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“THE MANLY AND THE RELIGIOUS”: MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY IN THE LITERARY OUTPUT OF CHARLES KINGSLEY AND THOMAS HUGHES

Keywords: Kingsley, Hughes, Muscular Christianity, literature

Abstract

Religion and sport have had an interesting and interconnected relationship since antiquity. Throughout the whole nineteenth century, Great Britain was the leader as far as the development of sports was concerned. It is there that numerous sports disciplines, such as football, rugby, tennis or golf, were born (or that at least their rules were codified). It is also in the British Isles that the religious context played an important role in the history of sports, which resulted in the creation of the ideology of Muscular Christianity, popular in the second half of the nineteenth century and later. This paper contains the analysis of the beginnings of that movement. The author presents the literary output of two English writers who believed that participation in sport could contribute to the development of Christian morality as well as fitness and manly character – Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes.

„MĘSCY I RELIGIJNI”: MUSKULARNE CHRZEŚCIJAŃSTWO W TWÓRCZOŚCI
CHARLESA KINGSLEYA I THOMASA HUGHESA

Słowa kluczowe: Kingsley, Hughes, „muskularne chrześcijaństwo”, literatura

Abstrakt

Związki sportu z religią towarzyszą ludzkości od czasów starożytnych. Wielka Brytania przez całe dziewiętnaste stulecie przodowała w rozwoju sportu. To tu doszło do narodzin (lub przynajmniej skodyfikowania zasad) licznych dyscyplin sportowych, jak np.: piłka nożna, rugby, tenis czy golf. Także na Wyspach Brytyjskich kontekst religijny odegrał ważną rolę w historii sportu, co zaowocowało powstaniem ideologii „muskularnego chrześcijaństwa”, popularnej w drugiej połowie XIX wieku i później. Niniejszy artykuł zawiera analizę narodzin owego ruchu. Autor prezentuje sylwetki oraz twórczość dwóch angielskich pisarzy, którzy uważali, iż udział w sporcie może przyczyniać się do rozwijania chrześcijańskiej moralności oraz sprawności i męskiego charakteru – Charlesa Kingsleya i Thomasa Hughesa.

David Newsome – similarly to other scholars – defines Muscular Christianity as a philosophical movement that originated in England in the mid-19th century, characterized by a belief in patriotic duty, manliness, the moral and physical beauty of athleticism, teamwork, discipline, self-sacrifice, and “the expulsion of all that is effeminate, unEnglish and excessively intellectual”¹. An important factor which influenced the birth and development of Muscular Christianity was that there was a growing concern that church congregations were succumbing to a wave of effeminacy. It was believed that sporting manliness could constitute the antidote to that debilitating malaise. Andrew Parker and Nick J. Watson note this and other issues, such as the Victorian pre-occupation with sanitation and health². Briefly speaking, Muscular Christianity had two basic aims: to increase men’s commitment to their health, and to increase men’s commitment to their faith.

¹ D. Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies On a Victorian Ideal*, London 1961, p. 216.

² A. Parker, N. J. Watson, *Sport and religion: culture, history and ideology*, “Movement and Sport Sciences – Science and Motricité” 2014, no. 86, p. 7, <http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/2338/1/Parker%20and%20Watson%20sport%20and%20religion%20peer%20reviewed%20version.pdf> (access 5.04.2016).

Two mid-century English writers, Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, are generally perceived as the main pioneers and propagators of the new ideal and its most eloquent advocates, for whom “the manliness and the Christianity were inextricably bound up with each other, [and whose] novels project an imaginatively compelling synthesis of the two elements”³. The term “Muscular Christianity” – which then meant most of all “the increasingly fashionable involvement of the clergy as practitioners and promoters of sport and in particular the attribution of religious and moral value to physical activity”⁴ – probably first appeared in a critical review of Charles Kingsley’s novel *Two Years Ago* in the February 21, 1857, issue of *Saturday Review*, written by Thomas Collett Sandars⁵. Kingsley seemed not to like the phrase and did not accept it at the beginning – he was of the opinion that it carried negative overtones. As historian David Rosen notes, the reactions to that name were mixed:

The movement labeled by its derogators as “muscular Christianity” arose, paradoxically perhaps, among notably liberal men, the Christian Socialists, who had fought for the Chartists, for improvements in living conditions, and even for limited rights for women. These men alternately rejected (Kingsley, Letters II 83) and embraced the term “muscular Christian” (Letters II 54; Hughes, Oxford 98–100), as did Victorian society. In Charles Kingsley’s Cambridge sermons on King David in 1866, every mention of “muscular Christianity” produced loud cheers of approval, although the iterations were intended to deride the term⁶.

Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) was a Broad Church priest of the Church of England (ordained to the curacy of Eversley in Hampshire in 1844, where he spent most of the rest of his life), a university professor, historian, and novelist, as well as an amateur naturalist. Norman Vance remarks:

He was listened to as a teacher and loved as a parson. His chaotic energies, his infectious enthusiasms and his plain-spoken truculence would have given him

³ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, Cambridge 1985, p. 6.

⁴ H. McLeod, *Sport and Religion in England, c. 1790–1914*, [in:] *Sports and Christianity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. N.J. Watson and A. Parker, New York and London 2013, p. 115.

⁵ T. Ladd, J. A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport*, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1999, pp. 13–14.

⁶ D. Rosen, *The Volcano and the Cathedral: Muscular Christianity and the Origins of Primal Manliness*, [in:] *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. D. E. Hall, Cambridge, New York 1994, p. 17.

a reputation for aggressively manly Christianity if he had never written a single novel⁷.

As Larry Uffelman states, Kingsley “stands importantly at the center of the Victorian age”⁸. One of the main reasons is that he was a social reformer, a strong supporter and a leading spirit of Christian Socialism⁹, who sympathized with the aims of the Chartists (“but he looked to educational and sanitary reform rather than political change for improvement”¹⁰). He joined the Christian Socialist movement as a result of his interest with the miserable condition of the lower classes. The Christian Socialists were concerned with social problems and tried to “improve” society. One of their aims was the Christianization of education (for example, they organized evening classes and opened a co-operative workshop for tailoring and other crafts). The movement “aimed at reform of individuals and society by the application of Christian principles in all social relations”¹¹.

Basing their ideology on the teachings of Jesus, they believed capitalism to be idolatrous and rooted in greed. As for greed, it was regarded as the main cause of inequality. Many nineteenth-century writers and thinkers are viewed as Christian Socialists. This group included: Frederick Denison Maurice, who held that true socialism was possible only if it was a result of a true Christianity (he wrote treatises like *The Kingdom of Christ*, 1838), John Ruskin (*Unto This Last*, 1862), Frederick James Furnivall (co-editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*), Adin Ballou (*Practical Christian Socialism*, 1854), Francis Belamy (the author of the United States’ *Pledge of Allegiance*), and, last but not least, Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes. As G.D. Klingopulos states, “the Christian Socialists, with F. D. Maurice as their chief thinker, [...] belong to the Anglican reaction against depersonalizing forces in Victorian society”¹².

⁷ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 133.

⁸ L. K. Uffelman, *Charles Kingsley: A Biography*, The Victorian Web, <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/ckbio.html> (access 8.04.2016).

⁹ See for example: J. C. Cort, *Christian Socialism: An Informal History*, Maryknoll, New York 1988.

¹⁰ *The Consise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford, ed. E. A. Livingstone, New York 1996, p. 289.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 106.

¹² G. D. Klingopulos, G. D., *Notes on the Victorian Scene*, [in:] *From Dickens to Hardy*, ed. B. Ford, vol. 6 of *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, London 1996, p. 41.

As for inspirations and influences that helped shape Kingsley’s ideology, Norman Vance notes:

Kingsley acquired his theology of man, nature and society chiefly from Coleridge and Maurice. He had the benefit of historical and rhetorical stimulus from Carlyle and Arnold, and of a good deal of creative exasperation from the preaching and practice of Evangelicals and Tractarians. But he was too hasty and too much a man of action to be a serious theologian himself. He saw himself more as a ‘sporting wild man of the woods’ whose temperament and training and such theology as he had equipped him to fight manfully for noble causes and to preach a correspondingly manly Christianity¹³.

Evangelical and Tractarian “Manicheism” was the principal negative influence on the Christian manliness of both Kingsley and Hughes. The positive influences were the teachings of the aforementioned Coleridge, Maurice, Carlyle, and (Matthew) Arnold. Coleridge, who was a nature-poet and philosopher, had a great impact on Kingsley, and provided him with “a theology to unify his instinctive love of nature, his delight in physical manliness, his scientific and humanitarian interests”¹⁴. His religious understanding of man as moral, scientifically enquiring, fundamentally social and thus socially committed being, had a profound influence on the shaping of manly Christian idealism¹⁵. Maurice’s vision of continuing heroic struggle against falsehood and unrighteousness, as well as all that thwarted the coming of the kingdom of Christ played its role too. As for Carlyle, he “stimulated Kingsley and Hughes to rush to the manful side of things in personal as well as in social matters”¹⁶. Christian manliness benefited selectively from his teaching. In Vance’s opinion, “perhaps his most valuable contribution was to provide a *rationale* for hero-worship and so help to reinvigorate the tradition of Christian heroism and moral manliness”¹⁷. As Andrew Sanders states, “Kingsley followed his mentor [Carlyle] in cultivating both a taste for history and a penchant for the kind of heroes to whom the soubriquet ‘Muscular Christians’ has been affixed. His later novels [after 1850] certainly suggest a relish for dynamic

¹³ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 78.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 46.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 62.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 68–69.

and often bloodthirsty action”¹⁸. As far as Matthew Arnold – a poet as well as literary and social critic of great repute – is concerned, he was one of the heroes of the nineteenth-century imagination whose moral severity and dismay at human wickedness could not go unnoticed either.

Vance underlines that Kingsley “embellished his version of the Christian manly quest, more often individual than co-operative, with the Platonic doctrine of *thumos* [spiritedness], or righteous indignation, with the glitter of chivalry and with the rhetoric of cosmic battle for righteousness assimilated from Maurice, Carlyle and Arnold”¹⁹. He promoted the view that men should glorify God in their bodies as well as in their spirits. His vision “represented the moral and physical strength that was attractive in the ‘eyes of God’ and that would ultimately be tested in ‘the service of Christ’ in campaigns against individual injustices and ‘the bracing work of social improvement’”²⁰. Kingsley was averse to all forms of asceticism, which he disliked for its physical enervation and its distractions from civic duty. He considered “Manicheism” to be a sin of omission and blamed the celibacy and astheticism of some Anglo-Catholic clerics for producing a dangerous “fastidious, maundering, die-away effeminacy”²¹. He claimed that bodies should not be ignored but rather consecrated in God’s service. Therefore, the need to support the activities such as athletics which could enhance the body’s serviceability²². As far as social benefits of sports were concerned, Kingsley noticed its ability to ameliorate English class differences and to fulfil the imperial ambitions of the United Kingdom.

As for sporting passions, Kingsley, writing to his fiancée, explained:

you cannot understand the excitement of animal exercise from the mere act of cutting wood or playing cricket to the manias of hunting, shooting or fishing ... of these things more or less must young men live²³.

¹⁸ A. Sanders, *High Victorian Literature (1830–1880)*, [in:] *An Outline of English Literature*, ed. P. Rogers, Oxford, New York 1998, p. 309.

¹⁹ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 132.

²⁰ D. Brown, *Book review: Norman Vance, The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, <http://library.la84.org/SportsLibrary/SportingTraditions/1987/st0302/st0302v.pdf> (access 22.04.2016).

²¹ Quoted after: C. Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London 2003, p. 12. The effeminacy of Popish priests is often emphasized by Kingsley. For more see: M. Mazurek, *The Unknown Relatives: The Catholic as the Other in the Victorian Novel*, New York, Abingdon 2017, pp. 79–85.

²² C. Putney, *Muscular Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 13.

²³ R. Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford 1992, p. 92.

He stated (writing for *Health and Education* in 1874) that:

games conduce not merely to physical but to moral health; that in the playing fields boys acquire virtues which no books can give them; not merely daring and endurance, but, better still, temper, self restraint, fairness, honour, unenvious approbation of another's success, and all that 'give and take' of life which stand a man in such good stead when he goes forth into the world, and without which, indeed, his success is always maimed and partial²⁴.

Kingsley's novels – in which he commends healthy, socially committed, domestic ideal of Christian manliness – are often attributed to the “muscular” school of fiction. His chief powers as a novelist lay in his descriptive faculties. The notion of Muscular Christianity is epitomized in three dominant figures of the novels: Amyas Leigh in *Westward Ho!* (1855), an imperialist adventure which, set in the Elizabethan period, was inspired by the upsurge of patriotism during the Crimean War (exploiting anti-Catholic political excitement by adopting patriotic themes)²⁵; Tom Thurnall in *Two Years Ago* (1857), which is concerned with fighting disease and unmanliness, and in which “Kingsley exploits the glamour and the challenge of war as a testing-ground for manly virtue”²⁶; and Hereward (an eleventh-century leader of local resistance to the Norman conquest of England) in *Hereward the Wake* (1866), a novel which was instrumental in elevating that protagonist into an English folk-hero.

It is also worth mentioning that Kingsley's characters constituted “manly models” for the English clergy as well – these were the “sporting parson” Parnurgus O'Blareaway in his 1851 novel *Yeast* (about the revivifying effects of sport) and a ship's chaplain Jack Brimblecombe in *Westward Ho!*

Stanley E. Baldwin emphasizes Kingsley's personality and thoughts he placed on the pages of his literary works:

Some men's writings are the greatest part of them, and posterity studies their lives through a spirit of curiosity excited by their works. In a sense this is true of Kingsley, but in a truer sense many are reading Kingsley's literary works because

²⁴ Quoted after: T. Ladd, J. A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants...*, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁵ Kingsley dedicated *Westward Ho!* to two aggressively manly Christians of his own day – Rajah Brooke of Sarawak, whose bloodthirsty exploits Kingsley was always eager to defend, and George Selwyn the energetic and warlike Bishop of New Zealand, as if to suggest that the spirit of Drake lived on.” N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 86.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 91.

of the indelible impression his personality made upon his fellow men, for whom, in all his activities, he labored. His life in itself was a poem of deep lyric passion²⁷.

Sheila Smith and Peter Denman go a bit further acknowledging his literary weaknesses, but finding positive aspects of his creative efforts:

Charles Kingsley is a minor novelist, but in *Yeast*, *Alton Locke* and *Two Years Ago* he helped to extend the novel's subject matter, and to make it more serious, more concerned with reality. He saw God, Heaven and Hell in human terms. This was an asset to him as a novelist, and gave substance to his novels²⁸.

Norman Vance, who pays particular attention to themes of the relationship of manliness to religion in Kingsley's novels, states: "Christian manliness was not just an ideal in Kingsley's fiction, it was the basis of his practical work as pastor, teacher and reformer and the essence of his life and experience"²⁹. In a moment we will turn our attention to another pioneer of Muscular Christianity, Thomas Hughes. It should be noted, however, that Kingsley wrote more prolifically than Thomas Hughes and as Clifford Putney notes, deserves more credit than Hughes for equipping English muscular Christianity with a cohesive and conscious philosophy, consisting equally of athleticism, patriotism, and religion"³⁰.

Thomas Hughes (1822–1896) was as an English jurist, reformer, and novelist, who portrayed Muscular Christianity – a vigorous moral and practical Christianity which owed a great deal to the Mauricean idea of Christian socialist co-operation – in his novels *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), *The Scouring of the White Horse* (1859), and *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861). Hughes "emphasized its positive potential by attaching it to concepts of manliness, morality and patriotism"³¹. As in the case of Kingsley, his physical manliness included a sense

²⁷ S. E. Baldwin, *Charles Kingsley*, Ithaca 1934, p. 194.

²⁸ S. Smith, P. Denman, *Mid-Victorian Novelists*, [in:] *The Victorians*, ed. A. Pollard, New York 1987, p. 261.

²⁹ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 107.

³⁰ C. Putney, *Muscular Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 12. For more on Kingsley, see for example: S. Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk: A Life of Charles Kingsley*, New York 1974. Polish readers are advised to familiarize themselves with Kingsley's book translated into Polish – Ch. Kingsley, *Herosi czyli Klechdy greckie o bohaterach / opowiedział dzieciom swoim Charles Kingsley* (oryg. *The Heroes: Or, the Greek Fairy Tales for My Children*, 1856), tłum. W. Berent, Poznań 2013.

³¹ T. Ladd, J. A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants...*, op. cit., p. 14.

of chivalric service and Christian mission. Both authors espoused Christian Socialism, disliked what Kingsley termed “Manichean”, and deplored the effect of industrialism on English society.

As for the aforementioned theme of co-operation, reinforced by Maurice’s theology of universal brotherhood in Christ, it is important in the Tom Brown novels even though Hughes developed his interest in co-operative associations when school and college experiences were behind him. In fact, as Vance states, “he remained a Rugby schoolboy all his life and later experience complemented and enlarged rather than effaced earlier interests and enthusiasms”³².

Hugh McLeod explains to whom Hughes directed his ideas:

Hughes was fighting a battle on three fronts. His rhetoric was directed at religious people who thought sport was not Christian, at sportsmen who thought religion was not manly and also at those who saw their sport simply as a source of personal pleasure and who lacked a social conscience. Above all, he was not merely advocating sport as a remedy for social ills or an alternative to more disreputable recreations: it was a part of the full life that God intended us to live, and thus should be enthusiastically enjoyed by Christians, including clergymen³³.

His most known book, *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, belongs to the so-called school novels, which “uphold the values of the public school system, with its focus on team games and strict rules of upbringing”³⁴. The story, which represents a new ideal of manhood, and which launched a whole genre of boys’ school tales, is set in the 1830s at Rugby School – a public school for boys – during the era of Thomas Arnold. It contains a first-hand, if fictionalized, account of Arnold’s reform of the public school system at Rugby. It is, to a great degree, based on the author’s experiences. One can easily see that Hughes “fully shared the sportsman’s delight in physical contests of all kinds and in closeness to nature”³⁵. The book records how Brown triumphs over various schoolboy trials finally to captain the school cricket team and become a solid citizen. In fact, it is full of narratives of sporting contests. As for Brown’s favorite sports, he takes part in an early form of rugby, he goes fishing and bird-nesting, he participates in hare and hounds, plays cricket, runs, practices fist fighting with elements of wrestling, and is indirectly involved in horse-racing. Tom Hughes,

³² N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 137.

³³ H. McLeod, *Sport and Religion in England...*, op. cit., p. 115.

³⁴ L. Sikorska, *An Outline History of English Literature*, Poznań 2002, p. 290.

³⁵ H. McLeod, *Sport and Religion in England...*, op. cit., p. 115.

like Tom Brown, had been an enthusiastic cricketer at Rugby. The same concerns boxing and rowing – great Hughes’ passions which are reflected in his novels. As far as Hughes’ fascination with fighting is concerned, he did not approve of brutal fights for money, but appreciated doing it for noble purposes – in the service of women, children and the weak generally. Yet it should be noted that Tom Brown’s school is a happier place than Tom Hughes’ School, where there were espionage and the oppressive discipline.

Tom Brown is first an outsider, but he soon learns to excel in games and schoolwork. Consequently, he becomes the all admired model of sportsmanship and loyalty inspiration for the youth of the nineteenth-century upper class. The book’s advocates were numerous Victorian educators, but also schoolboys adored it because it addressed them and their concerns directly. It was clear to every reader that sporting manliness and the ethic of pluck and hardihood could be extended into a more adult, a more specifically Christian, ethic. It was to lead to future dedication to noble causes.

Tom Brown’s Schooldays can be called the Bible of Muscular Christianity, while Kingsley is its “patron saint.” Their work contributed to the fusion of athleticism, patriotism and religion that carried through the rest of the nineteenth century and remains, in some ways, still today³⁶. The book sold prodigiously – it sold 11,000 copies in the first year, was widely read, not least abroad, and definitely helped to legitimate sporting leisure³⁷.

As for the next part (a sequel), *Tom Brown at Oxford*, which is of interest – among others – for its evocation of the Oxford Movement, in one fragment, Hughes describes muscular Christians (using bodies in morally uplifting ways) in contrast to another group of “musclemen”:

The only point in common between the two being, that both hold it to be a good thing to have strong and well-exercised bodies. ... Here all likeness ends. ... The least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man’s body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men³⁸.

³⁶ T. C. Rider, *Muscular Christianity*, [in:] *Sports Around the World: History, Culture, and Practice*, eds. J. Nauright and Ch. Parrish, Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford 2012, p. 141.

³⁷ M. Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, London and New York 2004, p. 160.

³⁸ T. Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, London 1861.

It is worth saying a few words about the aforementioned Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), head teacher of Rugby School between 1828 and 1841 (he had been Hughes’ headmaster in the 1830s)³⁹, who “fostered a system of education based on a foundation of religious training, seeking to educate the sons of middle-class parents into a high sense of duty, of public service, and of the importance of personal character”⁴⁰. This outstanding educationalist wanted to eliminate violence, idleness and other manifestations of sinfulness, and to focus instead on “the creation of Christian gentlemen [...] the champions of righteousness especially selected to combat the ever watchful forces of evil”⁴¹. Although Hughes credited Arnold with instilling in him “a strong religious faith and loyalty to Christ”⁴², the headmaster’s Christianity was, however, less inextricably linked with sports than that of Hughes. Arnold moderated the prefect-fagging system and advocated regular sports which provided exercise and encouraged healthy competition⁴³. Sport – governed by the rules which could eliminate gratuitous violence – was definitely one of the ways to achieve these aims. It should be also noted that sports were viewed by Arnold as “a means of channeling and dispersing those boyish energies (particularly sexual energies) which, if left unchecked, might result either in masturbation (“the deadly habit”) or in other illicit behavior”⁴⁴.

Norman Vance sums up the great role of Thomas Arnold and his influence on Kingsley and Hughes in the following way:

Thomas Arnold gave both Kingsley and Hughes a moral and religious interpretation of history which served to confirm from an unimpeachably Christian source the Carlyean vision of history as the drama of righteousness. As schoolmaster, churchman and campaigner for social reform, seeking to train Christian gentleman for a Christianized state, he had a powerful influence on the personal and social dimensions of manly Christianity⁴⁵.

³⁹ *Tom Brown’s School Days* has been the source for several film and television adaptations.

⁴⁰ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴¹ J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology (Sport in the Global Society)*, Abingdon and New York 2012, p. 15.

⁴² C. Putney, *Muscular Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴³ A. Perry, *Victorian Sport: Playing by the Rules*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/sport_01.shtml (access 20.11.2016).

⁴⁴ C. Putney, *Muscular Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴⁵ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 76.

It was the public schools that would become the greatest strongholds of Muscular Christianity. The headmasters of the leading schools were Anglican clergymen, and the influence of the Broad Church was very strong there. From the 1850s sport started to play a key role in many of them⁴⁶.

Hugh McLeod notes the significant consequences of the British public school education:

The schoolboys who imbibed a passion for sport in the mid-Victorian era would often become the politicians, landowners and industrialists – as well as the Anglican clergymen and missionaries – of the later Victorian and Edwardian years. In these various roles, ‘muscular Christians’ would play a major role in the sporting boom of the later nineteenth century⁴⁷.

Although Muscular Christianity, like “athleticism”, saw sport only as a means to an end, both ideals had the common effect of placing sport, especially team sports, in a position of higher social and moral authority than they had probably ever occupied in Britain before⁴⁸. Gerald Redmond speaks of the so-called sentiments of the muscular Christian gospel – mostly that physical activity and sports (especially team games like cricket and football) contributed significantly towards the development of moral character, and also fostered a desirable patriotism⁴⁹.

Patriotism had been an essential component of mid-Victorian Christian manliness, reflected in the unembarrassed chauvinism of *Westward Ho!* and Hughes’ active participation in the Volunteer Movement⁵⁰. Tom Brown novels, just like *Westward Ho!*, reflected the popular patriotism first revived by Francophobia (the fear of French invasion and Napoleon III) and the Crimean War. Both for Hughes and for Kingsley, soldiering was a noble occupation for a gentleman of manly sporting instincts. As for Hughes, in short, “morality, sport, social concern, co-operation and aggressive patriotism are the major ingredients of the Tom Brown novels”⁵¹.

⁴⁶ J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School...*, op. cit.

⁴⁷ H. McLeod, *Sport and Religion in England...*, op. cit., p. 119.

⁴⁸ T. Morris, *Vain Games of No Value? A Social History of Association Football in Britain During its First Long Century*, Bloomington, Indiana 2016 (Kindle Edition).

⁴⁹ G. Redmond, *The First Tom Brown’s Schooldays: Origins and Evolution of ‘Muscular Christianity’ in Children’s Literature*, “Quest” (summer 1978), no. 30, p. 7.

⁵⁰ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 193.

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 143.

The books like *Westward Ho!* or *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (which effectively founded the genre of schoolboy literature) remained popular favorites, not only among children, but the reading public in general. But games were soon taken much more seriously than Tom Hughes would have wished. Sport historian J.A. Mangan notes that where *Tom Brown's Schooldays* had moved between Arnold's official programme of terrible righteousness and the attractive but manifestly inadequate rough-and-tumble sporting ethos of the informal schoolboy culture later schoolmasters negotiated a “strategic capitulation to the ‘boy-culture’”⁵².

As for Hughes' other works, one should mention *The Manliness of Christ* (1879), in which he “insists on the connections between a vigorously human Christ and a vigorously humane Christianity, opposed to ascetic otherworldliness and earnestly committed to work in the world”⁵³, and claims that if Christianity could not be made more manly, it “will go to the wall”⁵⁴. Hughes argues that “Jesus demonstrated his manhood in His self-sacrifice and moral courage. Sturdy manliness leads on to and in a sense becomes a metaphor for unflinching moral resolution”⁵⁵.

To sum up, the ideology of Muscular Christianity – a powerful response to the crisis of masculinity which became visible in the second half of the nineteenth century – strongly influenced the perception of sport by Christian churches, and played its role in the process of making Christianity more virile (in Britain and then in other countries). Moreover, as for the Anglican Church authorities, they began to notice the benefits resulting from the new concept, such as reaching the new industrial classes, rather indifferent to organized religion, and stopping the drift into Catholicism by High Church Anglicans⁵⁶. The spreading idea embraced – as it has been demonstrated – both clergymen, lay intellectuals and ordinary people. One of the reasons why Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley had desired to infuse Anglicanism with enough health and manliness was to make it a suitable agent for British imperialism. That aim was largely achieved. Their vigorous, patriotic and socially committed

⁵² J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism: A Case Study of the Evolution of an Educational Ideology*, [in:] *The Victorian Public School*, eds. B. Simon, I. Bradley, Dublin 1975, pp. 152, 147–167

⁵³ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵⁴ T. Hughes, *The Manliness of Christ*, Boston 1880, p. 5.

⁵⁵ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 146. For more on Hughes see for example: G. J. Worth, *Thomas Hughes*, Boston 1984.

⁵⁶ R. Holt, *Sport and the British...*, op. cit., p. 93.

Muscular Christianity, which aimed at being “vigorously combative Christianity involving urgent ethical and spiritual imperatives”⁵⁷, would play an important role in the worldwide expansion and popularization of sport in many countries, both in the sphere of ideology and in practice (by building sports facilities, within the framework of the activity of the Young Men’s Christian Association⁵⁸).

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⁵⁷ N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit...*, op. cit., p. 3.

⁵⁸ As for the YMCA in America, see for example: M. Mazurkiewicz, *Muscular Christianity: Christian Roots of American Sports*, “Zabawy i Zabawki. Studia Antropologiczne” 2018, nr 16.

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