

5-2016

Dandy as Disease: Gender Hygiene and British Nineteenth-century Literature

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Fox, S. L. (2016). Dandy as Disease: Gender Hygiene and British Nineteenth-century Literature. *Graduate Theses and Dissertations* Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/1471>

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Dandy as Disease:
Gender Hygiene and British Nineteenth-century Literature

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English

by

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May 2016

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Abstract

“Dandy as Disease: Gender Hygiene and British Nineteenth-century Literature” explores the link between the nineteenth-century dandy, ideas of hegemonic masculinity, and Walter Besant’s *The Revolt of Man*, a dystopian text in which women have usurped all traditionally-masculine roles, while men are the caretakers and manual workers. The first chapter deals with the historical role of the dandy in the nineteenth-century and how he might be viewed as the cause of the fall of Britain. The second chapter revolves around Besant’s novel, exploring how men are shown to be at fault for Britain’s fall in the eyes of the rest of the world. Their failure in performing hegemonic masculinity has led to the destruction of all that made Britain great in the nineteenth century, as they allowed women to trample on all her accomplishments. Besant’s proposes it is the dandy that is the one required to revolt and take back his “divinely appointed” role as a figure of authority in Parliament, education, and the church, restoring Britain to greatness. Finally, the third chapter looks at how children’s literature took up the same chant for a return to hegemonic ideas of masculinity through the plethora of gendered periodicals that instructed boys how to grow up to be paragons of manliness, while girls were instructed in how to be happy within the home, taking care of children. I conclude the entire thesis by examining how the same rhetoric that calls for a return to hegemonic masculinity in the nineteenth century is found in the twenty-first century as a response to the rise of the metrosexual, who is portrayed as fulfilling the same role now as the dandy did in the past. I hope to show how the anxieties of the nineteenth century have not been quieted, even after more than one-hundred years, and the fears found in a novel like *The Revolt of Man* are accepted by some sections of society as still relevant today. I hope to show how Besant’s novel is as timely to consider now as when it was published.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks are extended to my thesis director, Dr. Sean Dempsey, for all of his help through the process of writing this thesis, and to my committee, Dr. Bill Quinn and Dr. Lissette Szwydky, for all their help in completing the project.

Also, a special thanks goes out to the faculty and staff at the University of Arkansas for their commitment to the University and to the students.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Donovan, and my children, Ciaran and Sian, who have put up with so much in order to let me follow my dreams. Thank you so much for all of your love and for all you do for me.

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Introduction

Literature can serve many purposes, but perhaps one of its most influential is its ability to share societal “truths” in a way that is more accessible to the masses than, say, a political tract or a rhetorical transcription. The novel, as a literary form, has proven both entertaining and educational, and becomes especially educational when one looks at the novel as a construct of the time in which it is written. This thesis will look at the idea of manliness from the perspective of the novel, and particularly the idea of the dandy as a disease, or rather more correctly, as a source of dis-ease (I will use the two words interchangeably throughout), threatening Britain in the nineteenth century. Edmund Burke, in his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, states that,

We are but too apt to consider things in the state in which we find them, without sufficiently advert to the causes by which they have been produced, and possibly may be upheld. Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion (76).

I believe Burke’s statement to be true, and though he is referring to the French Revolution, it is as pertinent when discussing a novel, which we so often take at face value without consideration of the inspiration for the storyline. Many years ago I bought a little-known nineteenth-century novel, *The Revolt of Man*, by Walter Besant. I read through the dystopian text and took it at face value – it is a novel that deals with a future Britain that has allowed women to take all positions of authority, while men are left at home to sew or spin, and to look after the children. The *roles*, that is “a general set of expectations which are attached to one’s sex,” for men and women, are almost entirely reversed (Connell *Masculinities* 22). Burke’s prophetic words, at least regarding my reading of this novel, proved true – I thought little of the background at first reading. But there are some questions I should have asked myself. What made Besant write this novel? What

might be going on around him that he felt the need to create such a world. I am well aware many dystopian novels, such as George Orwell's *1984*, which came out of the fears surrounding the cold war, or Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, which grew out of Bradbury's fear in the McCarthy era in America, and so I should have considered what fears did Besant draw on in his writing of a future Britain so far removed from his own. Several years after purchasing the novel I pulled it off of the shelf once more and reread it, this time asking myself many questions, and it is from those questions that this thesis arose. I could easily see the novel as antifeminist, and as the book was written during a time when the "New Woman" was finding her feet this would not be entirely wrong. What I wondered, however, was what were the men doing while women usurped traditionally male roles? How did their society make such a complete reversal? When we look back at the nineteenth century it was not just the women who were changing their ideas of what it meant to be a woman, there was also a select group of men, the dandies, who were straying from nineteenth-century gender-normative ideas. Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, "suggests that history proceeds via a series of radical (and ultimately inexplicable) shifts from one fundamental style of thought, or *episteme*, to another ... continually challeng[ing] the conventional figuration of history as a smooth and continuous narrative in which one event leads to another in logical and understandable ways" (Booker 24). It may not be a smooth transition historically from dandy to "New Woman," but the transition is there and so we must consider the dandy as a significant cog in the wheel of changing roles in society, and therefore a cog in Besant's belief that the future was heading towards a Britain *run by women* if men did not resort back to traditional ideas of masculinity. It is, therefore, the effect of the nineteenth-century dandies on *The Revolt of Man* that this essay will revolve around.

The dandy, as defined by Dr. Katherina Krosny, included men whose

style stood for an amoral, superficial attitude toward life and the rejection of middle-class responsibilities in favor of aristocratic detachment, pedantically observed decorum, and a general decay in morals. The dandy's world revolved around stylish clothing, drawn-out toilettes, extravagant dinner-parties, the London season, the newest dances, horse racing, and the jockey Club. His social behavior was characterized by capricious favoritism, dry wit, sangfroid, and a tendency to turn on those fallen from grace.

Offered as defying normative, or traditional, ideas of manliness in novels such as Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, or William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* or *The History of Pendennis*, the dandy finds his home in many novels. In turn, a novel such as Walter Besant's *The Revolt of Man* looks at how nations must fall when men fail to be "manly," offering up subliminal warnings to nineteenth-century men to beware the rising dandy population. After the warning has been issued to nineteenth-century adults, children's literature will take up the cry for a return to normative masculinity, proposing normative-masculinity requires courage, patriotism, and men who are unafraid of the enemies without. As the century went through profound changes, the nineteenth-century novel follows along quickly, moving from dandy, to revolutionary, to a return to the teaching of warrior-masculinity, offering insight into the changing landscape of masculinity, or at least the mainstream ideas of masculinity and manliness, in a world growing exponentially throughout the century.

The idea of studying "masculinity" is a relatively new concept and there are those who view this field of study as "a not-so-subtle attempt to infiltrate women's history and blunt its polemical edge" (Tosh "What" 179). History is often considered to be already male-gendered, and so any further study of masculinities is seen to promote an already androcentric concept of world history. R.W. Connell states that while "there already was a men's history ... [t]he central theme of new men's history ... could only be what was missing from the non-gendered history of men – the idea of masculinity" (Connell *Masculinities* 2). Therefore, while studying the feminine

in history is important, ignoring the masculine does not strengthen women's story, rather it creates a history that lacks depth, making it essential to look at both genders separately, as well as the ungendered populous as a whole, in order to get a complete picture.

According to John Tosh, “‘Masculinity’ is the nearest we have to a word which embraces all the things which distinguish men from women: it includes both physical and psychological attributes, both appearance and behaviour, both interiority and performance” (*Masculinities*). Herbert Sussman, John Tosh, and R.W. Connell are part of a growing number of writers taking a closer look at the study of masculinity within history. Sussman, in his book, *Masculine Identities: The History and Meaning of Manliness*, states that the concept of Manliness, set apart from masculinity, “is an unmarked category, an area that is seemingly so self-evident in its meaning that we seldom think about it. And when we do, we often meet with confusion and contradiction” (1). The confusion and contradiction felt may arise because ideas of manliness, the word most often used in nineteenth-century Britain to “denoted those attributes - both moral and physical – that men were happy to own, which they had often acquired by great effort and self-discipline, and whose absence in other men they deplored,” are not as set in stone as many wished them to be (1). Though Herbert Sussman states “men seldom step outside the socially given ideals to consider alternatives, to see themselves as living within a discourse of masculinity that is historically specific and yet emerges from the history of manliness,” in the nineteenth-century the concept of what is manly, or masculine, was constantly challenged and some men, such as George “Beau” Brummell, made conscious decisions to veer away from traditional manliness (1). R.W. Connell suggests that “[m]ass culture generally assumes there is a fixed, true masculinity beneath the ebb and flow of daily life,” however, the nineteenth century called this into question (Connell *Masculinities* 45). Connell goes on to say that “role norms are

social facts, they can be changed by social processes ... [which] will happen whenever the agencies of socialization – family, school, mass media, etc. – transmit new expectations,” and in the nineteenth century men like Brummel offered alternative social concepts of masculinity, outside of the idea of one “fixed, true” idea of masculinity (Connell *Masculinities* 23, 45).

Andrew Dowling suggests that “ideals of Victorian manhood exerted power, not necessarily by repressing individuals but by constructing a ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ of what it meant to be a man,” and the novel, long a carrier of morality, became a tool used to define, or redefine, nineteenth-century normative masculinity. In the eighteenth century, novelist Mary de la Rivière Manley stated that “the chief end of history is to instruct and inspire into men the love of virtue and the abhorrence of vice, by the examples proposed to them,” and novels often served as a means of inspiring men to virtue, or warning them against a failure to live virtuously (quod. in Davis 111). Furthermore, novels are offered, not just as inspiration to virtue, but also, according to Michael Foucault, as neither “a biological entity, nor a convergent phenomenon, but as discourse” (Booker 24). In *The Revolt of Man*’s case, it engages in a discourse on differing ideas of manliness, asking its reader, both at the time of publication and since, to understand and accept one idea of manliness as normative and nation-building, and another as divisive and unpatriotic.

The pushing of traditional ideas of masculinity in novels, such as Walter Besant’s *The Revolt of Man*, can become not only a wish for a return to old ways, but an offer of a cure for the dis-ease caused by dandyism which was viewed as destroying the nation. While writers such as Thomas Carlyle and Walter Besant, who belittle alternative masculinities or call for a return to traditional masculine roles, may seem somewhat exaggerated in the twenty-first century, as Britain faced war and pursued colonialism in the nineteenth century, the call for strong men,

particularly colonizers and soldiers, is offered as both necessary and understandable. Those men who failed to fulfill ideas of traditional masculinity, which Norman Vance defines as “embracing qualities of physical courage, chivalric ideals, virtuous fortitude with additional connotations of military and patriotic virtue,” may well have appeared to be a step towards Besant’s dystopian Britain (quod. in Mangin 1). These men are more decorative than useful, and women have usurped traditional male roles and destroyed technology, pulling the nation backwards.

The call for a return to traditional masculinity in the latter-half of the nineteenth century went beyond a warning to men, trickling down into children’s literature, particularly highly-gendered boys’ annuals, promoting a return to the hegemonic masculinity Vance suggested. What we learn then, is that literature in the nineteenth century, both for adults and children, become what Kenneth Burke describes as a “strategic naming of situations,” allowing the reader (both at the time of publication and in present times) to comprehend the societal anxieties sweeping nineteenth-century Britain (Adams 945).

Kenneth Burke asks if we can consider “the most complex and sophisticated works of art” as “proverbs writ large” – in other words, can we look at a text such as a novel and use it to determine what lessons are being taught about and for society by the writer (Adams 944)? Burke might ask us to consider written material such as *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *The Revolt of Man*, or *The Boys Own Annual*, as the “addition of a word to an informal dictionary” (Adams 946). Is it possible that “a new typical situation had arisen and people needed names for them” (946)? Are we being asked to learn about dandies, and the danger inherent in dandyism and female suffrage, through literary works, in order to enhance our understanding of the world in which the writer lived (946)? I am attempting, in the following chapters, to make “intuitive leaps” by grouping strategic situations that may not seem at first to fit together, but may well be part of an attempt

by different writers to help the reader understand the dandy. For some, like Besant, the dandy does not fit within hegemonic ideas of masculinity, and so he asks the reader to realize the impending harm that may be caused by failing to recognize the rising spread of the dandy-disease (Adams 946). The chapters will look at the beginnings of the dis-ease related to dandyism, how it promoted the type of actions that could destroy a nation, and then what a possible end result can be for a nation which does not curtail the cause for the dis-ease. This thesis will finish by looking at how to halt the dis-ease before it is contracted into the bodies of young boys.

Chapter One, “The Dandy Disease,” considers the changing world of Victorian Britain, in which the growing “dandy” population and the “New Woman” are stepping away from traditional roles, leading to anxiety from the more conservative side of society. These conservatives view the growing dis-ease of dandyism as detrimental to a nation stretching out around the globe, which requires a strong masculine presence if it is to maintain its tenuous position. The “dandy,” the origin of which is often ascribed to George “Beau” Brummel (1778-1840), offered an alternative to traditional notions of masculinity in the nineteenth-century, centered around aesthetic autonomy rather than tradition. Dandyism did not promote the idea of a man’s responsibility to his country, but instead asked a man to concern himself with his dress first, then perhaps what food he partook of or what parties he attended. There is a lot of narcissism involved in dandyism, which directly opposes a culture that asks you to think of yourself as British first and an individual second. Thomas Carlyle, a prolific essayist of the nineteenth century, in many senses led the way in asking Britain to return to more traditional manliness, back towards the idea of the “hero.” Carlyle felt Britain was failing to produce heroes like those of the past, and dedicated much of his writing and speaking to calling for a return to traditional manliness.

Sartor Resartus, Thomas Carlyle's poionomenon on a German philosopher's views on *Clothes: their Origin and Influence*, revolves around the words of an editor struggling with those views. It is a commentary disparaging those who focus on clothing, and particularly the dandy, defining him as "a Clothes-wearing Man, a Man whose trade, office and existence consists in the wearing of Clothes. Every faculty of his soul, spirit, purse and person is heroically consecrated to this one object, the wearing of Clothes wisely and well: so that as others dress to live, he lives to dress" (Carlyle 207). The rising fashion for men to care more about their dress and leisure time than their careers, to be consumers rather than creators or leaders, led the more conservative (such as Carlyle) to believe that men *were*, in actuality, losing their masculinity and becoming more *feminine*, even docile. Dandies, who appeared in such novels as William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* or *The History of Pendennis*, are viewed by the likes of Carlyle as a virus that must be cured if the country is to thrive. The dandy was not portrayed literarily as the type of man to father children or fight for his country, which is a problem in a country expanding beyond her borders, and so any man more concerned with his clothes than his country can be little else than a disease, as a source of dis-ease.

At the same time some men in nineteenth-century Britain were stepping away from their "traditional" roles, some women were leaving the confines of their homes and taking positions in offices and shops. Women were entering in greater numbers into academia. Women were becoming politically active, advocating for abolition and women's suffrage, refusing to be kept quiet. Although women's rights were still fairly limited in the nineteenth century, and it was not until 1928 that all British women received the right to vote, new laws slowly opened doors for women to be more vocal about the situation in which they found themselves, no longer locked into marriages because they were financially dependent on their husbands, or even their fathers.

Women found their *appointed* domestic sphere less and less acceptable, and apparently, to men such as Walter Besant and Thomas Carlyle, if men in the nineteenth century did not stand up for their inherent position in society and reign-in women's freedoms, women would continue to take more and more control and might, eventually, wish to take the positions of absolute power within the British Empire. The dandy appeared to be enabling women to usurp men's position in society and only one thing would stop the movement: revolt. Besant is clear that this revolt is to be a "man's movement, and must be guided by men alone" – apparently women are not the problem (Besant 123). It is the men.

Chapter Two, "A Prescription for Revolt," revolves around the book that called to me from the bookshelf, Walter Besant's dystopian novel, *The Revolt of Man*, which John Goode describes as a "proleptic satire about 'the new woman'" (Howard 246). Goode's description of Besant's novel as satirical may lead the reader to believe the novel is meant to be read as sarcasm aimed at the situation, however, at no time in the novel are we led to believe that there is any humor in the situation. In *The Revolt of Man*, a return to traditional masculinity, in fact to a pre-Victorian concept of traditional masculinity, is prescribed as the only cure for the disease that appears to be sweeping Britain – dandified men allowing strong women to rise up and destroy the once *Great* Britain. Besant views this need for revolt as anything but funny – it is an imperative. The only hope for a cure, Besant advocates, requires men taking back their divinely-appointed role, in turn allowing (forcing) women to return to their subservient position under man's supervision, from the Crown down.

The Revolt of Man tells the story of Britain, some two-hundred years in the future, after the (fictional) "Great Transition" and the "transfer of Power, which marked the last and greatest step of civilization," where women had slowly been substituted for men in all realms of

authority, to the detriment of Britain's position in the world. *The Revolt of Man* can only be considered a critique of the way nineteenth-century Britain appeared to be heading (Besant 12). As the nineteenth-century progressed, many gendered roles did appear to be changing: Britain had a female monarch for the first time in centuries, the "New Woman" openly expressed her opinions and stood up for her rights, while at the same time many men stepped back from their traditional roles allowing women to take positions they could not possibly have taken previously. Besant's dystopian novel may be merely a work of fantasy, but it also signifies the anxieties pervading the traditional constituents of British nineteenth-century society. Besant's novel appears to be a "call-to-arms" for late-nineteenth-century man: Rise up or lose it all. In Besant's future all familiar ideas of religion have been replaced by the worship of the Perfect Woman, in which the only tenants seem to be that *woman* is the superior being and so *women* should fulfill all roles of authority and creativity. What becomes apparent in Besant's novel is that women cannot fulfill the roles of leadership, and if men allow them to continue to rise up in society, then Britain will lose its position in the world. One of the more *enlightened* characters in this novel declares that, in Besant's fictitious future, "trade ... is gone ... greatness ... is gone ... industries ... are gone ... our arts ... have perished" and now Britain "stand[s] alone, the contempt of the world to whom we are no longer a power" and this is all because women are taking positions that are not rightly theirs – with women at the helm, it seems there can no longer be a GREAT Britain (Besant 127). It is only if the men rebel against the objectification they have been subjected to that Britain has a chance to rise from the ashes and become a great nation once more – a revolt is necessary. Not just a revolt of man, but a re-subjugation of women to the private sphere.

Besant's novel becomes a rallying cry to all Victorian men to not let go of their masculinity, and to hold tight to their positions of leadership. The fiction is that a King is the

only way to save the country, while the fact of the era was that Victorian Britain, ruled over by a woman, was more successful than it had ever been. The reality was that Queen Victoria led her country strongly, even after losing her husband, opposing Besant's "prophecy," and yet *The Revolt of Man* appears to be a prescription against a virus viewed to be destroying the nation. Dandies must be removed and men must return to traditional ideas of manliness or all is lost.

Chapter Three, "Preventive Measures," explores how the (perceived) rising number of dandies and the pervasiveness of strong females become catalysts for a felt need to train young boys to be more "masculine." This need for training can only come from a need to prevent the future offered in novels such as *The Revolt of Man*. Prior to the 1860s most children's books were ungendered, aimed at merely "children," but not too long before Besant published his book for an adult audience, boys were being singled out, shown the way they *should* act, through tales of war and fighting. The new stories for boys depicted strong warriors, and powerful heroes. The boys' tales were fast-paced and adventure-filled, whilst the girls were offered, in their equivalent periodicals, sedate and domestic stories. Children's books were being written in a way to encourage a return to traditional roles. Tales, such as those found in the *Boy's Own Paper* published through the Religious Tract Society (1879-1967), or Samuel Beeton's *Boy's Own Magazine* (1855-1890), and a myriad of other "Boys' Own" publications, encouraged boys to aspire to be more masculine and represent the Great British Empire as soldiers and warriors. The periodicals could be described as training manuals, which, according to Kirsten Drotner, were used to instruct boys that they should "never sneak, never weep, never lie, and never trust foreigners," in fact that they should be strong British men-in-training (107). The only long-term cure for the dandy was to ensure the next generation of men learn what traditional masculinity looked and acted like from childhood, ensuring Besant's future remained fiction rather than

prophecy. Children's literature becomes a way to suggest gender-normativity in an era in which men and women were stepping away from those ideas. So we see the policing of genders reaches far beyond that of adult fiction and into the hands of schoolboys who are being taught the importance of sports for building muscles, the need for boys to fight their own battles, and for young men to fight for a country against any enemies who might threaten Britain's superiority.

To see novels and periodicals as history, as windows into the past, is important as it allows us in the postmodern era to understand the anxieties of a society that is long past. Kenneth Burke asks us to see "Literature as Equipment for Living," as sociological criticism, and so while essays, novels, and magazines may be read merely as entertainment, as a form of escape, what may well be offered in literature such as *The Revolt of Man* or the *Boys' Own Papers*, is far from escapist (Adams 943). While the subject of manliness is covered in a lot of nineteenth-century writings, and has been "elaborated, reiterated, contested, and adapted – by preachers, [and] school-masters," we must understand that each iteration may well have been used to "scale[] down to everyday proportions" the idea of "civic virtue and ... heroic achievement ... as a guide to the little man" (Tosh "What" 180). Literature may as easily represent societal anxieties as any sermon offered in Victorian Britain, guiding male readers of such works as *The Revolt of Man* to rise up against an issue viewed as detrimental to the well-being of society. The Victorian-era offered new opportunities, but it also reignited age-old anxieties regarding the loss of masculine superiority, and popular literature offers itself as part of a movement to teach that a "good" citizen is either a "tough man" or a "domesticate woman," suggesting there is no room for any other kind of citizen in a strong country. The reading of a novel such as *The Revolt of Man* then becomes prescriptive rather than entertaining, as men are called to arms, to rise up against the "New Woman" and the dandified man, to take back their "divinely appointed" role as leader and

start a revolution that will bring traditional ideas of order *back* to a country fighting for its position in the world.

My aim, therefore, in this essay, is to see literature as more than merely fictional, but as a proffered means of understanding the “unwritten” gender-hygiene policing going on in nineteenth-century literature. One begins by defining the dandy as less than a man, moves on to warning a nation of the pitfalls of failing to curb the dis-ease surrounding the dandy, who is believed to be infecting the nation, and finally ends with trying to understand a deep need to instill in the young men of Britain a clear idea of what is acceptable manliness. What is deemed “acceptable” is courage and strength in the face of enemies, whether those enemies be within the nation or outside, ensuring the disease is curtailed and Britain can continue to be considered Great.

The Dandy Disease

Nineteenth-century literature offers insight into a changing Britain, allowing the reader to understand anxieties that prevailed throughout the country in a manner that is easy to understand. Concepts of changing masculinity show up throughout nineteenth-century British literature, as we are offered every type of masculinity. Think of the valiant, brave, and strong Colonel Brandon, who seeks to save young women from all manner of wrongdoing in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Or we might consider the upwardly-mobile John Thornton, who works his way up from his father's suicide to running his own mill in Margaret Gaskell's *North and South*. We are also offered characters such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's John Watson in the *Sherlock Holmes* books, a man who first fought overseas for his country and then came home to continue his war, but this time against crime. Not all types of masculinity depicted in nineteenth-century literature were so easy to accept however. Contemporary nineteenth-century readers were familiar and comfortable with depictions of strong masculinity, as these are the types of men who would ensure Britain stayed Great, but deviations from the strong, chivalric, warrior-type caused anxieties, and these are the men we shall be considering in this chapter – these are the type of men who put their own needs before those of their country, a problem for a growing nation facing opposition on many fronts.

In the nineteenth century Britain spread her fingers throughout the world, creating colonies in parts of continental Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India, to name just a few. She was pushed forward partly by the age of industrialization, which offered better transportation and arms. To successfully colonize the world, however, it also proved necessary to have strong British men who were willing to go to the ends of the earth to defend their country, to enlarge her holdings, or to die in that pursuit. R.W. Connell states that “[c]olonial conquest ... was mainly

carried out by groups of men – soldiers, sailors, traders, administrators, and a good many who were all these by turn” (*Men* 47). If wars were won by men, actually by vast armies of soldiers, at least in the nineteenth-century, a growing fear throughout the Victorian era suggested British men were losing their strength and so Britain might be in trouble. Dandyism, which Thomas Carlyle defined as “Dandiacal Self-worship or Demon-worship,” threatened Britain’s position as a world power, as the vast majority of dandies came from the aristocracy and the “landed gentry,” the very men who were expected to be the “ruling group in the colonial world” (Carlyle 216, R.W. Connell *Men* 47-48). “The warrior is an individual,” Herbert Sussman states, “but, as with all forms of masculine identity, he derives this identity from the values and structures of the society into which he is born,” and in the early nineteenth-century Britain was strong and needed to create strong men who were willing to put on a military uniform and fight to maintain her position (Sussman *Masculine* 12). Britain was facing other countries such as Germany and France, who were also seeking out their own new frontiers to place their flag upon, and without a superior army or navy, Britain was not likely to maintain her position for very long. Dandies, therefore, threatened, British superiority as a colonial power.

In the midst of the wars and colonialism Britain was experiencing during the nineteenth-century, the huge push towards industrialization also called for engineers and leaders for the mills. Industrialization called for a different kind of masculinity than that of the soldier, and brute strength and teamwork became less important for upward mobility. Affluence pushed beyond the upper-classes, as middle-class men opened factories and made their own fortune, as seen in Gaskell’s *North and South*. The rise of the “economic man,” as Sussman describes him, meant that “manliness as service to the common good in war and in peace was replaced by an ethos grounded not in community but in individual self-interest motivated by rational calculation

of economic gain,” and so “working hard, making money, and accumulating commodities” became a new marker of manliness (*Masculine* 81). Mechanical power replaced the need for strong men and added to the concept of what made a man manly – business acumen and leadership. Not all men in nineteenth-century Britain could picture themselves as soldiers or businessmen however, and so chose an alternative masculinity, turning away from societal needs, instead turning to the aesthetic ideals of men such as George “Beau” Brummel (1778-1840), who ascribed to a very different concept of masculinity than the traditional warrior- or economic-masculinity – they chose the lifestyle of the dandy.

Dandyism, according to Josh Simms, meant “being known for one's style – and its decadent pursuit ... The dress itself conformed to no uniform. Rather, one's clothing turned oneself into a one-off art form, utterly individualistic - sometimes theatrically so, sometimes with immense restraint” (Dandyism). The dandy became known as the man in ostentatious clothing, but in fact Brummell ascribed to a rather somber palate of colors, and his big addition to fashion was actually to lengthen and tighten pants, and yet all who chose to dress and act in a manner deviant to traditional ideals, were considered dandies. Brummell's “highly original advocacy of cleanliness” was something he was immensely proud of, and yet this is not necessarily how dandies were generally perceived (Moers 32). Brummell stood in direct opposition to the Macaronis, the eighteenth-century iteration of the dandy, who dressed outlandishly and effeminately, more in the style of *Vanity Fair*'s Jos Sedley, as a means of demonstrating how well traveled they were. Unlike Brummell, these men “sponsored a cult of slovenliness and disarray to counter their reputation for affectation and effeminacy in dress” (Moers 33). The dandies who professed to follow Brummel often were more like the Macaroni, drenching themselves in cologne, which in actual fact, Brummell refused to wear as he felt his cleanliness

is what made him smell good. He smelled like a woman, whether because he was clean or because he wore a lot of scent, so even their odor set the dandy apart from other men. Whether following the ways of Brummell or the Macaronis, the dandy was not a man known by the sweaty odor he acquired from doing battle for his country.

Novels defined men who stood in opposition to the idea of man as warrior or soldier, as being dandies. “For many middle-class Englishmen of the second-half of the nineteenth century,” according to Brent Shannon, “fashion became a highly visual means by which to subvert the rigid and confining dictates of proper masculine behavior,” and so dandyism, which eschewed traditional ideas of manly dress, was not just the choosing of a different style of clothing, but was rather viewed by society as a symbol of lost manliness (599). While it was acceptable for women to dress in such a way as to draw attention to themselves, for men to do so was “vain and immoral” and should be acknowledged by women only in order to belittle them for failing to be the “man” they could be (Shannon 618). Any characters portrayed as having dandiacal tendencies were likewise meant to be belittled and seen as less than a man.

Portraying strong men willing to fight for their country and for the love of a woman in the earliest part of the nineteenth-century, novels slowly began to include dandies as main characters as the century progressed. Rarely were these men portrayed in a positive light, however. As the nineteenth century progressed, characters such as Jane Austen’s Robert Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) or Sir Walter in *Persuasion* (1816), became more apparent. Joseph (Jos) Sedley in William Makepeace Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1847), or even the young Penn, Mr. Foker, or “the old dandy” Major Pendennis, in Thackeray’s semiautobiographical *The History of Pendennis: His Fortunes and Misfortunes, His Friends and His Greatest Enemy* (1848-50) depict Britain’s awareness of the growing dandy population (*History*). Sir Walter is

devoid of all understanding of anything but vanity. Robert Ferrars is self-centered to the point of ignorance. Jos Sedley, Thackeray's dandy in *Vanity Fair* is portrayed as fat, vain, and selfish – a man who looks to the needs of others only after his own needs have been met. The young Penn, in *The History of Pendennis*, is described as a “wit and dandy,” and accepts his new role as a gentleman easily, spending his money on clothes and food in order to ensure his schoolmates see him as a man of worth, even though his mother and Laura, a charge of the family, are left destitute (Thackeray *History*). Penn is set apart from others who have less by the fact that he “has got curtains to his bed, and wears shiny boots, and a silver dressing-case” – however, it is that he cares about how he and his surroundings look that is almost his downfall (Thackeray *History*). Major Pendennis, Penn's uncle, peruses newspapers, not for news regarding his country's wellbeing, but to “see that his name was down among the guests at my Lord So-and-so's fete,” appearing to behave more like a woman than a man in his concerns (Thackeray *History*). Mr. Foker's need to “arrived scented and arrayed in fine linen, and perfectly splendid in appearance,” even to meet with a group of men, depicts him as a man obsessed with outer appearances first and foremost (Thackeray *History* n.pag.). These characterized dandies are not men who we are meant to idolize or copy, but are instead the types of men who cannot push Britain to greatness unless they are willing to change and take on greater responsibility and work hard, which seems impossible for all but the young Pen who will learn by the end of *The History of Pendennis* what the more important things are in life.

Austen's Sir Walter in *Persuasion* is presented as a man who obsesses about his good looks. He is described thus:

Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character; vanity of person and of situation. He had been remarkably handsome in his youth; and, at fifty-four, was still a very fine man. *Few women could think more of their*

personal appearance than he did, nor could the valet of any new made lord be more delighted with the place he held in society. He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy; and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these gifts, was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion (10, emphasis mine).

Once his wife passes, her “method, moderation, and economy, which had just kept the family within their income” passes with her (Austen *Persuasion* 14). While he did marry, once widowed, his dandyism becomes a source of regression for the family. He spends his money on clothes, food, and extravagances, leading the family into so much debt that they are required to leave their familial home and move to Bath. While it is the leaving of Kellynch Hall that moves the story forward, the reader is not meant to see Sir Walter’s extravagances as a positive, but as something ridiculous. When the baronet is urged to rent Kellynch Hall to an admiral, he expresses that he disagrees with such men because the life of a naval man “cuts up a man's youth and vigour most horribly; a sailor grows old sooner than any other man” (Austen *Persuasion* 22). Sir Walter’s response seems ridiculous in a country that must rely so much on her navy to remain strong. However, to a man who thinks how one looks and dresses is *almost* the first thing that sets him apart, with only his position at birth superseding it, the reader realizes that this dandy has completely lost sight of all that is important to Great Britain. Those who surround him do not do so out of enjoyment of his character, but out of hope of what they can gain from him. His lawyer only laughs “as he knew he must, at [Sir Walter’s] wit,” not out of real feeling towards what is said, but out of obligation for being an inferior (Austen *Persuasion* 20). We should feel pity for such a man as Sir Walter, who must buy his associates.

Consider Robert Ferrars in Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*; he is a man who cannot pass a mirror without looking at himself, and who both Lucy and Elinor describe as “silly and a great coxcomb” – he is not written in a way to be admired (110). We are meant to look down on

the likes of him and despise him. In fact, the first time Elinor and Marianne see the yet-unmet Robert, Austen portrays him as shopping. Austen writes about Robert:

But the correctness of his eye, and the delicacy of his taste, proved to be beyond his politeness. He was giving orders for a toothpick-case for himself, and till its size, shape, and ornaments were determined, all of which, after examining and debating for a quarter of an hour over every toothpick-case in the shop, were finally arranged by his own inventive fancy, he had no leisure to bestow any other attention on the two ladies, than what was comprised in three or four very broad stares; a kind of notice which served to imprint on Elinor the remembrance of a person and face, of strong, natural, sterling insignificance, though adorned in the first style of fashion (*Sense* 165).

His clothes, the fact that he dressed in the “first style of fashion” are not meant to make him more of a man to the on-looking women, but in fact he is less, he is insignificant. Robert is portrayed as the kind of man who fails to consider any young lady’s needs before his own, never mind those of his own country, and the “contempt and resentment” that Marianne expresses for the as-yet unnamed shopper is the same contempt that society asks the readers to feel towards all such young dandies, whether within the pages of a book or walking in the street towards them (165). The shop was a place that Marianne and Elinor, as women, should expect to be treated well, but here a man is taking that away from them, usurping their rights.

Dressing according to the values of men such as George “Beau” Brummel suggested, to many, a laxity of moral code and a wish to deviate from societal norms and Sir Walter and Robert Ferrars are generally depicted as people of little worth who lack moral fiber. Characters, like Sir Walter, or Robert Ferrars, depicted in novels as men who dress like Brummel are therefore portrayed as lacking in morals, which cannot help but be detrimental to nineteenth-century Britain. Novels become educational, helping to instruct the reader how to react to the dandy. Women may spend their time shopping and dressing to get attention, but men should be working or fighting, upholding Britain’s position, not worrying about neckties or the dimensions

of a toothpick case. Women are not supposed to be the ones holding down the finances – that is the man’s role in Victorian Britain. We are asked to follow Marianne’s example and feel nothing but reproach for men like Robert Ferrars or Sir Walter.

During the earlier Victorian era ‘the iconography of shopping – its spaces, its goods, as well as the very act of shopping itself – [were] consistently encoded as feminine,’ and so for men to enter this sphere became a further reason to see the dandy as “feminine” in character, rather than masculine (Shannon 598). The new department store, which, as the nineteenth century progressed, increasingly became a space for both male and female consumers, suggested it was no longer true that women were consumers and men were producers, and in fact, “for the fashionable middle-class bachelor (who lacked the valets employed by the upper classes), the purchase and care of clothing had become a time-consuming task,” which hindered their ability to fulfill other activities (Shannon 609). With the new obsession for dressing well, which was viewed in itself as effeminate, there was added a new need to shop, and so scenes such as the one in *Sense and Sensibility* became far more common. If outward vanity was a woman’s failing, then the dandy, who was seen as equally, if not more, vain, was failing in an even greater way. In a time when, according to Shannon, “any man who seemed to care about his appearance risked accusations that he was weak and womanish,” the actions of men who willingly followed in Brummell’s footsteps incited anxieties in society that manliness was cast aside, as men became less than men, they became women (Shannon 613, 614). Their purpose seemed to be evaporating at the same time that their fashion choices changed, and so dandyism became a sign of men’s inability to fulfill any position of any worth in their society. Brummel becomes a case in point as earlier in his life he had aspired to be a doctor, studying medicine at Oxford University, but chose to drop out of Oxford, and even resigned his commission from the army,

reportedly because he did not wish to move from London to Manchester, a city which he felt did not offer the amenities he enjoyed. Manchester did not offer the ability to shop or the fashionable establishments he was used to eating at that London offered, and one can suppose that both learning to be a doctor and training with the military used up time he felt better spent in the pursuit of those vanities and excesses he felt *necessary* to his everyday life. Brummel's great accomplishment appears to be that he is credited with inventing "the starched neckcloth and introduc[ing] long pants," which is far from the societal difference he might have made as a soldier or doctor, both of which served important roles in a country stretching beyond its own borders (Freeman). Brummel, who reportedly spent "hours tying and re-tying a pile of freshly pressed cravats until the perfect shape was achieved ... would have the soles of his boots polished ... [and] hired an additional glove-maker just to fashion the thumbs," it is said could also spend five hours at his daily dressing, which was easily more than the average woman (Dandyism). Important men looked to Brummel on matters of dress, including the Prince of Wales, who later became George IV, and so Brummel's choice to spend his time on his outside adornments, instead of spending it making a difference for his fellow countrymen, led to the belief in a "disease" spreading from the aristocracy down to the common man, appearing to harm the country irrevocably in its wish to step outside of "normal" masculinity (Freeman). The aristocracy, many of whom followed in the footsteps of Brummel, no longer sought to fight for their country, and instead, now worry more about what tie to wear than the state of their nation.

But why did so many embrace the lifestyle of the dandy? Surely it is not as simple as the men liked to look good. As the French Revolution became a thing of the past, "the uneasy atmosphere of shifting perspectives and sinking values" opened the door for a new kind of masculinity (Moers 17). The early dandy, those who followed Beau Brummell, were known by

their “rejection of any visible distinction but elegance; his self-worship in self-adornment; his superiority to useful work in his tireless application to costume. His independence, assurance, originality, self-control and refinement should all be visible in the cut of his clothes” (Moers 21). The Regency period (1811-20), during which time Brummell was an advisor to the Prince of Wales, was a time when high society sought exclusivity. Ellen Moers, in *The Dandy: Brummell to Beerbohn*, states that “in no other society had the mechanism of exclusion been so prominent, elaborate and efficient” (41). As Brummell rose from a young man whose upbringing was barely above lower class to the Prince of Wales’ personal friend, his power grew. Moers states that Brummell’s power lay in the “Exclusivism” attached to his social behavior – to be part of his entourage meant you were in with “the” exclusive group of their society, one attached to the future King (26). One became fashionable simply by being recognized by Brummell, and in the regency period, to be fashionable was desired above all else by many. The pretentiousness of Robert Ferrars in his choice of a snuff box, speaks to his desire to be considered fashionable in the small things as much as the large – he strove to emulate an exclusive group, one that would notice the slightest imperfection and wield their wit against anyone who failed (*Austen Sense* 165). Brummell’s opinion was still held even after he absconded to France to avoid his debtors, and so the legend lived on despite his apparent failure to live up to his own standard of living, and his eventual death after having never returned to England (Much like Jos Sedley in *Vanity Fair*).

A commonly held belief by the more conservative members of Victorian society was that Brummell’s death in France was a “divine judgement on his career” (Moers 29). This sentiment clarifies that the dandy was viewed as a man choosing to live outside of religious ideals. Societal anxieties have a tendency to weave their way into popular literature and this is very much the

case in nineteenth-century literature where the idea of manliness, both normative and deviant, is depicted, and where we see how the women and society as a whole respond to them, teaching us to view them as hazardous to Britain as a whole.

Jos Sedley, like Robert Ferrars, is portrayed by Thackeray as a man who thinks first of himself, and only later, perhaps when forced, even if it is only for appearances sake, to think of others. Jos's vanity is displayed in what he wears, much like Brummel, as he is obsessed with waistcoats. The first time we meet Jos we are told he is in "the morning costume of a dandy or blood of those days" (25). Major Pendennis, likewise, though older, appears to always put too much of his attention on how he looks, attempting to create a youthful attitude through his outward apparel. He covers his grey hair with wigs, and wears false teeth, refusing to entertain any kind of company until he has been "belted, curled, and set straight" (Thackeray *History* n. page). If they are to be seen as preening hens then they are to be treated as less than manly, and at times, even as less than womanly. Jos, Robert Ferrars, Sir Walter, Major Pendennis, and all dandies who consider their outward appearance as all-important, are offered as ridiculous characters we are meant to look down on and treat in the same way that Marianne treated Robert Ferrars – with contempt and resentment. Even in the twenty-first century, when we look at film adaptations of novels such as *Vanity Fair*, *Sense and Sensibility*, or *Persuasion*, it is clear we are still asked to ridicule such a character as Jos Sedley.

Thomas Carlyle takes up the dandy's obsession with clothes in *Sartor Resartus*, his poioumenon that explores the philosophies of Professor Diogenes Teufelsdröckh of Weissnichtwo, who regarded his "outmost wrappage and overall" with great care (Carlyle 4). Though Carlyle states he is offering up the philosophies of Teufelsdröckh, he does it through the words of an editor whose hope, he expresses, is not to encourage the professor's views on

clothes, but is rather “to stem, or if that be impossible, profitably to divert the current Innovations, such a volume ... if cunningly planted down, were no despicable pile, or floodgate, in the Logical wear” to be offered (Carlyle 11). The editor is clear that though Teufelsdröckh’s writings on “Clothes” may offer the “opening of a new mine-shaft, wherein the whole world of Speculation might henceforth dig to unknown depths,” he himself appears to despise putting too much emphasis on the bodies outerwear and considers any change to ideas on traditional clothing as detrimental (*Sartor* 22). James Eli Adams, in *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood*, states that in *Sartor Resartus*, “the dandy becomes the gross icon of an outworn aristocratic order, a figure of self-absorbed, parasitic existence, against which Carlyle evokes a heroism founded on superbly self-forgetful devotion to productive labor” (21). A hero is not made by his clothes – but a dandy is. Although, as we will see in *The Revolt of Man*, there are times when clothes are representative of courage and heroism. It is the belief of Teufelsdröckh that it is in “his Body and the Cloth” that the “site and materials whereon and whereby [a man’s] beautified edifice ... is to be built” and not, one must presume, in his “physical courage, chivalric ideal [or] virtuous fortitude” as Norman Vance has suggested (*Sartor* 28, *quid.* in Mangin 1). For the dandy, the *outside* becomes far more important than what is *inside* a man, according nothing more to manliness than his finery. The constant mention of new waistcoats by Jos Sedley shows him to be a man after the heart of Teufelsdröckh. The novels of the nineteenth-century offer up such caricatures of men as examples of men who have lost sight of traditional ideas of manliness, replacing them with the very finery Teufelsdröckh proposes, instead of focusing on what these men can do to improve the lot of their family, and even for their country.

Jos Sedley, introduced by Thackeray as the very epitome of a dandy, is described as “a VERY stout, puffy man, in buckskins and Hessian boots, with several immense neckcloths that

rose almost to his nose, with a red striped waistcoat and an apple green coat with steel buttons almost as large as crown pieces” (*Vanity* 25). External qualities are offered as the only positive qualities of Jos Sedley, who believes himself “a very fine man,” a man who tells others “that he and Brummel were the leading bucks of the day,” while in reality he was lonely and the butt of jokes, even those of his own father (*Vanity* 30, 29). We are encouraged to ridicule Jos in the same way his father does, or in the same way Marianne ridicules Robert Ferrars. Major Pendennis, another of Thackeray’s dandies, is described in great detail as a man who,

made his appearance in the best blacked boots in all London, with a checked morning cravat that never was rumpled until dinner time, a buff waistcoat which bore the crown of his sovereign on the buttons, and linen so spotless that Mr. Brummel himself asked the name of his laundress, and would probably have employed her had not misfortunes compelled that great man to fly the country. Pendennis's coat, his white gloves, his whiskers, his very cane, were perfect of their kind as specimens of the *costume of a military man en retraite*. At a distance, or seeing his back merely, you would have taken him to be not more than thirty years old: it was only by a nearer inspection that you saw the factitious nature of his rich brown hair, and that there were a few crow's-feet round about the somewhat faded eyes of his handsome mottled face. His nose was of the Wellington pattern. His hands and wristbands were beautifully long and white. On the latter he wore handsome gold buttons given to him by his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and on the others more than one elegant ring, the chief and largest of them being emblazoned with the famous arms of Pendennis (Thackeray *History* n.pag., emphasis mine)

So much work is put into describing the outer-adornments of the Major that it is impossible not to realize that his outer appearance is his only important quality. The Major’s accoutrements offer him as unmanly, as a dandy. Indeed, when asked “In what does manhood consist?”, one working class campaigner responded in 1873, “Well, certainly not in walking the streets with a cigar and a silver-headed cane,” excluding the Major from ideas of manhood, at least according to commonly-held beliefs (Tosh “What” 185). Clothing did not make the man, according to the average working man who could afford perhaps two sets of clothes, one for daily wear and one

for special occasions and Sundays, so “silver-headed cane[s]” would just be a wasted extravagance (185).

A dandy, apparently, is a dandy because he is dressed as one – he is a “Clothes-wearing Man, a Man whose trade, office, and existence consists in the wearing of Clothes. Every faculty of his soul, spirit, purse, and person is heroically consecrated to this one object, the wearing of Clothes wisely and well; so that as others dress to live, he lives to dress” (Carlyle 207). As Teufelsdröckh clearly states in *Sartor Resartus*, “the first purpose of Clothes ... are not warmth or decency, but ornament”; Jos Sedley and the Major are obviously aware of Brummel, as both characters make mention of the man, and ascribe to his ideas on fashion, using clothes as a costume for the type of man they *wish* to be viewed as, rather than a means to keep warm (Carlyle 30).

The dandy’s masculinity is then more performative than real, as *wearing* the costume of a military uniform, according to Teufelsdröckh’s philosophy, is tantamount to *being* a soldier, without ever placing oneself in danger. Dandyism appears to strip men of their desire to serve their country, replacing that desire with colorful vests and brushed wigs. If clothing is more important than action, then spending time at one’s “toilette” is greater in importance than defending one’s country, and the fact that Major Pendennis “required a little preparation before he cared to be visible” is not just effeminate, but shows how far he has removed himself from the military life his title suggests he once aspired to. Jos and the Major are performing their masculinity in such a way as to propagate pre-Victorian ideals of masculinity – they are dressing to be seen as courageous, not timorous; they dress to look attractive to women, but fear female accompaniment – while many who look upon them see something other than a *man*. According to Judith Butler, gender-performativity suggests “words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the

effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body” – the clothes are not representative of what is on the inside (173). Jos is performing manliness, but is not manly. Unlike the faithful soldier William Dobbin, or swaggering ladies’ man George Osborne, two of Jos’s companions in *Vanity Fair*, men who “longed to see their own names in the glorious list [of victories in war found in the newspapers] ... [and] cursed their unlucky fate to belong to a regiment which had been away from the chances of honour,” Jos’s masculinity is placed in tales of his tiger-hunts in India (*Vanity* 58). In reality those hunts were far from courageous, and actually resulted in an accident in which he was “half-killed – not by the tiger, but by the fright” (*Vanity* 41). John Tosh, in “Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity,” states “Manliness claimed the active virtues for men [in the early-nineteenth century], naturalizing the privilege by dwelling on their female opposites: dependence, caprice, emotionality and timorousness” (465). If women were the ones who were timorous, and men like Jos acted timorously, the implications seem to be that these men were acting like women, were effeminate, and clothes cannot change this.

Though unwilling to actually fight, even for his country, Jos is comfortable wearing clothes that suggest his willingness; sporting a “military frock-coat, ornamented with frogs, knobs, black buttons, and meandering embroidery. He ... affected a military appearance and habits ... and he walked with his two friends, who were of that profession, clinking his boot-spurs, swaggering prodigiously, and shooting death-glances at all the servant girls who were worthy to be slain” (*Vanity* 246). Clothing is the performance of courage and virtue for the dandy, representative of his own ideas of his worth to society. Fighting for one’s country becomes unnecessary when one can simply dress as a soldier, or grow a moustache, which Jos

views as a soldierly habit, even if in reality they merely accompany the women, while enjoying “prodigious eating and drinking” (*Vanity* 313).

Clothing, then, for the dandy, becomes a facsimile of real courage. Samuel Smiles (1812-1904), a nineteenth-century author and reformer, in his work entitled *Character*, states

It is moral courage that characterises the highest order of manhood ... the courage to seek and to speak the truth; the courage to be just; the courage to be honest; the courage to resist temptation; the courage to do one's duty. If men and women do not possess this virtue, they have no security whatever for the preservation of any other. Every step of progress in the history of our race has been made in the face of opposition and difficulty, and been achieved and secured by men of intrepidity and valour (n.pag.).

When the chance for Jos to be the intrepid and valorous man Smiles suggests he should be arrives, he fails to do his duty to his country and feigns duty towards his sister instead. Jos states “I only said I should like to go—what Briton would not? But my *duty* keeps me here: I can't leave that poor creature in there” (*Vanity* 351). According to both Vance's definition of manliness, and Smile's description of courage, fulfilling his *duty* to fight for his country is the first duty of every *man*. Duty to his sister should be shown through his duty to his country.

When writing about the French Revolution, Edmund Burke, stated that in France, “It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness” (Burke 73); similar rhetoric is ascribed to the dandy in England, who is portrayed as lacking all courage and honor. The rhetoric of the French Revolution is as true of England in this moment as of France. Jos's cowardice, his unwillingness to face battle, is clear when the Battle of Waterloo appears to be at an end and Britain is said to have lost. Jos informs one of the commanders' wives that he and his sister will leave for safety and Mrs. O'Dowd, a military commander's wife, refuses to leave until her

husband gives her instructions to do so (*Vanity* 359). Mrs. O'Dowd ridicules Jos's behavior, asking him if it is his sister who wants to go home, or if he "want[s] to go to Mamma" himself (*Vanity* 360). Jos is not just seen as effeminate, he is infantilized by the military wife, who proves herself more courageous than the man who just days before had proudly paraded around in military-wear, pretending military-prowess. Thomas Carlyle, in *Past and Present*, states that "man is created to fight; he is perhaps best of all definable as a born soldier; his life "a battle and a march," under the right General," but this can only mean that Jos is far from a man, and, in this case, compared to Mrs. O'Dowd, is not even as strong as a woman (Carlyle *Past* 191). Burke stated that if courage "should be totally extinguished, the loss [he] fear[ed would] be great," and this is the same fear now falling on the British public as they looked at the dandies who are failing to be all they were meant to be (Burke 73).

Jos does not see battle as a place to show his manliness, instead he is happy to *look* like a soldier fulfilling his national duty, without the fear of impending death hanging over him. He is quick to turn from that duty when death is a possibility. When it appears his country's honor is lost, Jos redresses himself as a civilian, shaving off his moustache, which in his delusion he had viewed as a symbol of his bravery as a "soldier," and casts aside his military-inspired clothes, with every intention of fleeing from harm's way (*Vanity* 363). As Carlyle supposed in *Sartor Resartus*, if clothes are meant to show what or who a man is, then Jos's choice to dress as a soldier allowed him to believe himself a soldier, courageous and brave, regardless of the reality. When one costume no longer fits the kind of man he wishes to be seen as, he simply changes one costume for another, and identity becomes editable, fluid. Manliness, much like a coat, can then be put on and taken off, or exchanged for another kind of coat, or another kind of manliness. There is no strength of character, only an ever-shifting pattern which fits itself to the situation.

The dandy wishes, according to Carlyle, for us only “to look at him, and he will be contented,” and Jos is such a man (Carlyle *Sartor* 208). Yet clothes do NOT make Jos a soldier, only a facsimile of a soldier – he is neither brave nor willing to fight for his country – he is a fraud. Jos, as a dandy, is a man of inaction, of cowardice, and yet in his own mind he feels he is fulfilling some version of manliness, even though his country experiences none of the benefits associated with masculine endeavor. He is performing his masculinity while he fails to perform his masculinity. Jos’s only concern is ultimately for himself and his own comfort, not for his family, his fellow countrymen, or even his country.

Although Jos is unwilling to fight, his role in the East India Company’s Civil Service as the collector for Boggley Wollah, a role which Thackeray describes as “an honourable and lucrative post,” means he is, in a manner, a representative for British manliness (*Vanity* 28). Herein lies the problem for nineteenth-century traditionalists, including Mr. Sedley, Jos’s own father, who described his own son as “vain, selfish, lazy, and effeminate,” as he “laughed heartily at his [son’s] pompous braggadocio stories” (Thackeray *Vanity* 60). The traditional echelons of their society feared characters such as Thackeray’s Jos were the kind of dandified men who were *actually* representing their country throughout the world, and believed this type of man could only spearhead the downfall of Great Britain. Using Jos as a literary depiction of a dandy allows us, as readers, to understand the fears that grabbed at the hearts of the more conservative of Britons. If bravery and courage are needed to ensure Britain’s greatness, then dandies, men who dress the part but fail to fulfill traditional ideas of manliness, are a source of dis-ease, that if allowed to spread, could destroy the country and its colonies. If the men only masquerade as soldiers, then who will actually go into battle and fight for the country when the need arises? The need did arise in the nineteenth century for the kind of manliness that Norman

Vance defined, and so the fears apparent in *The Revolt of Man* of a future where men have handed over the reins of the country to the women seems plausible.

There *were* other options to save Britain in the midst of this apparent crisis: If a man will not fight for his country, perhaps he can bring forth sons willing to do so in his stead. As the only son of the Sedley family it should have been Jos's duty to marry and provide a son and heir, and yet all he thinks about is food and clothes. The likelihood is further removed once we hear he is "averse[d] to marriage altogether" (690). Jos's inability to even talk to a woman may have suggested to his contemporary's other inadequacies, such as impotence, which became a prominent topic of discussion throughout the nineteenth-century. Doctors and quacks alike discussed cures from the sublime to the ridiculous for an epidemic that could prove the undoing of Britain. Prior to the nineteenth century, the idea of gender had not been as clearly demarcated as a two-sex model, but as the nineteenth century continued, the new model "exaggerated the anatomical differences between the two sexes. Women were now typecast as sexually passive, men as consumed by an all-powerful libido," and so Jos's failure to act upon any kind of sexual stimuli suggested an effeminacy viewed as purely female (Tosh "Gentlemanly" 464). Trev Lynn Broughton states that,

insofar as mid-Victorian "manliness" had a sexual component, it was defined not, as in the eighteenth century, as an element of reproductivity, nor, as it tended to be later, in stark opposition to homosexuality on the one hand and female sexuality on the other. Instead, it emerged among a cluster of overlapping notions: effeminacy, celibacy, continence, incontinence, license, and so on (506).

Celibacy is not a valid option for Victorian men who wish to be seen as manly. The vain and self-centered dandy, Major Pendennis, appears to be a "happy bachelor," who is "mistakenly flawed by his mistaken sense of self-sufficiency," who does not require a woman to "complete" him (Dowling 73). Both men's inability to marry is viewed as a problem in an era when

“manliness was ... defined by the imperative of marriage,” especially as it became a way to “bind[] men to the industrial system ... [as] being married with children provides for a compelling reason to follow the work ethic” of a country undergoing massive industrialization (Sussman “Masculine” 93). John Tosh states that “in most societies that we know of, setting up a new household is the essential qualification for manhood. The man who speaks for familial dependents and who can transmit his name and his assets to future generations is fully masculine,” is manly, and so any failure to do so made him “less than a man and the common butt of music-hall humour” (“What” 185). Austen’s Robert Ferrars may well have married a girl at the end of *Sense and Sensibility*, but nobody really believes their marriage is one that will bring about a slew of Ferrars heirs. Sir Walter has been married and provided three daughters, but in his widowhood what stands between him and a male heir that can keep their estate in the family is his disfavor with freckles, which Mrs. Clay possesses, making her unsuitable as a wife and yet she serves to keep any other women away (Austen *Persuasion* 33). So, as more men chose to remain unmarried, choosing bachelorhood over the roles of husband and father, anxieties grew, as the “belief in the household as a microcosm of the political order, vigorously re-stated by Evangelicals, underlined the importance of the man being master in his own home” (Tosh “What” 185). In other words, if men were not choosing to rule in their own homes, and were instead *wasting time* in department stores choosing clothes, how could they be expected to rule within their country. Though men such as Thomas Carlyle suggested that sexual inactivity allowed for greater work output, in the case of men such as Jos, Robert Ferrars, or the Major, who failed to produce anything substantive in the work arena, sexual inactivity was viewed as effeminacy – another symbol of their being more like women than men.

In his 1859 work, *How Men Are Made*, William Landels declared “It is by work, work, work, - constant, never-ceasing work – work well and faithfully done ... that you are to rise out of things into men” (qutd. in Tosh “Gentlemanly” 466). For dandies like Brummell, or like Jos Sedley, work held little importance except as a means of meeting people, and if this could be achieved in a social setting, especially around a dinner table, then all the better. A good work ethic was an attribute of manliness, and therefore failure to work must suggest a failure to be manly. Young Penn’s wish for a profession is not one that requires hard work, but one that requires being “well-dressed” (Thackeray *History* n.pag.). It is only at the end of *The History of Pendennis* that Pen finally learns to work hard, and marries a woman he loves, that we see there is hope for Britain after all, and surely this is what we are supposed to learn from such a book – that being a dandy need not be terminal. Jos never really applies himself and finishes his life far from Britain, with little to show for it, as “all his property had been muddled away in speculations, and was represented by valueless shares in different bubble companies” (Thackeray *Vanity* 807). The suggestion seems to be that the dandy cannot prosper in a capitalist society. Dandyism appears to offer no future for its followers, and Bachelorhood is proven unprofitable for Jos. It should be noted here, however, that one of the negatives ascribed to the dandy is his penchant for shopping – he loves to spend money on fripperies, and this is a good thing for a country built on capitalist notions. However, the dandies shopping is what will end so many of them in debt – in reality Brummell had to flee to France due to his grievous debts, and Thackeray’s Jos remained abroad until his death due to similar habits. While the dandy might be good for capitalism, his behaviors are far from good for himself. The dandy’s lifestyle may not have proven good for him financially, but what of other pursuits?

William Acton, a nineteenth-century doctor and writer, suggested bachelorhood was necessary for intellectual potency (Broughton 507). Brummell was known for his wit, but “a few among his contemporaries put him down as a mere impudent fool, tolerated for the amusement derived from his absurdities. His admirers, however, found in Brummel powers of minute observation and a brilliantly discriminate tact ... they hardly judged the quality of his mind from anything he said” (Moers 37). His intellect apparently was geared more to faux pas made in the dress of others than in politics or any subject of weight. Literarily, Young Pen eventually did well in college, but only after a lot of mis-starts, suggesting being a bachelor failed to insure his intellectual potency, and in fact it was only Laura’s love for him that allowed him to return and pass the exams he had previously failed. Neither Jos nor Major Pendennis display any intellectual output that would necessitate such an action. Their sexual inactivity once again pointed to effeminacy, diluting their manliness in a culture that feared celibacy as a marker of Catholic religiosity – which may well explain, as we shall see in Chapter Two, why writers such as Walter Besant, in *The Revolt of Man*, included the worship of the “Perfect Woman” in a future where men had lost all of their manliness and had given over all the traditionally male roles to women.

It seems somewhat justified in a country that constantly seemed to be at the edge of war or adding new colonies, that the growing number of men failing to live up to their civic responsibility created anxiety. Thomas Carlyle overly dramatically describes dandyism as one of “two bottomless boiling Whirlpools,” along with Drudgery,

that had broken out on opposite quarters of the firm land: as yet they appear only disquieted, foolishly bubbling wells, which man’s art might cover in; yet mark them, their diameter is daily widening; they are hollow Cones that boil up from the infinite Deep, over which firm land is but a thin crust or rind. Thus daily is the intermediate land crumbling in, daily the empire of the two Buchan-Bullars

extending till now there is but a foot-plank, a mere film of Land between them; this too is washed away; and then – we have the true Hell of Waters, and Noah's Deluge is outdeluged!" (*Sartor* 216-7)

Carlyle is comparing the outcome for Britain, if they don't reign in the growth of dandyism, to that of the biblical flood, which was brought on the people because "The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time" (Genesis 6:5). And, if dandyism is allowed to spread, then the worry held that all *men* would be infected, making Walter Besant's Britain of the future a possibility. If indeed men do fail their society, who is left to fill their vacated roles?

It may well have seemed as if it was the women who must take up the slack, and this is a problem for those who believed "masculine self-respect demanded the exclusion of women" (Tosh "What" 186). John Tosh states that "the gender coding of the [nineteenth-century] world of work could accept the reality of women's labour in the domestic setting as servants or home-workers ... but the entry of women into formal paid work out of the home – whether it was mill-girls at the beginning of the century or female office-clerks at the end – always occasioned a strain, not only because there might be less work (or less well-paid work) for men, but because their masculine identity as the working sex was at stake" (186). It was simple: Men were expected to work. Sir Walter has no purpose except to look good and eat sorbet. Robert Ferrars only really worked at shopping. Jos Sedley did claim a job, but he was little more than window-dressing, apparently having no real responsibilities within his job in India, and afterwards wanders aimlessly around Europe pretending to be one thing or another. Young Pen does eventually find employment, and it is when he begins to work and marries a woman he loves that he finds purpose in his life. The dandy's failure to work meant more openings for women to step

in to though, and so we see how the two diseases, dandyism and the “New Woman,” worked together against traditional ideas of gender and social responsibility.

While it may appear a big stretch to state that dandyism is the cause of rise of the “New Woman,” as Alice Freeman Palmer coined her, at the fin-de-siècle of the nineteenth-century, that idea was not unfamiliar to their contemporaries. In nineteenth-century writings it is not uncommon to see the dandy and the “New Woman” joined together as “not simply antithetical figures in a deeply self-divided decade, but as antagonistic principles intent on each other’s destruction” (Dowling 435). Linda Dowling suggests that in the nineteenth-century, the dandy and the “New Woman” were “persistently identified” together by “literary critics and reviewers” as “a profound threat to established culture” and a step in the direction towards the destruction of Britain itself (435). According to Dowling, the reaction of the more traditional parts of British nineteenth-century society towards the dandy and the “New Woman” ranged from “hilarity to disgust and outrage,” and it is in the midst of those emotions that novels such as Walter Besant’s *The Revolt of Man*, which we will discuss in the next chapter, were written (436).

As woman stepped out of the sphere of domesticity in which she had been held, she opened the doors to new ambitions and independence. If men were choosing not to be hardworking husbands and fathers, it seemed women were opting to follow their lead and choosing careers over wifely duties and motherhood, especially as new position opened, allowing them to step in. According to Kirsten Drotner, “while women in middle-class occupations made up 12.6 percent of all workers in 1881, they constituted 23.7 percent of the labor force in 1911” (120). As Victorian women stepped out of the home to work, their daughters learned to follow in their footsteps and so the number of working women grew. On top of this exodus of women from the home, between “1850 and 1900 ... intellectual training of

middle-class girls was now being acknowledged as necessary,” meaning the number of educated women grew dramatically (Drotner 131). As can happen with any disease – an offered cure may result in a new form of dis-ease, and as men failed to fulfil their roles, then women took the opportunity to fulfill them. This offered an answer to the dilemma, but an answer that caused, rather than alleviated, anxiety. This led to “many men voic[ing] their anxieties about women transgressing their proper sphere,” as girls continued to be educated, which could only result in their dissatisfaction with the private sphere (Drotner 131). Carlyle’s rhetoric, referring to dandyism as comparable to the biblical flood, seems far from lonely in its hyperbole, when you read the words of so many others expressing the same sentiments. The rhetoric of the French Revolution was ascribed to the ideas of the dandy and the New Woman, offering a “sense of inevitable, inevitably disastrous consequences” for Britain, who must surely face similar issues to those of the French if nothing changed (Dowling 437). The *Westminster Reviewer* from 1889, writing about New Woman fiction and the female ego, stated that women’s egos,

will yet roll over the world in fructifying waves, causing incalculable upheaval and destruction. The stirrings and rumblings now perceived in the social and industrial worlds, the ‘Bitter Cries’ of the disinherited classes, the ‘Social Wreckage’ which is becoming able to make itself unpleasantly prominent, the ‘Problems of Great Cities,’ the spread of Socialism and Nihilism, are all intimately connected with the ascent of [this] Ego” (Dowling 439-40).

The actions of the New Woman were, according to one carpet weaver from Kidderminster in 1894, “reduc[ing man] and creat[ing] a *littleness* when he is no longer the bread-winner of the family” (Tosh *What* 185, emphasis the authors). Women moving in greater numbers into the work place, meant, to many, that there would be men who found themselves without work, and the belief was that “unemployment not only impoverished workers but gravely compromised their masculine self-respect (including their ability to demand respect from women” (Tosh “What” 190). The New Woman was no longer the “angel in the house,” as Coventry Patmore

had so named the domesticated wife, but is instead another diseased person who puts her own needs ahead of those of her family, which sounds similar to the rhetoric ascribed to the dandy.

And so, just as the dandy threatened the survival of Britain in his unwillingness to marry and procreate, so the New Woman, according to the July 1894 *Punch*, “made further development in generations to come quite impossible” (quod. in Dowling 445). As the example of Alice Freeman Palmer shows, women who choose education and ambition do not always choose motherhood as it disables any chances of moving up within one’s chosen career. As the century progressed, there was a “pervasive social outlook” that “educated women were no longer deemed unable, but unwilling, to assume the responsibilities of marriage and motherhood” (Drotner 139). If women will not stay within the home, and will not take on the role of motherhood willingly, Walter Besant suggests that men may well end up taking those culturally-normative roles for women of “caretaker” and “mother,” and the world, we will discover, in *The Revolt of Man*, is deemed inevitable. As men were choosing clothes over service, and women chose education and ambition over motherhood, people spoke out, stating, “We have heard a great deal about the new woman. Is the corseted popinjay with the twenty-six inch waist to be the new man?” (Shannon 624). Men’s clothes, which were fitted and cinched-in at the waist, appeared to resemble women’s clothing, further assuring some that men and women were slowly changing places and a world in which women rule appears less far-fetched.

The dis-ease surrounding the dandy was joined by the dis-ease surrounding the “New-Woman,” and Britain’s superior position in the world appeared to be diminishing almost overnight – or at least Besant will suggest this is a possibility in the next two hundred years in *The Revolt of Man*. Fears that Britain was sliding out of contention with the great powers around the world apparently left men like Besant with a lot of anxiety. The anxiety apparent in *The*

Revolt of Man stems from Besant's realization that men are not stepping into their "divinely appointed" roles, as they should, and the inevitability that women must then usurp those roles for themselves. It is clear to me that though women, particularly the New Woman, has her place in this future, that place is only possible because of men's, and I suggest particularly the dandy's, inaction within their own society. This inevitability posited by Besant is why it is important to understand novels such as *The Revolt of Man*.

A Prescription for Revolt

As the idea of the dandy as a detriment to the nation grew, and as more women stepped outside of the private sphere seeking to find their own authority in British society, many were uncomfortable with these changes. Walter Besant's *The Revolt of Man*, published in 1882, offers itself as a social critique regarding lost masculinity and the changing role of women via the creation of a dystopian future Britain in which gender roles have been entirely reversed and women are the only authority. Besant's futuristic world deals with man's earlier unwillingness to be authoritative as an issue that has resulted in Britain losing her position as a world power. In Chapter VII of *The Revolt of Man*, Victorian Britain is described rather idealistically by Besant's Bishop Ingleby:

We were a mighty country, the first in the world: we had the true Religion, two thousand years old; a grand state Church; we had an ancient dynasty and a constitutional monarchy; we had a stately aristocracy always open to new families; we had an immense commerce; we had flourishing factories; we had great and loyal colonies; we had a dense and contented population; we had enormous wealth; personal freedom; every man could raise himself from the lowest to the highest rank; there was no post too high for the ambition of a clever lad. In those days *Man* was in command (Besant 126, emphasis mine).

The past – which is the present when the book is being written and published – is not an accurate representation of the society in which Besant lives. It is not easy for new families to join the aristocracy – they can be new money but they will never be seen as aristocrats, as we learn when we spend time with Alec D'Urberville in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the amoral son of a man who simply chose a name from a list of aristocratic families when he came into money. Yet Alec and his family are always looked upon as something less than aristocratic. While the Victorians did have a flourishing economy and immense factories, there was also a lot of poverty and sickness, with families crushed into one room, with little food. The colonies were not always loyal. There were many wars and incursions throughout the colonial period. The Anglo-Ashanti war on the

Gold Coast that ran between 1821-1901, the war between the Maoris and the British in 1847, or the Indian Mutiny of 1857, are only a few of the battles Britain faced in the fight against the indigenous populations in the race for colonies (Luscombe). And while “it is estimated that during the first half of the nineteenth century the middle class, ranging from clerks to bank managers was the single most expanding social group,” every man could not raise himself out of poverty, and in fact many were reduced to it due to poor investments and the fast-changing world of industry (Drotner 65). But men *were* the ones in command – he at least was correct in that. But that appeared to be changing as women chose to move outside of the domestic sphere and into the public sphere. Ideas of degeneration, a belief that civilization was in decline due to biological issues within the populace, had filtered outwards from a sexual regression, to a “broader cultural spectrum,” allowing that, if unchecked, it “could spread wildly through the ranks of society and destroy an entire culture,” and this is exactly the fear Besant is addressing in his novel (Haefele-Thomas 74). And yet all of this anxiety is missing from Bishop Ingleby’s depiction of Victorian Britain in *The Revolt of Man*.

Besant’s novel states that women have rewritten history in order to remove man’s supremacy from the past, but it is not only the women who have rewritten history. Bishop Ingleby’s version of the Victorian era in *The Revolt of Man* is idealistic, with little bearing on reality, which is rife with concerns over Britain’s rapid expansion in the colonies (Haefele-Thomas 73). Perhaps we must understand that this is how the Bishop chooses to view the Britain of the past, regardless of the truth of the past, and so Besant’s issues with a future that allows women to rule becomes more understandable. Besant has recreated the past, in order to justify his call for revolution. This is perhaps the role of dystopian literature, to create and recreate, in order to justify some action that may seem over-the-top at the time.

It would be good at this point to discuss dystopian literature's role as social criticism. As stated in the introduction, Kenneth Burke suggested we should consider literature as a "strategic naming of situations," and this is very true when it comes to dystopian literature, which M. Keith Booker describes as "focusing ... critiques of society on imaginatively distant settings ... [and] provid[ing] fresh perspectives on problematic social political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable" (Adams 945, Booker 3-4). Besant obviously views the apparent move towards gender-equality as an inevitable, *but wholly wrong*, step towards a complete reversal of order, and so he seeks to call the men to push back against inevitability. *The Revolt of Man* places itself, as dystopian literature often does, "in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism" (Booker 3). Though Besant creates a world that women might see as utopic, for the men it is far from being so, and in case of point his world fits Booker's notion that dystopian worlds are often equated "with paralysis and stagnation," at least in the way Besant writes it (Booker 5). Besant's society is actually worse than stagnant however: it has moved backwards technologically. Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), a nineteenth-century biologist, believed "society was developing in ways that were antithetical to human nature, leading to a gradual increase in human misery, that would eventually lead to the downfall of civilization," and this belief appears to be shared by Besant, who portrays women in leadership as both "antithetical to human nature" and to religious teaching, creating a work of social criticism, rather than of entertainment (Booker 6).

The Revolt of Man then, as social criticism, serves to question the perspicacity of men *allowing* themselves to be "disciplined into obedience" by the women of their society, and calls for men to rise up and return to their socially-authoritative position, not just for their own sakes,

but for the sake of Great Britain (Besant 12). We learn that there is already a small group of people in Besant's dystopian world who are working towards the return to traditional ideas of gender held earlier in the nineteenth century – ideas that maintain men should be authoritative, and women should be submissive to them – and so change becomes possible, despite man's minority status. Besant is clarifying that it only takes a few men to change the status quo – just as it took a few dandies and women to change the world to what it had become in the novel's era.

If something does not change, Besant suggests, then the “incalculable upheaval and destruction,” that the July 1889 *Westminster Reviewer* suggested in the introduction, must happen if men allow women's egos to get out of control, and will be catastrophic for Britain, almost to the level that Carlyle had promised, that of the biblical flood. Without a revolt one can only presume Britain's position will go from bad to worse (Dowling 439). Therefore, we should not simply look at *The Revolt of Man* as a simple flight of fantasy, but as an attempt to rectify the wrong Besant believes has already begun. *The Revolt of Man* is meant to be viewed, I believe, as a prophecy that must come to pass if nothing changes in nineteenth-century Britain.

Besant's dystopian novel, set two-hundred years into the future, after the “Great Transition,” and the,

gradual substitution of women for men in the great offices; the spread of the new religion [worshipping the Perfect Woman]; the abolition of the monarchy; the introduction of pure theocracy, in which the ideal Perfect Woman took the place of a sovereign (Besant 12),

shows Britain to be a place where women have done more than just step outside of the private sphere, but have taken over all positions in the public sphere. Men no longer have any place in parliament, educational establishments, or even the church. History has been rewritten so that men's past authority is viewed as mythological. As I suggest in Chapter One, many, such as

Thomas Carlyle and Walter Besant, believed women could not so easily have stepped into authoritative roles if the men were not making it easy for them. The dandy-disease, if we can refer to it as such, at least in the world Besant creates, appears to have spread so far and wide that men are no longer striving to fulfill *any* of their duties to their country and have become totally passive in society. The British man has opened his country to ridicule by the nations around them as she fails to remain a world power with women at the helm. The “natural order has been replaced. The sex which should command and create is compelled to work in blind obedience,” while women trample on all that made Britain great (Besant 102).

A Britain run by women, according to Besant, cannot be a place of success or prestige, as it had been in the nineteenth-century. Edmund Burke, in 1790, suggested,

Where trade and manufactures are wanting to a people, and the spirit of nobility and religion remains, sentiment supplies, and not always ill supplies, their place; but if commerce and the arts should be lost in an experiment to try how well a state may stand without these old fundamental principles, what sort of a thing must be a nation of gross, stupid, ferocious, and, at the same time, poor and sordid, barbarians, destitute of religion, honour, or manly pride, possessing nothing at present, and hoping for nothing hereafter? (76-77).

This is the world into which we descend in *The Revolt of Man*. Burke’s fears regarding France after the Revolution have now been become a reality in his own country, one which he hoped would never occur. All technology created during the Industrial Revolution has disappeared and the great factories of the Victorian era have been demolished. What is left must, therefore, be a “nation of gross [and] stupid” people, who have no “manly pride” left, and Besant’s world is most definitely representative of Burke’s fears (Burke 77). In dystopian literature technology is often a critical issue – either machines have taken over, or they are removed in order to save people from them doing so. In Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon*, published in 1872, machines are banned because of what they *might* do to their society, the fear being that if machines are not

removed they may one day rise up and overthrow humanity, but in *The Revolt of Man* machines have disappeared simply because women are not engineers; women are in fact described as incapable of building such things as machines as it is only men who have such capabilities. It seems it is only men who can have the “manly pride” required to create such machines. Besant is not alone in this belief however, as the general consensus throughout much of the nineteenth century was that “the female mind was too delicately poised to handle the rigours of academic work. The resulting mental disturbance would be bad for their capacities to be good wives and mothers” (Connell Masculinities 21). In Besant’s world it seems that women who leave the home to pursue academia or politics, diminish their capacity to be a good mother. In fact, in Besant’s view, as they step away from traditionally female roles, they will pass the role off to the men, who will then be ostracized into the home because of women’s actions, and the role reversal of *The Revolt of Man* becomes a thing of reality. Technology, or the lack of it, will not only affect male and female roles however.

Cities such as Manchester, the very place “Beau” Brummell retreated from because it was a place that offered no amenities for him to live to excess in, would be even less appealing to him in Besant’s future, as it is now “pretty and quiet,” devoid of activity and vibrant life (Besant 110). This is a far cry from the Victorian era when, due to a mass-migration from the country to the city, in line with the Industrial Revolution, “by 1850 half of all Britons were town dwellers; by 1880 it was two-thirds. In 1801, only eight towns held more than fifty thousand people, but by 1851 that number had swelled to twenty-nine towns, nine of which had more than one hundred thousand inhabitants,” and Manchester was one of those cities (Drotner 77). A city, which had “in the old times ... had a population of half a million [and] was perpetually black with smoke, [with] ... hundreds of vast factories where the men worked from six in the morning

until six at night” is now rural and almost lifeless (Besant 110). Besant’s Professor Ingleby does acknowledge the Mancunian past. She states,

[t]heir houses were huts – dirty, crowded nests of fever, their sole amusements were to smoke tobacco and to drink beer and spirits; they died at thirty worn out; they were of sickly and stunted appearance; they were habitual wife-beaters; they neglected their children; they had no education, no religion, no hope, no wishes for anything, but plenty of pipe and beer (Besant 110).

Professor Ingleby’s description of the past sounds nothing like the one her husband, the Bishop, will offer just a few pages later in the novel, which is quoted at the outset of this chapter. Her description is actually more accurate to the reality for most Victorians, as “[i]n the overcrowded and infested slum areas of the urban centers, improvements in sewage were especially slow, and the physical and mental deterioration resulting from bad housing and ill-health were felt by” many in the working lower classes (Drotner 77). The Bishop has rewritten the past as a place in which “every man could raise himself from the lowest to the highest rank,” and does not resemble the reality of the place of little hope that his wife teaches about. The two viewpoints show how easy it is to rewrite history, even for those who are on the same side of a tale (Besant 126). Michael Foucault suggests that “the past is ultimately alien to the present and that we can never hope to attain a view of history that is undistorted by our perspective in the present” and so we must “engage in dialogues with the past in full consciousness of the necessary distortions that are involved in such dialogues” (Booker 24). I would argue that Foucault’s point is the case even for fictional characters in the same novel – we must be aware that each character is offering history from their own perspective. Although Besant’s “past” is in fact his actual present, we are still entering into a dialogue with him and his characters, both of whom are tainted by his perspective on Victorian Britain.

Regardless of how the Professor or the Bishop envision the past, Besant's beginning of the end for the men appears to have happened when the, as yet fictional, female majority in Parliament decided men's wages were to go directly to their women, whether their wives or their mothers. British Parliament, made up of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, has always been a predominantly male establishment, and as of 1870 had no females as members. In fact, women didn't even have the vote, never mind a seat in Parliament, at this time. Besant already understands the direction politics is heading though, and realizes women will not long remain outside of politics. For Besant, however, this is not a positive direction for Great Britain. Apparently the move from women entering Parliament to women taking it over is inevitable, unless the tide is stopped completely and women are returned to the home. As the dandy, who at the time of publication of *The Revolt of Man* is predominantly housed within the upwardly mobile, retreats from his duty to his country, even in the realm of politics, Besant foresees nothing but a downward spiral for the country. If no one stops the women from stepping out of their home and into the public sphere, then Britain will fall. As the female parliamentarians of Besant's past/future make one step towards a new regime, the men's failure to stand up to the women implies the Victorian world-order will surely be reversed and women will take *all* the seats in Parliament, not just the vote. The future then involves men being forced out of even the positions they sought to hold, as they are pushed in to their homes to spin cotton at a wheel, or placed in the field to cut down crops by hand, or taking on the role of caretakers for children, all while women run the country into ruin.

What other results come from women's interference in a society that the Bishop views as perfect? The products created without any use of new technologies are inferior (Besant 23). Art, literature, and music has been replaced by mediocre copies of men's creations, because "women

have never composed great music,” or created beautiful art, according to Besant (Besant 108). Learning has been diminished as “Mathematics, chemistry, physical science, geology – all these exist no longer, or else exist in such an elementary form as [their] ancestors would have been ashamed to acknowledge. Astronomy, which widened the heart, is neglected; medicine has become a thing of books; mechanics are forgotten” (Besant 106). Men are not allowed to congregate together, but must instead stay within the confines of their own home during their free time, stifling men’s collaboration, for both good and bad. The mid-Victorian ideal has been entirely reversed as men remain within the private sphere and women rule the public, but the result is not an empowered Britain, but one that has been run into ruin by those who govern.

Besant’s female-led Parliament has devolved into little more than them “screeching, crying, demanding to be heard, throwing accusations, innuendoes, insinuations, at each other” (Besant 17). Finding spouses is now the role of the government, which often defers to the whims of the older parliamentarians who seek young husbands, using their position to override the wishes of the men involved. There is no concern given to the young sweetheart who must lose her lover because a member of Parliament, often old and past her prime, takes a fancy to him. In Besant’s world parliamentary decisions seem to have more to do with personal pleasure than the needs of the country. What of the man whose lot it is to find himself auctioned off to an older woman? It is apparent he sits by placidly and allows the laws of his country to change with the whims of the women, much as Besant seems to suggest he has done since women took over Parliament. The men failed to retain their position. It seems the men didn’t even try to retain their position, but bowed out gracefully. In the dandy’s case, he bowed out gracefully and dressed to the nines.

The relatively small group of dandies of the nineteenth-century, who failed to stand up for anything as the century progressed, is now representative of all men of Besant's future society. So, instead of the strong "masculine" men writers such as Thomas Carlyle called to return to bring back Britain's supremacy in the world, Besant's future is one where "meekness, modesty, submission, and docility . . . mark the perfect man," and because of this shift in masculinity, Britain has diminished in the world's eyes, except as a figment of ridicule and contempt (39). The contempt Marianne felt for Robert Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, is now the same emotion we are asked to feel towards all men, and in turn to all of Britain (Austen *Sense* 165). The ridicule that was expressed towards Jos Sedley by his own father, is now the ridicule offered to Britain by Besant. The training we received in novels published earlier in the century taught nineteenth-century readers how to react to men who fail to live up to the standards of masculinity Besant believed would keep Britain in the forefront of the world. *Men* must lead the country, and all institutions within, if she is to remain strong, and Besant's future knocks all of the men out of those positions, even the position of deity.

In Besant's personal religion, that of the Anglican church, it is the men who run the churches, while in his fictional future the women have taken over the church and replaced Christianity with the worship of the "Perfect Woman." Only women create and have authority then. Schools and educational establishments are the lone domain of women. Besant has replaced one "opiate of the masses," to quote Marx, for another, but this time an opiate aimed only at one section of society - men. Professor Ingleby instructs Lord Chester that man "must learn religion—*i.e.* submission, and the culture of Perfect Womanhood" in order to be kept submissive, and one can assume, to keep them from revolt (Besant 105). Besant's inclusion of the "Perfect Woman" has striking similarities with Protestant views of Catholicism. Besant was

raised as an Anglican, and his brother was a cleric within that faith. His inclusion of this change in religious practices may express his own, and general Protestant anxieties regarding the legalization of Catholicism in the nineteenth century. The 1829 Emancipation Act “admitted Irish and English Roman Catholics to Parliament and to all but a handful of public offices” (“Catholics”). The 1871 University Test Act, which demanded all colleges, including Besant’s own alma mater, Christ’s College in Cambridge, open their doors to non-Anglicans was viewed by many Protestants as further proof that Catholicism was becoming more acceptable within Britain (“Catholics”). The “simple service of the Ancient Faith,” the one Besant advocates for in his novel, suggests the practice of the Anglican Church is the true faith that Britain must return to. Surely this suggests Protestant fears over Catholic beliefs. The service of the Ancient Faith included,

no flowers, no incense girls [altar boys?], no pictures of Sainted Women, no figures of the Holy Mother [Mary?], no veiled Perfect Woman on an altar crowned with roses; and there were no genuflections, no symbolical robes, no mystic whisperings, no change of dress, no pretence at mysterious powers. All was perfectly simple – a few prayers, a lesson from a great book, a hymn, and then a short address” (Besant 137).



Fig 1. Albrecht. *Mater Dolorosa*.

The worship of the “Perfect Woman” brings to mind the Protestant concept of Catholic Madonna-worship, considered blasphemous by believe the worship of Mary replaced that of Christ in the Catholic church (Besant 23). In Besant’s dystopia, the “Perfect Woman” is depicted in artist’s renderings as having “a star above her head” trying “not to look as if she were proud of that

star,” bringing to mind the myriad of portraits of the Madonna, her head surrounded by a halo, that have proliferated religious art since the beginning of the Catholic church (Fig 1). The “Perfect Woman,” I suggest, is intended to be synonymous with Mary. The “Perfect Woman” is portrayed as the savior of Britain, as in “a time of anarchy, when men had given up their old beliefs and were like children—only children with weapons in their hands—crying out with fear in the darkness,” she alone could save mankind (Besant 93-94). The religion of the “Perfect Woman” was

imposed, so to speak, upon the world for the elevation of women into their proper place, and for the guidance of subject man. It was carefully taught with catechism, articles, doctrines, and history, to children as soon as they could run about. It was now a settled Faith, venerable by reason of its endowments and dignities rather than its age, supported by all the women of England, defended on historical and intellectual grounds by thousands of pens, by weekly sermons, by domestic prayers, by maternal admonitions, by the terrors of the after-world, by the hopes of that which is present with us. A great theological literature had grown up around the Faith. It was the only recognised and tolerated religion; it was not only the religion of the State, but also the very basis of the political constitution. For as the Perfect Woman was the goddess whom they worshipped, the Peeresses who ruled were rulers by divine right, and the Commons—before that House had been abolished—were members of their House by divine permission: every member officially described herself a member by divine permission. To dispute about the authority of the ecclesiastical Decrees which came direct from the Upper House, was blasphemy, a criminal offence, and punishable by death (Besant 137).

For the Protestant Besant, Catholicism’s portrayal of Mary may well have appeared as the offering of just such a “Perfect Woman” to a nation who he viewed as losing its grip on “acceptable” views of gender-normativity. If the Perfect Woman was to raise women to “their proper place,” then perhaps Mary was viewed as offering the same in Victorian Britain (Besant 137). The “Peeresses who ruled were rulers by divine right” resemble the nuns who worked within the Catholic church, the idea of which was foreign to many Protestants (Besant 137). The Pope’s infallibility was decreed by the 1860-61 Vatican Council, but the idea of infallibility has always been “wildly reject[ed]” by Protestants (“Infallibility”). That disputing the women’s

authority is “blasphemous, a criminal offence, and punishable by death,” seems religiously unacceptable to a Protestant (Besant 138). Besant’s future world accepting the ideas of infallibility may suggest the author’s belief that Catholicism’s foothold in parliament and education was a step towards the end he has fictionalized. Catholicism also advocates for celibacy for priests, which stands in opposition to Victorian notions of the populace’s obligation to produce strong heirs if Britain is to retain her supremacy. The dandy’s choice to remain unmarried and to spend his time worrying about clothes, was reflected in the mantled priests, who reflected the dandy’s refusal to fight or provide sons. As we saw in Chapter 1, celibacy and effeminacy were viewed by Victorian Britain as two issues with the same origin – a lack of manliness – which needed to be discouraged as suitable behaviors for men, not revered as a religious offering (Broughton 506). The acceptance of Catholicism, the depiction of Mary, which many misunderstood as the usurping of Christ, the belief in infallible leaders, and the idea of male celibacy and the forsaking of marriage and fatherhood, all point to Besant’s fear that Catholicism was a step in an uncomfortable direction towards societal acceptance of the behaviors assigned to dandies, which had previously been looked down upon. The only response Besant can offer to his world is the necessity to “teach ... the nobler Creed, the higher Faith ... of the Perfect Man—the DIVINE MAN,” and return to the idea of masculine superiority and Protestantism (Besant 124). We are led to understand the “higher Faith” is the “faith of [the] wise fathers,” rather than, one presumes, the *ignorant mothers*, and this is the only faith that will save the country from being destroyed (Besant 124). The “higher faith” teaches men are divinely-appointed to be leaders, while women are to be submissive. To accept any other teaching is entirely wrong, and must eventually lead to Britain’s downfall.

To follow any other religion, Edmund Burke suggests, to throw “off that Christian religion which has hitherto been our boast and comfort, and one great source of civilization amongst us, and amongst many other nations, we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition might take place of it” (Burke *Reflections* 88). It is perhaps the acceptance of a religion, presumed by many to have a woman at the helm, that will ultimately lead to the acceptance of an “uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition” such as the “Perfect Woman,” which must then lead to a world with women at the helm (Burke *Reflections* 88). A strong Britain, to men such as Edmund Burke and Walter Besant, is a Protestant Britain, and a Britain in which all men are under the Divine Man, and no other. A perfect Britain is one where men are in control and women are subjugated, otherwise all will be lost.

I believe it is intentional on Besant’s part to introduce the idea of men returning to the Ancient Faith and taking back their position of authority in society, not from the mouth of a man, but that of a woman. The woman in questions is “the foremost intellect in England ... Dorothy Ingleby, Professor of Ancient and Modern History in the University of Cambridge” (Besant 12). Professor Ingleby is described as the one woman with “all the learning of the University Library in her head ... who, alone among women, held her tongue, and who, when she did speak, spoke slowly, and weighed her words, and seemed to have written out her conversation beforehand, so pointed and polished it was” (Besant 13). We are led to believe that Professor Ingleby is someone who should be listened to and who we should believe will lead us towards truth. At the beginning of Besant’s novel, we might believe this truth to be that woman is superior to man. What we learn, however, once Professor Ingleby opens up to the young man she has been training to lead the revolt of men, is that men are the only ones who can return Britain to what it

had been in the “mythical” past. The simple truth being offered is that men are superior. Besant’s misogyny seems hyperbolic when he has Professor Ingleby state that “at no time has any woman enriched the world with a new idea, a new truth, a new discovery, a new invention,” and all this because he states that women can “receive” but “cannot create” (Besant 106-7). According to Besant’s novel, all that women have brought into this future are the “rags of learning which remain from the work of Man” and that is the cause of Britain’s fall, as before long they “shall know nothing – unless you [a man, Lord Chester] come to [their] help” (Besant 107).

Professor Ingleby, as a character, reflects women like Alice Freeman Palmer, who, though well-educated, chose to marry and make her career choices based on her husband’s career, instead of her own. Although Freeman was *able* to be independent, but was willing to compromise her needs for those of her husband. Professor Ingleby, similarly, achieves much intellectually and in her reputation, and yet she is willingly subservient to her husband. Men like Besant apparently view such women as Freeman as a detriment to society despite her choices though. Despite Freeman’s subservience, her actions encouraged other women to go against accepted gender roles and usurp men. Besant turns this idea on its head though when he has Professor Ingleby, his “Alice Palmer Freeman,” lead the revolt that calls for a return *to* traditional ideas, rather than away from them. Palmer could only go so far in her ambitions because she was a woman and a wife – she was made to choose and her gendered-role ultimately won out, but in the meantime she encouraged a generation of women to want more than a nice house and children. Professor Ingleby chose to return to the Victorian ideal of a subservient wife, who stays at home, as a means to ensure her country had a chance to win back the level of greatness to which some men, such as Besant, suggest must be lost if women continued stepping into the roles that should be held by men. However, while women can choose subservience, it is

of first important that men are willing to take back their “divinely-appointed” position. Men are the ones who are required to rise up.

Who is the man who will return Britain to a position of power in the world? Besant creates the perfect man, the leader of a revolution, as a physically beautiful specimen, as well as a man of great intellectual capacity. There are other men who will participate in the revolt, but it is Lord Chester, a man described as “worth looking at, if only as a model, being six feet high, two-and-twenty years of age, strongly built, with crisp, curly brown hair, the shoulders of a Hercules, and the face of an Apollo,” who is created as the one who will retake the throne, rather than an older man who might bring to the role wisdom and experience (Besant 33). Besant’s choice to create a youthful, attractive man as the future leader of a once-again Great Britain, may well be his way of calling to the young men of his own generation. It is the older, more traditional sections of Victorian Britain, who wish for a return to older ways and so to place such a man (think of the Bishop) at the head of a revolt may seem redundant. Instead, to place a young man who looks more like a dandy in the role of leader, suggests that it is the younger men who will cause the fall, and so it should be the younger men who return men to power. It is the man obsessed with his outward appearance who has created the problem, and so it should be the dandy in all his finery who fixes the problem.

In *Sartor Resartus*, Thomas Carlyle wrote that for a man it is in “his Body and the Cloth” that the “site and materials whereon and whereby [a man’s] beautified edifice . . . is to be built,” and this idea continues in *The Revolt of Man*, wherein Lord Chester and all his men, as they revolt, must not just act like soldiers, but must dress as one also (Carlyle *Sartor* 28). As the revolutionaries grow in their resolution to revolt, importance is placed on their dress. Though the men arrived to fight dressed in “smock-frocks,” the apparel of the subjected man, who were

“shoving each other about in a vain attempt to stand in rank and file,” a change is brought about when they are redressed in other clothes – those of men in charge of their own lives (Besant 177). The army is merely a collection of random subjects, until they don their uniforms, which consist of “jackets,” that though “rusty of color and moth-eaten, ... made the men look soldier-like,” as “every man had round his arm a scarlet ribbon,” and “some had “scarlet coats, but not many,” and yet any kind of uniform is enough to set them apart as “manly,” as no longer men under the rule of women (Besant 178). Once more there is an element of performativity in masculinity – one must both look *and* act like a man. Unlike *Vanity Fair*’s Jos Sedley, whose outward apparel made him look like a soldier but only in his own eyes, the outward appearance of these men is portrayed as a reflection of the inside – these men’s dress reflect what is inside. Even Lord Chester, the leader of the revolt who has been singled out because of his looks and character, rides before the army “clad in scarlet, with glittering helmet” (Besant 201). The clothes are ornamental, as Teufelsdröckh suggested in *Sartor Resartus*, but he is also dressing in such a way as to demonstrate man’s return to a superior position. Clothing offers “individuality, distinctions, social polity” to the wearer (Carlyle *Sartor* 32). Teufelsdröckh states that “clothes have made men of us,” and this is what Besant seems to be suggesting – their military uniforms, rather than their country garb, has made them into “men” and not effeminate children (Carlyle *Sartor* 33). Lord Chester is dressed for much the same reason as Jos Sedley was at the Battle of Waterloo, to make him look like a soldier – however it is that he rides in front of an army that ensures we see Lord Chester as more than Jos, and as a man. In this case though, his dress may also suggest his allegiance with other men who care about what they look like; Lord Chester is a dandy for dandies. Besant is not ridiculing the dandy for how he dresses, per se, but for how he acts. Dress well – but act better. The mantle of authority does not finish with a scarlet jacket,

however, as a king cannot be a king without a crown, and so *The Revolt of Man* finishes with the donning of such an object, signifying Britain's return to hegemonic ideas of masculinity, wherein only a king, a male ruler, can save her from total destruction. The role of woman as authority has been removed and the lone authority is man, and in particular, this dandy-esque man in his fine red clothing.

The suggestion Besant makes to his readers is that one strong man willing to lead all other men back to a more normative concept of masculinity will have much the same effect as the dandy-disease had back before women were allowed to take over; the ripples from that one man will cover the entire nation until it seems all men will be "men," rather than inadequate dandies. Lord Chester's influence as a man unwilling to follow societal mandates of subservience was "so infectious among the men" that his "assertions of will" caused "any husband who happened to witness one of them ... [to] go home and carry on in fashion so masterful, so independent, and so self-willed, even those who had previously been the most submissive" (Besant 40). The men could only be brought back to their previous subservience through "threats, remonstrances, and visits of admonition from the vicar," after even being in the presence of a "real man" (40). One strong young man, willing to stand up for rightful position of a man, and to do so under the mantle of the Ancient Faith, should be enough to ignite all men to revolt against the new status-quo. How can *The Revolt of Man* be anything but a call-to-arms for all young men of Besant's era to take back up the mantle of authority under the banner of the Ancient Faith?

There is no room, in any Britain of the future, for a woman who creates a religion to usurp the "true" religion purely for her own gain. It is perhaps for this reason that Besant's Bishop Ingleby informs Lord Chester that the revolt he is to lead is "a man's movement, and

must be guided by men alone” (Besant 123); the Bishop’s remark makes it very clear that the call-to-arms is not intended for women. This is not a call to equality, but a call for a return *back* to a society in which men are the authority. It is a call for a return to Victorian ideas of hegemonic gender normativity, where roles for men and roles for women are separate and definitely not equal. R. W. Connell, in *The Men and The Boys*, states that “‘Men’ as a group, and heterosexual men in particular, are not oppressed or disadvantaged ... men in general gain a patriarchal dividend. Hegemonic masculinity is not a stigmatized identity. Quite the opposite: the culture already honours it. Seeking the unity of ‘men’ can only mean emphasizing the experiences and interests men have that separate them from women, rather than interests they share with women that might lead towards social justice” (209). Although Connell is writing about twenty-first century masculinity, the same argument applies to Besant’s Britain. The nineteenth-century was definitively skewed towards the rights of men, and yet Besant obviously believed those rights *were* being jeopardized both by men who were failing to fulfill his notion of masculinity, that of the Protestant father or soldier, and also by women who failed to remain in a place of subjectivity. For both groups to reject traditional roles, at least for Besant, the implication was that hegemonic masculinity was in danger of being oppressed. Men must rise up, revolt against the changing ideas of gender, and take back the country. Besant suggests it is only Protestant, non-dandified men, who can make decisions for the good of the country. If any other groups should effect a revolt, it is apparently destined to fail.

Even a woman as strong as Professor Ingleby, a woman of excellent reputation in her time, cannot effect a great change; instead she must raise up a man such as Lord Chester to lead the revolt in order for the revolt to have any lasting effect. The “New Woman” stepping back is not enough – the dandy must step up if change is to happen. It is not even the place of Professor

Ingleby's husband, a man she describes as "a wiser and greater being than [herself], whose will [she] carr[ies] out and whom [she] obey[s]," to begin the revolution (Besant 100). It must be a young aristocratic man, one who represents the men who are, supposedly, allowing women to usurp men's rightful roles who must lead the revolt. Besant does create a group of young men and women to be part of Lord Chester's entourage from the beginning of the revolution, each with their own gifts, but they do not represent the very group Besant seems to envision to be at the root of Britain's digression. Clarence Veysey, described as a "tall thin young man of four-and-twenty, with eager eyes, pale face, and high narrow forehead," is young, but religious, and might appear to the Victorian reader to represent traditional, religious views, and so the dandies who are stepping away from their roles will not follow him (Besant 125). The muscular Jack Kennion, who has a "square head, curly locks, and laughing eyes," represents the sportsmen and engineer – still not a man for a dandy to follow (125). Kennion has studied "mechanics and mathematics," in order to bring technology back to what it once was and return Britain to the "height" she has "fallen" from since women took over the world (Besant 128). Algy Dunquerque, a friend of Lord Chester's, is the one "learned in the old arts of drilling and ordering masses of men" – he represents the very skills that are being lost at the hand of the dandy and the inability of the women (Besant 128). Lord Chester, however, represents the aristocrat, the very group that was stepping away from their positions, apparently in droves, and to become a dandy. Lord Chester is called to return Britain back to what she was in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, when men were strong and women were subjected to them, which, one is led to suppose, was a happier time for both genders.

Besant does include women in the early group of revolutionaries, but they are all willingly submissive to men. Grace and Faith Ingleby, the daughters of the Professor and the

Bishop, have been trained since birth to fulfill their “rightful role” in the new society the Bishop wishes to bring to fruition. These are the types of young ladies that Besant wants all Victorian young ladies to return to. They are the kind who sew soldier’s costumes, and who bandage the sick, but who are quiet at dinner and know their place. These are also the types of young ladies who do not seek to enter Universities or take over Parliament. They are sweet and soft, having not acquired the “hard lines which a life of combat so early brings upon a woman’s eyes and brow” (Besant 129). They are shy women who do not force themselves upon men’s attentions. Lord Chester expresses his understanding that shyness is “a virtue in women,” a virtue that is apparently missing from all other women in Besant’s future, but also a virtue that Besant is perhaps suggesting is missing from too many women in his own time (Besant 129). Men should be in charge in the future, as they had been in the past, while women should quietly encourage men, showing “appreciation by smiles rather than by words” (Besant 131). As *The Revolt of Man* ends we discover what the women of the new order will act like: girls will display a “sweet feminine gift of coquetry” as “once more pretend[ing] to be cruel, whimsical, giddy, careless, and mischievous” and “the hard and anxious look [will] vanish[] from their faces ... replaced by sweet, soft smiles” (Besant 248). Girls will wait to be wooed by any number of young men who seek them out. These women are not portrayed as women of strength, or women of opinion, these are women whose only wish seems to be to find a husband, a strong young man, who will take care of them. Mrs. E.M. Field’s description of the young girl at the end of the eighteenth century is brought to mind; She was

A slim, muslin-clad, sandal shod creature, who, if she rode, must have a man to cling to; ... who at any painful or alarming sight would show her feminine sensibility by promptly fainting; whose exercise was promenading in such weather as would allow her scantily-clad frame to be out of doors, and whose culture was that which is represented by “The Use of the Globes,” the painting of circular bouquets of garden flowers symmetrically arranged and tied with an

elaborately-waved blue ribbon, and by “fancy works: in beads, shells, or gaudy wools (246).

According to Grace Ingleby, the “true place of woman” is as “the giver of happiness and love; she is the mother and the wife,” she is not meant to be a leader of men, but rather, perhaps, a maker of “fancy works” that serve little purpose but decorative – much like Besant’s ideal woman (Besant 223). The “highest function” of any woman should be to “cheer and comfort” her husband (Besant 216). This idea that women should want to be back in the home, rather than facing the struggles of living in a man’s world, were further exacerbated during the Late-Victorian era where “[e]ducation and economic independence had to be measured against the possibilities of social seclusion and occupational exclusion in a society in which women were still predominantly defined thorough their personal exchange of value; that is, their sexuality” and their ability to be mothers (Drotner 139). Women were compelled to choose between motherhood and independence, and from Besant’s point of view, it seems, being a wife and mother was all that women should desire and any other decision will lead to far worse than seclusion, but to a Britain that has become a place of ridicule in the world.

Lord Chester’s sweetheart, Constance, once the Home Secretary in the women’s parliament, prays to be forgiven for her “errors of the past,” informing her future husband that “There is the Perfect Woman; but she lives in the shadow of the Divine Man: she has her place in the Order of the World; but it is not the highest place. [Women] reigned for a hundred years and more, and everything fell to pieces; [Men] return, and all begins to advance again. It is as if the foot of woman destroyed the flowers which spring up beneath the foot of man,” and then declares that she will be his “most faithful subject” (Besant 249). The return of a man to the throne means “repression for the women” of Besant’s society, not equality (Besant 132). However, we are led to believe by Besant that women, at least the majority of women, are

thankful to have the mantle of authority taken from them and only the women who were abusing their privilege within the parliament are unhappy with the result. Women can now be free to do what women *should* do – which for Besant is little more than coquetry and eyelash fluttering. The roles fulfilled by dandies, by effeminate men, are now returned to the women, the only acceptable effeminate creature in nineteenth-century Britain. Besant finishes his novel with his apparent belief that women are better off as submissive creatures and so should ask for nothing else in their lives.

Besant is clear regarding his belief in the superiority of British men to rule the country, and the fallibility of women as leaders, and his prejudice is seen throughout *The Revolt of Man*. It is *impossible*, according to Besant's novel, for man to do well if he allows women to rise up, and this seems inevitable if men do not step away from their dandiacal-tendencies and take back all the reins of power. Tosh believes that “the belief in the household as a microcosm of the political order, vigorously re-stated by Evangelicals, underlined the importance of the man being master in his own home,” and so allowing women out of the home meant they would soon want in to politics, which bring us to *The Revolt of Man* (Tosh *What* 185).

The fantasy of Besant's future definitely spread beyond a solitary novelist. As the century progressed, the need to spread this polemic spread from adult literature and the likes of *The Revolt of Man*, to that of children's periodicals, which we will discuss in Chapter Three, showing how prevalent Besant's ideas actually were.

Preventive Measures

If dandyism is to be stopped, and Besant's proffered revolution in Britain is to be made unnecessary, then it becomes imperative that the tenor of masculinity taught to boys at an early age must be that of the warrior or soldier. Boys must be taught to be strong and manly as soon as they are old enough to read. Besant understood the need for early-education, as in *The Revolt of Man*, the religion of the "Perfect Woman" was "carefully taught with catechism, articles, doctrines, and history, to children as soon as they could run about" (Besant 137). It is often too late to try and teach such doctrines in adulthood. It is apparent that Lord Chester and his cohort's training did not begin in their adult years, at the start of the novel, but far earlier, although they were unaware of the end game regarding the necessary change in gender roles that would be required to bring Britain back from the brink of devastation. Professor Ingleby's subliminal teaching throughout Lord Chester's life is likely responsible for some of his strong personality, for his being "too masterful" in a society that ascribes all mastery to women (Besant 34). Teaching, whether subliminal or out in the open, is often intended as a means of indoctrinating a person into a particular set of beliefs. Most religious groups have some form of "Sunday school," in which to teach their young about their doctrine from a young and impressionable age; social-norm doctrines are similarly taught, even in the twenty-first century, where advertisements and media offer constant reminders of all types of masculinity, including hegemonic masculinity, along with the response we are supposed to have to them. Think of the Marlboro man of the 1970s or the Dolce and Gabbana ads of the 2010s – ideas of masculinity are pushed at viewers, many of whom succumb to the ideas that are shown, and so fashion changes and ideas of masculinity change with it. John Tosh suggests that "men ... seek to validate through recognition of their peers" what "has been shaped in infancy and childhood in relation of nurture, desire and

authority,” and, I might add, though what we absorb through our reading and education (Tosh *What* 194). The latter part of the nineteenth century used children’s literature, and for the sake of this essay we will be looking at periodicals aimed at boys, to push ideas of hegemonic masculinity. The intention of these periodicals, I suggest, was to teach young boys what the establishment saw as the qualities of a good and useful man in Great Britain, at a time when they are more vulnerable to such teaching. There was a definite choice to shift away from any depiction of the dandy or the effeminate man – the type of man Besant feared was overshadowing masculinity as the nineteenth century progressed – within later periodicals aimed at boys, and a move towards the kind of masculinity required for a colonizing country.

In the nineteenth century the “fixed, true masculinity” that traditionalists, such as Besant and Carlyle, wished was accepted by all men, that would not result in a society run by women, was recreated, or at least emphasized, through the periodicals aimed at boys. These periodicals portrayed sporty, adventurous men, or brave soldiers fighting for a cause throughout their pages, not the kind of men who would allow a woman to usurp their authority. Up until approximately halfway through the nineteenth century, children’s literature, for the most part, had not been gendered, aimed rather at educating *children* in what it meant to be virtuous and Christian, used for religious instruction first and foremost. Thomas White, a minister of the Gospel instructed children to,

Touch not, taste not, handle not ... When thou canst read ... read no ballads and foolish books, but the Bible and ‘The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven,’ a very plaine, holy book for you; get the ‘Practice of Piety,’ Mr. Baxter’s ‘Call to the Unconverted,’ Allen’s ‘Alarm to the Unconverted;’ read the history of the martyrs that died for Christ, and in the Book of Martyrs.’ And as you read, if the books be your one [sic], mark in the margent” striking passages (quod. in Field 190).

Reading should be done for spiritual edification it seems, and for no other reason. Entertainment was not part of the equation.

Although Rev. White is unlikely to have viewed children's periodicals as suitable material for young Christian readers, the very first children's periodical, published in 1765 by John Newberry, entitled *Lilliputian Magazine: or the Young Gentleman and Lady's Golden Library, being An Attempt to Mend the World, to render the Society of Man More Amiable, & to establish the Plainness, Simplicity, Virtue & Wisdom of the Golden Age, so much Celebrated by the Poets and Historians ... Printed for the Society, and Published by T. Carnan at Mr. Newberry's, the Bible & Sun in St. Paul's Church Yard* [Fig. 2], obviously intends his reader to be instructed in what it means to a good citizen and Christian, much as White did, but by using stories and history to do so (Lilliputian).

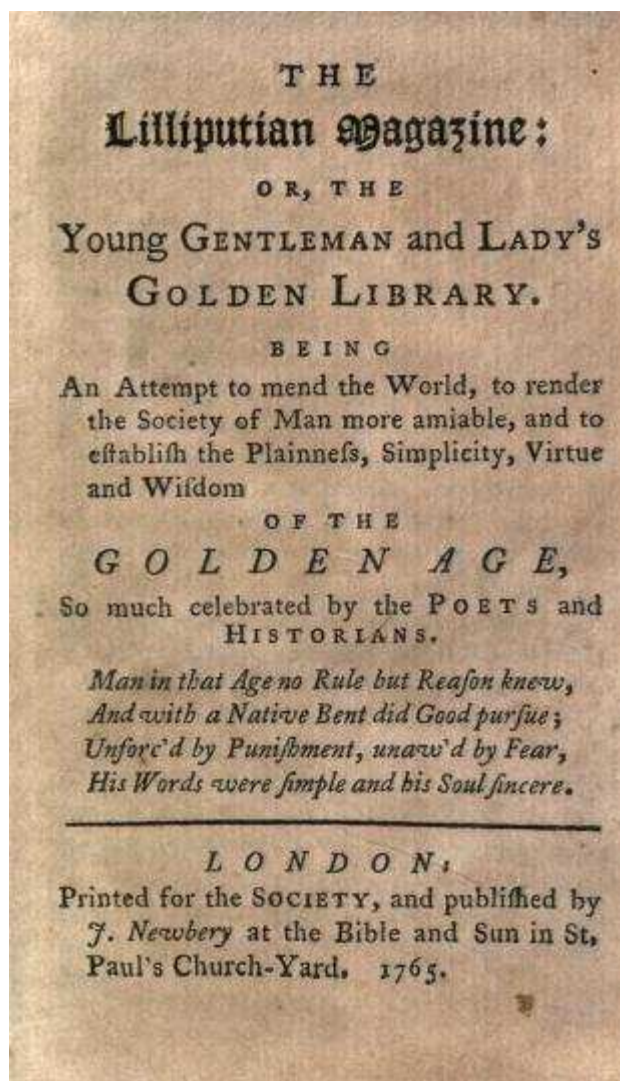


Fig. 2. "The Lilliputian Magazine"

The *Lilliputian Magazine* included adventure tales, such as "An Adventure of Mister Tommy Trusty and his delivering Miss Bidly Johnson from the thieves who were going to murder her," in which Bidly, whose "beauty made her proud and disobedient to her parents ... by not taking their advice ... had almost lost her life" except that she is saved by young Tommy Trusty (Lilliputian 14). Or "The Adventure of Tommy Tripp and his dog Jouler" who is a better

man than Tom Thumbs, according to the writer, although the two be of the same size, because Tommy is a “good scholar” who “whenever you see him will always have a book in his hand,” who after saving a young boy reminds him he must be a “good little boy, and to say his prayers and learn his book, and do as his mama and papa bid him, which this little boy has done ever since; and so must all other girls and boys, or nobody will love them” (*Lilliputian* 52). All children who read the *Lilliputian Magazine* were taught that to be good is enough, and to be otherwise results in death or a life without love, which is a rather dire consequence for vanity, but one that the writers thought appropriate for their young readers to hear if there was any hope of them avoiding the same fate. Other such periodicals were produced throughout the wane of the eighteenth century, all aimed at children as a whole.

In 1805 William Lloyd, a teenager himself, published the *Youth's Magazine* (1805-1867); the periodical, an inexpensive product, included “biographical communications, essays, obituaries of young people, extracts from scripture history, remarks on passages of scripture, anecdotes, poetry, or with instances of the beneficial effects of schools for religious instruction (No. 1 [September 105], p2),” was aimed at a wide-ranging age group and still catered to both genders within its pages (qutd. in Drotner 24). The *Youth's Magazine* was broadly read due to its affiliation with the Sunday School Union who offered it as prizes or was bought by parents for their children. The *Youth's Magazine* format was copied by numerous other periodicals during this time period, all equally inexpensive, and all aimed at creating a better child who followed the ways of the Bible. Kirsten Drotner states that periodicals such as *Evenings at Home* (1792-96), and other such periodical, were “magazines sprinkled” with “an assortment of uplifting fiction with equally educative samples of botany, metallurgy, astronomy, and geography and with an “instructive puzzle” thrown in for good measure” (20). Periodicals were meant less for

entertainment as instruction, however, during this time. Very little had changed since the *Lilliputian* in earlier times. Many of the stories depicted within the pages of periodicals during the first part of the nineteenth century included middle-class and aristocratic children who learned lessons through error or via instructions by other good children or adults. The earlier periodicals depictions of the middle- and upper-classes suggested that these periodicals were aimed at a more affluent reader. However, it was often not the upper classes who were viewed as lacking in Christian instruction, but rather the poor, and so it became essential to enlarge the pool of readers, which became possible after the Napoleonic war (1799-1815) when printing prices decreased.

With cheaper printing costs came the publication of more periodicals, including the Religious Tract Society's *Child's Companion* (1824-1937), the *Children's Friend* (1824-1930), and the *Children's Missionary Record* (1839-48). Many of the new periodicals were aimed at the poorer parts of society who were now able to purchase children's reading materials due to the lowered cost of purchase. In April 1834, the *Child's Companion* offered this to its readers:

Perhaps you are poor; but this need be no hindrance to your being religious. You, my young friends, may be pious without being rich; and it is far better to be pious than rich, for man, when he dieth, can carry nothing away with him." (*Child's Companion*, new ser. 3, no. 28 [Apr. 1834] p127, qutd. in Lam).

The intention of such periodicals was not to encourage poor children to seek a way out of their lowly positions, but instead to encourage those individuals to be happy where they are and accept the position God has placed them in. The periodicals seemingly intended to remind readers that a life being virtuous was as much as one might hope for, and to want more might be a sign of vanity, which as we learned, could result in death for the unfortunate child. The *Child's Companion's* contents "provided countless examples of pious infants whose conviction of sin was profound and whose deaths were edifying" to all children (Meigs et al 248). The included

tales taught what the morally right thing was to do in any given situation. The inclusion of obituaries of children, and the horrific consequences for children who failed to learn to be virtuous, seems a little macabre in the twenty-first century, but was very much in line with spiritual ideas in the early 1800s. The *Child's Companion* was described as “dull, lacking in real sympathy for children, and devoid of humor,” much like its editor, Rev. Carus Wilson (Meigs et al 248). The periodicals were not meant to be Charlotte Bronte, drew from her knowledge of Wilson to create the character of Mr. Brocklehurst in *Jane Eyre* (248).

The periodicals that were published in the second quarter of the century were a mixture of poems, riddles, and instructions aimed at either a boy or a girl, including morality tales meant to teach the importance of listening to one's parents, and how to behave in a virtuous fashion. The purpose of the children's periodical did not change incrementally from the earliest to around the mid nineteenth century. Mrs. E.M. Field, in her 1891 book, *The Child and His Book: The History and Progress of Children's Literature in England*, states that “the ruling idea for children's book, [was] that whatever might be told them, from the most trivial incident of daily life to the wildest flight of imagination, [it] should always be made to work up to a moral” (248). The consequences of failing to live a moral life were always dire. Field states that,

[o]ne of the most pernicious mistakes of the old's children's books was the inculcation of a spirit of revenge and cruelty in the tragic examples which were intended to deter their readers from idleness and disobedience. One, if he did not behave himself, was to be shipwrecked and eaten by lions; another to become a criminal, who was not to be taught better, but rendered a mere wicked contrast to the luckier virtue, and above all, none to be poor but he vicious, and none to ride in their coaches but little Sir Charles Grandisons and all-perfect Sheriffs (249).

This style of teaching morals was not considered a “mistake” in the earlier part of the century however, but instead as the best means of ensuring a virtuous child. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century hegemonic ideas of masculinity were only just beginning to be deviated from.

It is perhaps for this reason that children's texts do not dwell on ideas of what it means to be "a boy" or "a girl" in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. It is only when anxieties begin to grow regarding the dandies, and their effect on British society, means the subject must be addressed both from the top down, and the bottom up – until then religious instruction was first and foremost the reason to publish children's periodicals. Men, such as George "Beau" Brummel, who we discussed in Chapter One, stepping away from ideas of gender-normative behavior began to illicit anxiety regarding manliness as the century progressed and only then did periodicals take up the call for a return to hegemonic ideas of masculinity, as we will discuss later in this chapter.

Though the religiously inclined children's monthlies continued throughout the nineteenth century, in the 1840s there was a realization that these publications could be profitable and should be changed to encourage a greater readership. The readers of the earlier periodicals had now grown up and many were in positions to purchase periodicals for their children, which were offered in many formats, including "the weekly installments, monthly volumes with added colour plate illustrations, and hardback bound annuals" (Penner 637). The new crop of periodicals, unlike the earlier versions, were geared toward a gendered audience; periodicals were offered specifically aimed at boys, or at girls, rather than the generic *child*. Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, the proliferation of *gendered* texts grew immensely, especially in the format of the weekly periodical, which cost only a few pennies. *Beeton's Boy's Own Magazine* (1855-62), the Religious Tract Society's *Boy's Own Paper* (1879-1967), *Young England* (1880-1937), *Chums* (1892-1941), and *The Captain* (199-1924), along with a myriad of other publications that began during this period, were all aimed towards boys, as "the child [became] an entity in his own right whose favour had to be courted" (Penner 635). Gendered

periodicals also meant that households had to purchase two periodicals in a week, rather than the one that had previously been enough. But with publications being less costly than they had before, purchasing two periodicals was no longer cost-prohibitive.

Cornelia Meigs et al. describe Beeton's magazine as a "lively periodical," which was not successful because of its low price, but "due to the fact that the editors took into account children's tastes and printed what children wanted rather than what their elders thought they should have" (Meigs 249). While what was published *was* more in line with what children wanted, Beeton's magazine, and the numerous other periodicals that followed, were still used as instruction, but this time as instruction in the type of masculinity boys should portray: that of the courageous and strong man, the sportsman and the adventurer, rather than the dandy and effeminate man, and not entirely for religious instruction, although that element was essential to the hegemonic masculinity being offered. Claudia Nelson, in discussing the work of Austro-German psychiatrist and author of the foundational work *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1892), Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, suggests that effeminacy comes about by boys who are interested during childhood in the pleasures of "feminine things," making a need for boy's magazines, staunchly different from those offered to girl's, a concerted push against the dandy and his behaviors (548). The boy's periodical "worked on the reiteration of a code, in which the forms of appropriate behavior were laid out and dramatized," and did not include portraits of heroes who resembled Robert Ferrars, Jos Sedley, or Major Pendennis, who failed to live up to the newly restored idea of manliness for the latter half of the Victorian era (MacDonald 520). The reassertion of masculinity stated that manliness was "more a state of muscle, and its new antonym was "effeminacy"" (Nelson 542). Claudia Nelson states that the idea of manliness, unlike earlier religious concepts of virtue, is easier "for the average middle-class schoolboy with his privileged

education” to achieve, but is “effectively impossible for the average middle-class girl, who is unlikely to reach pinnacles of capitalist power,” which ensures Besant’s future cannot happen (543). The covers of the boy’s periodicals suggested this type of muscular manliness, depicting boys playing sports, like rugby, football, or cricket. The periodicals “pursued the cult of athleticism supported by the public schools, and in the space they devoted to teams, statistics and coaching, [periodicals] did much to make the cult dominant” (MacDonald 520). They depicted men facing up to the dangers of war or of colonization, suggesting that the boys should look to their future with the plan to follow in these men’s footsteps and ensure Britain’s supremacy on all fronts. There was no room for the dandy. These were periodicals for British boys who should be proud to be British.

The periodicals *were* read outside of Britain by missionaries and colonial readers, which Elizabeth Penner equates with their “strong association with a sense of British culture and identity,” an identity that was encouraged to be considered superior to other country’s identities (641). Penner quotes an editor’s reply to “one reader from Gothenburg,” which states “Foreign readers of the BOY’S OWN PAPER are eligible for our competitions, but must write in English, and take a chance – a poor one – with our British Boys” (641). Apparently British boys should consider themselves superior to other boys in the world, but only if, one must assume, those boys are following the mandates of masculinity enclosed within the pages of such periodicals as the *Boy’s Own Paper* – that of the strong, courageous, and patriotic boy who always does what is right and helps others out.

Beeton’s Boy’s Own Periodical was the first periodical to use the term “boy” in the title. The new periodical, in Beeton’s own words, was meant “to help form the taste and influence the mind of a youth; whose glorious heritage it is to possess the Empire that their fathers have

founded and preserved and whose duty it will be to hold that Empire, handing it down greater, more prosperous, to future generations” (Hyde 50). The *Boy's Own Paper*, published by the Religious Tract Society, stated that the boys who read their periodical should have an idea of the “ideal of conduct, and goodness and honesty were treated as a matter of course. [The *Boy's Own Paper*] recognized and rejected vice, but quietly, without moral fanfare ... Its policy was to emphasize both naturalness and manliness” (Meigs 252). What *was* manliness for this periodical? Manliness encompassed being “pure, courageous and unselfish; he never sneaked, he told the truth, he gave a ‘lifting hand to the fellow who is down,’” whether that fellow was a fellow British boy, or the *childlike* indigenous people he might meet while on his adventures in the name of Britain ... The manly British boy had to have physical pluck – demonstrated by fearlessly falling on the ball at the feet of the rushing forwards – but the essence of moral courage was to know what was right and not be swayed by the crowd” (MacDonald 522). The articles, though less religious in content than earlier periodicals, still included “Christian values,” still taught “what was right,” although these teachings “were incorporated through the paper’s serialized fiction, true-life stories ... sporting reports, competitions, and correspondence pages,” and through “instructional articles, such as Rev. Walter Horne’s “Some Manly Words for Boys, by Manly Men,” which still depicts masculinity as it relates to “Christian living” (Penner 632). According to Cornelia Meigs et al, “[t]he manly boy inevitably becomes a type, something which does not, as a matter of fact, disturb the average boy reader” and in fact is just the kind of boy they wish to emulate (Meigs 252). The periodicals were filled with well-known names from the world of science, literature, and sports – names the boys would be impressed by and, again, want to emulate, supplying a physical representation of what it meant to be manly during this time period. This was the place to learn what it meant to be the right kind of boy, which “one

journalist” who “interview[ed] Hutchison,” the editor of the Boy’s Own Paper from its beginning (although not officially until 1897), believed to be “the manly, mirth-loving, adventurous, wholesome boy,” not the sedate, clothes-loving, effeminate boy who would let women take over their position in society (Penner 633).

What the boys were assured of, through these periodicals, was that a real British man must always be aware that they are part of the greatest nation on earth and should act accordingly. Robert H. MacDonald shares an excerpt from an 1899 *Pall Mall Gazette*, which, in talking about *The Captain*, stated that it has “a fine, healthy tone . . . that we like; it should help make good lads and brave lads of its readers” (519). These are the jingoists, the brave lads who will go out and spout the greatness of Britain, willing to put themselves against any country who says any country other than Britain is greater. In the 1889-1890 *Boy’s Own Annual’s* “The Knight of the Blue Ribbon: A Schoolboys Adventure on the Brocken,” by Ascot R. Hope, the young protagonist has been sent to Germany to learn the language, which he portrays as something of a struggle, and early in the story he states that “surely one had a right to groan over

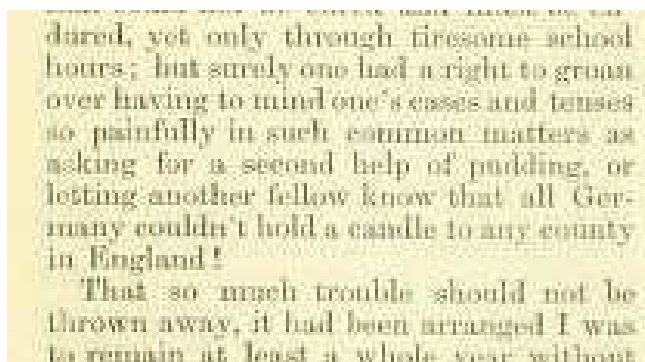


Fig. 3. Excerpt from “The Boys Own Annual 1889-90.”

having to mind one’s cases and tenses so painfully in such common matters as asking for a second helping of pudding, or letting another fellow know that *all Germany couldn’t hold a candle to any county in England!*” (see Fig. 3) (Boys,

emphasis mine). It is a brave boy, it seems, to speak up for one’s country while ensconced in another country. If you understand that Germany was another of the countries, like Britain, that was part of the race to create colonies, you realize that comments such as this is meant to remind

every boy that Britain is supreme and they should be proud to say so. All the stories included within the periodicals aimed at inciting boys to manhood were aimed at pushing boys towards particular ideals of masculinity. The acceptable kind of masculinity is one that stands up for one's country, or faces an enemy of some kind and overcomes them, because that is what British men are supposed to do.

The 1889-90 *Boy's Own Annual* includes adventures, such as "Attacked by Pirates," "My First Shark," and "My First Tiger," which end with the protagonist overcoming their foe. There is "Advice to Growing Lads," and "The Anti-Gambling League" which help boys to be the best they can be (Boys). There is instruction on "Boat Life in the Navy" which tell of the brave men who fight each day for Britain, surely meant to encourage the reader to do just such a thing when they grow up (Boys). Many of the stories are set in exotic locales, such as the colonies of the British Isles, and encourage British boys to venture far afield in the name of Britain. "How I Shot a Tiger in the House" by Major General R.C. Money, included in the 1889-1890 *Boy's Own Annual*, allows the reader to take part in a tiger hunt from the security of his own home, but, one presumes, with the intention of inciting him to follow in the Major General's footsteps one day. The story is set in Bengal, where the Major General works as Deputy-Commissioner of Jupigori. He states he heard from outside shouting about a tiger being loose somewhere. At the time he was,

sitting in his writing room, deep in the composition of one of those many official reports which leave a district officer in India less time of yore for shooting. [He] soon was made acquainted with the particulars. A tiger in a village ten miles off; and not merely in the village, but in quiet possession of a dwelling house. A cow killed, a man badly mauled – could any khubr sound more promising? The khuberrier (i.e. the man who had brought the news) had come in hot haste, taking little over two hours on the road. The tiger was in the house when he started, and he was quite certain that it would never dream of moving until the District Officer had inspected it!

What follows is a tale of the Major General's leisurely trip to the village, taking in the beauty of such a place as India at that time of year, reminiscing about previous hunts and shooting escapades. The reader is given recollections of the Major's own personal heroics in capturing and shooting the tiger, all done while the natives looked on in fear for their lives. It takes but one shot, and "luckily the one shot had done its business well, and certainly it saved the mates life" to down the "almost ten foot" tiger (Boys). Money's tale teaches boys that it is up to the men of Britain to save the colonies from such fearsome things as tigers, even though the indigenous people had been dealing with such ferocious creatures all of their lives we must presume. The boys are taught that though a position as a District Commander may be filled with paperwork, it is necessary paperwork in the commission of saving a British colony and therefore ensuring Britain maintains her power in the world, and the people of that country are kept safe. There is no mention of the uprisings in India, or the poor treatment of the indigenous people of India, only the assurance that British men are brave at the sight of a tiger because it is their duty to do all they can for their country, and for her protectorates. The tiger story that Jos Sedley brought up in *Vanity Fair*, which we discussed in Chapter One, the one in which he was "half-killed – not by the tiger, but by the fright," is not the kind of story included in the new periodicals as they depict the wrong kind of masculinity (Thackeray 41). Jos, the dandy, may have been frightened by the tigers he came across, but Major General R.C. Money is anything but – he is a warrior. Money is exhilarated by his chase, by his chance to prove the British as superior to the natives who cower in fear, and the readers of the periodicals are meant to bask in those feelings, not in Jos's fear, awaiting their own chances to show such prowess in the face of danger. The dandy has no place in the *Boy's Own Paper*, or *The Captain*, or any of the boy's periodicals of the latter part of the nineteenth century. The boys who read these periodicals, once they are men, should

fight valiantly, whether against an enemy or a tiger, because they are British and they are men. During the Boer War (1899-1902) *The Captain* “kept count of the numbers of ‘Old Boys’ at the front, school by school. The Old Fag [another name for the eponymous Captain] demolished pro-Boer arguments, telling one reader, who was evidently in the company of Germans, that Britain was great, that the war was essentially a civil war, fought chivalrously (though the Boers were treacherous), and that once hostilities were over, the Boers would live ‘very happily’ under British rule” (MacDonald 529). The women of *The Revolt of Man* react much in the same way as the Boers at the end of *The Captain*’s stories; they are left happy under the rule of British men, as to be otherwise is inconceivable, as ‘children’ always need to be taken care of. Boys were constantly instructed that Britain was indeed great and needed great men to keep all others in their place, which is under their supervision, if they are to ensure Britain’s place in the world is never lost, especially to the hands of a woman.

Nowhere in the list of contents of the 1889-90 *Boys Own Annual* is a recipe, or instructions on how to take care of a child, or anything else that might be necessary for someone taking care of a home. The closest one gets to a recipe are instructions on “How to Boil Water in a Paper Bag,” which one can only presume is to ensure the water being drunk in the wilds of Africa or India is safe to drink. While there is a list of “Indoor Amusements,” those amusements that are listed are meant as hobbies, such as “Wood Carving for Boys” or “How to Make a Small Dynamo” (Boys). These are the types of activities boys should be involved in, not the spinning of wool or the taking care of children that Besant suggests the men of the future will be left to do if women are allowed to take over and men don’t stop them. Real boys of the British Empire may be expected to build a fire, but should not be expected to watch over a baby – child care is women’s work, and should remain so. If Besant’s future is not to be realized, then men must

learn, as boys, to be brave and in control, to ensure women remain in the home, taking care of household matters, and not usurping male roles in the workplace, guaranteeing that hegemonic ideas of gender remain intact.

As boys were instructed regarding Empire-building in their periodicals, the girls were encouraged to pursue domestic tasks, and stay within the sphere of their home. Girl's periodicals, such as the *Girl's Own Paper* (1880-1956) and the *Girl's Realm* (1898-1915), offered instruction that was meant to be useful in a girl's daily life, such as "economical cookery, plain needlework, home education and health," encouraging young ladies to seek their enjoyment within the home, rather than in the public sphere (Drotner 116). While these periodicals did include a few stories that may suggest girls are capable of an adventurous spirit, every story concluded with the young lady finding a husband, getting married, and, one presumes, going home to use the recipes and childcare notes within the pages of their periodical, with all ideas of adventure far in the past. The lives of young girls at this time were often as restrictive as the periodical articles suggest, as although young boys found jobs that allowed them to venture out of doors, the girls were "confined to the home, minding a neighbor's baby, running errands for an older relative, or helping their mothers with the strenuous routine of cleaning, washing, and cooking" (Drotner 140). What is assured is that such jobs, "regarded by adults as natural ingredients of female upbringing, fetched little or no payment – merely a cup of tea, perhaps, or some food for the family," further enhancing a girl's concept of dependence on the men in her life to provide for her (Drotner 140). Schooling also added little more to a girl's education, as instead of learning mathematics, she was trained in needlework, laundry-work, and cooking during much of her time in school (Drotner 141). It was obvious from periodicals such as the *Boy's Own Paper* and the *Girl's Own Paper* that each gender was expected to fulfill

hegemonic ideas of what were correct activities for a boy or a girl, and to do otherwise, it seems apparent, can only lead to a lesser Britain and the fulfillment of Besant's prophetic future.

R.W. Connell states that "the growing emphasis on gender difference in European culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided symbols of overall superiority and inferiority," and this is very apparent in the gendered literature of the late nineteenth century, where boys are strong and in charge, while women are kind and nurturing (*Man* 49). MacDonald states that "the whole shift towards a more obviously patriotic programme was part of an emerging imperial consciousness, in which, at a popular level, the answer to the dangers of a decadent society was the strengthening of the Empire," and what better place to do this than in the literature being offered to future citizens who will fight for Britain (520). If decadence is to be avoided, and boys are to be taught what is necessary for them to become the saviors of the Empire, then it is imperative to teach them from an early age what the leader of an Empire looks and acts like. It was the place of boys, who would grow up to be men, to ensure that the Empire was in a good situation in the future, not the place of girls. Besant's novel clarifies what the traditional section of society believed might happen if girls are taught otherwise – Britain is doomed. Boy's periodicals held "up a heroic past or an exotic present as illustrious indications of the reader's actual possibilities in his immediate future" (Drotner 98). Gone were the religiously-based heroes of the very early children's periodicals, and in their place were stories of "[t]he medieval crusades, the Norman conquest, and the British army and navy" as stories of "audacious but responsible heroes" whose only purpose was to improve Britain's face in the world (Drotner 98).

The stories portray the British man as one who goes out to serve his country, always managing to bring down the native, not, they suggest, to subjugate him, but to save him. Connell

states that “Within the imperial ‘politics of war’ (MacDonald 1994), the conqueror was virile, while the colonized were dirty, sexualized and effeminate or childlike. In many colonial situations indigenous men were called ‘boys’ by the colonizers,” and boy’s stories exaggerated these ideas, feeding them to their young readers who were being taught to emulate the behaviors of the British man through the stories in their periodicals (Connell *Man* 49). Fears, not dissimilar to Besant’s in *The Revolt of Man*, held that if boys (who would one day be men) were not taught to see British hegemonic masculinity as the right kind of masculinity, as the only true type of masculinity, then when they grew up the boys might digress from those ideas and once again, Besant’s future becomes a possibility, and women are left to take over the country and drive it into ruination.

The indigenous men who were portrayed as children in stories such as “How I Shot a Tiger in the House,” were created so as to discourage boys from choosing them as their heroes, rather than the British man who saves them. According to Connell, “[t]he power relations of empire meant that indigenous gender orders were generally under pressure from the colonizer, rather than the other way around. But the colonizers too might change. The barriers of late colonial racism were not only to prevent pollution from below. They were also to forestall ‘going native’” (*Man* 49). To go native, to be anything other than a British man, was to put Britain in jeopardy as a power within the world. So, the indigenous person, viewed as effeminate, woman-like, if allowed to instruct Britons, would further enhance the dandy-disease’s, opening new doors for futures, such as is found in *The Revolt of Man*, to become a possibility. It becomes imperative then, to ensure that boys are instructed very early what masculinity does and does not look like, and boy’s periodicals helped to fill in this instruction. Not all of this instruction came to good ends however, as Mrs. E.M. Field includes a story,

where a boy named Albert Cudall, aged fifteen, having twice run away to sea, in imitation of one of these youthful heroes, hanged himself in endeavouring to copy the achievements of a boy hero in Mayne Reid's "Fatal Cord," who shows his courage by hanging on with his hands to a tree with a cord on a slip-knot around his neck (341).

For reasons such as this, some of the more sensational stories were condemned earlier on, but as colonialism gained strength and the Empire grew, concerns over how such stories would be accepted were overlooked and more sensational stories were once again included in order to incite the boys to want to read more and learn more. In fact, to incite boys to emulate the heroes regardless of the outcome for them.

So many of the stories included men who fought for their country, in one way or another, and who did so while fulfilling hegemonic ideals of masculinity, and with virtue. In later children's literature, according to Mrs. E.M. Field, "[m]en ... are not taught to love and labour for themselves alone, or for their little dark corners of egotism, but to take the world along with them into a brighter sky of improvement," in fact they should be laboring in order to improve their country and the whole nation if they are truly to be men (249). While the stories included in the boy's periodicals did often include stories of married men, or men who get married at some point in the story, marriage never led to an end of their adventures. Young British men are always to be virtuous, but are also always to be ready to fight for their country, or to go forth and extend her borders to new colonies. The girls learn from their periodicals that they should wait patiently for their men to return, with a meal always at the ready to feed their starving hero. Sexuality, even sexuality within marriage, was almost entirely nonexistent within the periodicals. The dandy, often equated with homosexuality by their effeminate behavior, was not offered as an alternative version of masculinity, and so as the nineteenth century drew to a close, some instruction on sexuality was necessary. The instruction, it was hoped, meant that "the

instinctive homosexual could be turned toward normalcy if the reindoctrination [sic] process began sufficiently early,” and so a few articles on the perils of masturbation were included within the pages of the periodical (Nelson 546). William Acton, as early as 1857, stated that “it is not the strong athletic boy, fond of healthy exercise, who thus early shows marks of sexual desire, but your puny exotic” (Nelson 547). If it is the weak boy who will bring the country down, then the need to continue to show boys playing sports in full color on the front pages of many of the boy’s periodicals becomes an imperative (Nelson 547). If the type of men who would not only fail Britain in the Victorian era, but could also allow such a future as Besant suggests is possible, are to be stopped in their tracks, then boys must be taught to emulate the hegemonic masculinity of the boy’s periodical as early as possible.

It seems obvious, at least to me, that boy’s periodicals were not published merely as a means of making more money because households with children of both genders were now required to purchase two periodicals. Instead, I suggest that the periodicals were gendered in order to emphasize the type of masculinity that the mid to late Victorian era viewed as ensuring the boys, and the girls, who read them were taught what was expected of them, both in school and at home. Boys should want to play sports, be interested in engineering projects, and look forward to a future where they can go out from their home and defend their great nation, whether by being an ambassador to one of the colonies or by fighting against insurgents. Girls, on the other hand, should be happy to remain in their homes, to learn to cook and take care of their families, and wait for their husband to take care of them, as though they are children. The gendered periodicals became, in their own way, a fight against the growing dandy population. They instructed boys that to act any way other than the boys and men within the pages of their periodicals acted was detrimental to Britain. They suggested that any other type of “manliness”

is deviant and should not be stood for. While Besant's *The Revolt of Man* was created as fiction, it follows the same premises as the periodicals. The revolutionaries are exactly like the typified boy and girl depicted within the periodicals: Lord Chester is the brave warrior who rides against the insurgent in his red jacket, atop a stallion. Algy and Jack are the men who have learned to use machinery, who play sports, and who know how to woo women. Though the Bishop is older, and is a man of education and great intelligence, he is also the head of his household and manages to keep a woman like Professor Ingleby subjugated, even when everything around her tells her she should be in control. The two daughters, Grace and Faith, are the types of women who cook and sew, who are quiet when in the presence of their superior, man. The very types who will revolt against the status quo in a novel, are the same types who are asked to revolt against changing ideas of masculinity in boy's and girl's periodicals throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, and this should not be overlooked. If dandyism and the "New Woman" are something to be feared, then we must have revolutionaries who are trained up to be all that Britain needs them to be.

John Tosh, in "What Historian Should Do with Masculinity: Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain," states that "[m]anliness expresses perfectly the truth that boys do not become men just by growing up, but by acquiring a variety of manly qualities and manly competencies as part of a conscious process which has not close parallel in the traditional experiences of young women ... If men are the sex at large in society, they must live by a code which affirms their masculinity" (181). The myriad of publications geared towards training a boy to be a man, a British man at that, took on the idea of passing on what many believed to be the only "manly qualities and manly competencies" that would ensure Britain maintained her position, or even better, improved her position (Tosh "What" 181). Their doing so, I believe, was very much "part

of a conscious process,” as prior to this time in history, the idea of teaching boys in such a manner, through their entertainment reading, was barely visible. They become part of, what John Tosh will describe in “Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity” as “the moral rearmament of the Victorian Governing Class” (457). Suddenly, with the onslaught of dandies (although this was as much in their heads as in reality), the need to rearm boys with what it means to be a *man* became an imperative if the dandy dis-ease was not to be allowed to spread beyond a select group of men. Just as the “New Woman” had to be stopped if men were to be allowed to keep their positions in society, which explains the numerous girl’s periodicals straining to push girls back into the home. The anxiety of the dandy and the “New Woman” bringing down Victorian society was apparently very real and strongly felt by many.

Concluding Thoughts on the Dandy and the Twenty-First Century

Besant's *The Revolt of Man*, published at the fin de siècle of one of the most transformative centuries is overtly sexist, that cannot be denied. A world with women in charge must fail! A world where men stay home must be a disgrace and worthy of ridicule! And yet, as we have seen, Besant was not alone in his beliefs. The proliferation of boy's and girl's own periodicals that were published throughout the last half of the nineteenth century suggest strongly that others felt the need to show their support for a Britain run by men of a certain character, and where women are encouraged to be happy within the home. It is unclear if the publishers of the periodicals believed Britain could not survive if the "New Woman" was allowed to continue her foray out of the domestic sphere, but the fact that the "girl's own" periodicals pushed so hard at domestication and the pursuit of a husband suggests they at least thought Britain would be stronger with women at home. It is VERY clear that the publishers of the "boys own" periodicals thought it was the place of men, and men who fit the description of Besant's Lord Chester and his cohorts, to take the places of authority within Britain. If, as John Tosh suggests, "manly vigour included energy, virility, strength – all the attributes which equipped a man to place his physical stamp on the World" were required for true masculinity (Tosh "Gentlemanly" 460). "Moral qualities which enabled men to attain their physical potential – decisiveness, courage and endurance," were now to be the dominant qualities required in all men of the Empire (460). If vigor and morality should be "considered applicable as much to the struggle of life as to the battlefield," then Besant's novel and the hegemonic masculinity of *Beeton's Boy's Own Magazine*, and *The Captain*, and all the other gendered-male periodicals that flooded the stands during the latter half of the nineteenth century, appear to be *necessary* reminders, at least in the eyes of the establishment, for men and boys to take back up their

weapons of masculinity and fight for their country (460). To enact masculinity in any other way, it is postulated, was to be un-British and to spell the end for a country which viewed herself as the greatest power in the world.

Is this loss of masculinity that Besant and Carlyle feared in their time and websites such as *Return of Kings* (I will get to them in a little while) cries against in our own time only a concern for the urbanite? The city, as the place where consumerism is easier to participate in and where social opportunities are deemed greater, is the central base of both metrosexuality and dandyism. Does this make dandyism only an urban dis-ease then? Should anyone outside of the city even be anxious about what effeminate men mean for them? What Besant's novel suggests, is that if not curtailed, even a predominantly urban dis-ease will spread beyond a city such as London or Manchester, and out into rural areas. In the dystopian future of *The Revolt of Man*, the dis-ease, which started to spread out from the Parliament in London, by the time of the novel has spread into all parts of the countryside – although the country has not taken to it quite as strongly as the urban parts of Britain – and the whims of parliamentarians may sway towards a country man as easily as a city man. No part of Britain, therefore, is safe if the dandy is not stopped before he causes dis-ease – at least that is what we read in *The Revolt of Man*. Regardless of where they lived, all parts of Britain were susceptible to the dis-ease caused by the dandy, and so novels and periodicals take their part in the fight against lost masculinity in the city, in the country, and even in the colonies.

Did Besant and so many of these publishers get their wish though? Did Britain succumb to a push-back against the dandy and the “New Woman”? John Tosh, in “Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain 1800-1914” states that there were still those “youthful aspirants to bourgeois masculinity commonly” who “experimented with forms of leisure and sexual

expression that conflicted sharply with the hegemonic values of industry and continence” even after the publication of so many tomes on what real masculine behavior should look like (335). The numerous stories of such ‘deviant’ behavior continued to abound throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, and is still apparent in our own time.

So why should we care about a book such as *The Revolt of Man*, which was written more than one hundred years ago? What *about* Besant’s concerns for society? What Oswald Spengler would suggest is that many of the points being offered through such a novel, are the same ones we are asked to consider in our own time. Spengler describes those situations which appear timeless as “contemporaneous” – that “a given human relationship may be at one time named in terms of foxes and lions, if there are foxes and lions about; or it may be named in terms of salesmanship, advertising, the tactics of politicians, etc. But beneath the change in particulars, we may often discern the naming of one situation,” and in our case that situation is lost masculinity in the face of growing women’s freedom (Adams 946). I think the situation that Besant imagined is far from over. There are still calls for men to be more “masculine,” and women to be more “feminine.” Think about all the negative press metrosexuals have gotten since the early nineteen-nineties, when many men discovered they wanted to use as many products for their skin and hair as women, and they were ridiculed for doing so.

Men who choose to pay a lot of attention to their dress and enjoy an affluent lifestyle are still recognized as a form of deviance from the hegemonic norm, even in the twenty-first century by some sections of society. Brent Shannon wrote, regarding the nineteenth-century dandy, that “fashion became a highly visual means by which to subvert the rigid and confining dictates of proper masculine behavior,” and there are many who would suggest that the ‘metrosexual,’ a name coined by Mark Simpson for the, supposedly, newly-emerging well-dressed man, is

subversive. Simpson, an English writer and blogger, introduced the idea of the ‘metrosexual,’ in the *Independent*, a UK national paper in 1994. He states:

Metrosexual man, the single young man with a high disposable income, living or working in the city (because that’s where all the best shops are), is perhaps the most promising consumer market of the decade. In the Eighties he was only to be found inside fashion magazines such as *GQ*, in television advertisements for Levi’s jeans or in gay bars. In the Nineties, he’s everywhere and he’s going shopping (Simpson)

Jeremy Kaye breaks the metrosexual down to one who “needs money to buy styling products, and fancy cars to support a life of leisure ... [who] needs to live in a hip urban area, away from the boredom and atomization of suburbia ... [who] must be narcissistic, and a little in love with oneself” (113). This sounds decidedly like the descriptions of the dandy. Brummell was a man who could not abide living outside of the city, who needed time to spend on his toilette, and who was most definitely in love with himself. Jos Sedley, Robert Ferrars both fit this stereotype – they are metrosexuals then. “With regard to the metrosexual,” according to Kaye, “Butler’s dictum of “gender is a doing” could be recast as “gender is a buying” (110). As we saw in Chapter One, the dandy (or the metrosexual) may be good for the economy, but society often fails to see them as such.

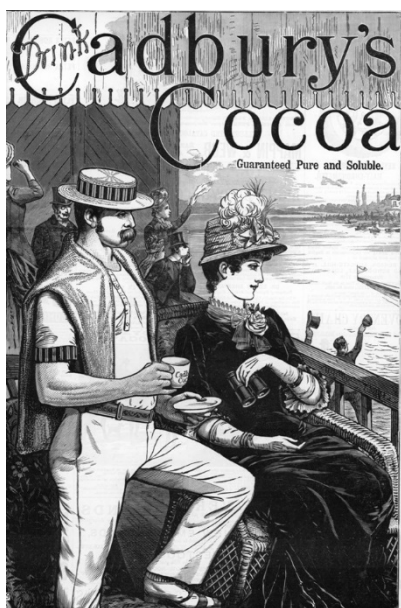
Simpson’s article in the *Independent* begins with a quote from a ‘metrosexual’ who states, “IT’S BEEN KEPT underground for too long ... This exhibition [‘It’s a Man’s World – Britain’s first style exhibition for men’, organized by *GQ* magazine in London, 1994] shows that male vanity’s finally coming out of the closet” (Simpson). If you just read the three chapters previous to this conclusion you must be aware, as I am, that if they *were* in the closet, it was not the first time they “came out.” The dandy could be described in much the same way as the metrosexual: he was *also* a man ... who generally dwelt in the city ... who had a large enough disposable income [or got into debt if he didn’t – think about George “Beau” Brummell], ... and

who loved to shop and dress well. So the metrosexual is just a dandy, and a dandy by another named ... well is still a dandy; he hasn't gone anywhere.

Just as the dandy was viewed as effeminate in the nineteenth century, the metrosexual, by many, was viewed to be gay. Webster's dictionary states, within the definition for "metrosexual," that he is a heterosexual. Why include his sexuality? Why include this if it was understood by society to be so? Because it was far from understood. Mark Simpson states in the same article in which he coined the term, that "American *GQ* ... was popularly dubbed 'Gay Quarterly'" for its inclusion of pictures of many metrosexuals. For many a metrosexual was just a well-dressed gay man, which further added to the idea of lost masculinity – because gay men are often portrayed as unmanly. It seems very little has changed, from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, for the man who cares about how he looks and what he smells like.

Besant, Carlyle, and the myriad of other writers decrying the loss of manliness in the nineteenth century, did not exterminate the dandy, even in their own time. Even as those writers looked backwards to a time of more hegemonic masculinity, calling for its return, department stores in the latter part of the nineteenth century were looking forward to a time when men could shop more freely, opening their doors to greater numbers of men as the century closed. Brent Shannon states that towards the end of the century "Britain's rapidly emerging consumer culture invited middle-class males to transform conspicuous consumption and self-display through goods into publicly acceptable masculine behavior" (600). So while boy's magazines were suggesting masculinity was found on a rugby field, department stores suggested there were other types of masculinity which Britain might have to learn to accept also. And while in 1994 Mark Simpson states that the "Metrosexual man wears Davidoff 'Cool Water' aftershave (the one with the naked bodybuilder on the beach), Paul Smith jackets (Ryan Giggs wears them), corduroy

shirts (Elvis wore them), chinos (Steve McQueen wore them), motorcycle boots (Marlon Brando wore them), Calvin Klein underwear (Marky Mark wears nothing else),” in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, advertisers were using the exact same strategies as they “strove to masculinize goods and to make the consumption of those goods appear safe and attractive by



STRENGTH AND STAYING POWER.—TO ATHLETES.—The popular beverage for Rowers, Swimmers, Fencers, and Skaters, in all seasons, is CADBURY'S Cocoa, a pure natural Cocoa containing no sugar and containing quantities of a concentrated form of soluble matter, rich in strength, health, and energy giving. CADBURY'S COCOA is guaranteed absolutely pure, and the public are cautioned to see that they get the best. In the whole process of manufacture, the naturally medicinal qualities of the Cocoa are retained by special heat.

Fig. 4. "Old Ads Are Funny: 1885 Ad: Drink Cadbury's Cocoa."

directly associating them with strong, robust male figures whose masculinity was seemingly self-evident” (Shannon 602). While David Beckham may have been deemed the ultimate metrosexual in the latter part of the twentieth century, a man, one presumes women want and men want to be, athletes and soldiers were used to sell everything from hot chocolate to clothing. Cadbury’s Cocoa stated that drinking their product would provide “strength and staying power – to athletes,” but what is depicted in the print ad is a man rather dandily dressed, with his sweater over his shoulders and his moustache waxed, watching a boat race (See Fig. 4). We are

asked to consider the man as an athlete, even though he is dressed in a way that some would consider to be dandyish, and even though he is only a spectator. It seems a dandy and an athlete are no longer antonyms of one another.

The athletic young man of the latter decades of the nineteenth century was choosing form-fitting clothes that resembled that of the dandy earlier in the century. Brent Shannon quotes an 1898 article in *Fashion*, which states that men have a “decided tendency to shapeliness” in their clothing choices at that time, with “fitted frock coats, fitted jackets, fitted pants, and “neck-brace type collars” being used to “emphasize[] longer and more muscular torsos, padded

shoulders, and tight wastes” (619). The emphasis has been placed on man’s inner body rather than outer – tight clothes are meant to show a man’s muscles, which we assume were gained through athletics or military training, not his vanity. *Vanity Fair*’s Jos Sedley’s propensity to be overweight then becomes the only fault he might be seen to have by the end of the century, at least where it comes to his appearance, as then his style of clothes has become more fashionable for the non-dandy. But to be shaped as anything other than an athlete would still show him unmanly, at least in his appearance. Because men should be shaped athletically. At the end of the century corsets were sold, not to make men thinner, but to make them appear more “athletic” – suggesting vanity is different if the intent is to make you appear to fulfill hegemonic ideas of masculinity, but not otherwise. Men were also indulging in the purchase of more toiletries as the century closed, with “Advertisers work[ing] vigorously to counter associations with femininity through strategically worded advertising copy that appropriated women’s beauty concerns and masculinized them” (Shannon 620). Again, think of the advertisements for men’s toiletries in the twenty-first century. Axe body spray commercials are practically soft-porn – suggesting men who use their products will become them more appealing to women, rather than smell effeminate. The dandy, much like the metrosexual one-hundred years later, wants to look and smell as good as any woman, and the late nineteenth-century society, for the most part, is more accepting of the practices, as long as the end result is still a masculine man.

There is no shortage of men (and women) today who are calling out for a return to more traditional ideas of masculinity in the early part of the twentieth century. Thomas Carlyle would have plenty of followers today of his twitter-feed, Facebook, or Instagram, of that I am sure. Carlyle’s call for the return of hero-masculinity to Britain is still heard, not just in Britain, but throughout the world. There has been a call for a “renaissance” – that is a return to pre-modern

ideas of masculinity - in the twenty-first century. While the call for a 'Menaissance' began in America, Helena Frith Powell, writing in *The Daily Mail* in 2006, in response to an article entitled "A Question of Manliness," states that "In the States, the dreary metrosexual with his face creams and liberal ways has been replaced by a new macho type of man who has more in common with Hercules than with Graham Norton," and she feels it is time for the movement to make its way across the Atlantic to Britain to bring back manliness to her country. At least this one British woman wants a return to hegemonic ideas of masculinity; she wants men who fulfill Norman Vance's idea of masculinity, that involves "embracing qualities of physical courage, chivalric ideals, virtuous fortitude," not lotions and tight shirts (quid. in Mangin 1). In 2014 *The Daily Mail* wrote an article entitled "Boys, chuck out the moisturiser! It's out with the 'metrosexual' and in with our latest crush the 'lumbersexual' (wood chopping skills not essential)" (Foster). These lumbersexual men, "[u]nlike their metrosexual brothers ... look rugged, unkempt and like they'd be a dab hand at using an axe... even if they've never picked one up in their lives" (Foster). The performativity of masculinity has once more returned. This push for a more masculine ideal sounds oddly like the concept of masculinity being offered in boy's magazines – that of the outdoorsy man who can take care of himself and any women who happens to be around. He at least "looks" like he could take down a tiger and save a village, or start a revolution to return men to superiority, even though there are some who simply see them as "A Metro-sexual who has the need to hold on to some outdoor based rugged-ness, thus opting to keep a finely trimmed beard" (Foster). Much like the men of the advertisements at the end of the nineteenth century, it may be enough to "look" manly – even if in reality they are little more than spectators on manly behavior. For some parts of society though, the call is for a full on revolt.

On *menaissance.org*, written by two men in Ohio in 2013, the reader is offered as pertinent to the twenty-first century, the words of men like Fred Hutchison (1919-1964), a professional baseball player, who is quoted as saying:

We, the men of America, are still here in spite of forty years of gender warfare against us. We are still here because God designed us to be men, placed us in this land, and expects us to lead. We are here because America needs us. We are here because our communities need us. We are here because women and children need us. We know that we are needed, in spite of the foolish popular denial of that rather obvious fact. At the moment, some women and some weak men may not like it when we behave as men. But we shall conduct ourselves as men because women, children, and weak men need us to do so. They need to know that we are here, we are not deserting our posts, we are not running away, and we are not abdicating our responsibilities. Women and children need to know that we will remain men in spite of all the cunning efforts by some of them to manipulate us to be otherwise. When women and children discover that we cannot be tricked out of being men, only then can they rest and feel safe. Only then can they find themselves and enjoy themselves as women and as children (Kennard).

Hutchison's words sound familiarly like Besant's. Hutchison wants a revolt of men. Women are laid alongside children and weak men as only capable of feeling safe when men act like men. Women are, therefore, once again, the weak ones who need the strength of men. There is no room for the "New Woman" in the mind of Besant, or in the mind of Hutchison, and it appears even in 2013, when Jim Kennard posted Hutchison's words to *menaissance.org* as words to live by. According to Kennard women should be happy to be returned to a position of subjection under men. To want something other than a home life must be detrimental to society and to women. To quote Fred Hutchison again, if women choose to step outside the home, they "must suffer the same thorns and thistles in the fields of work as a man does. Unfortunately, the woman does not have the tough hide of a man. She suffers more than a man does as she sweats in the field and the thorns and thistles injure her, speaking figuratively" (Kennard). Besant's suggestion that a woman who works hard must end up with the "hard lines which a life of combat so early brings upon a woman's eyes and brow," sounds familiarly like those of

Hutchison (Besant 129). Women, in their minds, need protecting, not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation. *The Revolt of Man*'s anxieties have not been left in the nineteenth century it appears.

Websites such as *Return of Kings*, which began in 2012 but continue still in 2016, states it is "a blog for heterosexual, masculine men. It's meant for a small but vocal collection of men in America today who believe men should be masculine and women should be feminine." Their mission statement claims they want to,

usher the return of the masculine man in a world where masculinity is being increasingly punished and shamed in favor of creating an androgynous and politically-correct society that allows women to assert superiority and control over men. Sadly, yesterday's masculinity is today's misogyny. The site intends to be a safe space on the web for those men who don't agree with the direction that Western culture is headed (Return, n. pag.).

On the website you find articles such as "Why Feminism is a Terrorist Movement," or "4 More Things That Enable Women To Avoid Taking Responsibility For Their Behavior" (Return, n.pag.). The website claims that "A woman's value significantly depends on her fertility and beauty. A man's value significantly depends on his resources, intellect, and character" (Return, n.pag.). This rhetoric, again, sounds familiar to that of the nineteenth century and ties in to the views expressed in *The Revolt of Man*. I have no doubt Besant would find time to read such a site if he was around today.

So while it might be easy to write off *The Revolt of Man* as a strange and interesting novel from the nineteenth century, to do so would be a bit of a shame. In looking at what led Walter Besant to pen such a book, to understand what he saw as harmful to society, we are given insight, not only in to nineteenth-century anxieties and beliefs, but anxieties and beliefs that still exist in the twenty-first century. It is an interesting thought that Besant might look at the twenty-

first century and think that what he wrote is still the future for Britain (and for America) as the dandy and the New Woman continue to roam unfettered within society. He would likely think the dandy-disease shows no sign of abatement, even in the midst of such articles as that calling for men to accept lumbersexual-behavior or *Return of Kings* statement that the “elimination of traditional sex roles and the promotion of unlimited mating choice in women unleashes their promiscuity and other negative behaviors that block family formation” (n.pag.). The revolution, I am sure Besant will believe, still lays ahead. The novel may be considered simply a dystopian text, where society must be brought from the brink of total disaster, but for Besant it was possibly more than fiction – it was a prophecy destined to be fulfilled if nothing changed and he might just think that nothing has changed, at least not for the better. Is *The Revolt of Man*, then, a prophecy, or a flight of fancy? I guess we must wait until the end of the twenty-first century, having waited the two hundred years Besant pictured it would take for his world to come to fruition, and see just how far Britain has gone from being a world power. Perhaps by that time more people will be jumping on Besant’s bandwagon, or perhaps it will become clear that women are as capable as men of running anything, even a country, well.

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