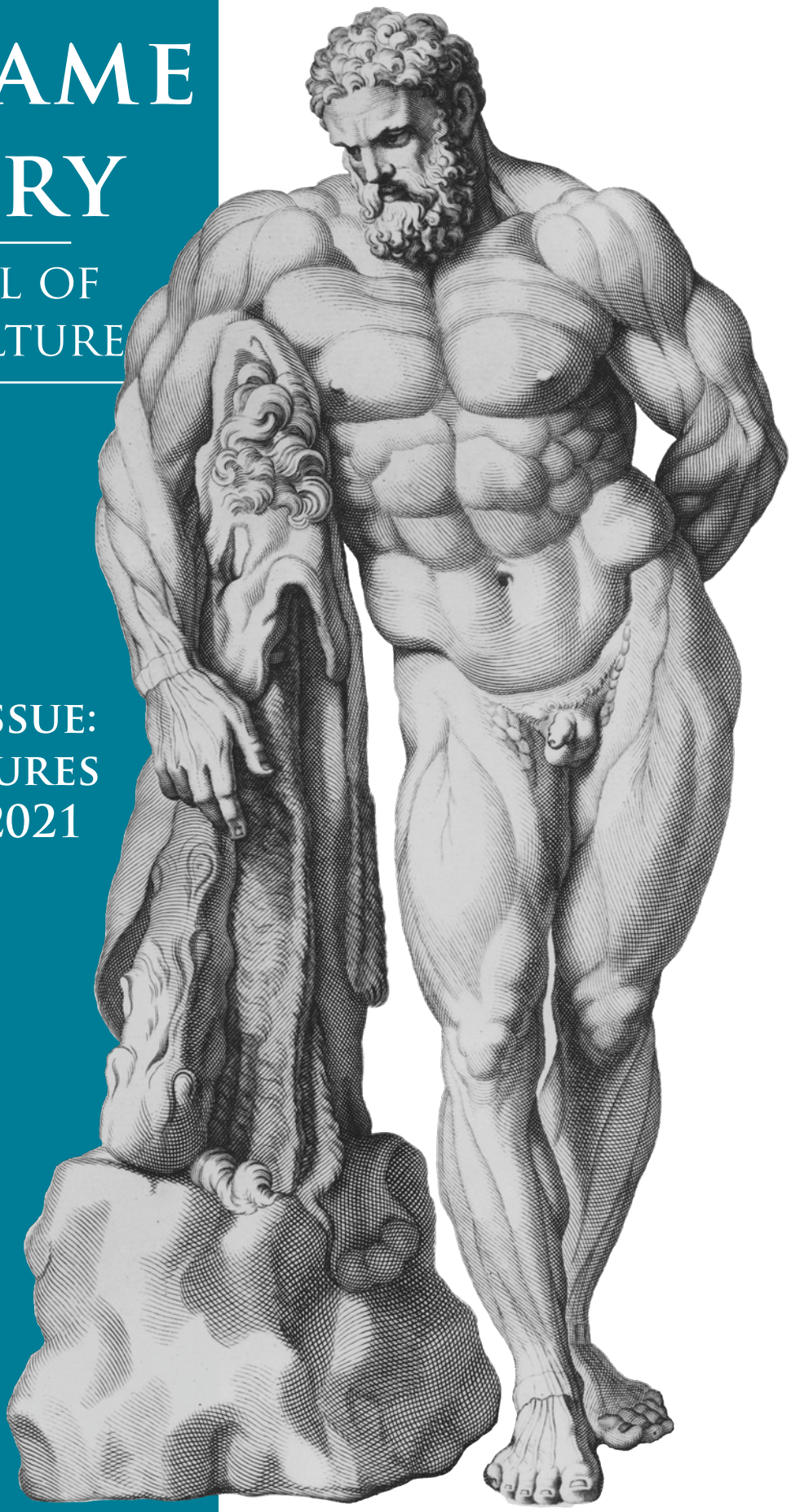
Iron Game History

The Journal of Physical Culture



Special Conference Issue: Physical Cultures of the Body 2021

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The Conference Issue:
Essays from *Physical Cultures of the Body* 2021

On 15 January 2021, the Stark Center played online host to a worldwide conference entitled *Physical Cultures of the Body*. Done during the height of the Covid-19 lockdowns which engulfed most of the modern world, the conference was an effort by Stark Center Director, Jan Todd, to bring scholars together during a time of considerable upheaval. Many readers will no doubt have experienced some form of online event during the past 18 months. Thanks to the pandemic, everything from world record deadlifts to small marriages have been streamed into thousands of homes. This was not always the case. At the time of Professor Todd's suggestion, I was optimistic but unconfident about the prospect of organizing an online conference. At that time, the University of Texas had moved classes online and, in my own experience, had met with mixed reactions from students. Thankfully my fears about technical difficulties or a disinterested public were ill-founded. Through the efforts of Dr. Kim Beckwith, Dr. Todd, Stark Center Curator Kyle Martin and the rest of the Stark Center staff, *Physical Cultures of the Body* not only went ahead, it proved to be an exciting and thought-provoking event. [Editors' Note: Thanks should also go to Dr. Heffernan who was a major force in organizing and promoting the conference.]

Beginning at 8AM and running until 6PM (Austin time), we welcomed speakers from thirteen different countries and just as many, if not more, time zones. It was a mighty undertaking and one which, in a world unaffected by the pandemic, would have proven impossible. In-person academic conferences are often preferable to sitting in front of a computer for the entire day, but the costs involved in travelling to them often prohibit a truly global engagement. On January 15, we welcomed presenters from India, Poland, South Africa, Britain, America, Austria, Spain, Ireland, France, Latvia, the Philippines, Australia and Argentina. True to its title, the conference explored the multiple ways in which the physical body is trained, developed and depicted in different societies. As the current issue makes clear, this truly was an international conference and one which embraced a variety of different historical approaches. Papers ranged from Renaissance writers to mid-twentieth-century Olympic weightlifters. We had the honor of welcoming people from every stage of the academic lifecycle, from graduate students to respected professors. This meant that many speakers met for the first time, some of whom forged relationships which will hopefully last for decades.

The other benefit of the conference was also the point that initially worried me so much, that it was online. Academic conferences, owing to their timing, cost, and location, rarely welcome members of the public. This is not deliberate, but rather an unfortunate consequence of their design. The Stark Center, as readers no doubt will be aware, somewhat bucks the trend in academia in that it has always had a public facing ethos. This very journal is testament to the Stark's efforts to meld academic and public interests together since its inception. The audience for *Physical Cultures of the Body* featured former UT students, private collectors of physical culture materials, journalists, academics, and enthusiastic proponents of the Iron Game. The diversity of interests and expertise meant that questions were routinely surprising, informative and thought provoking. The conference's impact was furthered by placing videos of most of the papers on the Stark Center website: https://starkcenter.org/physical-cultures-of-the-body-2021/.

As a final word, I want to comment on two new awards created in conjunction with the conference. Both were created by Professor Jan Todd to simultaneously honor the history of our field, while encouraging the next generation of researchers to push forward with their research. The first award, the David P. Webster Graduate Student Essay Award, was won by Rachel Ozerkevich for an excellent paper on French physical culturist Edmond Desbonnet. The other, the Terry Todd Award for Best Paper by a Working Scholar, was won by Anastasija Ropa for her research on Renaissance physical culturist Pietro Monte. Readers of *Iron Game History* will be well aware of Terry Todd and David Webster's contributions to this field, be they sporting, historical or, in my own case, as figures of inspiration. The awards served as a great platform to celebrate new work while also remembering the contributions of those who have helped to strengthen and enliven our field.

Very few people have fond memories of the first Covid-19 pandemic and the chaos of the lockdown period. While I cannot claim to have enjoyed the lockdowns, I can say that the *Physical Cultures of the Body* conference proved to be a special occasion in the midst of Zoom calls, uncertainty and confusion. It brought scholars together from around the world, helped friends reconnect, introduced new faces to the field, and brought academic work to the general public. This was an important conference which, in line with the Stark's own mission statement, helped to keep the history of physical culture alive and strong. I hope you enjoy the current issue, which is comprised of papers delivered at the conference. I have no doubt you will find them as enlivening and thought-provoking as I did on January 15 as the Stark Team frantically dealt with the errant WIFI connections, recording problems and minor technological mishaps which we managed to hide from attendees. I'll end by thanking all those who participated, those who helped to organize the conference, and to you the reader for helping me remember that the history of physical culture is still relevant in today's world.

—Conor Heffernan, University of Ulster

Physical Cultures of the Body 2021
Table of Contents

Winner of The Terry Todd Award for Best Paper by a Working Scholar

Pietro Monte's *Collectanea*: A Compendium of Knowledge About The Body, Health and Exercise

by Anastasija Ropa
Latvian Academy of Sport Education

Pietro Monte is known as the author of treatises on various subjects, from theology to military strategy to wrestling. His works, written in Latin, in Spanish or both, were printed in his lifetime or shortly after his death, showing that they were in demand. His longest work, *Collectanea*, is his *magnum opus*, but it is also a work that poses considerable challenges in terms of classification and organization. The material seems to be presented at times in a rather haphazard manner, as different from the encyclopedia of the medieval period, a genre best exemplified by Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*. Instead, Monte presents in a stream-of-consciousness structure a variety of topics, ranging from wrestling and fighting with various weapons to athletic and gymnastic exercise (running, throwing and vaulting), to bodily humors, physical and mental health, and the influence of bodily conformation on one's health and athletic performance. His description of exercises, fighting and, especially, wrestling techniques pose their own challenges: being rather cryptic in the absence of illustrations. The matter is further complicated by the fact that Monte uses a variety of native Spanish terms in his Latin text to refer to specific moves. This paper will consider the purpose of Monte's treatise, its intended and real audiences, as far as these can be gleaned from the surviving printed and manuscript copies, and, most importantly, the place of Monte's work in the contemporary tradition of encyclopedic writing.

The Man Who Taught Leonardo da Vinci Darts

Pietro Monte (1457 to circa 1509) has left us a number of treatises, including two important ones on physical education and sports: *The Appraisal of Men* (*De Dignoscendis Hominibus*), published in 1492, and *A Collection of Exercises and Military Arts* (*Exercitiorum Atque Artis Militaris Collectanea)*, the first medieval encyclopedia of physical culture. The *Collectanea* was probably completed in 1507-8 and published after his death in 1509.[1] Monte has left his imprint in the mind of his contemporaries, most notably Baldesar Castiglione, the author of the Renaissance treatise *The Book of the Courtier*, and Leonardo da Vinci.[2] Yet we know next to nothing about his biography or his career: even his origins are uncertain, as some scholars think, based on his legacy, that he was a Spaniard who served at various Italian courts, while others maintained he was an Italian who had spent time in Spain. The first hypothesis is more likely, as his references to Spain are invariably complimentary, and he uses many technical terms, in particular for wrestling and fencing, in his treatises, which were ultimately published in Latin.

We also do not know what he looked like. The image on pages five and six may give some idea of what the author of *Collectanea* imagined the soldier would look like, an ideal to which his implied readers would have aspired.

The athletic proportions of the Wound Man from the early sixteenth-century German treatise, in all his violent vulnerability, give some hint at the dangers and discomforts to which the body of a soldier, Monte's near contemporary, would have been exposed. In turn, the harmonious proportions of Leonardo's Virtuvian man remind the viewer of the notions of balance and moderation stressed by Monte on numerous occasions throughout his treatises. The association between Leonardo and Monte suggests a tantalizing hint that this, or one of the other studies by Leonardo, may preserve a vague likeness of the legendary master. One of Leonardo's notes alludes to the fact that the perfect method of throwing "darts," or spears, has been demonstrated and explained to him by the fencing master Pietro Monte.[3]

One of the early scholars of Monte, Sydney Anglo, summarizes Monte's contribution to the art of war and the practice of cultivating the human body as follows:

> No master was more comprehensive [in his writings] than Pedro Monte in 1509. He not only deals with wrestling, dagger fighting, the use of long and short lance, two-handed sword and the single-sword on its own or in combination with various types of shield and buckler and cape; he also discusses the various types of pole arm such as the partisan, the ronca, spe-

Anastasija Ropa is senior researcher in the Department of Management and Communication Science at the Latvian Academy of Sport Education. Her research focuses on the history of sports, mainly in medieval and Renaissance Europe, with a particular focus on comparing historical and modern practices in sport. Correspondence to: anastasija.ropa@lspa.lv

tum, and halberd. He examines in detail fencing and wrestling on horseback, along with various types of mounted lance combat; treats physical exercises such as running, jumping, and vaulting; provides a little encyclopedia of contemporary arms and armor; and finally places the entire corpus of material within a broader context of the art of war.[4]

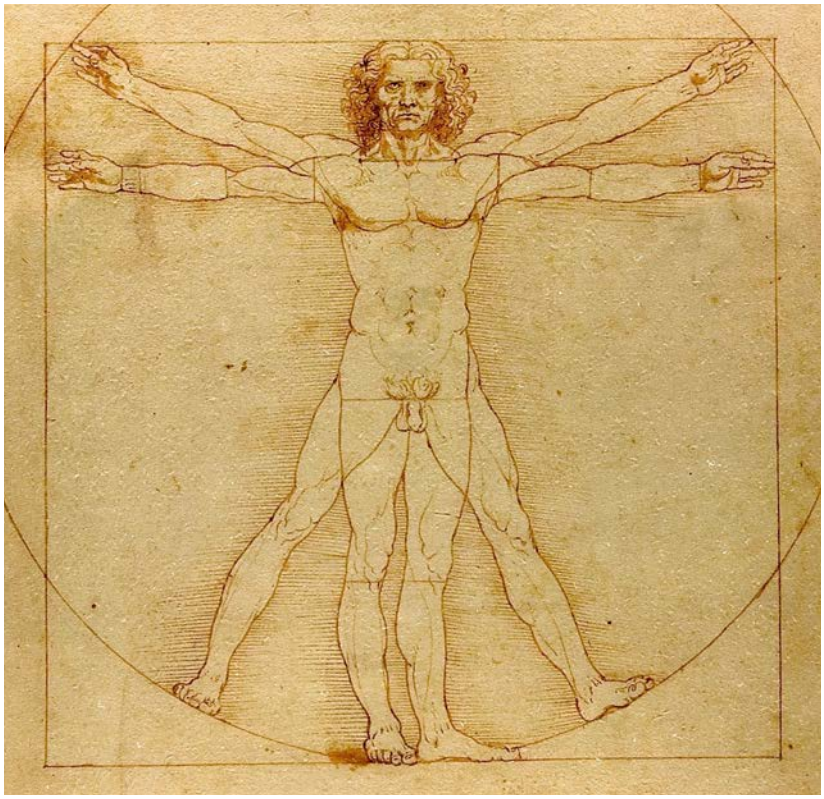
Monte's Precursors: Physical Education and Culture in Medieval Europe

Contrary to the popular perception of the Middle Ages as the dark age when cultivation of the body was discouraged by the church, medieval Europe was not ignorant of the benefits physical education can bring, especially to the members of the warrior elite. There have been several studies arguing that noble-born boys received extensive physical education, especially in the domains that could be useful for their martial careers, and, notably, it is the applicability of physical exercise to war that Monte emphasizes throughout his *Collectanea*. However, the physical education of girls was not ignored, either, as girls of noble birth learned horse riding and falconry. The physical education of boys from chivalric and, later, gentry families encompassed, in addition to riding and falconry, fencing with a variety of weapons, wrestling, often archery, hunting big game as well as vaulting and athletics, though there is less evidence on the latter practices.[5] Swimming was not ignored, either, though Monte is among the first to discuss the importance of this exercise. Still, medieval manuscripts testify to the existence of swimming as an exercise in the Middle Ages, alongside wrestling, as miniatures, especially those in the lower margins of manuscripts (the so-called marginalia) show swimmers, wrestlers and jousters.[6] The renowned French knight Boucicault, who lived in the fifteenth century, only several decades before Monte, is said to have perfected these chivalric practices.[7] Still, none of the earlier authors discussed or argued the importance of physical education and culture to the same extent as Pietro Monte, who writes about the physical, mental and spiritual virtues that are to be attained and exercised by the military man envisaged by Monte. His range of topics encompasses the theory of the four humors (sanguinic, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic) which was popular throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance; the correct diet for each type of exercise and lifestyle; a discussion of the lifestyle best suited for conceiving and raising healthy children; an appraisal of human physicality and man's spiritual and mental characteristics; as well as many other subjects, such as military strategy and tactics, fortification, etc., all of which would be useful to an aspiring man-at-arms at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

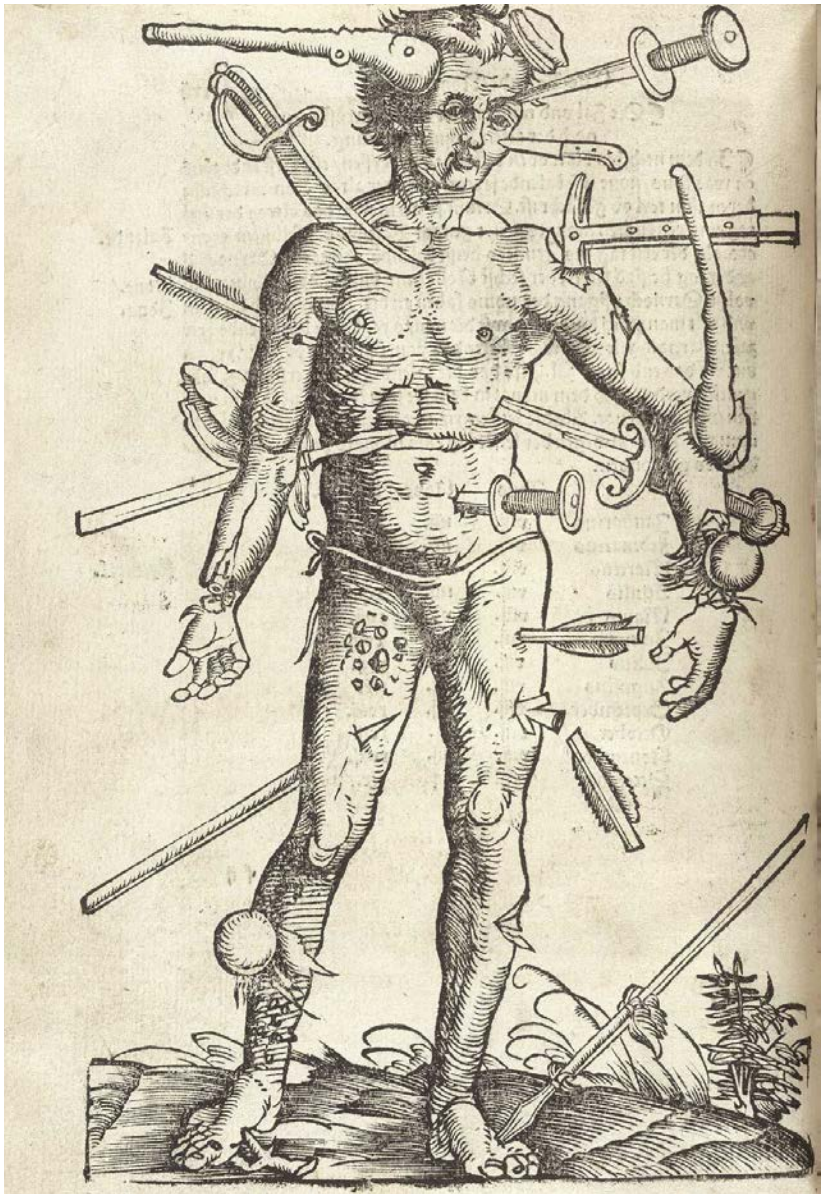
The most significant part of the treatise is devoted to the practice of various physical exercises or arts, their mechanics and technicalities. The pride of place is given to fencing with various weapons, most notably the two-handed sword and the poleaxe, the mastery of which would, according to Monte, enable the fencer to use other weapons well. He also devotes much space to wrestling, describing various techniques, as well as giving, elsewhere in the treatise, some notes on the peculiarities of wrestling practiced elsewhere in Europe. Monte has sections on equestrian vaulting, which encompassed mounting without stirrups and executing spins on a standing or running horse, similar to the modern gymnastic exercises of the pommel horse. The modern pommel horse's handles were derived from the pommels of medieval war saddles.

The sections on athletics include material on running on different terrains, running uphill and downhill, and running over long and short distances. It also discusses throwing projectiles such as the javelin; throwing small stones and a large stones like the modern athletic shot put; and jumping. He covers the medieval counterparts of the long jump, the triple jump, the high jump and the pole vault. All of these disciplines were to be practiced not as ends in themselves, but with an eye for public performance, a contest of strength, as well as being cultivated for the benefits they would bring on the battlefield.

Many of these arts are attested in other contem-



Along with the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*, Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* drawing is one of the most iconic images in the history of Western art. Drawn with pen and ink on paper, Da Vinci completed the Vitruvian Man around 1490. It was drawn as an homage to Vitruvius, a Roman architect who described the proportions of the human body in *De Architectura*.



Drawn as a guide to physicians about the kinds of possible injuries a soldier might experience in battle, there are several "Wound Man" drawings that have survived into the modern era. This image first appeared in 1517, after Monte's death, in Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundartzney*, a manual for military surgeons. The fact that the book was written and published in Germany makes it unlikely that the two men knew each other, but does not mean that some Renaissance soldiers may have looked much like the "Wound Man" before his injuries.

porary and later sources. Thus, an earlier fifteenth-century writer, the Portuguese King Edward I (Dom Duarte), in his *Art of Horsemanship*, describes some vaulting exercises, as well as wrestling and throwing the javelin and a small stone. Nevertheless, Duarte is dismissive of certain athletic practices noted by Monte, stating that certain athletic exercises are useless for a knight and warrior.[8] Like Monte, Duarte commends hunting as preparation for genuine warfare, because it includes the element of danger, but, again like Monte, Duarte does not dwell on hunting. The practice of hunting, especially hunting big game, as chivalric exercise preparing a knight for combat is described in detail by Duarte's father, King João I of Portugal, in his *Livro da Montaria* (*Book of the Hunt*).[9] Of course, as Duarte's title indicates, the focus of his treatise is on horse riding, and he devotes comparatively much space to jousting, a type of contest to which Monte devotes relatively little space, discussing fencing and wrestling contests in far more detail.

The Structure of Monte's Treatise

As we have seen, Monte was not writing in isolation, even if his work is the most comprehensive one that existed in his time, and it certainly deserves the title of an encyclopedia, despite its haphazard design. The range of subject, which so impressed early scholars, and Monte's personal reputation among his contemporaries and successors, ensured that his treatise remained influential in the first half of the sixteenth century, having been available in print and manuscript copies.

Although the presentation of material may seem chaotic at first glance, it follows a certain pattern. In the first book, Monte describes the basics of physical exercises, wrestling, fencing, athletics and vaulting, followed by an exposition of his theory of humors, which he also describes as human complexions, and body types. Each humor has certain physical and mental properties, but Monte notes that any human being includes something of all the four humours. To be a perfect, harmonious person, one should aspire to having all the four humours balanced, yet this ideal was hardly attainable. This meant one should be mindful of one's natural limitations, for instance, being careful about one's diet if one tends towards fatness, or emphasizing agility training if one is too heavy. It is in this book that Monte also discusses the physicality of various animals and describes the ideal animal proportions, always comparing these to the proportions of human body. He also devotes a section on procreation and the upbringing of children, explaining the similarities between animals and humans in that, like animals, those humans who are physically fitter are more likely to give birth to healthier, stronger children, whereas old, infirm, or indolent parents are likely to produce weaker offspring. Monte notes the importance of socializing the children, too. According to him, the children of nobility, albeit they may be lacking in physical accomplishments, are more likely to be more socially healthy than the children coming from lower social strata. This observation corresponds to what are known today as dysfunctional families, albeit, contrary to what Monte intimated, dysfunctional families may be encountered on all levels of society.

An important theme introduced in Book One and developed further in the subsequent book is the fostering

of moral and emotional qualities of a perfect soldier and athlete. Monte discusses the relation between skill and courage, the usefulness and handicaps that fear can impose and other subjects from the areas of human psychology and mental training technique. Interestingly, Monte's interest in fear as motivator and inhibitor are shared by Dom Duarte, who devotes several chapters of his brief treatise to the causes of fear and the reasons for becoming fearless. For both Monte and Duarte, fear can help in perfecting one's physical skills and enhancing one's body, but it can also become the enemy of the best athlete if it inhibits performance. Monte notes that "Fear can arise at two times: either before we come to the work, or when we are in it" The first type of fear is beneficial, because it motivates a person to exercise harder and avoid "immoderation in body and words" The second kind of fear is destructive, inhibiting performance. [10]

In the Book Two, Monte goes deeper into the consideration of various martial arts, especially those that are expected to be known by noblemen. He introduces the rules and terminology of jousting, describes the relevant equipment and provides advice on the training for tournaments. This part of Monte's treatise has been studied in the context of the medieval and Renaissance jousting in Iberia, and it corresponds to what we know from other sources, such as the descriptions of tournament competitions known as *pas-d'armes*, as well as jousting treatises by other authors.[11] Monte reiterates much of the material on wrestling, vaulting and athletics already introduces in the first part, which may necessitate going back and forth between the parts to check what Monte says on the subject earlier on. This task would have been made easier in the early printed copies that included a table of contents at the beginning of the work.

Book Three is the most theoretical, as it does not contain any discussion of physical exercises, instead, it offers general considerations on warfare. Monte also presents the ideal profiles of soldiers and commanders, as well as providing advice to commanders on choosing men as soldiers. Again, some of his observations repeat the things said in the early books. Thus, in Book One, Monte already advised aligning the soldiers according to their complexions, so that sanguines should be placed first, melancholics second, cholerics third and phlegmatics last.[12] The same advice is repeated in Chapter Three of Book Three titled: "How a battle array should be ordered according to the complexions." But, whereas his observations on the placement in the first book take the form of brief notes, they are more developed in Book Three.[13] He also develops the theme of age-specific exercise, arguing that every age has exercise that is most appropriate for it and that, although older people should refrain from imitating young ones, they are still worthy of admiration because "the old can thrive in strength of soul while failing in bodily strength"[14] This is the penultimate sentence of the last section in the book, and, although Monte does not specify this, he seems to imply that the task of "preserving health" would involve some physical exercise. This exercise, however, should no longer be performed in public, to avoid shame and criticism, because, for Monte, the preservation and enhancement of one's reputation are of paramount importance and an end towards which one would work in training various skills, quite apart from their application in combat.

What Skills Should the Ideal Soldier Develop?

Monte's treatise is wide-ranging, as it includes instructions on cultivating not only the body, but also the mind. In Book Three, describing the arts and skills to be perfected by a future soldier, he gives a list, which may be haphazard (given the stream-of-consciousness nature of Monte's writing in general), but may be rather suggestive of Monte's priorities: literacy, swimming, wrestling, jumping, vaulting, fencing with various weapons, hunting, and "survival" or practical skills. The primacy of reading may be surprising, given Monte's general preoccupation with the martial side of physical culture, yet he justifies it as follows: "to improve one's military completeness, first it is commendable and useful to be learned in reading and writing, so that we can read and understand histories and the deeds of other men, and by our own hand create even better ones, and to use our literacy to help us understand secret matters."[15]

Swimming, of course, has the immediate practical application of crossing rivers and other bodies of water, and the importance of wrestling and fencing for a soldier is self-evident. Athletic jumping and horse vaulting are recommended because of the exercise they provide for the body, though in Book One Monte also underlines the fact that jumping is a useful skill for a soldier in getting over some barriers, ditches, and other obstacles on the field of battle.

In describing the benefits of hunting, Monte, unlike his Portuguese predecessors João I and Duarte I, focuses not on the aspect of danger but on the scouting skills this activity trains, writing that, "In addition to accustoming our body to effort, hunting teaches us to work with the landscape, at times pursuing our course by the straight path, at other times wandering by the mountains, crossing rivers, ravines, ponds, marshes, and other such places, ascending and descending cliffs, trees, structures, and bridges, and doing similar things pertinent to military activity. It also teaches us to endure cold and heat, to look after our gear, and to care for and control animals."[16]

Finally, and somewhat surprisingly, Monte describes some practical skills that one would have expected a knight would possess. "He should know how to make arms, and how to repair his gear, saddle, and other things pertaining to him and his horse, when something is wrong with them."[17] It seems that by Monte's time, at least judging by his depreciating remarks about idleness, over-indulgence in food, drinks, gambling and other courtly distractions, young noblemen would have had little leisure for these less glamorous activities. Dom Duarte makes a similar complaint about young men indulging in dances and games when they should practice riding, but it is hard to judge about the decline of physical fitness over the course of the fifteenth century based on these complaints only. It may be that both Duarte and Monte are looking back

nostalgically to a golden age where people were fitter, stronger, more honest and virtuous, using this as rhetorical device or imagining a past that never existed.

Monte's Successors

Over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, more treatises were published, devoted to swimming, horse vaulting, fencing, riding and other subjects covered in the *Collectanea*, but these discussions, generally more systematic than Monte's, are far less holistic in their approach to developing the human body, mind and spirit. Among these treatises, Francis Willughby's *Book of Games* includes many athletics contests described by Monte, including throwing the bar and pole vaulting.[18] Equestrian vaulting is described in numerous later treatises, such as Giocondo Baluda's *Volteggiare* (c. 1630), William Stokes's *Vaulting Master* (1641), and Johann Georg Paschen's *Voltiger* (1660), to name but a few.[19]

A late-nineteenth-century counterpart to Monte's treatise on the cultivation of human body and spirit is the legacy of Colonel Thomas Monstery, a fencing and boxing instructor who published works on these arts as well as a series of articles on swimming.[20] Like Monte, Monstery argued for a holistic approach to developing the body in a functional manner through the practice of applied exercises, mainly of martial origin and application: fencing with various weapons, including the rapier and the quarterstaff, boxing, swimming and horse riding. According to Monstery, these exercises would not only develop functional muscle groups, but also enhance flexibility, agility and general well-being, priorities that were high on the list of late medieval and early modern authors, notably Dom Duarte and Pietro Monte. This is hardly surprising, as all of them approached the subject of physical culture from the perspective of becoming a perfect soldier. The line of continuity from Monte to Monstery is further strengthened by the fact that, during his career, the chivalric spirit of Monstery's accomplishments was emphasized by contemporary press. Thus, one of the public contests or "assaults-of-arms" in which Monstery fought was advertised as a "knightly tournament."[21] Although conducted on foot and with different arms, the range of weapons used by Monstery would have impressed Pietro Monte who argued that "above all we should learn something with every weapon"[22] Monstery's emphasis on boxing without gloves also would have found favor with Monte, who recommended studying "the art of wrestling, for this skill teaches many others." Exercise cultivating the body for certain tasks, developing agility and flexibility rather than increasing muscle mass is another point in common. Monstery speaks against gymnastics that would result on growing stronger, but less supple bodies.[23]

Likewise, Monte, in describing the soldiers to be chosen for fighting, notes that "Extremely large men are rarely very vigorous on foot or on horseback," and advises against choosing heavy men for ongoing warfare.[24] Monte's emphasis is on avoiding extremes, on developing the body through exercise, consuming "temperate" foods in moderation and on cultivating the mind and the spirit as well as the body, because intelligence and presence of spirit are as necessary in military situations, as well as in sports contests, as physical ability and specific skills. In this, Pietro Monte's advice is surprisingly modern, for it captures the notion of a healthy lifestyle, of physical, mental and social fitness, which are particularly topical today, with the challenges imposed by Covid-19 on both athletes and people who want to stay active and healthy in this changing and challenging world.

Notes

1. In this paper I use this translation of the *Collectanea*: Jeffrey L. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*: *The Arms, Armour and Fighting Techniques of a Fifteenth-Century Soldier* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018).
2. Baldesar Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier. The Singleton Translation.* Ed. Daniel Javitch. (New York and London: Norton, 2002); See also: Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book I, 4.
3. Sydney Anglo, *The Man Who Taught Leonardo Darts. Pietro Monte and His Lost Fencing Book," Antiquaries Journal* 69 (1989): 261-278.
4. Sydney Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 26.
5. For a comprehensive discussion of medieval children's physical activities, see Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children (*New Haven*:* Yale University Press, 2003). See also: Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy, 1066-1530* (London: Methuen, 1984).
6. For a history of swimming, see Nicholas Orme, *Early British Swimming, 55 BC – AD 1719* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1983).
7. Boucicault's life is documented in D. Lalande, ed. *Le Livre des fais du bon messire Jehan le Maingre, dit Bouciquaut, mareschal de France et gouverneur de Jennes.* (Geneva: Droz, 1985).
8. Duarte I of Portugal, *The Book of Horsemanship,* trans. Jeffrey L. Forgeng, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016).
9. Dom João I, *Livro da Montaria*, in *Obras dos Príncipes de Avis*, ed. M. Lopes de Almeida (Porto: Lello & Irmão, 1981).
10. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book I, 86.
11. See Noel Fallows, *Jousting in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia.* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011).
12. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book I, 60-61.
13. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book III, 200-201.
14. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book III, 227.
15. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's* Collectanea, Book III, 208.
16. Ibid.
17. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book III, 209.
18. David Cram, Jeffrey L. Forgeng and Dorothy Johnston, *Francis Willughby's Book of Games: A Seventeenth-Century Treatise on Sports, Games, and Pastimes.* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2003).
19. Giocondo Baluda, *Trattato del modo di volteggiare e saltare il cavallo di legno* (c. 1630); William Stokes, *The Vaulting Master, or, The Art of Vaulting* (London: I. Okes, 1641); Johann Georg Paschen, *Kurtze iedoch gründliche Beschreibung des Voltiger* (Sachsen: Melchior Oelschlegen, 1666).
20. Colonel Thomas Hoyer Monstery, *Self Defense for Gentlemen and Ladies. A Nineteenth-Century Treatise on Boxing, Kicking, Grappling, and Fencing with the Cane and Quarterstaff*. Ed. Ben Miller. (Blue Snake Books, 2015).
21. Ben Miller, "A Grand Assault-of-Arms in Old New York, directed by Col. Thomas Monstery," *Martial Arts, Weapons and Armour* (2015). Available from https://outofthiscentury.wordpress.com/2015/04/09/a-grand-assault-of-arms-in-old-new-york-directed-by-col-thomas-monstery/.
22. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book III, 208.
23. Miller, "A Grand Assault-of-Arms in Old New York."
24. Forgeng, trans. *Pietro Monte's Collectanea*, Book III, 206-207.

Winner of The David P. Webster Graduate Student Essay Award

Crafting the Ideal Woman: Photomechanical Manipulation in Edmond Desbonnet's Physical Culture Publications

by Rachel Ozerkevich
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The aesthetic merits of the conditioned body were paramount to Edmond Desbonnet. In the early years of the twentieth century, photographs of male and female physiques that had been transformed by his own training methodology were a crucial component of the French physical culturist's marketing.[1] One of Desbonnet's missions was to free women from conservative social constraints, such as the wearing of corsets and the belief that they were inherently weaker than men. But he also used his magazines and books to promote his larger mission of helping both sexes excel in their biological functions so as to repopulate France. He fervently subscribed to pronatalist notions that women' biological purpose was to attract and please a male partner, and then to deliver and raise healthy children.[2] In Desbonnet's 1911 book *Pour devenir belle…et le rester [Acquiring Beauty and Keeping It]* and his longstanding magazine *La Culture Physique*, he used edited images of acrobatic performers, beauty contestants, and record-holding weightlifters to demonstrate his beliefs about women's health, social and biological capacities, and appearance.[3] His sophisticated photo editing techniques altered his models' bodies, creating images that celebrated female strength while reinforcing pronatalist ideology and traditional gender roles.[4] Desbonnet's publications used retouched images to demonstrate the effectiveness of his training methodology while reconciling female musculature with signs of conventional femininity.

Desbonnet's photomechanical imagery make clear the connections between a woman's outward appearance and those upstanding moral qualities that make her an ideal candidate for motherhood.[5] To reflect the link between outer beauty and inner character, Desbonnet's models appear in his publications as subtly-manipulated, mixed-media objects, styled to emphasize gender dimorphism.[6] Desbonnet made use of the hand-editing technique of overpainting to alter the appearance of the women he featured. As a form of retouching, overpainting allowed Desbonnet to reveal the exceptional musculature of women such as the Athléta family of strongwomen while exaggerating and emphasizing those physical features that still allowed them to conform to pronatalist gender norms. Desbonnet presented the bodies of Athléta and her three daughters as proof that women are not inherently weaker than men, celebrating their visible musculature. Yet he reinforced those features on their bodies that indicate to readers that these models uphold their natural roles as women. Desbonnet presented muscular female bodies tempered with signs of social and biological femininity. With overpainting, Desbonnet could package his muscular female models to readers and potential clients as upholding the visual and behavioral attributes that made them ideal women.

Sport and physical culture were largely men's realms at the beginning of the twentieth century in France.[7] Women who participated in strength activities had to do so within the confines of a social environment that prescribed distinct roles for each sex.[8] Georges Vigarello has shed light on the links made between outward appearance and moral character in early twentieth century discourses on women's physical activity. Women were largely encouraged to participate in sport to cultivate balance between different anatomical features and character traits. Vigarello writes that women's health and beauty were imagined to encompass physical and mental efficacy, and different types of gymnastics were prescribed to help women move towards a holistic unity between inner health and its outward reflection. More broadly, the individual woman's role in aesthetic and moral improvement would ideally extend to the health of the entire nation.[9] A woman participating in inner and aesthetic self-improvement through exercise was to do so as a contribution to French social stability.

A number of art historians and sports historians in recent years have elucidated the importance of attending to visual and material culture when examining gendered sociocultural practices associated with sport.[10] In particular, scholars have illuminated the prominent role that physical culture publications had in shaping and disseminating bodily ideals for both men and women in turn-of-the-century France, and in prescribing physical and moral norms for women immediately before and after the First World War.[11] Desbonnet's work is situated in the broader, multidisciplinary field of inquiry into women's physical culture, health and aesthetics, and illustrated physical

Rachel Ozerkevich is a PhD Candidate in Art History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her dissertation addresses the dialogues between fine art and the illustrated sports press in late nineteenth and early twentieth century France. Correspondence to: rmoz@live.unc.edu

culture publications. Photography was central to physical culture's promotion and spread, and to Desbonnet's work in particular.[12] Because Desbonnet's business depended on recruiting new clients, both male and female, his messaging had to remain as widely acceptable as possible to his target audience.[13] Studies of Desbonnet's life and work have thus far focused primarily on his use of photography in light of his methodologies, writings, his place among his peer group, and his use of conventionally-attractive nude models to advertise his programs, without yet attending to the specific photomechanical techniques that allowed Desbonnet to present his methodologies and their purported results.[14] It was the editing of his imagery prior to publishing them that allowed Desbonnet to prove that his methodology, even when taken to highly advanced stages, could allow a woman to be both strong and capable of fulfilling her social and biological role.

In several of Desbonnet's publications, the Athléta family serve as aspirational models for readers. Their bodies are edited to simultaneously reflect the visual manifestations of advanced athleticism and ideal pronatalist femininity.[15] Desbonnet maintained that women could not develop the same amount of visible musculature as men.[16] Retouched images allow the female body to demonstrate that strength training is beneficial for women, while reinserting traits, such as slenderness or curvature, that viewers expected to see on a feminine body. The fact that these photographed bodies are so heavily edited suggests that the live models, and their camera-made portraits, might not have exhibited the kind of balance between the aforementioned features that Desbonnet prized. While it is impossible to consider all his images of women here, several notable examples taken from glass plate collections, select issues of the magazine, and his guidebook for women, *Pour devenir belle…et le rester* indicate how he used hand editing to reconcile his contradictory beliefs during a period of conflicting and confining standards for women. Desbonnet's retouched images indicate that while the live body might not have successfully communicated his methodology's desired results, its edited image could.

Pronatalism and Its Photomechanical Manifestations

In the decades following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the French government encouraged certain citizens to reproduce for the sake of national renewal. Pronatalist ideology championed the healthy nuclear family units' responsibility to the state to procreate in a collective effort to combat French depopulation.[17] Much of the pronatalist burden fell on women's shoulders. Images in early twentieth century media helped establish and reinforce the ideals and values of French heterosexual desire, procreation, family life, and distinct differences between men and women; these were values and cultural norms that many people felt to be under attack.[18] Yet not everyone in this period believed that women should be entirely passive in response to male virility and activity: some physical culturists advocated for women's ability to use gymnastics and weight training to build themselves into the strongest, most energetic versions of themselves to become better mothers, and to eschew notions that women were inherently weaker than men.[19] Desbonnet was part of a broader movement championing women's exercise in the service of pronatalism, yet his methods and ideas were not universally accepted by other fitness theorists. Critics of Desbonnet's methods worried that too much emphasis on the aesthetic results of training could distract women from the health benefits of exercise.[20] His competitors cautioned that encouraging women to lift weight might prevent their bodies from reflecting signs of gender-appropriate balance, launching them into the realm of hyper-specialization and excess musculature.[21] But Desbonnet believed that all women could achieve a balanced physique through specific forms of exercise, including personalized weight-training, in order to best improve their moral character and fulfill their roles as Republican women.

The widely accepted French female beauty standards in the early years of the twentieth century called for a narrow waist held in place by a corset, with smooth pale skin and lithe limbs.[22] The desirability of these physical features, reflected in the period's advertising posters, store catalogues, magazines and beauty manuals, often carried over into the realm of female physical culture.[23] Women who practiced physical activity often felt pressure to keep both their actions and physiques in line with ideals of delicacy and modesty, and to use physical culture to cultivate these traits.[24] For example, many women in Belle Époque France practiced Swedish gymnastics, believing that the programs would give them small breasts, flat stomachs, and lightly rounded hips—all features widely associated with conventional femininity and fertility.[25] To deviate from the "feminine"—from features that indicated the feminine, such as the narrow waist—would risk a woman being seen as aggressive and masculine.[26] Physical attributes such as a straight spine, shapely limbs, a slim neck, and slender mid-section were believed to reflect a woman's adherence to feminine characteristics like demureness that would complement male virility.[27] A woman who eschewed her responsibilities to cultivate an attractively feminine appearance would be unable to *act* like a good woman, would struggle to attract a suitable partner, and would fail to become a wife and mother.

Desbonnet's illustrated publications emerged in a climate broadly concerned with shifting gender roles and a preoccupation with personal hygiene and appearance.[28] His images blended aesthetic and scientific models from a wide variety of historical and contemporary sources to demonstrate the kind of results to which his readers should aspire. In *La Culture Physique*, he proposes an understanding of beauty based on balanced bodily proportions inspired, in part, by Ancient Greek statues that he felt best reflected symmetrical and well-developed musculature. Desbonnet's reliance on statuary was not unique: Georges Hébert also looked to what he claimed to be physical and moral ideals borrowed from antique models and from non-Western women whose forms seemingly reflected natural conditioning.[29] More broadly in this period, refer-

ences to antique sculpture spoke to early twentieth century aesthetic ideals of slimness, physical symmetry, and uniform features.[30] Desbonnet claims that much Ancient Greek statuary represents absolute human perfection, but that contemporary bodies have strayed far from Greek aesthetic ideals.[31]

To combat French declining health and to improve the appearance of his clients, Desbonnet developed a multi-faceted program influenced in part by Hippolyte Triat's principles of muscular isolation, contemporary physiological science, weight training, and a myriad of other wellness practices.[32] His plan involved three progressive components: starting with bodyweight and light resistance exercises, then moving to moderate weights and attention to aesthetic changes, and finally the athletic, performative stage.[33] Most practitioners were advised to engage in non-competitive, health-minded activity in keeping with the second stage. The importance of aesthetic results as a perfectly balanced reflection of internal health, and the use of weight training for women *and* men, set this method apart from competitors such as Georges Demeny who claimed to champion hygiene and health above all else, and from Hébert's "natural method" wherein aesthetics were paramount.[34] Using graduated weight training and a variety of visual models, Desbonnet promised to demonstrate the interconnectedness of health with aesthetics, without the passiveness evident in other contemporary prescriptions for women.[35]

Desbonnet associated inner health and its associated physical manifestations with an ideal form of Republican citizenship predicated on gender dimorphism and individual strength.[36] His publications use carefully-styled images to demonstrate that the contemporary human body can be saved from physical and moral decay brought on by the Belle Époque's excesses. An image of Max Unger published in the June 1904 issue of *La Culture Physique* features the subject standing on a block, contorting his body in such a way as to mimic ancient Greek statuary (see figure 1). Unger wears only a paper leaf over his genitals. The minimal *mis-en-scène* here calls to mind statuary that one might encounter in a museum—a thin string holding the fig leaf in place on Unger's body is visible, revealing that the stylist tried to emulate the coverings often added to nude statuary after their creation. Unger's image does not betray obvious signs of having been edited by hand, in part because of the thin newsprint on which the image was printed. Yet thanks to styling and framing, images such as this suggest that certain visual traits are associated with desirable characteristics. In Unger's case, his pose and styling reference the classical proportions and physical symmetry viewers might associate with ancient sculpture. Unger appears on the magazine page as a virile, healthy male specimen with a physique to which readers should aspire.

In *Pour devenir belle*, images of statuary establish certain visual standards for the female form, namely symmetrical features, smooth skin, and musculature balanced with feminine curvature.[37] Early in the book, there are images of two models whose bodies forge a connection between ancient ideals and contemporary women. They illustrate that beauty is individual, while still being predicated on balance: *La beauté blonde* and *La beauté brune*—Jeanne Delyane and Yetta Rianza, respectively (see figure 2). Both women pose in such a way as to attract the viewer's attention to specific parts of their bodies: their bare arms and décolletage, narrow waists, and rounded hips. In showing readers that Delyane and Rianza's bodies exhibit hourglass shapes and symmetry, similar to some of the physical ideals evident in statuary, Desbonnet suggests that the qualities he prizes as feminine beauty are timeless and can be achieved by following his training methods. Desbonnet writes that beauty is the exterior manifestation of physical and internal perfection, suggesting that the two models' forms mirror their character.[38] Desbonnet includes these highly stylized models to indicate that external beauty can be made tangible and concrete, and that physical culture can help women mold their entire selves to sculpted ideals.[39]

Desbonnet's own prescriptions for female physical culture promised to help women achieve their own version of feminine physical perfection. Desbonnet explains his goals for women in written form, and provides images to illustrate what an ideal result might look like for

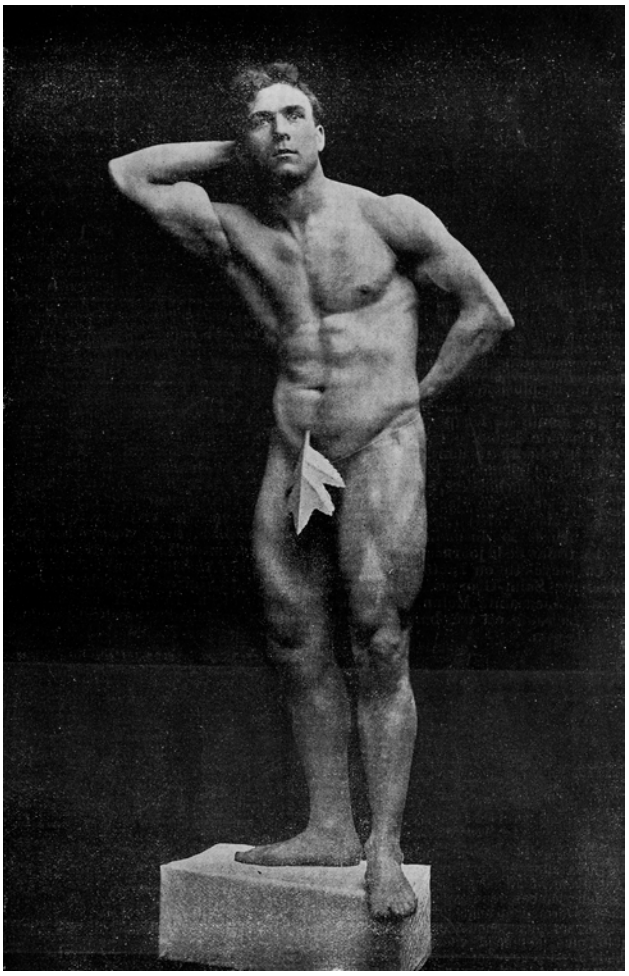


Figure 1. "Les produits de la culture physique raisonnée: Max Unger (Strongfort)," photomechanical image in *La Culture Physique* (June 1904), 71.

an individual. An image in *Pour devenir belle…* shows a young female model perched on a pillar, wearing a gathered leotard that reveals her long, blemish-free arms and legs draped over her perch (see figure 3).[40] The image's caption explains that this vigorous musculature is remarkably beautiful. The model's contorted pose emphasizes her narrow waist, and sanguine facial expression invite us to compare her to a statue, much like how Max Unger's image recalled ancient statuary, and which Desbonnet signals as visually pleasing in the caption. The image's background has been entirely replaced by solid black, suggesting that the model's form was cut away from its initial studio setting. The image has been edited prior to printing to create the impression of an uncluttered link between statuary and contemporary bodies. In his image of the female model, seemingly floating in a-temporal space, Desbonnet presents the body as a work of art. He invites viewers to admire the fact that the living subject's form has been sculpted by deliberate activity and long-term discipline, despite the fact that the image has been edited. In this image, the viewer is treated to what appears to be visual proof of successful female physical culture practice. A real woman reading the book could aspire to turn her own form into a timeless work of art, using Desbonnet's methods to sculpt her features into desirably feminine shapes.

Figure 3. "Cette musculaire vigoureuse est remarquablement belle," photomechanical image in *Pour devenir belle… et le rester*, 128.

Overpainting

Desbonnet's publications prior to the First World War are illustrated with photomechanical images printed in halftone. The halftone printing process was the first technical development that allowed publishers in the late nineteenth century to print photographs onto newspaper and magazine paper. The technique involves etching two sheets of glass with ruled parallel lines. These lines are filled with blank ink, creating the appearance of a thin screen. The two sheets of ruled glass can then be laid over a light-sensitive plate in a camera. The transparent spaces between the etched lines let light pass through the glass plates in the camera, therefore allowing for a faithful capturing of the dark and light areas in the subject being photographed.[41] The light and dark tones of the subject are translated onto the printing plate in a series of dots of varying sizes. Halftone printing was revolutionary in part for producing photographic images on pages alongside text—before halftone, publishers had to include images and text on separate pages.[42] Desbonnet's books and magazines take full advantage of the creative possibilities allowed by halftone, combining images and text in dynamic compositions, and blending the new printing technique with more traditional forms of handmade illustration.

Figure 2. Photomechanical printed page featuring Jeanne Delyane and Yetta Rianza from *Pour devenir belle…et le rester,* 3.

Desbonnet was passionate about images. He used photography and editing to record his professional achievements (in the form of visual changes evident on his students' bodies), to demonstrate to viewers how to execute his movements, and to inspire current and aspiring followers. Desbonnet viewed the photograph of a muscled body as a prized, collectable object itself, but also as tangible proof of the validity of his method.[43] In other words, Desbonnet saw photographs as a vehicle for creative expression and as a means of creating a tangible, lasting product out of his practical methodology. Photographs of students and of notable athletes were also advertisements: they made readers and viewers aware of what a body *could* look like with the right kind of disciplined work. But when a photographic negative failed to show signs of Desbonnet's and his subject's hard work, overpainting emerged as a means of bridging practice with appearance.

Prior to printing, all photomechanical images in late nineteenth and early twentieth century illustrated magazines were edited using a process known as retouching.[44] Retouching refers to a direct hand-made intervention onto a photograph's surface. But the more specific practice of

"overpainting" indicates the process of literally painting over a photographic negative or print.[45] Retouching, and overpainting in particular, were often used in a corrective sense, to help photomechanical images clearly display relevant features and hide distracting details.[46] Beyond simply highlighting, erasing, or outlining elements in the composition, these processes involved framing and cropping to direct the viewer's attention. Overpainting helped viewers "read" a photomechanical image in a predetermined context.

Thousands of Desbonnet's own glass plate negatives and prints are currently held at the Musée du Sport in Nice. Many of these objects betray clear signs of overpainting, indicating that Desbonnet hoped to guide his readers in their interpretations of his imaged bodies. One example wherein overpainting is particularly evident features a nude, frontal image of a male client (see figure 4). The negative indicates that a heavy, clumsy leaf shape has been drawn over the genitalia, on the emulsion side of the negative. This covering appears to have been added with a thick marker, making it immediately apparent how it differs in appearance from the rest of the man's body. Much closer inspection reveals that the man's body has also been slimmed and shaped in more subtle ways. Underneath his biceps, along his shoulders, and between his upper thighs, an overpainter has scratched on top of the negative, adding contours that make the body appear slimmer. Ideally, visible signs of overpainting would be minimized when printed using halftone onto newsprint or thicker book paper.[47] This editing, apparent to the naked eye on an unpublished negative, indicates that the camera alone had not captured a satisfactory body shape, and that the body itself, without retouching, might not have displayed the right balance of marketable, desirable traits.

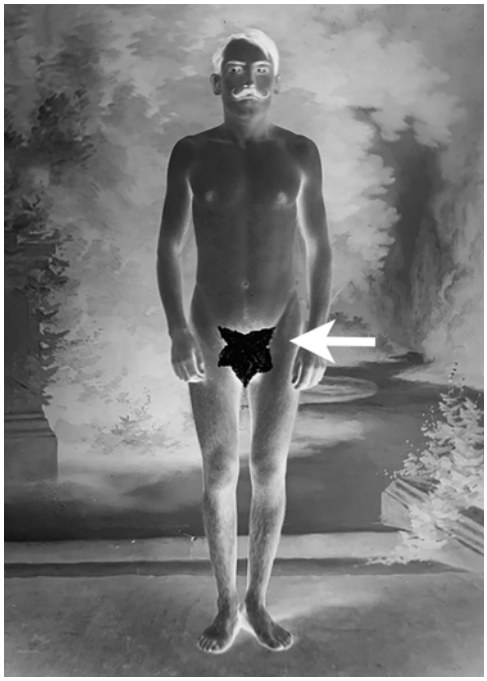


Figure 4. Edmond Desbonnet, photograph of nude male, glass plate negative, Musée National du Sport, Nice. Arrow added to indicate overpainting.

Visual Manifestations of Female Strength

Female strength performers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century worked in a social environment that demanded that male and female bodies, regardless of social class, should be visibly distinct. But women who performed feats of strength and physical skill also had the power to destabilize ideological gender values through their actions and appearance.[48] Myrtho and the Salonne sisters were performers who depended on their physical conditioning and strength for their livelihoods.[49] They developed a level of physical strength and conditioning unusual for most women at the time, a fact that invited their bodies to subvert gender distinctions.[50] In early twentieth century France, cultural paranoia about women transgressing "female" characteristics reflected a broader desire to maintain sexual dimorphism informed by natalist values. A woman who deviated from her biological role as passive, delicate, and motherly signaled physical and moral degeneracy.[51] The belief that such transgression could be located visually *on* a woman's body only added more tangible evidence to these claims. A woman who moved her body in a way that used brute force, or who exhibited a robust and powerful physique, showed herself to be biologically degenerate. While many commentators feared that socially emancipated women might disrupt the social order, Desbonnet reframed his images of physically strong women to appear as conventionally feminine as they were strong.[52] Images of Delyane, Rianza, the dancer Myrtho, and the gymnasts known as the Salonne sisters indicate how Desbonnet's publications used styling to emphasize models' overt femininity, despite signs of professional athletic performance. Features that signal "woman," such as waists, hips, and breasts are focal points in all the aforementioned examples. These images draw viewers' attention to those aspects of models' bodies that still subscribe to sexual dimorphism. They assuage readers' fears that physical culture might make women seem too "manly," for even these muscular bodies are made to seem feminine.

In *Pour devenir belle*, Desbonnet explains that women are afraid of doing away with restrictive fashion, and nearly always confuse strength with excess girth.[53] He writes that women misunderstand the very point of physical culture for the female sex: not to create unseemly muscle growth on a woman's body, but to promote well being and all its moral and social attributes. To Desbonnet, women actually need physical activity more than men. While men need developed musculature to be virile, women require bodily harmony and the ability to adapt to childbirth and motherhood—factors upon which the entirety of the French race depend.[54] Accompanying his plea to women to use physical culture as preventative medicine are numerous photomechanical images of women whose forms illustrate Desbonnet's arguments.[55] Pages such as that captured in figure 5 feature women whose nearly-nude bodies follow a general physical "type" and embody the attributes that Desbonnet praises in his writing: Myrtho and the Salonne sisters both have narrow waists and round hips, features that Desbonnet praises as healthily feminine. These women do not wear restrictive corsets and suggest that Desbonnet's methods could free women from conservative clothing restrictions,

sculpting the body and rendering shape-changing garments, such as corsets, obsolete. Yet the bodies also exhibit defined arm musculature and prominent quadriceps. The text that surrounds the images insists that female strength correlates with beauty—that women should not be afraid of exercise as it can help them achieve bodies that balance curvature with musculature.[56] These three models seemingly act as proof that a woman can use exercise to enhance the conventional markers of her sex in a healthier and more effective way than the confining corset.

A Curious Case Study: Athléta

Desbonnet manipulated the bodies of one particular family of female athletes frequently in his publications. The Belgian weightlifter and performer Athléta appears in Desbonnet's magazines and books as an example of how a woman could surpass even the kinds of strength and beauty modeled by the Salonne sisters, Myrtho, Rianza, and Delyane, while still remaining an ideal picture of feminine health. Athléta, born in Anvers, used her married name of Van Huffelen in her personal life and performed feats of strength at exhibition venues and music halls around Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Athléta's three daughters also demonstrated their unusual strength at public showcases and in weight rooms throughout Europe. The young women appeared on their own, as a trio of sisters, and with their mother in Desbonnet's illustrated publications. Some extant images of the family posing in studio settings do not betray signs of overpainting, and emphasize the women's conditioned, muscular physiques without hand-drawn interventions. Yet retouched portraits, both published and unpublished, make clear that overpainting was used in multiple instances to reinsert signs of femininity on top of the body's photographic image. In the retouched examples, an overpainter has narrowed the women's waists and slimmed their chins. The resulting images demonstrate sculpted shoulders, quadriceps, and broad chests, with added delicate curvature and balanced hourglass physiques.

Several photographs in the Fonds Soury collection at the Museum of Civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean demonstrate clear evidence of hand editing on the bodies of female lifters, including the Athléta family. There are two photographs on which overpainting has been done so clumsily that it is obvious to the naked eye, enabling clear analysis of the photographs' material makeup. These edited images are curious objects: they have been manipulated after the negative was printed. This is a departure from the more standard overpainting practice of drawing on a negative before printing the image on paper. The overpainting on top of the prints alters the surface texture of the object. Against the smooth, uniform surface of the print, the fine scratch marks are rough and clumsy, making clear that several forms of mark making have composed the final product.

One of these images in the Fonds Soury Collection, an unpublished yet retouched photograph printed on glossy paper, is of the Athléta matriarch (see figure 6). The photograph portrays the strongwoman in three-quarter profile, dressed in a performer's leotard and slippers. Along her back and along the entirety of her frontal torso, an overpainter has scratched away at her body. These same scratch marks are also apparent on her neck and below her chin. Seen from a distance, Athléta has a very narrow waist in comparison to her muscled arms and legs. Those areas of her body that have been slimmed appear to blend into the studio backdrop. Her physique has been altered, after the photograph was taken and printed, to appear leaner. The contours of her body are rendered in an exaggerated hourglass shape very much in keeping with conventional standards of female body shapes and pronatalist physical culture.

In another example, a frontal shot of Athléta, wherein the lifter is photographed decorated with medals, obvious overpainting creates a dramatic contrast between a feminine, narrow waist, and well-muscled arms (see figure 7). Athléta leans on a rock in the photographer's studio, with one arm folded behind her back. Studio lighting emphasizes shadows that sculpt her biceps and shoulders. Along the sides of her legs, seemingly covered in smooth stockings, her quadriceps are subtly shaded. In this image, Athléta's torso has again been narrowed by hand. Under both sides of her bust, an overpainter has scratched away at

Figure 5. Photomechanical printed page featuring Myrtho and the Salonne sisters from *Pour devenir belle… et le rester,* 60.

her leotard's contours. The forearm that rests on the stone pedestal also shows clear signs of having been manipulated after the photograph was printed. Even as a decorated champion, Athléta's physique had to be slimmed and reshaped, suggesting that without any handmade interventions, her shape might not appear feminine enough for Desbonnet's publications. In both aforementioned examples, drawing ensures that Athléta's body exhibits clear signs of fertility despite the developed musculature captured by lighting, and then by the camera.

Desbonnet's personal collection of prints, held at the Musée National du Sport, offer dozens of examples of much subtler overpainting on prints, as well as on glass plate negatives. That the retouching in these prints is not as apparent as those in the Fonds Soury Collection indicates that the signs of editing on a photograph could easily go unnoticed by the untrained eye.[57] In the Nice examples, overpainters use sketch-like mark-making to adjust the bodies of Athléta's three daughters. Figure 8 is a photographic print depicting the three young women posing together with their arms above their heads with their backs bent. Anna, Louise, and Brada all wear leotards and stand against a dark studio backdrop. The young women smile at the camera invitingly. The overpainter's handmade interventions are most evident on the central figure's left hip and on the figure on the right's buttock. These two areas in particular have been narrowed, allowing the body's actual contours as captured by the camera to disappear into the background. The young women's legs seem mostly unedited, while the majority of the light marks cover each model's leotard, slimming and defining the curvature of their bodies. Thanks to handmade shaping, the Athléta women's forms appear very similar to the models of female health and beauty in Desbonnet's book pages. Though these young women are professional athletes, retouching has ensured that their bodies still exhibit signs of feminine balance.

Images of the three Athléta daughters depict narrow waists covered only by skin-tight leotards; their lack of clothing and heavy undergarments reinforces the fact that their bodies were been shaped by activity, and not by shapewear.[58] [*Editors' Note: Whether the Athleta daughters are wearing corsets in this photo is unknown, of course. However, many women strength athletes performed while wearing corsets as did women who did acrobatics, practiced gymnastics, and went to gymnasiums. As women began engaging in exercise more regularly in the late nineteenth century, a few companies began selling corsets designed to be worn while exercising. Eugen Sandow even endorsed one brand for a time.]*

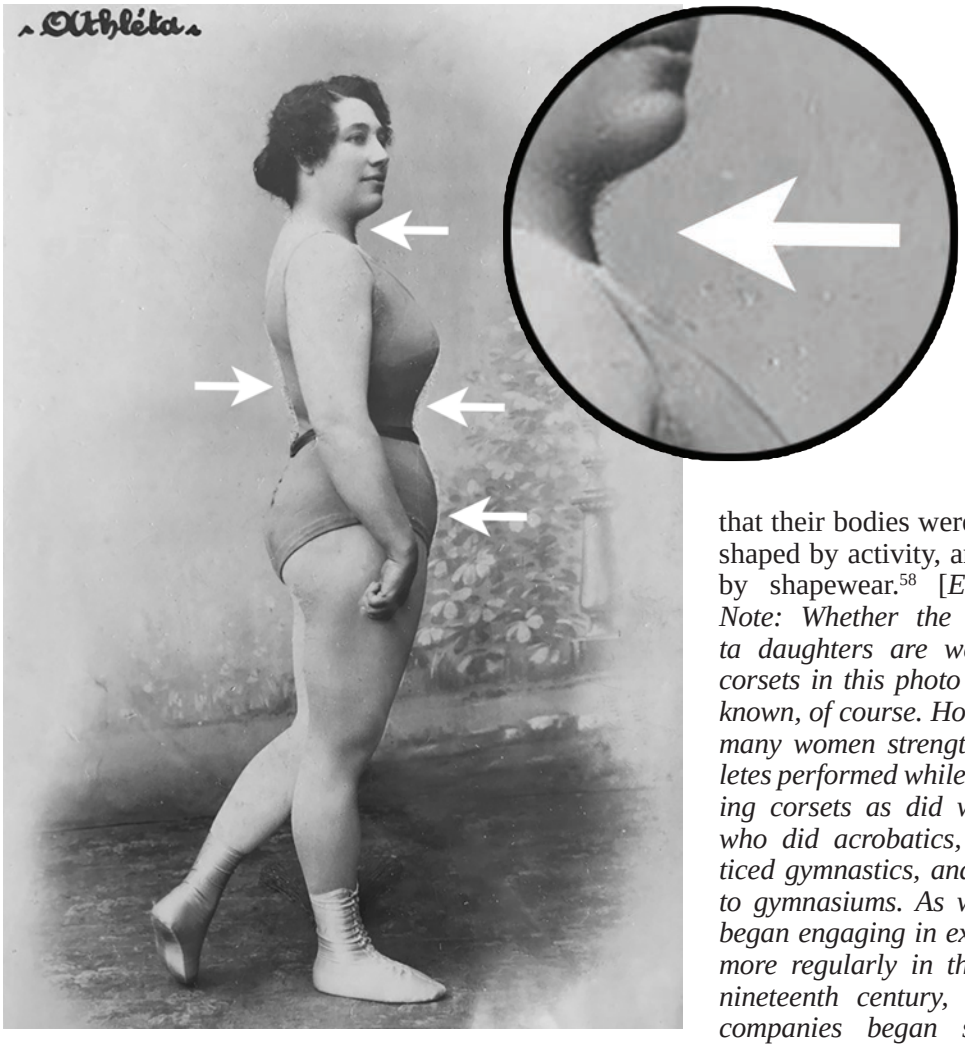


Figure 6. "Les 4 Athlétas. Athléta." Photomechanical print with scratch marks. Collection Fonds Soury, Museum of Civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean. Arrows added to indicate overpainting.

Desbonnet's contemporary Hébert was anxious about identifiable women posing nude for his publications, and covered his models' eyes in photographs. Desbonnet's subjects often confront the viewer directly.[59] Posed without shame, their images call to mind courtesans, using their near-nudity to attract and entertain.[60] Desbonnet's models were not the bourgeois women he targeted with his marketing; as performers, they were not considered the kind of role model appropriate for most young bourgeois women.[61] But though working class, these women were not hard laborers, and the physical work in which they engaged set them apart from peasant women toiling for sustenance. His models' personas and likenesses were included in print as aspirational for physical culturists, as women who had achieved the third stage of his methodology, that of athleticism and performance. Despite their class, Athléta and other female athletes exhibited signs of feminine refinement, added by hand, and visible muscularity, captured by the camera.[62] Their bodies suggested that physical culture could serve as a mid-way point between aristocratic leisure activities and low-brow entertainment.[63] And importantly, Desbonnet's performer-models

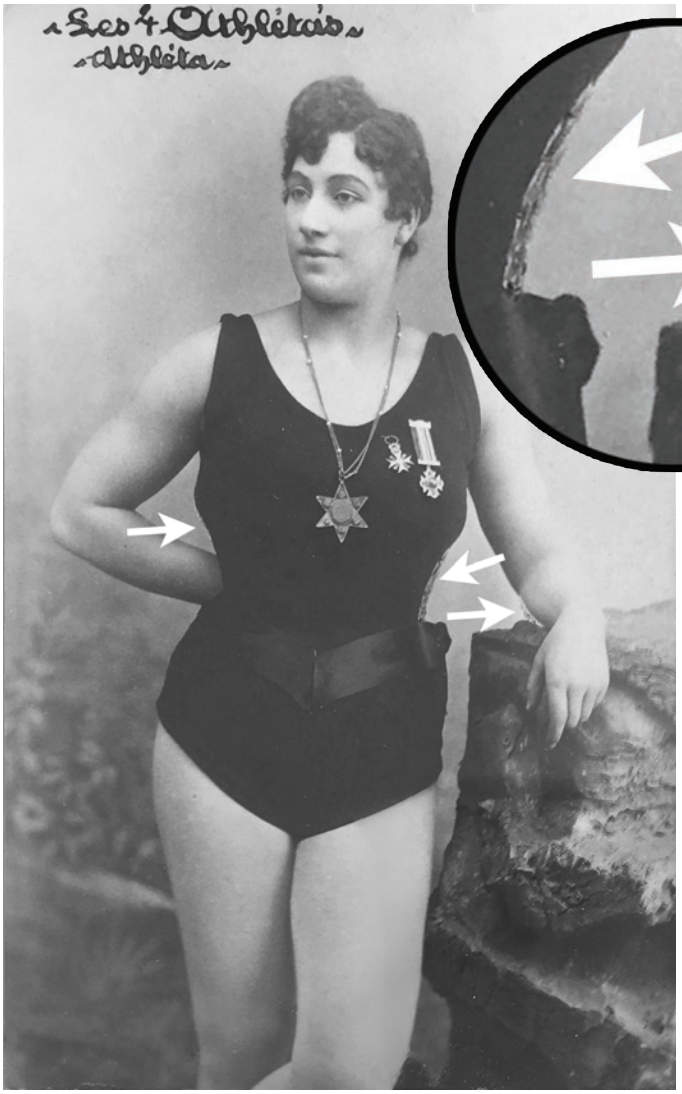


Figure 7. "Les 4 Athlétas. Athléta." Photomechanical print with scratch marks. Collection Fonds Soury, MUCEM. Arrows added to indicate overpainting.

were willing to pose in revealing clothing.[64] Already conditioned by training and willing to be featured with minimal covering, their appearances could be more easily edited to reflect desirable female features signaling healthy fertility and character.[65]

Once reproduced as a halftone image, a photograph loses some evidence of having been manipulated by hand. The unpublished print might display signs of scratching and contouring primarily in how scratch marks and ink drawings alter the surface of the photograph. However, it can be nearly impossible to detect retouched areas when encountering a photomechanical image printed on thin newsprint page with halftone. Yet Desbonnet's publications include many examples of photomechanical images that still betray signs of having been overpainted at some point in their journey from negative to magazine or book page thanks to blatant inconsistencies in line, shading, and shape. Such images often appear collage-like, blending soft contours with harsh outlines, and naturalistic depth with flattened areas more reminiscent of watercolor painting. While the camera captures the Athléta family's posed, styled, and muscular bodies, an overpainter has subsequently tempered their features with signs of sexual dimorphism.

The Athléta matriarch's images feature extensively in *Pour devenir belle*. Her body is larger and more robust than those of her daughters. As such, her photomechanical images often exhibit more involved retouching in attempts to add narrowness and demureness onto her form. A heavily-retouched example,

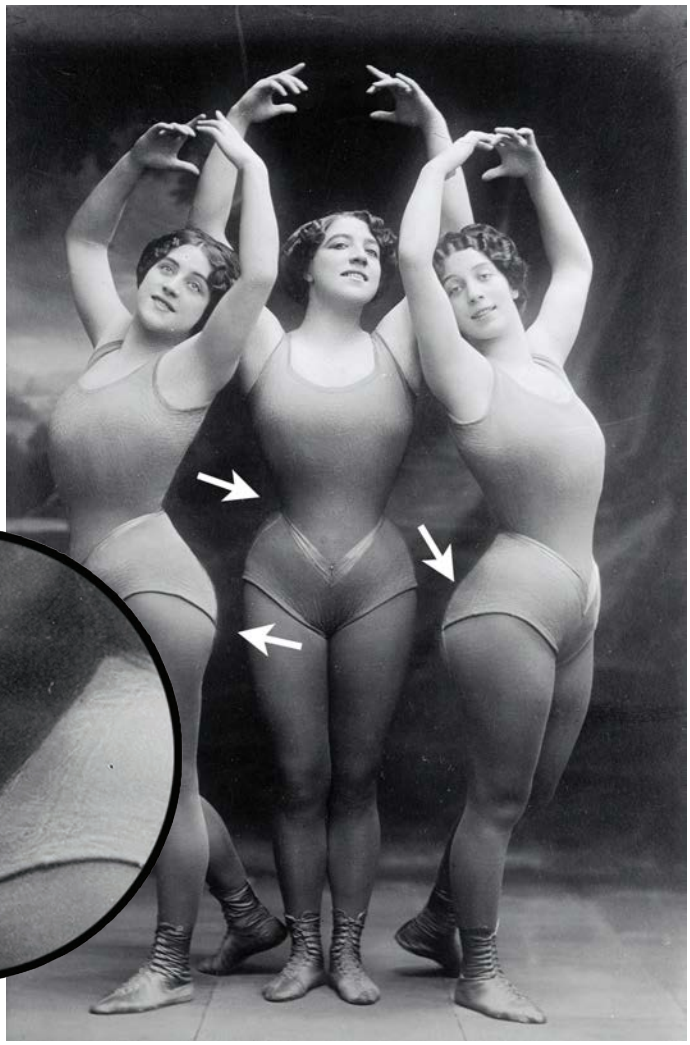


Figure 8. Anna, Louise, and Brada Athléta. Photographic print with hand editing. Fonds Desbonnet, Musée Nationale du Sport, Nice. Arrows added to indicate overpainting.

also published in *L'Illustration*, shows Athléta lifting five men, balanced on a bar, on her back and shoulders (see figure 9). Athléta's action in this image reminds readers that she is a professional athlete, albeit a retired one. The image supports Desbonnet's writing, which posits that this is not the standard to which regular women, even those dabbling in physical culture methodology, should aspire. Rather, Athléta is an exceptional case. Among women, she is notable for possessing a superior nervous system, which has helped the rest of her body develop past the point of being simply lithe and supple. She has surpassed the physical results and behavioral characteristics expected of most active women. Desbonnet suggests that she is a rare example of a woman raised in the same conditions as a man. And yet Desbonnet writes that despite lifting more than most men ever could, Athléta has never actually lost her feminine attributes. The image's extensive retouching is what allows Desbonnet to reconcile his celebration of Athléta's excessive strength with his praise of her femininity: overpainting on this image calls our attention to the "feminine qualities" of her body (her narrow waist and alluring countenance), while minimizing brute force or any strain that went into performing this lift.[66] The overpainter has defined each figure's features so crisply that we lose any sense of three-dimensionality, depth, or interaction between the bodies. Seeming utterly unphased by her strength and maintaining her feminine physicality, she appears in photomechanical, retouched form as the ideal female athlete. And against all odds, she is presented as proof that a woman's procreative potential can outlast even the most unusual physical attributes.

Figure 9. "La faiblesse du sexe féminin est une erreur." Photomechanical printed page from *Pour devenir belle… et le rester*.

Desbonnet consistently uses overpainting and other forms of image editing to drive home the idea that the Athléta family's bodies can in fact conform to his prescriptions for women to be soft and feminine, adding features that the subjects may not have actually possessed. In the first issue of *La Culture physique*, photomechanical images of conditioned men and women provide visual proof that the trainer's methods have sculpted bodies beyond what might have been truly possible. In many of the publication's images, visual features play tricks on the viewer, pushing the limits of what training could physically achieve. On one such page, Athléta's seventeen-year-old daughter Brada poses in a studio portrait (see figure 10). She is identified in a caption as an athlete—strong, healthy, and beautiful—and her image accompanies an article about the importance of proper breathing techniques.[67] With her perfectly upright posture and broad chest, Brada embodies respiratory health—an important element in Desbonnet's methodology as well as in Demeny's. She poses with her arms crossed high over her chest, and shading reveals the nuanced musculature in her forearms and biceps. This shading in Brada's neck, chin, and forearms has been very subtly enhanced, as have the outlines separating her smooth thighs and calves from the monochromatic studio backdrop. Brada's body is presented as having been conditioned by exercise, and her posing and subsequent framing make clear that her toned physique is notable and praiseworthy. Yet the extreme narrowness of her waist surpasses what even the most rigorous training regimen could deliver: this is a waist seemingly shaped by a corset.[68] But editing has made it possible for Brada to seem a healthy woman, fertile and desirable, as indicated by her hourglass physique, without the need for the kind of restrictive undergarment that Desbonnet claimed to have deplored.

Desbonnet's publications use other forms of framing to temper his presentation of Athléta's athleticism with examples of her more conventional femininity. In a 1910 issue of *La Culture Physique*, there is a three-page feature on the Athléta family and their home life. The pages combine photomechanical images, printed in poor visibility, with extensive text. The narrative recounts how the matriarch has retired after a successful career, leaving her daughters to continue her strength legacy. The author reminds readers that the three young women regularly perform feats of strength that would be impossible for the majority of men—members of the "stronger" sex. The writer admits that by 1910, more women have begun to follow structured strength programs, yet the Athléta family remain exceptional, and the matriarch is still the first woman to blend physical strength typically seen in men with feminine beauty.[69]

At first glance, the imagery accompanying the article does not correspond to the written narrative. *La Culture Physique*'s use of photomechanical imagery presents a decidedly domestic aspect of the elder athlete's public identity. Where the text praises the women's ability to transcend social beliefs about biological weakness, the images reinforce that the family still maintains traditional gender roles despite their athletic careers. Instead of relying on apparent overpainting, the article's images shift viewers' attention to the home and the way in which the eldest Athléta inhabits her domestic sphere. A photomechanical image of the matriarch at her retirement proper-

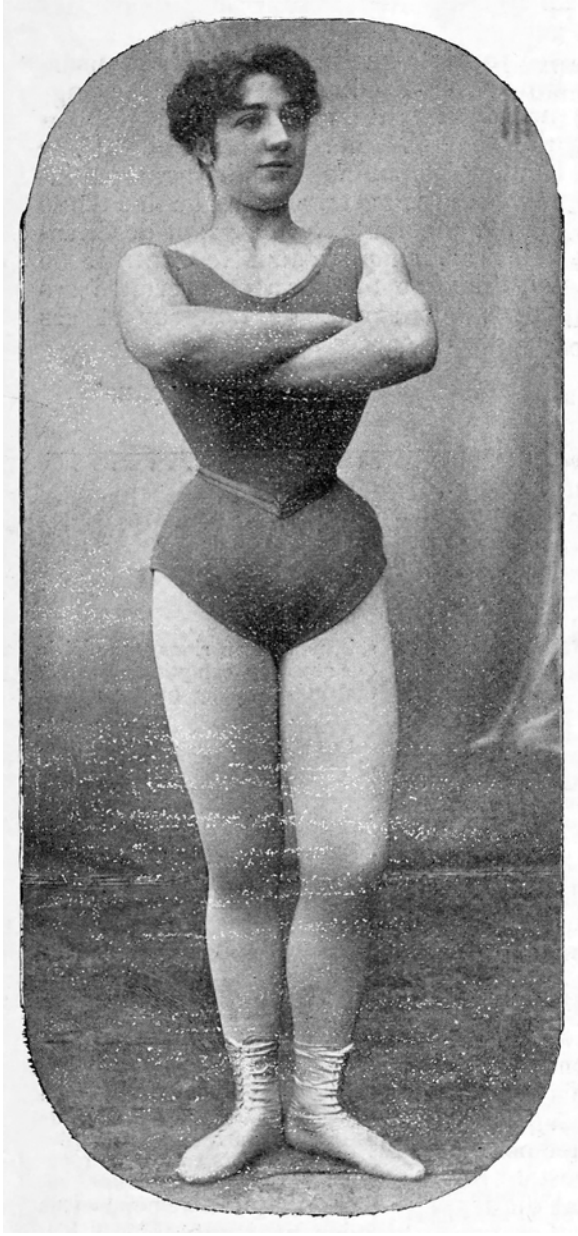


Figure 10. "Un athlète de 17 ans: Brada (la fille d'Athléta)," photomechanical image from *La Culture Physique* (February 1904).

ty in Saint-Nicolas with her husband (see figure 11) portrays the couple in a pleasant domestic setting. Athléta is dressed in a long dress typical of the period, fully covered from ankle to wrist to chin. In the second and third pages of this feature, readers are faced with representations of the culmination of Athléta's professional career: a comfortable abode, ample property, and a return to the kind of comportment and attire befitting a respectable mother and wife.[70] These image contrast starkly with the text surrounding them, which describes individual instances of Athléta's extraordinary performances.[71] Regardless of the narrative presented in the text, images of Athléta's domestic life emphasize a theme that permeates Desbonnet's broader output: that women should prize motherhood above all else. Elsewhere in his publications, Desbonnet used his own wife and daughter to indicate how robust internal health could be reflected on the outside, how youth could be preserved well into adulthood, and how a woman might pass her health onto her female offspring.[72] Yet in this particular feature, Athléta is presented as the ideal woman for having used her training to best fulfill her biological role.

Conclusion

Physical culture for women involved a set of practices, representations, and associated behavior norms than differed significantly than those open to men. Scholars of visual culture have noted that female muscularity—visible, pronounced musculature—was something that many French commentators in the early twentieth century found repulsive and frightening, yet exotic and fascinating.[73] Desbonnet toed the line between the latter and former in part to attract viewers. He relied on the fact that muscularity was not a feature associated with respectable bourgeois womanhood. A woman who exhibited a sculpted physique exhibited signs of difference on her body: she might be a low-class performer, a hard laborer, or physical anomaly.[74] But above all else, a woman with more muscle mass than a typical bourgeois housewife—or at least the ideal *image* of a bourgeois housewife—risked signaling herself as masculine, and therefore a biological failure as a woman. Desbonnet believed that women could lift weights without losing their femininity. But his images are separate entities from live performances and are not true reflections of his models' physiques.[75] His images shape, temper, and soften his subjects.

Desbonnet's photographs can be grouped into two categories: publicity photos meant to attract and encourage clients, and inspirational images of professional athletes.[76] In both cases, images of women's bodies are molded using hand-made marks to surprise and please a viewer interested in physical culture yet conditioned by the period's gender norms. Retouching brings these objects further away from the subjects they are representing. They therefore reveal less about the photographed subject and more about Desbonnet's own values as a trainer attempting to market his schools and products, a pronatalist, a patriotic Frenchman, and an artist. Where a female athlete's body might betray signs of developed musculature at the expense of feminine curvature, an overpainter can readjust the balance between the two poles, creating a harmonious image and body that Desbonnet's potential customers could themselves hope to achieve. Overpainting directs attention away from the transgressive possibilities offered by this muscular female body. Desbonnet's female models demonstrate what it might look like for a muscular woman to participate in Republican French society, using her physical and moral strength to repopulate the nation. While Desbonnet encouraged women to lift weights and to not fear excessive musculature, challenging conventional beliefs that women were inherently weaker than men, he used overpainting to make his models' bodies fall closer in line to conventional feminine standards and champion gender dimorphism.

Figure 11. Photomechanical excerpt from Ozalga, "Une famille de femmes athlètes. Athléta et ses filles," *La Culture Physique* (15 May 1910), 311.

Notes:

1. Philippe Campillo and Alessandro Porrovecchio, "La conception de la beauté corporelle dans La Culture Physique: La recerche de l'idéal antique," *Staps* 119 (2018), 11-25, and *Accord à corps*, ed. Gilbert Andrieu (Paris: Éditions Créphis, 1993).
2. Edmond Desbonnet, *Pour devenir belle…et le rester. Manuel de culture physique pour les femmes* (Paris: Librairie Athlétique, 1911), 1.
3. Desbonnet's *La Culture Physique* was a bi-monthly magazine and ran from 1904 until 1962, with gaps in publication from 1905 to 1906, and again from 1915 to 1925. The magazine absorbed the periodicals *La Beauté par la santé, La Santé par la beauté*, *Santé-beauté,* and *L'Athlète.* In 1963, *La Culture Physique* rebranded as *Santé-beauté et culture physique réunies*, lasting until 1970. In the magazine's first issue, the editors explain their goal: to produce a publication exclusively targeted at *men* who want to achieve physical harmony. Part of this project entailed locating never-before-seen photographs to demonstrate to readers what aspirational bodies can look like, all in the service of helping readers become beautiful and strong. See La Rédaction, "Notre but," *La Culture Physique* 1 (February 1904): 2.
4. Florence Carpentier makes clear the importance of attending to the many iterations of feminisms in the early twentieth century. It is not possible to consider Desbonnet to be fully progressive, or a "femininist," and it is too simplistic to consider him to be entirely socially conservative. Some proponents in this period of more rigorous female physical activity still argued that women should practice sport for reproductive and patriotic ends. See Florence Carpentier, "Alice Milliat et le premier 'sport féminin' dans l'entre-deux-geurres," *20&21. Revue d'histoire* 142, 2 (2019): 93-107.
5. I use Tom Gretton's definition of photomechanical as any printmaking process "in which a photographic image is used to produce a relief, intaglio, or planographic printing surface, in order to make adequate copies of the photographic image of a printing press, rather than by exposing and developing photosensitive paper." See Tom Gretton, "Signs for Labour-Value in Printed Pictures after the Photomechanical Revolution: Mainstream Changes and Extreme Cases around 1900," *Oxford Art Journal* 28, no. 3 (2005): 376.
6. Christine Bard has made clear how crucial clothing and other forms of styling have historically been in revealing markers of gender difference while masking signs of sex. See Christine Bard, *Une histoire politique du pantalon* (Paris: Seuil, 2010).
7. There is a rich body of scholarship on the different schools of French physical culture in the period between 1870 and 1914 and on the period's fascination with relationships between bodily form and function. See, for example, Sylvain Villaret and Jean-Michel Delaplace, "La Méthode naturelle de Georges Hébert ou l'école naturiste en école physique (1900-1939)," *Staps* 63, 1 (2004); Jacques Gleyse, "De l'art de la gymnastique (1569) au culturisme et aux premières competitions organisées (1904). L'émergence du *bodybuilding*?" *Staps* 1, 119 (2018): 27-45; Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello, *Histoire de la virilité*, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 211); Thierry Arnal, "Science et seduction du nouveau corps athlétique: à l'origine du sport en France," *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 56, 1 (2018); Georges L. Mosse, *L'Image de l'homme. L'invention de la virilité moderne* (Paris: Agora Pocket, 1996).
8. Natalia Bazoge, "La gymnastique d'entretien au XXe siècle: d'une valorisation de la masculinité hégémonique à l'expression d'un féminisme en action," *Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 23 (2006): 197-208.
9. Georges Vigarello, Alain Corbin, and Jean-Jacques Courtine, *Histoire du corps* vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 8-9, 332. For a more discussion of Republican gymnastics in this period, see Patrick Clastres, "Gymnastique, sport et nation (1870-1914)," in *Sport, société et culture en France: du XIXe siècle à nos jours*, ed. Paul Dietschy and Patrick Clastres (Paris: Hachette, 2006).
10. See, for example, Mike Huggins and Mike O'Mahony, "Prologue: Extending the Study of the Visual in the History of Sport," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, 8-9 (2011), 1089-1104, and Françoise Bosman, Patrick Clastres, and Paul Dietschy, *Images du sport: de l'archive à l'histoire* (Paris: Nouveau monde, 2010). The latter make clear the importance of situating objects and images with their conditions of production in mind.
11. Mary Lynn Stewart defines physical culture for women in the interwar period as "comprising personal hygiene, deportment, exercise, and beauty regimens" in Mary Lynn Stewart, *For Health and Beauty: Physical Culture for Frenchwomen, 1880s-1930s* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). This definition applies to *both* men and women in the 1870-1914 period. See also Tamar Garb, *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-siècle France* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998); Christopher Forth and Ian Crozier, *Body Parts: Critical Explorations in Corporeality* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005); Joan Tumblety, *Remaking the Male Body: Masculinity and the Uses of Physical Culture in Interwar and Vichy France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
12. See Andrieu, *Accord à corps: Edmond Desbonnet et La Culture Physique;* Bernard Andrieu, *Ma gymnastique des organes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014); and Peta Tait, *Circus Bodies: Cultural Identity in aerial performance* (London: Routledge, 2005).
13. Because Desbonnet's method was inherently commercial, it could not be accessible to everyone. Though his publications extended his ideas beyond the walls of his gyms and personal training, his product was still relegated to middle-class and upper-class patrons. See Bazoge, 197-208.

14. See Gilbert Andrieu, "Le nu au service de la santé", *Tréma*, 8 (1995), 3–14; Campillo and Porrovecchio; Martine Lavaud, "Les Amazones du sport sous la Troisième République," *Muse-Medusa* 7 (2019); Gilbert Andrieu, *L'homme et la force: une histoire de la force à travers des pratiques corporelles commercialisées au XIXe et au XXe siècles* (Paris: Paris 5, 1987); Bernard Andrieu, *Ma gymnastique des organes*; Gilbert Andrieu, *Accord à corps: Edmond Desbonnet et La Culture Physique*; Christopher Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).
15. André Gunthert and Thierry Gervais have demonstrated how prevalent photomechanical retouching in the French illustrated press was from photography's earliest appearances in periodicals. See Thierry Gervais, *L'Illustration photographique. Naissance du spectacle de l'information, 1843-1914* (Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2007) and André Gunthert, "'Sans retouche'. Histoire d'un mythe photographique," *Études photographiques* 22 (2008).
16. Desbonnet, *Pour devenir belle*, 59.
17. Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 16.
18. Lavaud Garb also writes that at the turn of the century, masculine women or feminine men represented unnatural aberrations to the social order, which was based on visible distinctions. See Garb, 11.
19. Other French physical culturists in this period such as Georges Hébert, Dr. Rouhet, and Albert Surier also encouraged women to explore their physical potential. See Vigarello, Corbin, Courtine, *Histoire du corps* vol. 2.
20. Ernest Weber, for example, believed that aesthetics ran counter to health concerns. See Ernest Weber, *Sports Athlétiques* (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1905), 2.
21. Hébert in particular worried at length that excess strength training, and too much focus on specialized training, might make a woman too muscular, and therefore unbalanced. See Georges Hébert, *L'Éducation physique feminine. Muscle et beauté plastique* (Paris: Libraire Vuilbert, 1919), 36.
22. According to Mary Lynn Stewart, this standard endured from the mid-1880s until 1908, when popular French fashion designers began to do away with the corset. While high fashion moved away from the hourglass shape, slimness remained desirable. See Mary Lynn Stewart, "Slimming the Female Body? Re-evaluating Dress, Corsets, and Physical Culture in France, 1890s-1930s," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 5, no. 2 (June 2001): 177.
23. Stewart, *For Health and Beauty,* 18.
24. For an overview of female physical culture and sport ideologies in late nineteenth and early twentieth century France, see Georges Vigarello, *Le Corps redressé. Histoire d'un pouvoir pédagogique* (Paris: Éditions universitaires, 1978); Laurent Guido and Gianni Haver, *La Femme sportive: L'enjeu des images* (Chêne-Bourg: Georg, 2003); Catherine Louveau, "Inégalité sur la ligne de depart: femmes, origines sociales et conquête du sport," *Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 23 (2006); Nancy Théberge, "Sport, caractère physique et différenciation sexuelle," *Sociologie et sociétés* 27, 1 (Spring 1995).
25. Stewart, "Slimming the Female Body," 186.
26. Jennifer Hargreaves, "Introducing Heroines of Sport: Making Sense of Difference and Identity," in *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2. See also Louveau.
27. Jean-Claude Bussard, "Gymnastique scolaire et représentation du corps féminin: les manuels suisses d'éducation physique du XIXe siècle et du début du XXe siècle," in *Images de la femme sportive aux XIXe et XXe siècles*, ed. Laurent Guido and Gianni Haver (Geneva: Georg Editeur, M&H, 2003), 197.
28. Georges Vigarello, *Les metamorphoses du gras. Histoire de l'obésité* (Paris: Seuil, 2010), 145.
29. Hébert's publications, such as *La Méthode Naturelle,* published in 1907, and *Muscle et Beauté*, 1919, championed the idea that women could perform the same physical activities as men. However, his method relied on natural systems of movement performed in nature, such as running, walking, jumping, and climbing. Desbonnet's method involved targeted and personalized weight training in addition to these types of movements. After the First World War, Hébert's female models became more muscular. See Jean-Michel Delaplace, *Georges Hébert: Sculpteur de Corps* (Paris: Vuilbert, 2005), 210-218, 298.
30. Laurent Guido, Gianni Haver, and Rachel Noel, *La Mise-en-scène du corps sportif: de la Belle Époque à l'age des extrèmes* (Lausanne: Musée Olympique, 2002), 32.
31. Desbonnet writes, "ceci tout simplement: c'est que nous autres modernes, nous ne nous faisons nullement le meme idéal de l'athlète que les Grecs," in Edmond Desbonnet, *Comment on devient athlète* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1911)*,* 51. For more on explorations of male virility, physical beauty, and athletes' bodies, see Arnal.
32. Campillo and Porrovecchio, 11-25.
33. Ibid.
34. Gilbert Andrieu, *Force et beauté*, 14. See also Christian Pociello, "Georges Demeny (1850-1917)" in *Le Corps et le mouvement. Précurseurs et pionniers de l'éducation physique* (Toulouse: Éditions privat, 1981).
35. Andrieu, *Force et beauté*, see also Lix Ruxol, *Beauté santé plastique: Hygiène de la femme* (Montluçon: Grande imprimerie du centre, 1913) as an example of a methodology for women that encouraged fragility and delicacy.
36. Vigarello, *Les metamorphoses du gras,* 153.
37. Campillo and Porrovecchio, 11-25.
38. Desbonnet writes, "La beauté éclate aux yeux et les éblouit; elle est la manifestation extérieure de la perfection physique, à laquelle on est enclin d'attribuer tous les dons de l'intelligence et tous les tendres sentiments du coeur," in his *Pour devenir belle*, 3.
39. Desbonnet's were not the only physical culture publications from this period that reflect a palpable panic about the decline of both the average French body and of French social acceptance of what bodies should look like. In Pierre Loti's preface to the 1911 *Comment on devient athlète*, the military officer and writer laments the fact that cultural acceptance of "morbid ugliness" has invaded French society to the point that all levels of visual culture—from illustrated journals to contemporary paintings—reflect deplorably unhealthy human forms. Loti writes that most French bodies look emaciated and deathly, and are far from the ideals established by classical beauty. Loti is frustrated by the fact that most people do not even recognize as monstrous the bodies they encounter most often. He praises Desbonnet for offering respite from this onslaught of ugliness in the form of photographed classical beauty. For Loti, Desbonnet's subjects, clearly visible in photomechanical form, prove that human bodies can be restored to their harmonious, ideal state, and that French society will benefit from the individual's renewal. See Pierre Loti, "Preface," to Edmond Desbonnet, *Comment on devient athlète,* 3rd edition (Paris: Librairie Athlétique, 1911), ix.
40. The leotard was named after French gymnast Jules Léotard (1838-1870).
41. Lyneise Williams makes clear how crucial printing processes are for constructing ideas about subjects' identities and social roles. See Lyneise Williams, *Latin Blackness in Parisian Visual Culture, 1852-1932* (New York: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019). For technical discussions of the halftone process, see Jacob Kainen, "The Development of the Halftone Screen," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1951), 409. See also Anne-Claude Ambroise-Rendu, "Du dessin de presse à la photographie (1878-1914): Histoire d'une mutation technique et culturelle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 39, 1 (Jan-March 1992) and Thierry Gervais' pioneering dissertation, *L'Illustration photographique. Naissance du spectacle d'information (1843-1914)*.
42. Gianni Haver, *La presse illustrée: une histoire romande* (Lausanne: Savoir suisse: Presses polytechniques, 2018), 49.

43. Gilbert Andrieu, "Introduction," *Accord à corps: Edmond Desbonnet et la culture physique,* 7-8.
44. Gunthert, 2.
45. Heinz and Bridget A. Henisch, *The Painted Photograph, 1839-1914: Origins, Techniques, Aspirations* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 13-15.
46. Ibid., 15.
47. Gunthert writes that "good" retouching was synonymous with invisible retouching. A successful overpainter would have been able to mask all evidence of his work. See Gunthert, 3.
48. Catherine Hindson. *Female Performance Practice on the Fin-de-siècle Popular Stage of London and Paris: Experiment and Advertisement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 3.
49. In 1911, Desbonnet proposed a tripartite definition of "athlete" that differs from contemporary understandings of the term. An athlete, the trainer claims, is not a Herculean figure, nor a colossus of epic musculature. An athlete is not simply an individual capable of individual physical feats required for a specific sport. While such people might possess admirable athletic skills, they do not encapsulate athletic perfection. The "athlete" that Desbonnet, his methods, and his peers seek to celebrate and promote, and to impress upon readers is at once strong, beautiful, and healthy. The "strength" requirement demands that individuals develop themselves to their fullest potential. In doing so, the subject will necessarily become visually beautiful, for someone who has taken care to build his physical form properly will "always" appear pleasing to the eye. Finally, Desbonnet stresses the notion that well-rounded muscular strength and its associated visual manifestations (symmetry, upright posture, and healthy complexions, among other attributes) will inevitably lead to good health. These were values that applied to men and women—both should strive for strength, health, and their associated physical manifestations. Yet for women, these attributes had the added bonus of further impacting French national health. See Desbonnet, *Comment on devient athlète,* 31-32.
50. Hindson, 37-38.
51. Anthea Callen, *The Spectacular Body: Science, Method and Meaning in the Work of Degas* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 20-21; 61-62.
52. Lavaud.
53. Desbonnet writes that "Les femmes confondent presque toujours les exercises et les sports athlétiques avec la culture physique, comme elles confondent toujours force et grosseur." *Pour devenir belle*, 60.
54. Ibid., 62.
55. These images are uncredited, yet their diversity of printing quality suggests that they come from Desbonnet's own extensive image collection, rather than having been taken by the author himself.
56. Desbonnet writes "La force, c'est la santé. La santé parfaite est le résultat des bonnes fonctions des organes," *Pour devenir belle*, 60.
57. Gunthert.
58. Betty Lefèvre writes that Desbonnet's images of female models serve to assuage viewers that physical culture has altered nothing about conventional femininity. See Betty Lefèvre, "La modernité de l'héritage d'Edmond Desbonnet," in *Accord à corps: Edmond Desbonnet et la culture physique*, 52.
59. Jacques Defrance, "L'Ambivalence du corps culturiste," in *Accords à corps: Edmond Desbonnet et la culture physique,* 69.
60. Claude Conyers writes that courtesans were featured in Desbonnet's publications, including in *Pour devenir belle,* for possessing desirable physical features. Caroline Otero was one such model-courtesan, who also performed at the Parisian Cirque d'Été, and was praised for her hourglass physique. See Claude Conyers, "Courtesans in Dance History: Les Belles de la Belle Époque," *Dance Chronicle* 26, no. 2 (2003): 220-222. Andrieu, *Force et beauté*, 18-19. Andrieu also writes of how the nude form was used as a pedagogical sign of natural good health in late nineteenth century France. See Gilbert Andrieu, "La nude au service de la santé," 3-14.
61. Richard Holt, "Women, Men and Sport in France, c. 1870-1914: An Introductory Survey," *Journal of Sport History* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 122. Joan Tumblety writes that bourgeois readers of sports and physical culture magazines in this period were encouraged to emulate the bodies of working-class sportsmen, while maintaining a sense of class distinction. See Tumblety, 114.
62. Athléta and other muscular female models are styled and edited in ways that recall idealized Republican gymnasts, with nipped waists, extended busts, and angular shoulders, albeit with more pronounced musculature. See Vigarello, Corbin, and Courtine, *Histoire du corps,* 371.
63. Lavaud. Gilbert Andrieu writes that spectatorship of strength activity was a middle-class activity in the nineteenth century. See Andrieu's *L'homme et la force: une histoire de la force à travers des pratiques corporelles commercialisées au XIXe et au XXe siècles*.
64. Desbonnet's personal correspondence with the Athléta family suggests that they maintained a friendly relationship beginning at least as early as 1897. Letters from the Athléta matriarch and her daughters to Desbonnet indicate that the women promoted Desbonnet's methods and publications while they traveled and performed across France. He seems to have provided promotional support and friendly encouragement to the women. It remains unclear, however, if the Athléta family received financial support from Desbonnet for being featured in his publications.
65. Fae Brauer, *Eroticizing Lamarckian Eugenics: The Body Stripped Bare During French Sexual Renegotiation* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 109.
66. Desbonnet, *Pour devenir belle*, 49-51.
67. A. Jenkins, "L'Art de respire," *La Culture Physique: Revue mensuelle illustrée, étude documentaire du developpement musculaire rationnel par les sports* 1, no. 1 (February 1904): 13.
68. The Athléta women pose without corsets in Desbonnet's publications, reflecting Desbonnet's claims that his methods could help free women from the social constraints of shapewear while preserving their procreative potential. See Brauer, 112.
69. Ozalga, "Une famille de femmes athlètes. Athléta et ses filles," *La Culture Physique* 129 (15 February 1910): 310.
70. Athléta is regularly praised in Desbonnet's publications as being such a strong mother that she transmitted her strength to her daughters at the moment of conception. See Ozalga, 310 and Brauer, 112.
71. Ibid., 311-312.
72. Desbonnet began his daughter Marguerite's training at a very young age. There is an image of her as a five-year-old lifting weights in the September 1904 issue of *La Culture Physique.* As a teenager, his daughter demonstrated how internal health is reflected by outward appearance on page 117 of Desbonnet, *Pour devenir belle*. John C. Grimek wrote of how Madame Desbonnet appeared younger than her 75 years in 1950. See John C. Grimek, "My Visit to Desbonnet," *Strength and Health* (February 1950).
73. James Smalls writes of how muscularity in women was a physical feature that could combine with other markers of difference to provoke repulsion and attraction in circus audiences. See James Smalls, "'Race' as Spectacle in Late-Nineteenth-Century French Art and popular Culture," *French Historical* Studies 26, 3 (Spring 2003), 371.
74. Ibid., 371.
75. Peta Tait makes clear that we cannot conflate performance with photographic accounts. See Tait, 6-7.
76. Gilbert Andrieu, *Force et Beauté* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1992), 16. Jacques Defrance writes that Desbonnet's photography served a technical and pedagogical role, giving practitioners clear criteria for comparison. See Defrance, 61.

出る釘は打たれる:
Tommy Kono's performances of strength and the formation of Asian American subjectivity

by Broderick Chow, Ph.D.
University of London

Since 2017, I have been researching at and with the Stark Center, primarily working on my forthcoming book, *Dynamic Tensions: Performing Fitness, Physical Culture, and Masculinities*. The book argues that the origins of fitness lie in the nineteenth and early twentieth century theater, and therefore, ideas of the theater, anti-theatricality, excess, and ornamentation continue to resonate in physical culture's contemporary manifestations, including or perhaps especially in relation to physical culture's construction of certain forms of ideal masculinity. While working on the book, the Stark Center received the papers of Tommy Kono, donated by his widow, Florence, and collected by Professor John Fair. The boxes' contents were totally unorganized and there were over fifty of them. Having written the majority of the manuscript by then I couldn't deal with opening another set of papers. But on my final few days of my trip to Austin in 2018, I took a peek and was struck by a picture of Kono. For all intents and purposes, here was another weightlifter who "looked like me," at least in that racialized way where a Japanese person can "look like" a Chinese-Filipino person. I kept returning to Austin to look at the Kono papers and as I began sifting it became clear how Kono offers a way to explore sporting performances as what Dorinne Kondo calls "racemaking," which, in a way, also gave me the theoretical tools to understand my own practice in weightlifting and bodybuilding as an Asian Canadian person.[1]

The subject of this article, then, Tamio "Tommy" Kono, is a figure who will already be famous to readers of *Iron Game History.* But he is, I would suggest, almost unknown in theater and performance studies, my "home" discipline. However, I will argue that Kono is important for both physical culture and sport history as well as theater and performance, because it is only with the intervention of the methods of the latter that we can truly understand his impact on the former. In other words, Kono's importance as not only a sportsman, but as a racialized, Asian American person (a term I will later complicate) can be understood by attending to his sports history *as performance*, or, as I will argue, "minoritarian" performance.

Broderick Chow, Ph.D. is Reader in Theatre, Performance and Sport and Deputy Dean of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. His new book *Dynamic Tensions* explores the origins of men's fitness practices in UK/US popular theater. Correspondence to: broderick.chow@cssd.ac.uk

The Nail That Stands Out

In this photo, we see Tamio "Tommy" Kono in 1956 giving a performance at the Waimea High School gym on the island of Kaua'i, Hawai'i. Kono broke two world records that night: he pressed 300 pounds overhead to best his own world record, and also broke his record for total weight lifted across three lifts, the snatch, clean, and press. According to newspaper reports at the time, Kono "completed his exhibition by driving two nails through a one-inch plank with his hands and blowing up a hot water bottle with his mouth until it burst."[2] This is not the only time Kono would perform "nail-driving." In 1960, the *Sacramento Bee* reported on a similar exhibition Kono performed in his hometown, where he finished with the same feat. "Try this sometime," the caption reads.[3]

After setting two world weightlifting records at a meet in Waimea, in 1956, Tommy decided to give the audience something else to add to its memory of that great night and blew up a water bottle until it burst, and then drove a nail through a one-inch board with just his hand.

Strongmen and women since the late Victorian period have performed this feat, which according to circus strongman and physical culture historian Ottley Coulter, is actually quite "easy." The "trick" is that usually the strongman's hands are *not* bare, rather the head of the nail is wrapped in a bit of cotton out of sight of the audience. The strongman learns to drive the nail into the board at a perpendicular angle—any deviation will spoil the stunt. Coulter's advice comes from a book called *Secrets of Strong Man Feats*, but in this case the secret turns out mainly to be technique.[4] Like pressing 300 pounds overhead, the "trick" is mastery of *techne*, or craft.

Performed by Kono, a *nisei* (second-generation) Japanese American, the performance and documentation exist at the intersection of two histories.[5] The first is the history of a performance tradition of physical culture that has had enormous influence on modern culture but has been systematically devalued in theatre historiography. The second is a history of Asian American racialization. In 1942, at the age of twelve, Kono and his older brothers, John, Mike, and Frank, and their *issei* parents, Kanichi and Ichini Kono, were relocated from their home in Sacramento, California to Tule Lake War Relocation Center, one of ten concentration camps established under Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 on 19 February 1942, spuriously to contain the "security risk" posed by Nikkei after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Tule Lake, notoriously, was one of the most brutal of the camps. In 2002, the photographer Emily Hanako Momohara went to Tule Lake and photographed the remains of the demolished barracks. One photo, a plank of wood studded with several rusted nails, recalls Kono's nail-driving feat. Momohara titled the photograph "The Nail That Stands the Tallest, Gets Hit the Hardest." As Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson writes, this contested proverb, "出る釘は打たれる" or *deru kui wa utareru*, is often associated with the camps. Those who "stood out", that is, resisted were "hammered hardest by being transferred to Tule Lake."[6] The proverb is often interpreted, primarily by non-Japanese speakers, as being about cultural homogeneity and assimilation. But Chambers-Letson interprets it as a strategy of survival. He writes: "Some of us do not have the capacity to 'blend in' but armed with the knowledge of the hammer's impending fall, we can at least develop oppositional strategies to dull, escape, or combat the effects of its blunt force."[7]

What are these oppositional strategies for Kono? In this image I see Kono becoming both hammer and nail. There is a refusal of the terms of the "blunt force" of the state's production of racial difference through internment, at the same time as there is an acceptance of the possibility of assimilation. The performance, like performance so often does, complicates narratives and frameworks of power and difference by emphasizing the agency and knowledge of the body performing the action.

Transformation, Incarceration and Racialization

The nail-driving performance, I argue, is an example of the complexity of Tommy Kono as a hero of physical culture and weightlifting in particular; both assimilationist and oppositional, painful and reparative, and a masterful display of technique and craft. As a performance, it begins to intervene in official narratives where sport, nationalism and race intersect. After all, Kono's story has often been used to obscure the racist violence of the camps. According to his official biography for the 1952 Olympic Games, the camps transformed Kono from a skinny, asthmatic, weak child to a strapping specimen of American masculinity.[8] In the desert air of Tule Lake, his asthma was cured. Once so skinny that water would collect in the "hollows by [his] clavicles" while he showered, Kono put on weight.[9] And, the IOC reports, "he found an unexpected form of happiness."[10] Two other internees, Ben Hara and Tod Fujioka, introduced him to bodybuilding, and then the sport of weightlifting. Upon his release, Kono was drafted by the US Army to fight in the Korean War, however, he was prevented from going when the military discovered his weightlifting prowess.[11] Kono went on to become the most celebrated of all American weightlifters, setting records in four weight classes and earning gold at the 1952 and 1956 Summer Olympics, and silver in 1960, as well as winning the World Weightlifting Championships every year from 1953-1959, and the Pan-American Games in 1955, 1959, and 1963. He was also successful in bodybuilding and was named Mr. Universe four times between 1954 and 1961.

The official narrative is a variant of what I have in my research called "The Bodybuilder's Journey," a form of *Bildungsroman* narrative popularized by physical culture media and magazines.[12] The Bodybuilder's Journey tells the story of a young man's transformation through adversity and the discovery of physical culture from a sickly youth into a model of ideal manhood (Charles Atlas's famous comic-book advertisements are one example).[13] In Kono's racialized version of the narrative, the concentration camps are refracted as a site for self-discovery and struggle against adversity, where the individual body becomes an ideal and even exceptional American citizen, paradoxically, via the *suspension* of citizenship and its attendant rights and freedoms. The "meaning of Kono," as it has been deployed through official IOC publications, physical culture/fitness media, and even Kono's own writings, portrays sport and exercise as a practice of survival and overcoming, as well as assimilation and reconciliation.[14] For example, the official USA Weightlifting website's tribute to Kono after his death in 2016, written by his friend Artie Dreschler, suggests that "Tommy began training religiously, with the very tentative hope that lifting weights might make him more 'normal.' Little did he know or dream that his dedication to his newfound sport would lead him to glory on the world's biggest stage."[15] Kono's Bodybuilder's Journey unites "the prison" and "sport" under the Foucaultian lens of disciplinary apparatuses; consonant with work in critical sports studies that makes a similar claim.[16]

It is significant to consider the ideological deployment of Kono's story because it confirms historical research on the true purpose of the camps, and the role of sport therein. Chambers-Letson argues that the camps

deployed "new juridical and social technologies of racialization that sought to produce Japanese American subjects as willing to accept and perform the simultaneity of citizenship and the suspension of its attendant protections."[17] The War Relocation Authority, which was in charge of the camps, openly acknowledged that the camps could be training grounds for assimilation; performances of patriotism and allegiance in the camps were part of this technology of racial statecraft. Sport was part of this disciplinary apparatus. As Michael Mullan shows, baseball and its associated rituals functioned as a way to perform American loyalty. He cites an editorial from a 1944 newspaper printed in the Minidoka internment camp that describes a softball exhibition: "Overheard above the continual cheering and chattering were shouts of 'take out the pitcher,' 'come on team,' 'we want an ump,' etc. Yes, these are traits true in any ball field, whether it be at the Yankee Stadium . . . or any sandlot of any normal town, in the good old U.S.A."[18] The unattributed quotation demonstrates an almost comical overidentification with American-ness ("the good old U.S.A.") that might cynically be read as satire, but its publication in a camp newspaper, which was subject to editorial control by the W.R.A., shows that there were at least audiences for such utterances, and one was the surveillance state.[19] Sport demonstrates the double-edged nature of panoptic power: while those playing baseball may have incurred numerous benefits (community cohesion, physical exercise, decreased anxiety), the physical practice was also a performance of normative subjectivity.

Chambers-Letson's research into the scrapbook of a young internee called Moriyuki Shimada shows how photographs from the camps reveal "performances of self-subjection that were ambivalently executed by the incarcerated Nikkei."[20] For example, one of Shimada's photographs, captioned "L.A. Girls," shows five young women posing in a normatively feminine way, though in the distance a guard tower can be seen. Chambers-Letson writes, "they stage the fact of being 'caught up' in a structure of power that exists independent of them."[21] The carceral apparatus surveilles the girls and compels a "normal," American performance from them, even as they willingly perform for its—and the camera's—gaze.

There is a larger truth to this form of ambivalent normative posing for the white gaze, not only Japanese Americans but East Asians of the diaspora more generally, who find ourselves racialized in terms of our supposed proximity to whiteness (the "model minority") yet simultaneously reminded of our status as what Lee, Wong, and Alvarez call the "perpetual foreigner."[22] It was therefore heart-breaking in my archival work to come across the photos and mementoes from the camps in Kono's papers that he saved from his older brothers, including end of school yearbook signings, cards for school dances, and programs for plays and talent shows. The teenagers of the camp, thrown into a situation beyond their reckoning, performed a kind of tragic "normal."

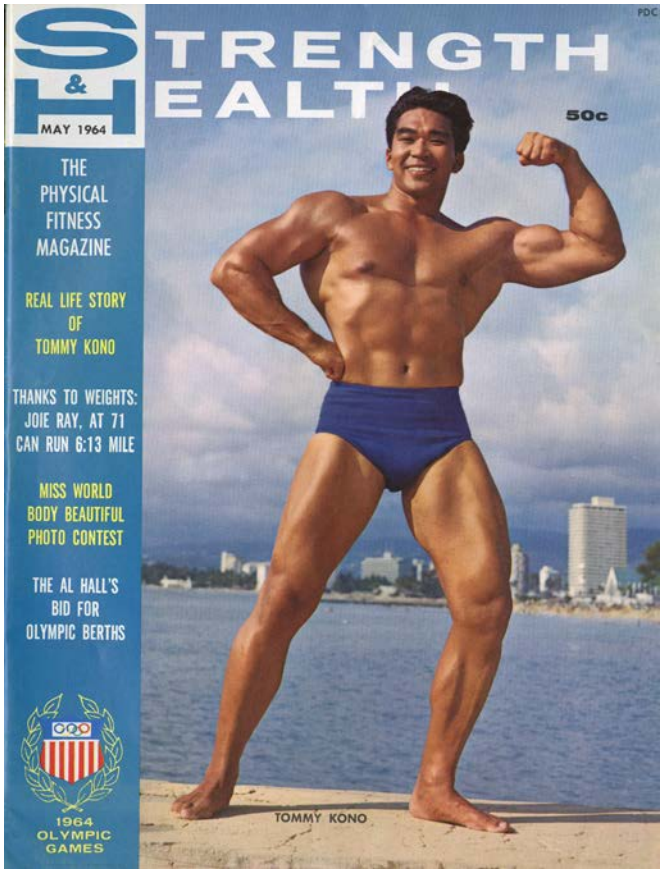
However, by all accounts, Kono's body is rather extraordinary. Therefore, the assimilationist optic performed by the pictures Chambers-Letson writes about is perhaps a bit more complex in his case. Kono's visible difference from whiteness (he is the nail that stands out) means he was able to represent, on the Olympic stage, the triumph of the liberal American "melting pot." Yet the triumphalist narrative always risks being ghosted by what Domenico Losurdo refers to as liberalism's "counter-history," that is, the "exclusion clauses" that are the foundation of its philosophy of freedom (in Losurdo's argument, enslaved people, people of colonial origin, and the working poor).[23] Twentieth-century physical culture media leaned hard on positive transformation through childhood hardship, and Kono was no exception. The racial violence of Tule Lake was presented as necessary and even inevitable to transform him from a sickly, asthmatic child (which conjures ideas of immigrant and Yellow Peril "contagion" as well as a stereotyping of Asian American masculinity as effeminate or infantile) into a muscular national sports hero.

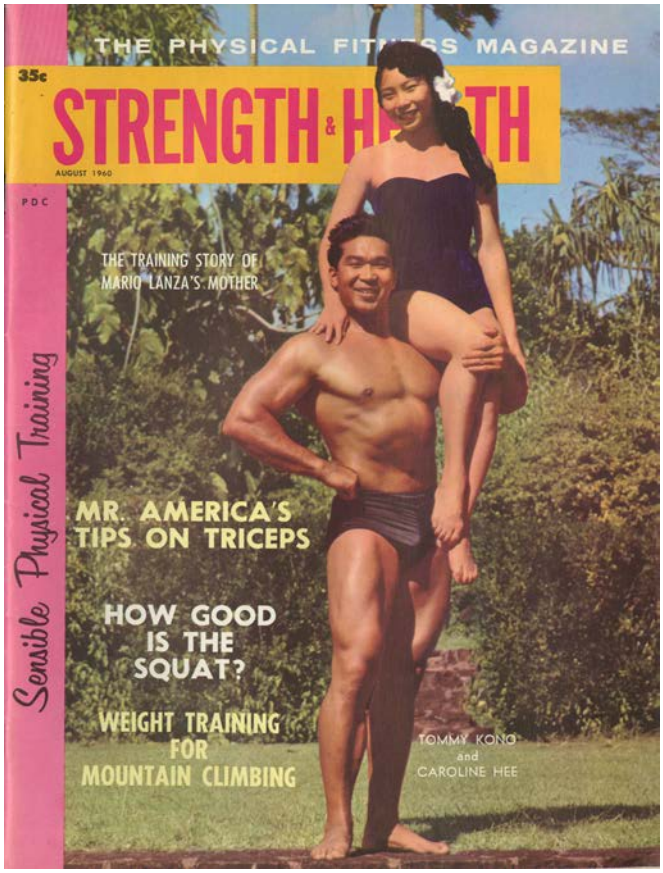
On the cover of the May 1964 issue of *Strength & Health*, Kono poses triumphantly on the beachfront in his adopted home of Honolulu, Hawai'i, flexing his left biceps, a broad smile across his face. In the accompanying article, he is positioned as an all-American hero, his weightlifting success consumed by a Cold War era sports narrative: "To the Russians, Kono is a marked man. Until the Red Samsons can defeat him, the Communist claim that the U.S.S.R. is the world's strongest nation will be open to question."[24] On the cover of the August 1960 issue, he balances an unknown model named Caroline Hee on his shoulder. Hee slants her legs demurely and points her toes, while Kono places his fist on his hip and flares his lats—it is a pose of heteronormative Asian American caricature.

We find other photos and media that perform a similar kind of national recuperative work—signalling that Kono's otherness has been accepted into the white body politic on the basis of his athletic success. In one photo we see Kono holding up two girls in one-piece swimsuits, one in each arm.[25] He smiles broadly at an unseen audience, wearing a white sweatshirt reading "York AC," or York Athletic Club. In other York photos he can be seen among the diverse USA weightlifting team—the sole Asian, but unexceptional among the other lifters, including African Americans, Latinos, and immigrants of all backgrounds. With the lifters clothed in "USA" or York Barbell Club gear, the team photo is a visual enunciation of the discourse of the American "melting pot."[26]

But another photo of Kono, which, judging by his white weightlifting singlet is likely a publicity photo for the Olympic Games, is more complex. Wearing a USA singlet, and standing before a barbell with weight plates clearly bearing the York name, Kono performs a dumbbell snatch with one arm. However, he stands on a patch of dried grass, and in the distance, we can see low hills stretching into the horizon. Only Kono's torso fills the empty grey space of the upper part of the photo. For anyone familiar with Kono's story the setting recalls the parched desert of Tule Lake.[27]

Perhaps weirdest and most representative of the





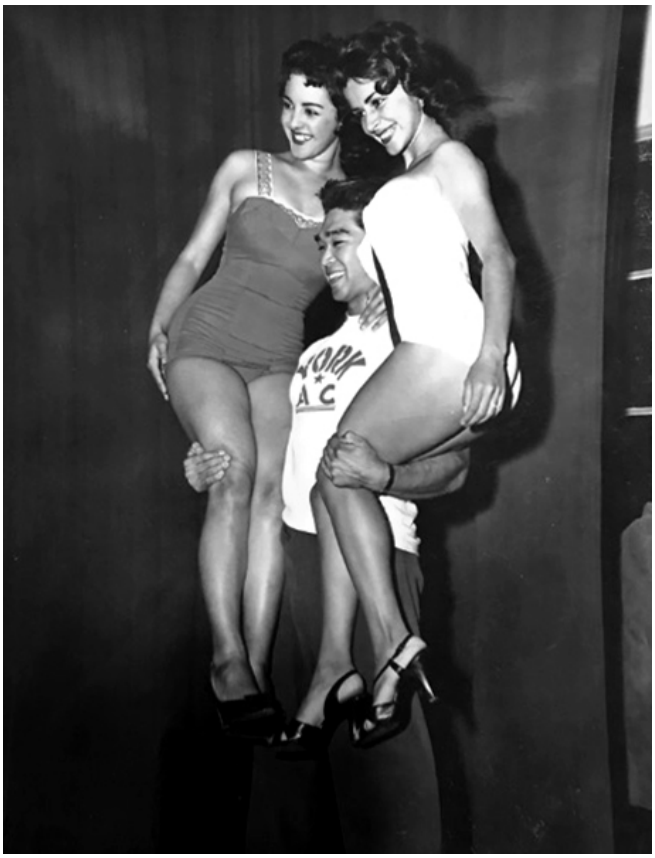
Kono appeared on many magazine covers during his long career. At left, he is pictured in front of the Honolulu skyline in the lead-up to the 1964 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo. At right, Kono is pictured holding a previously unknown model named Caroline Hee on the eve of the 1960 Rome Games. Having earned gold medals in 1952 and 1956, and a silver in 1960, Kono was portrayed as an American ideal; the son of immigrants who, through hard work and determination, became the best in the world.

contested role of internment in Kono's Bodybuilder's Journey is a Mexican comic book published in 1965 to coincide with Kono's appointment as coach of the Mexican team for the 1968 Olympics. It is perhaps the wildest reinvention of Kono's narrative. The internment camp is entirely ignored—or at least rewritten as the choice of the Konos, who move to Tule Lake on the advice of a doctor to seek "*un clima seco, con un aire mas puro.*"[28] In the comics Tule Lake is not an open air prison but a kind of summer camp populated entirely with white people. In one panel, we see a young Kono swimming one day in an outdoor pool, where he is befriended by Richard, a kindly white doctor who teaches him to lift weights. In reality, Richard was a real person, the Korean American Dr Richard You, who was not incarcerated at Tule Lake, but was the physician for the U.S.A. 1956 Olympic Team. Despite "Estrellas del Deporte's" total erasure of internment, the history of the camps haunts the pages, as in the "moving van" that takes away the Kono family's possessions, which looks eerily like a military transport vehicle.

The political stakes of this nationalist erasure and recuperation of internment can be seen in a May 1960 article Kono wrote for *Strength & Health* entitled "Lifting Behind the Bamboo Curtain." It's difficult to know whether the Orientalist aspects of this article are the result of editorial decisions, but as Kono was a prolific writer, it is unlikely this was ghost-written. The piece starts with language about "Red China" that would be unacceptable today: "For years the western world has heard many stories of Oriental men carrying enormous loads on their backs. Chinese coolies weighing a mere hundred pounds have been known to walk for miles and miles with a heavy pack on their shoulders."[29] He goes on to describe himself as one of only two "Americans" ever to "witness the Chinese lifters in action," whom he describes in machinic, dehumanizing terms that remain in circulation around Chinese athletes today. Kono, of course, is Japanese, and there is no reason to imagine that he would identify with the Chinese athletes, other than the fact that, within his own circles, he did, with many of his closest friends and weightlifting colleagues being Chinese American. In order then, to write about weightlifting behind the "bamboo curtain" in this way, Kono was required to identify solely with an "American" identity, transcending or obscuring the structural racism he faced as a *nisei.*

An "Asian-American" Weightlifter?

At this point in my argument, it is necessary to take a brief detour through the formation of "Asian American" as a racialized identity, with a bit of personal history. I do not know if later in his life Kono identified as Asian American. But I do know that in 1960, he almost



Kono's potential "otherness" is smoothed over as he holds up two young women in swimsuits, an embodiment of the heteronormative and transformational narratives described in many physical culture magazines, including *Strength & Health*.

certain would not have, since the term was not in broad circulation until the latter half of the decade, coined by Yuji Ichioka as part of the Asian American movement.

I was born in Vancouver, Canada, and I have mixed Chinese and Filipino ancestry. I have long identified as Asian Canadian, Chinese Canadian, or Filipino Canadian, depending on the circumstances. But when I arrived in the United Kingdom in 2005, I was surprised to discover that I was in fact, not Asian. I was told by white British people that Asian referred to people of South Asian origin, and not "Chinese" people, who were "Oriental." Thankfully, the use of that slur has died out but the racial lacuna remains: "Chinese" remains the only East and Southeast Asian ethnic group that appears on monitoring forms. The only alternative is "Other Asian." It is only in the last few years that the identity ESEA (East and Southeast Asians) or BESEA (British East and Southeast Asians) has gained traction in the UK, largely driven by calls for representation in theatre, film, and television.[30]

Racial categorization like "Asian," therefore, is always historically contingent, since the term itself encompasses a huge array of ethnic, racial, and national identities. In the case of "Asian American," it was borne out of political demands for justice. As Karen L. Ishizuka writes in her memoir of the Asian American movement, Chinese, Japanese and Filipino political groups in the 1960s began organizing around shared experiences of discrimination and structural exclusion from power. If the concentration camps marked the suspension of rights and freedoms from the *nisei*, the Chinese Exclusion Act and Filipino Repatriation Act did the same for Chinese and Filipinos. These legislative acts of racial violence functioned in concert with the widespread stereotyping of Asians as cheap and expendable labour, which made them targets of racist violence by whites. This shared backdrop of discrimination was the grounds for the formation of Asian American as a political identity, which furthermore worked in solidarity with Black, Latinx, and Indigenous movements for civil rights. Together, these movements in the 1960s evoked what W.E.B. DuBois called the "dark proletariat," the "dark and vast sea of human labour in China and India, the South Seas and all Africa; in the West Indies and Central America and in the United States—that great majority of mankind, on whose bent and broken backs rest today the founding stones of modern industry."[31] Chambers-Letson adds that the dark proletariat as community is defined "less at the level of identity than through position: by one's proximity to empire, nation, capital, power, and the entanglement of these systems with white supremacy."[32]

As the *sansei* anthropologist Dorinne Kondo (whose parents were internees) argues, the historiography of Asian America and the Japanese concentration camps in particular is often viewed through the lens of "resistance."[33] With the publication of John Okada's novel *No-No Boy*,

Bob Hoffman (second row, far right) characterized weightlifting as a meritocracy in which all that mattered was the amount of weight a man could put up. This picture of the U.S. Weightlifting team appears to bear that out, as Kono is pictured with African American lifters Jim Bradford and John Davis, as well as lifters from Polish, Italian, and other ethnic backgrounds.

the titular figure became a key discursive trope in how the camps were viewed. A "No-No boy" refers to those who answered "no" to question 27 and 28 of the 1943 test of loyalty for those of draft age in the camps. Question 27 read, "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered?" while question 28 asked, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, to any other foreign government, power or organization?" Those who answered no to both questions were, effectively, "hammered down," and transferred to Tule Lake as troublemakers. With resistance and protest thus celebrated, performances of allegiance or even everyday survival are at risk of being viewed as compliance or submission.[34]

Kono was only thirteen when these tests were being administered, so he could not have had the chance to resist in this way. But I would argue that Kono is not a symbol of Asian American resistance. His career is bound up in the narrative of the American state, in ways that suggest a kind of difficult assimilation. It is therefore painful to see Kono evoke the dehumanising stereotype of "Chinese coolies" in his *Strength & Health* article, just as it is difficult to square his enlisting in the U.S. army with my desire for Kono to be an Asian American role model, a figure of representation for Asian men and Asian weightlifters—like me.

Chambers-Letson writes that "if the dark proletariat has never fully materialized as a politically active force, we still regularly catch a glimpse of it in the realm of the aesthetic, and performance in particular."[35] In the final section of this paper, I want to return to Tommy Kono's performances as a site where a minoritarian formation of Asian American identity can be glimpsed; one that, while falling outside of political frameworks of resistance and demands for justice, opens up what Dorinne Kondo calls "reparative creativity," those acts of artistic production, or worldmaking, that attempt to "work through both the destructiveness of structural violence and our own desires for destructive vengeance."[36]

Archival Hypertrophy and Reparative Creativity

In 1988, Public Law 100-383 apologized for Japanese Internment and offered a cash payment of $20,000 to survivors. Tommy, the last surviving member of his family, gathered the papers together in a box file called "reparation," and made a successful application. Kono's legal demand for reparation prompts, for me, a reparative reading of this archive. In contrast to the broad sweep of his biography and its overlapping historical narrative, how might we see Kono's *everyday* practice and performances as a weightlifter and bodybuilder as minor acts of repair, on an embodied as well as psychic level? Because it is Kono's physical, corpo-real, and fleshly *body*—the body that lifts and flexes, breaks down and recovers—that holds together a political apparatus in which citizenship must be performed in a carceral space of its suspension, the practice of building that body, that is, physical culture, should therefore also be thought of as expansive, elastic or dynamic, rather than simply disciplinary.[37] Focusing on the training, transformation, breaking down, and building up of the body in a carceral space can shift the optic of Kono's story away from one of assimilation to a more complex space of tension and negotiation of national ideologies and state-imposed violence. In other words, the gestures and movements of weightlifting and bodybuilding in the context of the camps might be reframed as a kind of minoritarian performance.

In his team U.S.A singlet, lifting with a barren, parched land in the background, Kono could be interpreted to have overcome his internment in the desert of northern California through weightlifting, and to have remade himself as an American.

Minoritarian performance is largely associated with the work of the late performance studies scholar José Esteban Muñoz, who, in his book *Disidentifications*, focuses on artists and performers in the margins, who nevertheless negotiate their relation to a dominant culture that has excluded them.[38] Muñoz's thinking developed in train with the work of his mentor Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who built on the psychoanalytic concept of reparation to explore "the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture—even of a culture whose avowed desire has not been to sustain them."[39] Japanese American anthropologist and theater maker Dorinne Kondo (whose parents were themselves internees), goes further to define performance by marginalized artists as "reparative creativity," processes making, unmaking, and remaking race in relation to historical wounds that prompt both destructive retaliation and the desire for healing.[40] The "reparative" tendency, in

performance studies, then, seeks to move past tropes of resistance to focus on how marginalized (minoritarian) people and communities sustain themselves and survive.

Adopting a phrase from Nina Simone, Chambers-Letson describes minoritarian performance as "the art of 'improvisation within a fixed framework,' working within limited coordinates to make the impossible possible."[41] In the context of the racial capitalism's "unjust distribution of death toward, and exploitation of, black and brown life and queer and trans bodies," performance, he argues, is a "vital means through which the minoritatian subject demands and produces freedom and More Life at the point of the body."[42] Kono's minoritarian performance, then, at the very level of muscle growth, might be seen as a small, sometimes imperceptible movement of freedom within the restrictions of carcerality.

In Kono's archive, for the most part there is no organization at all. Kono's reparation documents are filed beside stacks of unopened bank statements. Newspaper clippings (non-chronological, of course) appear alongside a videotape of *Only the Brave* (a film about the 100th/442nd corps of Japanese American soldiers proving their loyalty in WWII), alongside a programme for a celebratory sports banquet in Honolulu. The impression is of both meaninglessness and a surfeit of meaning—the overflow of banality makes everything significant. My relationship with the Stark Center meant I was allowed access to his unprocessed papers during my visits to Austin, which translated to work—sorting family photos from takeout food menus—usually left to family members. I begin to sense the inability of archival practice to contain the expansion of Kono's life.

Buried among the overflow, is evidence of Kono's internment, the four years of his young life for which I was searching. The main source is a battered box file marked "Tule Lake," which contains facsimiles of his family's registration documents, a Ziploc bag of school albums and mementos belonging to his brother Mike, and some correspondence from fellow survivors. Unlike the rest of Kono's papers, Tule Lake is confined to its restricted space and time. With internment seemingly "filed away," I was not expecting the most personal of Kono's Tule Lake documents to appear among the random flow of documents and photos relating to training and weightlifting. Mixed in among clippings from *Strength & Health* and *Muscle & Fitness*, with no indication of its potential significance, I found a small, letter-sized envelope. The envelope contains a mimeographed newspaper clipping and two yellowing sheets of composition paper. The clipping documents a competition between different weightlifting clubs at Tule Lake, though Kono, apparently did not compete. This is actually not surprising. The names in this document are the people who Kono was learning to lift from at the time, a process that the two sheets of rough composition paper documents.

On these documents, it appears that Kono has drawn an outline of a body (his body?) posed in contrapasso with the left arm flexing its biceps—a pose drawn from bodybuilding pioneer Eugen Sandow's repertoire that would be familiar to any reader of physical culture. Diagrammatic boxes and lines point to each body part, with a measurement. It is possible that one of Kono's training mentors drew up this chart, but it is more likely that Kono created this "worksheet" himself, judging from childish marking on the third sheet, which reads, "Copy Right [*sic*] 1944 by Tommy Kono & Co."[43] Over a period of sixteen months, the charts detail the expansion of Kono's body. Chest, expanded, from 32 inches to 37.5 inches. Arm flexed, from 10 inches to 11 inches. Thigh, from 19 inches to 19.5.

The measurement documents, on the one hand, are evidence of Kono's transformation in the camp, in-line with the official narrative. On the other hand, the probable self-authorship suggests a self-reflective practice that Kono kept up throughout his life, as demonstrated by his training notebooks, distinctive, wire-bound notebooks that document both exercises as well as mental and bodily states when training.

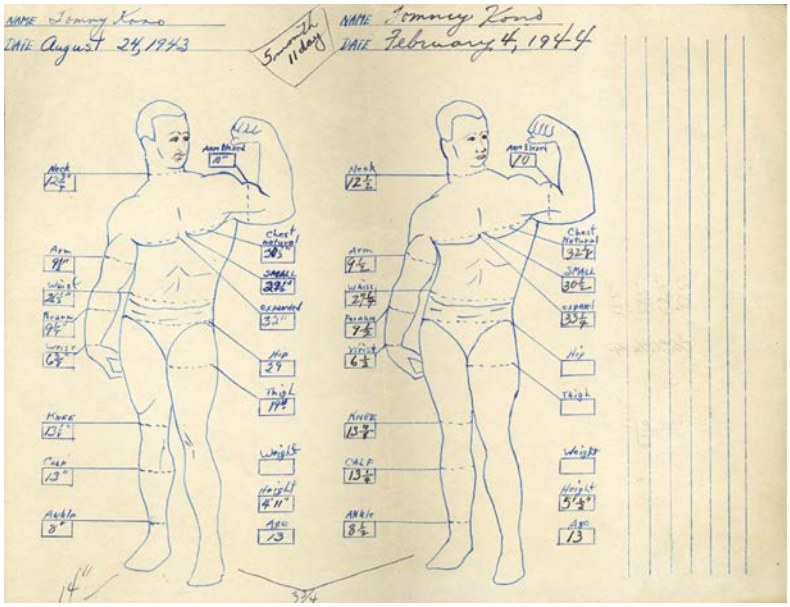
Kono's writings on physical culture, published much later in 2001, are also uniquely self-reflective. In contrast to other weightlifting or bodybuilding training books, that typically give technical cues and programmes of exercises, Kono's writing focuses on the connection between mind and muscle—a fundamental principle of both the sport of weightlifting and the aesthetic practice of bodybuilding, but one developed primarily as embodied knowledge. The measurement documents made in 1943-44, then, are the seeds of a process of self-knowing that underpinned Kono's later career. They mark a minoritarian performance of hypertrophic expansion against the restriction of carcerality as well as the bounded self. Hypertrophy is a medical term that refers to the enlargement of an organ or tissue resulting from an increase in cell size. In bodybuilding, it denotes muscle growth encouraged by purposive strength training and progressive overload. But hypertrophy is always expansion within restriction: the expansion of the muscle is restricted by the fascia or bone structure; the expansion of the body as a whole is restricted by the externality of the organism as an individual in the world. In relation to the history of Japanese internment, then, it is possible to read hypertrophy as an embodied expansion against the normative racial subjectivity that the carceral state compelled *Nikkei* to perform.

To go a bit further, we might say that physical culture, for a racialized person like Kono, was a way of seeing oneself in a dialectic with the stereotype imposed by the dominant culture. Frantz Fanon calls this the distinction between one's corporeal schema and the "racial epidermal schema."[44] Fanon describes an encounter where a child shouts a racial slur at him on the street – in this moment, he says, the corporeal schema, his body-knowledge, is shattered, and replaced by the fixed, racist image.[45] At the age of 74, Kono gave an interview with Pennsylvania's *York Daily Record* that seemed to confirm this reading. In it, he describes to the sportswriter Jim Seip his first trip to York to train with Bob Hoffman and the York Barbell Club. "As I walked down the street," he says, "kids were playing in an open lot and they stopped everything they were doing

to look at me […] I felt so ill at ease, and these are only young kids. It disturbed the heck out of me. I swore that I would never come back here again."[46] But in the gym, Kono found none of stares he did on the streets. While Jim Seip, the journalist interviewing Kono, reports that Kono's lifting ability enabled him to be seen "only as an American," I suggest that lifting might also be a way of resisting the white gaze via a practice that enabled the re-integration of his corporeal schema.[47]

For those of us who lift, we know that to master the snatch and clean and jerk is a long, complex process that requires the lifter to know their body, not in an unconscious way, but in a dialectic between the body and the material world: this bar, this platform, these plates, today. More importantly, it requires the lifter to see himself. To complete a lift successfully, the lifter must visualize himself performing the lift, while simultaneously feeling the internal workings of the body's muscles, joints, and tendons. This dialectic between externalization and internalization—that is, between the body's expansion and the limitations that contain it—is a minoritarian performance of resistance that challenges the drive to assimilate at the same time as it might seem to surrender to it.

Therefore, what I see in the drawings Kono made in the camp is an attempt, through the practice of physical culture, at what Kondo calls "reparative creativity." Central to Kondo's concept is the idea of reparative "mirroring," the making of racial, gendered, classed images of the selves on stage that have the power to "confer existence in the public sphere."[48] We can see this kind of mirroring in Kono's constant physical self-reinvention across both weightlifting and bodybuilding. It is a practice of body knowledge that challenges the "racial-epidermal schema" imposed upon him by the white gaze, which threatens to arrest the Asian body in a normative, racialized image. So, while Kono was no Asian American activist, in performance, drawing, and practice, he was making it possible for us to *see ourselves*, in concert with a burgeoning identitarian movement that was beginning to speak together as *we*.



Among the items in a box in the Kono collection marked "Tule Lake," are two sheets of composition paper on which Kono hand-drew figures to record his measurements. Over the period from August 1943 to December 1944, Kono tracked the circumference of his chest, upper arm, waist, thigh, and more, showing tremendous progress and his keen sense of attention to detail in his training.

Coda

As I close this article, I want to think about the stakes of this kind of embodied, reflective, and ultimately somewhat speculative historiography. To be blunt, I am drawn to exploring Kono's life and practice as reparative creativity because of *my* embodied positionality in the world, as a minoritized, Asian Canadian person, and a weightlifter, too. But in doing so I am already making racialized assumptions about a shared Asian experience that I have already attempted to complicate throughout. I am left to wonder whether this article is my *own* reparative reading of Kono's archive. I think about how Kono was sustained by a practice he found in the most carceral and life-depriving of circumstances. I am reminded of how for so many racialized, melanated, queer, and otherwise marginalized peoples, practices like weightlifting and bodybuilding, so often marked as straight, white, and toxically masculine, are profound forms of self-knowledge and agency. Yet, I cannot also help being concerned that perhaps, I am speaking *for* Kono, who passed away in 2016. The reparative tendency in the humanities, argues Carolyn Laubender, can tread dangerously close to making the subject of one's research ventriloquise one's own desires. She writes: "How indeed can we—critically, clinically—disentangle the desire to act on the object's behalf from our

own ideological investment in what its behalf is or ought to be (as though the descriptive and the prescriptive were ever separable to begin with)?"[49] How can I separate my desire to speak with Kono from my desire to speak for him?

On my last visit to Austin, I made it a point to attempt to integrate his writings and guidance into my training. While I could never lift on the level of Kono, I could emulate his training and learn from the knowledge he set down in his two published books. I could try to look like Kono, incorporating bodybuilding into my strength programmes. And yet, in seeking identification *with* Kono in this way, I was affirming the homogenization of the racializing category of "Asian" as well as the way sport seems to reify minor physiological variation into racial difference. I, a five -foot, ten-inch tall, 190-pound Chinese-Filipino could squat like a five-foot, five-inch 149-pound Japanese because of our "Asian hip mobility." But the broken nature of a racist society that produces our shared racialization simultaneously produces the grounds for a small act of repair. Under a white gaze that would see me, and Tommy, and say we all look the same, I started to think through the relationship of an embodied process of self-making to the arresting gaze of the other. Thus, after the archive closed each evening, I would ride my bike to the Hyde Park Gym on Guadalupe Street and lift weights. I wouldn't copy Kono's programme, but I would try to incorporate his cues and advice into my lifting. And after I showered and ate dinner, like Kono, I would write. What I'd like to offer, finally, then is that my speculative historiography might be seen as a way of speaking *with* Tommy, alongside him, of amplifying and celebrating those little scraps of shared experience that make up identity, even despite the greatest chasms of difference.

Notes:

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3. *Sacramento Bee*, 22 May 1960, D6. Clipping in Tommy Kono Papers, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports, University of Texas at Austin. Future references abbreviated to "Tommy Kono Collection."
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6. Joshua Chambers-Letson, *A Race So Different: Performance and Law in Asian America* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 133.
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26. Photographs, Tommy Kono Collection.
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Champion, Columnist, and Physical Culturist:
Arthur F. Gay and the Making of Rochester's Health and Strength Community

by Alec S. Hurley
The University of Texas at Austin

The interwar period was a boon for strength writers. Bernarr Macfadden's *Physical Culture*, Bob Hoffman's *Strength & Health*, and George Jowett's *The Body Builder* all published articles on strength, wellness, and occasional dietary advice to readers across the United States. The publications fought not only for supremacy of market share, but also for writers to fill their pages. Legendary strength figures such as Ottley Coulter and Earle Liederman routinely found a home in these magazines for their sage advice, knowledge of the strength community's history, and a bit of self-promotion. Because of their writings, several of these writer/strength athletes are widely known today courtesy of historical studies by Jan Todd, John Fair and other scholars.[1] However, one man—and his equally impressive and gifted wife—has yet to receive scholarly attention. This paper aims to add Arthur F. Gay and his wife, Emily, to the prominent list of interwar strength writers. In doing so I also examine how their writings influenced the health and strength community of their hometown Rochester, New York.

Originally sent to George Jowett, Arthur Gay notes on the back of this portrait that it won first prize in the Physical Culture Posing Contest of 1917.

Background

Arthur Gay was born a native son of Rochester on 2 April 1895. As a teenager he attended East High School, less than two miles from where his long-standing physical culture center would emerge several years after graduation. In his final year in high school, he was a member of the 1912 track team and garnered local recognition as the county champion in the quarter mile.[2] Like other strongmen of the day, Arthur boasted that physical culture had turned him from a weakling child to an imposing figure as a young adult. His growth was more tangibly connected to the local YMCA, and its director, Herman J. Norton.[3] At just twenty-one years old, Gay opened his own physical culture school. First accepting clients in September 1916, the school received steady press coverage by the local newspapers just a year and a half into its run as its owner departed for the war effort.[4] The school closed its doors in his absence, only to reopen in 1921 at 252 East Avenue, where the facility remained through the entirety of Gay's professional career as an instructor. East Avenue at the time was the closest Rochester had to a main boulevard. Elegant mansions belonging to Rochester's most powerful families lined the street and living or working on the maple-shaded avenue was an undeniable marker of status.[5] Gay, and his family, lived roughly three miles from his eponymous school and its well-to-do neighbors in a closely nestled suburban tract in the northeastern corner of downtown.[6]

Before reopening his gym, Arthur Gay married Emily G. Lewis in 1918. Both Rochester natives, the pair had two children together, a daughter and a son, Gertrude and Jackie.[7] As the clan grew, the entire family embraced the physical culture lifestyle. His wife was a dedicated partner and trainer at his long-running gym downtown as well as a prolific columnist in the very same publications in which Arthur appeared. The eldest child, Gertrude, was an award-winning participant in regional and national beauty and fitness contests. At fourteen she won first prize at the 1933 National Physical Culture Convention for possessing a perfect figure. She followed that up with another win the following year in the category for "national bathing and beauty perfect form contest." The latter win was par-

Alec S. Hurley is a doctoral candidate in the Physical Culture and Sport Studies Program at the University of Texas at Austin. His research looks at the intersection of sport clubs, urban landscapes, and civic identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Correspondence to: alec.hurley@utexas.edu

ticularly noteworthy as the Gay's teenage daughter bested a couple of Hollywood starlets.[8] She first appeared in her mother's weekly column as an example of the type of youthful feminine beauty that middle-aged women desired and pursued. Emily also used her daughter as an example that fitness and form could be trained rather than inherited. Emily argued that through her and Arthur's encouragement of proper exercise and diet, Gertrude blossomed by her teenage years overcoming her sickly childhood.[9] Gertrude later parlayed her well-trained beauty into a national modeling career, under the name "Lucky Saunders."[10] Jackie, followed his older sister's footsteps when he graced the first page of his father's column in *The Bodybuilder* as an example of an individual reared under the scientific and practical application of physical culture knowledge.[11]

During the Great War, albeit before United States involvement, Gay reached the pinnacle of his professional performing career. In 1917, he recorded a stage performance where he lifted a 140-pound boy overhead 30 times and then ten more times with just one hand.[12] By 1918, he claimed to have lifted 300 pounds with one finger and with one arm, performed 16 overhead repetitions with a 100-pound dumbbell. His greatest lift, he reported, as a 2,250-pound backlift. The latter two lifts would rise to 408-pounds and 3,386-pounds respectively by the end of the decade, with the backlift performed by carrying the weight of fifteen men.[13]

But war came, and Gay responded. However, before shipping out for a naval hospital in Newport, Rhode Island, he made time to enter and take second place at a strong man contest in Brooklyn.[14] In the Navy his first appointment was as a boatswain first-class aboard the USS Constellation. Before departure, he was awarded a medal declaring him the champion weight-lifter of the Navy. He earned this distinction by lifting one-to-two-pound weights 207 times. The lift was most likely performed as an overhead movement, but those details remain unearthed.[15]

After the War, Arthur Gay continued working as a strongman performer back in Rochester. In a change from dominating the stage in the biggest cities, his acts in the 1920s were truncated to various "stunts" for local charity and entertainment events.[16] While far from his title as the champion weight-lifter of the navy, he received nearly equal press coverage from the largest paper of his hometown for his feats of athleticism, once earning him the crown of "the best rope jumper in the city."[17]

Through his gym and community performances, Gay built the foundation of a resolute physical culture environment.[18] In addition to his expertise in physical culture put on display during roles as a judge and referee for formal events such as sanctioned AAU competitions to local beauty contests, Gay embraced contemporary media to reinforce his message.[19] Beyond his monthly column in Jowett's magazine, *The Bodybuilder*, and his live demonstrations and instructions, the radio offered Gay another medium through which to expand his message of measured physical culture and bodily improvement. Granted occasional five- and ten-minute slots throughout the 1930s, he took to the air from the early morning to the prime-time evening slot to speak to the local community about the importance of health.[20] Community events and messaging were important to Gay as they reinforced his appeal and credibility in the world of local fitness.[21] His success as a young man helped him find prominence as a national expert, instructor, and writer. Credibility being crucial to the maintenance of such a career, Gay was bestowed a certain amount of good fortune to accompany his hard work. Throughout his youth he was praised for his "ideal proportions." *Strength* magazine recalled in 1927, Gay's nearly perfect measurements as he had a sixteen-inch neck, biceps, and calf then considered the highest physical ideal by art critics and strength authorities alike.[22]

Bernarr Macfadden's Influence

The earliest influence on Gay's understanding of physical culture came from Bernarr Macfadden's magazines. By his late teens he had become an enthusiastic follower of Macfadden's training methods. What elevated Arthur from casual trainer to prominent physical culturist was his ability to develop his own system of progressive weightlifting and physical culture. A short six months after he began to first follow the methods prescribed in Macfadden's magazine in 1914, he devised his own system of progressive weigh training. The influence of the legendary strength and health advocate combined with his own ingenuity earned him a gold medal as the most perfectly developed man in America in 1915 according to the physical culture societies.[23] On 1 May 1917 he was awarded first prize in the "International Physical Culture Competition" held at the Madison Square Garden in New York City. In this contest he reportedly bested over one-thousand other entrants. His victorious pose was then displayed in the June issue of Macfadden's *Physical Culture* magazine.[24]

Proximity played a factor in developing their relationship further than merely author and reader. Gay's early posing victories in New York City were sponsored by Macfadden's magazine, which led to sporadic, yet cordial interactions throughout their professional lives, though possibly stopping short of a fully-blossomed friendship. When Macfadden's Physical Culture Hotel opened in Dansville, NY—forty miles south of Rochester—in 1930, Arthur and his family were among the first to visit. The following year Macfadden hosted Arthur and Emily as his personal guests of the hotel during the Christmas holiday.[25] Reflecting on his numerous visits in a letter to Macfadden circa 1938, Gay raved about the quality of the food—remarkable for a man for whom diet, and the abdominals comprised most of his written focus. In the same letter he wrote that the reason he and his whole family returned so frequently—everything from day trips to weeklong stays—was that no place was better suited for the benefit of one's mental and physical health.[26] Finally, the most compelling piece of evidence that the two maintained at least a passing friendship was Arthur's revelation that Macfadden had taken him for joyrides in his plane. In closing his 1938 letter, Gay wrote, "I wish to thank you publicly for many pleasant and enjoyable hours spent at the Physical Culture Hotel *and also for several thrilling trips with you in your Stinson plane*."[27]

Despite their professional—and personal—connections, the two men possessed vast differences in their approach to physical culture, particularly dietary regulations. Arthur withdrew from Macfadden's evangelized understanding of diet early in his career. Whereas Macfadden zealously latched onto fad diets—especially iterations of vegetarianism—Gay remained adamant that a complementary and filling diet from across the food spectrum was ideal.[28] Even where some overlap existed between the two men, Gay rarely ventured into the extreme claims favored by his mentor. Where Macfadden embraced diet as an all-encompassing facet of life, once even going as far as to create a religion based on a synthesis of Christian doctrine and diet fads, his pupil understood it merely as one part of the means to a fulfilling and moderate life.[29] The schism expanded to the written works of both men as Gay emphasized balance and moderation in his articles on abdominal strength, including those published in Macfadden's outlets.[30] Macfadden wrote extensively about "super foods" ranging from vegetarian meals to the scientific application and "miracle" qualities of milk.[31] Not all of their opinions caused such a divisive break between the two. On the use of pharmaceutical aids to cure illness, both Macfadden and Gay believed, preached, and wrote in fervent opposition.[32] Their friendship and lengthy professional relationship lent an aura of respectability to their debates. That closeness and respect resulted in at least one appearance on a local talk radio shows in the early 1930s.[33] Their joint session resulted in Gay being interviewed by his mentor on the benefits of his training system.

Ideals

As early as 1919 Gay was in consistent communication with George Jowett, one of the leading physical culturists and magazine editors. In one letter Gay wrote with a hopeful eye towards an increase of competitions in the Rochester area. He wrote not only as a competitor, but as a teacher of several pupils whom he claimed could "make a good showing."[34] His first national accomplishment as an instructor was when his eighteen-year-old star pupil, George Weber set the junior world record for most consecutive sit-ups with 1,700.[35] Another of his pupils, the well-regarded weightlifter Vic Tanny performed very well at local AAU competitions across the rust belt.[36]

Gay's vision for what accounted as proper strength and health was built on the foundation he had experienced during his own training. More importantly, he understood that his own success—itself the result of an individually tailored form of Bernarr Macfadden's plan—was not universal. The allure of his successful strongman career drew the first and most ambitious strength performers to his revitalized Rochester studio, but it was his lived virtues of patience, personal accountability, and a fine sense of humor that sustained his operation. A profile of Gay's physical culture school in 1934 spoke to its cutting-edge resources saying, the "studio is fully equipped with bicycles and walking machines, sun treatments with sun lamps during the cool months and on the roof during the summer months. Individual dressing rooms and shower baths included. …Gay has the largest weight assortment of any institution in this section of the country."[37] Upon his return from the war, he and Emily transformed the Rochester physical training scene. A far cry from the bare-bones dens of their local predecessors, the Gay's center for physical culture was more akin to Sig Klein's elegant facility in Manhattan.[38]

When not in use for his own training sessions, Gay used his gym to host displays of strength and weightlifting competitions. The competitions included athletes from within Rochester and the broader rust belt region, including Ontario, Canada. In two shows in the winter of 1929-30, multiple American lifting records were broken.[39] The record-setting trend continued into the 1930s, where yet another contest was conducted in April of that year at his physical culture school.[40] New amateur records were also set at a competition hosted by Gay's gym in early 1932.[41]

In recognition of years of dedicated service in the name of physical culture to his city and the region, Arthur Gay was named the chairman of the Niagara AAU district for weight-lifting. That honor capped a seven-year tenure in which he had been an active member since 1930. Simultaneously, he was granted a national appointment as one of the leaders of the 1936 Olympic Weightlifting team to represent the United States at the Berlin Olympics.[42] His promotion was granted in part because he promoted intercity matches and a Rochester weightlifting championship every year since the start of the decade. His goal moving forward was to establish a broader regional or district annual championship.[43]

Gay's devotion to his hometown was made richer in the blending of values. Rochester prided itself on the virtues of patience and personal accountability.[44] His school of physical culture embraced those ideals. In a profile of Gay's gymnasium on East Avenue, the local Rochester paper exclaimed, "an outstanding feature of Gay's physical culture methods is the individual training accorded to each pupil under the personal supervision of Mr. and Mrs. Gay."[45] Individually tailored one-on-one development, with no group classes, formed the crux of his teachings. Development of physical fitness meant more than mere musculature increases for Arthur. His center for physical culture endured because of his unwavering assessment that "no two people possess the same amount of strength or endurance."[46] His firm beliefs permeated his ruminations on physical culture when he turned to writing. Through his column a third aspect emerged to complete his views on the training of the average man's body. Pleasure was just as important to the crafting of the body as strength and diet.

Patience

Among Gay's list of mantras and beliefs, his most impassioned was the benefit of exercise on the general health of bodily processes. Rather than developing strength for the sake of strength, his writings reflected his understanding that "exercise . . . increases the powers of digestion by giving muscular attention to the stomach and intestines."[47] Inner strength presupposed outer strength.

Vital power, as he termed it, could only be strengthened through the abdominal muscles. Inner strength, vital power, or whatever name it should fall under was a central theme in Gay's writing.[48] In his articles, he acknowledged that the average man seeking to increase his fitness, focused on bulging biceps, a big chest, and massive legs. To counter that perception, he argued that those external physical ambitions were useless unless they were accompanied by a sound pair of lungs and a strong digestive system.

Longevity of health was the motivating factor behind Gay's reasoning. A strong and symmetrical body at the expense of one's vital organs was passionately advised against because they were "much more essential to the body than either big legs or arms."[49] His calls for a patient approach to strength and health often reinforced the idea of adequate goal-setting. To that effect, he once wrote, "don't try to accomplish in one month what should really take you three to six. Be patient, go slowly but surely toward your goal. Be sensible about eating, sleeping, exercising and really *live*."[50] He wrote plainly, but wisely that a rushed job will never produce results. When pressed, he offered a practical bit of counsel to his readers on their first year of training, writing "practice breathing and don't exercise too much."[51] Proper technique was essential. He believed this was especially important for thin men, who he claimed were always in a hurry. To this end he believed that they should take advice from larger men who could show them a proper style of patience and a hearty appetite.[52]

Patience was equated with moderation in Arthur's writings and teachings. That virtue was routinely embraced by Arthur and expressed zealously by Emily. Moderation, as a value, received prominent coverage by the Gays in columns on both diet and in training. In an article of the science of bodybuilding, Arthur acknowledged that hard drink should be cut from one's diet but made an exception for an occasional ale. Perhaps most surprising about his focus on moderation was his allowance for smoking. In that same article he claimed that he was "not opposed to moderate smoking [as it] is normal and healthy."[53] He acknowledged that it might cause some harm—as most things done beyond moderation often do—but concluded that such potential harm was negligible if partaken moderately. The imminent practicality of their teachings and writings—although perhaps frowned upon today—spawned an enviable universality.

Diet for Gay was the most important prerequisite for a successful bodybuilding regimen. Despite its pride of place within his program, Gay avoided specifications, providing only recommendations. Sufficient calories, as many as four thousand for the thin man looking to bulk, were adequate so long as they consisted of good, sustaining foods.[54] Beyond that, he wrote in scathing tone against the "mechanization" of eating where appetite had become what he called a "food habit, which recurred according to the clock and not the needs of the body." His outspoken and unrestrained criticism of dietary fads such as the "eighteen-day diet" put him at odds with his mentor. He was also greatly concerned with the deleterious effects of "fad dieting" and went on record stating that "it is never safe to reduce more than one to two pounds a week."[55] It was one of many of Gay's principles that continues to be backed by modern research.[56]

His wife, Emily, supported his claims in uncompromising terms. Railing against what she termed "tricks, bluffs, and schemes" she claimed that all were futile. Such "freak diets" she wrote, were only harmful in the long run.[57] Only through sensible dieting would one be able to reduce properly and thus regain the youthful look so many of his readers and clients desired. The fad to achieve a slender body, especially for women, brought hundreds of tablets into local drugstores; she condemned them all.

Her work was most notable for her extended commentary about the science behind diets. Her greatest strength, as an esteemed columnist in her own right, was her ability to apply health terminology in a relatable style. When writing about calories, she stated, "It is like a measuring unit—like your measuring cup that you use when measuring flour for a cake…The calorie simply represents the amount of heat and energy produced by the bread."[58] However, her articles were not always based on legitimate science as she once chastised the growing presence of condiments and spices in everyday meals, believing them to unnaturally increase the desire for food in a rebellious overthrow of nature. The foundation of her assertions, that undernourishment affects one's energy levels and complexion, was correct but her recommendations sometimes fell into extremes.[59] Emily maintained that the success of her husband's training program was due in large part to the minimal effects of uncertain dietary regulations.[60]

Along with diet, Gay stressed the importance of proper breathing. Adamant that exercises should never be performed too fast, he asserted that proper breaths, a by-product of a well-developed core, were of the utmost importance.[61] Among his bounty of claims to this effect, one from 1927 stands out where he asserted, "The most important of all organs to have in condition before attempting anything with any other part of the body is the stomach."[62] Even under a plan to increase weight Arthur insisted that "a balanced diet, fresh air, and graduated exercise" will bring about desired results without any additional extraordinary efforts.[63]

His program only worked due to time, effort, and discipline. A reality he acknowledged when he wrote, "that his plan doesn't work completely over eighteen days, but it has the ever-pleasing result of being permanent and without ill effects."[64] Time, for Gay, was the necessary component to building lasting health. He insisted that there were no short cuts in the body changing process and that there was no mystery connected to physical development. Steady progress, daily adherence to a schedule, and a measured diet constituted the fundamental steps.[65] He argued throughout his life that fundamental change to the body could only be established through the proper development of core muscles and breathing techniques. Both aspects were necessary prerequisites to any formal weight-lifting program. He argued that since one's body was prone to

stay in the position it had been subjected to during exercise, it was thereby critical to maintain a strong, fundamental base to one's movements.[66] As a part of his commitment to patience, Gay emphasized the importance of non-lifting measures. For him, fitness was a lifestyle to be embraced both within and outside the gym. Exercise, sleep, and eating all required systematic precision to allow one to fully embrace the rewards of strength and health.[67]

Understanding the basics of a proper foundation was found clearly in the writings of his wife. She realized most of her female audience had limited exposure to or no experience with physical training. As a result, Emily's articles featured brief tangents on anatomy. Her essays focused on points of the body most directly connected to beauty mainly on the face, legs, and hips. But, even within such articles, she minced no words when addressing the various components of muscles impacting the strength of the hip including the abs and diaphragm. Complimenting Mrs. Gay's consistent use of introductory terminology was her antagonism towards devices of vanity or comfort. Her notion, shared by her husband, that only persistence, patience, and proper form could change a body led to charges against bras, pills, or fancy footwear in her writing. Strength came from within. Arthur and Emily positioned themselves as the conduit through which individualized personal improvement could be achieved and maintained.

Personal Accountability

Arthur advocated for personal desire and knowledge when it came to fitness. Exercise, he believed, must be that of an individual nature owing to the variance in constitution and temperament. He urged his readers to embrace personal accountability, writing, "it is a matter for *you* to decide for yourself just what exercises are and are not suited to your requirements."[68] In one case in the late 1920s, he preached his effort-based evangelism from a Baptist pulpit, vigorously attacking the "pill-feeders, who think they can acquire health out of a bottle."[69] His wife went further when she chastised both Turkish baths and sweat loss programs, which she claimed were "stupid efforts to dodge effective and healthful cures."[70]

A well-balanced program was one that effectively trained both endurance and strength. Such a program needed to be tailored to one's individual requirements to properly address any deficiencies in either of those two areas without overexerting or overemphasizing one to the detriment of the other.[71] His distaste towards generalized workout plans extended to ideal images of the "perfect man." Despite being awarded such distinctions in his youth, he argued that height-to-weight ratios were woefully inadequate and caused undue frustration for those attempting to better themselves. He wrote once that those "calculations fall into serious error and short or tall men are assigned unnatural or freakish measurements."[72] His wife also wrote in criticism of the unreasonable fitness and beauty standards of the age. Echoing her husband's criticism of the classical Greek ideal she claimed that the famous Venus de Milo would "look awkward and far from beautiful in present-day clothes [being] far too plump, too heavy, and too bulky."[73] Hence, the Gay's gym focused solely on one-on-one training to avoid falling prey to such generalizations.

One of the primary reasons for his adherence to individual training with a physical culture expert was that he recognized the possibility of "overwork" often a cause of unsupervised gym sessions. He argued in his writings that under personal supervision, those who have taken up weight-lifting have been *far healthier* than they would have been otherwise."[74] He was insistent that only supervised work could bring about results.

He understood that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the "theory of weight-lifting," but did harbor reservations about the potential repercussions of abuses from unsupervised physical training. The importance of a teacher had less to do with the actual activity of lifting than it did with the preparation. He wrote that most men, upon arriving in a gym have "no realization of their posture's effect on the body carriage."[75] Thus, a qualified instructor provided a great advantage in maximizing the basic elements of an exercise program. He wrote that the use of light wights, bodyweight, or even calisthenics could produce some benefit for the individual if undertaken intelligently and supervised by a knowledgeable teacher.[76] To the former strongman's credit, Gay remained skeptical of the long-term benefit of calisthenics and argued that for strength—and thus health—to be built, it was necessary for there to be resistance to the action of one's muscles. Next to digestion, resistance was the "all-important factor in building strength." His writings also pushed back on the poplar criticism of weightlifters being "muscle-bound." He argued, always in a forthright manner, that weight training did not change the essence of an individual stating "weight-lifting makes no man slow if he is not naturally a slow type." He appealed to his reader's circumstance and wrote his sage articles arguing that all people were weight-lifters because even as infants we all have experience the daily sensation of lifting.[77]

His gym, therefore, became a "mecca" for many men and women of his hometown who suffered from over- or under-weight.[78] The allure of individualized attention and personally catered results bore a substantial and fervent following. His efforts pre-dated his military service as several hundred Rochesterians laid claim to his successful methods of patience and individualized attention since 1917.[79]

Writings espousing the benefit of individual training met action as he oversaw the women's department of his gym as well as the men's. Arthur made sure that his female clients were provided full access to his facilities every Tuesday and Thursday—leaving the men to occupy the remaining days.[80] Although rarely speaking directly to the equality of the sexes, his articles routinely featured claims that both men and women should aspire to strength with equal personal resolve. Arguing the case that women were capable of developments of strength and should be encouraged to do so, he wrote in 1937 that "When a boy or girl grows to maturity without the use of their muscles that are essential to bring out their full strength, that boy or

girl does not come into possession of all manly or womanly powers."[81] Arthur's claims were reinforced, often with more passion, by his wife. In her column she walked a fine line between the fashion and beauty articles geared towards women and legitimate essays on strength and science.

For general fitness, she acquiesced to the constraints of the age when she argued it was inadvisable for any woman to ever lift a barbell heavier thirty or forty pounds. Such strength, she claimed, already demonstrated "normal" levels of fitness and health.[82] Despite her concerns, Emily was an enthusiastic supporter of limited weight training for women. The lighter barbells, she always recommended 8-15 pounds in her columns, were excellent tools for the sports and athletics she favored for women and remarked at the accomplishments one could achieve through that training method. In fact, she believed that the true feminine form was the athletic form. True beauty, she wrote, came from being healthy and that she encouraged the modern woman to find lasting beauty through participation in healthful sports, recreations, and the outdoor life.[83] In the summer she encouraged swimming as much as possible, as well as all the golf and tennis one could manage. The ultimate benefit of these sports, she argued was the abundance of fresh air consumed during the activities. To drive her point home, she included pictures of the Gay's teenager daughter—by then a winner of several beauty and fitness contests—who developed her award-winning contour through a combination of swim, dance, and a routine of regular exercises.[84] In an article describing the musculature of the hips, she was implored her female readers to train properly, saying "if you have muscles why not develop them? Muscles give shape and contour."[85] She wrote that exercising even with a light barbell never becomes boring. The true challenge for female fitness was "that silent opponent in your head requiring concentration and effort."[86]

Emily Gay supported her husband on two key aspects of their embrace of structured individualistic training. She was adamant in her monthly column for *The Bodybuilder* that unsupervised and unstructured training would produce no discernable result. Also, she too, railed against modifications—pertaining to diet and clothing—that she viewed as providing an insufficient quick fix to what should be a lifelong pursuit of health. To convince women of the inherent value in beginning a weight training regimen, she appealed to the various forms of domestic lifting many women did on a daily basis. This assortment of "natural forms of lifting" included picking up children as well as domestic chores.[87]

In Emily's first article in George Jowett's *The Body Builder*, she lashed out at previous generations for restricting the "honest display of the female figure." Through "grotesque illusions and forgeries" such as laced waists and padded busts she claimed that the natural female form had been exaggerated and corrupted. That manufactured female standard destroyed the real beauty of health, to which she would set her sights on correcting through her monthly column.[88] She placed the blame for leg weakness on the use of high heels. In an article on the proper form for recreational pedestrianism she blamed the stilted nature of the shoes in prohibiting the proper movement and swing from the hips through which one gains sufficient economy of force. Without such nature grace and power, great beauty could not be achieved.[89] She also placed the blame for a weak bust on the use of brassieres. Her ire stemmed from the understanding that bras "cause the chest muscles to atrophy and as a result there is no muscular action to hold the bust up."[90] She was adamant that the muscles themselves needed to do the work because that is their natural function. The idea that unused muscles would dissipate due to artificial support was a common theme in both her and her husband's writing. They believed that restrictive clothing was no different than a fad diet or pill in terms of a short cut on the path to bodily transformation. Therefore, she alerted her readers, a reasonable amount of exercise—along with forgoing a bra—needed to be taken regularly for "the muscles to receive better circulation and thus increase their tone and definition."[91] To obtain the optimal symmetry and firmness desired in a 'normal' bust, Emily encouraged both her female readers and her clients to engage moderately in sports and exercise. However, she was quick to note that such actions were restorative as "a normal girls' bust [ages 14-17] will develop properly so long as she wears no tight undergarments."[92]

To both men and women, the Gays wrote, taught, and lived their message of personal accountability and patience. Their desire for individualized betterment could be observed through their repression of their own egos. Despite competing in, and winning, various strongman shows in his twenties, Gay preached avoidance of the "extremes of strength, such as to lift horses or elephants."[93] It was to the 'average man' whom Gay directed his writings. In an article for Bob Hoffman's *Strength & Health* he stated that the body of the average middle-aged man did not promote self-respect.[94] He argued that while being an athlete was not a requirement to live fully, he was adamant that every man should engage in some form of exercise or recreation. To that end, he developed a generic series of standards that "Mr. Average Man" should be able to complete. The tests, set for a forty-five-year-old male, included being able to walk seven miles in two hours, run one mile in eight minutes, ten consecutive pushups, and various endurance pieces such as rowing or swimming.[95] Emily also muted her own experience for the goals and development of her female clients and readers. Her own journey of physical rediscovery resulted in a loss of nearly forty pounds (from the mid- one seventies to the mid-one thirties) in the two decades she and Arthur had been married.[96] Their goal of promoting general fitness resulted in perhaps the couple's most unique contribution to the reams of strength literature in the interwar period. General fitness produced the best results when the individual in pursuit of them enjoyed the avocation. Pleasure was a much a part of a successful regimen as structured individual training or diet.

Pleasure

Even in Arthur's most fervent and impassioned

pleas for a healthy lifestyle, he remained focused on the larger aim of life. He addressed the necessity of joy in strength when he wrapped up a speech saying, "Health does spell religion, but I say it spells more – it spells life, it spells success, it spells happiness."[97] His wife summed up that feeling more emphatically, writing "I want to *LIVE* and not simply exist."[98]

Health was about identifying a lasting set of principles that could serve a man or woman for life. Since life is to be enjoyed, he insisted that "one's favorite exercises or recreation should be a source of comfort and pleasure and should be discontinued if proved otherwise."[99] Specifically, he claimed that beneficial and enjoyable exercises should often consist of "moderately heavy weights… giving you a satisfactory measure of resistance and yet avoid the possibility of strain."[100] Gay built on those claims expressing a profound respect and desire for periods of rest and recovery in the training process. Up to a week or two of time away from structured, supervised training he wrote, would not hurt one bit. Drawing from his experience as a former competitor and active weightlifting referee and committee chair, his advice on rest carried weight. His words held significant value among men looking to increase their musculature as Gay criticized them for "always want to exercise and never rest."[101] Even during periods of training, he doubled down on claims to avoid pushing oneself to exhaustion during exercise, emphasizing instead a comfortable and enjoyable level of engagement.[102] The common man required a simple approach to training. Though he emphasized a focus on the large muscle groups, including the those associated with digestion, his writings were clearly influenced by the nineteenth century ideology *mens sana in copore sano*. In conjunction with physical training, Gay encouraged his readers to read enlightening books and take time to play.[103]

Upon reflection on distinctions between energy (vitality) and work (strength), he urged his readers to observe children in play. Though lacking strength, Gay wrote that children possessed boundless energy and thus more enthusiasm for life.[104] The joys of a lift of strength and health could also inspire a renewed sense of confidence in a person. Understanding that for most of the average man's day his body would be covered under his clothes he asserted that the well-proportioned man – often of below average height – was right to shed his clothes where acceptable to be admired for the work he has rightly endured.[105] Confidence was manifest not only through the production of strength, but also in the use of energy provided by one's bodily transformation. He remarked early on about the importance of joy in relation to diet, weights training, and rest, writing, "Eat what your appetite calls for, exercise your muscles and keep them in condition. Laugh all you can and enjoy your life to the utmost."[106]

Conclusion

A man who embraced his own words through a life thoroughly lived, passed away on 4 June 1981 at the age of 86 from kidney failure. His wife, training partner, and equally prolific writer, Emily passed on several years before. At the time of his death, he continued to operate a physical fitness center, just around the block from his original long-standing facility. His physical culture exploits as a pioneer in the burgeoning Rochester fitness scene and as a contributor to national success within the AAU and Olympic movements have been granted sufficient treatment. It is his writings, wedged between other legends of the interwar physical culture era, that deserves a deeper inquiry. As he would have likely preferred, such is a task which could only be embraced through patience, guided individual effort, and no small amount of pleasure.

Notes:

1. See, for example: Benjamin Pollack and Janice Todd, "Before Charles Atlas: Earle Liederman, the 1920s King of Mail Order Muscle," *Journal of Sport History,* 44 (Fall 2017): 339-420; and Jan Todd and Michael Murphy, "Portrait of a Strongman: The Circus Career of Ottley Russell Coulter," *Iron Game History: The Journal of Physical Culture*, 7, no. 1 (June 2001): 4-21; and John Fair, "Father Figure or Phony: George Jowett, the ACW-LA and the Milo Barbell Company, 1924-1927," *Iron Game History*: *The Journal of Physical Culture* 3, no. 5 (December 1994): 20-27.
2. "Strong Man Joins Navy," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 30 March 1918.
3. Ben Pollack and Jan Todd, "American Icarus: Vic Tanny and America's First Health Club Chain," *Iron Game History* 13 and 14, nos. 4 and 1 (December 2016): 18.
4. Ibid., 22.
5. Blake McKelvey, *Rochester on the Genesee: The Growth of a City* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 155-156.
6. "Mrs. Arthur Gay Hurt in Auto Accident," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 25 October 1935.
7. "Birthday Greetings to Rochesterians," *The Times-Union*, Undated clipping, Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County Historic Scrapbook Collection, 2.
8. Emily G. Gay, "The Modern Venus," *The Body Builder* 1, no. 2 (August 1936): 17. Gertrude's measurements at the time of her second win were: 5' 5.5" (height), 126 pounds (weight), 34" (bust), 25" (waist), 37" (hips), 12.5" (neck), 10.5" (upper arm), 10" (forearm), 6.5" (wrist), 21.5" (thighs), 13.5" (calf), and 8.5" (ankle).
9. E. Gay, "Modern Venus," 16.
10. She was a popular choice for print displays by Kodak's Research Lab See: John Martin, "Pictofacts: Rochester Recognized!" *Democrat and Chronicle*, 14 September 1941, 75; and serialized illustrations in McCall's Magazine. See also: Henry W. Klune, "Seen and Heard," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 18 August 1945, 17.
11. Arthur F. Gay, "Is Body Building a Science?" *The Body Builder*, 2, no. 1 (January 1937): 22.
12. "Arthur F. Gay Obituary," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 6 June 1981.
13. "Winner in the Posing Contest," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 27 May 1917.
14. "Strong Man Joins Navy."
15. "Serving Country in War Forces," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 29 November 1918.
16. "Men Amused for Three Hours," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 1 January 1921.
17. "Seen and Heard," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 10 December 1928.
18. "Bare-Fist Boxing, Ancient Firemen, in Community's Piece," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 4 October 1932.
19. "Seen and Heard," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 8 August 1933.
20. Records of Arthur Gay's interviews are from 28 August, 15 October, 23 November 1934, and 23 February 1935. His interview with Bernarr Macfadden took place on 17 November 1932. All dates taken from Rochester's *Democrat and Chronicle*.
21. "Plan Church Smoker for To-morrow Night," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 2 February 1928.
22. "'Iron Man' of City Praised in Magazine," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 22 September 1927.
23. "Winner in Posing Contest," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 27 May 1917.
24. Ibid.

25. "Personal Mentions," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 30 December 1931.
26. Arthur F. Gay, "Arthur F. Gay Famous Athlete and Physical Culture Teacher Praises the Physical Culture Hotel," *Stark Center: Digital Library*; accessed 4 January 2022.
27. Ibid. Emphasis provided by the author.
28. Ryan Murtha, Conor Heffernan, and Thomas Hunt, "Building American Supermen? Bernarr Macfadden, Benito Mussolini and American fascism in the 1930s," *Sport in Society* 24, no. 11 (November 2020): 1941-1955.
29. Mark Adams, *Mr. America: How Muscular Millionaire Bernarr Macfadden Transformed the Nation through Sex, Salad, and the Ultimate Starvation Diet* (New York, NY: Harper, 2009), 3.
30. Arthur F. Gay, "Strengthen Your Stomach," *Physical Culture* (August 1920).
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35. "Rochester Youth World's Champion," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 18 December 1927.
36. "City's Strong Man Will Try to Set Marks," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 23 November 1934; Pollack and Todd, "American Icarus," 18-19.
37. "Personal Supervision Featured at Gay's," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 14 May 1934.
38. Kim Beckwith and Jan Todd, "Requiem for a Strongman: Reassessing the Career of Professor Louis Attila," *Iron Game History" The Journal of Physical Culture* 7, nos. 2 & 3 (July 2002): 47-48.
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50. Gay, "Building Better Bodies," 20.
51. Arthur F. Gay, "The Thin Man," *The Body Builder* 1, no. 6 (December 1936): 19.
52. Arthur F. Gay, "The Thin Man," *The Body Builder* 1, no. 5 (November 1936): 20.
53. Arthur F. Gay, "Is Body Building a Science?" *The Body Builder* 2, no. 1 (January 1937): 23.
54. Gay, "The Thin Man," 20, 41.
55. Gay, "Great Strength or Endurance," 10.
56. "Gay System of Gradual Reducing Said Better Than Extreme Dieting," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 26 January 1931.
57. Emily Gay, "The Modern Venus," *The Body Builder* 1, no. 2 (July/August 1936): 35.
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72. Arthur F. Gay, "Physical Tests for the Average Man," *The Body Builder* 1, no. 2 (July/August 1936): 27.
73. Gay, "Modern Venus," 16.
74. Arthur F. Gay, "The Exercise Dilemma," *The Body Builder* 2, no. 3 (April 1937): 18.
75. Gay, "Better Health Through Proper Posture," 15.
76. Gay, "The Exercise Dilemma," 16-17.
77. Gay, "The Thin Man," 33.
78. "Gay System of Reducing Better Than Extreme Dieting."
79. "Exercise and Proper Diet Best Way of Reducing, Says Arthur F. Gay."
80. "Physical Culture is Health Builder," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 19 September 1932.
81. Gay, "Building Better Bodies," 19.
82. Emily Gay, "Should Women Use Barbells?" *The Body Builder* 2, no. 1 (January 1937): 28.
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84. Emily Gay, "How to Beautify the Bust," *The Body Builder* 1, no. 5 (November 1936): 41.
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88. Gay, "Keep Young and Beautiful," 18.
89. Emily Gay, "Hips, Hips, Away," *The Body Builder* 2, no. 2 (February 1937): 12-13.
90. Emily Gay, "A Beautiful Bust," *The Body Builder* 1, no. 4 (October 1936): 30.
91. Gay, "How to Beautify the Bust," 28-29.
92. Gay, "A Beautiful Bust," 30.
93. Gay, "The Exercise Dilemma," 16-17.
94. Gay, "Better Health Through Proper Posture," 15.
95. Gay, "Physical Tests for the Average Man," 26.
96. Gay, "A Trim Waistline," 28.
97. "Physical Culturist, Minister Share Baptist Temple Pulpit," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 28 November 1927.
98. Gay, "How to Beautify the Bust," 41.
99. Gay, "Building Better Bodies," 20.
100. Gay, "The Exercise Dilemma," 18.
101. Gay, "The Thin Man," 20.
102. Gay, "The Thin Man," 20.
103. Gay, "Great Strength or Endurance," 11.
104. Ibid., 9-10.
105. Gay, "The Thin Man," 20.
106. "Rochester Youth World's Champion 'Sitter-Upper.'"

The Australian Body:
Masculinity, Whiteness, and Heterosexuality in 1980s Film

by Matthew Barnard
Bond University, Australia

In the 1964 prologue of seminal Australian cultural text *The Lucky Country*, author Donald Horn recounts how, during his extensive travels, conversations with friends, and talks with new acquaintances, he began to understand more about how the world viewed Australia. In Rome, an Italian senator discussed his point of view on the Australian communist threat; in Alexandria, Egypt, two Lebanese men questioned Australia's civil rights policies towards people of color. In New York, however, an American friend argued that due to limited global influence, Australia fails to exist at all in the consciousness of foreign nationals. The friend explained, "there is no image of Australia in America and there will not be until the intellectuals create one."[1]

Although the American friend's explanation of Australia is both exaggerated and over simplified, it still highlights a major truth about Australian identity. In the 1960s, there was no single, unified view of Australia, and thus no singular view of Australians. Domestically there was also a lack of clarity not due to a lack of identity, but rather, to an overcomplication of conflicting elements. The country was conservatively British and progressively American; colonially youthful and traditionally old; culturally European and geographically Asian. In short, Australia lacked a clear image to export, because it did not exist within the nation itself. Richard White writes, "We will never arrive at a 'real' Australia. From the attempt of others to get there, we can learn much about the travellers and journey itself, but nothing about the destination. There is none."[2]

Although a "real" Australia may not exist, a fabricated identity began to surface in the mid-1970s. Notably, it was not intellectuals who introduced this new image but, rather, artists, directors, actors and, through government investment in Australian film production, also politicians and lawmakers. The emerging image was tailored in the form of its makers, and created heroes of predominantly white, overtly heterosexual, physically rugged, traditionally masculine, men. This new ideal became known as "the Australian Body" and is characterized not only through its physicality, but also through its inherent utility and athleticism. This version of competent manhood has moved to the forefront of discourse on Australian identity in the twenty-first century and can be seen in contemporary films in the roles played by Hugh Jackman as Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* (2012) and P.T. Barnum in *The Greatest Showman* (2017). Chris Hemsworth's various portrayals of Thor, the Norse god, in the Marvel cinematic series are also good examples. Both the physiques and the utility of these actors embody their Australianness. These two actors, although not unique, embody an iconography of Australia purposely crafted through the film renaissance often referred to as the Australian New Wave. Through the analysis of three iconic Australian films that helped create the Australian New Wave: *Mad Max* (1979), *Gallipoli* (1981), and *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), we can identify the characteristics of the Australian Body and the ways in which it is tied to national imagery and global export.

The three films examined in this paper were released during a period of Australian history in which cultural upheaval, the development of strong social security, and a growing presence of Australia on the world stage, defined policy making. Many of these shifts were the result of a newfound national cohesion build upon bygone imagery from a falsely romanticized nineteenth-century colonial past, and frontier lifestyle. Russell Ward's frequently studied 1958 text *The Australian Legend* defines the Australian as "a practical man" who "swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, drinks deeply on occasion," who is a "sceptic" and thinks little of leaders unless they are blessed with "physical prowess."[3] Baron Alder explains that a wealth of criticism has been placed upon Wards notion of the Australian Legend in large part because critics argued that "*The Australian Legend* did not give a true and realistic picture of the average Australian."[4] This essay also takes a critical look at Australian manhood and masculinity, examining the historical ideas of the Australian Legend through the lens of Australian New Wave Cinema.

Australian Imagery

National identity and notions of national unity are fundamentally as abstract as the modern nation-state itself, in so much as they are both grounded in the imagination and mythmaking of a collective community. Although dated and notably only foundational to contemporary Western nation-states, Ernest Renan's notion that a nation is little more than "large-scale solidarity" still remains true.[5]

Matthew Barnard is a Ph.D. student in Queensland, Australia studying cultural history and sport at Bond University. He did his Masters in Sport Management at The University of Texas at Austin. His research focuses on national identity and Olympic representation, mass media patriotism, and oral history. Correspondence to: matthew.barnard@student.bond.edu.au

Yet, it has been commonly asserted that this solidarity is formed through a historical shared sacrifice or at the very least, a perceived shared history. It is through such a shared history that the collective whole or imagined community pursues a shared future together. As Andreas Wimmer explains, "national identities can encourage solidarity with fellow citizens and lead individuals to sacrifice personal gain for the common good."[6] Today the debate surrounding the relevance and traditional power of national identity in confrontation with growing globalism is hotly contested. With that being said, the recent decade has proved the stable hold in which national tribalism and regional identities have had on global geo-politics and perceptions of self.

For many young nation-states this shared cultural heritage can often be difficult to pinpoint. As is the case with Australia, it is for the most part non-existent with the exception of the Gallipoli campaign. This is not to claim that cultural history is not prevalent in the minds of every Australian, but rather to argue that a shared and collective cultural history is absent. Instead Australia, through policy and both public and private funding, collectively built its identity around fabricated symbols. The Sydney Harbor Bridge; the racing yacht *Australia II*, winner of the World Cup in 1983; the kangaroo and the emu; a slouch hat; the Southern Cross and many other icons became cornerstones of Australian identity. Connected to each of these symbols, in some ways overtly and in others more opaquely, is the image of the Australian body: a white, masculine, heterosexual man. As Lisa Featherstone notes, it is not merely the imagery of the figure that remains significant, but also its inherent utility, allowing for the "physical and mental conquest of the land."[7] This connection with, and mastery of, the land further promotes notions of white colonialism, and excludes immigrants who migrated after early European settlement.

The Australian body and those who possess it are known by many names such as, stockman, bushranger, digger, larrikin, drover, and although they differ in temperament and personality, they imagery remains steadfast. However, as Neil Rattigan notes, this image is of a "largely mythical creature," and as such is not representative of a true or modern Australia.[8] Although these figures at times can be considered plucked from a bygone era, their characteristics are embodied in another group of people inherently tied with modern Australian identity, sports people and specifically sportsmen. While sport and its influence both on and from Australian national identity is beyond the scope of this paper, the essential physicality of sportsmen cannot be overlooked, nor can the power of sport in the process of nation building.

The Emerging Body: 1970-1990

Although this paper is focused on films released in, or at least very close to, the 1980s, given the long run up to cultural change, it would be remiss not to examine 1970s Australia. 1972 saw the election of Labor Party leader Gough Whitman to the position of Prime Minister, the first non-conservative in the position in 23 years. The Whitlam Government, with its socially progressive agenda, was ousted in late 1975 following the now infamous constitutional crisis. This short-lived tenure however was not without substantial policy change, with the abolition of conscription, the removal of the racist White Australia policy, and the establishment of nation-wide universal healthcare. The Whitlam government also brought about significant cultural change including petitioning to introduce of Advance Australia Fair to replace God Save the Queen as national anthem, the reestablishment of relations with China, and the foundation of the Order of Australia in place of the traditional British Honours system. Whitlam also led the creation of the Australian Film and Television School in 1973, and Australian Film Commission in 1975, ushering in what is now known as "Australian Film Renaissance."[9] Many of these objectives were made possible through the rise and active advancement of a "new nationalism" which saw the shedding of traditional British colonial ties in favor for a uniquely independent Australian image. As has been discussed, this image of the typical Australian form was not representative of a modern Australia and its population at the time, nor is it now.[10]

With the groundwork laid for the advancement of the Australian body the symbol of Australianness, the 1980s saw the exportation of this symbol to the wider world and a "cultural nationalist-boom" within Australian borders.[11] Beyond the export of the Australian body through film in the 1980s, Australia was yet again thrust into an era of heightened contradiction. Calls for an Australian republic and the removal of the Queen as head of state by recently elected Prime Minister Bob Hawke were halted with the 1983 Royal Tour. Later that year Australians regardless of class or wealth celebrated an Australian boat funded by an eccentric millionaire for winning a yacht race for the first time in its 132-year history. Five years later Australians stood ideologically split in either their celebration of, or opposition to, the bicentenary of the landing of the First Fleet at Botany Bay, marking the first permanent British settlement of the country. Despite the apparent confrontation and divisiveness in the nation, the films produced in this period promoted a singular Eurocentric identity, an identity Peter Kunze notes promoted "andronationalism," the often unconscious conflation of masculinist and nationalist interest so as to rally support behind a nation ideologically dominated by patriarchal authority.[12]

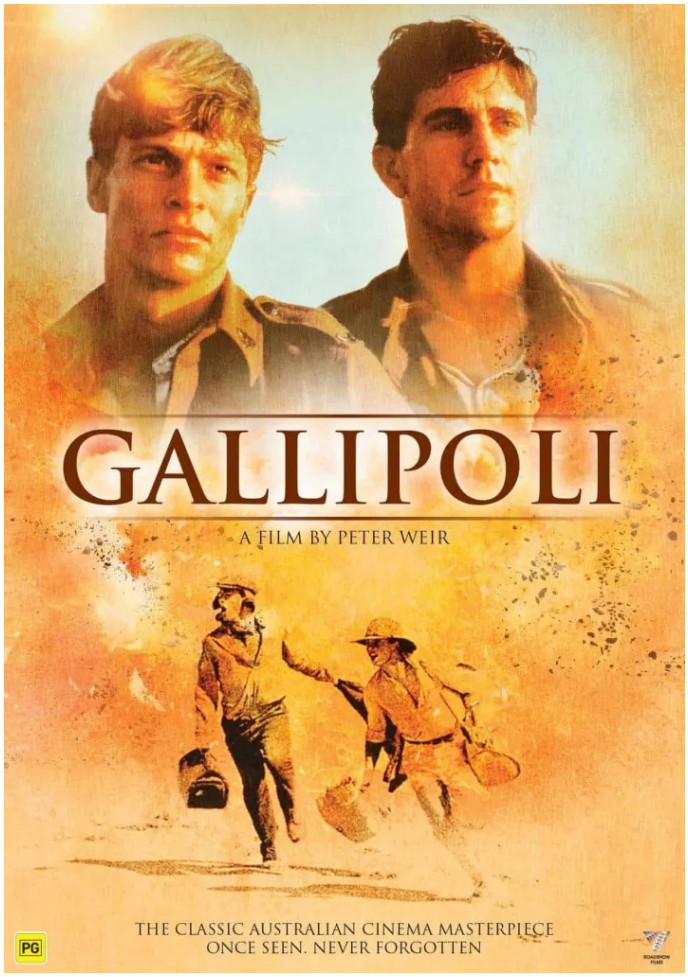
The role of cinema in both the reflection and reinforcement of collective ideology or mood within a society has been well established. However as is the case with Australia during the time in question, the reflection was not of a contemporary society, but rather that of an imagined history. The imagery of Australian identity as represented in the Australian body was although newly resurfaced, a product of strong historical ties, specifically to rural working men in the nineteenth century. Much of this imagery was grounded in unique Australian landscape. Unlike European romantic nationalism which had developed in previous decades, Australian writers and artists viewed their relationship with the land as far more

combative. Sue Beeton notes that Australia did not meet the "benign requirements of such an idyllic image" as was the case in Europe of the Unites States, and rather the Australian connection with the land came from hardship, pain, and danger.[13] Later imagery would reflect white conquest and taming of such landscape, often coated in racist undertones towards indigenous peoples. Communal defiance of the landscape fostered another significant component of perceived Australian national identity, mateship. Of national characteristics, mateship is perhaps the most overtly exclusionary in its inherent masculinity and gender marginalisation.[14] As will be examined further in relation to *Gallipoli* and its representation of mateship in conjunction with the Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) mythology, this component of national character lends itself closely with national unity and emotional closeness while remaining fundamentally heterosexual.[15] This foundation of the national body in the nineteenth century highlights that not only is it dated today, but it was already dated when resurfaced in the 1970s. As such, it was never in its conception forged to be truly representative of a contemporary Australian then, and certainly not now.

Gallipoli

Many a modern Western nation-state utilizes a shared historical struggle as the bedrock of their national identity. For Australia, the Gallipoli campaign during the First World War serves such a function. Stephen Alomes and Catherine Jones explain, "perhaps no event more influenced the character and development of Australian nationalism than the Great War."[16] The Gallipoli campaign and the unique experience of Australian and New Zealand soldiers in the battles against the Ottoman Empire has often been described as the seminal event in which both nations lost their innocence. With approximately eight thousand Australians dying as a result of the botched landing at Gallipoli, Australians found their common sacrifice, and the Anzac legend was born. Today both Australians and New Zealanders commemorate the landing each year as the main day of remembrance in their calendars.

Released in 1981 Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* follows the journey of two Australian men, Archy Hamilton (Mark Lee) and Frank Dunne (Mel Gibson) from Western Australia to the steep cliffs of the Dardanelles during the First World War. Hamilton, a young stockman with a deep desire to join the Australian Light Horse—the revered Australian Imperial Force Division—first meets Dunne at a local athletics event where the two face off in a sprint. Following Hamilton's win over Dunne, the two reconnect by chance at a nearby tearoom, where they agree to travel to Perth together so that Hamilton can again try to enlist after previously being rejected due to being underage. After poor travel planning and a long walk through the desert, the pair join the army, Hamilton with the Light Horse and Dunne along with three friends, Billy, Barney, and Snowy, with the infantry. The pair again meet while training in Cairo with their respective units, and successfully petition for Dunne's transfer to the Light Horse given the decision not to travel with horses and his history as a competitive



Released in 1981, Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* follows the journey of two Australian men, Archy Hamilton (Mark Lee) and Frank Dunne (Mel Gibson) from Western Australia to the steep cliffs of the Dardanelles during the First World War.

athlete. Hamilton and Dunne travel to Gallipoli together where they are thrust into uphill trench warfare. With poor leadership and communication, Hamilton is involved in a charge against the enemy position, during which he is gunned down running without a weapon towards enemy machine gun fire.

Much can be examined in both the 1915 Gallipoli campaign and the 1981 film of the same name. For the purpose of this conversation on the Australian body, four major themes are of relevance, mateship, athleticism, whiteness, and youth. Of note is that Weir in his recreation of the Anzac legend not only reflects these themes but actively "promotes them" as components of national identity.[17] This representation of Australian identity in the form of two young male bodies goes beyond simple pro-Australian sentiment, to blatant nationalism. For the most part this nationalism is represented in anti-British and anti-Ottoman sentiment representing anti-authoritarian and xenophobic characteristics of Australianness. As James Bennett notes, the film, rather than serving as a recounting of true history serves as a "radical nationalist interpretation of events."[18]

As one of the film's seminal themes, mateship

serves as the backbone to Weir's representation of the Anzac myth's foundation. Mateship, in line with other gendered notions of togetherness such as comradery and fraternity, is rooted in stronger and deeper ties that go beyond friendship. As is the case with Australia, these deeply entrenched ties are little more than imagined, however are perceived to be forged in spaces absent of women, namely the bush and at war. Mateship in *Gallipoli* comes in a handful of relationships presented. Hamilton and Dunne are connected through their passion of sport and a desire to serve their country although for different reasons. Dunne, Billy, Barney, and Snowy are connected through labor, larrikinism, and apparent irreverence.[19] And finally, Major Barton and his men are connected when commands send them towards sure defeat. Notably, all of these relationships are between white men all of whom are connected through their identity as Australians.

Hamilton and Dunne although inherently connected through their national identity, first find friendship through their shared passion for sport. However, sport and athleticism in the film extends beyond a simple plot point to a major theme and in turn serves as a cornerstone of national identity. While initially reluctant to join the war, Dunne is confronted by Hamilton asserting that it is his responsibility to enlist "because you're an athlete."[20] It is through this athleticism that Australians are shown to literally embody their nationalistic sentiment, in that they are bound to act for their country. Australian athleticism is shown in stark contrast to the British who, when during the final charge of the film are described, although historically inaccurately, as "sitting on the beach drinking cups of tea," while Australians are presented sprinting towards enemy lines.[21] Hamilton's admiration for fictional World Champion Harry Lascelles, a sprinter, whose name he borrows to enlist, further develops the Australian idolization of successful athleticism, and enforces the notion that it is not only physicality, but also utility of the body which is notably Australian. This understanding of Australians as a sport fanatic people sits at the forefront of national consciousness today. To not be athletic, or at very least be interested in athleticism through sport, would be considered by many modern Australians to be "un-Australian." Such an understanding of national character is a key through line in Weir's depiction of Gallipoli and the Australian body present.

As has been discussed, *Gallipoli* excludes women from its presentation of the Australian foundational myth, both in its depiction of mateship and of masculinity in the form of male athleticism. The film also actively depicts the heroic Australian as being solely white, at the exclusion of all other races. Unlike the case with other national identities that are often grounded in ideology, Australia is grounded in the white man's body as is presented in *Gallipoli*. Such a difference allows a fundamental contradiction between character and image. With that being said, it is impossible for all peoples within a nation to identify with the latter. The resurgence of a white national identity in the film ran counter to contemporary Australian social policy, with the dismantling of the White Australia Policy, progress in the Aboriginal reconciliation movement, and influx of immigrants from both Mediterranean Europe and Asia. Weir notably looked to the far colonial past rather than the present or future in his constriction of the Australian image.

The final major theme in *Gallipoli* as it related to the Australian body is youth. Unlike underlying themes presented in the film, youth is actively addressed and celebrated. Hamilton, who is younger than the enlisting age of 21, lies to join the war, and the naivety of Billy, Barney, and Snowy is at the forefront of their larrikinism and irreverence. However, it is through the relationship with the British that notions of Australian youth are reinforced. Barney Ronay and Oliver Laughland in writing about the heated Australian and English cricket rivalry, explain the relationship as, "Australia has often looked to portray itself as a youthful, sunlit kind of place, freed from the lingering, pigeon-chested hierarchical neuroses of the old country."[22] This tense relationship is most present in the final moments of the film in which young Australian soldiers are sent to their deaths by British-sounding officers. In writing about the scene in question, Mark Connolly notes, "brave Australian soldiers were martyred by arrogant, inefficient British generals."[23] Although not problematic on the surface, the connection of national identity with youth discounts much of the long history of Australian indigenous people. Although the nation-state itself is relatively young, the embodiment of the national culture as old is discounted in the protagonists of *Gallipoli* and replaced with a whitewashed youthful alternative.

Crocodile Dundee

Of films considered "quintessentially Australian," perhaps none is so frequently mentioned in conversation as *Crocodile Dundee*. The 1986 comedy centres on protagonist and film namesake Mick Dundee (Paul Hogan) and his relationship with American journalist Sue Charlton (Linda Kozlowski). If *Gallipoli* served as the inspiration of the "modern" Australian body in film within Australia, *Crocodile Dundee* undoubtably exported it to the world. In this endeavour the film was by all accounts a resounding success, landing itself in the position as the highest grossing Australian film of all time. In his recent autobiography Paul Hogan highlights this success of the cultural penetration of Australian imagery worldwide. Hogan writes, "what I don't think any of us understood at the time was that *Dundee* would be the first exposure many people around the world would have to Australian culture . . . Suddenly *Dundee* was the image everyone associated with Australia."[24] However, the "culture" presented in the film was not and is still not representative of an Australian people, nor a contemporary culture. Rather it was little more than a crudely fabricated stereotype drawn from classic tropes of the Australian legend. Hogan in his role of Dundee exported two key bygone tropes of Australianness, notably aggressive heterosexuality and mastery over nature, both of which are actively embodied by Dundee. The film also aided in ushering in an era of nationalistic commodification of Australian identity in tourism, sport,

Deemed an international success at its release in 1986, *Crocodile Dundee* is a comedy starring Paul Hogan in the titular role and Linda Kozlowski as an American journalist and Dundee's love interest.

and exported products. Andrew Zielinski summarises how such an image is exclusionary in writing, "*Dundee* is now the archetype, full of all the stereotypical, superficial narrowing of identity."[25]

The film opens with the American journalist, Charlton, pitching her editor on an interview with hunter Dundee who is reported to have had a near death experience with a large saltwater crocodile. Charlton travels to Walkabout Creek in the Northern Territory where, after a series of untoward events in a local pub, the two are introduced by Dundee's friend Walter Reilly (John Meillon). The pair then travel together into the outback where they are confronted by a series of obstacles including poachers, a water buffalo, snakes, and of course a crocodile, all of which Dundee bests to Charlton's admiration. Dundee and Carlton's relationship develops, and the pair share a kiss before jetting to New York City. Although clearly an outsider in his new environment, Dundee once again overcomes all challenges, at first struggling with social and cultural norms of the city, conquering his unfamiliarity with a bidet, hitching a ride with a mounted policeman, and scaring away a mugger with his now iconic line "that's not a knife, this is a knife"[26] Following an engagement between Charlton and her editor, a disheartened Dundee looks to escape the city but is confronted by Charlton on a crowded subway station and professes her love for the Australian. The two ultimately kiss at the conclusion of the film once Charlton explains that she is calling off the engagement.

The first half of the film depicts Charlton, an American woman, thrust into an exclusively heterosexual male environment in outback Australia. The implication is that Australia itself and its national identity is inherently masculine and heterosexual in contrast to a feminized American outsider. Annie Dignan argues that such images "helped construct the outdoors as a male environment, but not just any male; rather a white, physically able, heterosexual male"[27] The "real" Australia as presented and subsequently exported in *Crocodile Dundee* is exclusively outdoors, especially in contrast with the highly urbanized New York City. This predominantly heterosexual notion of nationalism in a masculine environment is the result of a backward-looking search for identity to the nineteenth century in which men made up the vast majority of white people within Australian outback. This is not to say that homosexuality was not present in such an environment, but rather to highlight how homosexuality was only perceived as an act and never as an identity. This concept is reflected in *Crocodile Dundee* in which Dundee kisses another man in order to win a drinking game. Although the protagonist is engaging in non-heteronormative behaviour, he remains undeniably heterosexual. As such this representation of the Australian body excludes any identification with homosexuality and relegates it to an act in which heterosexual men may engage. Dundee's heterosexuality turns to ignorance and transphobia when introduced to a transgender woman at a New York party by Charlton. Dundee, clearly unable to comprehend the identity of transgender individual, proceeds to grope the woman to which Carlton asserts, "It's ok, he's Australian."[28]

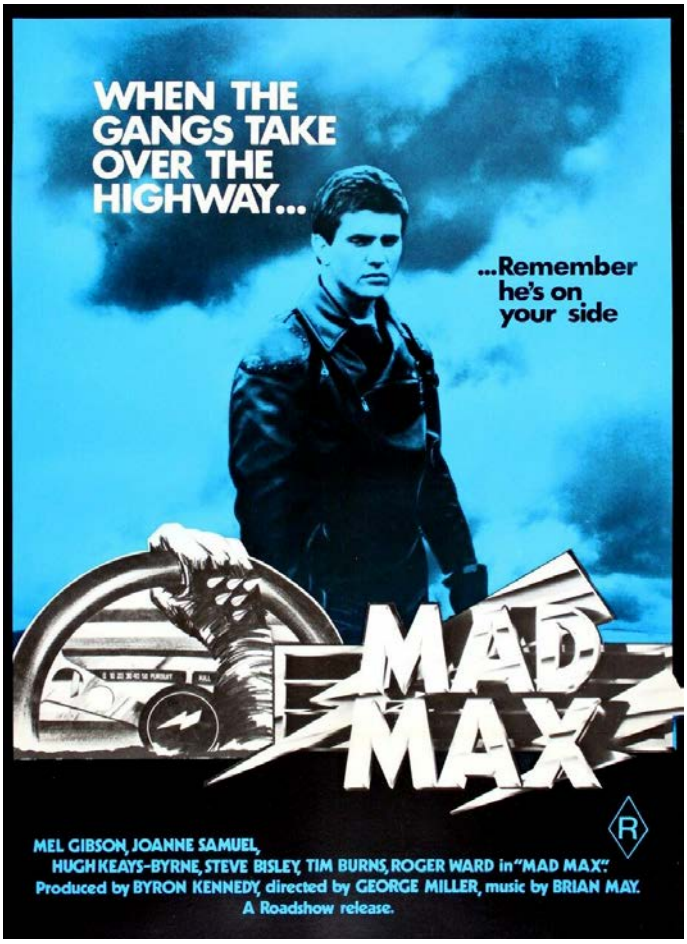
A cornerstone of *Crocodile Dundee* is Dundee's mastery over nature. The theme perpetuates both in his heroic masculinity over the bush and its wildlife in Australia, and in embracing new challenges in the alien environment of the urban jungle. This mastery is only possible through Dundee's unique ingenuity and ample athleticism. Anouk Lang highlights the ways in which "animals are the signifiers that allow Mick Dundee (Paul Hogan) to perform both masculinity and his Australian identity."[29] In environments devoid of animals, with the exception of those domesticated, the masculine dominance is displayed over a new "other," in this case Americans, and notably women. In the final scene of the film Dundee, unable to walk through a crowded subway platform towards Charlton, instead raises himself above the crowd and proceeds to walk atop the heads and shoulders of the bystanders. The scene is reminiscent of an Australian sheep dog mustering cattle, but in reality, shows an Australian icon literally walking above urban New York Americans. The scene embraces Australian masculinity as a defining feature of national identity in which Rose Lucas describes, "the man had control in every landscape he inhabits."[30] The film also explores the relationship which indigenous Australians have with

the land and with white Australians. In conversation with Charlton, Dundee claims "Aborigines don't own the land, they belong to it."[31] With Dundee's apparent mastery over the land, the implication is that he too, and for that matter all white men, have mastery over indigenous peoples. It is only through Dundee's white masculine body that mastery over land, animals, and other peoples is possible, and no other such body is able to achieve such an objective. This component of identity is racist, sexist, and not representative of modern Australian identity and yet still remains a key facet.

The commercialization of Australia by *Crocodile Dundee*, although not explicitly addressed in the themes of the film, cannot be understanded. The films commercial success led to two sequels *Crocodile Dundee II* and *Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles* released in 1988 and 2001 respectively, though neither reached the same level of success culturally or financially. Roger Ebert in his review of the first film noted that, "the movie feels curiously machine-made," in large part due to the fact that it was.[32] Australia and its rich cultural diversity were intentionally stripped down and a single stereotypical figure was used to appeal to wide global audiences. The commercialization of the Australian image in the film fell neatly into an era of Australian commercialization as a whole. Even today the film and it's dated tropes are still mined to sell Australia to the world. In a 2018 government backed advertising campaign, Tourism Australia placed a minute long trailer for a fictional reboot to the Dundee saga, this time the protagonist the American born son of Dundee (Danny McBride) returning to his cultural roots in the outback. The trailer knowingly joked at its own commercialization yet reinforced Australian identity in the image of a masculine white male Chris Hemsworth as a guide for McBride. What ultimately separates the depiction of Australianness in *Gallipoli* and *Crocodile Dundee* is the active selling of an Australian image to the wider world. Where *Gallipoli* looked to forge an image, *Crocodile Dundee* looked to profit off it.

Mad Max

Although released in 1979, *Mad Max* fits comfortably into an era of Australian New Wave cinema which dominated Australian popular culture in the 1980s. Privately funded on a low budget and yet far exceeding box office expectations, the film is often credited as a key player in the of future late twentieth century Australian cinema by renewing confidence in Australian filmmaking which had deteriorated in the post-World War II period. The cult classic, that would go on to produce three other films in its franchise, differs from the *Gallipoli* and *Crocodile Dundee* in that the protagonist is not himself explicitly Australian nor is the setting overtly Australian. Notably the film was dubbed with American accents when initially released to United States audiences. Nevertheless, the themes of the film offer insight into the Australian zeitgeist and concepts of national identity present at the time. The protagonist, Max Rockatansky (Mel Gibson), as with the other protagonists explored, embodies uniquely Australian fabricated



Making its debut in 1979, George Miller's *Mad Max* is one of the most notable films in the New Wave era of Australian cinema. Starring Mel Gibson as Max Rockatansky, the film and its sequels were major influences in popular culture of the 1980s.

characteristics which he acts upon through the utility of a masculine form. Rockatansky however unlike Dundee, Dunne, and Hamilton, embraces the classic role of the solitary hero made famous through traditional westerns. Rockatansky is only able to become such a hero figure through his suffering and subsequent embrace of violence as a tool for revenge. Finally, the excessive use of cars and motorbikes in the film, and the personalization of each, embraces Australian notions of individualism, freedom, and dominance over nature.

Set "a few years" in the future, in an alternate dystopian Australian setting, *Mad Max* begins with a high speed car chase in which Crawford "Nightrider" Montazano a member of the Berserk Motorbike Gang flees pursuit from the Main Force Patrol (MFP) following Nightrider's murder of an officer. Rockatansky, another officer of the MFP (which serves as a quasi-police force) joins the chase and causes Nightrider to crash resulting in his death. The gang after retrieving Nightrider's casket from a rural train station wreak havoc on the town and rape a young couple attempting to flee. The attacker, Johnny the Boy is arrested by Rockatansky and Jim "Goose" Rains, but then is released as no witnesses appear to Johnny's hearing. As revenge for the arrest, the gang attack Goose who is badly

burnt in his vehicle before being placed in an intensive care unit. After seeing Goose's injuries, Rockatansky takes a leave of absence from the MFP and proceeds to travel with his wife and young child. The trio are tracked down by the gang who kill the wife and child. As an act of revenge, with no shortage of violence, Rockatansky hunts several members of the gang including Johnny and leader Toecutter. The film concludes with yet another explosion as Rockatansky drives away.

The majority of the film portrays Rockatansky as a family man filled with compassion and love for his family, with strong bonds of mateship between his fellow officers. On this depiction of Rockatansky Belinda Du Plooy explains, "Max is depicted as a faithful husband, caring lover, adoring father, with endearing, kind and mutually supportive relationships with his wife, his police partner, his supervisor and colleagues."[33] This first film in the Mad Max saga serves as an origin story for the character who has not yet been raised to the position of a folk hero. It is only through the loss of his family and friends, and his resentment for authority figures both in the MFP and the court system that the 'Mad' figure of Rockatansky is born. Dennis Barbour in his evaluation of Rockatansky notes that the character "seeks to break with all traditions of the past, attempting to define his own reality through a solo existence, avoiding all thought or human connections, reducing his existence to nothing more than mere survival."[34] By doing this he seeks to be emotionally detached and void of past pain. This emotional detachment is in line with notions of the Australian Legend as in the image of white labourers in the second half of the twentieth century. These figures existed exclusively in masculine spaces, similar to those presented on the road in *Mad Max*. At the start of the film, when surrounded by friends and family Rockatansky is an exceptionally talented police officer, by the end, with his loves and companions removed from his life, Rockatansky is reborn as an Australian heroic icon.

To fill the void left from the departure of love and compassion from Rockatansky' s life, violence serves as a notable replacement. Such violence, and the people who embrace its use has little place in a modern urban society. However as portrayed in *Mad Max* such an environment no longer exists. Instead what remains is little more than a soon to be chaotic wasteland, not dissimilar to early white representations of a uniquely Australian landscape. Rockatansky becomes a hero not just through his violent acts, but also due to his acts fitting comfortably into the landscape which he lives. As such the landscape forms a crucial component of his own and as an extension his Australian identity. Although Rockatansky is presented in a dystopian future environment, its apparent emptiness, lawlessness, and outright violence is representative of perceived notions of an Australian past. Rockatansky in part becomes a hero of this environment due to his attempted taming of it, no matter the means. Film historian Ffion Murphy describes this depiction as a conscious act of "colonising the land."[35] As these acts and the landscape they take part in relate to the body, there is no overstating the role that Rockatansky supports as a white masculine male. It is only though his body, and what it represents that such taming, or rather colonization can take place.

Claire McCarthy notes the ways in which *Mad Max* is presented as a quintessential Australian film however also argues that the depiction of dystopian Australia, "spoke to the global issues of fuel shortages and environmental disaster."[36] Although the film does, in limited capacity, address global issues such as the oil conflicts of the 1970s, the hero of the film, Rockatansky, does not. Rather he is singularly focused on his family and then following their murder, the revenge of his family. His new connection becomes his identity with his vehicle. The car serves in many ways as secondary character in the film who, when paired with Rockatansky, springs into life becoming an extension of the protagonist. It seems, in fact, to be a part of his own body, which allows him to "tame" the uncivilized environment he inhabits. Claire Corbett writes, "the most typical and potent element uniting this heterochrony is the role of the car."[37] Through the unity of Rockatansky and his vehicle, the protagonist's body becomes an undoubtable master of the land. Without it the land, and the antagonists who are themselves a part of the land, Rockatansky is left all together helpless.

Conclusion

Although the three films examined continue to have significant cultural influence on notions of Australian identity today, they represent but a small portion of films presenting similar archetypal Australian man during the new wave movement of Australian cinema. The already explored sequels to *Mad Max* and *Crocodile Dundee* along with *The Man from Snowy River* (1982), *Burk and Wills* (1985) and *The Lighthorsemen* (1987), among others all present imagery of the Australian body in line with Wards "Australian legend." However, in the 1990s filmmakers looked to present a truly new image that runs contradictory to that presented in the decades prior. More women, people of colour, and people of a variety of sexualities began to appear in Australian-made film, often in lead roles. Michelle Arrow on the shift notes, "increasingly, Australian cinema disavowed interest in presenting a single unified version of national identity that many filmmakers had eagerly pursued during the 1980s."[38] Notable films of this era included *The Adventures of Pricilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994), *Muriel's Wedding* (1994), and *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), all of which presented imagery of the Australian which ran in contrast to those that came before it. Australia had not altogether changed, but rather its representation in film had finally began to catch up and dispose of bygone tropes. Gary Simmons explains, "bush myths and legends were either subverted or ignored, as cultural diversity generated national fictions that privileged women, migrants, Indigenous culture and diverse sexualities which had previously been marginalized."[39] Yet many of these films from the post-new wave movement remain as cult classics and did little to penetrate notions of Australian identity.

On the first day of 2021, Australian Governor General David Hurley upon the recommendation of current Prime Minister Scott Morrison amended the Austra-

lian National Anthem. The slight amendment is the first since the song was adopted in 1984 and replaces the line "for we are young and free" with "for we are one and free." The change, hailed by many for its inclusive outlook in recognition of the long cultural history of indigenous Australians, reinforces notions of a singular Australian identity. This identity is inherently tied to unrepresentative imagery of contemporary Australia, that is a white male body in line with Ward's notion of the Australian Legend. Such a body was drawn from historical and foundational myths, however, came to the forefront of national and global consciousness during the era of New Wave Australian cinema. Although there has been clear action to undo the bygone imagery, these actions have done little to shift modern conceptions of the Australian. This critique of the Australia Legend and the body which it exemplifies is by no means new or ground-breaking. However constant critique of the unrepresentative imagery utilized by Ward is required as its mystique still perpetuates the vast majority of Australian culture to date. As Baron Alder writes, "he is in 2008, as he was in 1858 and in 1958."[40] As Australian values continue to be tied to physical facets presented through the Australian body, any notion of national unity will remain nationalistic, isolationist, and prejudiced. Values tied to the body cannot be truly representative, in that a single body cannot itself be truly representative.

Notes:

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Between Belonging and Fitting In: Exploring the Intersections of Aging, Gender and Physical Activity from an Anthropological Perspective

by Dominika Czarnecka
Polish Academy of Sciences

It is often emphasized in the feminist sport discourse that referring to aerobics, fitness training, and other similar forms of physical activity as "feminine sports" simply devalues them. Many scholars note that although aerobics and fitness contribute with their "goals, contents and, in particular, presentation, to traditional feminine clichés," the analysis of these activities should not be limited to the public discourse around them.[1] To understand a given culture of movement, it is imperative to explore the personal experiences of its participants.[2] The present article takes this postulate into account, giving priority to the voices of older female exercisers. Accentuating the experiences of female gym goers and the multitude of effects fitness culture may produce (in this case fitness culture being "the symbolic and cultural ideas that constitute a specific way of approaching the body and physical culture") results in an analysis that goes beyond the one-dimensional, often externally imposed (e.g. by the media) interpretations of this complex and heterogeneous cultural phenomenon.[3]

The aim of the present work is to explore (in the local Polish context) elderly women's experiences of belonging to a community of female individuals that identify with fitness culture. Belonging is discussed and understood not objectively, but through the exercising women's subjective experiences. The article tackles the following questions: What kind of belonging is constructed by elderly female fitness culture participants within the fitness setting in Warsaw? What are the reasons for the development of a sense of belonging? What facilitates or impedes these belongings? These issues are discussed to present a more nuanced understanding of elderly women's attachment to a fitness community.

The article pertains to the experiences of a specific group of women—namely fitness culture participants over sixty years of age, who engage in various kinds of group training. These women only exercise in mixed-age groups (and thus, essentially, in the company of younger gym goers) and do not seem interested in training sessions targeted at senior citizens.

Dominika Czarnecka is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Modern Ethnology and Anthropology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. Her research focuses on the anthropology of the body, anthropology of sport, visual anthropology, and the post-Cold War military heritage of Eastern Europe. Correspondence to: d.czarnecka@hotmail.com

It should be noted that most of the data gathered through ethnographic qualitative research and presented in this study pertains to the period between the first and the second lockdown of the fitness industry in Poland (14 March—6 June 2020, and 17 October 2020—28 May 2021 respectively), caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.[4] The epidemiological situation profoundly affected the functioning of gyms, imposing numerous changes. One crucial detail in the context of the present article is that after the fitness industry reopened, many gym chains removed classes for senior citizens from their schedule. This policy of minimizing risk (financial on the part of the club; and health-related in the case of elderly gym goers) is likely to have been one of the reasons why some senior citizens decided not to return to fitness clubs after the spring lockdown.

After presenting the theoretical and methodological framework for the research, the article shall examine the local context of physical activity for the elderly in Poland. This is a necessary step towards a more thorough understanding of elderly women's experiences of belonging to a fitness community in Warsaw. The section entitled *Findings* presents the research results. The data provided in this article are a part of a broader research project, in which fitness culture in Poland is analyzed as a gendered phenomenon.

The Theoretical Framework

The idea of belonging may mean various things in different contexts. In the broadest sense, the concept of belonging refers to diverse social and spatial attachments that relate individuals to other people, groups, places or modes of being.[5] Belonging is processual (i.e. becoming rather than being), situational and relational in character.[6] Due to the temporal nature of belonging, it is negotiated and constructed across one's lifespan, and ageing can impact one's ability to build a sense of belonging in time.[7]

Two subjectively experienced forms of belonging are usually mentioned in the context of sport: "normativity" and "expressivity."[8] Normativity is defined as an individual's wish to be a part of the community through participation in collectively defined practices, norms and rules. Expressivity connects an individual with the community by the confirmation of the self which that participation produces. For the purpose of the present analysis, belonging is defined through expressivity "as a sense of ease with oneself and one's surroundings that is fundamental to our

sense of self."[9] However, for expressivity to be used as the theoretical framework to explore and make sense of elderly women's subjective experiences of belonging within the fitness setting, the concept needs to be defined in a more precise fashion. In itself, participation in fitness practices does not automatically result in the emergence of feelings of belonging. Involvement in motion practices may engender and enhance feelings of belonging, but it may also weaken them (the same is true with feelings of difference). For feelings of belonging to emerge, a person must have the impression of being a fully-fledged participant of a given culture of movement, and being accepted for who they are.[10]

Ageing is not without importance in the context of creating a sense of belonging, since "time itself is an important source of belonging, but one that is unequally accessible to people of different ages because of contemporary cultural scripts that present life as a linear progression into the future."[11] Future horizons may significantly affect the way an individual constructs and orients feelings and sense of belonging within the present, whereas normative social clocks influence a person's ability to build a sense of belonging, often having a limiting effect.

For the purpose of analysis, the present article moves away from naturalistic views in which age and ageing are assumed to be fundamentally biological phenomena. Following theoretical categories established by Cheryl Laz, I assume age and ageing to be social and cultural constructions that "we (individually and collectively) work at making meaningful (in general and in particular) in interaction and in the context of institutions and social structures."[12]

The last of the key categories in the theoretical framework of this article is "fitting in." In the context of fitness culture, "fitting in" may be defined as continual work to obtain the desired body; in the case of elderly fitness culture participants, the objective is not a young, toned, sexually attractive female figure, but has more to do with connecting the cultural demand for attractiveness with the "aesthetics" of a healthy looking body.[13] "Fitting in" is related to the basic self-image. The process of reducing differences between fitness culture participants through the pursuit of an ideal body is directly connected to an individual's readiness to accept the norms located within the current consumer culture. Juxtaposing feelings of belonging and the category of "fitting in" within the fitness setting is all the more justified given the fact that the latter may affect individual identity construction and the development of subjectively positive or subjectively negative experiences of belonging in gym goers.

The Methodological Framework

This study is based on ethnographic qualitative methods: (a) four semi-structured in-depth interviews with female fitness culture participants (recorded and transcribed), (b) observant participation, (c) informal conversations.[14] To ensure the credibility of the qualitative data, triangulation of data was applied.[15]

The four semi-structured in-depth interviews and informal conversations with female exercisers were face-to-face. All the interviewees were White women between sixty and eighty-nine years of age, who have for many years been regular participants in various types of group training. The shortest period of participation was five years, the longest, around thirty years. Three of the respondents are retired, one is still professionally active. For the sake of anonymity, the names appearing in the article have been changed. All respondents were given prior information about the objectives of my research and participated in it willingly.

The field research was conducted after the end of the spring lockdown of Poland's fitness industry, in one of the low-cost fitness clubs of Warsaw. All participants in the study were elderly female exercisers who have returned to the club after it reopened. Reducing the scope of research to a very specific group of physically active elderly women may be regarded as a significant limitation of the present study. Experiences of elderly women who only participate in training dedicated for senior citizens are likely very different. However, given the fact that female fitness culture participants over sixty years of age constitute a diverse group, the focus on women who do not (nor wish to) attend classes dedicated for seniors results in a more nuanced picture of the complexity of experiences of belonging within the group of elderly female fitness culture participants, leading to a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon.

The focus on women's experiences may also be a limiting factor, yet the choice was not accidental. First of all, group fitness activities in Warsaw are attended predominantly by women. Secondly, since I have myself worked as a fitness instructor, the experiences of female gym goers are closer to my own. Thirdly, the present article was a part of a broader research project, focused solely on the experiences of women in fitness culture.

Physical Activity in Later Life in Poland

As is the case with other European countries, the Polish society as a whole is progressively ageing. By the end of 2019, Poland's population amounted to 38.4 million, over 9.7 million (more than 25%) of which were people over fifty-nine years of age, 58.1% of them women. This means that the number of senior citizens rose by over 900 thousand in comparison to 2015.[16]

In principle, senior citizens "continue to have lower levels of physical activity than the rest of the population."[17] The most recent data collected in Poland corroborate this statement; regular participation in any kind of sports activity was declared by only 10.6% seniors, with men proving to be slightly more active than women.[18]

Physical activity in later life is socially, historically and culturally located.[19] Nevertheless, it cannot be regarded solely in terms of material resources which allow the elderly to be actively involved in the processes of consuming and choosing new forms of leisure. Almost equally important are the social and cultural associations connected with the ageing processes and the physical capabilities of senior citizens, as well as the forms of physical activity

deemed (un)acceptable by and for this age group. Gender norms also play a role in this context. Studies suggest that "Older women suffer more negative stereotypes because they live longer and also because gender is so often the basis of social inequalities."[20] Gender norms may affect recommendations pertaining to physical activity; some forms are presented as detrimental, or even harmful to older bodies, especially female older bodies, which allegedly lose their physical competence.[21]

The Polish society is still exposed to narratives of decline, which portray ageing as a process that is not only passive, but also negatively associated with crisis, deficit and decline.[22] With these narratives come specific expectations regarding the (in)appropriateness of given behaviors in later life; these expectations may also affect the causality of individuals and the choices they make. Academic research has confirmed that the physical activity of senior citizens and the associated social participation, "greatly influences the perceived wellness of older adults."[23] As far as Poland is concerned, despite the promotion of physical activity among the elderly, the gradual elimination of the related stereotypes, and the growing awareness of the benefits of staying in motion, the fashion for an active lifestyle has not yet developed to any significant degree.[24]

Fitness is an exceedingly institutionalized and commercialized form of physical activity, shaped by the material and ideological conditions of its time. In recent years and before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of elderly people attending commercial fitness clubs in Poland has gradually been rising, yet no official statistics in this regard are kept.[25] As "serious leisure" or "rational recreation," fitness is situated somewhere between amateur ideology and professional sport.[26] Fitness spaces allow people to perform embodied practices, which may, in other social settings, be seen as inappropriate. They also provide an opportunity to demonstrate one's chosen lifestyle, "feel a sense of social belonging."[27] At the same time, fitness spaces are the stage of the policy of "new ageing," based on a neo-liberal ideology of health. Within this policy, individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through engaging in physical activity, which is directly related to the demonization of sedentary behavior. On the one hand, the new model of ageing allows older adults to develop identities resistant to the narrative of decline; on the other, it may be used to promote new forms of intervention and presenting physical activity as an anti-ageing practice, in which there is no acceptance for ageing processes as an inevitable stage in human life.[28]

For senior citizens, fitness spaces may at the same time be inclusive and non-inclusive; they offer the possibility for sharing meaningful experiences with other participants of fitness culture, yet only able-bodied adults are considered welcome.

Belonging Through Bodily Practices

Fitness plays an important role in the life of each of my respondents. In the period when the interviews were conducted, all of these women participated in group training at least twice a week. Two of the exercisers declared taking part in group training at least five times a week. Acquiring a fitness club membership card, or even participating in group classes, does not automatically lead to the development of feelings of belonging to the "community of practice," as the fitness community is often called.[29] Unlike team sports (e.g. football or basketball), which provide an opportunity for women to *do* or *achieve* together and develop close bonds with teammates, fitness practices, although sometimes performed in groups, represent a highly individualistic form of physical activity. Rebecca (age 60) admitted: "I don't have any contacts from a fitness club specifically. I don't. My only contact is during fitness classes and eventually a few minutes after." Similar conclusions may be drawn from the statement made by Anna (age 60): "These are not contacts that are very close … Just casual acquaintances, but we do sometimes meet up [with other gym goers] in a pub or something."

In Dr. Czarnecka's study she interviewed older women who were members of group exercise classes in Poland during the time of the Covid Pandemic in 2020. Although older, some of the women participated in Zumba aerobics dance classes as this group of mixed-age women is doing here. The women in this photo were not part of the study.

This does not indicate that fitness spaces are lonely and isolating, but rather that fitness culture participants enjoy engaging in activity alongside other members, but "on their own."[30] This self-imposed isolation has certain consequences for the emergence of feelings of belonging within the fitness community. While crafting emotional closeness to, or distance from, other fitness culture participants is possible, it is (at the most) secondary in importance to the possibility of expression through bodily practices.

Feelings of belonging to a particular mode of being and moving do not emerge automatically after an individual joins group practices, but develop with time and in relation to the process of becoming a competent fitness culture participant. Catherine (age 89) expressed this as follows:

> I even said at home that I am so glad that I was not like that, because I was a bit embarrassed, because I thought that these young people would do [exercises] and that there was nothing I could look for there. But I noticed that there is not so bad. I don't want to brag but I truly feel inside me that there is not so bad … Yes, I was a bit afraid, I was. Whether I would, you know, there is a difference after all, a big one, it's not just, well, but it turned out that I can manage. Maybe it's not always easy, or pretty, but yeah, as I feel it, it's not bad at all (laughs).

Catherine's statement indicates that the emergence of feelings of belonging to a fitness community is processual in nature. Despite her initial presuppositions on the physical prowess of younger gym goers and anxiety over the potential of her own ageing body, through comparing herself with younger female exercisers in actual practices of movement and exploring her changing physical capabilities, in time encouraged Catherine to engage in regular training, improved her self-esteem and consolidated in her the view that age does not have to be an impediment to leading a physically active life.

This being said, in the case of elderly gym goers, the emergence of personal and subjectively positive experiences of belonging through participation in practices of movement is not dependent solely on developing the physical capabilities of gym bodies. Rebecca confessed:

> Well, when I look at all these girls, but usually it happens that there is someone like me, who can't perform everything perfectly. Just like these sit-ups today, none of us could do it, only you (laughs). So I am encouraged by the fact that the others don't work out either. It is not about being better than others, no, it is just good for my psychological well-being when I am not the only one in a group who is unable to perform correctly.

In Rebecca's case, feelings of belonging to a fitness community developed not only through involvement in practices of movement, but also through the experience of inability to perform certain exercises being shared by most of the people in the group, which in turn had a profound impact on weakening her feelings of difference due to age.

Involved participation in practices of movement and being able to "keep up" during mixed-age fitness group classes made my respondents feel like fully-fledged participants of fitness culture. Significantly, all of them were convinced that they would not get this feeling if they chose to participate in classes dedicated solely to elderly gym goers. This matter shall be explored in detail in a further section of the article.

The Pleasures of Exercising

To develop positive feelings of belonging to a fitness community, my respondents needed to become involved in exercise practice, but also to derive pleasure from it. For the purpose of the present article, pleasure through fitness activity is defined as "diverse emotions that make a person 'feel good.'"[31] Embodied pleasures of physicality (which are multidimensional in nature) transcend the imperative to stay healthy and take responsibility for one's own wellbeing. In the case of my interviewees, enjoyment and the experience of positive sensations of movement seems to have been an equally important factor in maintaining regular physical activity and developing a subjective feeling of acceptance, which in turn resulted in a deepening emotional attachment to fitness community. My respondents' statements point to various kinds of pleasure they experience when participating in group fitness practices. Rebecca expressed this as follows:

> So, I think, this is because I simply exercise. That it gives me a lot, affects my immunity. And my psyche, my psyche above all else. So well, and I say this, it is a source of pleasure. Why would I deny myself this? So the main goal is just to relax … And even if sometimes I get out of there all drained, 'cause with the Zumba it can get like this, to me it is enjoyable.

Catherine, in turn, mentioned the pleasure experienced in connection to the practice of correcting by touch, stating that she perceives the touch of the instructor during class as "so delicate, of course, very much so … it's not even a thing to consider. After all, it's all very pleasant."[32] Anna confessed: "I like it, I simply like [workout]. And I have my colleagues. And all of them think nearly the same, they also like it. So it just gives me so much pleasure." While Rebecca's statement connects pleasure with the sensations experienced through the ageing body after a training session, in Catherine's comment it is sensual pleasures that are in the foreground. Anna's words refer to the positive sensations of movement itself and indicate that, within the fitness community, embodied pleasures of

physicality are not only private, but also public in character. In an "individual but together" modality, the pleasures of exercising are collectively appreciated and shared, which means that their significance goes beyond the individual level. Furthermore, all of the above statements suggest that elderly exercisers construct their understanding of pleasure in the fitness setting based on positive (e.g. joy, relaxation), and not negative capabilities (e.g. the absence of pain, illness, fear).

What my respondents found to be an important aspect of experiencing the pleasures of fitness was performing physical exercises in a group, and therefore sharing these meaningful experiences with other fitness culture participants. Anna admitted:

> The group, for instance with Zumba, has to consist of at least ten people, then it is… if two or three people show up for Zumba, then it's not Zumba at all, it does not have the right effect. When there's a whole group, and the sequence comes out alright, and we get praised by the instructor, then it's great, we can see it ourselves that we enjoyed it. So this has a different appeal.

Further in the interview, she added: "Truth to tell, in a group with only older people, I would not want to [exercise], not at all. Because the younger ones, they provide this positive energy." Thus, similarly to other respondents, Anna identified the source of pleasure not with sharing experiences as such, but with sharing them with younger exercisers. In this context, Amy's (age 60) statement seems all the more direct: "I like to come, to make myself younger (laughs). I like to come, to make myself younger, there's music, and I like this kind of disco music. And you feel different, more relaxed . . . Being around young people is the best."Aside from referring to various pleasures of exercising, the above statement draws attention to the affectively transformative experience of looking at younger women, training alongside them and being in their company.[33] It results in deeper feelings of being more comfortable in one's own ageing body. In conclusion, the fact that elderly female exercisers experience various kinds of pleasure leads to the development of positive feelings of belonging to a community of practice through the confirmation of self and constructing a positive self-image.

"I would not take part in such classes …"

In the case of my respondents, the construction of a positive self-image and reinforcing the feelings of belonging to a fitness community happens, in a sense, in opposition to other individuals in their age group. This being said, the interviewees were open about the fact that in spite of their active lifestyle, their ageing bodies do change in time.

Being physically active, elderly female exercisers describe elderly people leading more sedentary lifestyles using the narrative of decline. Amy put it thusly: "And, as I say, looking at people my age, they are fat, obese, they have no strength, or look terrible, because they don't take care of themselves." She also added:

> Among my friends, I am the exception. I don't know if they don't like exercising, or what…[I exercise] simply for the sake of my health, maybe earlier it was more to keep my figure, because one wanted, you know, not to gain weight…to keep that figure…but now it's mostly to be healthy, not to get any ailments and to be strong, because at some point you start to lose this strength, to keep all of it.

Anna and Catherine made similar statements:

> They don't do things and say they can't. And I really don't think this is true, I think she can do anything, only tells herself otherwise . . . They go to various doctors, get treatment, swallow some pills, some physiotherapy here, some procedure there, can't do this, can't do that. I don't go anywhere, don't see any doctors, take no pills and I'm fine. That's the difference. (Anna)

> This is either some illness, many people are ailing, if they have a constant headache, they really can't. But there are also people who, out of laziness, go "I'm no longer fit for this," there's this resignation. Not even because of financial reasons, because it's not like this, I know how it is. It's not because of this. It's just either reluctance or some illness. (Catherine)

In the context of the present analysis, the more important fact is that my respondents placed themselves in opposition not only to less active individuals, but also to other fitness culture participants who only attend classes dedicated to senior citizens. Although all interviewees admitted that such training sessions are needed, they declared no interest in participating in active senior classes. Rebecca justified it thusly:

> I mean, I don't feel that I am so old. And usually younger [women] participate … It makes me feel good because I prefer to work out in a younger group than to go to these old-timers, I mean seniors. It is like I feel better psychologically, much younger. Because I don't feel as old as I am, even though I am a grandmother. It is somehow better for me when I am in a younger [group], and nobody points out your age, that you are old and you participate in these classes.

Amy declared:

> There should be [active senior classes]. I would not take part in such classes, because they are slow, the elders are unused to exercise, the ones that don't attend and will not do certain exercises, and certain exercises are not for them, because they don't have this kind of body anymore… An elder who's been exercising since forever will be different.

The above statements indicate that respondents distinguish elderly participants of fitness culture not so much based on the criterion of biological age, which seems to be a porous and permeable boundary, constantly crossed by interviewees, but rather on the basis of physical capabilities, and consequently also meaningful embodied experiences of the ageing body. Thus, it is not only about the (in)ability to perform certain exercises at the right pace, but also about the inability (or limitation of the ability) to experience the sensations of movement itself as something pleasurable. My respondents perceived participation in active senior classes as something that would not only have a negative impact on their self-image, but also deprive them of the feeling of being fully fledged participants of fitness culture. For them, the reaffirmation of the self through practices of movement is directly related to their sense of being able-bodied adults.

Belonging and Fitting In

Each of my respondents acted in accordance with the model of "new ageing," engaging in physical activity in the belief that the responsibility for their health and wellbeing was theirs alone. By exercising regularly, they showed concern for their body, aware that this body will be changing as time goes by. Amy made the following statement referring to herself:

> At my age, looking at other people, there is a difference because fitness gave me a figure that is not fat, not obese, has this capability that, for example, I can walk up stairs, jump, do things, where other people don't…I didn't even realize that in the summer I put on a T-shirt or something, and I have this feeling that I still need to exercise to get somewhere, but when I go to the doctor or someone says "oh, it shows that you exercise, you have a sporty figure." So people do notice it, it shows in my figure.

Although Amy was aware that she did not look "perfect," by presenting "external" evidence (opinions she heard about herself) she expressed the belief that she fits in, conforms to the aesthetics of a healthy-looking body. This contributed to a more positive self-image and the emergence of personal feelings of belonging to a fitness community. It should, however, be noted that not all of my respondents were in a similar situation. For example, Rebecca exercised regularly and at the level of life experience felt healthy, strong, and much younger than her biological age might suggest, yet did not manage to lose weight. Her obesity did not fit the aesthetics of a healthy-looking body, which worried her to some extent:

> All in all I know how old I am, I know that this body, this figure is changing. But also to prevent this, not to get, how to put it, any larger. And when I compare myself with my two sisters, because I have two sisters…although I weigh a lot myself, they weigh a lot more. And I say that exercise also prevents medical conditions … And the psyche, above all, it's for my psyche. So, well, as I say, it gives me pleasure…If I don't manage to [lose weight], it doesn't discourage me that I keep exercising and I still put on [weight].

Later in the interview she added:

> You know what, I like if there's someone in the group who is, so to speak, larger than me…It is good for my psyche, to see that, let's say, it's often that I am the largest in volume. But when I see that there are young girls and they are more like this, it is also good for my psyche.

Despite not fitting in at the level of externally imposed body ideals, through participation in practices of movement or, more precisely, the opportunity to express herself and experience the pleasure derived from exercising, Rebecca was able to develop positive feelings of belonging to a fitness community. Furthermore, training with younger women, many of whom were "larger" than her, provided reinforcement for her positive self-image and the feeling of self-acceptance. Rebecca's example demonstrates that while fitting in may have a positive impact on strengthening personal feelings of belonging in elderly female exercisers, its role is not decisive in the context of their potential development.

Conclusion

Elderly female gym goers who are over sixty years of age and take part only in mixed-age training constitute a very specific group of fitness culture participants. Following a neo-liberal model of "healthy ageing" (in which physical activity is of key importance), they challenge the negative stereotypes associated with the physical capabilities of the female ageing body, and develop identities "resistant" to the narrative of decline. Conversely, by developing their temporal selves (or, more precisely, their ageing selves), elderly female exercisers have shown interest in the future. Their resistance contains a deliberate element of distancing from other ageing bodies—from both elderly people who do not exercise and fitness culture participants only attending classes dedicated to senior citizens.

Through participation in fitness practices in mixed-age groups, elderly female gym goers develop positive feelings of belonging to a "fully" able-bodied fitness community. Despite the ongoing changes, their positive self-image is enhanced by the ability to feel the pleasures of physicality during exercising, and the fact that their ageing moving bodies are still a site of pleasures (and not only the object of intervention). Thus, the experience of multiple pleasures of physicality and enjoyment is productive in constituting social belongings. At the same time, involvement in group training and the ability to keep up with the pace lets older women "maintain a presence in the world through their physical selves," produces a feeling of being accepted by able-bodied exercisers and confirms their own identities.[34]

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Notes:

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A Place for Women:
University Gymnasiums, 1867-1969

by Kristen Wilson
The University of Texas at Austin

On 4 April 1896, seven-hundred women gathered at the Page Street Armory in San Francisco to watch the first women's intercollegiate basketball game ever held.[1] The contest pitted nine Cal Berkeley women against nine Stanford women, a fierce rivalry already firmly in place despite the fact that Stanford had only opened its doors five years earlier.[2] The baffling final score of two-to-one in favor of Stanford can perhaps only be forgiven when one considers that the baskets were not equipped with backboards, and that the players were forbidden from passing or shooting with both hands.[3] San Francisco newspapers eagerly followed all of the events leading up to the game—the initial challenge by the Stanford women, the stipulations of the Berkeley team that "the contest take place indoors and not [contain men in the audience]," the battle between the teams over the fifteen-cent gate receipts, the pledge of the Berkeley players that "what they lack in physical strength and skill they will endeavor to make up in strategy," and finally the concluding assurance that decorum had been maintained at the game: "No Hair Was Pulled."[4] Future athletic classes and competitions for women (or the lack thereof) would be premised on the dilemmas of spectatorship, athleticism, and commercialism evident at this 1896 game.

Such concerns are illuminated in how early-twentieth-century women's gymnasiums were built—with non-regulation courts, pools, and other facilities—and how the construction of these gymnasiums evolved over time. The design choices made in constructing women's university gymnasiums reveal what physical educators, administrators, and American society more broadly thought was appropriate and possible for women athletes at different times. These (sometimes still-standing) buildings act, in fact, as time capsules. This paper focuses on three key eras of construction: the first gymnasiums built at women's colleges in the late 1860s and 1870s, the wave of new and expanded women's gymnasiums at public universities in the 1920s and 1930s, and the few final gymnasiums designed and built strictly for women in the decade before Title IX came into effect. It is certainly true that other non-university women's gymnasiums built in these eras often followed similar strictures and design choices, particularly YWCA clubs, but focusing on university gymnasiums allows us to consider the explicit educational (and often mandatory) nature of physical education as part of a university degree.[5] It also allows us to consider what types of physical education were part of a systematic construction of elite, well-educated, and almost wholly white American womanhood as it existed and evolved in these eras.

The first American university gymnasium exclusively designed for women was Vassar College's Calisthenium, completed in 1866.[6] Physical education was considered such a critical aspect of Vassar's mission that its 1865 prospectus listed "physical education" first in its "general scheme of education."[7] The prospectus states that "[physical education] is placed first, not as first in intrinsic importance, but as *fundamental* to all the rest . . . good health is essential to the successful . . . development of either the mental or moral powers."[8] The Vassar founders then assert that physical education is especially important to "the education of women," given their belief in "the particular delicacy of [women's] physical organization…[and] the transcendent importance of women's health to the highest domestic and national interests."[9] The long shadow of the Civil War likely influenced this emphasis on the importance of women's health to "domestic and national interests," especially given that the Civil War concluded the same year as the Vassar prospectus was written, and still stands as the deadliest war in American history, with approximately 620,000 men, two percent of the total population, dying.[10] The ability of women to give birth often and safely was and is tied to their physical health, and the birth of healthy children was and is tied to assumptions about the ability of a nation to defend and expand itself.[11]

Of additional concern at this time was the number of women who died of consumption (otherwise known as tuberculosis). In the 1860 U.S. Census, twenty-nine percent of the women aged fifteen to twenty who died that year, died of "*fever* and *consumption*," with the proportion who succumbed only rising for each age group thereafter.[12] Advocates like Catharine Beecher responded to this crisis of health by advertising calisthenic exercise as a means to improve the base health of American women and to allow them to be healthy mothers of healthy children—"When the wife and mother is suffering from the debility and pain of ill health, it not only ends her enjoyment of life, but a cloud of gloom settles over the whole family circle."[13] Given this context, the emphasis on physical education at Vassar and other women's colleges seems obvious and prudent.

As the name suggests, Vassar students initially used the Calisthenium for the practice of calisthenics,

Kristen Wilson is a Ph.D. student at the University of Texas at Austin in American Studies. Her work considers cultures of measurement and legacies of erasure in women's sports history. Correspondence to: kristenwilson@utexas.edu

particularly the system that Boston-based Dioclesian Lewis had developed for his courses at the Normal Institute for Physical Education as well as his girls' school and movement cure sanitarium in Lexington, Massachusetts.[14] Lewis initially developed the system of exercises after his wife—Helen Cecelia Clarke-Lewis—contracted consumption and "rapidly dropped in weight from 116 to 80 pounds."[15] Lewis' calisthenics involved routines with instruments like dumbbells, wands, clubs, and rings, the exercises structured around each movement flowing swiftly into the next, maintaining time with the music that was playing.[16] The repetitive nature of these routines prompted Lewis to invoke a telling military metaphor. He urges "*accuracy* in the performance of the feats . . . those who have studied our infantry drill, have been struck with its simplicity…[yet soldiers] return to their task every morning, for twenty years, with fresh and increasing interest."[17] Lewis also criticized the popular interest in heavy lifting with dumbbells, echoing fears that one's flexibility and muscular health would be damaged by over lifting.[18] Instead, he recommended no one use a dumbbell of more

In the Mount Holyoke gymnasium (circa 1900) women exercise with Indian clubs in a carefully prescribed formation. Note the stall bars on the walls used for Swedish Gymnastics, the basketball hoop, and the lack of space for bleachers. This was not a gym where sport was meant to be watched.

than two pounds so that one could accomplish "a hundred graceful attitudes…bringing the muscles into use in every direction" as part of a calisthenic routine.[19]

Vassar seems to have wholly subscribed to Lewis's philosophy in the early years of the Calisthenium, down to his advice to paint "a regular pattern of soles of feet in right angled pairs" at "about fifty-five inches apart," providing a designated starting point for calisthenic routines and prescribing the distance between women performing the exercises.[20] Lewis had also recommended that exercises be done to music asserting that, "feeble and apathetic people, who have little courage to undertake gymnastic training accomplish wonders under the inspiration of music."[21] To that end, the Calisthenium's broad, open calisthenics hall had at one end a raised stage where a piano would be played accompany the exercises.[22] It is also important to note that the Calisthenium initially contained a riding school, with stalls for twenty-three horses and "an indoor riding ring" within the Calisthenium itself.[23] The riding school floundered financially by 1873 and was transformed into "music rooms . . . [an] art gallery . . . and a museum of natural history."[24] Still, the early vision of riding horses and Lewis's calisthenics as the two forms of unimpeachable exercise for young, elite women is important, revealing the class dynamics at play in early university physical education.

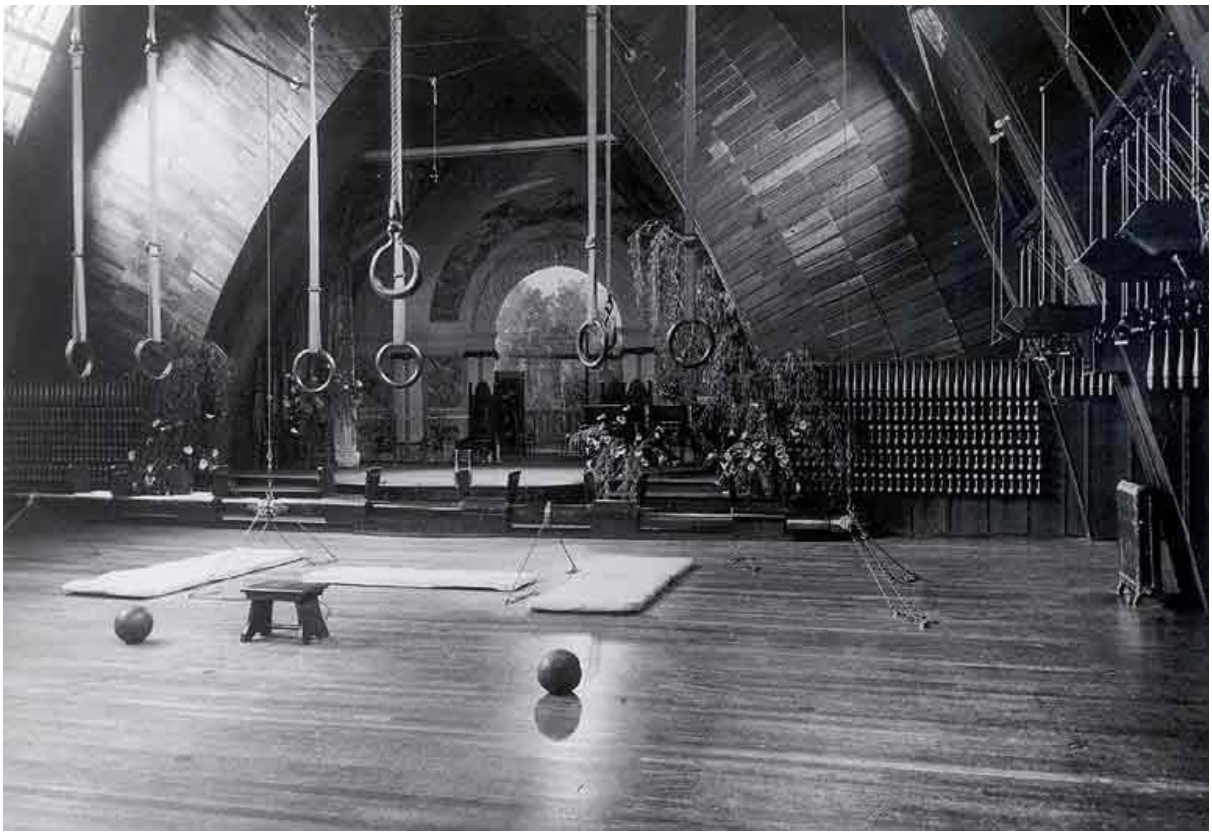
By 1876, ten years after the Calisthenium opened, Vassar athletics had expanded to include boating, baseball, and archery, with tennis, basketball, golf, swimming, skating, field hockey, bicycling, and track added by around 1898.[25] This surge in outdoor athletics necessitated the construction of the appropriate fields, courts, and equipment for each sport; unfortunately, little information survives about the quality of these facilities. The one detail stated over and over again is how well-sheltered the campus was from public view. One alumna and Vassar professor, Sophia Foster Richardson, remarked that "the public, so far as it knew of our playing, was shocked, but in our retired grounds and protected from observation . . . by sheltering trees, we continued to play in spite of a censorious public."[26] It is also telling that, "in 1889, the college put students in charge of all sports outside [of] physical education classes," this despite the fact that "students lacked the administrative and financial structures to carry out their new responsibilities."[27] The situation only improved with "the establishment of the Athletic Association in 1894," though the administration "often forced [the Association] to turn down invitations from other schools to compete."[28] Vassar only competed in an "annual tennis match with Bryn Mawr, and . . . [field] hockey games with the All-English and the Irish teams."[29] In this respect, Vassar was less outgoing than the other Seven Sisters' Schools, who competed in a greater variety of intercollegiate competition, many playing a few basketball or field hockey games each year with other sister colleges or outside clubs.[30] [Editors' Note: The term "Seven Sisters" refers to seven private women's universities in New England.]

The key aspect of all of these newly introduced exercises was, of course, the competition built into them, something distinctly missing from calisthenics. Vassar students took to competition readily; Professor Richardson recalled how "seven or eight baseball clubs suddenly came into being . . . ow[ing] their existence to a few quiet suggestions from a resident physician, wise beyond her generation."[31] In 1895, Vassar's Athletic Association started the first annual Field Day of any of the Seven Sister women's colleges and organized other intramural games. Field Day "f[ell] on [a] certain Saturday in late spring" and was "the focus of many athletic hopes and ambitions," attended by "throngs of chattering college girls brandishing their class colors, dozens of alumnae hardly less excited, and

a sprinkling of mothers, little sisters, and other feminine guests."[32] Much like the 1896 Stanford-Berkeley basketball game, competition was allowed only within certain parameters and strictly away from the gaze of male spectators. Field Day events included the "one-hundred-yard dash, 220-yard dash . . . running high jump . . . vault . . . [and the] base-ball throw."[33] Vassar studiously kept school records and record breakers earned a pink V on their sweater, the pride of their class.[34]

By 1889, it had become clear to some Vassar alumnae that the lack of new and more sport-minded facilities had put Vassar's physical education program behind those of the other Seven Sisters. This realization prompted alumnae to contribute the necessary funds to erect a new gymnasium to replace the Calisthenium.[35] The ground floor of the new Alumnae Gymnasium housed dressing rooms, a swimming pool, and a new exercise hall with much of the familiar calisthenic and gymnastic equipment from the Calisthenium.[36] During the winter, the second floor dramatic hall would be converted into "a tennis court and basket ball ground."[37] The Alumnae Gymnasium put Vassar back at the forefront of women's university athletics. In addition to accommodations for land-based exercise, the new facility also featured an approximately fourteen-by-seven meter swimming pool, "the largest in any school or college in the country."[38] While one *could* train for swimming competitions in the pool, it did contain certain features that hinted it was less of a competitive pool than a bathing pool.[39] As an example, the pool was not a regulation length, which was unsurprising considering the modern Olympics wouldn't start until 1896 and women would not be allowed to compete in Olympic swimming events until 1912. Nonetheless, the pool did become a limitation in later years, as did its successor, the 1932 pool at Kenyon Hall, which measured approximately twenty-three by twelve meters, another non-regulation length.[40] Photos of the original swimming pool reveal it to be both indoors and with high windows which, while not uncommon for university swimming pools even today, creates the effect, even if unintentionally, of hiding the swimming women from view, sheltering them once more from the gaze of not only a disapproving public, but also other women on campus.[41]

The baseless and unscientific concerns that exercise was harmful to women's health and temperament were, even with such design choices, largely kept at bay at women's colleges.[42] Professor Richardson succinctly responded to this criticism of "unwomanly" exercise in an article for *Popular Science Monthly* declaring: "The daughters of Sparta were handsomer and more attractive than the more delicately nurtured Athenians."[43] Vassar's physical educators also stood firm and did not yield to the pressure to discontinue women's athletics, as much as they may have disapproved of intercollegiate competition.



In the first two decades of the twentieth century, women students at the University of California at Berkeley trained in beautiful Hearst Hall for Women. Take note in the photo of the soaring wooden arches, the hanging rings and trapeze bars, and the row upon row of wooden Indian clubs and dumbbells hanging on the walls. Sadly, this architectural gem burned in 1921; Hearst Memorial Gym was built in its place.

Soon after baseball was introduced to Vassar, "a student, while running between the bases fell with an injured leg," potentially signaling the end of all baseball at Vassar. The faculty responded instead with assurances "that if the student had hurt herself while dancing the public would not condemn dancing to extinction," and sure enough soon after "a student did fall while dancing and broke her leg."[44] When baseball petered out in future years, Professor Richardson guessed it was due to "too much pressure against it from disapproving mothers."[45] Vassar students instead turned to more "ladylike" sports like tennis, with one account even singling out baseball as too "plebian" to be continued.[46] This again highlights the class element of sports that gained lasting traction in early women's university physical education.

The public concern for women's physical, mental, and moral health under the strains of exercise and competition reached a head in April 1923, when First Lady Lou Hoover called a conference of physical educators to address this issue, among others.[47] The conference "resulted in the establishment of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation."[48] With the emphasis on "amateur," the Federation prided itself on what distinguished it from the National Collegiate Athletic Association: namely that the Federation would focus on "maki[ing] participation possible for all, and strongly condemn the sacrifice of this object for the intensive training (even though physiologically sound) of the few."[49] The determination to emphasize participation for all over individual excellence dovetailed nicely with the overriding concern of the Federation "that [women] be protected from exploitation for the enjoyment of the spectator and for the athletic reputation or commercial advantage of any school or other organization."[50] The issue was not that women were incapable of playing or not worth watching, but rather the opposite: that university teams had become good enough that an undemocratic focus had fallen upon excellent women athletes, as had the exploitative and commercial gaze of the spectator and the university. The "undemocratic" angle of these arguments gained particular traction at public universities seeking to serve as many of their students as possible.

Much of this logic was internalized within the next wave of university women's gymnasium construction in the 1920s and 1930s, which doubled down on creating private spaces for many women to participate rather than for a few to compete. By the 1920s, public universities like the University of California, Berkeley (UC) and the University of Texas at Austin (UT) had not only begun to admit women, but admitted women at rates similar to, or even greater than, men. For the 1923-1924 academic year on UT's main campus, there were 1,802 women to 2,850 men.[51] For the 1924-1925 academic year (including summer sessions) on UC's main campus, there were 5,793 men to 8,364 women.[52] Prior to the construction of Phoebe Apperson Hearst Memorial Gymnasium for Women at UC Berkeley in 1927, and Anna Hiss Gymnasium at UT Austin in 1931, both universities allowed women spare hours in men's gymnasium spaces, but physical education would not be a given, as it had been in Vassar's prospectus.[53] At public universities, women had to fight for physical education. In 1892, legendary university donor and UC Regent Phoebe Apperson Hearst took an interest in the lives and health of the Berkeley women.[54] She started first with an endowment that provided scholarships to as many as twenty women annually, pushing the university towards parity in gender enrollment.[55] This would be the first of many times Hearst came to the rescue of the students.

When the Berkeley women first approached a university gymnastics instructor in 1891 to ask for use of the men's gymnasium, the instructor required that they obtain physicals to prove their health, then swiftly claimed that the university did not have the funds to cover such an expense.[56] Undeterred, the students turned to local physician, Dr. Mary Bennett Ritter, who agreed to perform the physicals free of charge.[57] Ritter found that many of the women were not in good health, even malnourished, and tracked the problem back to their expensive and inadequate housing—something the Bay Area has never struggled with again.[58]

Because the University of California charter initially specified that the university would not build any dormitories for students, Berkeley students often lived in attics and sheds. Many of these improvised housing units lacked access to running water, and students often did not have enough money left over to afford proper meals, leading to rampant malnutrition among the students.[59] Women were evidently perceived to be more vulnerable to these hardships, and though male students also tangentially benefited from Hearst's advocacy for proper housing, women were first and foremost on Hearst's mind when she skirted her fellow regents and went about purchasing and furnishing two clubhouses for a small number of women students.[60] The system grew to include at least forty-two such clubhouses.[61] This remedy to the dormitory policy is a direct consequence of the women students seeking out physical education and refusing to take "no" for an answer; it also speaks to the deeper mission of physical education in this era, the pursuit of hygienic and healthful living in all facets of student life.

After all of this, the women were granted time in the men's gymnasium when the men were off for their lunch hour and "three times a week during drill hour."[62] By 1900, physical education had become a requirement for women students, greatly increasing the time and space needed to fulfill this requirement.[63] Hearst came to the rescue once more, donating her three-story wooden banqueting hall to the cause of women's physical education. Hearst not only paid for the hall to be moved to the campus, she also bought and donated a new tract of land for it to sit on.[64] The banqueting hall, dubbed Hearst Hall, seems to have been used primarily for calisthenic exercises and gymnastics, but also doubled as a social club seeking to recreate a "home life" for the women of the university.[65] Hearst additionally donated a basketball court with a twelve-foot fence—presumably to ward off prying eyes—and, in 1914, a swimming pool.[66] All seemed well until the Berkeley women were struck with two tragedies in a short

span. The first was the loss of their great champion Phoebe Apperson Hearst to the influenza epidemic in 1919.[67] The second was the 1921 destruction of Hearst Hall in a fire, the cause of the fire still unknown.[68] On 22 June 1921, the morning after the fire, Phoebe Apperson Hearst's son, William Randolph Hearst, sent a telegram to Chancellor Barrows indicating his interest in rebuilding Hearst Hall: "I would like to rebuild this hall and its accessory buildings in fireproof materials as promptly as possible . . . my mother was so much interested in the welfare of the young women at the University that I am sure she would have wished to have the buildings immediately rebuilt and in a manner to prevent any such destruction in the future.[69]

Soon after, the women's physical education department sent a letter to the architects planning the gymnasium, stipulating that it must be able to serve over 8,000 women.[70] The department requested that enough showers be constructed to facilitate 700 women showering per hour, with special "attention . . . given to the working out of convenient routes of entry and exit" between "the different exercise centers to the shower rooms and to the administrative offices."[71] As a result of the request, the building is a maze of corridors that all have a way of leading back to the women's locker room, something of particular concern today given that the building is co-ed. Aside from this maze of corridors, the department additionally requested fourteen administrative offices of varying sizes, six gymnasiums, with four accommodating eighty students and two accommodating twenty-five students, two rest rooms with room for ten to twelve cots in each, a lecture hall for seventy-five students, a seminar room for twenty students, and bowling alleys, preferably on the ground floor.[72] In addition, the department anticipated the need for a fifty-yard archery range, two baseball diamonds, four basketball courts, two bowling greens, a clock golf turf, two cricket fields, croquet greens, a fencing green, four handball courts, two regulation field hockey turfs, and twelve tennis courts.[73] And, of course, there would need to be an outdoor swimming pool.[74]

When completed, Hearst Memorial Gymnasium met many of these specifications, though certainly not all. The building itself ended up looking like a squat fortress, with two above-ground stories and a basement constructed out of concrete, in order to make the building resistant to fire and earthquakes.[75] Outside of the wooden flooring for the exercise rooms, much of the rest of the building is a mix of smooth, concrete floors and slightly rougher, slip-resistant concrete, particularly around the pool and the corridors leading down into the women's locker room. Many of the first-floor windows are frosted glass, even outside of the locker rooms and bathrooms. Frosted glass, of course, allows light in but does not allow people on the outside to see in, consciously and concertedly protecting women from the gaze of any passersby. Frosted glass remains one of the easiest ways to spot a women's gymnasium even today. When I first arrived at UT-Austin, one of the buildings next to my department's home building had some curious frosted glass windows. It didn't take long to determine that this was Anna Hiss Gym, UT's women's

The hall adjoining Phoebe Apperson Hearst's home was renamed Hearst Hall for Women in the early 1900s.

After Hearst Hall was destroyed in a fire, Hearst Memorial Gymnasium was built in its place. This photo shows the newly constructed gymnasium in 1927.

gymnasium, which I will return to later in this paper. The fortress-like quality of Hearst Memorial Gymnasium in particular, and frosted glass in women's gyms more broadly, reveals the instinct of administrators and architects to be especially protective of the women inside.

The architects of Hearst Memorial Gymnasium again took particular pains to shield women from the gaze of others when they planned the entire building around the second-floor, open-air North Pool. The choice to make the pool outdoors—taking advantage of the feasibility of swimming year-round in California—while also preserving the ability to shield women from the gaze of others, led to a strange set-up. It is, as one may guess, extremely inconvenient to put a pool on the second-floor of a building. It seems that the entire space under the pool on the first floor is reserved for storage and pool maintenance equipment, taking a huge chunk out of the useful square footage of the building.[76] At the time of the gymnasium's construction, no building in the vicinity would have been of a height to render the pool deck visible, save for the Campanile, which is some distance away and whose bell tower might not have been accessible to the public.[77] Still more

curious is the concrete partition built along three sides of the pool, obscuring it even from the view of women passing by on their way to the locker room or participating in a class on the second floor of the building. While in the pool, the only one who can see the women is the lifeguard, and the only direction the women can look is north, towards the Campanile. When one looks up at the pool deck from the ground today, all that is visible is the lifeguard tower, which may not have been a part of the original construction, but serves as a functional embodiment of the protective gaze baked into the building.

The North Pool, aside from being on the second-floor, also bears another baffling distinction from most other pools: it is thirty-three and one-third meters long. Even more deliberately than the Vassar pools and the previous Berkeley pool, the North Pool in its very construction discourages swimming the traditional meter distances used in competition, fifty or one-hundred meters for example, and utterly destroys the ability to record twenty-five-meter splits. The inability to compare oneself to records others set in regulation pools is entirely intentional, at once discouraging women from the perceived corruption of competition and potentially warding off any men from the new pool, assuming they would want to record their times. The only sort of competition the pool allows is limited to the women actively in the pool at any given time, women often under the supervision of watchful instructors who would likely have discouraged too much competition. Similarly, the basketball courts at Hearst Memorial Gymnasium are non-regulation lengths, discouraging competition as they disregard the standardized rules and regulations of play that makes competition possible.[78] The lines of court also often cut close to the wall, leaving no room for bleachers or, in some cases, even standing room for spectators. This absence is particularly striking when one considers that the new men's Harmon Gymnasium, completed in 1933, had a 7,000-seat auditorium for precisely the sort of athletic competitions that women had, at the level of the building itself, been "protected" from.[79]

As for the class elements evident in the building, it was designed by two of the most prominent California architects of their age, Julia Morgan of Hearst Castle fame and Bernard Maybeck of Palace of Fine Arts fame. Both were trained at the Beaux Arts Academy in Paris and built the gymnasium following the Beaux Arts principles, evident in the elevated entry to the main floor and the numerous balustrades, columns, and balconies.[80] The dedication to Beaux Arts principles throughout the campus aligned with the university's mission to style itself as the "Athens of the West," an elitist construction if ever there was one.[81]

On a related note, I want to turn to an especially troubling aspect of the gymnasium's history. In addition to her generosity towards the university and especially the women of the university, Phoebe Apperson Hearst funded an anthropological museum as well as the anthropological work of Professor Alfred L. Kroeber.[82] When the university built and dedicated an anthropology building to Kroeber in 1959, they built it next to Hearst Memorial Gymnasium.[83] What was not on display at the Kroeber Hall museum, renamed the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropol-

This photo, taken from the University of Texas Tower, provides an aerial view of Anna Hiss Gym as it was first constructed. The gym opened in April 1931 and was originally named The Women's Gym before it was renamed in honor of Anna Hiss, the university's beloved director of Women's Physical Training.

ogy in 1991, was stored in the basement of the women's gymnasium next door.[84] As of 2008, there were the human "remains of about 12,000 American Indians in drawers and cabinets in the gym's basement . . . many of them were dug up by university archaeologists and have been stored under the pool since the early 1960s."[85] The university has resisted and continues to resist the repatriation of these remains and of artifacts within the collections.[86] As of 2020, "only 20% of some 500,000 artifacts" have been returned, "the lowest percentage of the audited campuses . . . UCLA has returned almost all of its artifacts."[87] In the last year, UC Berkeley has decided to rename three buildings on its campus due to the racist legacies of their namesakes: Boalt Hall, LeConte Hall, and Barrows Hall.[88] Discussion remains underway about the renaming of Kroeber Hall.[89] One source suggests that the human remains kept at Hearst Gymnasium were rehoused in more suitable storage under Kroeber Hall in 2016.[90] Even if that is the case, these remains spent decades under the pool at Hearst Gymnasium, a pool that under normal circumstances is used daily by the campus community. There is scarcely a better metaphor one could think of when considering the consequences of how university communities think of themselves and their bodies and how they think of the bodies of those they deem scientifically interesting.

While Anna Hiss Gymnasium does not bear this dark legacy, it certainly resonates with Hearst Memorial Gymnasium in many design elements, including frosted glass as far as the eye can see, non-regulation sized courts and pools, and a sheltered interior courtyard.[91] Perhaps most importantly, just as there was a before-Phoebe and after-Phoebe for the Berkeley women's physical education program, there was a before-Anna and after-Anna for UT. Anna Hiss graduated from the Sargent School, today Boston University, in 1917 and joined the faculty at UT in 1918.[92] She made an immediate impact on campus, was "promoted to director" of the women's physical education program by 1921, and spent her first decade at UT "found[ing] nearly a dozen sports clubs" for swimming, interpretive dance, archery, hiking and camping, tennis, horseback riding, golf, and fencing, among others.[93] When the university administration agreed to fund a new men's gymnasium, Gregory Gymnasium, in the late 1920s, Hiss made the case for a new women's gymnasium as well, pointing to the dismal "frame structure" they had been resigned to using since 1918.[94] Hiss "traveled the nation at her own expense to visit other top-rated women's gymnasiums," then secured $400,000 in alumni funding to build the Women's Gymnasium, renamed Anna Hiss Gymnasium in 1974.[95] Throughout her thirty-six-year career at UT, Hiss was resistant to competition and focused on the participation-model also in vogue at UC Berkeley.[96] She kept mirrors around the gymnasium and took before and after photos of students, urging them to be aware of their posture and the changes in their body after a semester of exercise.[97] Her earnest hope was that every woman would leave UT Austin with the tools and self-confidence they needed to live a healthful life.[98]

Due to the Great Depression, World War II, the post-war effort to expand university education for returning GIs, and the push for women to return back to the home and away from universities and serious athletic activity, construction of new university women's gymnasiums stalled for decades.[99] The declining enrollment of women as a percentage of undergraduates, as well as the declining power of women academics, who had made up "a record 32.5 percent of college presidents, professors, and instructors" in 1930, cemented the lack of co-ed university interest in building new athletic facilities for women.[100] It was only as women's enrollment began to rebound in the 1960s that some universities looked at their inadequate and/or outdated infrastructure and built a few final gymnasiums constructed solely with women in mind.[101] One example is Gerlinger Annex at the University of Oregon, completed in 1969.[102] The annex sits next to Gerlinger Hall, the original women's gymnasium from 1921, and served as a practice and competition space for some of the university's women's teams, including gymnastics and volleyball.[103] The annex appears to be equipped with bleachers that fold out of the walls, easy to put away when the space is being used for practice or physical education classes, a marked change from the lack of bleachers in many earlier women's gymnasiums.

The passage of Title IX in 1972 transformed women's athletics in fundamental ways, not least of which was the gradual gender integration of most men's and women's physical education facilities and competitive arenas. In the time since Title IX, gymnasiums formerly reserved for women have increasingly been reserved for intramural clubs and physical education classes, as they often lack the regulation sizing to be useful for varsity athletic teams. Hiss Gymnasium lost its pool to another building deemed more important and its remaining gymnasium has been converted into a robotics lab.[104] Sadly, many of these gymnasiums have been allowed to fall into disrepair or been selected for demolition to make room for new campus constructions that more accurately reflect the needs of the student body. It is important, with the women's university gymnasiums we have remaining, to record their histories and with them the history of how women's physical education has evolved to reflect new understandings of the capability of women and the goals of a university degree.

Notes:

1. "Stanford Wins at Basket-Ball," *San Francisco Call*, 5 April 1896. See also: Leslie Mitchell, "The World's First Women's College Basketball Team," 10 August 2020, viewed at: *calbearshistory.com.*
2. Mitchell, "World's First Women's College Basketball Team."
3. Ibid. The lack of backboard, the penalty for shooting or passing with two hands, and the restriction of players to zones of the court originated from Clara Gregory Baer's "Basquette" rulebook, first published in 1893, and swiftly popularized as a means to transform basketball into a "safer" sport for women. As practiced at the Stanford-Berkeley game, Baer's rules also segmented the court into different zones that each team would assign a player to, incurring a penalty if they left their designated zones. This supposedly "lessen[ed] the danger of collision . . . [and] prevent[ed] the rush of many players after the ball." "Re-

marks and Comments," *Mind and Body* 3, no. 25 (March 1896): 22; See also: Clara Gregory Baer, *Newcomb College Basket Ball Guide For Women: Collegiate Rules* (New Orleans, LA: The Tulane University of Louisiana, 1895).
4. "Co-Ed Basketball Players," *San Francisco Call,* 7 March 1896; "Sport Girls Play At," *San Francisco Examiner*, 11 March 1896; "Basket-Ball Maids," *San Francisco Call*, 4 April 1896; "Stanford Wins at Basket-Ball."
5. Julia Morgan, one of the architects behind the Hearst Memorial Gymnasium, discussed later in this paper, designed YWCA buildings up and down California, as well as one in Honolulu. Her work between the university gymnasium and the YWCA buildings is consistent, sharing certain assumptions and design choices. See: Ginger Wadsworth, *Julia Morgan: Architect of Dreams* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing, 1990), 58, 69, 108; Sara Holmes Boutelle and Julia Morgan, *Julia Morgan, Architect* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 2010), 101-105.
6. John A. Wood, "Calisthenium and Riding Academy (Avery Hall)," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, 2005, viewed at: vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu.
7. *Prospectus of the Vassar Female College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.* (New York, NY: C.A. Alvord, 1865), 3.
8. Ibid., 3-4.
9. Ibid., 4.
10. "Civil War Casualties," *American Battlefield Trust*, n.d., viewed at: battlefields.org.
11. "Improving Maternal Health Outcomes with a Focus on Physical Activity," *Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion*, 12 May 2020, viewed at: health.gov; See also: Richard H. Steckel, "Health and Mortality of Women and Children, 1850-1860," *Journal of Economic History* 48, no. 2 (June 1988): 333-345. As for the contention that children are held up as a nation's future power and potential, the examples are almost too numerous; the way that Theodore Roosevelt talks about sending his sons to war and the American people as "the sons of the men of the Civil War, the sons of the men who had iron in their blood" is particularly instructive. See: Theodore Roosevelt, "Second State of the Union," (Washington, D.C., 2 December 1902) viewed at: https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/state-of-the-union-address-98/; Theodore Roosevelt, "Letters to Henry Bordeaux," 27 May 1918 and 27 June 1918.
12. U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistics of The United States in 1860: The Eighth Census* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866), 263.
13. Catharine E. Beecher, *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1858), 164; See also: Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women, 1800-1875* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 137-162.
14. Ibid., 214, 263; See also: Allen Guttman, *Women's Sports: A History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), 113.
15. Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful*, 214, 263.
16. Dio Lewis, *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women, and Children* (Boston, MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1862), 13-14, 18, 28, 42, 59, 87.
17. Ibid., 64-65.
18. Ibid., 61-63.
19. Ibid., 61.
20. Ibid., 14; For first half of quote, see: Dorothy S. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education in Colleges for Women* (New York, NY: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1930), 36-38.
21. Lewis, *The New Gymnastics*, 14; Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 26-38.
22. Ibid., 26-38; Lewis, *The New Gymnastics*, 14. See also: John Rae, "Calisthenic Hall Illustration for the Women's Home Companion," *Vassar College Sesquicentennial*, 2011, viewed at: 150.vassar.edu/photos.
23. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 36; See also: Wood, "Calisthenium and Riding Academy (Avery Hall)."
24. Wood, "Calisthenium and Riding Academy (Avery Hall)."
25. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 30; Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 113; Sophia Foster Richardson, "Tendencies in Athletics for Women In Colleges and Universities," *Appletons' Popular Science Monthly* (February 1897): 518. A Vassar scrapbook has two photos of a field hockey team and an image of two women on ice with hockey sticks on page 6, so perhaps Vassar students played both. See: Elizabeth Bristol Greenleaf, "Scrapbook (1917)," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, 2005, viewed at: vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu; The exact date that many of these sports were added is unclear. The *Vassar Encyclopedia* puts them even earlier than Ainsworth or Guttman, including croquet, archery, rowing, skating, tobogganing, and riding by 1866, with baseball perhaps as early as 1866, and bicycling also from this source. "Athletics, 1865-1945," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, 2005, viewed at: vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu.
26. Richardson, "Tendencies in Athletics for Women," 517; For more information on Sophia Foster Richardson, see: Laura Johnson Wylie, "In Memoriam: Sophia Foster Richardson," *Vassar Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (May 1916): 93-96.
27. "Athletics, 1865-1945."
28. Ibid.; Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 84-89.
29. Ibid., 79, 85, 89.
30. Ibid., 84-89.
31. Richardson, "Tendencies in Athletics for Women," 517.
32. Alice Katharine Fallows, "Athletics for College Girls," *The Century* 66, no. 1 (May 1903): 60-61.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 61-62; Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 113; Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 90.
35. Frances Cohen and Bessie Eliza Boyd Lawton, *Vassar, A College Souvenir* (New York, NY: Chasmar Press, 1896), 25. See also: "Alumnae Gymnasium (Ely Hall)," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, 2005, viewed at: vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu.
36. Cohen and Lawton, *Vassar*, 27.
37. Ibid., 29.
38. "Alumnae Gymnasium (Ely Hall)."
39. Ibid.
40. James Frederick Rogers, "Physical Education in Institutions of Higher Education," (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 11. See also: Lisa Bier, *Fighting the Current: The Rise of American Women's Swimming, 1870-1926* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2011).
41. Cohen and Lawton, *Vassar*, 27.
42. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 90-91.
43. Richardson, "Tendencies in Athletics for Women," 519; Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 113-114.
44. Ibid., 113; Richardson, "Tendencies in Athletics for Women," 517.
45. Ibid., 518.
46. Ibid.; The discontinuation of baseball is attributed to its "'plebian' nature" in the *Vassar Encyclopedia*. "Athletics 1865-1945."
47. Paula D. Welch, *History of American Physical Education and Sport* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1981), 246.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 247.
50. Ibid.
51. *Catalogue of The University of Texas, 1923-1924 with Announcements for 1924-1925,* University of Texas Bulletin no. 2417 (1 May 1924), 338-339.
52. *Thirty-first Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the School Years Ending June 30, 1924 and June 30, 1925* (Sacramento, CA: California State Printing Office, 1927), 262.
53. E.V. Matigon, "What Mrs. Hearst Will Do in 1900," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 December 1899; See also: Brad Buchholz, "A Feminist, Before Her Time: The Journey of Anna Hiss," in *The Texas Book Two: More Profiles, History, and Reminiscences of the University* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2012), 63-64; *Prospectus of the Vassar Female College*, 3-4.
54. Alexandra Marie Nickliss, *Phoebe Apperson Hearst: The Most Powerful Woman in California* (PhD diss., University of

California - Davis, 1994).
55. "Phoebe Apperson Hearst: California's Grand Patron of Education," *California Historical Society*, 25 April 2016, viewed at: californiahistoricalsociety.blogspot.com.
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57. Ibid., 202.
58. Ibid., 206-209.
59. From the University of California charter: "The dormitory system shall not be adopted." See: California Legislature, "1868 Organic Act to Create and Organize the University of California: Chapter 244," n.d., viewed at: bancroft.berkeley.edu. One notable exception to the no dormitory was the "Kepler Cottages," constructed in 1874 and rented out to student clubs who then leased the cottages to eighty men. See: "Berkeley: Student Housing," *University of California Digital Archives*, 2004, viewed at: lib.berkeley.edu; Kirsch, *More Than Gold in California*, 206-209.
60. Ibid., 208-209.
61. Ibid., 213.
62. Matigon, "What Mrs. Hearst Will Do in 1900."
63. Kirsch, *More Than Gold in California*, 204.
64. Ibid.; See also: Matigon, "What Mrs. Hearst Will Do in 1900"; "Buys Land for the University," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 August 1900. The building appears to have gone into use in 1901. See: Verne A. Stadtman, ed. "Berkeley Buildings and Landmarks," *Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association*, 1967, viewed at: berkeleyheritage.com.
65. Matigon, "What Mrs. Hearst Will Do in 1900"; Kirsch, *More Than Gold in California*, 203-204.
66. Matigon, "What Mrs. Hearst Will Do in 1900"; Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 112; Stadtman, "Berkeley Buildings and Landmarks."
67. "Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst Dies in California," *New York Times*, 14 April 1919.
68. "Famed U.C. Building Destroyed by Fire," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 June 1922.
69. "Hearst Telegram to Barrows," n.d. Maybeck Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.
70. Department of Physical Education for Women, "Suggestions for New Hearst Hall," n.d. in Regents Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
71. Ibid.
72. Department of Physical Education for Women, "Suggestions for New Hearst Hall."
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. R.A.B. Smith, "Architecture in Concrete," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 79, no. 4100 (19 June 1931): 720-734; Susan Cerny, "Architects Designed 'Fireproof' Buildings After 1923 Disaster," *Berkeley Daily Planet*, 29 July 2003.
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77. William Carey Jones, "Historical Note," in *Directory of Graduates of the University of California, 1864-1916* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1916), xii.
78. Michael Corbett, *Hearst Memorial Gymnasium: Historic Structure Report*, September 2005, 26, 78. Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley. See also: Eric M. Leifer, *Making the Majors: The Transformation of Team Sports in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
79. Stadtman, "Berkeley Buildings and Landmarks."
80. Wadsworth, *Julia Morgan: Architect of Dreams*, 58, 69, 108. See also: Loren W. Partridge, *John Galen Howard and the Berkeley Campus: Beaux Arts Architecture in the Athens of the West* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 1988).
81. Ibid.; See also: Chris Bingley, "Hearst Memorial Mining Building," *Society of Architectural Historians Archipedia*, n.d., viewed at: sah-archipedia.org.
82. "An Anthropology Museum for the 21st Century," *Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology*, n.d., viewed at: hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu; See also: Alexandra M. Nickliss, *Phoebe Apperson Hearst: A Life in Power and Politics* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 276-298.
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84. "An Anthropology Museum for the 21st Century"; See also: "Remains of 12,000 American Indians Stored Under UC Berkeley Gym," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 January 2008; Amy E. Haplin and Kelly L. Holland, *An Archeological Curation-Needs Assessment for the U.S. Navy, Engineering Field Activities, West and Northwest, Naval Facilities Engineering Command,* (St. Louis, MO: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1997), 249-264.
85. "Remains of 12,000 American Indians Stored Under UC Berkeley Gym."
86. Ibid.; See also: Arianna Moss, "How the 'Home of Free Speech' Veils a Dark, Violent Past," *Daily Californian,* 26 March 2018.
87. Sam Lefebvre, "UC Berkeley Has Only Returned 20% of Its Native American Artifacts and Remains," *Hyperallergic*, 17 June 2020, viewed at: hyperallergic.com.
88. Eden Teller, "UC Berkeley Strips the Names of Professors with Racist Views Off 3 Buildings," *Berkeleyside*, 18 November 2020, viewed at: berkeleyside.org.
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92. "Anna Hiss Collection Finding Aid," The H.J. Lutcher Stark Center, The University of Texas at Austin.
93. Buchholz, "A Feminist Before Her Time," 63.
94. Ibid.; See also: Meredith M. Bagley, *Playing Fair: The Rhetorical Limits of Liberalism in Women's Sport at the University of Texas, 1927-1992* (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2010), 84.
95. Ibid., 84.
96. "Anna Hiss," *University of Texas Recreational Sports*, n.d., viewed at: utrecsports.org; Buchholz, "A Feminist Before Her Time," 63-69.
97. Anita Walker Howard, "Womanhood Discovered: Anna Hiss and the Women's Gym," *Alcalde* (September/October 1993): 30-32.
98. Ibid.
99. Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 179-180; See also: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999); Marvin Lazerson, "The Disappointments of Success: Higher Education after World War II," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 559 (September 1998): 64-76.
100. Women made up forty-three percent of undergraduates in the United States in the 1930s, forty percent in the 1940s, thirty-one percent in the 1950s, and thirty-six percent in the 1960s. Patricia Albjerg Graham, "Expansion and Exclusion: A History of Women in American Higher Education," *Signs* 3, no. 4 (Summer 1978): 764-766.
101. Ibid., 766.
102. "Gerlinger Annex," *University of Oregon Libraries*, n.d., viewed at: library.uoregon.edu.
103. Ibid.; "Gerlinger Hall," *University of Oregon Libraries*, n.d., viewed at: library.uoregon.edu.
104. Howard, "Womanhood Discovered," 30-32; Laura Morales, "Anna Hiss Gymnasium Renovations Receive $24.5 Million in Funding," *Daily Texan,* 26 August 2019.

5000 Miles to Lift Against South Africa: A critical Overview of the Olympic Experiences of Ron Eland

by Jannick Schlewing and Francois J. Cleophas
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

A New South African Weightlifting History

Standard works on physical culture, the predecessor of weightlifting, exclude weightlifting history in South Africa's black communities.[1] This is compounded by the fact that there is a paucity of formal and informal literature on South African Olympic weightlifting history (SAOWH). There are, however, limited research-based and informal works that connect South Africa's general Olympic history with weightlifting. These works include a government-sanctioned report by the Human Sciences Research Council, a book, namely *Olympic Dream*, and a PhD dissertation about South Africa's general (white) Olympic history.[2] Other sources, largely of an informal nature, such as mainstream media articles and interviews, generally exclude black weightlifting experiences. Formal archives are of limited use as a corrective since "records of government, expected to be far more extensive than of most organizations, are extremely partial."[3] This holds true for historians of SAOWH. Hence, although statistical records of competitions, personal bests, and rankings are integral to the sport and culture of weightlifting, the limited statistical documentation of black weightlifters in formal archives downplays their role and significance in SAOWH. A further limitation for historians is the fact that no formal research exists on South African black weightlifters who have been excluded from international competition. The historical representation of the South African 1948 Olympic team, as in *Olympic Dream*, serves as an example of the incomplete representation of black weightlifting history in the country.

The authors of this article subscribe to the principles of nonracialism and use references to racial categories cautiously.[4] Such references are either direct quotations, or the references are used with the purpose of bringing greater historical accuracy to the narrative. The authors, however, distance themselves from any racial connotations attached to any race labelling.

Jannick Schlewing is a master's student in the Department of Sport Science at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. His main fields of interest are youth sport development, sport medicine, and sport history.
Francois J. Cleophas is a Senior Lecturer in sport history at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. His focus is community sport histories with a special emphasis on physical culture. His recent book, *Critical Reflections on Physical Culture at the Edges of Empire* is a collection of essays on physical culture practices in marginalized settings.
Correspondence to: fcleophas@sun.ac.za

Ron Eland

William Ronald Eland, commonly known as Ron Eland, was a South African weightlifter born on 28 September 1923 in Port Elizabeth. He died on 12 February 2003 in Cape Town. His exclusion from the South African 1948 Olympic team was due to socio-political circumstances and not performance-based decisions.[5] This exclusion resulted in absences in subsequent narratives, sympathetic to the apartheid order, concerning South Africa's participation in the 1948 Olympic weightlifting competition. Eland, the country's best lightweight weightlifter, could (or *should*) have represented South Africa in the lightweight class in the same competition in which Piet Taljaard (heavyweight class) and Issy Bloomberg (middleweight class), two white South African lifters, competed. As reported in a newspaper article from 1965 titled "Sports for All – In South Africa Except the Blacks," Eland became British lightweight champion, qualifying him for the 1948 Olympic Games where he indirectly competed against his country of birth as no South African was appointed for the lightweight class.[6] The fact that *Drum* magazine recognized Eland as a historically significant weightlifter under the title "And Here is the Man who Dodged the Colour-bar," makes him an important figure in South African sport history.[7] *Drum* was one of the primary news carriers of black culture and social and political life during the 1950s in South Africa.[8]

This article seeks to provide greater insight into Eland's experiences and participation at the 1948 Olympic Games by means of a sociohistorical analysis of his private archival collection.

Private Archives

Because state archive records are incomplete, the sport historian must resort to additional archival forms that aid in retelling SAOWH with greater accuracy. Hence, there is a need to turn to private archives. Private archives are "defined as materials that are formed in the special activity process of private persons and institutions and in private property" that form an important part of cultural heritage.[9] Private archives are important complements to public archives because they contribute to the preservation of socio-historical and political developments

Humble beginnings on the journey to the cover of *Health and Strength* and the Olympic Games – Ron Eland in his backyard in Port Elizabeth.

of societies.[10] In the case of SAOWH, private archives give insight into the personal experiences and socio-political circumstances surrounding the exclusion of black athletes, their undocumented accomplishments, and their contributions to the sport. However, the collections only gain importance if they are exposed and used. Hence, an examination of Eland's private archives adds to the growing body of literature and the importance of considering such collections.[11] In light of missing black South African weightlifting history, we pose the question, "Can Olympic weightlifting's historical distortions be sufficiently rectified through a historical examination of private archives?" We say yes because such an examination may allow us to understand what transpired and led Eland to travel five thousand miles to lift against his home country, as reported in *Health & Strength*, and the social and political consequences thereof.[12]

The Best, But …

The Executive Committee meeting of the South African Olympic and British Empire Games Association (SAOBEGA) held on 13 January 1947 in Johannesburg recognized the receipt of a letter by Milo Pillay, Eland's coach and secretary of the Milo Academy of Health and Strength.[13] In this letter, Pillay stated the Milo Academy's intention to send 'non-European' athletes, amongst them Ron Eland, to the 1948 Olympic Games and requested the procedures to adopt for successful nomination. Milo Pillay, an Indian-born South African retired weightlifter, is considered a pioneer in South African weightlifting. He contributed to the shift of physical culture to weightlifting in South Africa by performing lifts and feats of strength on stage.[14] The *Cape Standard* reported on Pillay's sport-political activism when he attended a (white) national weightlifting conference in the Transvaal in an attempt to have the color bar that prevented black athletes from competing in national tournaments lifted.[15] The response to Pillay's letter by the General Secretary, Ira G. Emery, was that the SAOBEGA would not accept any nomination unless officially sent by the governing body of the particular sport and bearing the signature of the General Secretary.[16] The response further stated that the SAOBEGA had no jurisdiction over non-European sport and suggested that Pillay might contact the South African governing bodies regarding control of non-European sport.

The minutes of a SAOBEGA Council meeting held on 27 May 1948 indicated that no official nomination for Eland was made.[17] Three nominations were received to represent South Africa at the Olympic Games, namely Piet Taljaard (heavyweight), Issy Bloomberg (middleweight) and James van Rensburg (featherweight). No South African representative was nominated for Eland's lightweight class. The *Rand Daily Mail* confirmed that the Olympic trial results from the South African Weightlifting Championships resulted in the nomination of Taljaard, Bloomberg, and Van Rensburg.[18] By the time of the South African qualifiers, Eland was already in Britain, winning the British lightweight championship on 8 May 1948 in London. It remains unclear what transpired between the non-European weightlifting association and the governing (white) South African weightlifting body regarding attempts to nominate Eland for the official Olympic trials, as suggested in Emery's response letter to Milo Pillay. However, it is clear that no official nomination for Eland was made.

The response to Pillay's request regarding attempts to send black athletes overseas was not uncommon. Following a Springbok rugby tour to Great Britain and France in 1906, the South African Coloured Rugby Football Board approached the Northern Rugby Football Union with a proposal for a similar tour to New Zealand. The New Zealand Rugby Union responded that "all communication regarding tours must be made through the [white] South African Rugby Football Board [SARFB]." The SARFB responded that it had "no jurisdiction over and no dealings with the body making the proposal."[19] Hence, it was impossible for the Coloured Rugby Football Board to send a team overseas without representation by the white Rugby Football Board.

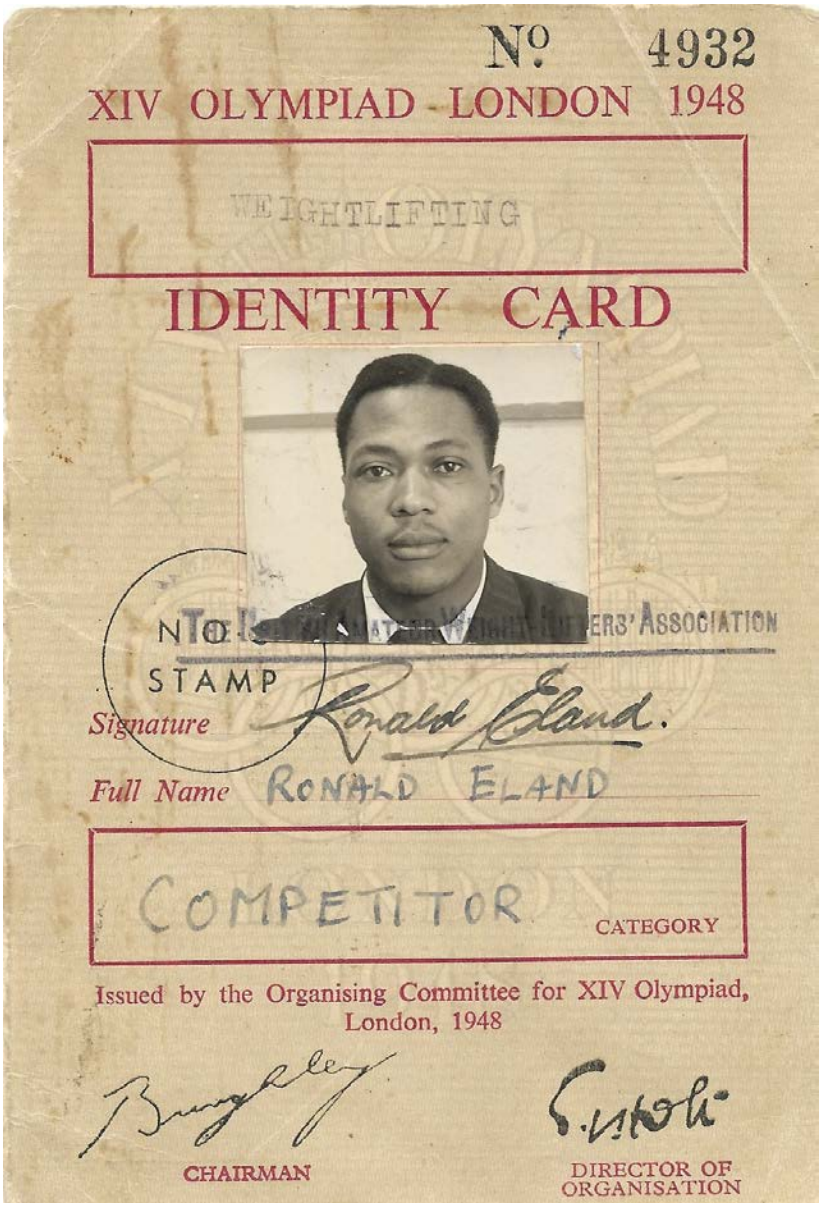
In the SAOBEGA report of 13 January 1947,

chairman R. Honey did, however, state that the non-European South African Amateur Weightlifting Association (SAAWA) had been accepted to be officially affiliated with the SAOBEGA. The SAAWA allowed both white and nonwhite athletes to compete. Honey further emphasized that the affiliation helped to make the SAOBEGA "all the more fully representative of amateur sport in South Africa," and stressed that "tremendous effort" was required from all national sporting bodies and athletes "to ensure that South Africa gets the chance to send the best possible team" to the 1948 Olympic Games.[20] As evident in the response letter to Pillay's request to send Eland to London, the SAAWA affiliation to the SAOBEGA did not result in a "fuller representation of amateur sport in South Africa" and also did not result in South Africa's sending the "best possible team" to the Olympic Games since Eland was excluded.[21]

During the 1940s, two championships were annually held with black only and white only divisions. Eland could not participate in the white division, governed by the SAAWA, only in the amateur championships of the Eastern Province Non-European Weightlifting Association. Port Elizabeth, Eland's city of birth, is situated in the Eastern Province of South Africa. The *News Times* reported on 6 June 1947 that Eland's lifts were "in excess of South African records, but because he is non-European, he is not allowed to compete for these championships."[22] A "tremendous effort," as mentioned earlier, should have therefore been made by the SAOBEGA to ensure that Eland formed part of the South African weightlifting team, especially since no lightweight representative was sent to London.

This highlights how non-European governing bodies (i.e. the SAAWA) were portrayed erroneously by the SAOBEGA as a helping hand to "fully represent" amateur sport while lacking actual support for black athletes to be included in the national team. If Eland had been included in the 1948 Olympic Team, South Africa would have sent "the best possible team" to the Olympic Games.

Several newspaper articles, interview transcripts, and reports by Eland himself from after 1948 indicate that Eland beat the unnamed white runner-up at the pre-Olympic trials but was not selected to represent South Africa.[23] Eland reportedly lifted a total of 715 pounds compared to the 680 pounds of the runner-up but was not named for the South African team "because of the colour of his skin."[24] It is unknown to which event these results refer to, and they are only described as "pre-Olympic trials" as recorded in a telephonic interview transcript with Eland in 1992.[25] Eland did not participate at the official South African championships that resulted in the official nomination of Taljaard, Bloomberg, and Van Rensburg, of whom only Taljaard and Bloomberg ended up competing in London. Eland was already in Britain at the time and became British lightweight champion on 8 May 1948 in London.[26] Although we could not identify comparative statistics between Eland's lifts and those of official events held by the SAAWA, it is reasonable to assume that he indeed was South Africa's best lightweight lifter; otherwise, it would have been impossible for him to qualify in Britain. By 1948, Great Britain had an established weightlifting heritage and a professional division, the British Professional Weight-lifters Association, founded in 1922.[27] South Africa had no such heritage, making Eland's success in Britain more remarkable.



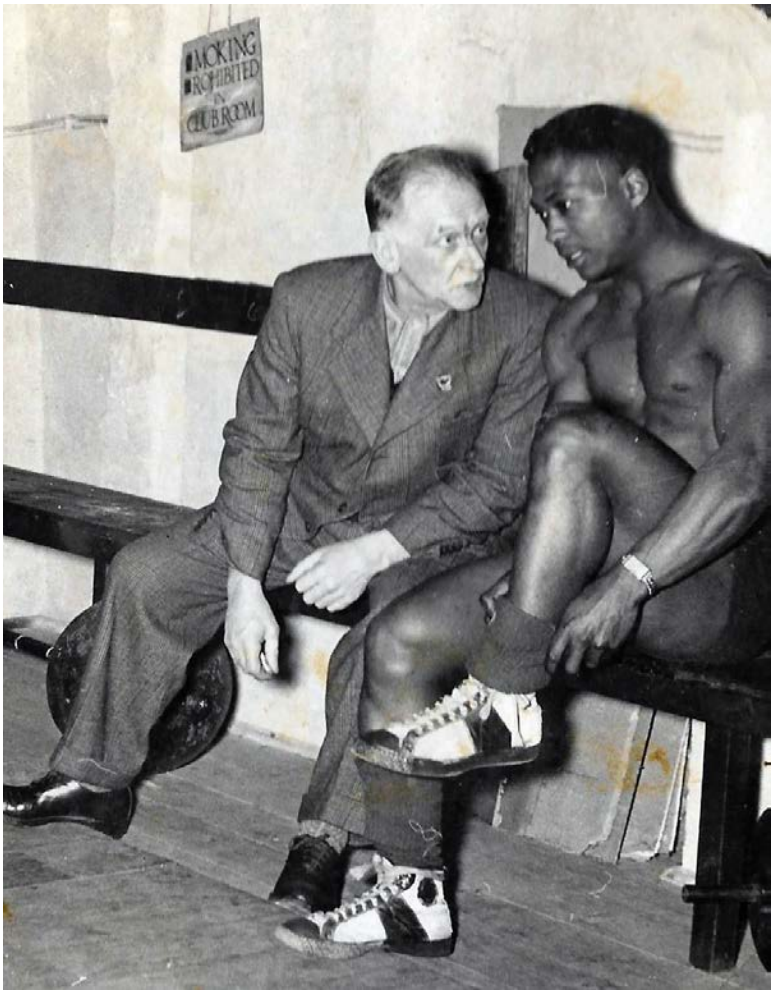
Ron Eland's original competitor identity card from the 1948 Olympic Games, found in his private archives. Olympic identity cards were first issued at the 1924 Paris Games. In some cases, such as the 1932 Los Angeles Games, these cards could be used in lieu of passports or other official government documents.

Road to British Champion and The Olympic Games

South Africa was under British administration in 1948, which allowed Britain first choice when selecting athletes for the Olympic Games. An unidentified and undated newspaper article found in Eland's archives suggests that Oscar State, the British Olympic weightlifting manager, invited Eland to the British Olympic trials as State was convinced that he had found "the next lightweight gold medalist." The trip to England was made possible through the financial help of the Eastern Province Non-European Weightlifting Association, with fundraising by Milo Pillay, his brother-in-law, G.K. Rangsamy, and shows hosted at the Milo Academy.[28] Tromp van Diggelen, a strongman and pioneer of physical culture, was instrumental in arranging for Eland to be coached by William A. Pullum, a British weightlifting icon, who became the British weightlifting team coach at the 1948 Olympic Games.[29]

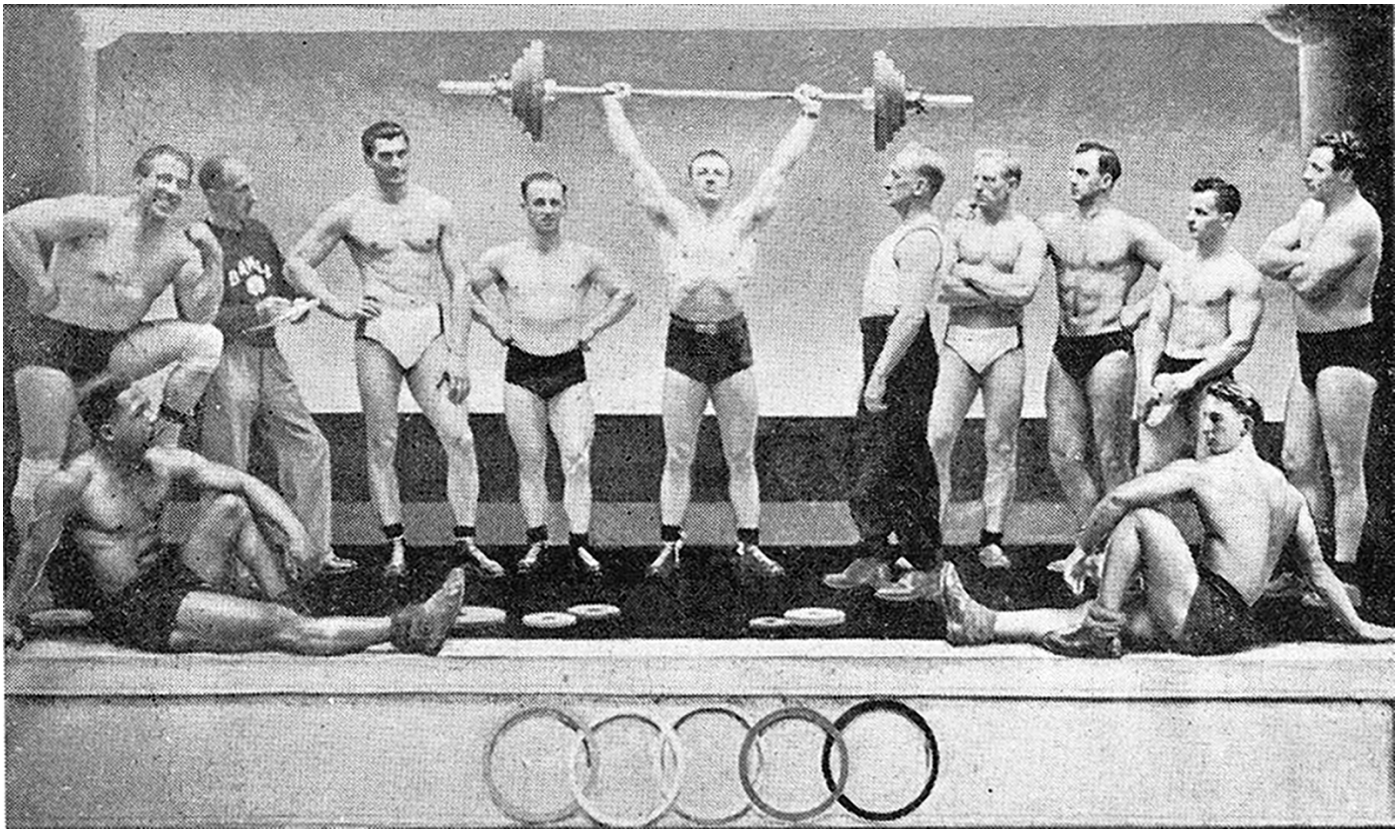
Eland's participation at the Olympic trials drew significant attention from the media, and he was featured on the front cover of *Health & Strength* on 6 May 1948, described as "making a bid for a place in the Olympic Weightlifting Team on May 8th."[30] An original diploma certifies that on 8 May 1948 at the Scala Theatre in London, Ron Eland was awarded the British Lightweight Champion title with a total of 672 pounds (203¾ pounds clean and press, 203¾ pounds snatch, and 264½ pounds clean and jerk). These results are in line with Eland's self-reported training strategies, according to which he would train with the same poundage for the clean and press and the snatch, which proved successful.[31]

His Olympic nomination to represent Great Britain was made official by Oscar State in a letter from the British Amateur Weight Lifters' Association on 16 June 1948, with Eland becoming the first South African to represent Britain in weightlifting.[32] A former student of Eland, Precious McKenzie, represented Britain under similar circumstances in 1968. McKenzie was barred from competing for South Africa in the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games but subsequently represented Britain at the 1966, 1970 and 1974 Games, taking gold in each competition. The letter further reads that Pullum organized Eland's expenses, accommodation, and lost wages to be covered as well as access to the opening ceremony. Eland had high praises of his treatment during his stay in Britain and was "very proud" to represent Britain at the Olympic Games.[33] According to Di Stefano, Britain "intervened" on Eland's behalf in order for him to compete and "British media supported him even more [than South African media] because they [Britain] were against segregation and apartheid."[34] The British newspaper *The Daily Mirror* reported on Eland's British Olympic trials with a picture of him under the title "Colour barred: but not for Britain" as well as "5,000 Miles to Lift for Britain" in the British magazine *Health & Strength*.[35]



Ron Eland (right) with his coach, William A. Pullum, during the 1948 Olympic Games in London. A lifelong physical culturist and champion weightlifter himself, Pullman claimed that his life in the iron game began when he cured his childhood pulmonary tuberculosis through exercise.

During the Olympic competition, Eland fell ill and withdrew from the contest, held on 10 August at the Earls Court Exhibition Centre, after a successful first lift, placing 13th.[36] He was later diagnosed with appendicitis for which he underwent an operation upon his return home to South Africa. However, his British Olympic weightlifting narrative extended beyond the actual competition. Eland placed second at the British Empire Championships, held in conjunction with the Olympic Games. In a *Health & Strength* column, Eland thanked his coach, Pullum, for the "wonderful and memorable time, spent under [his] fine supervision with the British team."[37] Britain, through the help of Eland's second place, ranked third in the Empire Championships. Similar to Eland's positive remarks, the British media portrayed Britain as a "savior" in Eland's story. Another original diploma found amongst Eland's archives indicates a total competition result of 704 pounds, beating his previous British lightweight championship total by 32 pounds. According to Eland, he "would have placed fifth, if [he] lifted [his] best."[38] He further stated that his trainers Pullum, Oscar State, and Murray "broke down [his] bad habits and



The British Olympic Weightlifting Team at the 1948 Olympic Games, Eland at the bottom left. Julian Creus, silver medalist in the bantamweight class, is the fourth man standing from the left. James "Jumping Jim" Halliday, bronze medalist in the lightweight class, hoists the weight overhead in the center.

made [him] lift like a robot," as they did not like the American weightlifting style that Eland had been taught in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. "I would have done much better if they had let me go but they wanted a person to lift perfectly . . . I did improve, but they should have let me go further," stressed Eland.[39] This statement suggests that his trainers intended for Eland to conform to British culture and style of weightlifting. It is common practice that trainers coach their athletes according to particular training philosophies that are visually distinguishable. For example (although generalized), the American weightlifting style emphasizes "staying over the bar" during the pull phase of a lift, compared to the Chinese style, which encourages "keeping the bar close." It is, however, unusual to make such drastic changes shortly before a competition. This (potentially detrimental) adaptation to Eland's lifting style raises the question whether the change was solely intended to increase his performance or whether it was attempted to transform Eland into a model of a traditional British-style weightlifter to visually fit into the British Olympic team.

Canadian lightweight lifter John Stuart placed fifth with a total of 733 pounds at the Olympic Games.[40] Stuart's name appears in Eland's archives on a note without an author, written about Eland's endeavors. It is described that Eland's "saddest moment" was when "England lost the British Empire Games title to Steward of Canada by 10 lbs.," and not the early withdrawal from the Olympics. In a lengthy hand-written compilation of notes, Eland reminisced about his participation at the Olympic Games. He described how proudly he wore the "red, white and blue flag stitched to his blue blazer," as the first nonwhite participant from South Africa to compete for Britain. "I proudly marched into the Olympic Stadium at Wembley, London, England, on that memorable day, rubbing shoulders with the best Olympic sports men and women Great Britain could present." He further described his nomination as an honored place among the British elite athletes. Eland emphasized his excitement about being the official lightweight weightlifting representative for Great Britain instead of South Africa. An unidentified newspaper article reads that Eland was "overwhelmed by his reception when he won the British lightweight title." The notes read further that Eland broke all his South African records under Pullum's training upon arrival in Britain. Although no records of personal bests during his training in Britain exist, these notes suggest that Eland must have lifted more than the 715 pounds in total, as reported during the pre-Olympic trials. Since he lifted 705 pounds during the British Empire Championships, placing second, and Canada only won by ten pounds, he could have placed first if he had lifted a total that was equal to his supposed record-breaking training lifts. This may explain the saddest moment of placing second during the British Empire Championships as he knew that he had already lifted heavier during training shortly before the Olympic Games than the Canadian winner, John Stuart. We demonstrated that athletes'

descriptions have to be considered in the context of their representation in society. This provides a fuller picture of the socio-political circumstances surrounding their participation and perception of their experiences in order to contextualize and critically analyze sport performance.

Black Weightlifting History and Post-Second World War Society

Eland shared common experiences of objectification with other weightlifters of his time. Sport historian Jason Shurley analyzed the media's depiction of African American weightlifter John Davis between 1938 and 1957 in *Strength & Health* magazine.[41] Shurley highlighted prevailing racial stereotypes in American society during the 1940s and reported on social and political exploitation of black male bodies in printed media. The analysis concluded that the media attributed Davis' physical giftedness to being "less removed from his savage ancestors," which was a prevalent eugenic social theme in American Society.[42] Eland made similar headlines in *Health & Strength* with descriptions by his manager Oscar State such as "my dark horse" and in South African media with titles such as "Coloured Teacher Equals Empire Record."[43] The Amateur Athletic Union in the USA, according to Shurley, used Davis as a ploy in America's attempt to prove social and political superiority during the Cold War by explicitly including him in the 1948 and 1952 American Olympic team due to his performance capabilities despite the prevailing racial stereotypes in the United States at that time.[44] The historian Peter J. Beck described sport's perceived potential as "an instrument of 'soft' power (as opposed to 'hard' military and economic power)."[45] A political trend that related Davis' experiences to Eland's inclusion in the British Olympic team in 1948 became apparent.

Britain as 'Savior'?

The Olympic Games in Berlin 1936, Helsinki 1952, and Moscow 1980 were held with much political controversy.[46] The London 1948 Olympiad did not attract similar political coverage in historical academic texts due to a perceived lack of broader political significance. However, the 1948 Games held much political-historical significance since it helped to relaunch the Olympic Movement after the Second World War that had caused the cancellation of the two previous Games. Although Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937) stated that "the important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part," the political implications surrounding the movement were apparent throughout history and climaxed during the 1936 "Nazi Games" in Berlin.[47] The Olympic Games were always subjected to political influences and an extension of political agendas of the hosting nation. The 1948 edition, however, was "relatively free from political rancor" but faced a damaged post-World War II world economy.[48] Beck elaborated on how the London Olympic Games were utilized by the British government. He described how Clement Attlee, Prime Minister of Britain, proclaimed that the 1948 Olympics "must not only go on but must also reflect well on Britain."[49] This gave rise to a notion that the Games should benefit Britain economically as well as advance national interest in the international political arena.[50] The Games thus presented an opportunity for the British government to portray itself as a leading and uniting force in a post-war world. It also provided an opportunity for mediation in an emerging Cold War world, driven by two political superpower nations, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The British government therefore made repeated attempts to ensure Soviet participation on the premise that it "was a good thing in the broader political sense."[51] Britain could use the Olympic Games to prove its regained international stature in light of the cancellation of the previous two events. This political utilization alluded to a rather self-serving purpose, placing Britain on a pedestal as savior of the Olympic movement and as voice of social and political leadership in a divided postwar landscape. Britain's success in its own country was paramount to upholding this national prestige, which could be extended to Britain's supposed stance against segregation and later apartheid in South Africa. The question is whether Eland's inclusion in the British team was purely sport related or had underlying socio-political implications as well. Deducing from Eland's archive the British government's deep involvement in the London Games to ensure success suggests the latter.

Eland was interviewed by Dr. Jim Meschino for a Canadian television interview series titled *This Is Your Life – Fitness: Fact and Fiction* on 20 November 1987. Meschino posed the question to Eland of how important he believed the 1948 Olympic Games were for Britain. Eland responded as follows:

> They were very important. Britain had just come out of a slump. You should have seen London in 1948. Those bombed buildings and the houses and the people who were crippled . . . and everybody spoke about the rough time they had gone through. Britain needed to be uplifted. The morale needed to be uplifted . . . They did a marvelous job. They were really successful in their organization. There's nobody to beat the British for organizing.[52]

A follow-up question asked if he felt he had been part of a "chess game" and been brought into the country to represent Britain out of selfish desire or "just for the sport." Eland elaborated as follows: "It was very convenient for Britain to have me. It was very convenient that I was so strong and capable. Britain could still say that she is still the master of the world. She had gone through war. The allies had been successful. She is going to get her morale back where it was before."[53]

Indications are that Eland was aware of the broader political implications of the Olympic Games for Britain and the potential value that he had for the British team. The explicit invitation by Oscar Sate for Eland to participate at the British Olympic Trials may have therefore been in part driven by the extensive political pressure on the British

Olympic Committee for Team Britain, and therefore by extension the country, to be successful at the Olympiad on home ground. Much like Davis's participation for the government of the United States at the same Olympic Games, Eland's participation may have offered Britain yet another showpiece to display national superiority. Di Stefano's comments that Britain supposedly opposed segregation in South Africa and "intervened" on Eland's behalf in order for him to compete, reveal how these narratives are adopted by the media, creating an image of Britain as a voice of reason in both social and political aspects.[54] Such a claim is supported by the British media's explicit declaration that Britain, unlike South Africa, does not bar athletes such as Eland based on their color.[55]

However, developments around the 1952 Olympic Games proved this assertion wrong. An undated article in *The Times* about Eland's potential participation for Britain at the 1952 Games under the title "Colour Bar Again" clearly describes how the British Olympic Association introduced legislation that barred athletes from its dominions from representing Great Britain.[56] This contradiction corrupts the impression of Britain and its sport associations as a virtuous leader and could possibly raise questions about the sincerity of Eland's inclusion in the 1948 Olympic team. However, much like in Davis' case, the British government's potential influence in the selection of Olympic athletes remains speculative. Afterall, when Eland took the stage on 8 May 1948 at the Scala Theatre, he lifted 672 pounds in total to become British Lightweight Champion, beating all British competitors and qualifying him for the Olympic Games as official representative for Great Britain. This achievement stands on its own, and his performance should not be downplayed in light of the above-described socio-political context in Britain.

Nevertheless, this conversation is necessary to make sense of Eland's Olympic experience. In this context, the international diplomatic relationship between the South African and British Olympic committees as well as Britain's changing legislation for colonial athletes post 1948 remain fields to explore in further research and could provide greater detail about the socio-political landscape in connection to stories similar to those of Eland and Davis.

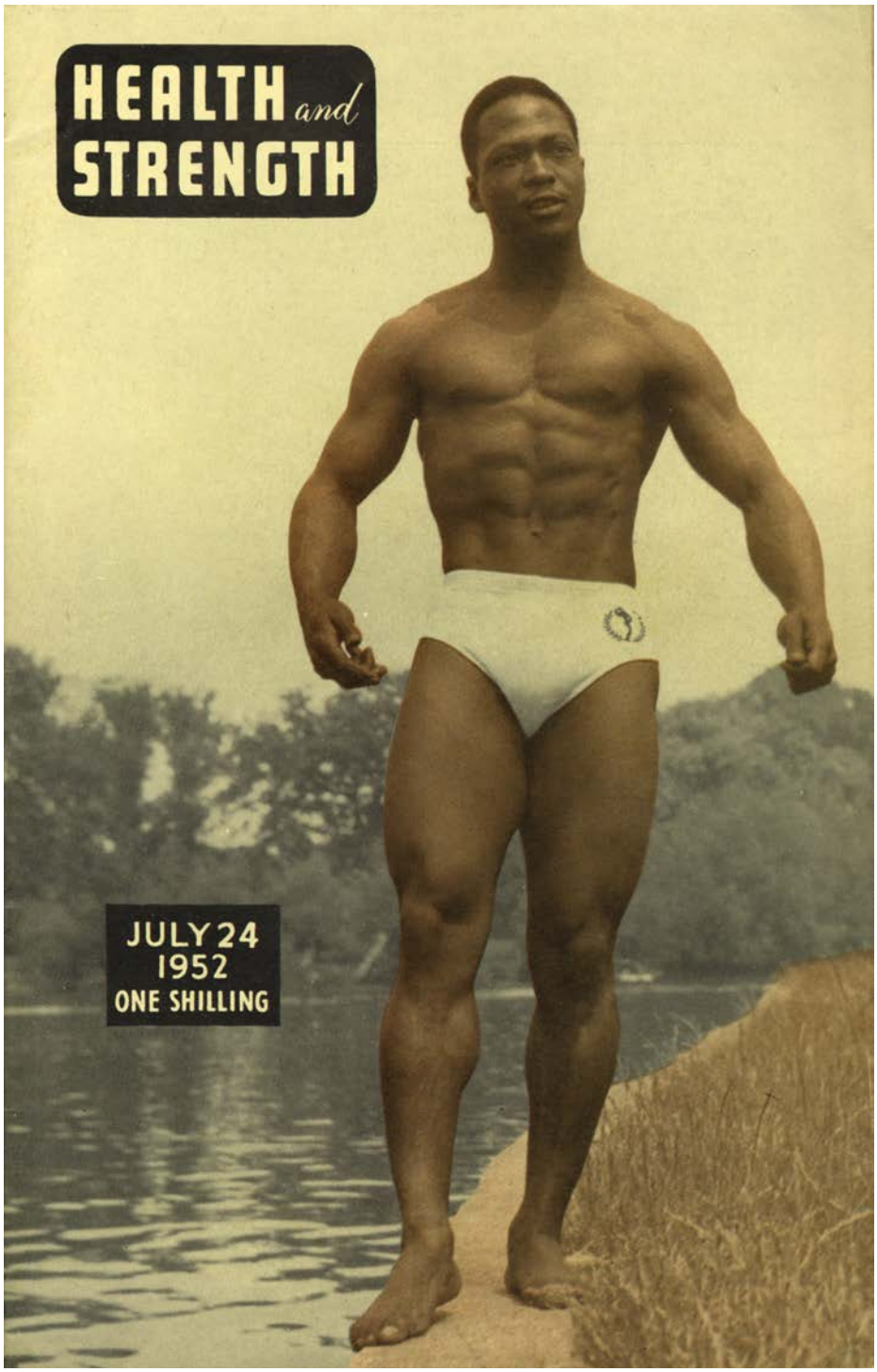
Personal Drives and Political Tools

A question now arises, "How did Eland perceive his role as a black South African within the British Olympic team?" The scholar Lesley Le Grange's reference to the concept of mimicry provides possible answers in this regard. Mimicry describes how the "colonized mimic the colonizer by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values" but the results are "never a simple reproduction of those traits."[57] The defining aspect of mimicry is the potential for the colonized to redefine the relationship with the colonizer.[58] Eland, speaking from a colonized perspective, noted that his Olympic experience revealed both a sense of honor to represent Britain as well as a personal achievement. The television interview *This Is Your Life* revealed Eland's awareness of the merit that he brought to the British team and the "convenience" of his inclusion as a way for Britain to demonstrate that it was still "the master of the world." Evidence for Eland's claim of his selection as a British convenience exercise can be deduced from his front cover feature on *Health & Strength*, being a leading magazine for physical culture and strength sports during the 1940s. It can be asked, "Was this a 'feel-good' story for British media to prove a sense of British intervention in South African segregation?" If so, it may be suggested that Eland uncritically accepted this political hegemony and mimicked British pride on the international stage. Thus, did Eland escape from the oppressive structures in South Africa to fulfil an Olympic dream only to assimilate into a dominant "savior" country? In other words, did he display any form of personal agency while being subjected to higher governing powers that might have used him for ulterior motives?

In numerous interview transcripts, Eland described and emphasized the pride that he took in "beating the odds" of being excluded from participating for South Africa by making the British Olympic team as the first black South African with such accolades. In *This Is Your Life*, Eland emphasized how the *Daily Mirror's* headline "Colour Barred: But Not by Britain" had "gone a long way with [him]," and he appreciated the media's acknowledgement of his journey from South Africa to Britain.[59] This suggests that Eland believed that a black man could prove himself if he was given the same opportunities as a white man in life and that the 1948 Olympic Games were his chance to prove this. Hence, the accomplishment of his personal dream to compete at the Olympic Games appears to have been of greater importance than the honor to represent Britain. Throughout his writings, Eland reminisced about his past as a competitor on the highest international stage but rarely mentioned his early dropping out of the contest due to the appendix injury, nor placing thirteenth. In the context of mimicry, an argument can be made that Eland redefined his relationship with his colonial masters through his personal accomplishment of participating at the Olympic Games and did not consider himself as a political instrument to showcase British superiority. His awareness of the political convenience of including him in the British Olympic team appears to have had no implications for his personal desire to achieve Olympic honors. In fact, he maneuvered space for himself within these constraints to fulfil his ambition and achieve his mission. In a letter to an endorser for the South African Medal of Good Hope to be bestowed upon him, Eland described his denial to represent South Africa as a "missed opportunity for both blacks and whites" and that "South Africa missed a critical opportunity to include blacks as citizens who could make great contributions to their country and become positive role models for its youth."[60] This statement further suggests that Eland's motivation to compete for Britain formed part of a bigger personal mission, namely to serve as a role model for South Africa's youth, that superseded any ulterior British colonial motives.

Eland's private archives surrounding his Olympic

participation revealed two important aspects: his pride in 'making it' to the Olympic Games as a personal achievement and the socio-cultural role that he aspired to fulfil as an ambassador for black sport and a role model for the youth. The latter is emphasized by his commitment to education throughout his later career as a teacher and coach in economically depressed communities in South Africa and later in Canada. Eland's commitment to fulfilling a socio-cultural role was confirmed by Dennis Brutus who claimed that Eland was a pioneering contributor to the South African nonracial sport movement.[61] Chris de Broglio, General Secretary of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee, also wrote in a recommendation letter on 24 February 1982 that Eland's "determination and initiative created a new situation in the fight against racial discrimination in sport in South Africa… [laying] the foundation for the challenge to the system of sports apartheid."[62] These comments highlight that Eland inspired the antiapartheid sport movement and made the impact that he desired to have.



Ron Eland's physical strength is evident in this physique shot used for the cover of *Health and Strength* magazine in 1952. Besides Olympic weightlifting, Eland also competed in bodybuilding and finished third in the 1948 Mr. Universe Competition.

The Ron Eland Type

Ron Eland's story and experience was not unique. It was previously mentioned that Precious McKenzie, whom Eland briefly coached, competed under similar circumstances for Great Britain. McKenzie was born in Durban, South Africa, in 1936 and won the Natal 1958 bantam weightlifting title in South Africa. Despite his achievements, as with Eland, he was prevented from representing South Africa at the 1958 Empire and Commonwealth Games and the 1960 Olympic Games due to his official racial classification as "colored."[63] In an interview with the official Team New Zealand (NZ) Olympics channel, he stated, "[The] National Party Government there made it very clear, no black would be allowed to represent their white country."[64] Further, he refused to represent South Africa at the 1964 Olympics as he would only be allowed to compete if he travelled segregated from his white team members. McKenzie and his family moved to England where he competed for Great Britain and won gold at the 1966, 1970, and 1974 Empire and Commonwealth Games as well as competing at the 1968, 1972, and 1976 Olympics, placing ninth, ninth, and thirteenth. McKenzie was awarded an MBE from Queen Elizabeth II in 1974, "became a friend of the Royal Family, wrote a book, attended future Olympic Games and world championships and became a television personality."[65] Upon moving to New Zealand, he won the 1978 Bantamweight Commonwealth Games title. Online publications and recognitions about McKenzie's achievements are limited in South African media. However, McKenzie was inducted

into the South African Hall of Fame on 5 December 2006 and commented that "[being] recognized by my homeland makes all the past sacrifices seem worthwhile. I can die a happy man now."[66] The South African website zar.co.za—Proud to be South African—lists McKenzie as a special South African in a section described as "Those who have inspired us. Those who have defined us."[67] [*Editors' note: McKenzie was also world champion and a world record holder in powerlifting.]*

It appears that McKenzie only attained a true feeling of accomplishment upon recognition in South Africa, his country of birth, and not through his many international weightlifting championship victories and gold medal achievements. We rightfully ask, "How many other Ron Eland types were there and how many are there today whose stories are still to be added to South African weightlifting literature through examinations of private archives?

Parting Thoughts

In conclusion, the private archival collection of Ron Eland revealed experiences and circumstances not present in formal academic literature. Our narrative demonstrated that it was insufficient to rely on public records as sole sources to create sport historical narratives. However, we emphasized that the subjectivity of these archives could not be ignored because this would lead to one-sided deductions based on subjective materials. This is why we attempted to critically situate the circumstances surrounding Eland's participation at the 1948 Olympic Games within a broader socio-political context. Our research indicated a need for further examination of the diplomatic relationship between the South African and British Olympic committees as well as Britain's changing attitude toward and legislations for colonial athletes post 1948 in order to further analyze the socio-political dynamics surrounding Eland's exclusion from South Africa's Olympic team. Further, it can be useful to search for archival material of the now defunct SAAWA and to interview weightlifters who competed during the apartheid regime. This may lead to the discovery of more historically marginalized athletes so that their experiences may be recorded through their private archives.

This article is, to our knowledge, the first formal study on the Olympic experiences of black South African weightlifters. We repeat our research question: "Can Olympic weightlifting historical distortions be sufficiently rectified through a historical examination of private archives?" Our analysis reveals that interrogating private collections is undoubtedly an important method of telling the stories of athletes who never appeared in official record books. Further, the missing information within private archives and new questions that arise from this open up many more avenues for future research that can tell the stories of previously excluded weightlifters in complex ways. The question may therefore not be whether historical distortions can be *sufficiently* rectified through private archives but rather whether the use thereof, as demonstrated by this article, is necessary to *attempt* a rectification. Although Eland cannot be considered an official South African participant at the Olympic Games, his story, nevertheless, challenges the one-sided (white) narrative of existing weightlifting literature.

Ron Eland was inducted into the South African Sports Hall of Fame posthumously in 2007. His contributions to inspiring the antiapartheid sport movement make him an important figure in the history of South African Olympic (weightlifting) history. We therefore encourage further research in this area by not simply adding names and performance results into the history books but rather by stimulating conversations about how SAOWH narratives are created through private archives that include the socio-political contexts and personal experiences of athletes. In light of this, it may be appropriate to question whether Eland indeed did travel five thousand miles to lift *for* South Africa after all.

Acknowledgements

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