

CHIVALRIC MACHINES: THE BOER WAR, THE MALE BODY, AND THE GRAND NARRATIVE IN THE *STRAND MAGAZINE*

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THIS ARTICLE WILL EXAMINE THE ROLE of the male body within the various discourses of masculinity that converged within the *Strand Magazine* during the Second Boer War (1899–1902). This short period marked the point at which several paradigm shifts relating to the emergence of a military-industrial complex and the obsolescence of particular modes of warfare spread into popular culture. By correlating these depictions alongside historical analyses of military science it is possible to gauge why the male body became the focus of so many desires, fantasies, and anxieties in the last years of the Victorian period. Discussion on the subject of physicality, exercise, and the male body had a long heritage throughout the nineteenth-century, not least in discourses of muscular Christianity. Nevertheless, the *Strand Magazine's* coverage of the war and its indirect depictions of soldiers and conflict are distinguished by two particular qualities. First, contemporary responses to the Second Boer War by writers, intellectuals, and cultural commentators were infused with a consciousness of the waning of the historical epoch in which previous military conflicts had occurred. By 1902 the conflict had lasted beyond both the turn of the century and the reign of Queen Victoria. This lent the public reaction to the British army's perceived underperformance a particular urgency and restlessness. Second, within the particular context of an illustrated magazine like the *Strand*, the debate could occur across multiple platforms simultaneously. Throughout the years of conflict, it featured in fiction, non-fiction, symposia and opinion pieces all of which were lavishly augmented with illustrations, diagrams, and photographs. This interplay between fiction and non-fiction, between word and image made for a high-intensity *milieu* of the kind that would not have been possible in any form other than a periodical. This openness proved particularly conducive to the kinds of uncertainty that attended the war, the debates that it prompted and the certainty with which responses could be articulated.

In his study of belief in decay, *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-François Lyotard made the observation that, by themselves, ideas are unable to circulate through a society (25–27). Their mobilisation and pedesis is entirely at the mercy of those narrators and narratives that might propel them into particular cultural spheres and realise their otherwise dormant potential. Between 1891 until the early 1900s the *Strand* was by far the most popular English

monthly magazine with a circulation that peaked (in August 1901) at well over 500,000 (Pound 32). It was thus well placed to stimulate the passage of particular ideas into the most populist regions of the print-media market. Popularity alone does not signify cultural importance but the *Strand's* content was organised in such a way as to condense the popular and intellectual discourses that were integral to discussion of the war. Principal among these was the “physical culture” debate, a wide-reaching series of discussions that sought ways to guard against the weakening and enfeeblement of the individual and collective British body. This was stimulated by a whole battery of anxieties that tied together fears of imperial decay, bodily degeneration, the growth of tertiary industry, the death of chivalry, and the uncertain future of “Victorian” ideals. These anxieties were notable trends and, consequently, have come to predominate in recent criticism that deals with the construction of nationhood during the late-century in the work of Rod Edmond (*Leprosy and Empire*, 2006), Lara Baker Whelan (*Class, Culture and Suburban Anxieties in the Victorian Era*, 2010), Nicholas Dames (*The Physiology of the Novel*, 2007), and Pamela K. Gilbert (*The Citizen's Body*, 2007) amongst many others. In wildly different ways, these writers (usually with reference to the work of Michel Foucault) map the germination of the sense of national selfhood that came to characterise the period. Because these studies share a belief in the pervasiveness of this idea, they focus on broad fields: the Victorian novel, socio-medical developments, or writing on liberalism and citizenship. This article approaches the same issue in the microcosmic terms of its construction across the varied, mereological constituents of a single magazine and its satellite texts. Over a relatively short space of time, the magazine showed a newly self-conscious relationship with what Edmond called “concern about the integrity of the national body” (Edmond 11). Voluminous research on the subject of Victorian masculinities has confirmed that such preoccupations were absolutely commonplace in other areas of culture but it is a concept about which the *Strand* appears to show a sudden and blinding awareness as a result of the South African conflict. By employing practices from the (occasionally ghettoized) field of periodical criticism, a new light can be cast on the debate. This is not simply due to the more spontaneous, reactive relationship between periodical writing and world events but also due to the fact that a multi-platform magazine could process and address these issues from a variety of perspectives at once. From its beginning in 1899, the war forced the magazine to a realisation of the cultural significance of the male body. As a result, the different ways in which it was depicted by fictional narratives of courtship and adventure alongside non-fictional portraits of institutions such as the military became hugely significant. These were the kinds of narrative that slowly spread an awareness of the character of late-modernity to the denizens of the popular marketplace. The tired old *cliché* that the First World War shattered the certainties that had underpinned Victorian belief is challenged by the fact that the *Strand*, which for many had epitomised those beliefs, ran with reasonable success until 1950. Appetite for “Victorian” beliefs was not, then, destroyed in popular culture, it was eroded and weakened at a slow, geological pace throughout the following decades. There is nothing revolutionary in this observation by itself; the key to the cultural significance of the *Strand* in this period is that it made a conscious decision to map all of these issues onto the terrain of the male body. Bodies, in short, became vehicles for ideas and, in a wider sense, for narratives. Abstract discussion of ideas alone can gloss over this fact and it is crucial to understand the different ways in which average British bodies held up under the considerable strain of the ideological baggage that was heaped upon them during this period.

One of the reasons for the *Strand's* interminably slow response to these issues is that, as a *milieu*, the magazine consciously emphasised the virtues of repetition, sameness and continuity. It was, in Lyotard's terms, a "static" culture where the very process of narration takes precedence over the specific content. In explaining this concept he refers to the initiation ceremonies of certain tribes where incantations lose all direct, linguistic significance beneath the shared "meter" of narration. This is the kind of helpfully reductive, pseudo-scientific framework that made Lyotard such an easy target for postmodern sceptics like Alan Sokal (125). However, despite its flaws as an anthropological observation, Lyotard's understanding of "static" cultures provides an instructive perspective upon the *Strand's* construction of masculinity. In its search for ideological stability the magazine incessantly reproduced the same kinds of male figure and associated certain kinds of body with certain patterns of living. In doing this, the magazine's writing performed what Lyotard called the enactment of "positive and negative" literary "apprenticeships" (*Postmodern* 22). The *Strand* sought to embed these "types" into historical immutability (to "legitimate" them) by aligning them with what it would call "grand ideals" but which resemble Lyotard's grand narratives. The magazine's literary editor, H. Greenhough Smith, maintained a deep distrust of literary modernism and its predilection for fiction that was dislocated from the grand narratives of the past. In 1920 he wrote in his diary that

[H]owever irresponsible those early short-story writers of ours seem to our war-tried, more mature generations . . . they did not fashion their plots out of man's bewilderments and fears; nor did they have any part in the brutal disillusioning process to which many of the new writers put their gifts. (Pound 75)

This "disillusioning" process, in Smith's estimation, dislocated every-day narratives from the grand narratives that legitimated their characters and conclusions. Whilst the *Strand's* grand narratives of choice were often intermixed, they can be reductively boiled down to four basic tropes: the immutability of heterosexual love; a Judaeo-Christian belief in the immortality of the soul; the correctness and desirability of empire as a historical certainty; and, finally, the transcendent nature of heroism and chivalry. Each of these narratives prompted a series of images and styles that were subject to continual repetition and reuse but, crucially, the figures used to embody them sometimes expressed an ambivalent response to this level of expectation.

This talk of the relationship between "bodies" and "narratives" remains somewhat abstract and theoretical until we focus upon one particular body, that of Prussian bodybuilder and proponent of "physical culture" Eugen Sandow. Sandow began his career as a performer in Florenz Ziegfeld's circus reviews in the late 1880s and became hugely popular with British audiences. He made his mark on the cultural landscape with various publications including memoirs, exercise regimens, a magazine (*Sandow's*) and a series of speculations upon the benefits of regular exercise. This work stimulated much debate on the state of the British body since it coincided with the ongoing public debate over the underperformance of the British army in the Crimea, in Afghanistan, and, particularly, the Boer War. Sandow's contributions to this debate were often conducted (directly and indirectly) with Arthur Conan Doyle on competing pages within the *Strand*.¹ Harold B. Segal has tracked the spread of the physical culture debate across Europe during the late-century and suggested that military activity and public interest in the issue were necessarily intertwined. If armies had engaged

successfully, as was the case with Germany, then the emphasis was on avoiding complacency whereas in countries of declining military strength the debate was urgently precipitated by performance anxiety on the world stage (“Pantomime” 68). In Britain, physical culture was deployed in the movement towards “national efficiency” which was a series of strategies designed to increase governmental ‘supervision’ of the nation’s effectiveness on all levels (Greenleaf 106). In the accounts of W. H. Greenleaf and Geoffrey Russell Searle, this drive for British “efficiency” would affect the organisation of parliament, the operation of the marketplace, modes of education and town-planning as well as the bodily health of the nation’s subjects (Greenleaf 105-06). Searle insightfully ascribed this impulse as the desire for the country to be organised by “scientifically-ordered” systems (Searle 27, 101, 256). In this way, overlapping ideologies of Britishness, masculinity, and empire became engaged in the struggle to modernise and make-efficient the terrain of individual bodies. This is the context against which Sandow rose to prominence. In November 1901, a plaster-cast of his physique was displayed in the South Kensington branch of the British Museum. The *Strand* marked this occasion with an article entitled “Sandow in Plaster of Paris” which retold the painstaking story of the cast’s construction. The terms in which the article couched these events and the culture of the magazine’s presentation of the male body, open up a route to understanding the ways in which bodies became highly problematic vehicles for the grand narratives of the past. The anonymous author highlighted a series of pertinent issues that had arisen from the physical culture debate whilst, on the page, his text was supplemented by no less than twelve separate pictures of a naked or semi-naked Sandow (Figure 37) which established his physique as the realisation of the male bodily ideal. The article sought to place the *Strand*, its readers, and the people who would wish to see the cast at a very particular, mid-way point in the cultural field. Whilst some way beneath the pretentious, implicitly sedentary, high culture aesthete they were also some way above the indiscriminate, scopophilic gaze of the low culture thug. The article began:

My friend the Superior Person had been visiting the South Kensington branch of the British Museum, and he came back in high dudgeon . . . indeed, he was literally spluttering with wrath. Evidently his very superior susceptibilities had suffered a cruel outrage. (“Sandow in Plaster” 461)

The “Superior Person” is, of course, “outraged” at the presence of Sandow in the rarefied space of the British Museum. “Great Scot!” he exclaims, “what will the Museum be coming to next? A penny show with marionettes and performing dogs, I suppose” (461). The author mediates this perspective by discussing the issue with the museum’s then-curator and contributor to the *Strand*, Ray Lankester, who highlights the anthropological benefit of the cast. Sandow, he argues “presents the perfect type of a European man” and also stands as “a striking demonstration of what can be done in the way of perfecting the muscles by simple means.” “I know what popular prejudice is” continues the article sadly, “even in these enlightened days individuals still exist who regard the cultivation of the body as a thing to be frowned upon” (461). Having decried the high culture perspective, the author then resists the counter claims of low culture prurience; Lankester, according to the article “is probably the last man in the world who would be moved by considerations of what is likely merely to amuse and to gratify the idle curiosity of a certain section of the public” (462). Sandow’s body, in this light, was established as the site of a site of cultural contest. The new language of physical culture became a means of legitimising the magazine’s



Figure 37. Arthur Weston, "Taking mould of back and shoulders." Photomechanical reproduction. *Strand Magazine* 22 (Oct. 1901): 461.

own self-perception as a middle-brow publication; committed to intellectual and personal growth but not so lost to reason and simple pleasures as to join the ranks of the "superior persons."

The specifics of this new social imperative outline precisely what qualities were expected to be codedly read in the abundance of Prussian flesh on display. The Boer War and the reaction of the public and press to its failures did not necessarily help the anti-imperialist cause, instead, according to Bentley Gilbert,

the war and its aftermath turned imperialism inward and redirected its energy, its violence and its intolerance back onto England. . . . Imperialists, with the same uncompromising vigour they displayed

in the conquest of Africa, took up national service, physical training, the Boy Scouts [. . . and] most importantly . . . they adopted national efficiency. (Gilbert 61)

In 1904 the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration delivered a damning verdict on the state of Britain's "physical efficiency" in light of the South African conflict. This further cemented a connection between domestic health and military success that would later come to preoccupy Doyle. Even if we are to treat Gilbert's rather unilateral statement with scepticism regarding the wider picture of post-Boer imperialism, we can read its relevant veracity in terms of the *Strand's* depictions of maleness and masculinity. The magazine goes to great lengths to engage and palliate the dual crises of the British male body and British manliness as an ideal. By casting Sandow as an idealised figure, someone who embodied the classical proportions of Greek sculpture, the article attempted to legitimate his body as an historical artefact by aligning it with the heroic, masculine discourse of remote classicism. To answer the question of what is at stake in the portrayal of his body, we thus need to balance a confused mixture of cultural, political, artistic, scientific, and nationalistic commitments. In 1900, after his return from a three-month stint in a private military hospital in South Africa, Doyle announced his entry into the physical culture debate with two telling letters to two very different publications. In November he could be found arguing for military reform in the *Times* and, in December, for the shortening of shop-workers' hours in the less illustrious pages of the *Grocer's Assistant*. The two debates, disparate in scale, shared only the new popular language of physical culture.

[T]here is a great untapped source of military strength in that large portion of the population who would willingly learn the use of a rifle, but who are unable to join any organised body of volunteers. . . . It would be a good thing for the country that every man should be made to understand that he is not to trust to others, but to himself for protection. (Doyle, *Letters* 72–73)

The matter of shorter hours for shop assistants is one in which I take the deepest interest, believing that in a country which has no compulsory military service physique and well being of the class to which you allude can only be guaranteed by a universal adoption of short hours and frequent holidays. (Doyle, *Letters* 71)

Doyle's argument, in the first letter, was that there were many thousands of "immature" soldiers that had to be left at home and many thousands more who were unfit for combat and who lacked sufficient training to be of any use in the Transvaal. These soldiers had sucked resources away from the core of men who, alone, should have constituted the main military presence. The army's systems of training and defence were, he felt, antiquated and had been shown to be so half a century earlier in the Crimea, from which point they had evolved little further. The physical condition of the army would be improved, he continued, by halving its numbers, doubling its pay and using it "entirely for the defence of the outer empire" (73). The home islands themselves would be defended by an expanded militia, or a corps of "civilian riflemen." The inspiration for this plan had not come from any imperial force but from the Boers themselves who, over the course of the war, had won grudging respect from many domestic commentators. Doyle began his study of the war by asserting that, based on the history of their resistance to Spain, the Boers "must obviously be one of the most rugged, virile, unconquerable races ever seen upon earth" (Doyle, *Great* 1). He was not alone amongst

the British press in making them subject to a simultaneous demonization and valorisation that abjured their apparent “savagery” yet celebrated their bravery and endurance.² In this context, Doyle’s interest in the physical well-being of shop assistants seems a far more vital problem than at first glance. There was a lingering sense that the army had been given a harsh lesson in virility, manliness and bodily fortitude; this corporeal anxiety had been acquired at the scene of colonial conflict but was quickly translated to the delicately balanced hierarchies of European power.

Accordingly, in Doyle’s plans for military reform, the threats to Britain’s security were far more likely to come from rival imperial powers; when he imagined an “invading force,” it did not emanate from the colonies but from much nearer to home (Doyle, *Letters* 72). These fears of physical frailty and national vulnerability were banished in the Sandow article by the invocation of his physique as a kind of fetish, an ego-ideal that allowed Britain to fantasise its own strength as a cultural and artistic and militaristic combatant. This may seem odd, given that Sandow (a Prussian) would seem to be representative of a rival imperial power and, as a consequence, someone to be feared rather than venerated. Despite Sandow’s gestures towards universalism and his adoption of British citizenship, this proved to be the case elsewhere (Plock 33–35), but not in the *Strand*.³ Nevertheless, his body, because of its unusual development, was capable of shouldering these expectations. Problems arose, however, when the *Strand* attempted to translate the masculine ideal onto “every-day” British bodies. This attempt was played out across two linked but distinct plains: the domestic social scene and the site of imperial conflict. Discussion of the former inevitably lead towards the latter and it is there that we begin to discover how the new efficiency-imperative began to be employed as a discursive and rhetorical technique.

Discourse on physical health was, of course, not initiated by the Boer War (indeed, Anson Rabinbach has traced it back to the thirteenth-century⁴) and, accordingly, the domestic fiction of the *Strand* had placed a strong emphasis on the well-being of its protagonists since 1891. Smith had overseen the magazine’s transition away from translated short stories from heavyweight European authors (Alphonse Daudet, Alexandre Dumas, Paul Heyse, Voltaire, and Michael Lermontoff all featured in the first three issues). Over time, the magazine instead identified several genres (the adventure romance, the engagement plot, the detective story, the evil influence narrative, the children’s fairytale, and so on) that could easily be produced domestically and which could be relied upon to recurrently represent the same “apprenticeships,” in Lyotard’s terms. The pattern for the elementary oppositions that characterised these fictions was established by Doyle’s story “The Voice of Science” which appeared anonymously in March 1891. In the story, an erect, upstanding, sportsman (Rupert Esdaille) saves his sister from the attentions of a slumped, lascivious, emotional villain named Beesly who attempts to conceal the libidinous excesses of his past (Figures 38 and 39). This elementary opposition of body types became endemic to the magazine’s representation of the male form; its best and worst selves. One does not need solely to use world events to explain the *Strand*’s emphasis on the healthy male form. It is fairly evident that any self-respecting, popular, middle-brow writer of fiction would not have chosen to present a corpulent, degenerate sex-addict as the hero of a courtship narrative for the simple reason that such a character would instinctively repel the intended audience. The *Strand*’s success was buttressed by a constant running dialogue with its readers that gauged their tastes and predilections. Later in his life, Smith would edit a collection of interviews



Figure 38. After W. S. Stacey, "I won't stay here and hear him slandered." Illustration from *Strand Magazine* 1 (Jan. 1891): 314.

with popular writers called *What I Think* (1925) in which the now-forgotten Ian Hay made the observation that

Most authors cherish a dream of breaking away one day from routine and writing something immortal. . . . But they never do. The reason is that their readers will not allow it. Your steady reader does not like his oats changed. Once he has decided what you are – a realist, a feminist, or a humorist, or what not – he sees to it that you remain humbly and reverently in that station to which *Vox Populi* has appointed you. (Smith 135–36)

This attitude was endemic to the *Strand's* editorial culture and had been since 1891. In her 1911 biography of the *Strand's* proprietor and first editor, George Newnes, Hulda Friedrichs repeatedly emphasised the extent to which the magnate's commercial success was based upon his studious attention to his readers' likes and dislikes (Friedrichs 109, 129). The reoccurrence of particular tropes and the orientation of the magazine's fiction was therefore not accidental or the result of a happy coincidence. They derived instead from the establishment of a



Figure 39. After W. S. Stacey, "Call me Charles. Do now." Illustration from *Strand Magazine* 1 (Jan. 1891): 315.

particular kind of culture within the organisation that included the editors, the proprietor, the authors and, centrally, the reader (see Jackson 1996). This point having been established, it is interesting to note the subtle changes that can be detected in the magazine's representation of male bodies. The key development in this regard lay in a new emphasis on its association with empire. This association was not exactly unheard of in the *Strand* before the Boer War, but dozens of courtship romances in the magazine's first few years depict "healthy," "manly" heroes without making this connotative leap between individual and national bodies. Doyle, however, had made this connection consistently although in later Sherlock Holmes stories, it was narrated far more explicitly. Two comparable figures in this context are Hall Pycroft in

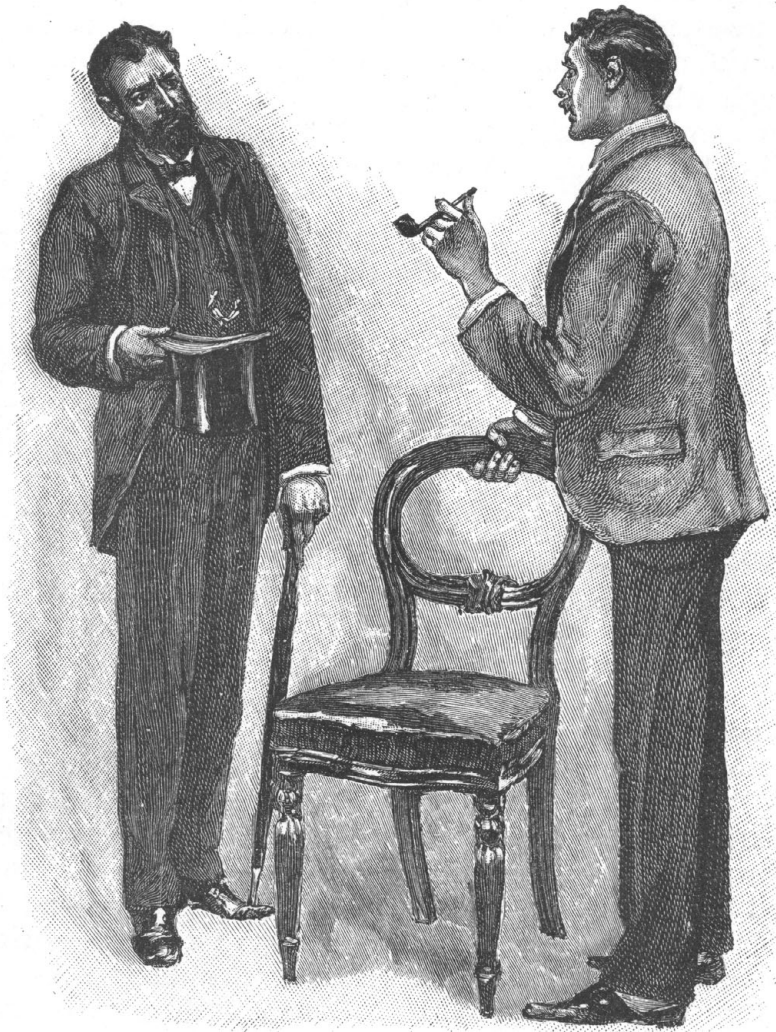


Figure 40. After Sidney Paget, “‘Mr. Hall Pycroft, I believe?’ said he.” Illustration from *Strand Magazine* 5 (Jan. 1893): 283.

“The Stockbroker’s Clerk” (1893) and Gilchrist in “The Three Students” (1904). Despite the former being the “client” and the latter the “villain” of their stories, they are both sportsmen who represent the ethical reliability of that code. They also highlight the strong, mutually reinforced connection between sporting and imperial values. Pycroft is described by Watson and depicted by Sidney Paget (Figure 40) in the following terms:

[Pycroft] was a well-built, fresh-complexioned young fellow, with a frank, honest face and a slight, crisp, yellow moustache . . . a smart young City man, of the class who have been labelled cockneys,

but who give us our crack volunteer regiments, and who turn out more fine athletes and sportsmen than any body of men in these islands. (Doyle, *Holmes* 1: 496)

Pycroft's complaint to Holmes transpires to be the result of a murderous plot to rob a bank by impersonating him (it echoes the more famous "Red-Headed League" [1891] in a number of ways). The language used to describe him is the key interest here: his sportsman's physique suggests, to Watson's practiced eye, the imperial value of such men. This connection recalls Conan Doyle's angry letter to the *Spectator* in May 1901 when he learned that, while fighting still continued in South Africa, a Springbok cricket team intended to tour England. He claimed the following:

It is a stain on their manhood that they are not out with rifles in their hands driving the invader from their country. They leave this to others whilst they play games. . . . The only excuse for a game is that it keeps a man fit for the serious duties of life. (Doyle, *Letters* 81)

The implied understanding of sport as a healthy, domestic arena for the enactment of chivalry and heroism is made explicit here and the moral background of his Sherlock Holmes stories accordingly mirrors this. Watson is the key example of someone who nurtured dual passions for both sporting and soldiering. He fought in the second Afghan War and, in civilian life, maintained a fine sporting instinct. Repeated references to his "service revolver" called attention to this soldierly aspect of his nature.⁵ He responds well to sportsmen because they tend to share in the idea that a fine physique indivisibly embodies both sporting and imperial ethics. Gilchrist, unlike Pycroft, is nominally the "villain" of "The Three Students." Holmes is contacted by a university professor, Soames, whose preparations for an important exam have been thrown into disarray by an apparent attempt to steal a look at the question paper. The destination of an important scholarship depends upon the exam and the suspicion falls on the titular academics who share the building with Soames. Watson describes him much as Sidney Paget depicts him (Figure 41):

[Gilchrist, according to Soames,] is a fine scholar and athlete; plays in the rugby team and cricket team for the college, and got his blue for the hurdles and the long jump. He is a fine, manly fellow.

[Watson later describes him as] a fine figure of a man, tall, lithe and agile, with a springy step and a pleasing, open face. (Doyle *Holmes* 1: 832–34)

Gilchrist's "crime" was prompted by his family's impoverishment at the hands of his dissipated father, a situation which placed undue importance upon him winning the scholarship. Holmes shares Watson's obvious admiration for the boy and their estimation is rewarded by evidence that Gilchrist suffered an attack of conscience and decided not to sit the exam. Instead, he avows his intention to take up a commission in the Rhodesian Police. This denouement satisfies all participants in the story and this satisfaction is predicated upon the same connection detailed above. Namely, that although Gilchrist is, in Holmes's words, "not a callous criminal," he is guilty of violating certain behavioural codes which his putative imperial service will amend. Holmes tells him, in conclusion, "you have fallen low, let us see, in the future, how high you can rise" (841). This sentiment contains an explicit assertion of the translatability of the two ethical codes; deficiencies and misappropriations



Figure 41. After Sidney Paget, “An instant later the tutor returned, bringing with him the student.” Illustration from *Strand Magazine* 27 (June, 1904): 611.

in the domestic arena may be amply repaid and balanced by exertions at the outer edge of empire. The illustrations reproduced here are not decorative; they suggest a visual genealogy of masculinity in the *Strand's* images. The illustrations assert these sporting figures as “apprentice” Watsons and they reproduce that character’s simplicity, genuineness and good health. Since Watson narrates the stories we can assume that it is he who maintains this physical economy of representation. These stories and the way they project deliberately military, imperial and sporting inscriptions onto the male body recall Lyotard’s distinction between small and grand narratives. The characters function as synecdochic embodiments of ideals drawn from grander, totalising narratives. This dynamic is simple and familiar to any reader of Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* where he examines the different ways in which fragments of the grand narrative of imperialism were refracted in different ways through domestic fiction (Said 80–97).

In broader terms, the magazine naturally endorsed Doyle’s suggestions for military reform with articles such as 1901’s ‘The New Musketry Practice at Aldershot’ which painted him as “the pioneer of civilian rifle clubs,” “the oracle of modern warfare” and suggested

that his model would now be adopted by the “regulars” (Broadwell 777). This backed up earlier articles where Doyle was able lay out his manifesto more clearly, 1901 also saw the publication of an interview where he suggested that it was “as important for a boy to learn to handle a rifle as to learn to swim” (Trevor 635). These articles and stories speak of a necessity to re-draw cultural boundaries to more masculine dimensions and, in doing so, exculpate and occlude the “feminised” cultural domains which were frequently linked to physical and moral weakness. The *Strand* was particularly adept at performing this task for several reasons. It repeatedly featured a core group of popular masculine fiction writers on its pages including H. Rider Haggard, Charles J. Mansford, and Grant Allen alongside Doyle and a host of less well-remembered names. It also prided itself on the high number of illustrations and images with which all of its items were decorated; this had the effect of saturating the *Strand's* fiction with textual and imagistic references to past depictions of bravery and manliness. This impression was imprinted so strongly throughout the Boer War period that it endured (with no serious interruption) long into the twentieth century. Because of this overbearing series of commitments, time spent in performing a close reading of the first two decades of the *Strand's* fiction does not inculcate a love of literature; the tedious, incessant reproduction of characters, plots, and situations demands endurance rather than enjoyment.

Nevertheless, even against this backdrop of disaffection, Austen Philips's 1913 story “The Boy Who Read Kipling” shines like a beacon as the absolute nadir of its type. Despite occurring twelve years after the death of Victoria and eleven years after the end of the Boer War, it relentlessly redeploys the same language and images as noted previously. The story emphasises the degree to which representations of the male body had become overdetermined by the competing expectations imposed upon it. The hero of Philips's narrative is a young cricketer and bank clerk, Harry Bassett who regularly wins county cricket games single-handedly but who is “too blooming modest” to take the acclaim of his baying fans (Philips 646) (Figure 42). Bassett is confronted by a moral dilemma: his girlfriend, Joyce Calvert, is threatening to flee to Switzerland to get away from her dissolute father and his lascivious gambling cronies. Harry, a man of modest means, is unable to propose marriage. In low spirits he consults with his widowed, middle-aged, platonic patroness Mrs Hussingtree who advises him to go to his bank's general manager, Mr Gordon, and ask for the managership of his own branch. Harry buoys himself for this act of bravado by rereading one of his many volumes of Kipling which reassuringly suggests that “fellows . . . get on” through acts of courage and personal dynamism. Ultimately, Harry gets what he wants from his “Kipling-begotten scheme” (650). Mr Gordon proves to be an ardent sportsman and Kipling fan and their meeting descends to frenzy as they recite “If” to each other. What is of interest, firstly, is the diction used to mark out Harry, Joyce, and Gordon's characters. Harry, “that apotheosis of youth in the temple of cricket” is “bronzed and tall” having ripened “out of spotty hobbledehoyhood into striking handsomeness” and “from tall ungainliness into magnificent manhood” (648). He is frugal in his habits, austere in his sense of decor and rigid in his literary tastes. Joyce is also, by nature, a picture of “normal, clean good-healthiness” though the narrator laments the physical state to which “she, the healthiest and most athletic of girls, had been driven by her father” (649–52). Harry's late-blooming body lifts him beyond the sedentary tendencies of modern life and the means by which he achieves this transcendence is figured as a combination of excessive Kipling reading, playing cricket, a pointedly asexual courtship of Joyce, drinking milk and prayer. On noting this last detail the narrator defensively



Figure 42. After W. Dewar, “Mrs. Hussingtree looked at him, saw his graveness, and turned towards the house. ‘It’s Joyce, Harry?’ she questioned.” Illustration from *Strand Magazine* 43 (Sep. 1912): 649.

remarks of Harry that “he was not a ‘modern’ and who breaks a lance for his lady is stayed, not shamed by prayer.” His un-modernity is symbolised by his explicit commitment to the grand chivalric and religious narratives that are invoked frequently throughout the story and which constitute the principle opposing tropes to “the modern.” This represents a conscious attempt to locate Harry’s body as a historical object that has outlasted the epoch from which

it draws its sources of inspiration; his body is a vessel fitted to preserve and embody the persistence of the chivalric Victorian spirit in the new century. It is thus fitted (against the exigencies of modern life that Doyle wrote about to the *Grocer's Assistant*) with the physical strength to excel at cricket and the moral strength to defend his country should it need him: he is “not less but more knight-errant for the teachings of outdoor games” (649). Anxieties over the average body’s ability to withstand the modern world were common in the *Strand*. A year before the publication of “The Boy who Read Kipling” Sandow contributed to the “My Reminiscences” section of the magazine and traced the birth of his interest in physical culture to a conversation between his father and his “delicate” and “frail” ten-year-old self:

‘The heroes of old, my little Eugen,’ he said, ‘never lolled at ease in a carriage or a railway train. Either they walked or rode on horse-back. Thus they were ever active, ever exercising their bodies. But nowadays,’ he went on, ‘the brain is cultivated and the body neglected . . . the result of it being world-wide degeneration of health and strength.’ (Sandow, Reminiscences 145)

Harry’s physique thus embodies a fantasised response to these social and political conditions. He is not the idealised superman that Sandow was presented as; instead he is something much more valuable to the *Strand*, the “everyday man” who has triumphed in his struggle against wasting tendencies of late-modernity to preserve his fitness. The second point of interest in the story does not lie in the bare physicality of his achievement, but in its cultural dimension. The appeal to Kipling as an august standard of moral, manly conduct in both everyday social affairs and imperial conduct is one that Said would later retrace through the passage in *Culture and Imperialism* that deals with the late Victorian rediscovery of the quest romance (Ch. 2, v). Through an analysis of Kipling’s *Kim* Said examines the same link between imperial strength, bodily health, and moral certitude. As direct evidence of the culturally embedded nature of Kipling’s work, imperial values and domestic ideas of Englishness, “The Boy Who Read Kipling” is a smoking gun. Said writes that the “tragically, or sometimes comically blocked protagonists” of realist fiction become gradually substituted with “an alternative – not only in the novel of frank exoticism and confident empire, but travel narratives, works of colonial exploration and scholarship . . . we discern a new narrative progression and triumphalism” (Said 226–27). It is this “triumphalism” that stimulates Basset; the kind of morally and politically secured narrative space where, inevitably, “[e]xplorers find what they are looking for” and “adventurers return home safe and wealthier” (227). Said balances these narratives against the simultaneous birth of modernism in Conrad and Camus which “radiate . . . an extreme, unsettling anxiety,” the same quality in fact, so explicitly abhorred by H. Greenhough Smith. Harry represents the point at which every valorised quality becomes embodied: physically developed, handsome, ethically principled within strict and clearly delineated boundaries, ascetic as regards stimulants and sex but alive to the pleasures of sport as a training ground for imperial conflict. The story does not just unite Joyce and Harry, but also Mrs Hussingtree and Mr Gordon, who, it transpires, she rejected when the two were young. This rejection has tormented Hussingtree ever since. Her motivation for the rejection was that she was “tricked by her mothering instinct” into marrying a “consumptive” whom she nursed lovingly till “death” (Philips 654). This incessant melding of a health/sickness binary into the story’s fabric persists even to Harry’s new job in a place called Budley; the outgoing manager he is to replace “was weak – exceedingly weak” and the “thoroughly bad office . . . needs a young, vigorous and, above all, popular man” to take his place (655). In

short, the only way for the fantasy male body to be preserved was in bad, written-to-order genre fiction, something that the *Strand*, despite occasionally publishing authors of real talent, was perfectly able to produce.

It is crucial to establish the nature of these domestic depictions before turning to the articles that explicitly discuss war and which provide the second constituent part of this domestic/imperial dialectic. The writing of these pieces makes more direct appeals to traditions, tropes and totems which are held to be immutable. These appeals are interesting in this context because their deployment is complicated by a concomitant attempt to depict the armed forces as “efficient,” “mechanistic,” and “modern.” It was this deadlock that necessitated the emphasis upon the image of the chivalric machine. The symbolic bodies that populated the fiction and non-fiction of the magazine’s Boer War canon became ambivalent figures, incapable of supporting these two contradictory impulses and this suggests a fundamental instability in the *Strand*’s ideology. If we observe how this complicated relationship was played out on the page then this rather abstract theorising should fall into clearer focus. Two articles, 1900’s “The Rank-and-File of the British Navy” and a 1913 “symposium” “If Britain Disarmed” elaborate the first part of this interaction with their appeals to grand narratives. “If Britain Disarmed” weighs up the financial pros and cons of disbanding the armed forces. The issue turns on how the contributors construe the whole notion of war, the anonymous author of the article mediates by wondering “[i]s war an unmitigated evil? Is the maintenance of gigantic armaments without a correspondent benefit to the community? Able Historians have alleged, indeed, that war is as necessary to a high type of civilisation as religion or literature” (414). This view comes to predominate (though not without challenge), particularly when voiced by the thriller writer E. Phillips Oppenheim who opined

The nation which ceases to breed warriors and sailors will be a nation without vital impulses. . . . I find nothing terrible in war. . . . War has been the subjective inspiration of art, simply because it has thrown onto the great canvas of life living examples of chivalry, heroism, patriotism and endurance. War has been the wholesome and stimulating corrective to a stultifying and narrowing commercialism. (“If Britain Disarmed” 416)

These appeals to “heroism,” “patriotism,” and “chivalry” are interesting not just in themselves as calls toward “traditional” ideals but also in the way they are wielded as guards against the now familiar threat of modernity, as conjured variously by Doyle, Sandow, and Philips. These grand narratives derive their power in the *Strand*’s ideology because of their supposed immutability; they inscribe themselves into monumentality by transcending the hum-drum, everyday life. In this way the *Strand* sets itself up as a magazine against the modern but whilst we can clearly read this desire in “If Britain Disarmed,” “The Rank-and-File of the British Navy” presents the second part of this doubled idea by valorising the efficiency and modernity of the navy. The article makes no attempt to disguise its aim to serve as a recruitment tool that would, “in the new patriotic spirit of militarism that the nation is exhibiting,” “appeal to the mothers of the Empire who hesitate to trust their sons to the fancied perils of a sea career” (Beresford 379). The article picks out the various career paths that a young “bluejacket” recruit could follow. The development of the boys is charted in the now familiar language of physical culture. “[S]turdy” boys who want to “try their fortunes on the sea” become “well-filled-out young men” at eighteen, then blossom into “splendid specimen[s] of British

manhood” and, finally, can expect to retire the service at “the age of forty, a young man, in the prime of life and in the best of health” (371–74). This physical education is played out on the same “canvas of life” that Oppenheim described. The navy offers “the lads of the British Empire” the opportunity “to sail under the same flag which floated over Drake and Nelson” (379). According to the article, this naval tradition, and its attendant prospects for heroism, courage and patriotism is enhanced rather than dimmed by technological advances since the days of Trafalgar: “If the old seaman . . . could come back to revisit the British Navy, nothing would astonish them more than the engine room on board a modern man-of-war” (375–76). The article explains that what the Navy most needs now are engineers rather than warriors but despite having “none of the fun of the fight” the engine-room will nevertheless “be made of the stuff of heroes” (376). This passage marks the first intersection of two ideas of warfare: the chivalric and the modern. The depiction of the navy seeks to project this doubled perspective of a service subject to increased mechanisation and “efficiency” (the word is used four times in the article) yet still investing its men with the ability to embody the same traditions listed by Oppenheim. The article’s relentless focus of career paths, wages, ranks and pensions, however, suggests that the organisation under discussion is much more like an industry than (as “If Britain Disarmed” puts it) “the good old days” where “a man had only to shoulder his arquebus or his pike and be off to the wars” (414).

The tension between chivalric and mechanistic models of warfare would prove to be one of the most important in twentieth and twenty-first century combat. In *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (1991), the theorist Manuel Delanda launched a large-scale interrogation of the historical relationship between society, science, and warfare. He describes a contest between two models of warfare: the “sedentary,” column or phalanx-based formations of land-holding, imperial powers and the “nomadic . . . flexible tactical doctrine” of the Asiatic armies that “invaded Europe in the thirteenth-century” (11, 113). The triumph of the “sedentary” model was partly precipitated by the incipient structures of capitalism that facilitated the faster development and deployment first of artillery and then of hand-weapons. The development of weapons technology gradually stripped the “act” of trigger-pulling of all connotations of “artisanship” and “heuristic knowledge” (132). The overarching project of military science, Delanda suggests, had the effect of gradually developing means by which human beings could be taken “out of the decision-making loop” (43). This project derives from the European classical ideal of a de-personalised, massed battle formation (as with the Roman phalanx) and is moving, according to Delanda, towards a fully computerised, human-independent mode of conflict. Whether these predictions are correct or not, the historical background to his argument is compellingly relevant to the *Strand*’s rhetorical conflation of classical, medieval and modern warfare. Principally Delanda discusses a subject familiar to Doyle: the process by which “sedentary” European armies had to learn to adopt the “nomadic” tactics of their opponents during colonial warfare in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries (13). It is in these conflicts that many of the *Strand*’s explicit models of heroism are found and it will be useful to now examine some of those references in the context of Delanda’s observations and the general context established by “If Britain Disarmed” and “The Rank and File of the British Navy.” Those articles suggested that the whole business of warfare was being modernised, professionalised, and commercialised and that, in themselves, these developments were beneficial because the fundamental “value” of war (that everyday men can inscribe themselves, through heroism, into history) remained achievable. Using Delanda’s model of scientific and military development, it is interesting that the “grand canvas of

life” is populated principally by men who fought during engagements (colonial wars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) that necessitated the partial abandonment of the modernising, military-industrial impulse and relied instead upon the more bodily virtues that harmonised with the projection of a chivalric past. From the millennial vantage point of such theorists as Delanda and, later, Graham Dawson (1994), the necessary conditions for such a relationship were a historical quirk peculiar to the nuances of colonial combat that would soon be rendered obsolete. This imminent obsolescence, I would argue, adds another dimension to the uncertainty that coloured reactions to the war and added an extra incentive to repress the uncomfortable inconsistencies in the chivalric machine dialectic.

During the war, the *Strand* published six articles that dealt explicitly with events relating to it: “The Flags of Our Forces at the Front” (1900), “Tommy on a Transport” (1900), “Pigeons as Messengers of War” (1900), “Deeds of Daring and Devotion in the War” (1900) and the aforementioned Doyle article “A Glimpse of the Army” (1900). In these articles the ideological goal was the same as that of “If Britain Disarmed” and “The Rank-and-File of the British Navy”: the projection of a modern, mechanised army that still fostered the capacity for heroism. Doyle was one of the most vocal critics of the “old-fashioned” army that was initially sent to the Transvaal and he expands bitterly on this subject in his article:

Who can stop this army now . . . ? It makes one’s heart bleed to think of the deaths and the mutilations and (worse than either) the humiliations which have come from our rotten military system, which has devoted years to teaching men to walk in step and hours to teaching them to use their weapons. (Doyle, “Glimpse” 345)

Humiliation is worse than death or mutilation for Doyle because it contradicts the grand ideal of chivalry which is either to die or succeed in combat. The best guard against this kind of embarrassment is articulated later in the article. Under a mortar assault he observes that the operators of a gun-battery “might have been parts of an automated machine” (350). Elsewhere the magazine supports the idea that the army’s failures occurred where this mechanistic imperative was disregarded. “Pigeons as Messengers of War” for example, bemoans the lack of an adequate communications network in South Africa and highlights the Army’s unpreparedness for modern combat: “How invaluable in the same manner might pigeons have been to those gallant fellows at Nicholson’s Nek”? (Osman 163)⁶ The wording is crucial here, the “gallant” soldiers are betrayed by the inefficient army network around them. Elsewhere in his article, Doyle examines the deployment of infantry troops, “[I]ook at the scouts and the flankers – we should not have advanced like that six months ago. It is not our additional numbers so much as our new warcraft which makes us irresistible” (Doyle, “Glimpse” 346). The army’s advances were, for Doyle, solely predicated upon a new ability to balance the resourcefulness and bravery of the individual soldier with the bludgeoning power of the massed phalanx:

The lonely hero is the man to be admired. It is easy to be collectively brave. A man with any sense of proportion feels himself to be such a mite in the presence of the making of history that his own . . . welfare seems for the moment too insignificant to think of. The unit is lost in the mass. (350)

Doyle provides first-hand evidence of the kinds of military-industrial accommodations discussed by Delanda a hundred years later and displays utter faith in the compatibility

between individual heroism and mass, scientifically-informed efficiency. However, cracks begin to appear in this happy ideological conflation when individual bodies are depicted in these articles.

“Tommy on a Transport” details the passage of British troops to the Cape on chartered liners by soliciting interviews with the ships’ captains. When asked for their opinions on “Thomas Atkins,” responses include suggestions that “the typical British private is a great, overgrown “kid,” a man arrested in development and turned into a machine” (Story, “Tommy” 417). The rest of the article discusses the various ways in which the troops were kept fit and fed on the voyage. “Physical drills” prevented them from becoming “soft and flabby” or “going to waste” and instead rendered them “hard and fit” (417, 421). This mechanistic fitness is set up as a warning contrast to civilian life. “After years of peace and prosperity a time of stress and storm is coming once again for England” notes “The Flags of Our Forces at the Front,” adding that there is a “need to see that as a nation we have not degenerated through our long enjoyment of peace” (Osborn 259). When viewed in isolation, this line of argument can seem to be a simple hymn to the protection that the army offers to the settled, domestic scene. In the context of the *Strand*’s deep involvement with the physical culture debate, though, these soldierly bodies represent a realisation of domestic strength and a source of unimpeachable models of manly behaviour. The diction and phrasing of these articles is crucial because through the familiar network of allusions and omissions they attempt to carve a strong ideological meaning out of the events in South Africa. Whilst this meaning is relatively simple, it is not elementary and is designed to transfer the associated anxieties into a proleptic fantasy that can endure into the new century. For example, the war is not represented as wholly good and neither are the soldiers but, crucially, the war acts as a kind of theatre that enabled the soldiers to enact their best selves. They are able to capitalise upon the reserves of imperial energy that a healthy, domestic life has afforded them. Moreover, it acted as a lens through which veiled criticisms of “the modern” could be mounted by casting it as a cause of “degeneration,” “peace-softening,” and moral weakness. In fiction like “The Boy Who Read Kipling” these ideas can be simply and uncomplicatedly embodied in characters like Harry Bassett. Bassett can be shaped any way his author wishes; he can be shorn of any kind of complexity or contradictions to make him fit an ideological mould; the story’s illustrations were able to conjure his image to these exacting specifications. The problem that faces the non-fiction articles is that such a burden must be placed on real figures and that the processes of visualisation must be fulfilled as much by photography as by illustration. To illustrate these articles the *Strand* had to find a way of visually representing the “chivalric machine” dialectic. Because the articles tended to be nominally located around some ephemera (pigeons, flags, transport ships, and so on) many of the articles avoided this representation dilemma by prioritising the depiction of these inanimate objects. “Pigeons as Messengers of War,” for example, features a series of illustrations of pigeon lofts and “Tommy on a Transport” focuses entirely on portrait shots of the Transport captains, rather than Thomas Atkins himself. “Deeds of Daring and Devotion in the War,” however, attempts to directly depict events and combatants from the conflict. The writer, Alfred Story, picks out notable narratives that have made domestic headlines and attributes special notice to them. It does this by suggesting that their relevance lies in their tapping into a grand national narrative: “To read the daily papers is like being at a school of heroism. . . . Britain’s sons [are] emulat[ing] the traditional hardihood and the traditional devotion. . . . These [deeds] will ever stand, like a piece of antique sculpture adorning the frieze of Time’s temple of valour” (Story,

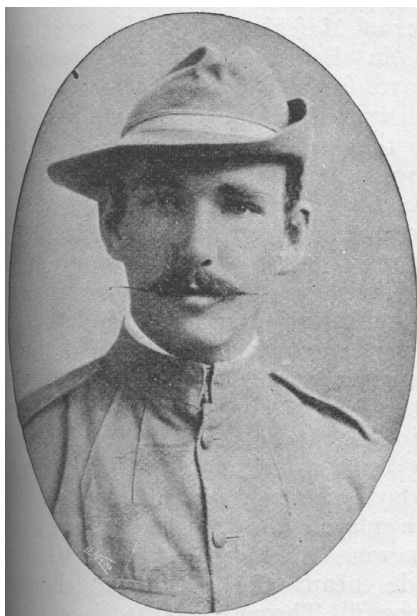


Figure 43. “Trooper Clifford Turpin.” Photomechanical reproduction. *Strand Magazine* 20 (Aug. 1900): 155.

“Deeds” 153, 158). The bravery displayed in the field, then, becomes the means of inscribing one’s name and deeds onto a historical monument, covered already with the deeds of the past. Here we see Lyotard’s connection between “writing” and “grand narratives” enacted; an overriding, confluent text is augmented by the appearance of smaller, localised narratives that graft tropes and figures from the “grand” narrative in an appeal for legitimacy. However, because the article describes real people and real events, it has to translate these techniques into an appropriate visual language in its appended photographs.

In the handsome face of Trooper Clifford Turpin (Figure 43) and the story of his promotion to Sergeant, the relationship between text and image is relatively straightforward. Turpin was carrying his wounded colonel to safety when the officer was finished off by “a bullet through the brain” (153). This prompted him to single-handedly attack and seize a Boer gun emplacement; the story is tied off neatly by a conclusion stating that “for his gallantry Turpin was promoted . . . and his name was mentioned in dispatches” (153). The relation of Turpin’s actions, both officially in dispatches and unofficially by his appearance in the *Strand* reinforce his bravery. His reward, in a sense, is to gain entry into the symbolic record of events which confers upon him the legitimating “traditions” of heroic discourse. The photograph is simple; a medium-shot with no background and the image is thus purified, freed from any external associations other than that which the text provides. The story is too brief to contain any detail that might obstruct the clear delineation of the narrative; the man and his actions were “gallant” and so he appears in the photograph. A different story from the same article provides a contrast to this arrangement. The story of Sergeant Boseley is even briefer than Turpin’s: “Nor should one forget Sergeant Boseley who, fighting his gun

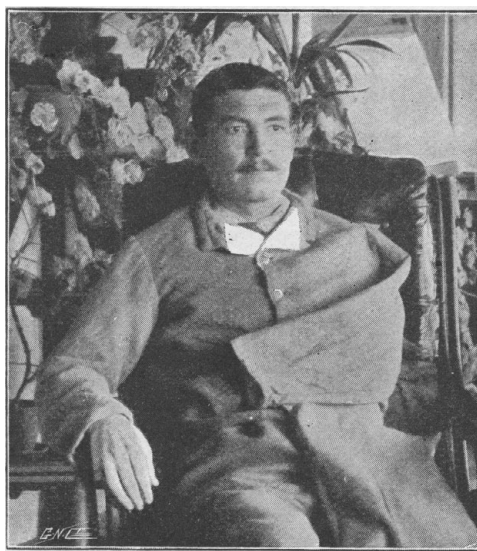


Figure 44. “Sergeant Boseley.” Photomechanical reproduction. *Strand Magazine* 20 (Aug. 1900): 156.

on that eventful day, and having an arm and a leg taken off, bade his men ‘Roll me away and go on with the firing’” (Story, “Deeds” 160).⁷

The picture of Boseley (Figure 44) is different from that of Turpin, Boseley appears older and is shown seated in an armchair, with an empty sleeve and an empty trouser leg. Unlike Turpin, his gaze is not directed fully at the camera but at an angle away from it. A small desk and several pot-plants are visible in the background. The strict harmony between text and image is disrupted by these differences in several ways. Turpin’s direct gaze at the camera implies a level of simplicity. His gaze meets that of the reader just as his qualities and his body meet the expectations and desires that the text establish. Because Boseley is looking out of frame he appears to be contemplating something beyond this dialogic relation.⁸ The domestic furnishings around him auger his civilian future and suggest the stunting, rather than the fulfilment of a man’s potential by war. As a body mutilated in conflict Boseley represents the fruition of imperial anxiety: the discomposed body. Even his famous exhortation to “Roll me away” (reported in several Boer War histories⁹) suggests a corporeality that changes him from active participant to a mere bodily presence or, indeed, to an impediment. Boseley is not an anti-imperial figure or a cautionary tale; he was rewarded with the medal of honour for his act of bravery and was no doubt pleased to see it recorded so vociferously in the press. As such, the question is not one of establishing imperial and anti-imperial poles around which to cluster these figures and ideas. The question is rather, with as much respect as possible for the real, quotidian Boseley, to separate him from the figure that exists as a construct of text and image on the pages of the *Strand*. Here, as a construct, it is possible to see where the ideological slippage between word and body occurs. The *Strand*-Boseley is an imperfect agent for the magazine’s ideas when compared to the *Strand*-Turpin; the compositional language of his bodily representation leaves open-ended

questions unanswered by the text. The reader may wonder what Boseley is looking at, where he is and what his life will lead to after his recovery. Uncertainty is the enemy of many ideas in the *Strand* and uncertainty (or at least ambivalence) results from the Boseley picture. It is an example of how ideas, projected clearly (though not without considerable manoeuvring) in text, can be undermined by the body asked to carry the idea and also begins to suggest why photographs prove far less reliable than illustrations at providing the magazine with embodiments.

Photographs in the *Strand* fall into three categories: “portraits,” where a subject or subjects pose specifically for the photo, removed from the everyday environment of their lives; “scenes,” where subjects are depicted as if the camera was not there, going about their business; and “exhibits” where things are depicted in isolation. Of course, in reality, the “scenes” are as stage-managed as much as the portraits. For all the pictures of soldiers going about their daily duties, there are no photos of them directly engaged in combat because the event would be too live and confused to be appropriately contained within a decipherable image, especially given the lengthy exposure times demanded by turn-of-the-century technology (Lund 7). The *Strand’s* dependence on stage-managed images is interesting because it suggests that there is a compositional language at work in their construction. This language is comparable to the lexicon of the articles but has different parameters. For example, “Deeds of Daring. . .” can describe desperate battles and heroic mutilations but the photos, in embodying the participants, invariably do so in “portrait,” removed from the scene that is happily and boisterously described in text. The route to understanding this disparity lies in the same problem that has coloured this discussion throughout, the terms of the *Strand’s* representation of narratives and characters (fictional and non-fictional) are too heavily conditional, too dependent upon slotting them into the exigencies of a rigid world-view and ethical code. This code, in such instances as “The Boy Who Read Kipling,” contains an implicit opposition to “the modern” in favour of swearing allegiance to grand militaristic and chivalric ideals. This is too complicated a contradiction to simply contain within any visual language that is not highly controlled and artificial. It is for this reason that, in attempting to analyse the ideology surrounding male body-gazing at the turn of the century, the illustrative and photographic components of popular culture magazines gives them a radically different role from, say, poets or novelists.

The *Strand Magazine* thus offers an intriguing perspective on the historical significance of the Second Boer War. Military failure or underperformance was nothing new but, when combined with an awareness of the onset of widespread commercialism, the modernisation of warfare and the emergence of literary modernism, it became the occasion to desperately imagine a conflation of the traditional and the modern. This dialectical fantasy (which I have called the chivalric machine) would become the vehicle through which to preserve the traditional forms of chivalry and heroism that had been such an important part of Victorian discourses of manliness (see Tosh 1999, Dowling 2001, and Barsham 2000). These articles and stories display a horribly discomfited consciousness as regards the imminent passing of the epoch upon which their ideological foundations were built. In these few short years, we find this image deployed repeatedly and with increased fervour simply because, despite its manifest inconsistencies, so much historical certainty was invested into it. The male body became the chosen site through which to project a highly selective vision of modernity where the *Strand* could pick and choose which elements would not contradict the grand ideals that it venerated. What we see during the Boer War period, then, is a realisation that the figures

and tropes drawn from the simplest echelon of Victorian masculinity have to be upgraded. The *Strand's* continued popularity (it advanced long into the twentieth century with its eyes firmly fixed upon the past) suggests that it presents us with a lengthy series of transitional texts that consciously attempt to re-map the figures of tropes of the nineteenth century for a new cultural *milieu*. The resultant formula for preserving nineteenth-century values might seem insubstantial but allowed the magazine to continue until 1950 catering for successive generations of twentieth-century Victorians.

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NOTES

1. In September 1901 the two men sat together in judgement on a contest at the Royal Albert Hall, to find the British man with the finest physique. Andrew Lycett notes that the winner, William Murray of Nottingham, was presented with a "solid gold" statue of Sandow with the proceeds of the tickets being donated to the Lord Mayor's Transvaal War Fund (Lycett 270).
2. "London journalists invariably presented the Boers as primitive and backwards, isolated rural people . . . whose defeat by the superior civilisation of the British was an inevitable result of social Darwinism. . . . But the reporting of events on the front soon became more balanced. There arose growing admiration . . ." (Morgan 5).
3. Another reason for *The Strand's* equanimity could have been its extreme reluctance to identify the Germans as a genuine threat to peace. As late as 1912, the magazine published a profile of Kaiser Wilhelm II arguing that he was the victim of popular prejudice and that he represented Europe's "best hope for peace" ('Kaiser' 257).
4. He writes that "[i]n early modern Europe the noble figure of work was constantly threatened by the subversive figure of idleness" (Rabinbach 25). "Fatigue," symptomatic of "the body's intractable resistance to unlimited progress and productivity . . . became the permanent nemesis of an industrializing Europe" (4). Taking an even longer view, the discourse can be traced to Juvenal's observation in his *Satire* on "The Decay of Feminine Virtue" that "[n]ow the ills of long peace afflict us: luxury, a more deadly incubus than warfare, avenges the world we subdued" (Juvenal 43).
5. References to Watson's "service" or "army" "revolver" occur in, amongst other stories, "The Red-Headed League" (1891), "The Speckled Band" (1892), "The Copper Beeches" (1892) and "Thor Bridge" (1922).
6. Nicholson's Nek was one of the "humiliations" that Doyle mentioned. In October, 1899, a combination of poor judgement and bad communication during the siege of Ladysmith meant that a substantial British force was left isolated on the summit of Tchengula Hill and mercilessly exposed to enemy fire as it watched the bulk of the British force retreat before it. The chastening result was that eight hundred British soldiers were captured. This point is not intended to suggest that a pigeon loft is a gleaming beacon of modernity, only that a putative pigeon network symbolised of a lack of cohesion between different wings of the army and lead to their not functioning in harmony or, in Doyle's words, "as a machine."
7. The "day" mentioned was the 6th of January 1902 where the British held "Cæsar's Camp" against a vicious Boer assault.
8. I do not presume to have the key to Boseley's inner consciousness here. His gaze falling outside of the frame is the principal contrast between the two photos and this supposition arises out of this compositional difference rather than as an observation upon the real person that the photograph portrays.

9. These include *The Times History of the War in South Africa, 1899-1902* (190); J. H. Settle's *Anecdotes of Soldiers in Peace and War* (505) and, most notably, Henry Nevinson's *Ladysmith: The Diary of a Siege* where the journalist author recalls Boseley's dependency ("helpless as a log" [111]) and predicts his future "great career as a wonder from the war" [112]).

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