BUDD, MICHAEL ANTON. *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire.* New York: New York University Press, 1997. Pp. ix-xvii, 218. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. $40.00 cb.

Although scholars interested in the history of sport now have at their disposal an extensive and informative literature, subjects such as physical training and, especially, physical culture, are less fully documented. The latter is the subject of Michael Budd's ambitious investigation of the construction of popular body images and how these were created and disseminated in discourses of masculinity, class, imperialism, reform, fears of degeneracy, and that ever-elusive concept, self The author has selected "The Sculpture Machine," a device conceived of by James Watt in the early 1800s, as a metaphor for conceptions of the human body that came to prominence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within its orbit, physical culture drew together an array of complex, and often contradictory, assemblages of images, ideas, concerns, and aspirations. As the author, drawing from an editorial that appeared in 1898 in *Sandow's Magazine,* observes, for most individuals at the turn of the century "physical culture represented a common expression that few could define with any precision" (p. 4.5). (Today's "fitness" industry is fraught with similar imprecisions!)

The author's main aim is to "present an evocative history of the body" and the various media in which it was shaped, defined, and articulated, thereby helping us think more deeply "about how bodies and lives were [and are] experienced,

represented, and who benefit[s] from particular forms of representation" (p. xi). Much to his credit, Budd warns the reader about the tendencies of "repeated analytical fragmentation" and the dangers of "the meaningless study of everything" (p. xiv) that are often encountered in current cultural studies-an admonition John MacAloon has made with regard to applying interpretive methodologies to the modern Olympic games and their creator.[1]

During the nineteenth century, cultural constructions of both body and society—and how each served as a metaphor for the other-underwent significant transformations. Budd enters into the difficult task of seeking to relate these matters to imperialism, race, class, degeneracy, eroticism, reform, and *inter alia* shifting biomedical developments. The book is divided into an introduction and six chapters. Chapter one, "Bridging Reform and Consumerism," opens with a brief overview of the institutional contexts wherein the notion of a sculpture machine evolved. These include, but are not limited to, depressed living conditions of the laboring classes, worker resistance, and British reactions to the debacles of the Crimean and Boer wars. The National Physical Recreation Society, one of various efforts to revitalize British (especially English) males, and the initiation of Royal Naval Military Tournaments are discussed as exemplars of reactions to such anxieties. By casting such matters in a different light than does Peter McIntosh's still very informative *Physical Education Since 1800,* Budd has been true to his stated intention of urging the reader to rethink a number of conventional assumptions.

Chapter two, "Picturing Physical Culture Consumers," and chapter three, "Sculpting the Heroic and Homoerotic," are focused around icons of the idealized mesomorphic male, especially that of German-born strongman Eugen Sandow, juxtaposed with images such as Oscar Wilde's physically and morally deteriorating character Dorian Gray and H.G. Wells's critiques of Victorian biology and politics. Budd also discusses popular physical fitness publications like Sandow's *Magazine of Physical Culture* and its competitor *Vim,* both of which relentlessly "sold" (literally as well as figuratively) the idealized physique. The advent of motion picture technology in the late 1800s made possible yet another medium for the construction and presentation of the mesomorphic male.

Chapter four, "Imperial Mirrors," takes up eugenics, fears of the feminizing effects of civilization and technology, and vacillating reactions to "the other"—subjected populations and peoples deemed to be inferior. Gurkha Hill Scouts were portrayed in stereotypical mesomorphic poses—a lean Zulu tribesman as "a member of 'a degenerate nation'" (p. 90). The health, vitality, and carriage of the Japanese soldier following the Russo-Japanese War, presumably inspired by Bushi tradition, was favorably compared to that of the less robust British Tommy.

The carnage of World War I, coming scarcely a decade after the Boer War, recast much of the discourse about bodies and is the focus of chapter five, "Slaughter Machines." Gallipoli and other conflicts gave rise to the generic body of the "unknown soldier" (p. 112), and images of physical and mental affliction (i.e., shell shock) gained ascendancy over that of the mesomorphic. The author reflects "upon the irony of building bodies only to destroy them' (p. xv). A brief

concluding chapter ends with a citation from a 1990 issue of *Men's Health* and a reference to "stereolithography" for creating computer-designed sculptural models. (Body sculpting by means of plastic surgery also comes to mind.) Budd's final words bring the reader full circle: "We need to continue to investigate how we build our own bodies and identities as well as the global consumer culture that relies upon them" (p. 129).

As does any useful, especially pioneering work, *The Sculpture Machine* raises many questions that need further exploration, and readers will be rewarded by both what the author does and does not say. Several topics require a more sustained analysis. How, for example, did all of this relate to the ubiquitous fascination with game-playing, rowing, and athletics (i.e., track and field) that was so prevalent between 1860 and World War I? What might we make of the icon of the very popular cricketer W.G. Grace or the outstanding batter and classicist C.B. Fry? How did this relate to the emerging biomedical sciences? During the early 1900s, *The British Medical Journal* often agonized over national degeneration. The initiation of the journal *Physique* in 1891 (at least six, not two, issues appeared), which brought together metropolitan public gardens, swimming baths, hygiene, professionalism in sports, and anthropometry, called for a "national physical education." The journal reflects the complexity of these powerful and still ill-understood matters which, as the author observes, remain with us today.

—ROBERTA J. PARK
University of California, Berkeley

1. John J. MacAloon, *The Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), xiv.