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INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be a man? In nineteenth century England, this question spawned countless theories and debates. According to Douglas Kerr, “There is now something of a consensus that Victorian manhood was neither monolithic nor stable, but on the contrary was riven with internal contradiction and fraught with anxieties.” Accordingly, in the late Victorian period, discourse regarding the true nature of masculinity frequently appeared in English magazines, newspapers, and non-fiction books.

In this paper, I will analyze three works of popular fiction written in England in the 1880s and 90s: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, Robert Louis Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Oscar Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray. It is clear that Doyle, Stevenson, and Wilde were all well aware of the current discourse surrounding manliness, which greatly informed the way they crafted their characters. All three books feature iconic figures that are still widely discussed today: the brilliant Holmes, the tortured Jekyll and Hyde, the beautiful Dorian. Perhaps one reason these books have endured the test of time is their cultural relevance: in them, Victorian readers could recognize the principles and fears that colored their everyday life. Even today, modern readers continue to find these books relatable, as Victorian masculine ideals were not so very different from our contemporary notions of what a man should be.

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The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes is a collection of short stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1892. They follow the exploits of the titular Sherlock Holmes, a private detective with extraordinary deductive skills, as he solves mysteries alongside his friend John Watson, a doctor who chronicles their adventures in writing. There is no overarching narrative to the collection: each short story forms its own complete arc, beginning with a client approaching Holmes about a mystery and ending with Holmes either succeeding or failing to solve it. The characters featured in one story generally do not return again after their tale is complete, with the exception of Holmes and Watson. Accordingly, there are a large number of characters in the text that are worthy of analysis. Although The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes is the earliest collection of short fiction about Holmes and Watson, they first appear in A Study in Scarlet, a novel published by Doyle in 1887. Notably, A Study in Scarlet features the first meeting of Holmes and Watson and allows us invaluable insight into their characters and relationship. Thus, I will reference the A Study in Scarlet in addition to The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes while discussing aspects of Holmes and Watson’s masculinity.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a novella written in 1886 by Robert Louis Stevenson. The plot is set in motion when Richard Einfield tells his friend Gabriel Utterson of a disturbing incident he witnessed the night before: a man shamelessly trampling a young girl. Through tireless searching, Utterson discovers that the perpetrator, Edward Hyde, is connected to his friend Henry Jekyll, a well-respected man of science. As Jekyll’s lawyer, Utterson worries that Jekyll has gotten involved with something sinister, a fear that only grows as Jekyll withdraws from
society and a sudden illness comes over their friend Hastie Lanyon. Finally, Utterson forces entry into Jekyll’s chambers and finds a dead Hyde, who has apparently committed suicide. Through letters written by Jekyll and Lanyon before their deaths, Utterson discovers that Jekyll invented a potion intended to separate the two halves of his soul: the kindly and respectable scientist and the decadent sinner. By drinking the potion, Jekyll could transform into Hyde, a creature without a conscience who could sin without ruining Jekyll’s reputation. However, the transformations soon began to occur even without the potion’s help; even worse, Hyde committed several murders, a fact that tortured Jekyll. Deciding that he would rather die than live exclusively as Hyde, Jekyll chose to end both of their lives.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a novel by Oscar Wilde. Although the book has been published several times, each edition differing in word choice and number of chapters, I refer to the expanded and revised version released by Wilde in 1891. The novel follows the titular Dorian Gray, an aristocratic young man who sits for his friend, the artist Basil Hallward. While Hallward finishes a masterful portrait of Dorian, Henry Wotton teaches the impressionable young man that beauty is all that matters in this world. Distressed by the idea that his own beauty will someday fade, Dorian declares that he will sell his soul in order to switch places with his portrait: it will age while he stays eternally youthful. Dorian’s wish is granted, and he spends his eternal youth consuming luxuries, attending frivolous parties, and ruining the lives of those around him. Most notably, he promises to marry the actress Sibyl Vane but calls off their engagement upon seeing her perform badly; Sibyl subsequently commits suicide. Years later, Hallward approaches Dorian to express his disapproval of the
young man’s lifestyle. Dorian shows him the portrait, which now displays a hideous old man, and swiftly murders his friend. Dorian becomes increasingly paranoid, not least because Sibyl’s brother James is set on revenge for his sister’s death. Although James is killed in a hunting accident, Dorian cannot handle the weight of his own deeds: he kills himself and appears an old man at last.

All three books were informed by Victorian discourses on masculinity. Of course, the construct of gender does not exist in a vacuum; it intersects with many related identities such as race, nationality, and class. Although a person’s race and national origin obviously have an effect on the expectations of masculinity placed upon them, all three books are almost exclusively about white Englishmen, and thus discuss masculinity solely in that context (with the exception of a few Americans or Europeans that appear in *Sherlock Holmes*, and one Jewish minor character in *Dorian Gray* that inhabits an anti-Semitic stereotype). Class is also relevant to discuss in relation to these books: for the Victorians, expectations of masculinity could look different for individuals of different classes, primarily in regard to paid work. The characters of *Jekyll and Hyde* are primarily working professionals; although Jekyll is a reasonably wealthy individual, he is not a member of the British peerage. Holmes and Watson are middle-class, but their cases occasionally put them in contact with beggars, nobility, and even royalty. In contrast, the cast of *Dorian Gray* is largely made up of wealthy and noble individuals, with the exception of the working-class Vane family. These three sets of characters interact with masculinity in different ways because of their various positions in the British class system, but none of them are exempt from the strict expectations of the male role.
Specifically, these three books explore the question of whether it is possible for a man to fully embody all aspects of Victorian masculinity. In *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, it would appear that Doyle’s answer is no. Although some culprits of Holmes’s cases appear to fail entirely at manliness, no one really succeeds at it—Holmes and Watson, as well as nearly all of their male clients, deviate in significant ways from the normative male role. Doyle does not suggest that it is tragic or immoral that so many men behave in feminine ways: on the contrary, Holmes and Watson both possess mixed masculinity and are unquestionably our story’s heroes. Instead, Doyle theorizes that the true meaning of manhood is more complicated than the discourse of his time would suggest: that even the best people do not always conform to gender roles, and that this diversity of behavior is in fact a good thing.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde also suggests that no one really conforms to traditional gender roles—even James, the most masculine character in the novel, has prominent, defining moments of femininity. But unlike in *Sherlock Holmes*, where situations tend to end hopefully, Wilde’s characters that blend masculinity and femininity either commit suicide or fall victim to murder. *Dorian Gray* presents a bleaker worldview: one in which no one can conform to the narrow function expected of him, so *everyone* must meet a tragic end. Because it is impossible for any man to embody masculinity without also possessing feminine traits, it is impossible for any man to survive in a society where gender roles are so well defined.

In contrast, *Jekyll and Hyde* presents an England in which it is possible to succeed at normative masculinity. While Jekyll/Hyde is coded as a feminine
character, Utterson is traditional masculinity incarnate. A major source of conflict in the novella is Jekyll’s belief that there are two opposing sides to his personality; he is unable to reconcile these two aspects of himself into one unified person. In some ways, this serves as a metaphor for his relationship to masculinity: Jekyll cannot figure out how to exist as a man when he possesses so many feminine traits. On the other hand, Utterson seems to naturally and easily embody masculinity, suggesting that this is indeed a possible state to achieve. Jekyll’s failure is a personal one rather than a failure of English society or of humanity as a whole.

It is clear that Stevenson, Wilde, and Doyle all address divergence from normative masculinity in consistent ways. In the works of Stevenson and Wilde, deviation from gender roles is almost always punished: characters like Jekyll and Dorian who do not conform are despicable people doomed to violent deaths. Additionally, Wilde condemns purely feminine characters more harshly than those that mix masculinity and femininity. In Doyle’s work, most characters possess a mixture of masculine and feminine traits; Doyle favors these mixed characters over those that fail entirely at traditional standards of manliness.

Oddly, these three authors express judgments about masculinity that do not necessarily reflect their own personal views about gender and conformity. Most notably, Oscar Wilde was a gay aesthete, so it seems odd that he would so heavily condemn his most feminine male character. One possible answer lies in Wilde’s beliefs about art as a whole: in the preface to *Dorian Gray*, he writes, “The artist is the creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is art’s aim… No artist desires to prove anything… An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable
mannerism of style.” If Wilde’s intention in writing *Dorian Gray* was to “reveal art and conceal the artist,” then he did not endeavor to express his own personal beliefs about gender in the novel, but rather to craft a beautifully written and emotionally powerful tale. What the book appears to say about gender was less important to Wilde than the beauty of the thing, a view similarly expressed by Dorian about the death of Sibyl: “‘No,’ said Dorian Gray, ‘there is nothing fearful about it. It is one of the great romantic tragedies of the age.’”

A letter from Wilde to Doyle confirms this view: “I cannot understand how [reviewers] can treat ‘Dorian Grey’ as immoral. My difficulty was to keep the inherent moral subordinate to the artistic and dramatic effect, and it still seems to me that the moral is too obvious.” Although Wilde wished to reflect current debates on morality in novel, his first priority was to create a beautiful “artistic and dramatic effect.” It is also possible that Wilde, a gay author, wished to portray elements of homosexuality in his novel but feared the consequences for doing so. Basil has romantic feelings for Dorian but meets a tragic end; by punishing gay characters, Wilde was able to represent them without openly endorsing homosexuality. Of course, this technique was unable to protect him in the end: *Dorian Gray* was used as evidence when Wilde was convicted and jailed for “sodomy and gross indecency.”

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3 Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, 106. Hereafter, citations to this book will be given parenthetically in the text.


Reception of the novel was initially negative: critics responded with terms such as “unclean,” “vulgarity,” “unnatural,” “perverted,” and, perhaps most tellingly, “effeminate.”6 Apparently, it was not enough that Wilde punished Dorian Gray’s feminine male characters; the mere existence of a book populated by feminine men was enough to make a Victorian audience uncomfortable.

Doyle’s treatment of gender transgression is more compliant with the views he expressed about masculinity in his personal life. In his autobiography, he writes of a trip he took to the countryside: “The country was lovely. My life was filled with alternate work and sport.”7 Work and sport were both coded as highly masculine activities in the Victorian world. Douglas Kerr agrees that Doyle fit the Victorian definition of manly: “Conan Doyle’s reputation ‘has been fixed in time as a museum piece of British manhood,’” he writes.8 Even so, Doyle thought very highly of Wilde and of Dorian Gray, a book which Doyle claimed was “surely upon a high moral plane.”9 Although Doyle did not openly approve of Wilde’s homosexuality, calling it a “monstrous development,” he expressed a firm belief that Wilde should not be jailed for it and that mental health care might be a more appropriate solution.10

Doyle was tolerant of men who did not conform to traditional gender roles—for the time in which he was writing, at least—and yet still valued manly activities. This balance between masculinity and femininity seems in line with the views he expressed in Sherlock Holmes. In contrast with Dorian Gray, The Adventures of

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8 Kerr, “The Straight Left,” 189.
Sherlock Holmes was wildly successful upon its initial release, to the point where readers protested en masse when Doyle killed off Holmes in a later story (Doyle was forced to resurrect the character in order to pacify them). Kerr posits that the Holmes stories were popular in part because they were adventurous tales of heroism with a plain, unpretentious writing style; this description codes the Sherlock Holmes stories as highly masculine in contrast with a decadent book like Dorian Gray.

In letters, Stevenson wrote favorably of masculine men and remembered fondly a rugged sea voyage he embarked on; he often used the word “unmanly” to describe behavior he did not like. For example, in a letter to E. L. Burlingame, Stevenson expressed frustration that his publisher would not offer a critique for the book he was working on: “I call it unfair and almost unmanly. I do indeed begin to be filled with animosity.” Of a reviewer he strongly disagreed with, Stevenson wrote, “he is one of the large class of unmanly and ungenerous dogs who arrogate and defile the name of manly.” These words seem in line with the traditional view on masculinity expressed in Jekyll and Hyde. Like Sherlock Holmes, Jekyll and Hyde was immediately popular upon its release, selling very well. It would seem that one key to a book’s success in Victorian England was the inclusion of (at least partially) masculine heroes that an audience could recognize and identify with. Utterson,

Holmes, and Watson all fit into that category—Holmes and Watson both embody some elements of masculinity successfully—but in *Dorian Gray*, the traditional masculine protagonist is nowhere to be found.

Of course, one also must consider that each of these books represents a different literary form, and that form sometimes dictates content. While *Jekyll and Hyde* indeed presents a fairly rigid view of the male role, it is also a very short novella: the edition I reference is 68 pages long. With such limited space at his disposal, it would be difficult for Stevenson to include a large cast of well-developed characters. Accordingly, the only ones readers get to know with real clarity are Jekyll/Hyde and Utterson. In this context, there is not much room for diversity of male behavior: we meet one man who succeeds wholly at masculinity and one who falls short at it. In contrast, *Sherlock Holmes* is a collection of individual stories, each with its own set of characters. This form allows Doyle countless players to work with, each representing a slightly different form of gendered behavior. The short story format also means that each narrative features a different outcome, allowing for more nuance in the treatment of those who do not perfectly conform to their assigned gender role. Consistent with the book’s large cast, Doyle features many women in this text, the most of any book I address in this paper. In *Sherlock Holmes*, it is possible to consider the implications of Victorian masculinity for women as well as for men. *Dorian Gray* is a relatively short novel (213 pages), but it is still over three times the length of *Jekyll and Hyde*. This form allows Wilde to develop his characters further than is possible in the other two books, and allows for great diversity of
opinion between characters, who often debate ideas that are closely related to masculinity.

To summarize, I intend to show how different literary forms allow for different levels of complexity with regard to their treatment of masculinity; I will explore the judgments that Doyle, Stevenson, and Wilde make about masculinity in their books; I will demonstrate how these three authors approach the question of whether it is possible to inhabit normative masculinity at all. These issues are as vital to modern life as they were to the Victorian world. Although contemporary American ideas of manliness are not identical to Victorian English ones, the modern era has spawned countless similar debates: Is it acceptable for a man to wear makeup or skirts? Are men inherently feminized if they are not athletic? Are men naturally less emotional than women, or do they feel uncomfortable expressing those emotions because of societal norms? The roots of these issues are clearly found in Victorian ideas on masculinity. To uncover them, we must take a look at what Victorian authors had to say on the subject. Perhaps we might even learn something about ourselves.
CHAPTER ONE:
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to analyze the influence of this discourse, one must first define what “masculinity” meant for the Victorians. The periodicals published during a historical epoch can give readers an understanding of what cultural values were prevalent during that time. Accordingly, I have conducted an analysis of the editorials, parables, poetry, and satirical writings published in Victorian magazines in order to uncover what they can tell us about the period’s views on masculinity. I have also consulted several non-fiction books written at the time, as well as various secondary sources to help inform my research. These documents make it clear that Victorian cultural attitudes towards masculinity greatly shaped the popular literature of the period.

In general, the ideal Victorian man was courageous, optimistic, healthy, rational, and self-controlled; he frequently partook in physical activity; he did not wear his emotions on his sleeve; he worked hard to provide for his wife and children. A man did not need to perfectly embody all of these traits, but it was vital that he not stray from them entirely. Historian Peter N. Stearns writes that “the nineteenth century in fact provided more outlets for diverse male behavior than had been possible for the general run of men in preindustrial society. But this only increased the rigor with which most men… held to basic notions of what a real man should
There were many possible ways to be masculine in Victorian society—but for a man to live outside all definitions of masculinity was unacceptable.

One Victorian masculine ideal was the courageous warrior: he possessed mental and physical fortitude and was eager to serve his country. He was sincere in his desire to fight for his fellow man, even at the cost of his own personal safety. He was physically resilient and adventurous, willing to endure the elements and stoically forgo personal luxuries for his cause. One periodical from 1863 describes the ideal Christian man as brave and hopeful in the face of all hardship. To panic, or pessimistically predict his own failure, was the epitome of unmanliness: a man had to approach danger calmly and rationally. This image of robust, athletic masculinity was not limited to the battlefield but could also be found in Victorian attitudes towards sport. Personal health was an ever-present issue in the Victorian consciousness, and many believed that men could become healthier through vigorous exercise. Engaging in sport meant that a man was striving to improve his physical prowess and personal character. The flip side to equating manliness with physical health was that a man who was ill, disabled, or elderly suffered from diminished

15 Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting*.
masculinity due to his inability to engage in the strenuous activity that was a crucial element of manliness.18

The ideal Victorian man was also married to a feminine woman. A key element of his masculinity was ability to hold power over his wife and children. Celibacy, even in married men, was thought to be unhealthy by some medical professionals and was often distrusted. Yet a man who was too involved in the private sphere and spent little time in public was suspect as well.19 The Industrial Revolution of the early nineteenth century led to the widespread creation of factories and meant that men were far more likely to work outside the home than they had been previously. This redefined the home as a feminine space and the external workplace as a masculine one. Masculinity in the middle class thus came to be heavily associated with work and the ability to provide for one’s family.20

For upper-class individuals who lived off their land or inheritance, it was considered more acceptable to forgo paying work, but engagement in politics, preaching, or charity work were encouraged as a way to become involved in the public sphere. To exist solely in a domestic space was seen as lazy and effeminate. In order to illustrate the absurdity of a man spending the majority of his time in at home, a comedic article from 1895 poked fun at the idea of “masculine housekeeping.” The author recounted an anecdote about a “confirmed bachelor” who “held the usual views of confirmed bachelors with regard to womankind. He believed them… to be a

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superfluidity.” In accordance with this view, he refused to marry or hire a housekeeper and instead cared for his living quarters on his own. This man spent his time performing traditionally feminine tasks at home and became a source of ridicule for many of his friends. Notably, he served comically large amounts of food at all his dinner parties, failing to exhibit the masculine virtues of willpower and restraint.22 Instead of behaving like the failed dinner party host, Victorian men were expected to leave the home to partake in business that was “other-regarding rather than selfish, often competitive, and above all strenuous.”23 For example, a member of Parliament in 1874 “described MPs unwilling to debate until 4 a.m. as ‘effeminate.’”24 One reason given for the exclusion of women from politics and many other jobs was that they did not possess the masculine fortitude necessary to undertake such taxing activities.

Likewise, the use of logic was seen as an inherently masculine ability. Men who could resolve disagreements with reason as opposed to violence were more likely to be viewed as respectable, especially because such violent outbursts demonstrated a clear lack of masculine self-control.25 The desire to accumulate knowledge was also coded as a masculine trait—J. A. Mangan writes, “‘Manliness’ symbolised an attempt at a metaphysical comprehension of the universe.”26 As in work, women were excluded from the pursuit of scholarship because they were

22 Dalziel, “Masculine Housekeeping,” 123.
26 Kestner, Masculinities in Victorian Painting, 3.
considered “irrational” and incapable of comprehending the same complex concepts that men could.

One can also observe Victorian theories on manliness by studying the literature given to boys at the time. Professor Hoffman, who wrote *Every boy’s book of sport and pastime* in 1897, explains that Victorian boys were much like men, preferring structured games and sports to free play; his idea of appropriate activities for boys likely resembles what adult men would have participated in. Hoffman instructs his readers on a variety of pursuits, including many sports but also chess, card games, magic tricks, theatrical productions, and scientific endeavors such as chemical experiments. Clearly, Hoffman agrees that both men and boys should engage in energetic activity as often as possible.27

One way to ensure that boys participated in such activity was to enroll them in the Boy Scouts. The original Boy Scout handbook, written in 1908 by founder Robert Baden-Powell, likened the experience of scouting to the lives of “backwoodsmen, explorers, and frontiersmen,” all quintessential types of highly manly men. He believed that Boy Scout activities closely aligned with the natural interests of all males: “I knew that every true red-blooded boy is keen for adventure and open-air life.” Baden-Powell also claimed that the natural state of boys was to form social groups; the Boy Scouts was able to fill that need and prevent them from instead forming aggressive gangs. Scouting encouraged “physical health… energy… discipline, pluck, chivalry,” and “patriotism,” all of which were strong Victorian masculine values. The book stressed the importance of service to others, of

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“resourcefulness, observation, self-reliance,” of pursuing hobbies, and of physical exercise.²⁸

Historian Jay Mechling agrees that the motivation behind formalized scouting groups was to ensure that young boys did not get into trouble in their leisure time. Many Victorians feared that boys were beginning to behave in ways that were too crass and adult. Stories spread about boys torturing animals or even fellow children; the question of how to reform them was thought to be one of the most pressing social issues of the turn of the century. Some Victorians worried that mothers or female teachers were responsible for “feminizing” boys and allowing them to stray from their natural masculine virtues. Mechling writes that this “crisis of masculinity” was a widespread anxiety not limited to boys: Victorians began to fear the degradation of masculinity as a whole.²⁹ This sentiment was often expressed in periodicals, as writers complained about the lack of morality in modern men. In an 1891 issue of The Arena, B. O. Flower lamented the “frightful degradation of manhood,” which he described as a “social ulcer that is eating into the heart of civilization.”³⁰ Masculine degradation was especially observable in universities, Flower explained, as many male students received a stipend from their parents and proceeded to spend it on wine and women, failing at masculinity due to their lack of willpower.

Sometimes these college transgressions were frowned upon because they explicitly subverted gender roles: for example, Flower recounted the tale of two

college-aged men who brought a male friend home with them. This friend, Harry Eel, lived as their roommate for several months, until police discovered that he was actually a missing young woman who had run away from home. Flower viewed this anecdote as unnatural and threatening for several reasons: a woman lived as a man, lodged with two men and possibly had sexual relations with them, and did so while dressed as a man, lending homosexual overtones to the encounter. According to Flower, Eel’s roommate Caldwell eventually committed suicide, unable to cope with the degradation of his own masculinity.\(^{31}\)

In an 1897 article, Emma Churchman Hewitt considered the phenomenon of the “New Woman”: the Victorian stereotype of a woman who exerted more freedoms and behaved in more masculine ways than previous generations. Hewitt disagreed with the concept, and wrote that the “masculine woman is no more common than the effeminate man.”\(^{32}\) Instead, she theorized that Victorian women were forced to take on more masculine roles due to the degeneracy of their husbands, who more than ever before had begun to desert and neglect their wives. Hewitt lamented the death of chivalry, and described the laziness, infidelity, and even cruelty that were common among men of the day. Without a husband to bring home an income for her, of course a woman would be forced to take on a more independent role. The other traits characteristic of the New Woman—speaking loudly with excessive, crude slang; engaging in vulgar, risqué behavior—came from women copying men, who had

\(^{31}\) Flower, “Editorial Notes.”
begun to swear more and behave in more uncouth ways. The degeneracy of femininity was simply a reflection of the degeneracy of manliness.  

Near the turn of the century, many writers spoke out against this perceived degeneracy. In an article from 1886, Maurice Gregory described what he saw as the pattern all societies eventually follow. “A strong and hardy race of people, either by conquest or commerce, enlarge their possessions,” he began, describing a society that becomes successful by engaging in masculine activities. However, this group soon begins its downfall: “they become rich, they become luxurious, they become immoral, they become effeminate” until they are in turn conquered by another, more masculine nation. Gregory equated luxury with both immorality and effeminacy, and contrasted this decadent lifestyle with a “purer” sort of man. In 1897, a seemingly light-hearted satire of etiquette books (or books of “masculine manners”) revealed the author’s fear of masculine immorality as well. According to the writer, most books of manners at the time encouraged men to behave as naturally as possible, which was not at all advisable. After all, cursing came very naturally to men but was not acceptable in most situations; “therefore,” the writer concluded, “don’t on any account be natural.” In general, this author’s view was that a man “should always carry himself with dignity.”

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33 Hewitt, “The ‘New Woman’ in Her Relation to the ‘New Man.’”
34 Maurice Gregory, “A Lesson from The Past for To-Day,” The Sentinel 8, iss. 7 (Jul. 1886): 86.
35 Gregory, “A Lesson from The Past for To-Day,” 86.
36 Gregory, “A Lesson from The Past for To-Day,” 86.
38 “Masculine Manners,” 288.
lacking in restraint, they had to learn to be respectable in English society by reigning in their brutish tendencies.\(^{39}\)

In 1895, Max Nordeau wrote an entire book about the degeneration of masculinity. He believed that the turbulent turn of the century caused some men to experience a “moral sea-sickness” and succumb to corrupt behavior.\(^{40}\) Nordeau associated this degeneration with the art trend known as aestheticism and claimed that those who subscribed to it were “the snobs, the fools, and the blockheads… the weak and dependent… the nervous.”\(^{41}\) They appreciated beauty but had no ability to comprehend deeper meanings or the connections between things. Nordeau went so far as to suggest that men who kept up with modern aesthetic trends were mentally ill. Although he described their symptoms as a combination of “degeneracy” and “hyste‌ria” (a medical term often associated with women), he titled these men “degenerates.”\(^{42}\)

First and foremost, the degenerate was associated with “[v]ice, crime, and madness.”\(^{43}\) One could recognize him from identifiable physical defects, such as deformities or a lack of symmetry in his features. A degenerate was overly emotional, especially about art: “He laughs until he sheds tears, or weeps copiously without adequate occasion… he falls into raptures before indifferent pictures or statues; and

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\(^{39}\) “Masculine Manners,” 288.
\(^{41}\) Nordeau, *Degeneration*, 14.
\(^{42}\) Nordeau, *Degeneration*, 15.
\(^{43}\) Nordeau, *Degeneration*, 15.
music... arouses in him the most vehement emotions.”

He was pessimistic and depressed, and felt negatively about himself, others, and the world. He had no conscience and possessed “no law, no decency, no modesty.” These traits were then passed down to the degenerate’s children. Obviously, the sort of man Nordeau described would fail horrendously at every aspect of Victorian masculinity.

The disparagement of overemotional men was fairly common at the turn of the century. In general, Victorian norms called for increased “surface friendliness or selective emotional openness”: both men and women were expected to be outwardly pleasant and cheerful in their interactions with others. Yet while sociability was viewed as a positive trait, men were still expected to possess a significant amount of emotional self-control. To be entirely unfeeling was seen as unnatural, but a tendency to succumb to dramatic emotional outbursts was a sign of a failed masculinity. In 1899, Garnett Smith took note of this cultural phenomenon: he wrote that many people “issu[ed] grave warnings against sentimentality. An artificial excitement of good feeling, an expenditure of emotion without adequate cause and in pure waste, it is the foible or vice of effeminate men and half-educated women.”

According to Smith, the English strongly disliked sentimentality and believed that they should set aside useless displays of feeling in favor of “embrac[ing] utilitarianism in its most

44 Nordeau, Degeneration, 15.
45 Nordeau, Degeneration, 15.
46 Kestner, Masculinities in Victorian Painting, 8.
rigid form.”

He sardonically remarked that soon, all feeling would be considered sentimental and therefore disgraceful.

Similarly, Henry Bruce, a member of the British parliament, stated in an 1872 letter to his wife, “Men do occasionally cry now, but they dare not show it, being ashamed of it.” He went on to express his surprise at this relatively new phenomenon, as greater emotional license had been awarded to men in the earlier years of the nineteenth century: for example, it had been customary to cry in response to highly emotional literature. A shift then occurred in the public consciousness: adventure novels became more fashionable for men than sentimental ones, and a new “tough stoicism” came to be encouraged. Possessing self-restraint in many areas of one’s life was seen as necessary to masculinity: a man knew that he should not overindulge in emotion, sex, alcohol, gambling, or even food, as adhering to a strict diet could be seen as a way to participate in masculine ideals of physical fitness. In general, these forms of discipline came back to the altruism expected of a good Victorian Englishman, who demonstrated “a willingness to subordinate one’s own selfish desires to a sense of duty.”

Accordingly, men who indulged in decadent lifestyles were frowned upon. In 1893, Arthur Symons defined decadence as “an intense self-consciousness, a restless curiosity in research, an over-subtilizing refinement upon refinement, a spiritual and

49 Smith, “The Sentimentalists.”
52 Mangan and Walvin, Manliness and morality, 7.
moral perversity.”⁵⁴ Dennis Denisoff, writing in the twenty-first century, describes the decadents of the Victorian era as full of “taunting self-display, uncommon sexuality and degeneracy.”⁵⁵ Decadence implied an emphasis on artificiality, on choosing beauty over meaningful content when it came to art or literature; it was heavily associated with the aesthetic movement described by Nordeau. For the lower and middle classes, who placed great value on the importance of utility, aestheticism was seen as a useless concept spearheaded by the wealthy elite at the expense of the majority, especially as aesthetes believed that functionality could actually detract from an object’s beauty. A common idea emerged that the greatest beauty in art would appear just before the total collapse of society, and people feared that such a collapse was imminent. Despite its critics, however, the decadent movement often served as a form of escapism for those distressed by other social problems of the turn of the century.⁵⁶

Aesthetes and decadents were thought to be deeply unmanly. Men who became preoccupied with aesthetic concerns ran the risk of being called dandies, an effeminate stereotype that was often mocked in Victorian publications. An article titled “Modern Beau Brummellism” called the dandy a “peculiar” man who “cannot be too much condemned.”⁵⁷ Due to their selfishness and love of excess, dandies were heavily associated with “unmanliness,” as well as “fastidiousness and helplessness”—they had a tendency to spend hours readjusting their appearance, and were unable to

⁵⁶ Denisoff, “Decadence and aestheticism.”
carry out simple tasks without the aid of their valets.\textsuperscript{58} As a result, the author suggested, dandies were more feminine than even “the most helpless of women”: “No lady has ever required the attention of her valet more than [the dandy] demanded the assistance of his valet during the tedious operations of his toilet.”\textsuperscript{59} Yet the most offensive sort of dandy was an elderly one. An old man who pretended to be young—or became delighted when others thought him younger—was truly contemptible.\textsuperscript{60}

One article specifically called out the sort of dandy who wore perfume, calling him effeminate, a “scented darling,” and someone who “wishes to make himself ridiculous.”\textsuperscript{61} Another described the dandy without naming him, calling him “the pretty man” or the “fop Adonis.”\textsuperscript{62} Men of this type “pass their lives in adorning themselves, and… have no other thought than their person.” They are vain, shallow, and stupid, described as “empty-headed fools” who thrive on flattery and judge others for not being as attractive as themselves. They are ineffective lovers and possess soft hands due to their inability to work. The author went on to contrast the pretty man with different types of traditionally masculine men: “the manly soldier, the bold traveller, the clever engineer, the spirited lawyer.” Although these men are often handsome, they cannot be “pretty men” because they are generally unaware of their own good looks, unlike the narcissistic dandy.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{58} “Modern Beau Brummellism,” 299, 298.
\textsuperscript{59} “Modern Beau Brummellism,” 299, 298.
\textsuperscript{60} “Modern Beau Brummellism,” 301.
\textsuperscript{61} “Perfume For Men,” \textit{New London journal} 3, iss. 58 (Jun. 8, 1907): 135.
\textsuperscript{63} “The Pretty Man,” 21.
Amusing tales about dandies were commonly published in leisure magazines. One such story, “The Heart of Dandy Fane,” told the story of a boy named Dandy who in every way fit his name. Dandy was an exceptionally clean, handsome child who wore clothes that were free of stains and tatters unlike an “ordinary active boy.” 64 At first, he seemed to be the ideal son: he was healthy, cheerful, courageous, intelligent, and good at sports. But after a visit to the doctor, Dandy’s family discovered that he had been born without a heart. It soon became clear that Dandy could not feel compassion for others; he did not cry when people died and had no real friends. However, when the adult Dandy encountered a beautiful woman, he fell in love with her and miraculously grew a heart. 65 This tale clearly plays into Nordeau’s ideas about degenerates lacking a sense of morality, but in the end, Dandy is saved from his illness by entering into a heterosexual marriage and embracing a normative masculine lifestyle. Although it was unacceptable for a Victorian man to succumb to random emotional outbursts, Dandy’s story shows that it was also unacceptable for a man to lack displays of feelings at appropriate times; Dandy’s refusal to cry at the death of others is seen as highly problematic. It is also notable that Kitty, Dandy’s wife, proclaims during the course of the story, “It is very ungrateful to pretend to be old when one is young,” reflecting the words in “Modern Beau Brummellism” about the dangers of emulating youth as an elderly person. 66

Not everyone thought so negatively of dandies, however. One author in 1890 argued that dandyism was simply “the outward and visible expression of certain

65 Beaumont, “The Heart of Dandy Fane.”
inward and invisible qualities,” echoing the Victorian idea that a man’s moral character was reflected in his physical appearance.\(^{67}\) The author believed that dandies were admirably graceful, kind, and true to themselves; they strongly valued the virtues of “order, self-possession,” and “harmony.”\(^{68}\) They respected themselves and loved the people around them, wishing only to make a good impression on others. The author also expressed the belief that dandies did not choose to behave the way they did, but that their dandyism “is unconsciously secreted by the mental and moral qualities of the wearer, like the plumage of birds or the scales of fishes.”\(^{69}\) This echoes “The Heart of Dandy Fane,” in which Dandy’s behavior was presented as something innate that he was born with as opposed to a choice. However, for the average Victorian man, masculinity was a conscious process: a series of behaviors he attempted to maintain in order to avoid the accusation of effeminacy.

In summary, Victorian discourses on masculinity can be broken down into three broad categories: the dichotomy between the workplace and the home as respectively masculine and feminine spaces; ideas about masculine athleticism, outdoorsmanship, and courage; and the fear of masculine decadence and degeneracy. Each category features prominently in all three of the books I will discuss.

\(^{67}\) “The Days of the Dandies,” *Saturday review of politics, literature, science, and art* 69, iss. 1784 (Jan. 4, 1890): 9.
CHAPTER TWO:

WORK

The act of leaving one’s house in order to pursue selfless, strenuous labor was strongly associated with men in the Victorian period. Conversely, the act of spending large amounts of time at home was coded as feminine. The works of Doyle, Stevenson, and Wilde all reflect this tension in that they feature male characters that do not work or do not often leave the home. Although other characters generally see this behavior as negative, the three narratives differ in the degree to which they punish reclusiveness and laziness.

In *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, male characters who do not pursue any vigorous activity outside the home are evil people and are punished for their crimes. On the other hand, characters that spend some time working and some time at home—or approach their work in an atypical way—are reasonably moral people who are awarded happy or mixed endings rather than tragic ones. This is consistent with Doyle’s tolerant attitude towards those who blend masculinity and femininity in general. In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the most hardworking character (Utterson) is a virtuous man who escapes the story unscathed; in contrast, Jekyll/Hyde does not work, stays shut up in his house for days, and is heavily punished by the narrative. In *Dorian Gray*, no character is afforded a happy ending, but those who spend some time working and some time averse to work are generally good people who meet an unfair and untimely death. Dorian, on the other hand, does absolutely no work and is a cruel person in addition to meeting a terrible fate. As
usual, both Stevenson and Wilde present a world in which men who fail to conform are immoral and are punished; in *Dorian Gray*, the extent to which a man does not conform determines the extent of his immorality.

Holmes certainly possesses mixed masculinity with regard to work. Before their first meeting, when Watson asks where he might find Holmes, their mutual friend Stamford responds, “He is sure to be at the laboratory… He either avoids the place for weeks, or else he works there from morning till night.” Watson, too, remarks on the “dual nature” of Holmes, musing, “The swing of his nature took him from extreme languor to devouring energy” (185). Holmes alternates between spending long hours engaged in vigorous activity outside the home—a decidedly masculine endeavor—and avoiding work in favor of idling at home, an activity that calls his masculinity into question. However, Holmes’s laboratory experiments are a hobby, not a source of income; his real occupation is that of a consulting detective, a business he initially conducts from his flat. When clients arrive seeking his services, Holmes asks Watson “for the use of the sitting-room” and explains, “I have to use this room as a place of business” (22). This arrangement further codes Holmes’s behavior as an odd mix of the masculine (he has a job, albeit an unusual one) and the feminine (he works solely in the feminine space of the home).

Interestingly, after Holmes moves in with Watson, this balance begins to shift in favor of masculinity. When a pressing case arrives for Holmes, Watson urges him to leave the flat in order to collect evidence: “Surely there is not a moment to be

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lost… shall I go and order you a cab?” (27). Holmes, at first, is uneasy about the idea of working elsewhere. “I’m not sure about whether I shall go,” he says. “I am the most incurably lazy devil that ever stood in shoe leather—that is, when the fit is on me, for I can be spry enough at times” (27). Yet again, Holmes is painted as a man who vacillates between extremes of masculinity and femininity. But because of Watson’s coaxing, “an energetic fit ha[s] superseded the apathetic one,” and Holmes agrees to leave the his home in order to work (27). This influence is not one-sided: during his first meeting with Holmes, Watson describes himself as “extremely lazy,” but when Holmes invites him along on their first case, he agrees without protest (19). Soon Watson even resumes his work as a doctor. In “The Man With the Twisted Lip,” despite having “newly come back from a weary day” of seeing patients, Watson agrees to go out and collect his neighbor Elias Whitney from an opium den; his bravery and willingness to spend long hours serving others are admirably masculine (230). Watson’s actions in this instance contrast him with his wife and with Kate Whitney, who stay at home during the heroics in a traditionally feminine manner. Yet Watson is still not always a diligent worker: on one occasion, he reports, “I had remained indoors all day… [w]ith my body in one easy-chair and my legs upon another” (287).

Similarly, Holmes is described in later stories as “a late riser,” “languid,” “lounging upon the sofa in a purple dressing-gown,” and “loath[ing] every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul” (258, 165, 244, 161). Watson bemoans that his friend must be “persuaded… to forego his Bohemian habits so far as to come and visit” him: Holmes clearly still possesses some laziness, and some reluctance to
pursue activities in the outside world (274). Yet when Holmes has “an unsolved problem upon his mind,” he works at it constantly, going “for days, and even for a week, without rest” until he figures out the solution (240). Gregory Bassham agrees that Holmes could be interpreted as a workaholic during his energetic periods, explaining, “Holmes’s supercharged work ethic was widely admired by Conan Doyle’s Victorian readers.” ⁷¹ Although Holmes possesses elements of both masculinity and femininity, it was his manly traits that Victorian audiences related to.

Another threat to Holmes’s masculinity is the fact that he is unmarried—and in fact has no intention of ever marrying. Watson writes that Holmes “never spoke of” romantic love “save with a gibe and a sneer” (161). In contrast, Watson describes the “complete happiness” he experiences now that he is married and serving as “the master of his own establishment” (161). Despite this masculine description of married life, the *Sherlock Holmes* stories were not written in chronological order, and many cases in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* take place while Holmes and Watson are still two bachelors living together. In one such story, Holmes’s client is involved in an unfortunate incident involving his wife, and Holmes tells Watson, “we are never likely to find ourselves in the same position,” implying that he never foresees either of them marrying (301).

In stories that take place after Watson’s wedding, he still often lives with Holmes for various lengths of time. In “A Scandal in Belgravia,” Watson spends a night at Baker Street; in “The Five Orange Pips,” Watson stays there for several days

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while his wife is visiting her mother; in “The Man with the Twisted Lip,” Holmes tells Watson that Mrs. St. Clair has prepared two rooms for them, but they end up sleeping in a “large and comfortable double-bedded room” together (240). Barry McCrea explains that this same-sex cohabitation, combined with Holmes’s lack of interest in women and strong affection for Watson, have led some scholars to conclude that Doyle intended Holmes to be a gay man, which of course would further complicate his masculinity. Whether or not that is the case, McCrea describes Holmes’s “lifestyle” as “alien to the daily round of family life… it leaves him outside, indeed, resolutely opposed to the economy of marriage, reproduction, and inheritance.”

Many of Holmes’s clients also possess a mixture of masculinity and femininity in their attitudes towards work and family. In “The Red-Headed League,” Jabez Wilson reveals that he spends time at home to a feminine extent. “I am a very stay-at-home-man,” he tells Holmes, “and as my business came to me instead of my having to go to it, I was often weeks on end without putting my foot over the doormat” (179). When Wilson accepts work at the Red-Headed League, his employer Duncan Ross informs him of his duties: “Well, you have to be in the office, or at least in the building, the whole time” (181). The most important aspect of Wilson’s new job is not even the work itself, but the act of spending time outside his house. Wilson is also unmarried, a fact that Ross is unhappy with: “It is exceedingly unfortunate that you should be a bachelor,” he says, claiming that Wilson’s lack of a wife and children is “very serious indeed” (180).

Like Holmes, Wilson vacillates between femininity (his family situation and original job) and masculinity (his work at the Red-Headed League). But Holmes soon discovers that Red-Headed League is a front created to advance a criminal scheme; instead of selfless labor, Wilson is really performing useless busywork so that thieves can drill from his basement into a bank vault next door. In Wilson’s case, even his supposedly masculine job could not really be called a normative working environment. Yet Wilson is a moral man who does not intend to collude with criminals, and while his blending of masculinity and femininity produces negative consequences for him, the costs are largely impermanent ones. Holmes stops the thieves before they can complete their robbery, and Wilson is paid a large sum for his work; as Holmes explains, “You have lost nothing” (183).

Despite the Victorian association of work with masculinity, it was not unheard of for women to work outside the home. In “A Case of Identity,” Holmes’s client is Mary Sutherland, a woman who has her own income both from her job typewriting and from stock. Yet economic success is still associated with the men in Sutherland’s life rather than with Sutherland herself: she believes that she and her mother sold their family business for not “near as much as [her] father could have got if he had been alive”; her stock was given to her by her uncle; her money is handled by her stepfather (193). Sutherland’s status with regard to work is partially masculine and partially feminine: she works outside the home but requires assistance from men in handling her financial matters. In the end, Sutherland meets a similar fate to Wilson: she is a respectable person who is tricked by another, but does not suffer long-lasting damage. The same can be said for another woman who works in this book: Violet
Hunter, Holmes’s client in “The Adventure of the Speckled Beeches.” Like Sutherland, Hunter embodies a mix of masculinity and femininity: she indeed has a job and provides her own income, but she works as a governess, a traditionally feminine occupation that is performed in a home (albeit not her own). And like Sutherland, Hunter is a reputable person, is involved in an unpleasant incident, and escapes from it essentially unharmed.

The villain of Sutherland’s story is her stepfather James Windibank, who concocts an elaborate scheme to prevent her from marrying so that he will have access to her money forever. Windibank does not work. He relies entirely on women for his income and cannot provide financially for himself or his family: to Holmes, he says, “I am not quite my own master” (199). It is also notable that, when in disguise as part of his ruse, Windibank tells Sutherland that he sleeps on the premises of his office building—this is a lie, but it is still an association between Windibank and the act of conflating home and work. Windibank is purely feminine in his attitude towards labor, and so the narrative paints him in a purely negative light: Holmes says that “there never was a man who deserved punishment more” than Windibank, and describes him as a “cold-blooded scoundrel,” predicting that he one day “does something very bad, and ends on a gallows” (201).

In “The Five Orange Pips,” we meet another man who almost never leaves his home. Holmes’s client, John Openshaw, describes his uncle Elias as a man “of a most retiring disposition. During all the years that he lived at Horsham, I doubt if he ever set foot in the town… very often for weeks on end he would never leave his room” (219). Elias Openshaw is a thoroughly unpleasant person: he has a temper, many bad
habits, and an “aversion to the negroes” (219). He was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan and stole crucial papers from the organization; he is later murdered by the KKK for his betrayal. Likewise, the villain of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” is Dr. Roylott, an unmistakably deplorable man: he murders two people, attempts to murder a third, and physically abuses his stepdaughter. He also meets a terrible fate at the end of his story: he is killed by his own pet snake. It makes sense, then, that Roylott is another character who “shut himself up in his house and seldom came out” (260). In both of these stories, a male character’s propensity to spend too much time at home is associated with disreputable actions—and dire consequences.

In “The Man with the Twisted Lip,” Holmes investigates the disappearance of Neville St. Clair, who “had no occupation, but was interested in several companies and went into town as a rule in the morning” (233). Although he does not work, St. Clair has enough money to provide for his wife and children and leaves the home to partake in some outside activity each day. Certainly, neither Holmes nor Doyle condemns St. Clair for his lack of profession: he is “a man of temperate habits, a good husband, a very affectionate father, and a man who is popular with all who know him” (233). Yet it soon becomes apparent that St. Clair’s occupation is not what it seems. While working as a journalist, St. Clair decided to attempt begging as research for an article on the beggars of London—and found that begging made him far more money than journalism had. “Well, you can imagine how hard it was to settle down to arduous work at £2 a week when I knew that I could earn as much in a day by… sitting still,” he tells Holmes (243). St. Clair flagrantly rejects the vigorous work expected of him as a Victorian man in favor of a sedentary life in which money is
literally handed to him. He acknowledges that this is not a socially acceptable source of income: he is horrified at the idea of his family finding out, and explains, “It was a long fight between my pride and the money, but the dollars won at last” (243).

St. Clair embodies a unique combination of the masculine and the feminine: he works outside the home and obtains a salary that can provide for his family, but his work requires none of the energetic effort expected of Victorian men. Because of his complex relationship with masculinity, St. Clair is an otherwise upstanding man whose actions appear to have no long-lasting consequences: he is not arrested and survives the story physically unscathed. He does promise to stop begging, however, implying that this is not a long-term career possibility. Doyle does not indicate that St. Clair’s mix of gendered behaviors makes him an evil person, but that these behaviors are unsustainable for him in the long term.

In The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Utterson’s work situation is not out of the ordinary in the slightest: he is a lawyer who leaves his house every day to go to work. His dedication to his profession becomes evident when he first realizes something is amiss with Jekyll. Although Utterson is personally curious about the situation, he is also Jekyll’s lawyer; investigating Jekyll is in some sense just an extension of his job. After all, Utterson first begins to investigate in his “business-room.”73 He certainly dedicates long hours to his work: he spends so much time thinking about this mystery that he lies in bed “digging at the problem” until “[s]ix o’clock” (11). And Utterson is not a man who is comfortable thinking without doing:

73 Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 1886. Reprint, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde & Other Stories (San Diego: Baker & Taylor, 2014), 9. Hereafter, citations to this book will be given parenthetically in the text.
he waits outside Hyde’s lodgings until he is able to meet him, standing there for days “by all lights and at all hours” (12). Utterson brings this propensity for action to all of his endeavors: when he learns he can be of assistance at the police station, he “hurrie[s] through his breakfast” and heads there immediately, and indeed on many occasions is willing to drop everything and travel wherever his quest may take him (20).

Jekyll and Hyde do not embody masculinity in the same easy way that Utterson does. Utterson describes Jekyll as an “inscrutable recluse” because his friend often “shuts himself up” and becomes “confined to the house” to lead a life of “extreme seclusion” (32, 35, 29, 31). At one point, Utterson tells Jekyll this explicitly: “You stay too much indoors… You should be out” (33). And when Jekyll briefly comes “out of seclusion,” he performs many tasks that are considered masculine: “He was busy, he was much in the open air, he did good” (29). Even before his first transformation into Hyde, Jekyll is not the picture of a masculine worker. He is a scientist who describes himself as “inclined by nature to industry,” and yet he conducts this science in a building attached to his own living quarters (53). Utterson experiences a “distasteful sense of strangeness” while viewing Jekyll’s laboratory, probably in part because it is odd to have such “dissecting-rooms” in a location “from which… Jekyll’s private cabinet is most conveniently entered” (24, 48). Jekyll’s home and profession are strongly intertwined. It is impossible for him to participate in the masculine activity of work without spending too much time in the feminine space of the home.
Although Jekyll works, Hyde does not: he spends his life engaged in sinful pleasures and violent outbursts rather than in vigorous employment. However, while Hyde does not have a job or another selfless outlet for his energy, he does not spend much time at home either—in fact, the entrance to his “home” is really just the back door to Jekyll’s house. Richard Einfield says that Hyde’s abode “seems scarcely a house,” and Jekyll himself describes Hyde as “houseless” (7, 64). On one occasion, Jekyll spontaneously transforms while outside and desperately worries that he has no way of entering his quarters without his servants calling the police on him. Faced with this predicament, Hyde drives to a hotel and “s[its] all day over the fire in the private room”: he wastes his time lazily, but in a place that is not his home (65). Hyde has degenerated so far that both work and home are outside his reach. While Jekyll embodies both masculine and feminine traits, Hyde is neither masculine, nor feminine, perhaps because he has “nothing human” within him (65). In this novella, men who possess complicated relationships with masculinity are punished heavily, but men who are neither masculine nor feminine are so outside the ordinary that they cannot even be considered people.

Like Holmes, Jekyll’s home life also fails to be masculine because he is unmarried. Interestingly, none of the other characters in the novella seem to be married either—Utterson’s home is referred to as his “bachelor house,” and Einfield and Lanyon are never mentioned to have wives (9). This is a rare similarity between Utterson and Jekyll that serves as a blemish on Utterson’s near-perfect masculinity. However, when everyone in the novella is unmarried, Utterson’s lifestyle does not seem unusually feminine—instead, Utterson’s bachelor status allows him to spend
even more time on work and exercise because he does not have a wife and children to
care for. In contrast, Jekyll spends his spare time as Hyde, committing violence
against women and children rather than serving as the head of a family. Even though
neither of them are married, Utterson is still clearly far more masculine than Jekyll.

In The Picture of Dorian Gray, the artist Basil Hallward works in a “studio”
(5). It is unclear whether or not he actually sleeps on the premises, but the building
certainly serves the functions of a home for him: he employs a butler there; he
entertains his friends there; he decorates the place with lavish art, numerous sofas,
and a garden. These elements make Hallward’s studio feel more like his personal
lodgings than a traditional place of work. In general, Hallward dislikes leaving his
studio and heading into society: “It is such a bore putting on one’s dress-clothes,” he
says. “And, when one has them on, they are so horrid” (30). When Henry asks
Hallward to join him and Dorian at the theater, Hallward refuses, stating, “I have a lot
of work to do” (30). Years later, Hallward tells Dorian, “I intend to take a studio in
Paris, and shut myself up till I have finished a great picture I have in my head” (141-2).
This makes Hallward yet another character who displays a mixture of masculine
and feminine traits with regard to work: he spends a lot of time on his job, but does so
in a home-like space that he dislikes leaving. Even when Hallward turns down an
invitation to dinner in order to continue working, his masculinity is still complicated
because he refuses to venture into the outside world.

Of course, Hallward does occasionally leave his studio: “You know we poor
artists have to show ourselves in society from time to time, just to remind the public
that are not savages,” he says (9). Hallward is conscious of the result that
reclusiveness would have on his image, and implies that his decision to be seen in public has more to do with avoiding a negative reputation than it does with any personal desire to be outdoors. Perhaps this is because of Hallward’s view that it “is better not to be different than one’s fellows” (7). Although privately his relationship with work is not perfectly masculine, he does not let the rest of the world see this side of him. Of course, this is not enough to save him—in the end, Hallward is brutally murdered.

Hallward’s masculinity is also compromised because he is deeply in love with Dorian Gray, another man. Hallward professes that he “couldn’t be happy if [he] didn’t see [Dorian] every day,” and claims, “As long as I live, the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me” (12, 15) Henry refers to Hallward’s feelings for Dorian explicitly as “love,” and acknowledges that Hallward “worshipped” Dorian (15, 19). When Hallward discovers that Dorian is engaged to someone else, a “strange sense of loss came over him… His eyes darkened, and the crowded, flaring streets became blurred to his eyes,” presumably from tears (78). In an earlier edition of the text, Hallward described his feelings for Dorian as “extraordinary romance” (234). And Hallward is not necessarily the only gay character in the novel: Henry’s fascination with Dorian could easily be interpreted as queer desire, and Dorian ruins the reputations of many young men in an unspecified manner that could very well be homosexual in nature. As in Jekyll and Hyde, none of the major characters in Dorian Gray are married: Hallward and Dorian both die unwed, and Henry becomes divorced before the end of the novel. “Never marry,” he tells Dorian (47). Because none of
these men participate in normative heterosexual marriage, all of them suffer from diminished masculinity.

Sibyl Vane (another character who never marries) is an actress whose income supports her family. Despite the fact that she is engaged—the more traditional path a woman’s life might take—her mother is adamant that she not give up her career: “I am only happy, Sibyl, when I see you act. You must not think of anything but your acting,” she tells her (59). Sibyl wants to quit her job and live as Dorian’s housewife, but her mother begs her to remember that their family needs the money. In this case, Sibyl is a woman who wishes to take on a normative feminine role but is prevented from doing so by her economic circumstance. However, there are still aspects of her situation that are very feminine: her mother reminds Sibyl that she doesn’t know “how [they] could manage without” the male Mr. Isaacs, Sibyl’s employer (59).

Despite her job, Sibyl is still dependent on a man for her income; her situation is once again a mix of the masculine and the feminine. Sibyl’s brother James also loathes the idea of work: “I hate offices, and I hate clerks,” he says, and then mentally expresses his distaste for several other careers (62). Though James ends up working as a sailor, he fantasizes about marrying a wealthy heiress so that the two of them can “live in an immense house in London”; his future plans are domestic rather than work-centric, and rely on a woman to provide for him (64). Like Hallward, neither Sibyl nor James survives the novel: James is shot by Sir Geoffrey, and Sibyl commits suicide when Dorian calls off their engagement.

Dorian is not much inclined towards vigorous action. He is in the habit of “lounging,” “reclining in a luxurious armchair,” and sleeping until one o’clock in the
afternoon (48, 45). Sometimes he spends long hours doing absolutely nothing: “Three o’clock struck, and four, and the half-hour rang its double chime, but Dorian Gray did not stir” (93). He is too lazy to even stay on his feet while Hallward paints him: “‘Basil, I am tired of standing,’ cried Dorian Gray, suddenly. ‘I must go out and sit’” (22). Dorian dedicates his life to the study of pleasurable things—fashion, perfumes, music, jewels, embroidery—but none of these hobbies comes close to being a profession. Although Dorian is the heir to considerable wealth and thus does not need to support himself financially, upper-class men in Victorian England were still expected to pursue some sort of selfless activity outside the home. Dorian does nothing of the kind. He is best summarized by a description Wilde gives of his sleeping face: “He looked like a boy who had been tired out with play” (155). Dorian spends his life in play rather than work—and does most of that play in his home.

In fact, as the years go on, Dorian becomes more and more uncomfortable with the idea of being away from his house: he “hated to be separated from the picture that was such a part of his life,” and “would suddenly leave his guests and rush back” to his home in order to make sure the painting had not been discovered (135). On one specific occasion, Dorian “did not leave the house” for several days “and, indeed, spent most of the time in his own room”; “[i]t was not till the third day that he ventured to go out” (191-2). Even Henry, who delights in those who defy convention, tells Dorian, “I can’t bear you shutting yourself up like this” (94).

Of course, Dorian is not an upstanding man: he commits countless immoral acts throughout the novel, from cruelly abandoning Sibyl to murdering Hallward. In the end, he stabs himself. Although Hallward, Sibyl, and James are all also victims of
violent deaths, all three of them are presented as reasonably moral characters. None of them commits a crime during the course of the novel, and none of them behaves cruelly without reason (James attempts to murder Dorian but does so in an arguably noble act of revenge). The difference between these three figures and Dorian—who is villainous and meets a terrible end—is that Dorian alone does not possess a mix of masculine and feminine attitudes towards work. Dorian Gray is purely feminine, and so the narrative punishes him hardest of all.
CHAPTER THREE:
MENTAL AND PHYSICAL FORTITUDE

The Victorians valued men who were courageous, healthy, and athletic. A real man loved the outdoors, exercised regularly, and always stayed calm in the face of danger. In Doyle’s stories, men who possess some masculine and some feminine traits in regard to this ideal are usually good people who achieve their goals. Purely feminine men are presented as the villains of their stories and do not receive happy endings. In The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, we once again see a divide between Utterson, who is presented as the epitome of masculine fortitude and health, and Jekyll/Hyde, who is cowardly and weak. In The Picture of Dorian Gray, Dorian is again a purely feminine figure contrasted with James and Sibyl, who both embody a mixture of masculine and feminine traits.

Although Watson was a soldier before meeting Holmes, he is not a war hero who feels at home in the trenches. His opinion of the battlefield is in fact mostly negative: “The campaign brought honours and promotion to many, but for me it had nothing but misfortune and disaster,” writes Watson (15). He goes on to explain that he would have died in battle if not for the “devotion and courage” showed by his orderly (15). Once again, Watson’s masculinity is mixed: he is a soldier, but an unsuccessful one. He becomes physically compromised and requires another man—who better embodies masculine fortitude—to save him. After sustaining his injury, Watson becomes ill, further diminishing his manliness. He describes himself as “[w]orn with pain,” “weak and emaciated,” with his “health irretrievably ruined”
(15). Even after recovering considerably, Watson still attests, “the Jezail bullet which I had brought back in one of my limbs as a relic of my Afghan campaign throbbed with dull persistence” during inclement weather (287).

On a more traditionally masculine note, Watson’s time in combat means that he can endure less than comfortable living arrangements. When Mrs. St. Clair apologizes for the state of her home, Watson replies, “I am an old campaigner,” implying that he is accustomed to situations that lack personal comfort and luxuries (237). He also enjoys nature in a way Holmes is incapable of: upon seeing the “rolling hills” and “foliage” outside the windows of their train car, Watson enthusiastically exclaims, “Are they not fresh and beautiful?” (322). Holmes “sh[akes] his head gravely,” and explains his belief that “the lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside” (322). In this case, Watson continues to embody both the masculine and the feminine.

On the other hand, despite his distrust of nature, Holmes is purely masculine in regard to strength and athleticism. Describing their first meeting, Watson of Holmes “gripping my hand with a strength for which I should hardly have given him credit” (17-18). The detective is no stranger to organized sport: he is “an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman” (22). As these skills would suggest, Holmes’s cases sometimes require him to engage in physical combat, at which he is exceptionally talented. In “The Red-Headed League,” Watson describes a battle between Holmes and a criminal, in which Holmes “had sprung out and seized the intruder by the collar” (189). The other man produced a “revolver, but Holmes’s
hunting crop came down on the man’s wrist, and the pistol clinked upon the stone floor” (189). Unarmed except for a riding crop, Holmes successfully relies on his own physical strength and speed to defeat an armed criminal, which is certainly impressive. Indeed, Holmes later refers to himself as “exceptionally strong in the fingers” (310). In addition to these talents at combat, Holmes partakes in regular exercise in the form of “an afternoon stroll” (287). Holmes is also willing to endure a significant amount of physical strain and discomfort for the sake of his cases. When Watson first meets him, Holmes requires human blood in order to complete an experiment and wastes no time in pricking his own finger to supply the amount necessary. Perhaps Holmes, then, would have made the better soldier.

In contrast, the villains of Doyle’s stories tend to be cowardly and unathletic. In “A Case of Identity,” Sutherland explains that Hosmer Angel “had the quinsy and swollen glands when he was young,” which “left him with a weak throat, and a hesitating, whispering fashion of speech” (194). Frailty is a theme for Angel: Sutherland describes his eyesight as “weak” as well (194). The man’s personality is similarly feeble, as he is “very shy” and “hated to be conspicuous” (194). Of course, all these personal qualities are fabricated so that Windibank can maintain his disguise: he whispers to conceal his real voice, uses weak eyesight as an excuse to wear shaded glasses, and hates to be conspicuous lest anyone recognize him as James Windibank. Even so, Doyle clearly draws a parallel here between Angel’s physical and mental weakness and the suspicious nature of the character, as these details help Holmes to discover the truth of his identity. In this case, a timid man weakened by illness is also a cruel person who exploits others for his own gain.
In “The Boscombe Valley Mystery,” all evidence points to James McCarthy as the murderer. Holmes believes that he is in fact innocent, and pronounces that McCarthy displays “the signs of a healthy mind rather than of a guilty one” (205). It is certainly telling that Holmes chooses the word “healthy” here rather than the more obvious “innocent.” Holmes’s firm belief in McCarthy’s mental health stems from McCarthy’s ability to look crisis in the face calmly, without panic or despair: “His frank acceptance of the situation marks him as either an innocent man, or else as a man of considerable self-restraint and firmness” (205). In this case, Holmes considers McCarthy’s “firmness” in the face of danger such a positive trait that he is convinced of McCarthy’s innocence based on that observation alone. McCarthy is a rare character who does seem to exemplify normative masculinity—but as he is only present for a brief interlude, it is difficult to determine whether he possesses perfect masculinity in all aspects of his life.

Holmes soon discovers that John Turner committed the murder in question (his faith in McCarthy’s innocence was well-founded). Turner is the epitome of the rugged, masculine outdoorsman. He lived in the brush of Australia for many years, where he acted as a highway robber. His open-air lifestyle involved considerable excitement, adventure, and at times physical combat. Additionally, Turner calls himself “strong of limb,” and describes how he “stood firm” in a time of crisis (216). Watson paints a similar picture of Turner in his report to the reader: “his hard, deep-lined, craggy features, and his enormous limbs showed that he was possessed of unusual strength of body and of character. His tangled beard, grizzled hair, and outstanding, drooping eyebrows combined to give an air of dignity and power to his
appearance” (215). It is telling that Watson includes details of Turner’s moral character along with his other observations. Watson is able to determine Turner’s physical capabilities from examining the man’s appearance, but his descriptions of Turner as “possessed of unusual strength of… character” and “an air of dignity” are assumptions Watson makes based on Turner’s appearance. For Watson (and for most Victorians), a man who was grizzled and strong was also necessarily dignified and in possession of great moral fiber.

Yet Turner’s masculinity is compromised by the fact that he is “in the grip of some deadly and chronic disease,” which gives him a “slow, limping step” and the “appearance of decrepitude” (215). He soon reveals that he is dying of diabetes. Turner’s moral situation is similarly complex. He was a highway robber, but later began a new, respectable life and vowed to atone for past crimes. He committed murder, but revealed to Holmes that the victim had been blackmailing him for years; Turner killed in order to save his daughter from the same fate. The end of Turner’s tale is bittersweet as well: his daughter is safe, and he will not be sent to prison, but he knows that he will die of his diabetes within the month. In Turner’s case, a combination of masculine and feminine traits leads to a similarly grey morality and complicated fate.

Elias Openshaw is an ex-colonel who, unlike Watson, performed “very well” in the US Army (219). After the war ends, he continues to enjoy outdoor pursuits in England, where he “take[s] his exercise” in the “garden and two or three fields round his house” (219). But after receiving an ominous letter in the mail, Openshaw “shrieked” with a “trembling hand”: “His lip had fallen, his eyes were protruding, his
skin the colour of putty” (220). Openshaw shuts himself in his room and refuses to emerge, meaning that he ceases to exercise. His isolation also represents an inability to bravely face his imminent death: Openshaw’s grandson John explains, “sometimes he would emerge in a sort of drunken frenzy and would burst out of the house and tear about the garden with a revolver in his hand, screaming out that he was afraid of no man, and that he was not to be cooped up” (221). However, when these fits are over, Openshaw returns to his room “like a man who can brazen it out no longer against the terror which lies at the roots of his soul” (221). Openshaw has two ways of facing his fears—his drunken frenzies represent a lapse in masculine self-control; his periods of hiding are timid and cowardly. Neither method resembles the masculine level-headedness in the face of danger that the Victorians valued. Of course, as previously mentioned, Openshaw is an unpleasant man who meets a violent end. Because he is unable to cope with his terror and subsequently abandons his athletic lifestyle, he is heavily punished by the narrative.

In “A Case of Identity,” Neville St. Clair disguises himself as the “crippled” beggar Hugh Boone (234). Because of his physical disability, Watson is skeptical of the beggar’s ability to commit murder: “But a cripple! … What could he have done single-handed against a man in the prime of life?” (235). Holmes points out that Boone “walks with a limp; but in other respects he appears to be a powerful and well-nurured man… weakness in one limb is often compensated for by exceptional strength in the others” (235). Holmes encourages Watson not to underestimate Boone, but does so by pointing out that Boone might actually still be physically capable; Holmes does not question the idea that physical strength is necessary for this man to
be taken seriously. It is also important that Neville St. Clair does not really walk with a limp, but has put one on as part of his disguise. When Holmes uncovers Boone’s disguise, he discovers that the beggar’s limp was false in the same moment he proves that Boone could not have killed St. Clair: any suspicion of Boone being a murderer vanishes in tandem with the discovery that he is actually physically fit. St. Clair’s masculinity is further complicated by this incident—although he is not really disabled, he still walked with a limp for a considerable amount of time.

In “The Adventure of the Speckled Band,” we are introduced to Miss Helen Stoner, who reacts to fear in a traditionally feminine way. She shivers with “terror,” and appears “in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and gray, with restless, frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal” (258). She is very much on edge; when Holmes makes a correct deduction about her situation, Stoner “g[ives] a violent start” (259). Yet it must be noted that, at the first sign of danger, Stoner travelled by herself from the countryside to London in order to seek the services of a detective. Although her physical reaction to fear is not perfectly calm and rational, she is still had the courage to do something productive and optimistic—hiring Holmes and believing that he could solve her case—when faced with danger. Stoner fits into the category of characters who embody some aspects of masculinity and some of femininity, and is treated appropriately by the narrative: she is a virtuous woman who is unfairly put through trauma, and comes out of her ordeal alive.

Like Stoner, Doyle’s other female characters are often braver than a Victorian reader might expect. After asking for news of her husband, Mrs. St. Clair instructs Holmes, “Do not trouble about my feelings. I am not hysterical, nor given to fainting”
Watson describes Mary Holder as “sweet” and “womanly,” but also as “a woman of strong character, with immense capacity for self-restraint” (309). Irene Adler, too, is notable for her emotional strength. The King of Bohemia says that “she has a soul of steel. She has the face of the most beautiful of women, and the mind of the most resolute of men” (166). This immediately presents Adler as a character that blends masculinity and femininity. Although she appears “the daintiest thing under a bonnet on this planet,” she is able to beat Holmes at his own game through sheer wit and daring (168). Adler’s cleverness firmly contradicts the Victorian idea that only men were rational enough to be intellectual, and Holmes is outwitted precisely because he underestimates her capabilities as a woman. Adler also frequently presents herself as a man in public: in a letter to Holmes, she writes, “Male costume is nothing new to me. I often take advantage of the freedom which it gives” (175). Adler is able to succeed in all her endeavors—as well as winning deep respect from every man in the story. It is clear that Doyle celebrated women who blended masculinity and femininity.

In “The Adventure of the Engineer’s Thumb,” Victor Hatherly comes to Watson for treatment after his thumb is ripped off. Despite having just suffered this grisly injury, Hatherly is remarkably composed, and gives Watson “the impression of a man who was suffering from some strong agitation, which it took all his strength of mind to control” (274). He reveals that, upon waking from a faint to find his thumb removed, he created a tourniquet himself and headed for a doctor with incredible level-headedness. It is no wonder, then, that Watson describes Hatherly’s face as “strong” and “masculine” (274). However, Hatherly’s perfect self-control soon slips:
Watson writes, “He laughed very heartily, with a high ringing note... All my medical instincts rose up against that laugh... He was off in one of those hysterical outbursts which come upon a strong nature when some great crisis is over and gone. Presently he came to himself once more, very weary and pale-looking” (275). Several aspects of this incident are coded as feminine: the high-pitched voice, the word “hysterical,” the fact that Hatherly’s self-control has slipped and allowed for a dramatic emotional outburst. Watson is deeply disturbed by this, to the point where he feels that doing so is medically unsafe for Hatherly. Indeed, afterwards Hatherly looks considerably worse for wear, appearing physically weak and ill. Yet Watson specifies that this laughter is symptomatic of people of a “strong nature,” which would imply that it happens to especially masculine men (275). This seems to confirm Doyle’s view that most men mix masculinity and femininity to some degree: men who are especially manly are also prone to moments of intense femininity. And because Watson does not seem concerned in the long run by Hatherly’s outburst—he assures Hatherly that he did not in fact make a fool of himself—Doyle implies that his readers should not be especially troubled by male moments of femininity either.

Hatherly fits the model of a virtuous character who is put through an upsetting incident and comes out mostly unharmed. Another similar character is Alexander Holder in “The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet.” He is described as “tall” and “imposing, with a massive, strongly-marked face and a commanding figure” (301). Yet Holder also becomes very “out of breath” after a brisk walk, describing himself as a “man who takes very little exercise” (302). He also reacts to fear in a highly undignified way: he “jerked his hands up and down, waggled his head, and writhed
his face into the most extraordinary contortions,” escalating to the point where he “beat his head against the wall” (301, 301-2). Yet Holder is eventually able to bravely “fight[.] against his extreme emotion” long enough to speak to Holmes and Watson, and Watson claims that Holder’s terrified gestures appear “in absurd contrast to the dignity of his dress and features” (301). Like many of Doyle’s characters who blend masculinity and femininity, Holder is a somewhat bumbling and incompetent—but overall moral—person whose mistakes are fixable and result in no lasting harm.

In “The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor,” we are introduced to Hatty Doran, a woman who in many ways embodies masculinity. Her fiancé, Robert St. Simon, describes her childhood:

During that time she ran free in a mining camp and wandered through woods or mountains, so that her education has come from Nature rather than from the schoolmaster. She is what we call in England a tomboy, with a strong nature, wild and free, unfettered by any sort of traditions. She is impetuous—volcanic, I was about to say. She is swift in making up her mind and fearless in carrying out her resolutions. On the other hand… [she is] a noble woman. I believe that she is capable of heroic self-sacrifice and that anything dishonourable would be repugnant to her (292).

Clearly, Doran possesses considerable strength and courage. She lived an adventurous, outdoor lifestyle for many years, and spent considerable time in a mining camp, a place of male employment rather than a feminine home. She is “strong,” “fearless,” “heroic,” and engages in “self-sacrifice,” all traits highly valued in Victorian men. Even St. Simon says that she is masculine: he calls her a “tomboy” and explains that she does not subscribe to any traditions, presumably including traditional gender roles.
It soon comes to light that Doran was initially engaged to another man and must marry him rather than St. Simon. Her true fiancé, Frank Moulton, is masculine in a similar manner to Doran: he is “sunburnt” from working outdoors at the mining camp where the two met (298). In contrast, St. Simon’s dress is “careful to the verge of foppishness,” bringing to mind the stereotype of the dandy (291). His servants prepare an expensive, luxurious meal at his instruction, linking him with decadence and excess rather than selfless, outdoor labor. Doran reveals that she is deeply in love with Moulton, and was only willing to settle for St. Simon because she thought Moulton dead—she clearly chooses Moulton over St. Simon. This is not the only way in which St. Simon is painted as the villain of this story. He is arrogant and bitter, and refuses to stay and dine with the others because he is unable to forgive Doran for her actions. Holmes sides with Doran and Moulton, laughing at St. Simon’s arrogance and telling Moulton that his “company” is an “honour” because it is “always a joy to meet an American” (299).

In this story, a masculine woman and her masculine husband are our heroes, while a feminine man is unlikable and ends the tale unhappy. Perhaps for Doyle, women had more freedom to transgress gender roles than men did. Masculinity was something that could be celebrated in both men and women, whereas wholly feminine men were to be condemned. However, this interpretation becomes more complicated when one takes into account the other factors present: St. Simon is also a nobleman (Doran and Moulton are not) and an Englishman (in contrast with two Americans). It is difficult to say whether this story condemns feminine men, or rather condemns the
English aristocracy in favor of the hard-working, down-to-earth people of a supposedly classless society.

The very first sentence of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* describes Utterson as “a man of a rugged countenance” (3). He exercises regularly in the form of “Sunday walks,” putting “the greatest store by these excursions” (3, 4). When Jekyll becomes ill, Utterson’s first instinct is to suggest exercise as a cure: “You should be out, whipping up the circulation like Mr. Einfield and me,” he tells Jekyll. “Come, now; get your hat and take a quick turn with us” (33). But Jekyll insists that this is “quite impossible”; unlike Utterson, he is not in the habit of exercising (33). In fact, Utterson describes Jekyll’s “tread” as “heavy” and “creaking,” hardly the descriptors of a man accustomed to long walks (41-2). On the few occasions Jekyll does seem to partake in outdoor activity—“stepping leisurely across the court… drinking the chill of the air with pleasure”—he is interrupted violently by a transformation into Hyde, who cuts short his ability to exercise (66).

Jekyll/Hyde is also a cowardly person. Enfield describes Hyde as “frightened”; upon meeting Utterson, Hyde “shrank back with a hissing intake of the breath” due to “his fear” (6, 13). He is later described as exhibiting a “sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness” (14). Lanyon describes Hyde as “wrestling against the approaches of the hysteria,” and becoming so agitated that Lanyon “grew alarmed both for his life and reason” (50-1). “Compose yourself,” Lanyon tells Hyde (51). Jekyll, too, is prone to frequent, visible displays of fear. While out walking, Utterson and Einfield strike up a conversation with Jekyll at his window; all at once, Jekyll’s face takes on an “expression of such abject terror and
despair, as fr[eezes] the very blood of the two gentlemen below” (34). On another occasion, Jekyll “seem[s] seized with a qualm of faintness” when Utterson questions him about Hyde; this parallels the woman who “fainted” at the “horror of” of seeing Hyde commit murder out her window (26, 20). Jekyll/Hyde, then, clearly exhibits a feminine attitude towards danger. Jekyll himself admits as much: in a letter to Utterson, he writes of the “terrors” he has experienced, which are “so unmanning” (31).

In contrast, Utterson is only described as fearful when he has just “recover[ed] from the hotness of his alarm” (29). He is briefly afraid to read a letter from Lanyon, but soon “condemn[s] the fear as a disloyalty” and opens it anyway (31). Although he is “fearful” of what he will discover should he visit Jekyll, he still dutifully goes to call on him (32). And upon arriving at Jekyll’s house for the final time, “Utterson’s nerves… g[ive] a jerk that nearly thr[ows] him from his balance; but he re-collect[s] his courage” and enters the building, making a “call on his resolution” (37). In comparison with Jekyll’s footman Bradshaw, who is “very white and nervous,” Utterson calmly tells him, “Pull yourself together,” because doing so is imperative to their goal of helping Jekyll (41). For Utterson, manly virtue wins out over womanly fear every time.

Jekyll also fails to maintain a masculine standard of physical health. He is described as “ill,” “looking deadly sick,” and possessing a “feverish manner” (30, 24, 25). Although his relationship to Hyde is science-fictional in nature, the language Stevenson uses to refer to it is often medical, implying that Hyde himself is an illness afflicting Jekyll: Poole speaks of Hyde “crying… for some sort of medicine,” and
Utterson hopes that Jekyll will achieve “recovery” from his “maladies” (38; 39). Jekyll’s transformation into Hyde, too, is accompanied by negative physical symptoms such as “nausea,” “shuddering,” and “faintness” (64). Additionally, Jekyll describes himself as “elderly” in contrast to the “comparative youth” of Hyde, calling to mind the essay “Modern Beau Brummellism” in which the author heavily condemned older men who pretend to be younger than they are (61).

Interestingly, Lanyon’s health also deteriorates after meeting Hyde. When Utterson goes to visit him, Lanyon has his “death-warrant written legibly upon his face. The rosy man has grown pale; his flesh has fallen away; he is visibly balder and older” than when Utterson last saw him (30). He has undergone a “swift physical decay,” and Stevenson implies that these ailments have come about because of fear: his eyes “and quality of manner… testify to some deep-seated terror of the mind” (30). Indeed, Lanyon later writes that “the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night” (52). “I have had a shock,” Lanyon tells Utterson, “and I shall never recover. It is a question of weeks” (30). He is accurate in his diagnosis, for one week later, he passes away. This is quite the contrast to Lanyon’s first appearance in the novella, where he is described as “a hearty, healthy, dapper, red-faced gentleman” (10). Jekyll’s butler Poole is similarly changed by his employer’s presence: Poole’s “manner is altered for the worse,” and he expresses “his terror” to Utterson (35). Stevenson suggests that Jekyll’s lack of masculine fortitude is so pervasive that it has become somehow contagious, for both Lanyon and Poole seem to be in good physical and mental health before the events of the novella come to pass. This idea is supported by the fact that Lanyon experiences physical symptoms upon meeting
Hyde for the first time: he describes his own “incipient rigour” and “a marked sinking of the pulse” (10).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, James is an interesting combination of the manly outdoorsman and the feminine homebody. In his first appearance in the novel, he tells his sister Sibyl, “I want you to come out with me for a walk,” and subsequently goes for a stroll with her (61). But when James tries to imagine his future as a sailor, he thinks that it will a “dreadful” life on a “horrid ship, with the hoarse, hump-backed waves trying to get in, and a black wind blowing the masts down” (64). Although James enjoys light exercise, he is deeply uncomfortable at the thought of a lifestyle involving physical labor and exposure to the harsh elements of nature. Next, he tries to imagine himself as a gold miner, having swashbuckling adventures fighting “bushrangers” that he would “defeat[] with immense slaughter” (62). Working in a gold mine is a similarly vigorous, outdoor job, but James dismisses this notion as well, because gold mines are “horrid places” (62). His last vision is that of himself as a “nice sheep farmer,” who rides a horse and saves a maiden from a highway robber (62). It seems James has found a happy medium—the job involves some exercise and open air, but does not put him through hard physical labor. James will engage in combat, but only combat of a very vague sort that he does not dwell for very long.

In the real world, James is willing to fight courageously for his sister’s honor, to engage Dorian in a real physical battle—but he fails to actually kill Dorian, and ends the scene “trembling from head to foot” (183). Of course, an afternoon of sport ends up getting James killed, proving that outdoor activities really are quite
disastrous, and even deadly, for him. In this case, James exhibits a mixture of masculine and feminine traits in that he likes the idea of an athletic, outdoor lifestyle but is not willing to fully commit to one.

From the beginning of the novel, Wilde makes it clear that Dorian is not a courageous outdoorsman. Henry contrasts Hallward’s “strong, rugged face” with Dorian, who “looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose leaves” (6). Delicate rose leaves are hardly a symbol of brawny fortitude; Rita Felski agrees that Dorian’s “scarlet lips, golden hair, and eternal youth” make him a physically androgynous character. Additionally, Dorian’s reactions to the world around him are usually indicative of fear rather than bravery. When he believes that James has arrived to attack him, he hides inside the house, “sick with the wild terror of dying” (191). He becomes increasingly paranoid, feeling “terror in every tingling fibre of his body,” to the point that Henry tells Dorian, “How absurdly nervous you are, my dear fellow! You must come and see my doctor, when we get back to town” (197, 195). Dorian describes feeling “faint and sick” after the death of Hallward, and in fact does faint in the middle of a party in a highly feminine manner (174). And like Hyde, Dorian’s sickly, fearful temperament becomes contagious to those around him: upon seeing the portrait again, Hallward let out “[a]n exclamation of horror” (149). His “forehead was dank with clammy sweat,” “[h]is hands shook,” and he “looked at Dorian Gray with the eyes of a sick man” (149).

Dorian does not often spend time in nature, the occasions on which he does have a calming effect on his intense emotions. After Dorian’s disastrous final

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encounter with Sibyl, Dorian “step[s] out onto the grass” and “draw[s] a deep breath. The fresh morning air seem[s] to drive away all his sombre passions” (89). Years later, there is “something in the clear, pine-scented air of that winter morning that seem[s] to bring him back to his joyousness and his ardour for life” (192). The fact that nature holds such positive properties for Dorian makes it even more striking that, as the novel goes on, he increasingly shuts himself inside the house. There is surely a connection between his intense, feminine passion and his lack of masculine outdoor pursuits. It is also notable that, immediately after Dorian tells Henry that he has made up his mind to become a good person, he recounts an incident in which he “was going through the Park,” associating outdoor exercise with morality (205).

On the only other occasion that Dorian takes part in an outdoor activity, he “walk[s]… for an hour in the garden” and then attends a “shooting-party” (192). The sights and sounds of the men shooting “fascinated him and filled him with a sense of delightful freedom” (193). However, Dorian soon proves that he is not cut out to be a hunter; upon noticing the grace of the hare that Geoffrey is about to shoot, Dorian cries, “Don’t shoot it Geoffrey. Let it live” (193). He later tells Henry that he wishes hunting “were stopped for ever… The whole thing is hideous and cruel” (194). Although Dorian has a passing interest in shooting, he quickly dismisses it as something he does not enjoy or approve of. Once again, Dorian is a purely feminine character: he is cowardly and ill, and does not participate in any athletic activities. Although nature seems to have therapeutic properties for him, he does not often take advantage of it; the healing Dorian does receive is too little too late.
CHAPTER FOUR:

DEGENERACY

Max Nordeau feared the “the degenerate”: a man without a conscience who committed constant crimes and cruelties. The degenerate was recognizable from his decadent lifestyle, apathetic depression, physical deformities, and inappropriately intense emotionality—especially about art. Although many characters in these books fail to fully conform to Victorian standards of masculinity, Jekyll/Hyde and Dorian fail so dramatically at manliness that they fit Nordeau’s conception of the degenerate. Some of Holmes’s culprits reflect this cultural worry and could be called degenerates as well. Neither Holmes nor Watson perfectly fits into the trope, but both possess some of the traits Nordeau described; this is yet another example of how the two blend masculinity and femininity in their behavior.

Alyce von Rothkirk agrees that the “fear of degeneracy greatly influenced the depiction of villains” in the Sherlock Holmes stories. She specifically cites Roylott as an example, a heartless character who possesses “[v]iolence of temper approaching to mania” and is “absolutely uncontrollable in his anger” (260). He frequently starts “disgraceful brawls” and commits murder and abuse without remorse (260). Like Nordeau’s degenerate, Roylott’s wicked nature is clearly visible in his physical appearance: he possesses a “large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun, and marked with every evil passion” (264). Similarly, Hatherly

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explains that he was talking with Colonel Lysander Stark when a “feeling of repulsion, and of something akin to fear had begun to rise within” him (277). He gives no logical reason for this sudden onslaught of disgust—except for the fact that Stark is frighteningly, unnaturally thin. This instinct turns out to be a good one, for Stark is a counterfeiter who attempts to murder Hatherly.

Although St. Clair is not a degenerate, he does use makeup to make his face seem “disfigured by a horrible scar,” to the point where Watson refers to him as a “crippled wretch of hideous aspect” notable for his “repulsive ugliness” (235, 234, 241). St. Clair is suspected of murder, but after Holmes washes his face, he is revealed to be neither ugly nor deformed and is simultaneously cleared of all suspicion. Like Stark and Roylott, St. Clair feeds into Nordeau’s idea that a degenerate can be identified by visible physical defects. Another possible degenerate in the Holmes stories is the child that Hunter cares for, whose “whole life appears to be spent in an alternation between savage fits of passion and gloomy intervals of sulking” (324). The child also enjoys torturing small animals. Echoing Nordeau’s idea that degeneracy is hereditary, Holmes theorizes that the boy’s propensity for “cruelty for cruelty’s sake” was passed down to him by one of his parents (330).

While Holmes and Watson are certainly not degenerates, they do possess some aspects of the degenerate femininity that so frightened Nordeau—this is yet another way that these two characters represent a combination of masculine and feminine traits. Anna Neill believes that, before meeting Holmes, Watson could be classified as a degenerate due to his “objectless” life and pessimism towards the future (20). She writes, “Watson’s identification with the urban refuse of the empire,
together with his metaphor of the metropolitan landscape as cultural sewer, suggests Nordeau’s degenerative ‘feeling[s] of immanent perdition and extinction.’”

Holmes soon sets Watson right, as his passion for knowledge is the exact opposite of depressed, directionless decadence. This energetic influence in opposition to degeneracy is epitomized in Holmes’s words to John Openshaw: “You must act, man, or you are lost. Nothing but energy can save you. This is no time for despair” (223). Watson does not approve of degenerate decadence either: he refers to the King of Bohemia’s extravagant clothing as “barbaric opulence” in “bad taste” (164). Neill also posits that Holmes and Watson reduce the degeneracy of the world around them through their mission to rid London of criminals.

Yet Holmes does possess one trait indicative of a degenerate: intense emotionality. Watson claims, “All emotions… were abhorrent to [Holmes’s] cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind” (162). Apparently, Holmes has rejected all emotion through sheer force of will, so as not to corrupt his talent for pure reason. This paints an image of Holmes as an incredibly masculine figure—one who is not prone to emotional outbursts, who always values his head over his heart—yet Holmes proves time and again that Watson is incorrect in this view of him. When the two men first meet, Holmes has just achieved results in his scientific experiment and “spr[ings] to his feet with a cry of pleasure” (17). “Had he discovered a gold mine, greater delight could not have shone upon his features,” writes Watson (17). On another occasion, Holmes “choked and laughed… until he was obliged to lie back, limp and helpless, in the chair” (167). The detective is no stranger to displays of negative

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emotion, either. After learning that one of their clients has died, Watson writes that he “could see that Holmes was deeply moved” (227). He describes how Holmes, “depressed and shaken,” “paced about the room in uncontrollable agitation” (228). On another occasion, upon receiving unbelievable news, Watson recalls that Holmes “sprung out of his chair as if he had been galvanized. ‘What!’ he roared” (238).

In “A Case of Identity,” Holmes is so upset by a case that he actually becomes violent. Holmes tells Windibank, “If the young lady has a brother or a friend, he ought to lay a whip across your shoulders… here’s a hunting crop handy” (201). Holmes then takes “two swift steps to the whip, but before he c[an] grasp it,” Windibank flees from the building (201). Even Holmes admits that it is “not part of [his] duties to [his] client” to enact vengeance for a crime, but he is so moved by the horrible nature of Windibank’s actions—and frustrated by the fact that the law cannot touch him—that Holmes impulsively and emotionally decides to take matters into his own hands. Similarly, Watson describes Holmes’s “purely animal lust for the chase” when in search of a culprit, bringing to mind the animalistic lack of self-control described by Nordeau (211). Sometimes, however, Holmes’s intense bursts of emotions are not entirely genuine. After tricking a man into believing that he has just beat Holmes at a wager, Holmes appears “deeply chagrined… turning away with the air of a man whose disgust is too deep for words” (238). A moment later, he has a good laugh about the affair with Watson. The Victorians scorned male emotional displays in part because they believed them to be often fabricated and disingenuous, which is exactly the case in this scene.
But Holmes is not a degenerate—he has a strong moral compass, is usually optimistic, and is passionate about his cases. His physical appearance does not repulse those around him, but is characterized by an air of “alertness and decision” that makes Watson believe he is a “man of determination” upon their first meeting (20). Yet Holmes is an emotional man, especially about art: he and Watson once attended the orchestra, all “the afternoon [Holmes] sat in the stalls wrapped in the most perfect happiness, gently waving his long, thin fingers in time to the music” (185). At times he speaks in a way reminiscent of the aesthetic movement: “To the man who loves art for its own sake,” Holmes begins, describing how to gain the “keenest pleasure” possible from literature (316). Holmes is also guilty of giving into temptation in the form of frequent cocaine use. For Doyle, human archetypes were not so black-and-white as they were for Nordeau: one could embody some traits of the degenerate but not others.

This is also true of several other characters in the Holmes stories: Alexander Holder reacts with “weariness and lethargy” at his misfortune rather than optimistic energy, and when Holmes solves his case, Holder’s “reaction of joy was as passionate as his grief had been” (312, 313). Yet he is not deformed and certainly has a conscience. Even Doyle’s villains sometimes break from the mold of degeneracy: Sir George Burwell is an “absolutely desperate villain, a man without heart or conscience,” but he is also a “man of great personal beauty,” proving that not every man who exhibits degenerate behavior has an evil appearance to match (304).

Hyde fits Nordeau’s description of a degenerate much more closely. Enfield tells Utterson that Hyde “trampled calmly over the child’s body and left her
screaming on the ground” (5). Hyde’s “perfectly cool” demeanor while harming a child indicates his utter lack of conscience (5). Enfield says that there “is something wrong with [Hyde’s] appearance, something displeasing, something downright detestable… He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn’t specify the point” (7). Although Enfield cannot identify what specific physical imperfection Hyde might have, he associates deformities with a moral depravity so strongly that he assumes Hyde must have one. Utterson, too, believes that Hyde’s “look… went somehow strongly against the watcher’s inclination,” in part because of this “the impression of deformity” (12, 14).

Like the degenerate, Hyde is a deeply emotional creature. In his first conversation with Utterson, he cries out his words “with a flush of anger” and “snarl[s] aloud into a savage laugh” (13, 14). He possesses an “ill-contained impatience,” “lively” to the point where he “sought to shake” Lanyon (19, 50). Hyde “gnashed [his] teeth… with a gust of devilish fury” at a man who dared to laugh at him; Jekyll admits that if the man had not stopped laughing, Hyde might have attacked him (65). When provoked on another occasion, Hyde “br[eaks] out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane, and carrying on… like a madman” (19). Finally, he murders the object of his rage, propelled by an “ape-like fury” (20). Hyde is the personification of “the animal within [Jekyll]”: he has degenerated from a man into something far more bestial that cannot hope to control itself (64). In contrast, the other male characters in Jekyll and Hyde tend to refrain from emotional outbursts. Enfield says that the doctor who arrived to treat the trampled child was a “usual cut-and-dry” sort of man, who was “about as emotional
as a bagpipe” (5). Lanyon tells Utterson, “I affected a coolness that I was far from truly possessing,” indicating that he is not in the habit of letting his true emotions come to the surface (51). These characters make Hyde’s unusually strong emotionality seem even more dramatic.

Jekyll also exhibits despair towards himself and the world. He tells Utterson, “I have lost confidence in myself,” and looks out his window “with an infinite sadness of mien”; his suicide, of course, points to this degenerate depression as well (25, 33). On another occasion, Jekyll describes the “streaming tears” that run down his face, and Jekyll’s butler Poole confesses that he once “heard [Hyde] weeping… like a woman or a lost soul” (63, 42). It is clear that Hyde’s emotionality is linked to his femininity. In a similar vein, Enfield says that Hyde “wasn’t like a man” (5). He likely refers to Hyde’s inhuman nature, but Stevenson still chose the word “man” here rather than a more unisex “human” or “person.”

Like true degenerates, Jekyll and Hyde both lead decadent lifestyles. Jekyll’s chambers are “cosily” decorated, and his home possesses “a great air of wealth and comfort” (44, 14). Hyde wears clothes of a “rich… fabric” (49). He “only used a couple of rooms” in Jekyll’s home, “but these were furnished with luxury and good taste. A closet was filled with wine; the plate was of silver, the napery elegant; a good picture hung upon the walls, a gift (as Utterson supposed) from Henry Jekyll, who was much of a connoisseur” (22). Stephen D. Arata informs us that, in a response to a critique of the novella, Stevenson confirmed that Hyde purchased this painting for
himself, proving that he has an appreciation for art as well as Jekyll.\textsuperscript{77} Jekyll and Hyde’s love of comfort and luxury is damning with regard to their masculinity: a Victorian man should prefer functionality to beauty and be able to brave unfavorable conditions.

Hyde also, of course, gives into every impulse that comes into his head, often committing cruel and immoral acts in the name of his own “pleasures” (58). Hyde’s “every act and thought center[s] on self,” rather than the altruism admired in Victorian men (58). Jekyll admits that he indulged in a similar manner when he was a young man, and that he now looks forward to Hyde’s misbehavior “with a greedy gusto” (58). When Jekyll attempts to control his immoral urges, he becomes “tortured with throes and longings… and at last… compound[s] and swallow[s] the transforming draught” that allows him to become Hyde and give into temptation once again (58). Overall, Jekyll fails spectacularly at masculine self-control.

In contrast with the degenerate Hyde, Utterson is described as “never lighted by a smile,” “backward in sentiment,” and “undemonstrative at best” (3, 13). When Utterson meets Hyde, despite experiencing a strong sensation of disgust, Utterson “ke[eps] his feelings to himself” (13). He is so stoic that even the most sinful of men “never mark[] a shade of change in his demeanor” (3). In fact, when Utterson and Poole break down the door to Jekyll’s chambers with an axe, Utterson is “ashamed by [his] own riot,” repulsed by his uncharacteristic outburst despite its necessity (42). Utterson is also generally an optimistic person: Hyde is able to make him feel “a nausea and distaste of life… a gloom of his spirits,” but Utterson clarifies that this

momentary depression is “rare with him” (15). Most of all, Utterson is a deeply moral man; his kindness shines through, not in exclamations of feeling, but in the “acts of his life,” for Utterson is a man of action rather than emotion (3). Tellingly, “it [is] frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of down-going men” (3). If Hyde is one of these “down-going men,” Utterson is his clear foil, a man who has retained his masculinity and resisted degeneracy in all its forms.

Arata also contrasts Jekyll/Hyde’s obvious degeneracy with Utterson and his friends, all of whom are skilled professionals rather than physical laborers or landed gentry. He argues that Hyde represents both a criminal underclass and a decadent upper class, but that the novella is truly about its middle-class protagonists: indeed, readers spend far more time with Utterson than they do with Jekyll and Hyde. In this case, the Victorian fear of degeneracy is connected to the fear of male failure to work: a degenerate is a petty criminal who could not hope to be a lawyer or doctor, but he is also a man who believes such work would be beneath him because he deserves only pleasure. In this sense, all Victorian anxieties about masculinity are connected.

Like Jekyll and Hyde, nearly everyone in The Picture of Dorian Gray lives a life of excess. Wilde’s descriptions of Hallward’s studio are the picture of decadence, from “the rich odour of roses” that fills the room to the “divan of Persian saddlebags” on which his guests recline (5). Hallward speaks of the aestheticist idea that artists should merely “create beautiful things,” and Henry expresses his aestheticism when he defends “dyed hair and painted faces” (14, 238). Henry smokes “innumerable cigarettes” and tells Dorian of his philosophy that men should give into every urge
that comes to them, without any “self-denial”: “The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it,” Henry says (5, 21). Despite this evidence to the contrary, neither Hallward nor Henry could be classified as a degenerate. Neither are physically deformed or overly emotive; Hallward is an upstanding citizen, and while Henry verbally endorses indulgence in sinful pleasures, he does not follow his own advice and put his words into action. In this sense, Basil and Henry continue to be characters who blend masculinity and femininity.

Dorian Gray, on the other hand, could certainly be classified as a degenerate. Instead of selfless pursuits, Dorian dedicates his life to “infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins,” and “seem[s], at times, to have almost entirely lost control” (102, 123). He possesses “mad hungers that grow[] more ravenous the more he feed[s] them” and his ideology is best described as a “worship of the senses” (124, 125). Dorian’s life is the epitome of decadence: he passes time in opium dens and spends whole years studying functionless luxuries such as perfume and jewels. And although Dorian is not deformed, his portrait gradually becomes older and uglier, gaining “hideous lines that sear[] the wrinkled forehead,” “bloated hands,” a “misshapen body,” and “failing limbs” (124). Hallward feels “disgust and loathing” when he gazes upon its “foulness,” and warns Dorian, “You don’t want people to talk of you as something vile and degraded,” referencing the fact that some people may actually begin to see Dorian as a degenerate if he continues on his path of sinful behavior (150, 151, 143).

Dorian is also prone to inappropriately strong displays of emotion. At a perceived insult, Dorian “[leaps] to his feet, with flushed cheeks and burning eyes”;
when he is distressed, a “cry of pain [breaks] from his lips, and he [leaps] to his feet” as well (52). Most dramatically, when Hallward speaks critically of Dorian, “suddenly an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward [comes] over him” and “the mad passions of a hunted animal stir[s] within him” (151). Dorian “rushes” at Basil with a knife, “stabbing again and again” until Hallward is dead (151). Obviously, a man who could be driven to murder by an unpleasant conversation is one who is deeply emotionally impulsive. After learning what he has done, Dorian’s friend Alan Campbell tells him, “You have gone from corruption to corruption, and now you have culminated in crime” (164). Indeed, despite the number of people whose deaths have resulted from Dorian’s mistreatment—Sibyl, Hallward, Alan himself—Dorian never feels enough remorse to change his ways for more than a day or two.

Dorian’s most damning emotional outbursts come from his reactions to art. After Henry makes a speech that affects Dorian deeply, Dorian muses that he has never felt such strong emotion before except upon listening to music: “Music had stirred him… Music had troubled him many times” (22). When Dorian sees his portrait for the first time, “hot tears well[] into his eyes… and, flinging himself on the divan, he buries his face in the cushions” (27). Similarly, Dorian is so moved by Sibyl Vane’s acting that he impulsively resolves to marry her; when she performs badly, he loses interest in her completely, claiming that his intense feelings of passion were for her art rather than for her. Certainly, this calls to mind Nordeau’s claim of degenerates falling into states of rapture before music or paintings. Whether in art or in people, Dorian values appearances above all else. He lives by the “worship of
beauty,” subscribing wholeheartedly to the aesthetic movement that Nordeau so feared (125). This aestheticist sentiment is so vital to The Picture of Dorian Gray that it forms the foundation of the book’s preface: “The artist is the creator of beautiful things,” writes Wilde. “All art is quite useless” (3-4).

When it comes to expressing emotion, Dorian resembles the women of the novel far more closely than the other men. Sibyl Vane wears her emotions on her sleeve: “Mother, mother, I am so happy!” she cries (59). Sibyl “tosse[s] her head and laugh[s],” sings and dances on a whim, weeps openly, and “run[s] across the room to hug” her brother upon sight (59). An “expression of infinite joy c[omes] over her” upon seeing Dorian, and she “feel[s] oppressed” when she is unable to “express her joy” (83, 66). In contrast, the only visible affection that James can give Sibyl is “a faint smile curving [his] sullen mouth,” because he “detest[s] scenes of any kind” (66, 68). “Oh, don’t be so serious, Jim,” Sibyl tells him (67). James only expresses strong emotion upon hearing that Sibyl is engaged, when he makes the “dramatically and vividly expressed” declaration that he shall murder Dorian if he ends up hurting Sibyl (70). But even this claim, no matter how emotional, is masculine in a sense: he intends to defend the honor of his sister, loyally and selflessly, in a courageous physical battle. For the most part, both Sibyl and James conform to their traditional gender roles with regard to emotion, unlike Dorian, who emotes with a degenerate’s effeminacy.

In another interpretation, Bridget M. Marshall explores the tension between Dorian’s physical features and the way his portrait appears. If Dorian’s real body does not look deformed, can he really be called a degenerate? Certainly, Wilde uses Dorian
to play with the Victorian idea that a person’s true nature will always be reflected in their exterior. As Marshall writes, his beauty “utterly confuses Dorian’s friends and acquaintances, who truly believe that a villain must have a villainous appearance.”

She concludes, “Dorian Gray illustrates the dangers of relying on the beauty of appearances as an indicator of moral goodness.” In this case, while Wilde was certainly influenced by the idea of the degenerate, it is also possible to read Dorian as a deconstruction of this archetype. Wilde suggests that one cannot always recognize decadent, immoral men just from looking at them, and thus the entire concept of a degenerate is ridiculous. Perhaps this is why Nordeau went on to criticize Wilde in Degeneration, denouncing his aestheticism and claiming that he “apparently admires immorality, sin, and crime.”

If Dorian is not a degenerate, he is still certainly a dandy. Dandies spend inordinate amounts of time caring for their appearance and think of little else; sometimes, like in “The Heart of Dandy Fane,” they are described as men without a conscience. In line with this definition, Henry describes Dorian as “some brainless, beautiful creature,” and he indeed becomes “more and more enamoured of his own beauty” (7, 124). Dorian’s studies of fashion and perfume are certainly dandy-like, and Henry calls Dorian an “Adonis,” just as “The Pretty Man” described the dandy as a “fop Adonis” (6). In fact, James refers to Dorian outright as “this young dandy,” and Dorian lists “Dandyism” among the hobbies he avidly researches for some time.

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80 Nordeau, Degeneration.
In fact, according to the essay “Modern Beau Brummelism,” Dorian is the very worst kind of dandy, as his portrait allows him to be an elderly man pretending to be a young one. But no matter what label a person chooses to give Dorian—degenerate, dandy, or something else entirely—it is all too evident that he could never be called masculine.
The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and The Picture of Dorian Gray all reflect common Victorian debates about masculinity. Perhaps because of their cultural relevance, these stories are immensely popular to adapt: they have been re-imagined as movies, television series, stage plays, radio plays, songs, operas, stage musicals, and even other books. Some of the earliest outside interpretations of these characters are illustrations printed in the books themselves. At times, these images reinforce the views of masculinity presented in their respective narratives; at others, they represent an entirely new vision of the characters.

In the original illustrations that Sidney Paget drew for The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, Holmes and Watson are presented in a manner fairly compliant with the text. Figure 1 displays a scene from “The Red-Headed League” in which Watson arrives to find Holmes “half asleep, with his long, thin form curled up in the recesses of his armchair. A formidable array of bottles and test-tubes… told [Watson] he had spent the day in the chemical work which was so dear to him.”81 The illustration captures a reclining Holmes, relaxing in a chair with his legs crossed. Inches away from him are the plethora of bottles and instruments that Watson described; we therefore simultaneously witness Holmes at rest in his home and see the tools he uses for work. Figure 2, an illustration for “The Boscomb Valley

Mystery” shows Holmes lying on the grass in front of a tree (91). Someone familiar with the story would know that Holmes is intently searching the ground for clues—and he is working outdoors, making the endeavor all the more masculine. Yet if someone were to flick through this book without context, they would see a man lying down on his stomach with the caption “for a long time he remained there,” bringing to mind Holmes’s bouts of laziness and apathy.

Indeed, Paget drew many pictures of Holmes leaning back in his armchair or lounging on the sofa. In Figure 3, the first illustration for “The Adventure of Blue Carbuncle,” Holmes’s effeminate, reclining pose is contrasted with Watson’s strong stance; their outfits contrast as well, for Watson wears a coat, indicating that he has just spent time outside, and Holmes wears nothing more than a dressing gown (95). In another illustration Holmes wears a long outer coat and Watson reclines in a dressing gown, as he has just “remained indoors all day” (137). Of course, we get snapshots of Holmes’s on cases as well: in an Figure 4, an illustration for “The Adventure of the Speckled Band,” Holmes is presented in a clear action shot, poised to lash out at the killer snake (121). The snake is not in the image, and there is no background: our entire focus is on Holmes’s athletic motion. Yet even in this moment of heroic vigor, we can see Holmes’s “deathly pale” face and wide eyes “filled with horror and loathing,” complicating his masculinity still. Watson is gifted a similar action shot in “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches,” as he heroically leans forward to shoot a violent dog and save the man it is attacking (180). In Paget’s illustrations, Holmes and Watson were both drawn in some masculine scenes and some feminine ones.
Figure 5 is a poster for *Jekyll and Hyde* printed in the 1880s, most likely to advertise one of two stage plays (in 1887 or 1888) that adapted the novella.\(^8^2\) It features the scene in which Hyde transforms into Jekyll front of Lanyon, highlighting the utter unmanning terror on Lanyon’s features: he clutches his heart, eyes very wide. Hyde, too, is cowering with obvious fear in his eyes.

Interestingly, Jekyll appears more traditionally masculine in the poster than he does in the novella. Jekyll describes himself as “elderly” in comparison to a younger Hyde; in this image, Jekyll appears to be in the prime of life, and it is Hyde who possesses scraggly white hair and wrinkled features. Stevenson also states that Jekyll is much larger than Hyde, presumably both taller and heavier, but in this poster they appear to be roughly the same size. In the novella, both Jekyll and Hyde frequently succumb to terror, but here Jekyll appears strong and courageous, standing up very straight with a look of serious determination upon his face. The poster seems to represent the very best in Henry Jekyll: we are in his place of work, surrounded by books and scientific instruments, without any indication that this room is so closely connected to his home. On Jekyll’s wall is a painting of a lighthouse, implying a love of nature that he does not possess. Notably, Jekyll points a cup of the transformation potion towards the floor, pouring out its contents. Presumably Hyde has already consumed enough potion to transform, but Jekyll’s act of emptying the cup implies the willpower to reject the potion and resist his pleasures.

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\(^8^2\) National Printing and Engraving Company, “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” *Library of Congress*, Reproduction no. LC-DIG-ds-04518, 188-.
This precise moment in Jekyll’s story was likely chosen for the poster because it is a moment of intense intrigue and emotion. However, it is also a moment in which Utterson, our masculine hero, is not present—so in order to appeal to a Victorian audience, the artist re-imagined Jekyll as the pinnacle of manliness. This is another way that form can dictate content: an advertisement for a book has more cause to exaggerate or alter details than the illustrations in the book itself, for its main purpose is to draw people in rather than to stay faithful to its source material.

In a series of illustrations for *Dorian Gray* drawn in 1908, Eugene Dété depicted a world true to the book: one of decadence and sin, with little masculinity to be found. In Figure 6, Henry reclines lazily in an armchair (in a manner reminiscent of Holmes), smoking a cigarette and looking utterly at ease. Every item in the room serves an aesthetic purpose in addition to its practical one: next to Henry sits a decorative side table, on which rests an ornate ashtray and a tasseled handkerchief. The portrait of Dorian is enormous, and has been placed in an ornamental frame. In Figure 7, Dorian has just broken off his engagement with Sibyl, who tugs desperately at his arm from her position on the floor; decadence abounds here as well. Sibyl kneels in front of a beautiful chaise lounge. Dorian is dressed in his evening finest, holding what appears to be a fur coat. Strangely, Sibyl is also dressed in finery, complete with a brooch at her neck and a feathered hat. In the novel, this encounter takes place in Sibyl’s dressing room. The theater she performs at is a seedy establishment that only working-class Londoners would visit, which is part of the

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thrill that Dorian gets from attending. Sibyl is not treated well by her employer and does not have much money of her own; it is unlikely that she would own expensive clothes and furniture. Instead of using his artistic license to make the book seem more masculine as in the *Jekyll and Hyde* poster, Détect kept the spirit of *Dorian Gray* in mind and made his illustrations even more decadent than the novel already was. Even in Figure 8—an illustration of the moment of Hallward’s death—an ominous shadow rises behind Dorian, his face filled with a degenerate cruelty, yet there are still objects in the foreground that one might find in a lavish, upper-class home.

Modern adaptations of these books often resemble the *Jekyll and Hyde* poster in that they attempt to make their protagonists more masculine than in the source material. In the 1997 musical *Jekyll & Hyde*, Jekyll is a young, thin, conventionally attractive protagonist with noble goals: he creates the potion in order to cure his father’s illness, and in testing it on himself accidentally creates Hyde. It is only Hyde who gives into decadent desires; Jekyll is a virtuous man dedicated to his fiancée Emma and to his scientific work. In fact, Jekyll becomes increasingly obsessed with his job to the point where Emma’s father sings to him, “You have your work and nothing more.” This restrained, married, workaholic Jekyll is entirely foreign to the Jekyll of the novella, and has been appropriately played by hyper-manly actor David Hasselhoff.

A similar masculinization can be found in the 2009 film *Dorian Gray*: this Dorian is stripped of his androgynous blonde curls and is given a heterosexual love interest in the form of Henry’s daughter Emily (which masculinizes Henry as well, as he is now apparently a father). The trailer showcases the movie’s dark color scheme
and gritty scenes of London streets, rather than the decadent artistry that makes up Dorian’s life in the novel; the trailer also makes sure to show Dorian engaging in heterosexual intercourse. The 2010 television series *Sherlock* is perhaps better at showing Holmes’s mixed masculinity: he vacillates between overworking and lounging, indulges in decadent drug use, and is closer to Watson than to any woman. This could be yet another reflection on form, indicating that it is easier to depict a figure with complicated masculinity in a television series, when one has many more hours to develop characters than in a two-hour musical or film. Yet it is telling that some modern directors depict Holmes as he originally was—a man of mixed masculinity—but few seem willing to admit that Jekyll and Dorian, two of literature’s most iconic figures, are not masculine at all.

These observations are not intended to insinuate that the modern day is somehow less progressive than the late Victorian period was. At the same time, we are certainly not rid of Victorian views on men and masculinity. This discourse still affects the fiction written today—just as it permeated the books of the 1880s and 90s—and forces readers to think critically about the prevailing social values of their time. Hopefully, we will see more literature in the future that celebrates the rich diversity of behavior found in men. As Holmes puts it, the most interesting people in the world are those “outside the conventions and humdrum routine of everyday life” (176). Perhaps Jekyll and Dorian are villains, but they are more memorable than a character like Utterson precisely because they do not conform. Holmes, Jekyll, and Dorian all represent a rejection of the hyper-masculine behavior expected of men, and we as readers rejoice in their rebellion.
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Figure 1

Figure 2
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