KNIGHTLY GENTLEMEN: SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

AND HIS HISTORICAL NOVELS

THESIS

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This thesis analyzes Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's contribution to the revival of chivalric ideals in late Victorian England. The primary sources of this study are Doyle's historical novels and the secondary sources address the different aspects of the revival of the chivalric ideals. The first two chapters introduce Doyle's historical novels, and the final four chapters define the revival, the class and gender issues surrounding the revival, and the illustration of these in Doyle's novels. The conclusion of the thesis asserts that Doyle supported the revival of chivalric ideals, and the revival attempted to maintain, in the late nineteenth century, the traditional class and gender structure of the Middle Ages.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Any time period can be characterized as the best of times and the worst of times. The years between 1880 and the first World War brought to most of Europe a political and class power structure that created opportunity and advancement for some while it led to oppression and instability for many others. The governments and social conditions of the newly unified Germany, France's Third Republic, Umbertian Italy, and Victoria's England during the late 1800s led to a reevaluation of the social conditions. For many unhappy citizens, an "unsparing self-critical assessment, eventually resulted in a quixotic nostalgia for the vanished heroism . . ."1 This idea of political nostalgia, a glorification of the past, is exactly what many historians argue was occurring in England during the late 1800s. These nostalgic notions went back to the Middle Ages and attempted to revive old but cherished chivalric ideals. For the majority, the reality of a moral and prosperous England was not part of their present. It was part of the past that they wanted to revive.

This thesis explores the reasons and consequences of the return to these chivalric ideals in England. My study builds on the argument of those historians who acknowledge the revival of medieval chivalric ideals which occurred in England in the mid-to late-nineteenth century. Mark Girouard, Harold Perkins, Pierre Nordon, and others have argued that this revival was an aristocratic reaction to the negative effects that the Industrial Revolution were expected to have on aristocratic power. It is my contention that many aristocrats embraced the revival in an attempt to nullify the social changes brought by the Industrial Revolution which challenged their authority and position in the traditional English establishment.

Socio-cultural changes, besides those of the aristocracy, such as the rise of the middle-class, the growing demand for women's suffrage and independence, the disintegration of separate gender spheres, and drastically changing mores brought about much uncertainty. The late Victorian Age was awash with the results of political, social, and industrial changes from the early and mid-Victorian Age. The Reform Bills, the Corn Laws and their repeal, the Industrial Revolution, Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory, John Stuart Mill, and other great thinkers who influenced and upset the average English mind all contributed to the appeal of the revival. These changes induced a yearning for some sort of stability involving the old and the familiar. This yearning manifested itself in a magnification and
idealization of medieval chivalry. The revival attempts mythologized the ways of gentlemen in the medieval knightly traditions, and it was these gentlemen who were remembered and glorified in the revival literature.

My examination centers on the life and work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his response to this social dislocation. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle contributed greatly to the revival efforts through his seven historical novels. Although he is now most remembered for his Sherlock Holmes adventures, all of his historical novels were popular among the public and his own most cherished accomplishment. Doyle's historical novels help to illuminate the picture of society's transformations in England during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Doyle used the characters and events of his historical novels to vividly illustrate the desire and benefits of returning to the social and power structure of the medieval chivalric society.

My thesis focuses on three consequences of the changing society. The first is the revival itself. The revival used the uncertainty and instability of the era to promote, revive and glorify chivalric ideas from the Middle Ages which appealed to many persons. These chivalric ideals were in direct contrast to the evils of industrialization and to the blurring of class lines caused by the modernization of England. The revival appealed to people who treasured the ideals of 'Englishness' and did not want to lose their secure, stable identity. Most people could support
the ideal of an English identity, but many persons were concerned with the rigidity of class structure.

This changing class structure is my second area of focus. Individuals were now more able to make a living or a fortune on their own works rather than solely through their class identification. The sacred English class structure was becoming less paternalistic and more open. Each class's acceptance or denial of this new structure was an indication, but not a guarantee, of acceptance or denial of the revived chivalric ideals. There were reasons to accept or deny the chivalric revival other than strict class identification. The ideas and effects of the revival touched the rigid gender structure as well as the wavering class structure.

This gender structure is my third area of focus. The same paternalistic structure of class was also evident in the relation of gender. The strong hold was shaken by efforts of women's movements for independence and also by the development out of the Industrial Revolution of separate spheres of home and work. I will examine and define the responses to the changes and challenges of the gender structure, and the acceptance or denial of the positive or negative effects for both men and women and the ultimate contribution of the revival to this gender structure.

I contend that the revival of chivalric ideals was an attempt to return to the rigid but comfortable social structure of the world people thought they had lost. This revival became a
means through which the aristocracy could regain its hegemony over England and maintain a paternalistic hold over the rise of social groups such as the middle-class and women working for equality. Doyle's novels illustrated the desired ends of this revival.

Literature has always been a useful source for looking into the times of the author, or in this case the author's view of the past. Doyle's historical novels add to our understanding of the late Victorian era. The time period Doyle chose as his setting, his immense efforts to be historically accurate, his personal narratives within the texts, and especially the elements he emphasized and glorified in his novels bring the reader not just an understanding of the Middle Ages but an appreciation of the significance and importance of the chivalric elements which Doyle mythifies. He believed in these chivalric ideals. He emphasized them and neglected the changes of social structure in his own society.

This thesis contributes to the historical research of the late Victorian Era with a reintroduction of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle through his historical novels. Doyle was greatly respected by his contemporaries and readers for his chivalric and gentlemanly qualities as well as for his literary capabilities. His historical novels provide insight into his view of the efforts of the revival of chivalric ideals, and he represented and influenced his many readers. As a prominent literary and social figure, it is
undoubted that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's historical novels contributed to the historical and social development of the late Victorian era.
CHAPTER II

DOYLE AND HIS NOVELS

The Doyles, members of the Roman Catholic landed gentry in Ireland, traced their family lineage back to the fourteenth century.\(^1\) At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the enforcement of the Penal Laws caused the Doyles to lose their land in Ireland and move to London.\(^2\) John Doyle, Arthur's grandfather, soon found success in London as an artist. His political caricatures and famous signature "H.B." were known throughout England. John's son Charles Doyle was also an artist but did not achieve nearly the same success as his father. Charles was dedicated and virtually obsessive with the time he spent on his art, but his art did not earn much money for his family. For that reason, in 1849, Charles Doyle and his immediate family left London so that Charles could accept a government job in Edinburgh and secure a stable income. Owing to Charles' tortured artistic temperament, many of the family responsibilities were left to Mary, his wife. Mary Foley Doyle was also from aristocratic Irish descent and cherished her heritage. Mary Doyle was the sole adviser of the children, including their son, Arthur Conan Doyle, who was born on May 22, 1859.

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Mary had spent many years studying in France before her marriage and imparted her knowledge and interest in France and in family history to her son. For Arthur's first eleven years, the only education he was exposed to came from his mother. Arthur spent much of his time with his mother and was molded by her beliefs. She read to him in French, told him of his noble Irish ancestry, and praised the qualities of the Middle Ages. She believed in treasuring their family lineage. Arthur was "living from his tenderest years in the chivalric sciences of the fifteenth century in the bosom of a family to whom pride of lineage was of infinitely greater importance than the discomforts of that comparative poverty that had come to surround them". His mother encouraged Arthur's intellectual activities from a young age, and the books they read together were not children's stories but history and literary masterpieces. He developed quickly and learned to treasure history and the ideals which surrounded him throughout his childhood.

In early adolescence, Arthur went to the Jesuit school of Stoneyhurst. The atmosphere at this school was very disciplined and stressed the basics and the classics. While at Stoneyhurst, he thrived in his school work, enjoyed and excelled at sports, and discovered his writing talents. In 1876, Arthur entered Edinburgh University Medical School. No other employment opportunity seemed more exciting, and Arthur enrolled in medical school.

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because he wanted the ability to support his mother and any future family of his own. For seven months in 1880, he undertook the manly activities of being a ship doctor on a whaling boat in the Arctic. After that Doyle took on several small medical internships, and in 1885 he began to establish a medical practice in Southsea. Almost immediately, he married Louise Hawkins.

In the initial years of Doyle's medical practice, he attempted to supplement his income through writing short stories. After the first year of his marriage, Doyle decided to end his medical practice and dedicate more time to his writing since it was his writing that was financially supporting the family. He still struggled some, owing to the usual difficulty of getting his initial works accepted by a publisher. After Micah Clarke's overwhelmingly positive reception from the public and critics in 1889, Doyle was able to publish his next manuscripts without problems.\(^4\)

In 1907, with his writing career established, Doyle detailed his literary inspirations in *Through the Magic Door*. As a child, Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* was one of Doyle's favorite books. Doyle read, or was read to by his mother, books by Scott, Thomas Macaulay, Thomas Carlyle, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Doyle credited his love of history to the influence of his mother and his exposure to these historical writers. The historical novel, for Doyle, combined basic historical accuracy with a valid literary

achievement. Doyle treasured and respected historical novels much more than the money-making detective short stories featuring Sherlock Holmes. Doyle felt that, "all things find their level, but I believe that if I had never touched Holmes, who had tended to obscure my higher work, my position in literature would at the present moment be a more commanding one."  

In writing his historical novels, Doyle did not allow love or feminine aspects to detract from the adventure and historical themes of his novels. He felt that "in the career of the average man his marriage is an incident . . . but it is only one of several. . . . Love will often play a subordinate part of his life."  

It was a masculine way of life which Doyle described in his historical novels and embraced in his own life. He had been a ship's doctor on a whaling boat not only for medical experience and money, but also because, as he said later, "I just feel as if I could go anywhere, and do anything."  

This feeling of masculinity continued throughout his life. In an effort to show his bravery and loyalty to England and its causes, Doyle left his family to become a chief surgeon in the Langman Field Hospital during the Boer War. Although he served in a private capacity and not as an official part of the military, Doyle did this work to help soldiers, and to demonstrate his

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5Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Memories and Adventures (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1924), 75.  
7Quoted in Carr, The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 28.
dedication to England. The dominant chivalric themes of bravery, action, comradeship, and upholding the appropriate code of conduct are seen in his own life as well as in his historical novels. Doyle had an honest belief in chivalric ideals. He focused on and commended chivalric actions in the present as well as in the past.

Doyle was a commanding figure in many areas of English life. He wrote articles and spoke on such disparate subjects as divorce reform (he favored it) and the tactical importance of guns in all military units (lances and sabers, while chivalric, were outmoded). He spoke out against atrocities in the Congo and even ran for a seat in Parliament, but lost. He wrote articles concerning politics, novels of mystery, and books concerning religion and his belief in Spiritualism. His involvement in current political and social events showed his earnest desire to take an active and influential role in the development of England. Doyle believed that he could be influential and wrote to his mother, "bar Kipling, I feel that I have perhaps the strongest influence over young men in England: it is really important that I should give them a lead."

Regardless of these other achievements, Doyle found his greatest personal satisfaction in his seven historical novels. They were written and published over a span of seventeen years. Micah Clarke was his first publication in 1889. In 1891, Doyle published his favorite novel, The White Company, followed in 1893 with The Refugees. While spending two years in Switzerland for the benefit

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9 Ibid, 21.

Doyle was a representative figure of the late Victorian age. Like many others, he traced his heritage to nobility, but this nobility was not a visible factor in his nineteenth century daily life until in 1902 when he was offered a knighthood by the British Monarchy. At first, he did not want to accept it because its significance had been modernized, and, according to Doyle, it did not carry near the same honor it had in previous centuries. At the request of his mother, he did finally accept so not to insult the monarchy.\textsuperscript{10} Doyle did not want social change, and he supported the traditional restrictions of class and the barriers of gender.

For the last seventeen years of his life, Doyle turned away from his parent's Catholicism and toward Spiritualism. He no longer believed in a defined religion, but in a code of conduct. This conduct was described to him by his mother and vividly depicted in the novels he read by Scott and Macaulay. His beliefs, "could be expressed in two words: Knightly honour."\textsuperscript{11} It was this knightly honor in conjunction with his respect for literary achievement which made his historical novels the most important of his achievements. At his death in 1930, Doyle held fast to his family and his Spiritualism.

\textsuperscript{10} Carr, The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 159.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 56.
His son, Adrian described his relationship with his father. "I had to learn at his knee that there are in life three tests of a gentleman: firstly, his attitude of protection and chivalry to women; secondly, his courteous behaviour to people of lower social status than himself; and, thirdly, his rectitude in financial manners."12 Through Doyle's writings and especially his historical novels, his idealization of medieval England and support of the late Victorian revival of chivalric ideals can be seen in many social aspects. The exact goal of life for Doyle was expressed by the character Gerard, ". . . the remarkable exploits which have won me the love of so many beautiful women, and the respect of so many noble men . . ."13

While Doyle's novels were historically based and chivalric in intent, two especially glorified the ideas of chivalry: The White Company and Sir Nigel. Both of these novels were set in medieval England. Sir Nigel was published in 1906 years after The White Company, but the former, in content, was a precursor of the latter. The adventures and honorable actions of the young Nigel Loring were described in Sir Nigel, and the exploits of the old Sir Nigel Loring were depicted in The White Company. The story of both novels takes place in the fourteenth century during the ongoing conflict between the governments and peoples of England and France.

12Doyle, The True Conan Doyle, 14.
In *Sir Nigel*, Nigel Loring was just beginning his adventures and military career. The Loring family was part of the impoverished landed aristocracy, but as a young man, Nigel still had to prove himself a worthy member. Nigel’s father died when he was a young boy, and so he lived with his grandmother Lady Ermyntrude Loring in the Loring manor house. They had little money, and so lived a meager lifestyle. Nigel wanted to join the English military forces, but the lack of a suit of armor and the strong wishes of Lady Ermyntrude for Nigel to stay with her prevented him from leaving.

The lack of money and the delay in beginning his military exploits did not bother Nigel to an intolerable degree until the Loring house was to be a resting stop for the king and some of his top military men. Both Nigel and his grandmother saw this visit as an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism. Lady Ermyntrude sold her most valuable possessions to be able to entertain the king, and Nigel awaited the opportunity to impress the king with his military abilities. Both Lorings achieved their goals. The king left money for Lady Ermyntrude, and he acknowledged Nigel’s military prowess and allowed Nigel to join his military forces. The young Nigel Loring carried into battle the best wishes of his grandmother and the love of his future wife, Mary.14

Through his initial exploits, Nigel demonstrated his youthful inexperience in military affairs. His efforts to save some of his men

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from the horrible hands of the Butcher from the castle of La Brohinière were chivalric but not wise. The Butcher was known by all military men as an unchivalrous wolf. Nigel returned from a mission to find that some of his men, including his own archer, Samkin, had been taken captive and were being held in the castle of La Brohinière. His immediate action was to rush the castle and save his archer Samkin for whom he felt responsible. After being scolded by his military leaders, Nigel grudgingly accepted that a plan had to be established to save the men. With few losses, Nigel and his group secured the freedom of their comrades and continued on their military adventures. This lesson helped Nigel to learn to respect the greater good for the greater number of his men. His class and military position meant that he had the responsibility of being a protector not only of women but also of the men of lower status.

The young Nigel Loring's adventures came to an end when he had won three honors for his love, Mary, and honor for himself and family. His greatest accomplishment came in the midst of a harsh battle. Nigel, while protecting his comrades, knocked the King of France from his horse, but did not claim him as his prisoner. When it was realized that the king was captured, there was a fight among the foot soldiers over who could claim the ransom of the king. Nigel Loring, being a good aristocrat, only wanted the honor of dismounting the king, not the ransom. His chivalrous actions

Ibid, 682-695.
earned him a knighthood, and therefore the respect of the aristocracy and the honor and love of Mary. On returning home with his knighthood, Nigel now had societal rights to ask Mary to become his wife.

Samkin did not receive military honors like Nigel, but he did earn personal honor and money. There was no confusion for Samkin and others like him over their proper social position. They earned respect and honor, but from within their own group.

The White Company contained the record of Sir Nigel's story, with Doyle basing this plot on Jean Froissart's Chronicles. Doyle began The White Company by introducing four very diverse characters. Alleyne Edricson was a young man of the old Saxon landed gentry family who had just left a monastery. The monks had raised him after the death of his parents, and at eighteen, in accordance to his father's will, he had to experience the outside world for three years. During Alleyne's initial travels through England, he joined two men, Hordle John and Samkin Aylward. Hordle John was a lower class man looking for something to make his life complete. Samkin Aylward was not in search of guidance but of war. His satisfaction in life came from military conflict and the resulting monetary wealth. Samkin convinced Alleyne and Hordle John to travel with him to the castle of Sir Nigel Loring. Once at the castle, they learned that Sir Nigel was preparing to
leave England to lead the White Company against the French. The three travelers decided to join Sir Nigel.\textsuperscript{16}

On their way to France and during their time with the White Company, their exploits exemplified chivalric ideals. Whether it was helping an individual in peril, a woman in need of protection, or a military man facing an unchivalrous attack, they stopped and gladly offered aid. Through their chivalrous actions, the four men were able to attain their goals.\textsuperscript{17} Samkin engaged in military conflict and secured his share of spoils from their conquests. Hordle John gained wealth and honor, and more importantly for him, he learned that he wanted to live a quiet middle-class life back in England. Sir Nigel, while accumulating more honor and respect, also lived up to his position, and most importantly his duty, as an aristocrat by leading his fellow Englishmen in the defense of their country. Alleyne gained the honor, respect, and knighthood needed to gain the hand of his love, Maude Loring, the daughter of Sir Nigel.

Members of the White Company, Alleyne, Samkin, Hordle John, and Sir Nigel all upheld the traditions and ideals of chivalry. When they returned home, all having done well, they returned with a higher social standing in their own class. Neither Samkin nor Hordle John held illusions that they would become part of the


\textsuperscript{17}Ibid, 252-293.
aristocratic class. Through their goals and realistic expectations, they exemplified Doyle's beliefs in traditional class structure.

Doyle's first historical novel was, *Micah Clarke*, written in 1889 just two years after *A Study in Scarlet* introduced Sherlock Holmes. *Micah Clarke* had great publishing success and went through five editions in only two years. It was highly acclaimed as a readable novel of fiction, but it did not receive the literary or scholarly recognition which Doyle expected and desired. *Micah Clarke* was Doyle's most historically accurate novel, since it was strongly based on Macaulay's account of the struggle of Monmouth's Rebellion in his *History of England*. Although religious conflict was the central theme, the focus of the novel was the strict class hierarchy and the need to protect women in this society.

Doyle began the novel with the background of the Clarke family. Joseph Clarke, the father, was a lower-class man who had the reputation as a physically strong and dedicated citizen and soldier of England. When Monmouth's forces were assembling, the Clarke family knew that Micah had to participate and support the rebellion to represent the family honor.  

During his travels through England to join the gathering forces, Micah encountered many situations which required his strength and also his vigilant preservation of the appropriate code of conduct. There were many times when Micah and his companions had to defend the honor of a woman. Regardless of the consequences to their own persons or to

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their adventure, the men protected any woman in need, regardless of class. Micah and his comrades engaged in many oral and physical disputes to protect women.

Upon arriving in Taunton, the city where many supporters of Monmouth were gathering, supporters divided into divisions and trained for the impending military conflict. Micah demonstrated his bravery and loyalty many times throughout this training. He was sent on a mission to deliver a message to the Duke of Beaufort to gain the Duke's support for the rebellion. The support was never given, but it was interesting that the support was needed not for money, but for the significance of the Duke's position. To have the support of different aristocrats was more important than the dedication and might of the assembled lower-class men. The success of the military effort required the social position, power, and military superiority of the aristocrats.19

The issues of rigid class structure and female protection were a prevalent issue for Micah. He had the same responsibility any man had to protect women from harm, but he also had to live within class constricts. Although Micah was respected and rewarded by his men and his military superiors for his many brave actions, his class position prevented him from becoming the leader of the military forces.

Religious conflict dominated Micah Clarke as well as The Refugees. Both of these novels centered around the struggles of

19Ibid. 286-321.
religious dissenters, and Doyle felt that both these conflicts were comparable to Puritan struggles in England. \(^2\) Although neither of these novels was set in medieval times, chivalric ideals remained prominent as did the historical accuracy which Doyle felt was all-important. In *The Refugees*, Doyle described the struggles of a few Huguenots during the increasingly intolerant French society before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

During the growing unrest in France, one of the main characters, De Catinat, worked in a military capacity for the king. The people of France gave a great deal of respect to men who served in the army. Therefore, De Catinat's military position and assignment to guard the king provided him a high social status within France. During this time, however, the majority of the population and the French monarchs barely tolerated the Huguenots. De Catinat and his family were Huguenots and did not believe in changing their religious beliefs because of social and political pressures. De Catinat did not change his beliefs although he had to keep them concealed. The higher social status gained from being in the military outweighed all compromises and uncomfortable positions.

A visiting American, Amos Green, did not understand the strict social hierarchy. When Amos first arrived in France, he had to the rescue De Catinat's fiancée, Adèle. Amos used American innovation and direct action to protect Adèle from the harm of five

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\(^2\)Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 75-80.
French anti-Hugenots. As one of the aggressors hung over a balcony with only Amos' grip holding him from the ground two stories below, Amos accepted the other man's word that Adèle would be left alone. This other man, however, of some social standing, was a scoundrel and did not honor his word. This unchivalric action only added importance to the chivalric social structure.  

After this incident, Amos and all of his Huguenot friends faced new difficulties when the revocation of the Edict of Nantes became official. The De Catinat family had to abandon their homeland and personal property to secure their personal safety. Under duress they escaped France and sailed to America. Once in America, they faced new difficulties in the rough new frontier.

In this wilderness, the group encountered Frenchmen who had already settled in America. With their countrymen's help, the De Catinat family attempted to travel north toward Canada to set up a home. During their travels, they had many violent encounters with American Indians and had to join forces with other settlers to survive.  

Regardless of the conflicts for the Huguenots in France or with the Indians in America, their code of honor and chivalric ideals remained intact. The barbaric conditions in the American wilderness and the uncivilized Indians were met with only chivalric

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22 Ibid. 782-821.
actions from the European travelers. Women were also protected and defended, regardless of the costs. In unchivalric conditions, chivalric actions and ideals survived.

Rodney Stone, set in a rural town of England, described a maturing and changing time in the lives of two young boys. These boys, Rodney Stone and Boy Jim, were best friends and spent most of their days together. They dreamt of leaving their town and making a name for themselves outside their small community. There was no real class conflict between the boys or in the small town since all of the inhabitants were of a similar lower class. The only visible representation of class structure in the town was the abandoned Avon family mansion. This lack of class diversity, however, did not mean that there was no ambition or that there was no jealousy of the aristocratic class.

Rodney Stone's father wanted to defend England against foreign threats, but he also wanted to improve his family's status by being a member of the Royal Navy. The respect gained from being part of the Royal Navy was as important as the booty gained from military victories. Rodney was expected to join the navy, but thanks to the success of his father, would be able to start in a higher position. Boy Jim did not seem to have the opportunity of financial mobility. He was working in a blacksmith shop with his uncle, who was a famous boxer. Boy Jim did not really expect to improve upon the position of his uncle, but would enjoy a comfortable life as a blacksmith. As both boys were enjoying their
time together and dreaming of leaving their rural homes, Rodney's wealthy maternal uncle offered to take his nephew to the big city to experience the diversity of city life.

Boy Jim was happy for Rodney, but jealous of the opportunity. Rodney enjoyed traveling with his uncle and encountered many individuals of varying classes. While attending a social function at the house of an aristocratic leader, Rodney met many of the top boxers of England. These boxers were not part of the aristocracy, since an aristocrat would not engage in such unchivalrous fighting, but the aristocracy enjoyed watching and gambling on the fights. The excitement of the night rose when an anonymous man challenged any one of the boxers to a match. To Rodney's surprise, this challenger turned out to be Boy Jim. By challenging one of the top boxers to a match, Boy Jim was attempting to establish a name for himself.\(^2\)\(^3\)

After a test match with one of the older boxers, a prize fight was set for Boy Jim. When the fight was just a day away, Boy Jim's unknown father surfaced and prevented him from boxing. His father, Lord Avon, was of noble birth and had been in hiding for many years. An embarrassing event of cheating and supposed murder had occurred in the Avon house: Lord Avon's brother cheated their guests in a game of cards. Because of his brother's foolish and disgraceful actions, Lord Avon went into hiding to cover the story and to prevent any disgrace from tarnishing the Avon

name. When Lord Avon heard that his son was to box in a prize-fight, however, he had to prevent him from engaging in an activity that would damage his social class.\(^2\)

For Lord Avon, the honor of his family name was more important than his own personal freedom. He gave up his freedom for the honor of his family and then again for the future honor and position of his son. Boy Jim, now a newly established aristocrat, had a higher social status than his friend Rodney, newly commissioned in the Royal Navy. This new class position held more weight than their former personal relations.

The Adventures of Gerard and The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard were different from Doyle's other historical novels in that they were originally published chapter by chapter in serial form. These novels were also different because they did not center around class issues. Despite their differences, they were similar enough in their historical and chivalric content to be characterized with Doyle's other historical novels. In both of these novels the main character, Étienne Gerard, was an officer in the French army during the times of Napoleon. Although Étienne was an officer in the distinguished Hussars regiment, the stories center on the individual actions of Étienne and not of the regiment as a whole.

In The Adventures of Gerard, Étienne was a lower ranking officer in the French military. His personal accounts began with his exploits in foreign countries. His adventures were always in regard

\(^{24}\text{Ibid, } 1075-1112.\)
to the protection of a woman or the defense of his army and country. In Italy, he was taken captive and had to defend the honor of a woman and to protect her from being harshly punished. In his effort to protect her, Étienne had his ear cut off by his captives. Although this was disfiguring to the concerned Étienne, it was his only option. He had to protect the young woman. In another incident to insure the safety of a woman, Étienne intervened in a marital dispute. The husband, a scoundrel, mistreated his wife and Étienne challenged him to a duel. Neither was killed, however, and Étienne secured the safety of the woman. After his duty to protect her was accomplished, he left to join his army.

When Étienne was reunited with his army regiment, he was sent on a mission through hostile Spanish territory to relay a message and save another section of the French army. He encountered personal danger, but proceeded with his mission regardless of the consequences. A parallel incident happened in Russia when he again had to deliver a message. Étienne avoided any positions which could compromise his honor, and delivered both messages for the good of his country.

His last missions entailed saving the emperor from military capture and then later from the island of St. Helena. In a last stand of French forces, Étienne disguised himself as the Emperor to draw the enemy after himself and away from Napoleon. He was

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26 Ibid, 1056-1080.
successful in his efforts even though Napoleon was eventually captured. A few years later, Étienne joined a sailor in an effort to rescue Napoleon from St. Helena. After many difficulties, Étienne arrived on St. Helena just hours after Napoleon died.

The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard, offers more stories about Étienne's services to Napoleon. He reached the rank of Brigadier during the reign of Napoleon. As a higher ranking officer and with his reputation as a great swordsman and rider, the Emperor called upon Étienne for his assistance. His first mission was to accompany the Emperor into a forest and meet two men who were supposed to have valuable information. When the situation turned violent, Étienne protected Napoleon, killed both men, and earned respect and honor for himself and his military company.²⁷

Stories of Étienne's personal accomplishments are included in The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard, but the most significant story detailed yet another adventure for the Emperor. Because of his success in rising through the ranks and his previous accomplishment of protecting Napoleon, Étienne was once again chosen to carry out a special deed for the Emperor. Napoleon, sensing an imminent defeat, wanted Étienne to accompany him while he hid his personal papers. After much difficulty and overcoming deceit among some of the Emperor's lower ranks, Étienne accomplished his task before Napoleon was captured. The

Emperor was pleased and congratulated Étienne on his bravery and loyalty.28

Loyalty, bravery, and dedication are just a few of the consistent and chivalric elements included in all of Doyle's novels. The young and old Nigel Loring, Rodney Stone and Boy Jim, Amos and De Catinat, Micah Clarke, and Étienne, always lived by the chivalric code of conduct. These main characters illustrated exactly what Doyle treasured and wanted to exist in his society. Consistent elements of the novels, besides the code of conduct which illuminated the parts of the chivalric revival, include a focus on one beautifully chivalrous gentleman and his adventures; heavy melodrama and romanticisms; the obvious lack of a prominent female figure; and an absence of any challenges to the social structure. Even though the seven historical novels span a wide range of time; from the Black Death to the downfall of Napoleon, the chivalric ideals remained constant. Regardless of differences in the novels, their common elements and positive portrayal support the cause of the revived chivalric ideas.

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28Ibid, 915-966.
CHAPTER III

REVIVAL OF CHIVALRY

To understand the reasons for the revival of the medieval chivalric ideals that occurred in nineteenth-century England, the character of medieval chivalry must first be understood. Between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries, chivalry was part of popular discourse. In a medieval Italian text, Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, the protagonists play a game in an attempt to define a 'courtier'--a 'gentleman'. The players decided that the perfect courtier should be of noble birth, possess grace, literary accomplishments, women's affection, and morals, and that "the principal and true profession of the courtier ought to be that of arms."1 An exact definition of chivalry, however, was and still is elusive. Many individuals tried to pin it down, they produced no definition or code that would guide following generations down the sacred path of chivalry.2 Chivalry was an ideal. The meaning of the word changed in relation to the era in which it was

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2 *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* Vol. 3, s.v. "chivalry."
employed.³ It represented an uncertain number of qualities to an uncertain number of people and generations.

During the Middle Ages, chivalry was not equated with a specific social system. Medieval feudalism was distinct from the specific chivalric ideals. Chivalry meant knights and horsemen ready for battle. Although their involvement in military exploits was a form of social elitism, given the cost of horses and armor, chivalry, unlike feudalism, did not determine the whole structure of society. Chivalry was a code of conduct for a specific group of people. This group of people in the Middle Ages was usually composed of warriors and gentlemen. In The Song of Roland, the two main characters are presented as chivalric gentlemen fighting for their honor and their land. Regardless of the disaster awaiting them, they remained and fought till the end.⁴ These gentlemanly warriors, the knights, followed the code of chivalry with only chivalric intent.⁵ Their purpose in following the code was to preserve both honor and the code itself. The knights did not insist that others follow their actions; however, other classes idolized, imitated, and respected certain aspects of the chivalric code.

Although all were exposed to this code of conduct, "... chivalry was the limited ideal of a small aristocratic caste. ..."\(^6\) They dressed in expensive armor and engaged in noble adventures in defense of their honor and their country. Their elite activities and lifestyle made honor, duty, bravery, respect, and courtly love their code of conduct. This chivalric code, "... made a direct appeal to the pride of caste and the established values of the nobility. ..."\(^7\) While these values had certain elements and restrictions, the chivalric code was easier to live by than to define.

A general air of respectful behavior was the most visible part of the code of conduct. The knights displayed this respect to everyone; it was most visible to their comrades and enemies. One knight abiding by the code of chivalry in his everyday conduct won the instant respect of another knight and all those who came in contact with him. Respect and honor for themselves and their comrades were the goals of the knights while fighting for the safety of their country.

Fighting for the defense of country and honor was part of the chivalric code. Fighting was certainly not simple, but often it was clear and straightforward in principles and goals. Courtly love was a more difficult part of chivalry to define. In the Middle Ages, its definition ranged from first love, to romance, to hidden

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\(^7\)Ibid, 274.
admiration, and often to adultery. Modern efforts to define medieval courtly love could be based on any point in this range. Historian Roger Boase attempted to define courtly love by pinpointing its origins. He found three possibilities. The first explanation was knights' confusion over power relationships with their mothers. The male child was powerless, but gained power as he matured, thus changing his relationship to all women. Boase also argued that courtly love could just be a literary fallacy which historians had developed in an effort to understand the Middle Ages. The male-female relationship of the Middle Ages was a complex subject which historians simplified and defined as courtly love for their own convenience. Third, Boase suggested that courtly love was simply a catch-all for the elusive and undefinable aspects of the chivalric ideal.8

Medieval chivalry was a conglomeration of many beliefs, and the institution as a whole was never simply transplanted from one era into another. Only certain aspects and elements of medieval chivalry were revived in the nineteenth century: those which could exist within the realities of nineteenth-century politics and society. This revival of chivalric ideals led to a redefinition of exactly what the ideals represented. The chivalrous knights were no longer merely a group of fighting gentlemen. They stood for many of the same principles, but their

role in society had changed. They stood for the qualities of chivalry, without the military implications. They represented honor, bravery, loyalty, and the differences and importance of class lines.

Why did these ideals revive in the nineteenth century? In an age of daily technological advances and the newly available conveniences of modern society, it is difficult to imagine the reasons for resuscitating the ideals of antiquity. These technological innovations and modern comforts, however, rested upon a society that was also changing and evolving every day. The rate of change in England had been accelerating since the 1700s. As a result of the ideas of the Enlightenment and the growth of science, the Industrial Revolution started to take hold and shape the physical development of England during the mid- to late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Science enhanced industrial technology. That affected industrial production, which, of course, caused considerable social dislocation.

Rapid and radical change in industry and production changed all aspects of life. Industrial workers had to live in the urban areas, initially in great squalor and poverty. This situation created many problems and caused discontent, as the following chapters will illustrate. Since these changes were not leading toward utopia and, in many people's view, were actually creating instability, a need was created for some sort of ideological
anchor. As historian Michael Adams claimed, "Tearing through time generated a need to hold on, to cling to ancient verities".9

Many of the romantic aspects of chivalry conflicted with the new reason and rational thinking that developed from the Enlightenment. The chivalrous ideas of traditionalism and nationalistic character opposed the new Enlightenment views of internationalism and reason. Yet, Enlightenment thinkers did not disregard tradition or the sentiments associated with this nationalistic character. They felt that both should be modified to take on a broader world view. Doyle recognized that this Enlightenment thought, while stressing change and progress, provided a new critical but positive view of history, which was instrumental in the revival of chivalric ideals. History contained a new importance for the Enlightenment thinkers. Gibbon, Hume, and others tried to follow a historic idea back through time and develop and expand it rather than simply focusing on strict facts. Gibbon felt that "to write history en philosophe would mean establishing interconnections and tracing their operation through time."10 This new method of approaching history rejuvenated events and ideas of the past. It revived the grandeur of the Middle Ages at a time which was advantageous to the nineteenth century.

9Michael C.C. Adams, The Great Adventure: Male Desire and the Coming of World War One (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 64.
The Enlightenment shifted ideas and thoughts away from the power of traditionalism and toward reason and rationalism. The Enlightenment leaders wanted progress and forward motion, although they did not disregard the past. They believed in learning and expanding old or traditional ideas to fit the ever moving present. Other thinkers of the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke, for example, professed the same belief in history. There had to be a recognition, understanding, and adjustment of history. "One advantage is as little as possible sacrificed to another. We compensate, we reconcile, we balance."\(^{11}\)

Unlike the Enlightenment, the industrialized nineteenth century reacted to the fear of too much change. Because things changed at a revolutionary rate, dissolving the comfortable social structure of traditional English ways, and because changes in France and other countries were resulting in violence, the people of England yearned for some sort of stability. Yet, in alignment with the Enlightenment thinkers, the people of England no longer believed that everything would work out on its own. Action was needed to effect change.\(^{12}\) The English in the nineteenth century no longer trusted Adam Smith's laissez faire economy. As the economic historian G. E. Mingay explained the growing unrest:


... though laissez-faire informed much of the thinking of the age, it was not all persuasive. There were many people who rejected the philosophy, and clung to the old fashioned view that it was the responsibility of the governing class to remedy grievances and root out evils. 13

The Industrial Revolution brought new innovations to society as well as to industry. Modernization was neither easy nor free of pain. Workers now lived in the cities to work the factories and produce goods for England. The particular circumstances in England of an abundant labor force allowed and possibly encouraged the industrialists to exploit the workers. These horrible working conditions in the factories made the change from country life to city life that much more difficult. Alfred Lord Milner, a student of Arnold Toynbee, said of the Industrial Revolution, he "regretted its effects upon the mass of ordinary Englishmen, who were pushed off the land and into blighted factory towns, where they lost their physical strength and moral values."14

Because of the suffering and disorder that existed in English society during the Industrial Revolution, a reevaluation took place about the order of society and the possible means of making things better. These thoughts and efforts eventually expanded into an assessment of just how important these

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technological advances were.\textsuperscript{15} Did the organization of England need revamping to accommodate industrialization or were the industrial innovations not the positive good they appeared to be? As Thomas Carlyle wrote in 1829, "the faith in Mechanism, in the all-importance of physical things, is in every age the common refuge of Weakness and blind Discontent; of all who believe, as many will ever do, that man's true good lies without him, not within."\textsuperscript{16} Doyle, for one, believed that this advanced technology led to a materialism that neglected the needs of many. Adam Smith's economic theories of "the best for all" did not take into consideration labor-rich England which allowed the exploitation of the workers to benefit the industrialists.

Because of the overwhelming changes and rising discontent, the English people searched for something to treasure, something to hold on to: some ideal which romanticized their identity as a nation. They wanted something that embraced the ideals of "Englishness". As Linda Colley's new research on the idea of Englishness shows, the patriotism and mass allegiance to Britain in response to almost any outside threat acted to negate the different internal dissentions for the benefit of Great Britain as a whole. This patriotism before 1815 was directed toward an

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid, 82.

external enemy, France. After 1815, the lack of external unrest and the presence of internal unrest, the Industrial Revolution, created a situation whereby authors and politicians were able to mobilize the population toward renewed belief in the importance of Englishness. The Englishness manifested itself in the mid- and late-nineteenth centuries through authors who were forming a revival of chivalry. This English identification in chivalry was used to create patriotism from within, and this patriotism, like that used against France, subordinated individual internal interests to the overall survival of Great Britain. This Englishness, while supposedly helping to calm the effects of industrialization, also strengthened the position of the aristocracy. As Colley wrote, "... chivalry also reaffirms the paramount importance of custom, hierarchy and inherited rank." The Industrial Revolution caused disintegration of the good traditional English ways of life and social structure. Other writers such as Charles Dickens and especially Sir Walter Scott were "obsessed with identifying and recreating the essential spirit of England, to be found in the past and in the country." For these authors, "it was tempting to romanticize [the Middle Ages] as an age of simple faith and loyalties and the source of much that

18 Ibid, 147.
19 Wiener, English Culture, 62.
now appeared both sacred and threatened." Authors and many other Englishmen and women felt that a revival of chivalry would balance modern industrial life.

Not only were the good, traditional ways of English life threatened, the basis of the social class system was also in danger. This class system, one of the most stable, and to some, the most treasured institutions in England, was also being altered. The Industrial Revolution enabled some ambitious middle-class businessmen to gain wealth and power in society. This increase in middle-class wealth meant a change in the power of the leading classes, but many of these industrialists were viewed as money-mongers, not as traditional English gentleman, a point that we will explore in the following chapter. The new financial leaders focused on money rather than on the traditional English love of land. These industrialists would do anything for money, because money was the goal; preserving the traditional English way of life was not.

Not only was the old rural life seen as more traditional to the ways of Englishmen, but the old rural life was seen as more humane to the masses. The English garden, not the urban landscape, was the romanticized ideal. Englishness meant land

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20 Girouard, The Return to Camelot, 23.
21 Wiener, English Culture, 89.
and countryside. Industrial cities were not the ideal of English life. English life centered on a country gentleman whose noblesse oblige led him to take care of the agricultural workers who depended upon him.23

The changing role of the landed aristocracy during the time of the Industrial Revolution led to the decline of Englishness. As the twentieth century English economist, E.J. Mishan, put it, "every step forward in technological progress . . . effectively transfers our dependence upon other human beings to dependence upon machines, and therefore, unavoidably constricts yet further the direct flow of understanding, the sympathy between people."24 The aristocrats no longer exercised sympathy and social responsibility toward the lower classes. That the characteristic of Englishness was vanishing changed the whole of society. The aristocrats declined in power. Society no longer demanded that they be leaders, nor were they financially able to continue in their role of social protectors.

The industrialists, however, did not assume the role of protector. According to Adam Smith's theories of pursuing individual interests to benefit the whole, the workers did not need protectors. The workers were no longer directly connected to their work or to their bosses. The new structure of industrialized England encouraged the industrialists to put their individual

24As quoted in Wiener, English Culture, 94.
financial and material well-being above the concerns and well-being of their workers. Many observers saw the nineteenth century as confined into the role it had developed, but others such as Doyle believed that to have modern advances, stabilizing factors had to exist, like the traditional English social structure.

Part of the instability of the social structure involved the place of women. Industrialization required a large number of workers, and women responded although not necessarily to their own benefit. With this new demand on women to be outside the home, the women's growing and expanding role undermined stabilizing tradition. The requirements of chivalry demanded that the women remain in their separate domestic sphere. But as the conflicts of the changing British society continued, "... separate sexual spheres were being increasingly prescribed in theory, yet increasingly broken through in practice." Resolving the conflict between women and the chivalric idea of separate spheres in the nineteenth century is a key element in understanding the revival of chivalry and will be discussed in chapter five.

According to Doyle, England was "the land where their fathers had bled, the home of chivalry and of knightly deeds, the country of gallant men, of courtly women, of princely buildings, or the wise, the polished and the sainted." Through Sir Nigel and

other knights, Doyle contrasted the changing nineteenth-century ideals of knightly qualities. The knight-errants of Doyle's novels defined and represented the ideals and characteristics of chivalry such as duty, honor, respect, and courtly love as applied to the current needs of English society.

Although Doyle had some degree of Romantic antagonism toward the Enlightenment and the radical changes that science was bringing. This antagonism, in combination with his love for the past, led Doyle to accept and encourage the revival efforts. Doyle's historical novels illustrated the importance of the chivalric ideals and Englishness and their application to the nineteenth century.

The characters and settings of his historical novels illustrated Doyle's love and efforts to support these chivalric ideals. In his novels Conan Doyle advanced the agricultural ideal of England and presented cities in a bad light. As a leading country gentleman in Micah Clarke felt, ". . . nor have I ever been in that great sewer which is called London . . . . Every evil thing that had been stamped underground had spawned and festered until its vermin brood flooded the streets, and the godly themselves driven to shun the light of day." 28

In the context of his agricultural ideal, Doyle described the changes of the chivalric knights from the medieval period to the nineteenth century. Doyle believed that the importance of the

28 Doyle, Micah Clarke, 202.
nineteenth century "knights" did not lie in their military prowess, but in the role which the knights played in society. "The knights, I think, were much more human-kind of people than they usually have been depicted. Strength had little to do with their knightly qualities."\(^2^9\) It was a reformulated concept of knighthood, one not depending on military might, that was important both in Doyle's novels and in the nineteenth century. Many jousts and other medieval military activities were staged in the nineteenth century with the sole purpose of keeping alive a certain romantic sense of what medieval chivalry represented. They no longer served a direct military purpose. As Doyle demonstrated, military might and skills were not as important as other chivalric qualities, and he was an important contributor to the rejuvenation of the concept of the chivalric knights and its adaptation to the nineteenth century.

Doyle glorified the revived chivalric ideals and goals of the nineteenth century knights in his novels. These characters demonstrated the importance of respect, bravery, honor, and courtly love. The nineteenth century knights needed respect from the whole of society. Chivalrous acts earn respect. A brave, selfless act to save a comrade or to help a cause stirred immediate respect from all who witnessed it. As the young Nigel attacked the castle of La Brohinière in an effort to save his archer

and friend Samkin, not only the English forces, but also Nigel's French prisoner hoped for his success and feared for his safety. Yet this brave action, like others, did not preclude unpleasant consequences. Abiding by the code did not guarantee safety. If a brave action threatened the position of a chivalrous enemy, the enemy's sense of duty and loyalty to his respective cause and country necessitated a not-so-chivalrous counteraction. As other chivalrous knights joined Sir Nigel in the unplanned attack, the soldiers of the castle, though admiring their enemies' bravery, responded by dousing them in oil and setting them alight with burning arrows.30 Regardless of the outcome, both sides earned the respect of all and honor for themselves.

Nationality was often second to chivalry as illustrated by the instances in Sir Nigel when both French and English knights were attacked unfairly. "There was a comradeship among men of gentle blood and bearing which banded them together against all ruffianly or unchivalrous attack."31 In an effort to avoid unseemly actions at the hands of a group of ruffians, the knights would put aside their national differences and bond together in chivalry. In defense against unchivalrous attackers, in the form of revolting peasants, Sir Nigel and his squires fought side by side with the French knight Du Guesclin.32

30 Doyle, Sir Nigel, 682-692.
31 Ibid, 676.
This understood chivalric respect of the code of conduct guaranteed honorable treatment if one were held captive by the enemy. The knights, both captive and captor, acted with respect and honor in accordance with the code. Deals were struck and wishes granted, with the results resting on the honor of the grantee. A knight would always stand behind his word, regardless of personal consequences, because bravery, respect, loyalty, or duty meant nothing without honor. The honor or word of a knight was his most respected quality. A knight would take any measure to insure the soundness of his word. As the young squire, Nigel impulsively gave his word to insure the safety of one of his chivalric captives. Nigel had to stand up to the King of England.

"Because I promised him his life, and it is not for you, king though you be, to constrain a man of gentle blood to break his plighted word and lose his honor."33 Without the validity of his word, a man was no longer a knight.

A knight's honor was at stake even when he had not verbally given his word. The knights were not seen as law enforcers, but if they encountered anyone in danger or receiving harm unjustly, regardless of the social status of the endangered person, the knights were bound by chivalric honor and duty to respond. When traveling in Bordeaux, Sir Nigel came across a poor Englishman who was fearful for his safety. The man offered to pay for an escort, but Sir Nigel answered him by saying, "By Saint Paul! I

33Doyle, Sir Nigel, 616.
should be a sorry knight if I asked pay for standing by countryman in a strange land."  

It was wrong for a knight to ignore anyone in need. The main purposes, after all, of living the life of a knight was to become a knight-errant: to search for adventure and engage in chivalrous deeds. Few things could be defined as more chivalrous than aiding a less fortunate individual. The knight-errant defended others, fought for his country, his honor, and even sometimes for the object of his love.

As honor and bravery seemed to stand for their own value, courtly love was most often simply a foil for other, more important aspects of knighthood. As a French gentleman vividly displayed to Nigel, quarrels about women could easily be encouraged with the purpose being for the knights to engage in competition and earn honor and respect. "But we must have cause for quarrel, Nigel. Now, here I drink to the ladies of Brittany, who, of all ladies upon this earth, are the most fair and the most virtuous, so that the least worthy amongst them is far above the best of England."

Doyle and many of his contemporaries believed that courtly love and the other aspects of chivalry were needed in their disturbed society. Regardless of the material advances, many British people were tired of the social realities of an

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36Doyle, Sir Nigel, 719.
industrialized world. They wanted to go back to what the Enlightenment thinkers had scorned. They had strong longings toward the past, a strong nostalgia which attempted to blot out present realities. The public was in search of the ideal which they thought could be found in the old traditional ways. Doyle believed that authors had the capability of giving the public this ideal to replace what had been lost by the effects of over-modernization. Doyle wrote in his memoirs, "I knew in my heart that the book [The White Company] would live and that it would illuminate our national traditions."37

Pierre Nordon has pointed out that Doyle believed authors, politicians, and other leaders of society should practice and exhibit the ideals of medieval chivalry.38 Indeed, Doyle felt that authors were part of a noble profession, and that they needed to conform to the highest value of that profession. Doyle certainly felt that philosophers and authors had an effect on the common man. In contemplating the motives of the common man, Doyle noted: "It is to be remembered that these were the years when Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill were our chief philosophers, and that even the man in the street felt the strong sweeping current of their thought, while to the young student, eager and impressionable, it was overwhelming."39

37Doyle, Memories and Adventures, 75.
39Doyle, Memories and Adventures, 26.
Doyle's book *Through the Magic Door*, he praises his favorite authors: Scott, Stevenson, Macaulay, Meredith, and Dickens. He believed that they, especially the "high-souled chivalrous gentleman," Sir Walter Scott, were influential on England. Their writings had the potential to shape and influence English readers. The significant choice of Doyle's first historical novel, *Micah Clarke*, which was set to the historical structure of Macaulay's popular *History of England* demonstrated that he wanted the mainstream to read his work. In this aim, he was successful. As a reporter for *The Evening Standard* said, "Conan Doyle has been a good nourisher of Englishmen. There is more of him in our blood and bones than we think."\(^{40}\)

Chivalry was the civilizing factor, according to Doyle, that was missing in the nineteenth century. Doyle and other literary figures felt the need to civilize the savage modernization of England. This "... industrialism and the industrial spirit could be seen as not truly English, and, indeed, as a profound menace to the survival of 'Englishness.'"\(^{41}\) Doyle wanted "... the fantastic graces of Chivalry [to] lay upon the surface of life...," and it was these graces which would rescue England and the cherished ideals of Englishness."\(^{42}\)

\(^{40}\)Doyle and Nordon, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, 110.

\(^{41}\)Wiener, *English Culture*, 81.

\(^{42}\)Doyle, *Sir Nigel*, vii-viii.
CHAPTER IV

SOCIETY'S NEW ORDER

During the late nineteenth century, developments and changes from the Industrial Revolution stimulated attempts to evaluate and define the new order of society. This new order challenged the accepted boundaries of class and class function and began to crack the rigidity of English class structure. Many people welcomed these challenges with enthusiasm and vigor. Some individuals, like Doyle, however, clung to the stabilizing qualities of traditional Englishness and chivalric ideals. The revival of these chivalric ideals was intended to calm the disruptive social effects of industrialization, and in turn they would strengthen and redefine the traditional qualities of Englishness.

Embedded in this Englishness was the quality of the class structure that was now being challenged. "... The national culture was based upon an unequal diversity of functions." In response to these social changes, Doyle emphasized stringent class lines in his novels, with the aristocracy usually as his focus. This stringency and contentment with the separation of the classes and the leadership of the aristocracy in Doyle's supposedly historically

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correct novels emphasized the benefits of this traditional system over the current changes.

At present, many historians debate whether the power of the aristocratic class was disintegrating during the late nineteenth century owing to the rise of middle-class-industrialists and whether the upper echelons of the industrialists were becoming part of the aristocracy. Whether disintegrating or not, the aristocracy was an important part of traditional class and social stability and therefore vital to revived chivalric ideals. Since the aristocracy was an integral part of Englishness, the chivalric revival actually strengthened the position of the late-nineteenth century aristocracy. ". . . The dominant English had the power . . . to say what the national culture had been and was. . . . During 1880-1920 the conviction that English culture was to be found in the past was stabilised."²

It was this traditional English identity that united the unhappy masses under the umbrella of patriotism during these turbulent times. "Social-imperialism was designed to draw all classes together in defense of the nation and empire and aimed to prove to the least well-to-do class that its interests were inseparable from those of the nation."³ Doyle vividly illustrated the coming together of individuals from different classes in The

White Company and Micah Clarke. As Alleyne traveled through the forest in his search for a normal life outside of the monastery, he joined at different times people representing all classes. Alleyne and his companions came together with the goal of joining the White Company and defending English interests in France. This idea of an overall goal triumphed over individual interests. The stressing of national unity was to bring together the working class, the industrial middle class, and the aristocracy to engage in the battle of preserving an English identity. Through a direct narrative to the reader in Micah Clarke, Doyle wrote for emphasis that, "... they were upholding their country's true self against those who would alter the old systems under which she had led the nations."4

Doyle used the term "England" in his novels for the purpose of demonstrating unity behind a common goal. The distinction between English and British did not concern Doyle. Even though Doyle traced his roots back to Ireland, there was no distinction in his novels between any of the divisions of the United Kingdom that existed during his own lifetime. The revived chivalric ideals stressed unity and cohesiveness. To acknowledge that the varying sections of Great Britain differed from each other would defeat his designated purpose. For most of the years preceding industrialization, there was no Great Britain. England stood alone, with Wales, until the 1707 Act of Union with Scotland. The realm broadened still more with the Act of Union with Ireland in 1801.

4 Doyle, Micah Clarke, 353.
Since the common objective of the revival and of Doyle was to strengthen traditional ideals, "Englishness", not "Britishness" was the important and established traditional quality. In times of crisis, which this industrial period was to the aristocracy, the identity of a nation was defined on very wide terms.¹⁵

Great Britain's aristocracy was a perfect example of coming together for a common goal. For this aristocracy, class differentiation created stronger barriers than sectional loyalty. The English, Scot, and Irish elites came together for the individual greater good of their class, but most importantly for the good of the country as a whole.⁶ Throughout Doyle's novels, there was no distinction between English, Irish, or Scot. All of Great Britain's elite needed to unite to overcome the internal pressures from the other classes. The elite made concessions not only for the sake of their country and social statue, but also because the memories of violence against the ruling classes during the French Revolution and the unrest of 1848 had not yet been forgotten.

Doyle demonstrated through his novels that international war was a sure way of uniting differing forces and individuals within the country. Defending the nation was, of course, the most honorable justification for war. The country could draw strength from within to fight against the enemy from without.⁷ This enemy

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⁶Colley, Britons, 164.
⁷Ibid, 1.
was a great stimulant for national cohesiveness. An analogy of war was one of the effects which resulted from the revival efforts to unite the nation. The horrible conditions of the Industrial Revolution and the instability of the class structure became identified as the enemy. The chivalric revivalists pushed for mobilization against these undesirable conditions. To beat the "enemy" all that was needed was to grab hold of the past. But to use the past as a means to unite meant accepting all that came with it. The goal was to unite from within to fight not France or another European nation, but the negative social effects of the Industrial Revolution. Individuals worked together against the threat from within for the survival of their national identity.

All classes came together happily to fight for and defend their country, as illustrated in the united efforts of The White Company and Micah Clarke. The focus on boxing in Rodney Stone demonstrated an everyday example of class differences. Although the classes did not engage in the same activities with the same ends, they did respect each other's unique position. Lord Avon said that it was perfectly fine and even commendable for a man of lower class standing to improve himself through boxing, but it was not for a man of noble birth to degrade himself by participating in a lower class activity. While it was acceptable for Boy Jim to box or to train physically with his guardian, it was not acceptable to fight in an organized bout. When Boy Jim's natural father, Lord Avon

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8Ibid, 1-6 and 368-371.
learned of the possibility that Boy Jim might fight in a scheduled bout, he told Boy Jim that he could not fight for a purse.\textsuperscript{9} Public prize-fighting was the sport of the lower classes, but it was these manly sports which kept the general population ready for war.

With the same effect, segregation of the classes, the restriction of lower class activities existed as well. In response to a disagreement, a servant said to a noble friend of Lord Avon, "... you will permit me to say that a serving-man may resent an injury as much as a gentleman, though the redress of the duel is denied to him".\textsuperscript{10} Classes remained separate in function, but in crisis, class differences were subordinated to the success of England.\textsuperscript{11}

Classes did have a common goal, but they also had their individual goals. The economic goals of the aristocracy confronted the goals of the rising middle-class industrialists. It is hard to imagine how their conflict could be resolved without a large sacrifice from one or the other of the classes. As Gramsci argued, though, a dominant force cannot simply impose an identity on a subordinate.\textsuperscript{12} All groups affected had to accept a new, or in this case not so new, identity. Most of the population, therefore, had to accept or even welcome the revival of chivalric ideals.\textsuperscript{13} The aristocracy, of course, treasured the old identity since that was

\textsuperscript{9}Doyle, \textit{Rodney Stone}, 1093.
\textsuperscript{10}Ibid, 1099.
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid. 977.
\textsuperscript{12}Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds. and trans., \textit{Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci} (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 244.
\textsuperscript{13}Dodd, "National Culture" in \textit{Englishness}, eds., Colls and Dodd, 21-22.
where their now dubious power had been the strongest. The majority of the working class, however, did not accept the old identity because of the traditional power structure, but simply because the horrible conditions which surrounded them since the Industrial Revolution required change and stability, and the chivalric ideals provided this.

Therefore, even if the industrialists wanted to impose a new social order, they had too many groups, the working class as well as the aristocracy against them. This opposition did not, however, present an irreconcilable difference. The old social order contained enough space for most of the industrialists to forge their own position. Their interest in money did not upset the social standing of the aristocracy, although according to Doyle, it did cause some conflicts and issues of superiority. For the upper elite, honor was more important than money. When Nigel had an opportunity to gain money from the King of France after a battle, Nigel claimed the honor but not the money. The king commended him by saying. "... I swear by my father's soul that I had rather have the honour this squire has gathered than all the richest ransoms in France."\textsuperscript{14}

Since the businesses which resulted from industrialization required a lot of work from the industrialists themselves, they did not present a direct threat to the parliamentary positions of the aristocracy. Some industrialists wanted to become gentlemen,
although most supported the changing view that money was more important than land. Neither Samkin or Hordle John, after earning their deserved money and honor in the White Company, bought a mansion or presented themselves as gentlemen.\textsuperscript{15} As Doyle showed through these characters, the financially rising classes did not challenge traditional class position. Therefore, the chivalric revival was able to continue without significant disruption from the industrialists, since they continued to work and earn their money, while the aristocracy held and treasured their unpaid positions in Parliament.

With the rising power of the industrialists, the aristocracy did have to consider other interests in making national policy.\textsuperscript{16} The industrialists, although not holding the majority of official power before 1880, did influence policy. Growing monetary worth and recent enfranchisement gave power to the industrialists. With the right to vote, the industrialists were able to hold the Parliament members accountable for policy-making. "This two-way traffic could only mean that members of the landed interest continued to enjoy the appearance of power on condition that they did not use it exclusively in the interests of land."\textsuperscript{17} The elite changed its position and ultimate influence to maintain Parliamentary control and to benefit the greater good of the voters.

\textsuperscript{15}Doyle, \textit{The White Company}, 415-421.
\textsuperscript{17}F.M.L. Thompson, \textit{English Landed Society in the 19th Century} (London: Routledge & Regan Paul Ltd, 1963), 276.
The industrialists accepted the necessity of maintaining their dedication to business since serving in office cost money. They also argued that they were benefiting the greater good when they confined their efforts to things other than Parliamentary action.

The old patronage system itself was influential in winning universal acceptance to the revived chivalric identity. The imbedded characteristics of leaders and followers, and the strong class-minded consciousness had been a part of England's identity for many years. The old English identity had been established, tested, and proved over and over. This new social order which was developing from the Industrial Revolution and the rising middle-class industrialists was not only unproven but currently the cause of much discontent, instability, and hardship for many, especially the working class. The aristocracy supported the revival and so did the working class who were now in a dreadful condition. The working class and the aristocracy defined and supported each other's positions which enabled them to play a significant part in the national culture. It was the ability of the aristocracy to adapt and compromise to the industrial middle-class demands which allowed the aristocracy to hold power for a while longer. "... Just how dominant and durable a ruling class can be depends on how far it convinces others - and itself - of its right to rule and its ability to rule."

18Colls, "Political Culture," in Englishness, eds., Colls and Dodd, 37.
19Dodd, "National Culture," in Englishness, eds., Colls and Dodd, 21.
20Colley, Britons, 193.
The aristocracy adapted and compromised to the changes of industrialized England, and they remained in power. Their paternalistic approach to ruling seemed to be a defense of their domination. Their claims of nurturing guidance and especially protection led not to the best interest of everyone, but to the best interest of the aristocracy. This so-called protection was really more of a form of control. The protection of another group or individual defined the protectors as dominant. Although the theory was that the aristocracy was protecting the lower classes from harm, the reality was that they were protecting them from opportunity. While restraining any advances the lower classes might otherwise make, the aristocracy was solidifying their ruling power.

By the late 1880s, however, the aristocracy's position lessened owing to the combined affect of the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884-1885, and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The wider male suffrage facilitated many of the middle-class goals. The election of some middle class persons to Parliament occurred, but most importantly, all old members of Parliament had to consider the well-being of these middle-class voters. The aristocracy had to consider the concerns and the demands of the middle-class industrialists since the members of Parliament were voted in by the newly expanded electorate. Although middle-class industrialists achieved political victories, the aristocracy remained the group passing this legislation because of the established social
traditions. Doyle and others emphasized and glorified these traditions and patriotic feelings with the hopes of forestalling or preventing any wide-spread social change. Simply because the non-elite classes now had their right to vote did not mean that they would elect each other. They had the power to choose, and they chose the aristocracy for many years. The fact was that, "... the entrepreneurial class ruled, as it were, by remote control, through ... the landed aristocracy which continued to occupy the main positions of power down to the 1880s and beyond." 

Present historical arguments concerning the position of the aristocracy are divided into two main groups. Lawrence Stone and W.D. Rubenstein argue that middle-class industrialists were forging their own position in the class structure for the purpose of an identity separate to that of the aristocracy or working class. Stone argued that only a few of the newly rich merchants tried to become part of the aristocracy by owning land. Rubenstein documented that by the early 1900s, many of the new wealthy individuals in England were landless. Another view by Martin Wiener and F. M. L. Thompson portrays the wealthier industrial entrepreneurs as becoming part of the aristocracy and desiring the


traditional role of a land-owning gentleman. Wiener defines the upper stratum of English society as "a stratum produced by the coming together of businessmen, the rapidly expanding professional and bureaucratic classes, and the older gentry and aristocracy." If an individual invested a lot of money in land, even without earning a monetary return, "... he would be a greater person in the eyes of more people." The new upper class was formed by "accommodation and absorption", and it was this class who supported chivalric ideals.

Regardless of which of the above arguments is true, the aristocracy was losing their exclusive hold over political and social power. Until the 1880s, the aristocracy successfully held onto its teetering power, and held off attempts by the rising industrialists to eclipse this power. The revival of chivalric ideals and the overwhelming general deference to social hierarchy aided their struggle to maintain control. This deference in conjunction with the revival of tradition strengthened the aristocracy by default.

The population, as a whole, treasured the feelings and theoretical ideals of Englishness. The new industrialists "wanted to own a country house not because it was a step on the way to Parliament but because ... it represented to them peace, tradition,

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beauty and dignity."^{29} This national culture helped the revival to succeed. The ideal of Englishness was everywhere, and everyone respected gentlemanly qualities, even though they may not have been gentlemen. Even in a drunken state, a lower class man apologized, "... if I've said anything wot isn't gentlemanlike---"^{30}

As society changed with the varying positives and many negatives of the Industrial Revolution, the ideals of chivalry seemed like a desirable option to all classes.

It was these English ideals which Doyle used to support the position of the aristocracy in his novels. He did not care in which way the industrialists were going to be accepted in society, but as shown through his novels, knighthood, respectability, and honor could only be achieved by those who were born into nobility. For this reason, Micah Clarke was purposely defined as a commoner. Throughout the novel, Micah was a brave and honorable soldier. His actions earned him an honorary title, but not a knighthood.^{31}

When Micah had distinguished himself on behalf of the Protestant cause, Monmouth said of Micah's home town, that, "they breed a good old English stock in those parts."^{32} Even when Micah had accomplished tasks that were more honorable than anything his leaders had done, he and his town were still referred to as good stock. Since Micah was not from noble origins, Doyle deliberately

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^{32}Ibid., 244.
kept him in a lower place. Doyle downplayed purposely Micah's heroic and respectable actions to stress class structure. Probably in response to current changes, Doyle's goal remained for the aristocracy to keep its power, influence, and position in society. Doyle attempted to use the revival of chivalric ideals to rejuvenate the position of the aristocracy in late nineteenth-century England through the characters of his widely read novels.

Doyle portrayed Micah Clarke and Samkin as lower class individuals who fought for England and earned honor and sometimes money for themselves through their exploits. Neither Micah nor Samkin with all of their successes were equal to Alleyne or Sir Nigel. Although all four men collectively and individually fought bravely and equally for their cause, Doyle portrayed them as unequal because of the inherent differences in their class rankings. A clear and telling demonstration of the class differences was the concern over money. The knights in Doyle's novels, like the aristocrats of the late nineteenth century, earned honor for the sake of honor and did not concern themselves about monetary gains. Alleyne and Sir Nigel did not pause to reap personal riches from their conquests, whereas Samkin did and was expected to.

Doyle embraced and encouraged old ideals of class structure to promote stability in society. Simply because he wanted the aristocracy to continue in their power did not mean that he shunned the technological changes and advances of the Industrial Revolution. The changes affected his everyday life, but he made
no complaint of them. Nor did Doyle support antiquity because it was quaint. He incorporated firearms into his novels. Some of the characters in his later novels, The Refugee, Adventures of Gerard, and Exploits of Brigadier Gerard carried and used guns in battle. Significantly however, the nobles, whose position Doyle was glorifying, did not use guns and maintained the traditional rules of fighting.

Through Doyle's novels the reader can see his acceptance of the advances of the Industrial Revolution in technology and conviences, but nothing changed for Doyle in his acceptance and behavior of the aristocracy. As the whole of English society evolved with the Industrial Revolution, Doyle glorified his elite characters through the traditional qualities of the aristocracy.

Many authors wrote about chivalry to create a stable environment. Doyle deliberately wanted to strengthen the aristocracy. As shown through his lack of incorporation of any positive class change into the historical novels, Doyle certainly treasured the chivalric ideals and especially the class structure. Although the social dislocation demanded change, Doyle's characters did not demand the same. Doyle illustrated this as “[Dame Ermyntrude Loring's] thoughts and memories went back to harsher times, and she looked upon the England around her as a degenerate and effeminate land which had fallen away from the old standard of knightly courtesy and

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33Nordon, Conan Doyle, 46-53.
valor."\textsuperscript{34} Doyle not only supported the idea of Englishness, but he also supported the return to the rigid chivalric class structure.

\textsuperscript{34}Doyle, \textit{Sir Nigel}, 455.
CHAPTER V

GENDER RELATIONS

Along with the changing class structure in nineteenth century England, the gender structure changed significantly. The status of women altered greatly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Industrial Revolution brought wide-ranging employment opportunities to England, some of which were available to women. These new opportunities were not always pleasant and certainly not equal to those for the men, but they encouraged the desire for more equality and opportunity for women. The actions by women and women's groups from the 1860s onward attempted to further their causes for equality, but also prompted suppression. This shaking of the old gender structure was but yet another reason for many people to desire the revival of chivalric ideals.

Controversial issues challenged the position of women. The Reform Acts of 1867, 1884, and 1885 had more social impact than just the concern of male suffrage among the nonaristocratic classes. As the reform of 1867 came to a vote in Parliament, women began demanding they receive their suffrage rights also in this reform. If there was going to be reform of the discriminatory voting policy,
some women wanted equality for all, including themselves. Not excluding the important motivational factor of the long term oppression of women throughout history, the immediately and personally felt exclusion of women in the Reform Acts and the abominable passage of the Contagious Disease Acts in 1864 prompted action by women's interest groups to change the tide.

The initial objective of the Contagious Disease Acts and most other governmental legislation concerning social issues was to help the public. Many of these efforts, however, led to exploitation. The low social position of women and the dominance of males in government led men to enforce the legislation with any means possible, which basically meant without concern for women.

The obvious purpose of the first Contagious Disease Act, passed in 1864, was to contain the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially in the military ports. The law however, was enforced by demanding bodily inspections on any woman who was thought to be a prostitute. This caused much outrage from the Women's Suffrage groups, Women Trade Union organizations, and other women's groups, since the enforcement of the Contagious Disease Act discriminated on the basis of class and gender. Nothing was done to the military men who were frequenting prostitutes. It was the same vice for both men and women, but only the women were held accountable. This uneven enforcement, along with the
severity of the enforcement, prompted action on behalf of these women which eventually led to the repeal of the last act in 1886.\textsuperscript{1}

The exclusion of women's interests in the Reform acts also caused women to react. There were attempts to include provisions for women in the 1867 act, but when it came to a vote, Gladstone vetoed it.\textsuperscript{2} This defeat did not end the matter, but instead spurred interest and action in women's suffrage. Gladstone killed many attempts at including women's suffrage in the reform acts. According to the \textit{Women's Suffrage Journal} of September 1885, when members of Parliament tried to include women in the Reform Act of 1884, Gladstone announced that he would veto the entire bill if it included anything about women.\textsuperscript{3} Although the Reform Act of 1884 did not include women, the women's organizations had many accomplishments and became extremely influential in the 1880s.

Women had reasons to feel hopeful about the possible expansion of their rights. These reasons, however, such as the "separate spheres" concept, created more barriers for women to overcome. The changing situation of employment during the Industrial Revolution cultivated the idea of separate spheres. The new and prominent separation of work and home helped to develop the idea of a domestic sphere. As men interpreted the domestic sphere, it meant a home with a woman remaining inside it. While


\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
some women attempted to change their economic position and left the domestic sphere to work in the factories, most stayed in the home. With men out of the home and working in the factories, women now had sole control of the home. This change in responsibilities and in lack of the physical presence of men in the home, gave some women new freedom. For many women, however, the domestic sphere became another barrier to equality and another effective tool used against their efforts to gain independence and to secure employment outside of the home.

Men glorified this domestic sphere. They argued that only women could obtain the benefits and carry out the duties of the domestic sphere. They claimed that women needed to be dedicated to the home. Men and anti-suffragists asserted that, by nature and God, women were part of the domestic sphere. The talents of keeping a house and rearing the children belonged to the women, and therefore women were destined to remain within the domestic sphere.

A woman's identity was not established by her being English but by the domestic sphere. She was not responsible for the country, but for the home and children. The glorification of these duties in the domestic sphere was done in an attempt to keep women out of the increasingly appealing jobs outside of the

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domestic sphere. Women were only to become an economic participant outside of the home in times of necessity. The demands and restrictions of men apotheosized and nullified the women's position everywhere but in the home.

Women had little legal status or rights outside of the home. Inside of the home, however, in the absence of their husbands, they were expected to maintain authority, which forced women to maintain a dual status. Outside of the domestic environment, women must act in a subordinate manner, but once back in the home, women changed their status and maintained the household while their husbands were at work. Not only did women have to juggle their status from the outside world to the domestic sphere, but they also held a dual status within the domestic sphere itself.

Women were the keepers of the house. Their dominant role in the home included the duty of educating the children. This education was moral as well as intellectual since women were the moral keepers of the family. The moral education was left to the mother, but the majority of the intellectual training for most young boys took place outside of the home. A mother's authority over her sons within the domestic sphere ended when the young boys went off to school. Mothers stayed within their sphere at home with their daughters, as the young men ventured out in the world.

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Women did not have the freedom to leave the domestic sphere. In Davidoff and Hall's explanation of the dual status, the women's role in the domestic sphere, "... promised women fulfillment within the home and had little space for frustrated ambition or unsatisfied needs." They were the chained spiritual leaders and propagators of the race. This so-called authority in the domestic sphere did not mean much compared to all the other limitations to which they were subjected. The structure of the domestic sphere with the emphasis on religious morality demonstrated that, "their religion recognized their spiritual equality yet defended social and sexual subordination." In response to any new opportunity that the Industrial Revolution or any social change gave women, men were reluctant to accept them as a self-determining, independent individuals. They attempted to force women to remain in the domestic sphere, a subordinate role, in an effort, they proclaimed, to protect them from the evils of society.

To protect women from the evils of society and to prevent women from interfering, men placed women on a figurative pedestal. It was a theory which supported the domestic sphere by keeping women in an appropriate role. It limited the acceptable actions of women. Being atop the pedestal presented women as delicate, moral goddesses, far from the evils of society and needing

7Ibid, 177.
worship and protection. To stay on this pedestal, women abstained from many activities, "... in order that they might the better wear an aspect remote enough to seem worthy of worship."  

Men placed women on the pedestal to keep them safe from the world. The men trudged through the grime and suffered on their behalf. They martyred themselves for the "benefit" of the women, and this martyrdom required that women live up to masculine expectations. The chivalric, "courtesy was created by men for their own satisfaction, and it emphasized women's role as an object, sexual or otherwise." This courtesy did not benefit women in any way, and, "when men ignored chivalry, women were better off."  

On the pedestal, women needed protectors and, marriage provided a husband, a protector, and a way to contain women within their domestic sphere. Marriage, "safely domesticate[d] the burgeoning garden flower into an indoor pot plant..." The pedestal forced her to be protected by her husband, but from whom was it that she was being protected? Who was the threat? As Judith Walkowitz so aptly noted, "women were essentially moral, 'spiritual' creatures who needed to be protected from essentially animalistic, 'carnal' men."  

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10 Fernando, "New Women", 3.
12 Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, 451.
13 Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 256.
This domestic sphere ideology and the accompanying pedestal theory were not really about protecting the women. They actually enabled the men to act outside of the home without much interference from women. In the domestic sphere, women were, "sheltered and respected, not so much for themselves as because they were . . . the guardians of the 'honour' of their husbands." The domestic sphere was seen as religious, too, and, it was, therefore, ungodly for women to rebel or to leave their duties. Being confined in this sphere did not allow women to engage in self-supporting activities. Woman's survival depended on man's aid and protection. Not only were women dependent, but this protection racket encouraged men to become extremely repressive against the women. Brothers and fathers had to protect their sisters, daughters, and wives, "... no matter how heavy handed such protection could sometimes be."

These repressive efforts spurred the 1890s reaction of the "New Women" movement. Women took matters into their own hands and actively sought to reverse the repressive actions and eagerly attempted to promote their own independence and equality. The concept of the New Woman developed in response to the "frustrating slowness of the general progress toward equality for women . . . ." The New Women demanded social equality and

14Fernando, "New Women", 6.
15Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, 327-328.
16Ibid, 327.
17Johnson, "Dual Life," in Victorian Literature, ed., Cox, 32
the possibility of social independence. They rebelled against the growing repression and the attempted imposition of traditional chivalric ideals.\textsuperscript{18} The New Woman movement was a renewed attempt to diminish the gender inequalities. The movement wanted to eradicate the swelling backlash against women and their equality. This backlash supported the efforts of those who wanted to revive chivalric ideals.

The efforts by women and the social changes of the nineteenth century stimulated efforts to revive chivalry. With women on a pedestal, chivalry required from the men protection for the women. If women became active and successful in the world which was beginning to open up to them, if they ventured outside their domestic sphere, it threatened men. Men's alleged duty of protecting women was really just a problem of controlling themselves which would allow women to expand and develop their own identity.

The identity of women evolved and advanced during the nineteenth century. Writers defined, through their writings, their ideas of acceptable and appropriate behavior for both men and women. The separate gender spheres were clearly defined and visible in Doyle's historical novels.

Doyle portrayed women as passive and quiet and never as aggressive or troublesome. In his historical novels, there were actually very few women characters. When women were

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid, 22.
incorporated in the novels; however, they were most always controlled and protected. Mary and Maude Loring were the only women in the historical novels to demonstrate any form of independence. Of the few female characters, except the two Lorings, all were strongly fixed in the home with no seeming desire to leave. Women in Doyle’s novels were certainly restricted to the domestic sphere. Women stayed within the domestic sphere where they were atop of a pedestal with a chivalric knight ready to defend them.

Within Doyle's novels the chivalric knights placed women on a pedestal. Every woman, according to Sir Nigel, was worthy of protection and worship from the knights. All women were to be cherished and, "there is no woman so humble that a true knight may not listen to her tale of wrong."19 It was a knight’s responsibility to his chivalric code to worship women and to maintain their status on the pedestal. All chivalric men were to protect all women.

Even in Nigel Loring’s younger days his qualities of knighthood were unfaulterable. His first priority to the chivalric code was his responsibility to women. Aylward said,

Sure I am that if my little master Squire Loring had the handling of it, every woman on this island would be free ere another day had passed. . . "He is one who makes an idol of woman, after the manner of those crazy knight-errands.20

20Doyle, Sir Nigel, 658.
The actions of young Squire Loring always placed women on a pedestal and, therefore, in need of protection. His efforts and respect for women were defined within the ideals of chivalric conduct and his actions 'protected' women.

Regardless of a man's military mission, the protection of women came first. When Micah Clarke was with a group securing food for the forces, they heard a cry through the woods. Although the nonchivalrous major told them to stay, Micah and his companion exclaimed that they could not just ride by and leave a woman in distress. They had to lend their aid and explain their actions to the king after they had secured the safety of the woman.21 Micah's defense of his actions in later life included that, "yet I trust, my dears, even now, when years have weighed me down, that the scream of a woman in distress would be a signal which would draw me to her aid while these limbs could bear me."22 Although, because of his class, Micah was not a knight, he still owing to his gender, held the same code of conduct toward women.

Any man, regardless of social standing, according to the chivalric code of conduct, was responsible for protecting any woman in need. This was illustrated by the request that an American keep watch for a woman's safety. Immediately after Amos arrived in France, he was asked to stay by the house of

21 Doyle, Micah Clarke, 361.
22 Ibid, 376.
DeCatinat because Adèle, might need a protector. It was not known if Amos was a gentleman, but it was assumed that he would protect Adèle from some known unchivalrous men.

This assumed need of protection and men's actions to this end, placed women in an inferior position. Men assumed that they were stronger physically and mentally than women and acted accordingly, which took power away from women. Women supposedly did not have power over themselves, much less over anyone or anything else. As demonstrated by Étienne's thought when put in a compromising position with a woman, he was the one responsible for diffusing the situation. Speaking to himself after being placed together with a young, beautiful woman, Étienne asked, "what must it mean for [me]? What must it mean for her? . . . But I was reserved. I was discreet. I tried to curb my own emotions and to discourage hers." The woman apparently did not have the control to discourage her own emotions and actions. According to this situation, the knight needed to protect the woman from herself.

There was only one instance when a woman challenged the boundaries of the domestic sphere. Maude Loring was a rowdy young woman who lived with her parents Sir Nigel and Lady Mary Loring. When Alleyne and his group of travelers waited at the castle for their departure to join the White Company, Maude took

an interest in Alleyne. Sir Nigel had Alleyne tutor his daughter in an attempt to pacify her rowdy heart and to direct her interests onto the appropriate ideas and actions for a young women. When Alleyne was ready to depart, however, Maude was upset that she could not be of some use to them.

Oh, But I hate myself for being a woman! What can I do that is good? Here I must bide, and talk and sew and spin, and spin and sew and talk. Ever the same dull round, with nothing at the end of it.25

With this outcry, Alleyne assured her that she had value and that was her value to him. With this confession of love, Maude awaited his return. When it was feared that Alleyne had died in battle, Maude planned to enter a convent. Alleyne arrived just in time and said that it was too much for her to become a nun because, ". . . she was made for a wife and not for the cloister."26 So in the end the young and rebellious Maude was tamed by society's expectations and her soon to be husband and protector, Alleyne.

This one incident in all seven novels was the only one in which a woman expressed so clearly her wishes for something beyond a life in the domestic sphere. All other descriptions of women involved their being defended or protected by males. As Étienne Gerard demonstrated again and again, ". . . I have the privilege which every gentleman possesses of protecting a woman

26 Ibid, 417.
against brutality." Étienne felt that he had the right and duty to protect a woman against any form of attack.

- The manly world defined by the chivalric code of conduct changed during the Industrial Revolution. Women experienced more opportunity and freedom. Many men responded to this new freedom of women by trying to contain them in the domestic sphere. Once women were backed into this sphere, they were considered subordinate or inferior. The same paternalistic argument the aristocracy used against the lower classes was also the one used against women. The nineteenth century men validated their superiority by forcing women into an inferior position. The lack of major female characters in Doyle's novels and the way he portrayed the minor roles of the few female characters demonstrates his lack of consideration for women in their evolving nineteenth century roles. Although the environment and the men of Doyle's novels incorporated both the medieval traditions and the nineteenth century traditions, the role of women was left back in the medieval tradition.

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28 Ibid. 995.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle illustrated, through his novels, his support of the chivalric social and cultural ideals of the Middle Ages over those of the nineteenth century. Although he did not initiate the revival of medieval chivalric ideals, he contributed to the movement significantly. His overwhelming popularity as a literary figure combined with strong glorification of chivalry in his historical novels influenced many people during the late-nineteenth century to embrace chivalric ideals. Novels "provide modern readers with the materials for representing their desires, . . . and in doing so they place limitations on how and what to desire."

These limitations as presented by Doyle rejected the contemporary society and embraced the Middle Ages.

These chivalric ideals and rituals, appealed to the traditional values of the nobility. The position of the nobility, which Doyle considered himself part of, was threatened by the socio-cultural changes of nineteenth century England. Doyle like many of his companions embraced the revival in an attempt to stem the changing basis of political and social power. Through his

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novels, Doyle used the patriotic feelings of Englishness to gain a wider based support for the revival of the chivalric ideals. This revival claimed to return to the treasured and stable good old days.

In appealing to the patriotic Englishness, Doyle attracted not only the aristocracy, but everyone who supported England. With Englishness resting on a paternalistic grounding, class and gender relations remained rigid and organized according the power structure of the Middle Ages. This paternalistic structure affected class relations in terms of the *noblesse oblige* as well as the relations between the genders in terms of the domestic sphere. The success of the revival and Doyle's personal efforts encouraged chivalric ideals to pervade early twentieth century English life.

Doyle wrote during turbulent times. Instead of addressing the difficulties of his society, like Charles Dickens, Doyle glorified the past. Doyle embodied the ideals of chivalry but placed them in the context of modern times. He did not refer to the unrest or social upheaval of the late Victorian era; instead he illustrated and romanticized the chivalric ideals as an alternative to the unrest and social upheaval.
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