

*Ideologies of Exemplary Masculinity in French and British
Adventure Novels 1870-1900*

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Introduction

1 *Social and Political Context: Crises of Confidence*

On 16 February 1885, the French daily newspaper *Le Petit Parisien* added its proprietor's perspective to a national debate that had, since the early 1870s, captured the attention of politicians, journalists and the public. Under the headline, 'La Force des Peuples', the editorial compared the relative birth rates of France with those of its European rivals, especially Germany, at whose hands France had suffered a humiliating military defeat fourteen years earlier.¹ The author of the editorial, Jean Frollo, most probably the pseudonym of the newspaper's proprietor Deputy Charles Ange Laisant,² emphasised the vulnerability of a country surrounded by potential aggressors at a time when a low birth rate and what he calls an 'inferior' male population made it difficult to fill the ranks of the armed forces.³ Although Frollo quotes no figures in the editorial, census results for the period 1825 to 1914 indicate a live birth rate of 20 per 1,000 in France compared with an estimate of over 30 per 1,000 for the previous century. The population of France increased by about 10% from 36 million to 39.5 million between 1872 and 1911, at a time when Germany's population had increased by 58%.⁴ In the two decades between 1871 and 1891, France's population increased by 2.3

¹ 'La Force des Peuples', *Le Petit Parisien*, 16 February 1885, p. 1.

² See Adolphe Robert and Gaston Cougny, *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français 1789 à 1889*, vol. 3 (Paris: Bourloton, 1889) p. 540. Laisant, a former army officer, had taken control of *Le Petit Parisien* in January 1879 and had used his editorial position in 1880 to accuse M. de Cissey, a former Minister of War, of an inappropriate relationship with a Prussian baroness who was suspected of espionage. Laisant used the pseudonym Jean Frollo for this campaign. Following this, the pseudonym was used by more than one contributor to *Le Petit Parisien* in the 1880s and 90s (Therenty 2011: 960), although by 1899 the pseudonym Frollo once again represented Laisant (Kalifa et al., ed. 2011: 1422).

³ Cole relates how 'widespread fears of cultural and national degeneration led many public figures to call once more for increases in the number of births' (2000: 1).

⁴ Census figures quoted by Nye (1993: 77).

million, Great Britain's by 6.3 million and Germany's by 8.3 million.⁵ Although Frollo's editorial employs the hyperbole of mass journalism, Cole reports that Senators and Deputies of the Third Republic's National Assembly were 'nearly unanimous in their horror of depopulation' (2000: 4). Frollo underlines these anxieties: 'Le ralentissement du mouvement de la natalité en France a été, depuis quelques années surtout, signalé par de nombreux publicistes comme l'un des périls les plus graves qu'aît jamais connu notre pays'. Frollo discusses the necessity of healthy population growth for military and political dominance, then concludes by offering this hypothesis to his readers: 'si nous nous trouvions un jour dans un tel état d'infériorité numérique que la défense nationale en fût gravement compromise?'.⁶

Underlying the concerns expressed by Frollo were reports filtering back from the eighteen-month-old French colonial expedition in Tonkin, a region broadly approximate to today's North Vietnam. France had originally intervened in 1881 in support of its trade interests and had embarked on a brief and unproductive war with China between December 1883 and May 1884. Gildea reports that premier Jules Ferry 'defended French strategy as designed to gain control of the Red River and gain access to a market of 400 million consumers in China' (2008: 418). By 1885, news reports of military setbacks at the hands of Tonkinese rebels and Chinese troops were making clear to the 100,000 readers of *Le Petit Parisien*⁷ that the politicians had given their military commanders insufficient resources to

⁵ For a summary of European population trends see Karen Offen, 'Depopulation, Nationalism and Feminism in Fin de Siècle France', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 89, No. 3 (Jun., 1984) p. 652.

⁶ 'La Force des Peuples', *Le Petit Parisien*, 16 February 1885, p. 1.

⁷ Bellanger reports circulation of *Le Petit Parisien* as 39,419 in 1880 (1972: 245). Gildea reports circulation of 100,000 by 1884 (2009: 404).

complete the task of annexation of a protectorate,⁸ reputedly rich in mineral wealth and of strategic value in securing trade routes.⁹

Of equal concern to military leaders and their supporters in the press was the rate of attrition among the physically overtaxed troops behind the front lines of the Tonkin expedition. Jennings reports a ‘2% mortality rate from disease amongst colonial troops in Indochina between 1883 and 1888’ (2011: 8) while Berenson underlines the controversy surrounding France’s intervention in Tonkin, ‘where many French soldiers died’ (2011: 56). A letter in *Le Petit Parisien*, dated 9 November 1884, purportedly from an infantryman in the Ké-Lung province, cast further doubt on the readiness of France’s military resources to undertake the challenges demanded of them in Indochina and other tropical protectorates. The tropical climate and soldiers’ susceptibility to disease through inadequate medicines and provisions were described as taking their toll on the expeditionary forces: ‘C’est pitié de voir dans nos cantonnements cinq ou six cent hommes à la mine pâle, à la démarche chancelante, se traîner péniblement’.¹⁰ Even when more troops were provided following the urgent pleas of General Brière de l’Isle, Commander in Chief of French forces in Indochina, the physical condition and vulnerability of the new re-enforcements upon arrival left the French forces in a weak position before any serious engagement with the enemy, as reported by a despatch of 7 February 1885: ‘Des 1500 hommes débarqués, il y en a cent qui dorment sous terre, quatre-vingt sont rentrés en France mourants, plus de deux cent sont aux ambulances; deux cent

⁸ For discussion of anti-colonialist sentiments in the 1880s See Gildea (2009: 418). Berenson also reports that the French ‘had to struggle hard and with considerable loss of life to overcome opposition in Tonkin’ (2011: 275).

⁹ Berenson reports ‘an economic rationale [for] a new empire’ which would ‘vastly expand the market for French goods and supply the raw materials so crucial for France’s own industrial development’ (2011: 62).

¹⁰ ‘Nos Soldats Sacrifiés’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 7 February 1885, p. 2.

autres qui n'y sont pas, faute de place de personnel et de médicaments, traînent dans les cantonnements, et le reste ne vaut guère mieux'.¹¹

These two causes of anxiety, weak population growth and the putative physical weakness of the men charged with defending the nation, fuelled a broad national debate in the burgeoning mass press. This debate concerned itself with the perceived decay of the French nation at a time when its status as a world power had been undermined by military defeat and continuing humiliation by the occupiers of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, lost in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 (Forth and Accampo 2010: 2). France's national pride was still bruised fourteen years after the war. Historian Matt Reed underlines the fragility of France's self-image in the 1880s: 'As the Third Republic embarked upon its version of the democratic experiment, it did so with deep reservations about the health of French society and profound questions about the capacity of its citizens to meet the country's challenges' (2010: 72). These reservations were voiced by the journalists and editorialists of *Le Petit Parisien*, whose launch manifesto in October 1876 stated aims to 'rassurer, stimuler les timides, faire appel au patriotisme de tous'.¹² According to a series of articles that appeared during the first quarter of 1885, France had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the ruthless Prussians, largely through the misjudgement of the Emperor.¹³ Editorial comment maintained that families were not replacing the stock of Frenchmen at a rate high enough to exact revenge on the aggressors or even to defend the nation.¹⁴ Moreover, young Frenchmen were reported to lack the physical strength and prowess essential to a great military power.¹⁵ France lacked rôle models of the calibre of Napoleon I, Jeanne d'Arc, or even the defeated Carolingian hero

¹¹ *Le Petit Parisien*, 7 February 1885, p. 2.

¹² *Le Petit Parisien*, 15 October 1876, p. 1.

¹³ 'La Haine Allemande', *Le Petit Parisien*, 3 January 1885, p. 1.

¹⁴ 'La Force des Peuples', *Le Petit Parisien*, 16 February 1885, p. 1.

¹⁵ 'Nos Soldats Sacrifiés', *Le Petit Parisien*, 7 February 1885, p. 2.

Roland, to inspire French youth to acts of valour.¹⁶ Citizens were being weakened by the migration from honest physical labour in the countryside to desk and factory work in the new consumer economy (Forth and Accampo 2010: 133). According to the rhetoric of *Le Petit Parisien*, a decline in public morals and the spread of venereal disease was weakening the fibre of the nation. The same newspaper bemoans the meddling of Church and monarchist factions, which, it maintains, obstructs the development of a robust Republic strong enough to repeat the military victories of the earlier part of the century.¹⁷

Preoccupations with potential aggressors to the East, however, did not preclude attention to the fortunes of the traditional foe to the North. The press and politicians cited British colonial adventures and misadventures as a foil to some of the frustrated ambitions of French colonial policy. So, for example, on 15 February 1885, the mass daily newspaper *Le Petit Journal*, selling over half a million copies by 1880¹⁸ and arch-rival to *Le Petit Parisien*, published rancorous recriminations against the British for standing back as the Prussians marched into Paris fourteen years earlier: ‘Est-ce que les Anglais nous ont tendu la main lorsque nous étions sous la main de fer des Allemands et de M. de Bismarck?’¹⁹ *Le Petit Journal* also raised suspicions of British complicity with the Chinese in obstructing the French advance in Tonkin: ‘L’Angleterre, persévérant dans son système de haine égoïste, n’a pas cessé d’exciter les Chinois contre nous dans la question du Tonkin’.²⁰ In spite of the accusatory rhetoric, no evidence is provided by the editorialist of *Le Petit Journal* as to

¹⁶ Berenson highlights ways in which these legends ‘permeated the culture of the early Third Republic’ (2011: 171).

¹⁷ ‘La Carême’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 19 February 1885, p. 1. See also Forth and Accampo (2010: 6-7).

¹⁸ For press circulation figures see Bellanger (1972: 137, 234, 297).

¹⁹ ‘Chacun pour Soi’, *Le Petit Journal*, 15 February 1885, p. 1.

²⁰ *Le Petit Journal*, 15 February 1885, p 1.

exactly how the British have conspired with the Chinese to undermine the French, this style of journalism being perhaps an attempt to justify setbacks to French expeditionary forces.²¹

1885 was also a pivotal year in the development of British colonial policy. It was a year in which national confidence had been severely shaken. On 25 January, three weeks before *Le Petit Journal's* publication of the above anti-British tirade, General Charles Gordon had been killed by Mahdist warriors on the steps of the Governor's palace in Khartoum, an event that shocked the British nation and undermined that nation's morale, despite his army's earlier heroic defiance of the Mahdi in the struggle for strategic control of Egypt, Sudan and the Nile.²² The staunchly patriotic *Illustrated London News* provided a critical appraisal of British expeditionary achievements to its 200,000 subscribers²³ in its summary of the outcome of the Sudanese expedition and the failed rescue of Gordon by Wolseley:

The campaign which began in early January is now at an end. It has proved an entire failure and Lord Wolseley's army now stands just where it stood last Christmas. The Mahdi has, on the contrary, achieved a great success and has gained the mastery of the Nile. No political or military advantage seems to have

²¹ Although my comments on the ideological motives behind this article in *Le Petit Journal* are speculative, it is instructive to note that Francine Amaury sub-titles the second volume of her history of *Le Petit Journal's* primary competitor, *Le Petit Parisien* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972): *Le Petit Parisien: instrument de propagande au service du régime*.

²² For background on the Sudan campaign see Berenson (2011: 83-84). Berenson informs us that 'journalists and editors [flew] Gordon's flag in 1884 and 1885' (84).

²³ Sinnema reports that the *Illustrated London News* was 'aimed at a fairly literate market' (1998: 17). A cover price of sixpence, however, limited circulation of the *Illustrated London News* outside the middle and upper classes. Nonetheless, Bacot reports that weekly circulation had already passed 200,000 by the 1860s (2005: 110) and reached 300,000 with special editions (2005: 48). Beegan reports that the *Illustrated London News* was broadly read through 'pass-on' readership from subscribers to their domestic servants who, as Hibbert reports constituted the largest employment group in Britain in Victorian England. See Beegan (2008: 37) and Hibbert (1975: 53).

been secured on our side by the late operations in the Soudan, which have cost thousands of lives, and have been fatal to some of the best officers in our army.²⁴

This indictment of political and military leadership was atypical of the *Illustrated London News's* editorial position, which was habitually more supportive of the State. This charged response demonstrated a growing national malaise at threats to British imperial sovereignty, together with doubts about the capability and volition of newly enfranchised British men to defend Britain's overseas interests.

Nearly thirty years earlier, the Indian Mutiny of 1857 had represented the beginning of a series of colonial setbacks that shook the confidence of the British Empire. Heavy losses had been sustained in the Zulu wars of 1879 and the guerrilla warfare against Afghan tribesmen in 1878-80. The demoralising effect of these reverses was compounded by the loss of the Transvaal to rebellious Boers in 1881.²⁵ At home, in the interim, the Second Reform Bill of 1867 had given the vote to urban men, nearly doubling the electorate from 1.4 to 2.4 million.²⁶ The Conservative administration under Derby and those of his Liberal successor Gladstone were by no means confident of securing the vote of this vital sector of the electorate that was further enlarged with the enfranchisement of farm labourers by an Act of 1884. In Britain, as in France between 1871 and 1885, urbanisation, poverty and concomitant low standards of hygiene and nutrition were considered by legislators and their medical advisors to have produced a physically unfit generation of young men. Even after two decades of efforts to improve, army doctors judged nearly eighty percent of volunteers in Manchester for the second Boer War of 1899 to be physically unfit for recruitment.²⁷

²⁴ 'The Soudan', *Illustrated London News*, 21 March 1885, p. 296.

²⁵ See MacKenzie (1984: 228) and (1986: 2) for public reaction to these British imperial setbacks.

²⁶ For background on the Reform Bills see Francis Barrymore Smith, *The Making of the Second Reform Bill*. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966) p. 2.

²⁷ Bristow in *Empire Boys* quotes figures of 8,000 of 11,000 volunteers (1991: 176).

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, therefore, military defeat, the perceived shortcomings of French youth and a stagnant birth rate in France were topics of national concern, debated by politicians and journalists. Colonial setbacks and a disaffected youth in Britain also prompted perspectives of national and imperial decay and a crisis of masculinity. Legislators and editorial writers in both France and Britain sought to popularise role models with which to bolster confidence and inspire the next generation to acts of valour to defend nations perceived to be under threat. Potential candidates for exemplary heroic status were promoted by these writers from among the ranks of colonial adventurers, soldiers and explorers, including Hubert Lyautey and Jean-Baptiste Marchand in France, and Charles Gordon and David Livingstone in Britain. Their exploits were celebrated not only in the daily press, but also through a broad range of media, including music-hall entertainment and the packaging and promotion of branded consumer products such as soap and tobacco, which often carried colonial or military themes (Dawson 1994: 145). Another powerful means of imparting ideologies of exemplary masculinity was the adventure novel, which, by the end of the century, had achieved wide penetration²⁸ within an increasingly literate population in both countries.

2 Primary Research Question

My thesis explores adventure fiction published in France and Britain between 1870 and 1900. How did the adventure novel work in the inscription of ideologies of masculinity? In responding to this question, I explore the role of adventure fiction among the many other political, cultural, journalistic, medical and religious discourses within which ideologies of exemplary masculinity could potentially have been inscribed between 1870 and 1900. I therefore broaden the scope of my project to cover not only representations of masculinity in

²⁸ See appendix for estimates of readership of adventure fiction and penetration (i.e. percentage reach within target groups).

literary texts,²⁹ but also in the mass press, illustrated magazines, personal journals and correspondence, political pamphlets and published speeches of the period 1870 to 1900, as

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- ²⁹ My corpus of primary texts in the French adventure genre are (*JV* = *Journal des Voyages*): Améro, Constant. 'Aventures de trois fugitives en Sibérie', *JV*, 9 July 1882, Chapter 23. Assollant, Alfred. *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran* (1867). Bousсенard, Louis. 'À travers l'Australie', *JV*, 14 July 1878, Chapter 8. ——— 'Aventures d'un gamin de Paris au pays des lions', *JV*, 5 July 1885, Chapter 10. ——— *Aventures extraordinaires de l'homme bleu* (1891). ——— 'Le Rajah de Bornéo', *JV*, 3 January 1883, Chapter 1. ——— *Les Robinsons de la Guyane* (1882). ——— *La Terre en Macédoine* (1912). Daudet, Alphonse. *Aventures prodigieuses de Tartarin de Tarascon* (1870). Delcourt, Pierre. 'Les Robinsons Marseillais', *JV*, 6 January 1884, Chapter 12. Driant, E.A.C. *La Guerre de demain. Grand récit patriotique et militaire* (1898). Erckmann-Chatrian. *Le Brigadier Frédéric* (1874). Gros, Jules. 'Un Volcan dans les glaces', *JV*, 21 July 1878, Chapter 1. d'Ivoi, Paul. *Émule de Lavarède. La Folle du temple d'or* (1899). ——— Preface to *Récits du Brigadier Flageolet* (1899). Jacolliot, Louis. *Histoire des vierges. Les Peuples et les continents disparus* (1879). ——— 'Les Mangeurs de feu'. *JV*, 3 January 1886, Chapter 3. Laurie, André. *De New York à Brest en sept heures* (1890). Lermina, Jules. *À Bruler. Conte astral* (1889). Loti, Pierre. *Au Maroc* (1890). ——— *Aziyadé* (1876). ——— *L'Inde sans les Anglais* (1884). ——— *Un Jeune officier pauvre* (1923). ——— *Le Livre de la pitié et de la mort* (1891). ——— *Mon frère Yves* (1883). ——— *Pêcheur d'Islande* (1886). ——— *Ramuntcho* (1896). ——— *Le Roman d'un Spahi* (1881). ——— *Soldats Bleus. Journal intime* (1918). Maël, Pierre. *Amour d'Orient* (1895). Rosny, J.-H. *La Guerre Anglo-Boer* (1902). Séguin, Alfred. 'Le Robinson Noir', *JV*, 12 January 1879, Chapter 10. Verne, Jules. *Aventures du Capitaine Hatteras* (1866). ——— *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* (1872). ——— *Michel Strogoff* (1876). ——— *Voyage au centre de la terre* (1864). Zévaco, Michel. *Le Capitain* (1899).

My corpus of primary texts in the British adventure genre are:
Ballantyne, R. M. *The Fugitives or The Tyrant Queen of Madagascar* (1887).
Burnaby, Frederick. *On Horseback Through Asia Minor* (1877).
Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Complete Brigadier Gerard* (1894-1910).
——— *The Lost World* (1912).
——— *The Tragedy of the Korosko* (1898).

well as some examples of popular performance and visual arts. In particular, I interrogate my chosen texts simultaneously for parallels as well as divergences in the ways in which exemplary masculinity was represented in France and in Britain.

3 Research Framework

A preliminary analysis of my primary research question has prompted me to consider the following problematics in order to frame my analysis within the context of prior scholarship:

- a) A justification for studying the French and British adventure novel 1870-1900 in light of the major scholarly work already published on it.

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- *Uncle Bernac: A Memory of the Empire* (1897).
Graydon, William Murray. *The Fighting Lads of Devon* (1900).
Haggard, Richard Rider. *King Solomon's Mines* (1885).
——— *She* (1887).
Henty, G. A. *The Bravest of the Brave or With Peterborough in Spain* (1887).
——— *By Sheer Pluck: A Tale of the Ashanti War* (1884).
——— *The Dash for Khartoum: A Tale of the Nile Expedition* (1891).
——— *Do Your Duty* (1900).
——— *Sturdy and Strong or How George Andrews Made his Way* (1888).
——— *Through the Sikh War. A Tale of the Conquest of the Punjab* (1894).
——— *Torpedo Boat 240. A Tale of the Naval Manoeuvres* (1900).
——— *With Moore at Corunna* (1898).
——— *The Young Colonists* (1885).
——— *The Young Franc Tireurs* (1872).
Hornung, Ernest. *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman* (1899).
Kipling, Rudyard. *Captains Courageous* (1897).
——— *Kim* (1901).
——— *War Stories and Poems* (1886-1932).
Stables, Gordon. *Hearts of Oak. A Story of Nelson and the Navy* (1892).
Steevens, G. W. *From Capetown to Ladysmith* (1900).
——— *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (1898).
Yates, M. T. (ed.). *Graphic Stories of Adventure* (1906).

- b) A discussion of why a study of ideology is original with regard to adventure fiction in this period. What work has been published on nineteenth-century fiction and ideology or on adventure fiction and ideology?
- c) A discussion of masculinity and what has been written on it.
- d) An explanation of why I have decided to focus on exemplary masculinity and what language nineteenth-century writers use for that concept in France and Britain.
- e) A justification for what I call ‘manliness’ with a definition of it.
- f) Why my research question matters, why it is original and what it contributes to existing research.

By way of introduction I provide below a brief summary of these problematics, together with signposts as to where each topic is covered in more depth later in my thesis.

3.1 *Why Study Adventure Fiction?*

Why embark on a new study of the adventure novel and why choose the period 1870 to 1900 in France and Britain? The work of literary scholar Philip Dine underlines the prominent role of adventure fiction in Britain: ‘literary representations of colonial adventure and derring-do [were] perhaps the single most important element in the process of juvenile internalisation of imperial culture in the British context’ (1997: 182).³⁰ This bold statement could, of itself, qualify the adventure genre as a topic for analysis by historians of empire and colonies. Literary scholar Joseph Bristow also sees British adventure fiction as an important conduit for ‘aspects of imperialist ideology: aggressive, competitive and yet gentlemanly behaviour’ (1991: 41). Historian John MacKenzie suggests adventure’s ideological power in forming the self-image of the British nation when he evokes ‘the adventure tradition, replete with militarism and patriotism, in which violence and high spirits become legitimated as part

³⁰ Dine is referring to what he calls the ‘meta-narrative of imperial vocation on the British model’. Although he does not specify a precise historical period, he is comparing the British colonial novel to its French equivalent at the time of the Third Republic (1997: 181).

of the moral force of a superior race' (1984: 199). These analyses from three prominent scholars prompt additional research into the genre in order to establish how the effects attributed by them were achieved. The curiosity of the researcher is stimulated further by scholarship on military adventure heroes and the ways in which ideology is inscribed in their histories. Cultural historian Graham Dawson has analysed how the genre of adventure fiction was central to the cultural context of its time. He contends that the 'adventure text [...] involves an encounter between the historically formed motifs and sedimented structure of the genre and new developments in the cultural imaginaries resonant at the moment of its production' (1994: 57). Dawson's observations invite further research into, for example, the ways in which press and literary discourses reflected and refracted each other.

French scholars of the genre coincide in their assessment of the importance of the adventure novel in the inscription of ideologies of nationalism and imperialism. Historian Sylvain Venayre sees the adventure genre as a response to calls for regeneration following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war: 'Après 1871, le contexte de l'instauration d'une République qui, née de la défaite militaire, place l'éducation au centre de ses préoccupations politiques, contribue à expliquer le développement considérable du discours sur l'aventure destiné aux adolescents' (2002: 64). Venayre also attributes a pedagogical motive to adventure fiction writers: 'les auteurs de ces ouvrages conçoivent le récit d'aventures comme un moyen d'attirer le jeune lecteur et ainsi de lui permettre d'assimiler plus facilement des connaissances qu'un cours magistral rendrait rébarbatives' (62). These 'connaissances' are interpreted by literary scholar Jean-Marie Seillan as propaganda, disguising for readers the true nature of France's colonial project: 'Ces fictions leur livraient aussi, sous le couvert didactique et moralisateur d'aventures déclarées authentiques, des histoires de pillages et des scènes de carnages'. Seillan associates the rhetoric of adventure fiction with the ambitions of the military class, and sees the novels as 'affabulations de militaires rêvant, dans l'attente de

la Revanche, de blanchir l’Afrique noire en exterminant ses habitants’.³¹ The capitalisation of the word ‘Revanche’ here underlines the seminal importance of revenge against the Prussians as a contemporary political motif. The use of the words ‘dans l’attente’ also hints that distant French colonial projects were partly conceived by legislators and their supporters in the military as stopgap distractions from more deep-seated territorial ambitions closer to home.

Seillan also discerns the motivational effect of these accounts in setting up exemplars for their readers: ‘des faits d’armes déclarés d’autant plus admirables, même quand leur résultat est douteux, qu’ils sont accomplis dans des conditions climatiques difficiles, en situation d’infériorité numérique’ (2006: 6). Literary historian Yves-Olivier Martin, in the same way as Dawson does for the British adventure novel, situates popular French fiction at the heart of national preoccupations with renewal: ‘le roman populaire forge une idée neuve du peuple et devient populaire parce que ses lecteurs y découvrent leur identité, recréent le peuple en se lisant’ (1980: 13).³² Finally, underlining the significance of adventure fiction in France from 1870 onwards, literary scholar Matthieu Letourneux contends that the adventure novel ‘a été l’un des genres les plus importants des cultures populaires et de jeunesse’ (2011: 7). In choosing to focus my research on the period 1870 to 1900, I have been mindful of the contentions of Venayre and Seillan regarding the crucial period for French self-perception following the Franco-Prussian war. I have also taken into account observations by Letourneux who dates the origins of adventure fiction as a genre to precisely that period in France, a little earlier in Britain: ‘la prise de conscience de l’existence d’un genre propre n’apparaît qu’après 1860, voire, en France, au début des années 1870’ (9). Importantly for my cross-disciplinary project, the period 1870 to 1900 offers rich comparative material in both French and British

³¹ Jean-Marie Seillan, *Aux Sources du roman colonial* (Paris: Karthala, 2006) Publisher’s synopsis.

³² Martin’s analysis of ‘une idée neuve du peuple’ does not specifically address regeneration but may equally as well qualify the emergence of a working class identity. His historical scope is broad, starting with the *romans feuilletons* of the 1830s, but concentrating much of his analysis on the period of rapid expansion of serialised popular fiction in the 1880s.

non-fiction texts recounting colonial exploits, such as the newspaper reports of colonial campaigns cited in the introductory paragraphs of this chapter. The issues raised above on imperialism, national identities and ideology are explored, and illustrated with examples from my primary texts, in my chapters on representations of masculinity in colonial contexts and on the battlefield.

3.2 *Ideology*

The second component of my research framework requiring an introductory summary is my analysis of the workings of ideology. How was ideology inscribed in nineteenth-century fiction and, more particularly, in adventure fiction? Scholarship here can usefully be divided into two segments: that which defines the rubrics of ideology and its political and cultural resonances, and that which applies an ideological reading to literary texts. Examples of the first segment include the work of seminal early twentieth-century thinkers such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Valentin Volosinov, together with more recent scholars who have provided definitions of ideology and instances of its inscription, such as Louis Althusser and Terry Eagleton. In the second segment, important models for the application of an ideological reading to nineteenth-century texts include literary scholars Mary Poovey and John Cawelti and philosopher Pierre Macherey. Bakhtin and Volosinov provide models for understanding the inscription of ideology that can usefully be applied to literary texts. Bakhtin contends that language is stratified not only into dialects, but also into ‘languages that are socio-ideological’ and which ‘belong to genres [...] and particular generations’ (1990 [1935]: xix). I employ this concept of languages that ‘belong to genres’ to explore the workings of language and of narrative structure in the adventure novel, in my chapter on reading for ideology. Bakhtin’s scenario for modelling variety, based on ‘people talking to each other in a specific dialogue at a specific time’ (1990 [1935]: xx), together with his notion of the ‘appropriation of a specific mix of discourses that are capable of best mediating their own intentions’ (xx), lends itself

ideally to the study of a genre which is often self-avowedly didactic in intent and which is set in a historical moment beset by self-doubt and aspiration. Bakhtin's admonishment that 'the study of verbal art must overcome the discourse between an abstract formal approach and an equally abstract ideological approach' (1990 [1935]: 259) comprises a useful discipline in trying to untangle the ideological web which is at the heart of many literary discourses of the late-nineteenth century. The value of Bakhtin's theories in an analysis of fiction is underlined by literary scholar Lennard Davis who sees his work as combining 'structuralist interest in language, formalist interest in narrative and semantic forms, with a political interest in the novel' (1990: 134). These three concepts (structure, form and politics) provide a valuable framework for an analysis of nineteenth-century discourses of adventure inasmuch as all three work together in the inscription of ideology.

Another ideological concept which lends itself to the study of the adventure novel is Althusser's notion of 'know how', which, he contends, is taught by state institutions like the school and the church, and by 'apparatuses like the army' (1984: 7). I explore in my chapter on ideology the ways in which literary texts, to borrow Althusser's definition, 'ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its practice' (7). In particular, given the dual readership of adventure fiction by both adults and children,³³ and the pedagogical approach of both writers and publishers, Althusser's concept of the cultural State apparatus can usefully be applied to a study of the adventure novel: 'for years, the years in which the child is most vulnerable, squeezed between the family State apparatus and the educational State apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of know-how wrapped in the ruling ideology' (29). Cultural theorist Terry Eagleton also provides an array of definitions and concepts that are applicable to an exploration of ideology in literary texts. His contention that ideology has to do with legitimating the power of a

³³ For an analysis of readership of adventure fiction among different age groups, together with scholarly contributions on this topic, see appendix.

dominant social group or class (2007 [1991]: 1) lends itself readily to a study of the adventure novel, in that adventure fiction is a genre imbued with class and race prejudice, and one in which the narrative perspective is almost invariably that of a white European male.

Turning now to those scholars who have applied ideological readings to literary texts, Poovey's work on nineteenth-century British literature constitutes a valuable model. In her study of the 'uneven developments of systems of ideas and institutions', Poovey argues that 'the middle-class ideology we most often associate with the Victorian period was both contested and always under construction' (1988: 3). This contention is of value to the analysis of nineteenth-century adventure fiction in that it encourages examination of counter-discourses³⁴ and of the development of ideological motifs during a period when the fortunes of both British and French colonial projects were under threat by their colonised subjects and under review by their own architects. An analysis of literary and journalistic representations of masculinity (such as the one I am proposing here) is also informed by Poovey's assertion that 'the representation of biological sexuality, the definition of sexual difference, and the social organisation of sexual relations, are social, not natural phenomena' (1988: 2).

Macherey, likewise, provides an analytical model for discerning ideological motifs in literary texts. He applies it to one of the leading exponents of late nineteenth-century adventure fiction. In his analysis of the oeuvre of Jules Verne, Macherey contends that 'this era has produced a new kind of narrative—one which gives the imaginary its function as reality: this is why fiction is the privileged form of expression during this historical transition' (1978: 181). Macherey's notion of the imaginary's 'function as reality' is relevant for a comparative reading, like mine, of parallel ideological discourses in the mass press and in adventure

³⁴ See Richard Terdiman's discussion of counter-discourse in the work of Bakhtin, where he contends that 'in Bakhtin's conception, the networks of distinction within which social meaning occurs are always sites of intense and multi-levelled struggle' (1989: 34), a concept highly pertinent to an analysis of gender, race and class in adventure fiction.

fiction, often indistinguishable in their narrative structure and their representational style of exemplary masculinity.

Cawelti also analyses the ways in which the imaginary, or fantasy, is interwoven into the formulaic plot structures that are typical of the adventure novel. These literary formulae, Cawelti argues, are ‘means of making historical and cultural inferences about the collective fantasies shared by large groups of people and of identifying differences in these fantasies from one culture or period to another’ (1976: 7). Cawelti’s arguments here are also of value in identifying recurrent underlying ideological motifs in adventure fiction which, although published in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, were often set at earlier historical moments, such as in the Elizabethan or Napoleonic era. Other scholars provide important insights on how ideologies are inscribed within nineteenth-century literary texts. For example, literary scholar D. A. Miller, in his study of the role of disciplinary culture in Victorian fiction, ascribes a clear ideological purpose to the nineteenth-century novel: ‘perhaps no openly fictional form has ever sought to ‘make a difference’ in the world more than the Victorian novel, whose cultural hegemony and diffusion well qualified it to become the primary spiritual exercise of an entire age’ (1988: x). Miller’s contention prompts me to explore ways in which didactic strategies of publishers and authors might be given expression in the adventure novel in my chapter on reading for ideology and in my overview of French adventure fiction.

Finally, literary scholar Catherine Gallagher’s analysis of the political economy of the Victorian novel has much to offer in terms of research methodology. In particular, in my analysis of ideological motifs in the adventure novel, I make use of Gallagher’s contention that ideology is ‘less a set of explicit beliefs than a set of practices, which we repeat even while protesting against them’ (2006: 1) in researching a period which saw the paradox of much-vaunted heroism emerging from unpopular imperial projects.

3.3 *Masculinity*

Turning now to the third component of my research framework, I first explore some of the significant scholarly work on masculinity that can lend itself appropriately to a study of nineteenth-century literary texts. Writing on Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, literary scholar James Eli Adams sets masculinity firmly within what he calls the ‘Victorian model of the gentleman’, a model that is built on ‘self discipline as a distinctly masculine attribute’ (1995: 2). He qualifies his contention in two important ways. First, he positions masculinity within ‘the peculiar amalgam of athletic and devotional rhetoric that would become known as muscular Christianity’ (101). This concept provides an appropriate framework for the study of the adventure novel, where feats of physical prowess are typically motivated by a God-given certainty of the rightness of the protagonist’s cause. Second, Adams argues that ‘normative masculinity is typically asserted as an unending performance’ (11), embracing a view similar to Poovey’s assertion that ‘representations of biological sexuality [are] social, not natural phenomena’ (1988: 2). Gender studies scholar Ann Pellegrini, however, suggests limits to this conceptual approach when she asks ‘if everything is performance, and everyone, at once performer and performed; if there is no ‘Real’ but only endless dissimulations— what [...] next?’ (1997: 9). This is a question that can usefully be asked of representations of masculinity in the adventure novel in comparison with those in the mass press.

Some potential answers to Pellegrini’s rhetorical question can be found in historian Robert Nye’s study of masculinity and honour codes in modern France. Nye contends that nineteenth-century French culture ‘conceptualized male and female as binary opposition’ (1993: 7), thus defining male sexual identity as a ‘state of complementary equilibrium’ (7). Venayre claims that this opposition finds expression in the narrative structure of adventure fiction: ‘tout ce que dénote la femme, l’efféminé, l’absence de l’élément viril, est impitoyablement éliminé d’une telle littérature’ (2002: 79). Nye argues that masculinity in

nineteenth-century France was inextricably tied into honour codes which ‘sprang from the social and political arrangements of male-dominated warrior societies’ (1993: vii). Nye’s definition of these honour codes coincides closely with Adams’s notion of masculinity as ‘virtuoso asceticism’ (1995: 2). Nye cites ‘a preoccupation with moral discipline, inner values, and with the control of reproduction and sex’ as emblematic of masculine honour codes (1993: 32). Bristow imputes less honourable motives to British imperial projects in which ‘dominant or hegemonic masculinity is endorsed by a longstanding genealogy of violence’ (1991: 1). Dawson, similarly, equates masculinity with aggression in his notion of the soldier hero as ‘one of the most durable and powerful forms of idealised masculinity within Western cultural traditions’ (1994: 1). He expresses a view similar to the one which Venayre embraces on masculine hegemony in French adventure fiction when he cites ‘the equation between masculinity and adventure [...] founded upon the defensive need of men to distance themselves from ostensibly feminine interests in narratives of domesticity and romantic love’ (63). Dawson argues, like Bristow, that masculinity is closely tied into discourses of nationalism and colonialism. He reports that, during the late nineteenth century in Britain, ‘heroic masculinity became fused in an especially potent configuration with representations of British imperial identity’ (1), an assertion that is given credence by the many illustrations of heroic exploits overseas which appeared in illustrated magazines in Britain (and in France) in the last twenty years of the century (Bacot 2005: 9).

In contrast to the spirit of assurance implicit in what Dawson terms a ‘potent configuration’, cultural historian Annelise Mauge perceives a crisis of masculinity in France at the turn of the century: ‘la crise que traverse alors le sexe masculine, groupe dominant sans doute mais groupe incertain, angoissé, déchiré’ (1987: 9). Mauge traces the emergence of what she terms ‘la femme qui n’est plus la femme’ (12) as an increasingly emancipated threat to ingrained concepts of masculinity, and cites the *fin-de-siècle* obsession with interrogating

the place of masculinity in the world. To what degree did late nineteenth-century concepts of masculinity in France depend on a military identity, such as that cited by Dawson and Bristow for Britain? Mauge addresses the concept of the ‘binary opposition’ (Nye 1993: 7) of the sexes in a compelling way. She underlines the shortcomings of military service as a totem of masculine identity in an intriguing comparison of death on the battlefield with death in childbirth in late nineteenth-century France:

la plupart des Français de sexe masculin n’ont d’autre relation à la guerre que le mimodrame du service militaire et, comme le font remarquer souvent les féministes de l’époque, il tombe alors plus de femmes au champ d’honneur de la maternité qu’il ne se meurt de conscrits en manœuvres (72).

A number of consistent themes emerge from this brief review of scholarly work on late nineteenth-century concepts of masculinity. Self-discipline and aggression (linked with precepts of militarism and imperialism) are recurrent motifs in scholarly definitions of masculinity. Elevated nineteenth-century notions of masculine honour and heroism are thrown into question by the scholarship of Surkis and Pellegrini,³⁵ among others, that contends that masculinity was a performance, mandated to a large extent by its construction in binary opposition to femininity.

3.4 *Exemplary Masculinity*

With these definitions of masculinity in mind, I now explore the fourth component of my research framework: the nature of *exemplary* masculinity and the language used to represent this concept at the end of the nineteenth century. Historian Edward Berenson, in his study of charismatic nineteenth-century colonial heroes, argues that ‘the question of masculinity and male identity was extraordinarily vexed in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war’ (2011: 56). He contends that colonial explorers and soldiers in the

³⁵ For discussions of binary opposition of sexes and gender performance see Surkis (2006: 248), Pellegrini (1997: 6) and Poovey (1988: 2).

mould of Brazza, Lyautey and Marchand were idealised counterpoints to the ‘emasculating event’ and ‘ignoble defeat that had stripped French fighters of their manhood just as it had stripped France of Alsace and Lorraine’ (57). As exemplars, these men were emblematic of ‘a revised image of masculinity, one both consistent with the new republic’s egalitarian values and capable of projecting a sense of strength, confidence and power’ (57). The fictional adventure heroes of Verne also conform largely to these models of masculinity. In relation to the notion of ‘binary opposition’ discussed in the previous section, it is significant that Verne himself saw the presence of women in his narratives as a constraint on the exemplary strength of his heroes. For example, Macherey cites an article written (in English) by Verne for the *Strand* magazine³⁶ in February 1895: ‘my heroes need all their faculties, all their energy, and the presence of a charming young woman in their midst would have prevented them from realising their gigantic projects’ (1978: 236).

Anthropologist David Gilmore embraces a view similar to Verne’s notion of ‘gigantic projects’ as a core foundation of exemplary masculinity when he contends, in reference to Kipling’s literary works that ‘consequent only to great deeds, being a Kiplingesque man is, more than owning the Earth, a truly imperial masculinity consonant with empire building’ (1990: 18). From scholars and writers cited thus far, notions of exemplary masculinity at the end of the nineteenth century tend to coalesce around the values of energy, strength, confidence and power, given expression in large-scale expeditions, most often related to empire. In spite of significant differences in religious practice and political governance in France and Britain, there is a remarkable commonality in these values of empire that are fundamental to representations of masculine prowess, typically demanding conflict, conquest and inhospitable climates to set them off to best effect. Brantlinger incisively captures the ideological strength of an imperial context by highlighting

³⁶ *Strand* was a monthly magazine of short stories and feature articles, launched in London in 1891 by Newnes publishers.

countervailing threats to the achievement of great deeds: ‘peace and prosperity, feminine wiles and domestic tranquillity are dangerous to the high ideals of England’s past’ (1988: 36). Historian John Tosh also illustrates this tension between domesticity and empire in the period of high imperialism in Britain after 1880 when he reports that ‘domesticated masculinity came under mounting attack, as Englishmen were called upon to colonize the empire and to defend it in difficult times’ (1999: 7).

It is a short step from imperial ideals of masculine energy, strength, and confidence, however, to more extreme ideologies, as exemplified in some British adventure discourses. This transition was captured in George Orwell’s 1939 essay on boys’ weekly magazines (popular from the 1870s until the middle of the next century), in which he argued that ‘popular representations of masculinity were completely governed by those right-wing ideologies of nationalism and supremacism that shaped expectations of what it meant to be a boy’.³⁷ Representations of exemplary masculinity in magazines and in adventure fiction abounded at the end of the nineteenth century in both Britain and France. Helène de Burgh, in her study of Loti’s colonial adventure novels, argues that ‘Loti modelled his protagonists upon real men who impressed him with their physical strength and resolute courage’ (2005: 114), and cites admirable men that Loti encountered at the Naval Academy and in Breton fishing ports as his role models. The deeds of real-life colonial heroes, however, remained a powerful parallel discourse to these literary representations. Dawson contends that ‘popular soldier heroes’ such as Wolseley, Gordon, Roberts and Kitchener, constituted ‘a new tradition of exemplary imperial masculinity which remained at the heart of the British national imaginary right up to 1914’ (1994: 83). My research framework for exemplary masculinity, taking its foundation from the insights of the scholars I have discussed here, concentrates on the inscription of ideologies of energy, confidence and power, typically given expression, in

³⁷ Cited by Bristow (1991: 52).

both literary and journalistic texts, in the context of French and British imperial projects. I explore these concepts further in my chapter on representations of masculinity and manliness.

3.5 *Manliness*

The fifth component of my research framework is closely linked to the review of scholarship on exemplary masculinity. It addresses a form of exemplary masculinity which is comparable with that defined above, but which brings with it a number of nuances that make it quite distinct. I refer to the notion of manliness. Historian John Tosh provides a framework within which the complex concept of manliness can be analysed: ‘Boys became men by cultivating the essential manly attributes – in a word, *manliness*. Energy, will, straightforwardness and courage were the key requirements’ (1999: 111). Tosh amplifies this concept of manliness as part of a rite of passage to manhood by adding that ‘a manly bearing was taken to be the outcome of self-improvement and self-discipline’ (111). Manliness, therefore, was more than just masculinity. Cultural historian Gail Bederman provides relevant insights from both the United States³⁸ and from Britain on concepts of manliness. In the United States, she contends, ‘until about 1890, literate Victorians rarely referred to individual men as masculine. Instead, admirable men were called manly’ (18).

Amplifying this concept, Bederman provides insights as to how British men were perceived by external observers in the 1890s. It is significant that she again uses the word ‘manly’ to qualify her observations: ‘Many white Americans felt a pleasurable sense of social kinship with the English, whom they saw as fellow Anglo-Saxons, the most manly and civilised of races’ (61). Bederman contributes towards an understanding of how manly chivalric codes of conduct enhanced concepts of masculinity in a British context in the 1890s. Referring to outraged British public reaction to pejorative press coverage in England of a

³⁸ Although my focus is on France and Britain, the work of Bederman on manliness in late nineteenth-century America provides hints as to how students of European culture might differentiate between concepts of masculinity (exemplary and otherwise) and manliness.

female African-American civil-rights activist, she reports that ‘it was neither manly nor civilised to slander a lady’s character’ (65). Nonetheless, she also hints at how concepts of racial superiority were aligned with exemplary masculinity in a British context at the end of the nineteenth century: ‘The British were considered racial equals [to white Americans] qualified to pronounce upon civilised manliness’ (68). Manliness, seen through the lens of Bederman’s work, is not just brute force and imperial hubris but also embraces notions of natural superiority and chivalry. Although it is prudent not to over-interpret these U.S.-based observations in the context of British and French adventure heroes, there is a structure to Bederman’s differentiation between masculinity and manliness that fits neatly with other scholarly work on the late nineteenth-century notion of manliness in Britain and France. Nye, for example, also offers a view on how manliness expressed itself in ways that are supplementary to codes of masculine honour. A type of manliness, according to Nye, was at the heart of French Third Republic ideals of citizenship: ‘by engaging in affairs of honour [...] men could express simultaneously their patriotism, their right to membership in a democratic civil order, and their manliness’ (1993: 147). A similar contention is made by Adams in the context of British society in the late nineteenth century: ‘the energetic self-discipline that distinguished manly character offered not only economic utility but also a claim to new forms of status and privilege within an increasingly secular and industrialised society’ (1995: 5).

What were the qualities of manliness that conferred these rights and status? Gilmore discerns a concern with personal reputation in what he calls ‘being good at being a man’ (1990: 43). He argues that ‘they stand to lose their reputations or their lives [...] this acceptance of expendability constitutes the basis of the manly pose everywhere it is

encountered' (1990: 223).³⁹ Reputation is central to Berenson's portrayal of his 'heroes of empire'. He depicts them as 'models of character and behaviour for the young and images of reassuring manliness for people yearning for certainty and unity in times when political, economic or social developments otherwise pulled compatriots apart' (2011: 9). By aggregating these various notions of manliness (albeit from different national discourses and at different historical moments in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century), a composite picture of manliness emerges which combines notions of honour, virtue, courage, moral codes and personal reputation.

How might these valences of manliness be given expression in literary texts? Historian Matt Matsuda perceives differences between what he calls the 'manly heroes' (2005: 27) of Kipling, Haggard, Doyle and Stevenson and those of Loti. The British manly heroes are sent on 'distant quests, presumably in flight from the emasculating domestic realism of George Eliot' (27). He contrasts Haggard's domain of 'manly, supernatural adventure and regenerative violence' with the 'sentimental attachment' of Loti's protagonists (27). He argues that Loti 'posed himself a truly manly writer and soldier of a different sort' and 'materialised the masculine devotion and erotic attraction embraced by brothers and lovers of nation and empire' (29). The slippery nature of manliness as a concept becomes apparent here, in that interpretations of manly heroism differ from scholar to scholar and, in scholarly analysis, from novelist to novelist. This can partly be attributed to Adam's assertion that 'manliness is exemplary of all gender norms in being always under pressure from the very social dynamics that authorise it' (1995: 19). This is particularly apparent in the way in which manliness is treated in scholarship on late nineteenth-century French literary texts. Masculinity is broadly comparable, in the valences it combines, in both French and British

³⁹ Gilmore spreads the net of his anthropological analysis wide to include examples from African and Latin cultures. He refers specifically, however, to the 'moral masculinisation of the English speaking countries' in Victorian times and the attendant concept of Christ as 'the supremely manly man' (1990: 18).

cultural interpretation. Manliness, with some of its specifically British moral and reputational overtones, is not a universally applicable concept.

One way of approaching this question of definition is to test the French concept of *virilité* and to evaluate which parts of it coincide with scholars' perceptions of what constitutes manliness. Historian Alain Corbin, in the introduction to his collection of scholarly work on *virilité*, provides two valuable insights that inform research aimed at discerning the nuances of masculinity in a French context. First, in an analysis that has striking parallels with the work of Bederman in America, he informs us that *masculinité* was a term 'que les dictionnaires du temps oublient presque et qui, alors, ne relève pas du langage commun' (2011: 10). Corbin contends that *virilité* is not synonymous with masculinity and is certainly not defined solely by its opposition to femininity. For a Frenchman of the late nineteenth century, Corbin argues, *virilité* was not just a biological given, but 'un ensemble de qualités morales qu'il convient d'acquérir, de préserver et dont l'homme doit savoir faire la preuve' (9), herein offering a parallel to manly reputation as formulated by Gilmore. Second, Corbin offers definitions of *virilité* that have parallels with the notions of manliness discussed by the scholars cited above. For example, he lists some of the qualities embraced by the concept of *virilité*. These include courage or heroism, readiness to die for one's country, the quest for glory and, setting the concept within the socio-legal framework of the time, 'la nécessité de relever tout défi s'imposant à des hommes dont la législation conforte l'autorité au sein de la famille' (7). This last point is of value in teasing out distinctions between French notions of *virilité* and British notions of manliness. The concept of the French *chef de famille*, at a time of perceived degeneration and population stagnation,⁴⁰ constituted a polemical issue to be found in both journalistic and literary discourses. For this reason, I devote a section of

⁴⁰ Corbin refers to 'la crainte de la dégénérescence et de la régression, deux phantasmes majeurs qui hantent les élites' (2011: 8).

my chapter on representations of masculinity and manliness specifically to this topic and to a comparison with notional British counterparts as identified by scholars.

One further nuance in the differential analysis of manliness and *virilité* is essential to an understanding of the discourses of the time. My readings of adventure texts nearly all identify underlying ideologies of physical fitness and prowess as part of the make-up of the idealised adventure hero. In the British texts, this is typically linked to the cult of the public school sportsman who translates his prowess on the cricket field to bravery on the battlefield. For example, historian J. A. Mangan, referring to nineteenth-century public school games culture, contends that ‘it was a genuinely and extensively held belief that they inspired virtue, they developed manliness, they formed character’ (1981: 9). Although physical fitness is also a recurring motif in representations of French fictional adventure heroes, this quality is not typically set in the context of schooldays. Mangan, seemingly parodying the nationalist rhetoric of the day, portrays British public opinion as ‘pitying French youth, sapped of its strength, and France, robbed of its leaders, because of an education system which allowed opportunity for idle thoughts to take the form of vicious desire. English boys on English fields were safe from such depravity’ (132). In France, the equivalent antecedents of these physical expressions of manliness, rather than set on the school playing field, more frequently appear in accounts of the experiences of young recruits in military barracks or on military expeditions, as I shall illustrate from Loti’s adventure fiction.

Historian Jean-Paul Bertaud captures the essence of this ideological undercurrent in his account of ‘la virilité militaire’ in the years after 1871: ‘sportif, le soldat acquiert de la vigueur, de l’endurance, de la souplesse, et surtout le sens des responsabilités, tout aussi important que la bravoure’ (2011: 197). Rites of passage from boyhood to manliness are frequently occurring motifs in nineteenth-century British adventure novels, especially those of

G. A. Henty, and span the transition from playing field to battlefield.⁴¹ French literary discourses, for example those of Loti and d'Ivoi, set these rites more typically in the barracks.⁴² As Bertaud argues, these rites were also set within nationalist preoccupations with revenge: 'la propagande patriotique et l'esprit de revanche le fait que les jeunes gens regardent la caserne comme le lieu du passage obligatoire pour basculer de l'adolescence à l'âge d'homme' (202). In these ideologies of fitness and physical prowess, we can therefore discern parallels between the British notion of manliness and the French concept of *virilité*, but with important differences deriving from the cultural and political preoccupations of the late nineteenth century. *Virilité* and manliness emerge, as I have suggested in this review of scholarly insights, as overlapping but distinct ideologies.

4 Subsidiary Research Questions

In addressing the issues outlined above I have chosen to structure my research under the following six headings which also serve to suggest the titles of my chapters: representations of masculinity, qualitative and quantitative aspects of adventure fiction, ideological inscription, the exemplary masculinity of colonial pioneers in both French and British overseas territories, and adventure heroes at war.

4.1 Chapter One: Late Nineteenth-century Concepts of Exemplary Masculinity: A Review of the Literature

My first subsidiary research question is centred on styles of masculinity and, specifically, on the related notion of exemplary masculinity. The masculine exemplar is fundamental to the title of my thesis and to my primary research question. How do scholars

⁴¹ An example of this recurrent formula in the works of Henty is *By Sheer Pluck* (1884), which traces the career of Frank Hargate from his school cricket pitch to a commission in the British Army in West Africa.

⁴² Both Loti's *Le Roman d'un Spahi* and his *Aziyadé* are set in military establishments, in Senegal and Salonika respectively.

define masculinities in the context of the late nineteenth century? This has proven to be a very rich research pathway. It has led me into the scholarship of social and political history, war studies, colonial history, gender studies, sociology, medicine, psychology and philosophy, as well as literary theory and criticism. What can each of these areas of scholarship provide in identifying valences that combine to form notions of manliness? In particular, could they provide an evaluative framework with which to address the primary texts, both literary and journalistic? How do British discourses of manliness compare with French discourses of masculinity and *virilité*, and where do these discourses overlap? What are the areas where there are clear divergences? Although the notion of exemplary masculinity constitutes but one part of my primary research question, it is a concept that is so central to my project that it has justified its role as a catalyst for a broad review of the scholarship. By expanding on the definitions of types of masculinity outlined above, this chapter lays the essential groundwork upon which my analysis of discourses of exemplary masculinity, both fictional and journalistic, can be based.

4.2 Chapter Two: *A Qualitative Overview of French Adventure Fiction 1870-1900*

My second chapter (and the appendix which supports it) comprises an overview of adventure fiction in late nineteenth-century France. Starting from my preliminary finding that this genre is less comprehensively researched and documented than its British equivalent, I explore the narrative *topoi* and the publishing context of the adventure novel in France. I provide case-studies of excerpts from eight adventure novels serialised in the weekly magazine the *Journal des Voyages* and analyse in more depth two works by Paul d'Ivoi and Louis Bousсенard. (In the appendix, I analyse the market environment in which these works of fiction were published and, especially, the sequential nature of the launch of works from authors such as Verne, d'Ivoi and Bousсенard, which typically appeared first in serialised form in magazines or newspapers). What were the business strategies and the market

performance of Pierre-Jules Hetzel and of Michel and Calmann Lévy, two of the most successful publishers of the adventure novel in France?⁴³ What was the scale and segmentation of the market for adventure fiction? Making use of Allen's statistical summaries from the *Bibliographie de la France* (and the data which Allen also quotes from Lorenz), the general catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and of specialist literary bibliographies, I estimate the size of the market for literary works and, within this category, works of fiction between 1870 and 1900. Using the work of James Smith Allen and other bibliographical studies, how might we build a theoretical model for the adventure fiction market in France in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century?

Within this model, how might we situate the oeuvre of Jules Verne and Pierre Loti, the most widely published authors of French adventure fiction? Can we calibrate their well-documented successes against the achievements of what I term a second division of less-celebrated authors who contributed to the genre? Among these, I single out some of the works of Paul d'Ivoi and Louis Bousсенard for close reading. What were the most recurrent ideological *topoi* characteristic of adventure fiction and how were these ideologies inscribed within a broad range of lesser-known authors of the genre? Based on available data, is it feasible to estimate the penetration and readership of adventure fiction, thereby providing an evaluation of its power as a means of communicating ideology? I set out to gauge the level of public awareness of these ideological motifs by estimating the distribution and sales of adventure fiction as a proxy for readership. Finally, in the accompanying appendix, I analyse the available data on the socio-economic profiles of readership groups.

4.3 *Chapter Three: Reading Adventure Fiction for Ideology*

My third subsidiary research question, and the subject matter of my third chapter, asks how and why ideology might be inscribed within my primary texts. In building upon the

⁴³ I single out Lévy and Hetzel because of their close association with Loti and Verne respectively, two of the most successful exponents of the adventure genre in France

summary included in my introduction, I seek the basis of an evaluative framework for this task among the works of Bakhtin, Volosinov, Althusser, Eagleton, Macherey, Williams and Cawelti. What were the possible motives among authors, publishers and their political sponsors for the inscription of ideology within adventure fiction? As a first step, I employ one of Eagleton's definitions. I explore ways in which the concept of power is imbricated in adventure texts and seek to identify examples of how the ideologies of honour, loyalty, 'backbone' and manhood are packaged. How did narrative structure (e.g. the exploration quest formula) operate as one of the tools of ideology? In my analysis of sexism, racism and classism in the adventure genre, I then explore some of the most controversial aspects of adventure fiction's ideological impact. Finally in this third chapter, I ask what might have been the impact of fiction and of journalistic reportage in the inscription of ideology and analyse their relative potential to influence the attitudes and behaviour of their readers.

4.4 *Chapter Four: French Colonialism*

My fourth chapter explores colonial adventures and voyages of discovery in French literary and press discourses in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. How does the backdrop of exotic tropical locations and unfamiliar other races, either as antagonists or as subjects for exploitation, lend itself to the delineation of exemplary masculinity? To what extent was a nation's identity formed by reference to, and contrast with, colonial subject races? How does the prestige of colonial possessions affect the self-image of citizens in the *métropole*? In the specific case of France's cession of Alsace and Lorraine to the Prussians in 1871, how might journalistic and fictional accounts of colonial conquests have participated in attempts by the government of Jules Ferry and others to distract public attention from military defeat in Europe? What were the political and military objectives of France's colonial policies and how great was the economic and reputational value to France of a colonial empire? How did the policies of *assimilation* and the *mission civilisatrice* differentiate

France's colonial strategy from that of other European nations? I explore examples in the works of d'Ivoi, Loti and Boussenard of how exemplary masculine heroes are delineated against the backdrop of colonial possessions and protectorates in West Africa and South-East Asia. Finally, how were colonial rivalries between European powers given expression within the adventure novel? How could the concept of empire have served political purposes in diverting attention from domestic problems as well as inspiring loyalty and patriotism? The contribution of this chapter to the key research questions at the heart of my thesis is to harness the definitions and theoretical concepts set out in my chapters on manliness and ideology and to apply them to a wide range of literary and press discourses.

4.5 Chapter Five: British Colonialism

My next chapter employs a similar research design to that used in the study of French colonial fiction outlined above. Looking at British colonial manly heroes, I explore the ways in which national heroes like Charles Gordon and David Livingstone were lionised in the press. How does the rhetoric of these accounts compare with the fictional accounts of colonial manly heroism to be found in adventure novels published by Blackie and Son and William Collins and Son? As I have done with the French texts, I explore whether press reports and fictional accounts of exemplary behaviour could have participated in strategies to distract readers from economic and social difficulties faced at home. In particular, how might the colonial experience of some of the most popular adventure writers have inspired ideological content in their work? How might networks of power among publishers, politicians and news proprietors have encouraged specific ideological themes in plots and narrative? I compare evidence uncovered by my research in both French and British literary discourses and ask why these discourses might differ.

How important was the phenomenon of jingoism and how great was the potential of colonial exploits as domestic propaganda? I adduce some unexpected characteristics of the

British adventure hero. What were the possible motives for the self-proclaimed diffidence and modesty present in many representations? I explore the ideology surrounding values of fair play and sportsmanship that typically imbue colonial military heroes. What was the value, to fiction writers and overseas correspondents, of ‘others’ in delineating their own heroes by means of contrast? Finally, I compare the idealised construction of colonial heroes in literary discourses with the sad reality of under-nourished and unfit recruits to the colonial forces and the disease and pollution that decimated their ranks even before they were mobilised for action. By doing so, I offer some conclusions as to the underlying contemporary need for, and potential influence of, the ideologies of exemplary masculinity inscribed in British adventure fiction.

4.6 *Chapter Six: Heroes at War*

My final chapter explores my subsidiary research question about the comportment of the adventure hero at war in French colonial campaigns in West Africa and Indochina in the 1880s, and in British campaigns in the Sudan and Southern Africa in the 1880s and 1890s. How might fictional accounts of acts of valour on the battlefield have influenced public perceptions of military expeditions at times of setbacks and defeat? I analyse literary and press discourses of war and explore their value as political propaganda. What concepts of honour, bravery and adventure did young conscripts or volunteers for overseas military postings bring with them? How important was the pomp and circumstance surrounding military ceremonial? Can evidence be found in private war correspondence of a propaganda effect of literary role models? I begin this chapter with a review of a sub-genre within adventure fiction, the ‘future war novel’. What were the reasons for its success in both France and Britain, as the inevitability of war in Europe began to gain currency among political commentators and the mass press towards the end of the nineteenth century? Using a French example, Émile Driant’s *La Guerre de Demain* (1898), I explore how this genre was reputed

to have acted as an inspiration and encouragement to young military servicemen. How might notions of *camaraderie* among combatants and military ceremonial have formed part of an ideological project to make life in the services more noble and attractive? Finally, in chapter six, I investigate how the narrative *topoi* of the quest formula could lend themselves ideally to the construction of exemplary masculinity.

5 Objectives

In the course of the six chapters outlined above, I adduce evidence to explore my primary research question regarding the ideology of exemplary masculinity in the adventure novel. Having settled on my definitions of both ideology and masculinities, I set the French adventure fiction genre within the publishing and journalistic environment of the late nineteenth century. I explore how the colonial and military context of the adventure novel lent special emphasis to notions of exemplary masculinity. In drawing together my research evidence from both French and British adventure fiction, as well as from the contemporary mass press and personal journals and accounts, I compare the ways in which ideologies of exemplary masculinity were inscribed in France and in Britain.

Chapter One

Late Nineteenth-century Concepts of Exemplary Masculinity: A Review of the Literature

1 Research Questions and Methodology

The concept of exemplary masculinity is central to my thesis. A putative lack of virility and courage among conscripts was one of the anxieties expressed by commentators in the press articles on French and British colonial expeditionary forces cited in the opening paragraphs of my Introduction. Given some parallels in the social and political problems faced by both countries, this chapter aims to highlight commonalities between concepts of exemplary masculinity in France and Britain, as well as distinctions between the British notion of manliness and the French notion of *virilité* in literary and journalistic discourses at the end of the nineteenth century. Exemplary masculinity is so crucial to a study of the ideological workings of adventure fiction that I provide in what follows a more detailed analysis of how masculine exemplars were represented in both adventure novels and in the mass press. In doing so, I build upon the substantial body of scholarship published on late nineteenth-century masculinities.

2 Four Novelistic Representations of Exemplary Masculinity

I begin with four brief case studies of how exemplary masculinity is represented in four adventure novels of the late nineteenth century, two from France and two from Britain. My objective in these case studies is to provide a context for the discussion of scholarship on aspects of masculinity, exemplary masculinity, manliness and *virilité* which follows in this chapter. My chosen primary texts are Paul d'Ivoi's *Cigale, émule de Lavarède: la folle du temple d'or* (1899), Louis Bousсенard's *Les*

Robinsons de la Guyane (1882), G. A. Henty's *The Young Franc-tireurs and their Adventures in the Franco-Prussian War* (1872) and G. W. Steevens' *From Capetown to Ladysmith* (1900).

D'Ivoi's novel is set in the Northwest frontier of India and Afghanistan during the British Raj in the last years of the nineteenth century. This chapter will concentrate on the ways in which the novel works to represent exemplary masculinity. One of the most striking aspects of the novel is that, although the plot is fast-moving and broadly based geographically, only one or two characters are developed in any depth. One of these is the young Parisian, Cigale, who is presented as an adventurer in the same mould as the dashing righter-of-wrongs, Lavarède, who had been d'Ivoi's most successful literary creation, starting with the publication of *Les Cinq Sous de Lavarède* in 1894. Cigale is described as 'le brave enfant de Paris' (1899: 537) and plays his part in a series of adventures in which he dupes the colonial British administrators, rescues a maiden in distress and seeks hidden treasure but, although he is the titular character of the novel, there is little autonomous agency on his part. He acts principally in concert with the character who is the central pivot of the action, the enigmatic Docteur Mystère.

In this partnership Cigale demonstrates initiative and courage, in particular when faced with British adversaries. Confronted by the bellicose British colonial Governor Lord Fathen, Cigale coolly addresses him: 'Mon gros Anglais, dit-il tranquillement, si tu as la maladresse de pousser un cri, je te tue comme un simple rat' (461). Throughout the narrative, Cigale's character is delineated more by his actions than by his words. When he does speak, however, it is to characterise himself as courageous, level-headed and action-oriented. Apart from these facets of exemplary masculinity, we learn little more about Cigale and he is, to some extent, a cipher

whose role is to move the action forward. This emblematic status is emphasised by references to him in the text as ‘le Parisien’, characterising him by his birthplace rather than his personal qualities.

In the same way, other protagonists in Cigale’s quest adventure are one-dimensional caricatures or national stereotypes. For example, the helpless girl who finds protection in the care of Cigale and Docteur Mystère is referred to as ‘la jolie italienne’ (525) and Indians are most typically labelled ‘l’Hindou’. Representations of British colonial officers, in particular, are exaggerated or satirical, as in the appropriately named Lord Fathen, who complies with contemporary French stereotypes of the rival colonial nation: ‘les Anglais sont généralement doués d’un robuste appétit, et Lord Fathen ne faisait pas exception à la règle’ (463).

The only character in *La Folle du Temple d’Or* who is delineated with any subtlety is ‘le gentleman correct et souriant qui répondait au nom de Docteur Mystère’ (390). It is instructive, therefore, to look at the ways in which Mystère represents exemplary masculinity. Mystère’s words as well as his actions define his character. He is consistently calm under threatening circumstances and always chooses his words carefully. When considering the solution to a dilemma, he reflects at length and either provides a logical response (‘enfin Mystère ouvrit la bouche’ [396]) or remains enigmatically silent (‘Mystère ne disait rien’ [593]). His erudition and wisdom are complemented by a robust physique and great reserves of stamina. He combines ‘résistance à la fatigue’ with ‘muscles d’acier’ and ‘élasticité de [ses] mouvements’ (390). He does not drink alcohol. He is also quick to come to the aid of weaker parties: ‘Mystère venait au secours de son jeune compagnon’ (447), especially young women who seek his protection: ‘le savant attira la jolie mignonne pres de lui’ (414).

Part of Mystère's mission in India is to give physical and moral support to the Hindu race in their struggle against British colonial oppression. The Hindus are described as 'les adversaires acharnés des Anglais qui [nous] oppriment et [nous] pressurent sans merci' (750). The complex political and racial issues inherent in this colonial conflict are portrayed by the narrator by means of stereotypes of both the peoples and the terrain that form the background to the adventure. Hindu fatalism is represented in brief pen-pictures of secondary characters: 'Êtres étranges que ces jeunes filles de l'Inde, pour qui la mort n'est point une idée terrifiante comme pour les femmes d'Europe' (452). The final episodes of Mystère's (and Cigale's) mission are played out in the mountain passes of Afghanistan on the trail of a political assassin who is attempting to open the way to a British annexation of Kabul and Kandahar. Afghanistan is consistently painted negatively as 'la résidence de l'horreur' and 'ce pays lugubre' (665), once again perpetuating stereotypes rather than offering any considered assessment of the territorial and sectarian issues at stake.

How, then, does *La Folle du temple d'or* represent exemplary masculinity? First, it is striking how little subtlety is present in the characterisation of the main protagonists. They comply largely with stereotypes to be found elsewhere in the adventure fiction genre. The narrative is told exclusively from the point of view of the male characters.² The women, when they do appear, are weak and in need of protection, with the notable exception of a Boer woman, Mrs. Wilhelmina Sanders van Stoon, whose presence in Northwest India goes unexplained and whose only apparent role is to act like a Greek chorus in recounting the defeats and the cruelty of

² The moral vision of *La Folle du temple d'or*, and of the two other case studies that follow from the work of Bousсенard and Henty, is imparted by an anonymous third-person omniscient narrator who adds value judgements derived from the events of the plot. Less typical of the genre, but in many ways more powerful in recreating the experience of combat, is the use of a first person narrator in Steevens's *From Capetown to Ladysmith*.

the British army several thousand miles away in Southern Africa. The novel's protagonists are invariably characterised by action rather than words. They are fit and resilient. The notable exception to this model is the appropriately named Docteur Mystère. Mystère's exemplarity is different. He complies with all the basic requirements of the adventure hero. He is physically fit, resilient and courageous. He brings, however, additional layers of subtlety to the otherwise one-dimensional portrayals of *La Folle du temple d'or*. He reflects before he speaks. He chooses to remain silent rather than speak or act impulsively. He brings a refined brand of chivalry to his treatment of those in danger (especially women) that inspires their confidence in him. He is of noble birth and has been educated in England, a fact, the narrator implies, that explains the erudition and wisdom which he applies to the solution of the many dilemmas which confront his group of colonial adventurers. With this notable exception, exemplary masculinity is represented essentially in the novel as a combination of physical prowess, determination and courage, set off to advantage by the depiction of local Indian adversaries and European colonial rivals as cowardly, cruel, duplicitous or ridiculous.

In particular, representations of exemplary masculinity in *La Folle du temple d'or* reflect two ideological motifs identified by literary scholar Marie Palewska in her study of d'Ivoi's *Voyages Excentriques* (originally serialised in the *Journal des Voyages* in the 1880s).³ She cites d'Ivoi's implication that the atrocities committed by 'indigènes' suggest 'l'idée de la supériorité de la civilisation européenne' (2007: 142). Among these European colonists, Palewska observes that it is the French who act with bravery and honour while the British 'apparaissent tour à tour apathiques,

³ For insights on colonial ideologies in the *Journal des Voyages* I am indebted to Matthieu Letourneux's 'La Colonisation comme un roman', *Belphégor*, vol. 9, 1, 2010.

ridicules, couardes et cupides' (142). Exemplary masculinity in this novel is characterised in turn by superiority of physique, intellect, courage, gender and race.

To explore further how these concepts are imbricated within French adventure fiction, I now provide a shorter case study of an adventure novel by another contemporary of Jules Verne. Louis Bousсенard's *Les Robinsons de la Guyane* (1882) is part of a sub-genre of *robinsonade* adventure fiction popular in France in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. I concentrate here on how exemplary masculinity is represented in Bousсенard's novel. The narrative is centred almost exclusively on the adventures of the French political prisoner Robin, who escapes from a penitential colony in French Guyana. The reader is engaged on the side of Robin, who has been unjustly convicted and treated with sadistic cruelty by his warders in the 'bagne'. Robin's powers of resilience are highlighted in a passage in which the narrator compares the perils which face Robin in his flight through the Guyanan rain-forest to the trials which he endured as convict: 'mieux vaut le reptile qui enlace, le tigre qui déchire, le soleil qui affole, la fièvre qui ronge, la faim qui tue: mieux vaut la mort sous tous ses aspects que la vie du bagne' (1927 [1882]: 10). Robin's credentials as an exemplar are established initially by his bravery and physical prowess.

There is more to Robin, however, than these frequently encountered characteristics of the adventure hero. His status as a political prisoner differentiates him from his fellow prisoners who are common criminals. This confers upon him special qualities of intellect and foresight which enable him to outmanoeuvre his pursuers: 'quand il apprit le nom de l'évadé, le commandant, qui connaissait son énergie et qui avait su apprécier son caractère, sentit diminuer sa confiance' (2). Robin's courageous attitude in the face of cruelty and deprivation has a solid

foundation in ideologies of patriotism and patriarchy: ‘il ne voulait pas mourir ... il était epoux et père, ce vaillant que l’effroyable labour du bagne n’avait pu abatre, que la misère n’avait pu dompter, dont la chiourme n’avait jamais fait baisser les yeux’ (11). In spite of the privations he endures, Robin’s exemplary masculinity embraces a code of honour which obliges him to spare the life of his most sadistic oppressor, the head-warder Benoit, who is mauled by a tiger as he is about to shoot the cornered escapee Robin. Robin’s adventures enable exemplary masculinity to be represented in some of the ways that typify the adventure hero, but there are facets to his characterisation that distinguish him from other protagonists of the adventure genre. He is brave, resilient and honourable, thus far complying with the *topoi* that characterise the genre.

The narrator also emphasises that he is a husband and a father and that he is endowed with special qualities of intellect and perception, thus providing an exemplar which addresses some of the anxieties of the political commentators cited at the beginning of this chapter. More typical of the way that exemplary masculinity is represented in French adventure fiction are the ways in which the honourable qualities of Robin are set off against the claimed duplicity of other colonial powers, especially the Dutch, and against what is described as the unsophisticated and savage nature of the native Guyanan people with whom Robin comes into contact. Unlike d’Ivoi’s natives, the Guyanans are not depicted as barbarous, but there is a condescending and elitist tone to Robin’s interactions with native Guyanans which makes for uncomfortable reading today (102). In summary, Robin, like *Le Docteur Mystère*, is a representation of exemplary masculinity that combines physical prowess and valour with qualities of wisdom, honour and foresight, set off to advantage against races depicted as lacking in these qualities.

How does the British adventure novel compare with the French genre in the representation of exemplary masculinity? I begin with a case study of G. A. Henty's *The Young Franc-tireurs and their Adventures in the Franco-Prussian War* (1872). Unlike the French adventure fiction of d'Ivoi and Boussenard cited above, Henty's novel depicts a cordial and productive informal alliance between the British and the French, in opposition to the invading Prussian forces in 1870. The novel employs a narrative device to achieve an *entente* that was not representative of the respective political stances of France and Britain at the time. It centres on the family of a retired British colonial soldier, Captain Barclay, who has married a French woman and settled in Dijon. His two teenage boys have been educated in Burgundy and feel as much of an alliance to France as to their father's native land. This device provides the novel's narrator with the opportunity to represent exemplary masculinity both in the persons of the two young Britons, Ralph and Percy Barclay, as well as in the characters of the French officers who act as their leaders and mentors.

Unlike d'Ivoi's novel, Henty's *The Young Franc-tireurs* is generous in its appraisal of the efforts of a rival colonial race to deal with the challenges brought by foreign armies on its own soil. The narrator attributes no fault to the French divisions that had finally surrendered Wörth to the Prussians in 1870: 'no one thought of blaming the troops. It was evident that they had done their best' (1872: 15). Captain Barclay, however, does express his misgivings about a lack of discipline among the French: 'Radical opinions may be very wise and very excellent for a nation, for aught I know, but it is certain that they are fatal to the discipline of an army' (10). No lack of discipline or eagerness to serve is found in representations of the two Barclay brothers. The narrator presents them as exemplars both in their physical fitness and in their valour. They implore their mother to allow them to join the French forces against

the Prussians as guerrilla fighters or sharp-shooters: ‘we are stronger, mamma, than a great many of the men who have been called out, taller and stouter in every way; we can walk better than a great portion of them. We are accustomed to exercise and fatigue, we are far more fit to be soldiers’ (18).

Here we have a two-edged representation of exemplary masculinity. The narrator is prudent in not casting all French soldiers as inadequate, but the physical and moral stature of the two Britons is pointed up by contrast with some of the French troops. The use of the word ‘stouter’, in particular, connotes not only physical strength, but also a brand of British patriotism and determination inherent in the cartoon character of John Bull.⁴ Their father is very insistent on determining the intentions of the two young men, thereby providing the narrator with more opportunities to underline their exemplary honourable motives. He interrogates them to make sure that they are not merely seeking ‘the excitement or the adventure’ (18). He needs to be reassured that they are volunteering ‘because you desire earnestly to do your best to defend the country in which you were born and have lived’ (18). A complex web of ideologies is woven into *The Young Franc-tireurs*. The heroes are painted as inherently British and, to some extent, derive their superior status as exemplars not only by contrast to the ruthless invading Prussians, but also in contrast to sections of the French army. They are led, however, by a French officer, Captain Tempé, who is, himself, a powerful masculine exemplar. His address to his newly recruited company of (mainly French) soldiers is entirely consonant with the aspirations of the two gallant British volunteers and their father: ‘there must be no murmuring under hardship, no hesitation in obeying my order, however unpleasant’ (22). The French captain continues with a call to duty which is a rallying cry typical

⁴ John Bull was the heroic British archetype invented by John Arbuthnot in his political pamphlet ‘Law is a Bottomless Pit’ (1712).

of what Dennis Butts, in his analysis of Henty's formula stories, calls a 'psychologically reassuring message that even ordinary boys [...] can survive, and indeed triumph, under the most adverse circumstances' (2008: 158). Captain Tempé outlines what he calls his 'programme'. This consists of 'prompt, willing, cheerful obedience when at work, a warm friendship and perfect good fellowship at other times' (1872: 22), thereby adding the virtues of loyalty and collegiality to his prescription for masculine exemplarity which already includes determination and resilience. In contrast to the French novels cited above, Henty's novel defines exemplary masculinity in prescriptive passages such as those cited above, rather than merely by a sequential account of the brave deeds of the protagonists. Brave deeds, however, are by no means lacking in the narrative of *The Young Franc-tireurs*. Ralph and Percy are soon engaged in skirmishes with Prussian Uhlan cavalry where, 'in the excitement of loading and firing [...] they had scarcely time to give thought to the danger' (39). They are captured by the Prussians, escape by swimming a river, are wounded and are tended by French peasants in Orléans before returning as heroes to their family in Dijon. Typically, as exemplary masculine heroes, 'neither have ever been heard to boast of their achievements' (160). Butts sums up neatly the nature of the exemplary masculinity invariably found in Henty's formulaic adventure stories 'the heroes of the books are usually potentially manly boys [...] endowed with a good deal of pluck' (2008: 153). I will return to the ways in which this specific notion of manliness is represented in British adventure fiction later in this chapter, but will first provide one more brief case study of how exemplary masculinity is represented in the British genre.

My fourth case study is G.W. Steevens's documentary adventure novel *From Capetown to Ladysmith* (1900) which, like Henty's *The Young Franc-tireurs*, is

an account of a real-life military campaign which is barely concluded by the time of writing. Much of the narrative recounts the skirmishes between Boer forces and the British army in South Africa before and after the battle at Ladysmith in October 1899. Exemplary masculinity is represented in *From Capetown to Ladysmith* in a very idiosyncratic way. The narrator sets out in detail how soldiers react to the noise and the dangers of what became the prelude to the modern warfare of the Great War, in which artillery and high-powered rifles were to play a much greater role than in previous conflicts. Steevens's narrator, representing himself in his role as a war-reporter, anticipates the First World War phenomenon of shell shock. He describes the psychological effect of waiting for an enemy artillery shell to burst: 'if you listen and calculate, you are done; you get shells on the brain, think and talk of nothing else, and finish by going into a hole in the ground before daylight' (1900: 105). His prescription for exemplary behaviour advocates going about 'your ordinary business' with the result that 'your confidence revives immediately' (105). His recipe for valour under fire draws upon Muslim fatalism: 'you leave the matter to Allah and, by the middle of the morning, you do not even turn your head to see where the bang came from' (105). In contrast to the idealised accounts of warfare to be found in Henty's adventure novels, depictions of military actions against the Boer guerrillas are drawn by Steevens's narrator with a striking blend of the horrors of modern warfare and the visceral responses of excitement and anticipation evoked in the combatants by the sound of nearby gunfire: 'there is nothing to stir the blood like rifle-fire. Rifle-fire wins or loses decisive actions; rifle fire sends the heart galloping' (106). The narrator goes on to provide a vivid description of the 'tearing scream' and 'the horror' of the devastating artillery bombardment of the town of Ladysmith. He is caught in the artillery crossfire and survives a near miss: 'you come out of the dust and the stench

of melanite, not knowing where you were, hardly knowing whether you were hit [...] nothing to do but endure' (133). Here we have a representation of exemplary masculinity that does not shy away from the horrors of warfare. It evokes the paradoxical combination of horror at what is happening together with the physical excitement of the men on the battlefield. Above all, it privileges the exemplary characteristics of valour and endurance.

The four adventure novels cited above demonstrate some commonalities in the ways in which their narratives work to evoke exemplary masculinity. Both the French and the British novels represent masculine exemplars who are physically strong and resilient. They behave with valour and honour. Women are marginal to the plot, especially in the British texts. There are some important distinctions, however, within these small samples of the two national adventure genres. Both d'Ivoi's and Bousсенard's novels depict heroes who apply more than just physical strength and bravery to their encounters with opponents. Both *Mystère* and *Robin* are represented as being reflective and prudent in the ways in which they plan their engagements with adversaries. Their status as masculine exemplars is also enhanced by the contrasts evoked in the novels between their honourable behaviour and the devious or cowardly behaviour of their opponents. Henty's narrator, by contrast, is given to prolix formulae and prescriptions of heroic behaviour that become axioms for the young protagonists. Their deeds are equally as courageous as those of their French counterparts, but are typically preceded by the narrator's somewhat heavy-handed code of behaviour with which their heroes' subsequent actions inevitably comply. In Steevens's text, this formula is given added impact by the narrative device of taking the reader into the centre of a battlefield with no idealised descriptions of individual

bravery, rather the demands made on the resilience of the protagonists by the unbearable noise and stench of modern warfare.

It is tempting, given the clearly delineated forms of exemplary masculinity in the very small sample of four novels cited above, to draw some broad conclusions as to how the adventure fiction genre in France and Britain represented the male hero. By doing so, however, I would be ignoring a very substantial body of scholarship that has addressed not only nineteenth-century masculinities, but also specific concepts of exemplary masculinity and the related (but not entirely contiguous) notions of manliness and *virilité*. In what follows, I build on the analysis of masculinities contained in my Introduction and on the initial impressions gleaned from the four case studies of adventure novels.

3. Masculinities in Late Nineteenth-century British Texts.

In order to set a context for British concepts of exemplary masculinity, I first explore published nineteenth-century definition of manliness, essential to a study of British adventure fiction. I have elected to cite two late nineteenth-century press reviews of adventure novels and one review of published colonial memoirs. I have chosen to illustrate my analysis of manliness using these three texts, in that they provide specific insights as to how manliness was represented by contemporary press commentators. In this way, they offer hints as to the frame of reference brought to the adventure novel by contemporary readers. My chosen book reviews are both critiques of British adventure novels from the 1880s.

The first review is of E. S. Brooks's historical adventure novel *Historic Boys: Their Endeavours, Their Achievements, Their Times* (1885). The book review was published in *Knowledge*, 'an illustrated magazine of science', founded by Richard A. Proctor in 1881. The broad scope of *Knowledge* magazine is indicated by

the contents of the July 1885 edition, which lists articles on ‘Mysteries and Moralities’, ‘Illusions of the Senses’ and ‘The New Flying Machines’, a hint that the magazine’s intended readership encompassed both adults and adolescents.⁵ The anonymous article reviews Brooks’s account of the early lives of William the Conqueror, Henry V, Louis XIV, and other heroic European figures. Brooks’s narrator is judged to have adopted a suitable tone in his account of the achievements of these prominent figures of history. In particular, the reviewer detects ‘manly’ qualities in the way in which their histories are related: ‘a wholesome book, manly in tone, altogether one that should incite [...] further acquaintance with those rulers of men whose careers are narrated’.⁶ By relating accounts of the achievement of power in a manly tone Brooks, in the opinion of *Knowledge’s* reviewer, has provided appropriately ‘wholesome’ reading matter which will stimulate young readers’ interest in the great men of history. How should ‘manly’ be understood in the context of the tone of historical adventure fiction? Historian Kelly Boyd offers a useful hint as to how to interpret the word in this context: ‘the Victorian paradigm of manliness embraced several traits, including physical courage and skill, an arrogant belief in one’s own superiority, and a moral rectitude about the way the world was shaped’ (2003: 71). For its reviewer, then, Brooks’s novel exemplifies something like what Boyd calls a ‘paradigm of manliness’, in as much as content (the endeavours and achievements of great men) and style (manly tone) are commensurate.

My second book review is from the *Birmingham Post* and critiques G. A. Henty’s adventure novel *A Final Reckoning. A Tale of Bush Life in Australia* (1887). The *Birmingham Post’s* anonymous reviewer is convinced that Henty’s narrative will

⁵ Richard A. Proctor, *Knowledge*, Vol. VIII No. 192, 3 July 1885.

<www.books.google.uk/about/knowledge>

⁶ Blackie and Son Book Catalogue. Bound into rear cover of first edition of G. A. Henty’s *With Moore at Corunna* (1898).

be read with ‘eager and unflagging interest’,⁷ an assertion certainly given credence by historian John MacKenzie’s estimate of Henty’s annual sales in the 1890s of between 150,000 and 200,000 books (1984: 220). The review continues in an admiring tone: ‘the episodes are in Mr. Henty’s very best vein—graphic, exciting, realistic; and, as in all Mr. Henty’s books, the tendency is to the formation of an honourable, manly and even heroic character’.⁸ Significant for understanding the nuances implicit in the concept of manliness is the combination here of honour, manliness and heroism. Edward Berenson provides a relevant insight into how manliness was constructed in the late nineteenth-century imaginary. Berenson characterizes ‘the ideal of manliness’ for this period as ‘defined by the ability to persist against all odds, to confront physical danger and the perils of the unknown and to combine strength and fortitude with kindness toward women, “natives”, and others needing gentle guidance backed by a firm, steady hand’ (2011: 10). The ideal of manliness cited by Berenson resonates with some of the principles of manliness, heroism and honour identified by the *Birmingham Post’s* columnist in Henty’s text. Berenson’s colonial heroes, as the reviewer claims is true of protagonists of Henty’s novel, are honourable (they show kindness), are heroic (they persist against all odds), and they are manly (they have fortitude and strength). Berenson also suggests that, in the late nineteenth century in France and Britain, the ideal of manliness was often defined by kindness when confronted with ‘others’, typically those depicted as inferior.

An example of this specific aspect of Victorian manliness is provided in the *Illustrated London News* of 10 January 1885. It contains a review of the recently published memoirs of Mrs. Speedy, the wife of one Captain Speedy, described as a ‘military gentleman’ who had made a distinguished career as the political and

⁷ Ibid. (1898: 9).

⁸ Ibid. (1898: 9).

business agent of the British government in India and Abyssinia in the 1870s. The unnamed reviewer of Mrs. Speedy's account praises both her literary and her personal qualities: 'Mrs. Speedy's agreeable narrative is very welcome. It has the charm of true womanly tastes and feelings, and wifely appreciation of the manly powers and accomplishments of her distinguished husband.'⁹ This appraisal is rich in allusions to the overt (and the hidden) ideology surrounding the concept of what I will term the manly hero in Victorian England, and adds another dimension to the working definitions of manliness outlined above. First, Mrs. Speedy's identity is constructed primarily in relation to her husband's career and achievements. Her 'womanly tastes and feelings' are by implication those which have inspired her to travel the world enduring the rigours of tropical climate, disease and personal privation in support of her husband's appointments. Mrs. Speedy's narrative is 'agreeable' and 'very welcome', presumably because she knows her place in colonial society and because of the appreciation she expresses for the power and accomplishments of her 'distinguished' husband. Most striking is the use of the signifier 'womanly' to denote tastes, feelings, charm and admiration, juxtaposed in the same sentence with the signifier 'manly' connoting, in this context, power, achievement and distinction. The overt sexism of the *Illustrated London News* article illustrates one of the recurrent *topoi* of the discourse of exemplary masculinity. In this case, the construction of exemplary masculinity is obtained by contrast to an inferior 'other'. One further aspect of this article lends it particular relevance to an analysis of the nuances of masculinity and manliness. The reviewer juxtaposes the 'manly' colonial administrator with his 'womanly' consort in an equilibrium defined by their respective virtues. This juxtaposition corresponds to the 'binary opposition' and

⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 10 January 1885, p. 59.

‘complementary equilibrium’ discussed by Nye (1993: 7) as well as to Poovey’s discussion of binary representations of sex. This contemporary magazine article suggests that the need for an opposing force to sustain a state of equilibrium applies not only to masculinity, but also to manliness.

How might we place the concept of manliness within a broader framework of masculinity in Victorian England? It is tempting, from a twenty-first century perspective, to regard masculinity as the umbrella concept within which the notion of manliness fits. Historian John Tosh provides a potential framework for such a viewpoint. He offers a definition of Victorian full masculine status as ‘the gift of one’s peers [...] accomplished by economic or military achievements in the public sphere, often marked by a rite of collective, men-only initiation’ (1999: 3). These rites of passage, according to Tosh, are performed through the acquisition of what he terms the essential ‘manly’ attributes of ‘energy, will, straightforwardness and courage’ (111).¹¹ A picture of manliness emerges from the nineteenth-century discourses and from the scholarship of Berenson, Boyd and Tosh cited above. In the context of the British imperial project, valences of power, confidence, courage and honour combine to form this complex construction.

4. Masculinities in Late Nineteenth-century French Texts.

Courage and strength abound in representations of French nineteenth-century adventure heroes. They omit, however, some of the overlays best characterised by the notion of ‘playing the game’¹² implicit in representations of the British schoolboy turned colonial soldier. More typical in the French genre would be

¹¹ Tosh also explores exaggerated manifestations of manliness in his observations on the ‘stiff upper lip’ and the extremes of self-control that it demanded (1999: 184).

¹² ‘Play up and play the game’ is the refrain of Henry Newbolt’s jingoistic poem, ‘Vitaī Lampada’ (1892). It links accomplishments on Public school playing fields with bravery on the battlefield.

the description of one of Verne's most notably masculine heroes, the Czar's Courier Michel Strogoff: 'Michel Strogoff était haut de taille, vigoureux, épaules larges, poitrine vaste. Sa tête puissante présentait les beaux caractères de la race caucasique' (1999 [1876]: 37). Here, Verne's narrator introduces the reader to his hero in terms that are purely physical. The power and vigour of Strogoff are imbricated with the physical features of girth, height and physiognomy rather than with any subtlety in terms of his honour code, loyalty or sense of moral purpose. The only oblique reference to moral character ('beaux caractères') is couched in racially deterministic terms that call social-Darwinism to mind.

The lexicography of Genouvrier, Désirat and Hordé (1992: 428) on French synonyms supports my preliminary thesis that British concepts of exemplary masculinity do not have precise equivalents in French. Their examples of nineteenth and twentieth-century usage of the adjective *mâle* cluster around notions of *résolution*, *assurance*, and *énergie*, connoting a bias towards physicality, decision and action rather than towards the 'moral rectitude' of manliness evoked by Boyd (2003: 71). The closest equivalent to manliness which I have identified in scholarship on French adventure fiction is *virilité*, an overlapping but not contiguous concept defined by Alain Corbin as 'l'héroïsme, le savoir mourir pour la patrie, la quête de la gloire' (2011: 7). In what follows, I attempt to map the extent of this overlap.

5. *Polarised Concepts of Exemplary Masculinity*

My reading of more than sixty French and British adventure novels from the period 1870-1900, suggests that an understanding of ideals of exemplary masculinity, manliness and the French notion of *virilité* is essential to an analysis of how ideology is inscribed within the adventure fiction genre. I have, therefore, explored the scholarship of French and British historians, sociologists, feminists, philosophers,

literary scholars and critical theorists in search of clues that could contextualise my comparative work. I outline below one particularly striking insight that emerges from the scholarship treating aspects of masculinity at the end of the nineteenth century.

Groups of scholars have tended to privilege opposing aspects of the concept of exemplary masculinity. It would be an exaggeration to contend that the scholarship is divided into two clearly defined oppositional camps, but there are certainly clusters of scholarly opinion that mark the extremes of an identifiable critical spectrum on this concept. Although these clusters are not strictly aligned with national ideologies, one school of thought embraces an ascetic model typical of the British manly hero, while the other lays emphasis on aspects of the fertile *chef de famille* which characterises many French representations. The clusters of scholarship at either end of the critical spectrum, therefore, emphasise concepts of ‘energetic self- discipline’ (Adams 1995: 5) as opposed to imperatives of fatherhood and regeneration. While there are shades of scholarly commitment to one or other of these standpoints, there are enough secondary texts situated firmly at either end of this spectrum for it to provide a valuable methodological framework. At what I will call the ‘ascetic’ end, the work of Adams provides an outline theoretical framework for the study of Victorian manliness based around concepts of self-discipline and ‘virtuoso asceticism’ (1995: 2). At the opposite end of the spectrum, social historian Kristen Stromberg Childers provides insights on national regeneration through patriarchal intervention.¹⁶ Shades of both critical extremes appear across the corpus of relevant scholarship but, before exploring this work, I will set in place some theoretical ‘book-ends’ by summarising the analysis of Adams and Childers.

¹⁶ Although Childers’s work is primarily concerned with the period from 1914 to 1945, she sets the context for her research in the familial and patriarchal framework of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Third Republic and provides insights as to how the father figure acted as a bulwark against national decline (2003: 49).

Adams reports that nineteenth-century manliness was equated with the economic utility, status and privilege of a ‘secular and industrialised society’ (5) and seen, as I have cited already above, as ‘an ongoing regimen of aggressive self-mastery’ (9). Adam’s analysis prompts him to quote appropriately from John Ruskin (‘you can chisel a boy into shape but you cannot hammer a girl into anything’)¹⁷ and Thomas Arnold of Rugby School (‘a death in the school is as nothing when compared with the existence of any unusual moral evil in the school’)¹⁸ in support of his observations on Victorian codes of self-discipline. Adams borrows from British philosopher J. L. Austin (as interpreted by Judith Butler) the concept of ‘performativity’ and asserts that Victorian normative masculinity is ‘typically asserted as an unending performance’ (11). A picture emerges, from Adam’s analysis of masculinity, of a model characterised by a performance of rigorous self-discipline.

Scholarship on aspects of masculinity is enhanced by social historian Kristen Stromberg Childers’s account of *Fathers, Families and the State* (2003). According to Childers, the *chef de famille* in Third Republic France had not only to conceive and raise children but had to perform as a ‘superior being whose qualities and actions were essential in the fight against national decline’. The performance of this role needed ‘sacrifice, courage, political expertise’ and constituted a ‘bulwark against national degeneration’ (2003: 49). The self-disciplined model of Adams’s British gentleman and the fecund father figure of Childers’s citizen of the Third Republic, although they differ in many ways, do share some characteristics. Both scholars identify physical prowess and courage as prime facets of how their respective subjects are represented. The *lacuna* between the two concepts, however, is significant. Manliness, as represented in the adventure fiction of Victorian Britain, typically does

¹⁷ Lecture to Royal College of Science (1868), cited by Adams (1995: 10).

¹⁸ Address at Rugby School (1828), cited by Adams (1995: 69).

not admit any association with the opposite sex as a defining trait. If anything, the opposite is true. Rider Haggard's narrator, at the beginning of *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) informs his readers that: 'there is not a petticoat in the whole history' (2006 [1885]: 10). Robert Louis Stevenson, likewise, in his 1894 essay on the composition of *Treasure Island*, entitled 'My First Book' and written eleven years after the publication of his adventure novel, avers that 'there seemed elements of success about this enterprise. It was to be a story for boys, no need of psychology or fine writing [...] women were excluded' (1999 [1883]: 193).

The French adventure novels of Pierre Loti, by contrast, abound with romantic interludes involving his colonial officers between their bouts of fighting against rebellious colonial subjects. Bousсенard's 1882 interpretation of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *Les Robinsons de la Guyane*, unaccountably involves the arrival of the hero's wife and family at his makeshift tropical retreat. Verne, in his own unfinished saga *L'Oncle Robinson* (1870), not only paints the sailor Jean Fanthome as a solicitous surrogate *chef de famille* to the shipwrecked wife and children of naval officer Bob Clifton, but also paints Mrs. Clifton as an exemplar of dutiful parenthood: 'C'était 'une mère' dans la plus grande acception de ce mot, une mère telle que dut être la mère d'un Washington, d'un Franklin ou d'un Abraham Lincoln, une femme de la Bible, forte et courageuse, un composé de toutes les vertus et de toutes les tendresses' (1991[1870]: 15). Even one of Verne's most aggressively masculine heroes, Michel Strogoff, forms an uncharacteristic sentimental attachment to his vulnerable and recently orphaned young travelling companion, Nadia Fedor, another example of an involvement with women which is typically absent from the British adventure genre. It would be an over-generalisation to claim that French adventure novels feature women protagonists and that British adventure fiction does not. Nonetheless, the

instances of this phenomenon in my chosen sample of primary texts prompts speculation as to what might be the underlying reasons. My initial hypothesis is based around issues of national decline and population decline in France's Third Republic, which made the family and the figure of the *chef de famille* totemic ideological concepts.

6. *Discourses of Heroism*

6.1 *Context*

Up to this point, I have used some of the basic concepts adduced by Adams and Childers in drawing up the opposed stereotypes of the self-disciplined British ascetic and the fruitful French father figure. The literature on this subject is very rich, however, and the many subtleties of analysis and interpretation in recent scholarship cannot justify a simple juxtaposition of this nature. In what follows, therefore, I set out the best scholarship on the concept of exemplary masculinity in late nineteenth-century France and Britain under the three broad headings of 'Heroism', 'Gender' and 'Masculinities'. I start with a review of discourses on heroism.

6.2 *Late Nineteenth-century Discourses of Heroism in France*

As the research framework of my thesis specifies the hero as a primary point of reference, I will begin by exploring the secondary literature that addresses heroism in both the British and the French tradition. No study of the ideology of heroic masculinity in late nineteenth-century France would be complete without an appraisal of the enduring image of Napoleon Bonaparte. This topic is addressed by historian Venita Datta in her 2005 article 'L'Appel du Soldat'. Datta's thesis is that Bonaparte is a flawed model of heroism and advances the theory that this was appropriate for the Belle Époque era: 'Napoleon incarnated a manly image from a bygone, glorious era; yet he was diminished by his human foibles to the stature of an ordinary man. As

such, he was a true hero for the democratic age' (2005: 7). Datta also relates the ways in which the Third Republic encouraged the idea that ordinary men and women could become heroes, and characterises the hero as one with 'great strength of will and strong sense of self [...] willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good' (2010: 219)¹⁹. Datta recounts how Joan of Arc took her place in the 1880s alongside Napoleon as one of the most popular exemplars of heroic self-sacrifice to restore honour and glory to a defeated nation. Historian Christopher Forth also cites these 'pre-modern' connotations of heroism in late nineteenth-century France, a concept that he defines as 'often martial in nature and almost always emphasising courage, action or some kind of innovation' (2010: 215). Forth's definition, as I will show in chapter six, overlaps in interesting ways with British notions of exemplary masculinity.

An extension of the concept of heroism in late nineteenth-century France beyond the time-worn pairing of Napoleon and Joan is to be found in Jean-François Chanet's article, 'La Fabrique des Héros' (2000). Here he makes the distinction between what he calls 'grands hommes', including scientists and artists such as Pasteur and Hugo, and the more conventional martial hero. He also insists that the need for heroes was rooted in the defeat of the Franco-Prussian war which, 'absurdement engagée par l'Empereur, avait été perdue à cause de l'incompétence ou de la trahison des chefs de son armée' (2000: 17). Chanet brings new perspectives in his elision of the concepts of military and paternal duty, which he sees as fundamental

¹⁹ This assertion by Datta is certainly supported by the habitual reporting of acts of spontaneous heroism by ordinary citizens to be found in the *faits divers* columns of mass daily newspapers such as *Le Petit Parisien*. For example, on 13 January 1885, a report appears under the heading 'L'Accident de Croissy' of the actions of one Monsieur Duval, a local farrier who goes to the rescue of a pregnant woman who has become entangled in her dog's chain and has been bitten on the ankle, as indeed has Duval: 'quant au sieur Duval, qui a fait preuve en cette circonstance de beaucoup de courage, il est soigné à son domicile' (*Le Petit Parisien*, 13 January 1885, p. 3)

to an understanding of republican patriotism. This alignment of two pivotal masculine roles has resonances in my chosen primary texts, especially those French adventure novels where the *pater familias* also plays the military hero (for example, Bousсенard's *Les Robinsons de La Guyane* or, in a less formal familial context, Loti's *Le Roman d'un Spahi*).²⁰ Chanet synthesises the two roles neatly in the context of contemporary politics: 'L'association entre la figure du père, les vertus viriles et le sens du devoir militaire est essentielle pour comprendre le fond de culture et de mentalité sur lequel se déploie le patriotisme républicain' (16). Here, Chanet provides valuable insights into French notions of heroic masculinity in his imbrication of the father figure with virile virtues and military duty in the construction of patriotism. *Virilité*, in this sense, comes close to representing the valences of duty and patriotism associated with the British concept of manliness.

6.3 Late Nineteenth-century Discourses of Heroism in Britain

One of the most unvarnished accounts of the reality of colonial soldiering is provided by Rudyard Kipling in his short story 'The Drums of the Fore and Aft' (1889). It is a brutally candid assessment which owes nothing to the elegant notions of muscular Christianity which permeated the age: 'Speaking roughly, you must employ either blackguards or gentlemen, or, best of all, blackguards commanded by gentlemen, to do butcher's work with efficiency and despatch' (2009 [1889]: 9). Here, Kipling's narrator lays bare the fact that, for all the rhetoric of duty and heroism, the task of a colonial soldier is to kill his opponents, at that time most often in cold blood and in close combat: a 'butcher's work'. For this task he sees the 'blackguard' (in his era the equivalent of a vicious common criminal) or the 'gentleman' as most suited.

²⁰ In Loti's *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, the novel's protagonist, Jean Peyral, fathers the child of a Senegalese girl and belatedly offers a performance of fatherly affection.

This latter notion of the gentleman soldier, imbued with the sense of honour, loyalty, courage and duty on the playing fields of his Public school is a frequently encountered archetype of the British adventure hero.

Joseph Bristow, in his study of how imperialist ideologies were transmitted to Victorian boys, provides valuable insights on the schoolboy hero turned colonial soldier: 'the mid-Victorian manly schoolboy hero, who is physically strong and morally incorruptible, is the complete antithesis to the swaggering bullies of a former age who feel it is their birthright to hold power over men deemed to be their inferiors' (1991: 55). This combination of physical strength and moral probity is invariably at the heart of representations of heroism in the British adventure novels. It provides scope for a large body of scholarship. The important nuance in Bristow's assessment of the British pioneer is that he no longer conquers the world by brute force and arrogance but through a perceived duty to impart his own unimpeachable set of moral values to colonised peoples. Gilmore, in his 1990 cross-cultural anthropological study *Manhood in the Making*, also identifies moral values in literary masculine exemplars. He aligns representations of the Greek hero with the nineteenth-century cultures of ambition and self-discipline. For Gilmore, manhood is 'more than simply the sublimation of libido and aggression into culturally approved channels of practical achievement; it is also the encouragement to resist the opposites: indolence, self-doubt, squeamishness, hesitancy, the impulse to withdraw or surrender' (1990: 38).²² Here, once again, are parallels with the 'manhood that ostensibly transcends self-interest' evoked by Adams (1995: 10).

²² I cite Gilmore here because, although his anthropological study covers the Americas, Asia and Africa as well as Europe, his insights have a universality that is readily applicable to my readings of adventure fiction.

Robin Gilmour provides context to my exploration of heroic masculinity by citing Ruskin, Arnold, Hughes and Newman on the concept of heroism. Newman's homily on the idea of a university, preached in Dublin in 1852, represents an important formative influence on the late nineteenth-century concept of the hero: 'he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable and to death because it is his destiny' (1981: 91). By citing educators, philosophers, novelists and lawmakers, Gilmour lets the mid-nineteenth century arbiters of heroic status speak for themselves. Most telling are his insights into the heroic ideals promulgated by schoolboy fiction. For example, he imputes to Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) 'the higher sense of communal responsibility in being captain of the cricket eleven' (95). Heroic ideals formed on the playing field are also central to social historian J. A. Mangan's account of athleticism in British nineteenth-century Public schools. Mangan characterises games as 'a source of good sense, noble traits, manly feelings, generous disposition, comradely loyalty' (1981: 132). Gilmour and Mangan concur on the role of the British school system and its organised sports as key influences on the development of manly character.

The scholars cited above contribute towards a composite picture of British nineteenth-century exemplary masculinity. How, then, did the ideology of heroic masculinity infuse the national psyche? Central to the problematic here is the difficulty of discerning the relative ideological power of reported real-life events and fictional representations of heroism. Kendall Walton takes the position that it doesn't really matter: 'legend or myth may be as good as history. An avowedly unveridical tale may be as suggestive and stimulating as a trustworthy account of actual events and may inspire similar insights' (1990: 97). More recent work by Berenson, however, is meticulous in mining the variety of media through which the ideology of

heroism was inscribed. He identifies the channels through which idealised models were constructed: ‘stories of heroism reached into the furthest recesses of British and French society, as millions of newspapers, illustrated magazines, children’s books, song sheets, posters and advertisements rolled off printing presses each and every day’ (2011: 5). Berenson’s work suggests that deeds of prominent national figures were powerful underpinnings of the ideologies of heroism as a palliative for national malaises: ‘For many, the antidote to these ills would come from extraordinary individuals, heroes whose exemplary lives would inspire their fellow citizens to join them in reversing their nation’s putative decline’ (6). The heroes discussed by Berenson, however, show no hint of the combined ethic of fatherly and military duty described by Chanet (2000: 16). Instead, according to Berenson, ‘most explorers and the colonial military men who succeeded them remained unmarried until later in life – if they married at all’ (14), a contention that is consonant with accounts of the inward looking, all-male communities in British colonies cited by Bristow (1991: 81).

Married or not, the exemplary masculine hero takes his place at the centre of discourses of national regeneration at a period of deep anxiety in both Britain and France in the late nineteenth century. Within French discourses of regeneration, however, the notion of the *chef de famille* is given particular emphasis. Historian Joshua Cole, in *The Power of Large Numbers*, offers a convincing rationale for why fatherly traits are privileged in representations of French heroism: ‘after 1870, senators and members of the Third Republic’s National Assembly were nearly unanimous in their horror of depopulation and politicians and publicists endlessly discussed measures to increase the birth-rate’ (2000: 4). Scholars cited above on exemplars of heroic masculinity propose models ranging from the ascetic self-disciplinarian bachelor to the fruitful father-soldier. Perhaps largely for the reasons

adduced by Cole, it is at the latter end of this continuum that the French adventure hero is often situated.

7. Gender Identities

7.1 Context

I have noted above that late-nineteenth century concepts of exemplary masculinity are, in some texts, constructed by reference to women, whether represented as the ‘she who must be obeyed’ (2008 [1887]: 132) of Haggard’s *She*, or the dutiful and subservient native concubines of Loti’s colonial officers. In pursuing my quest to illuminate and compare aspects of exemplary masculinity in the French and British adventure novel, therefore, I have explored the scholarship on nineteenth-century gender identities published by feminist scholars, philosophers, social psychologists and social historians as well as literary scholars.

7.2 Gender Identities in French Nineteenth-century Social and Literary Discourses

Nye’s article on ‘Honour, Impotence and Male Sexuality’ (1989) makes an important contribution to scholarship on the notion of separate spheres in Belle Époque France. Nye argues that, in the late nineteenth century, ‘personal identity is eternally trapped within a binary opposition of male and female difference’ (1989: 48) and contends that the ‘biologically based system of sex difference’ consigned men and women to the sphere appropriate to their nature’ (49). Nye analyses French medical literature of the second half of the nineteenth century, in which harmony and moderation characterise the healthy male. Quoting from Descuret’s *La Médecine des Passions* (1860) he draws up a table of desirable male-specific attributes where Force, Calm and Courage are opposed to Weakness, Apathy and Fear, but without straying into the immoderate defects of Violence, Anger and Temerity (54). Nye reports that ‘legitimate reproductive fertility’ was the prescriptive norm adopted by the French

medical profession and that ‘the contempt and fear with which respectable society regarded the celibate is profound testimony to this dominant outlook’ (70). Nye’s subsequent study of *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honour* (1993) goes further in underlining the societal imperatives implicit in these prescriptive norms and refers to the ‘bourgeois preoccupation with moral discipline’ (1993: 32). Nye also identifies adherence to the conventions of the French honour code as one of the means of attaining manly status in society: ‘By engaging in affairs of honour as principals or seconds [...] men could express their patriotism, their right to membership in a democratic civil order and their manliness’ (147). Nye’s scholarship contributes to our understanding of exemplary masculinity in nineteenth-century France in three ways. First, he illustrates the ways in which the notion of masculinity depended on states of equilibrium, whether it is the ‘binary opposition’ (1989: 48) to women, or the qualities of force and courage opposed by weakness and fear. Second, he highlights the expectation of masculine reproductive fertility. Third, he sets manliness within the context of patriotism and honour, adding to our understanding of how manliness constituted a particular aspect of masculinity.

Historian Karen Offen’s account of ‘the woman question’ in France coincides with the views put forward by scholars such as Childers and Chanet that degeneration and population decline prompted the need for masculine exemplars (1984: 648). Her insights on ‘feminisme’ (which she tells us first came into vogue as a term in the 1890s), however, suggest that much of the Belle Époque discourse of masculinity was partly a defensive reaction to familial feminists who ‘aimed not to overthrow the economic basis of patriarchy but to reorganise the existing society to the greater advantage of women’ (654). In 1895 the statistic was published that there had been 852,000 deaths in France in the preceding twelve-month period, only partly

compensated by 834,000 births (Offen 1984: 661). Offen reports that the issue of population decline and its implications for the defence of the nation became fused with anxieties about feminism. She describes how a ‘surge of antifeminism manifested itself as an aggressive defence of patriarchal values of long standing’ (661). The strength of this anti-feminist rhetoric can be judged by excerpts from Théodore Joran’s *Le Mensonge du Féminisme*, cited by Offen. A ‘good household’, Joran avers, is one in which ‘the woman believes she ought to please her husband, to serve him, and applies herself exclusively to that end’ (662), part of a counter-rhetoric to the emergent ‘familial feminist’ discourse described by Offen.

This dutiful dependence on husbands is one of the opening themes of historian Judith Surkis’s study of late nineteenth-century French women’s roles in *Sexing the Citizen* (2006). For Surkis, femininity ‘marked bodies that required care, that is, persons who could not care for themselves, in part because they had to care for others, and children in particular’ (2006: 3). Surkis’s scholarship not only addresses late nineteenth-century discourses about the role of women, but also highlights very real concerns about male autonomy. For her, the *chef de famille* role is of central political significance to Third Republic France and is emblematic of the moral status of the nation: ‘Republican thinkers imagined married heterosexuality as a motor and manifestation of civilisational and moral progress’ (1). Ironically, the *lycées*, formed to further these ideals, often produced adolescents with ‘perverse tendencies’ and Surkis reports that Republican pedagogues strove to establish a model of state authority that could encourage men to ‘behave according to the norms of their time and their country’s civilisation’ (19). Surkis’s work brings new perspectives to the study of gender identities in nineteenth-century France, especially in the context of republican models of education.

One of the means of re-building the perceived virility of the French nation was obligatory military service, which had originally been introduced in 1872 and then, in 1889, was legislated at three years, without many of the previous loopholes for exempt status. The role of colonial soldier, however, was not without its subsidiary risks to French manhood in the last part of the century, especially that of sexually transmitted diseases from interaction with colonial ‘natives’²⁵ who were ‘thought to suffer from endemic syphilis’. Self-discipline and restraint were not enforceable options for French conscripts, so registration and health controls on brothels were introduced in both the Indo-Chinese and the Madagascan theatres of France’s colonial campaigns (Surkis 2006: 223). Surkis sums up the dilemma facing the legislators and educators of the Third Republic as follows: ‘under that regime of universal male suffrage, the citizen’s masculinity was at once presumed and problematic, because always subject to potential deviation’ (243). Surkis’s work is particularly helpful in its exploration of the nuances of gender identities in France in the late nineteenth century. She provides a lucid analysis of the opposition of feminist and masculine discourses. She underlines the ideologies surrounding models of married heterosexuality. She also points up the vivid contrast between Republican ideals of masculinity and an often unhealthy cohort of young colonial soldiers, at risk from venereal as well as tropical diseases.²⁶

²⁵ No value judgement is intended by the use of the term ‘native’. In the introduction to Elleke Boehmer’s anthology of *Empire Writing*, she makes the following observation: ‘The term native, traditionally pejorative but subverted and reclaimed by postcolonial writers and theorists in recent years, has been used throughout’ (1998: xliii).

²⁶ Some of the resonances of these debates were still heard in the early years of the following century. For aspects of the ‘coherent national consciousness and confidence’ which inspired the ‘jeunes gens d’aujourd’hui’ who volunteered for service in the First World War see Gildea (2009: 443). A retrospective look at the moral and physical development of the ‘generation of 1890’ is contained in a survey published in *L’Opinion* of March 1912 under the pseudonym of Agathon. Entitled

7.3 Gender Identities in British Nineteenth-century Social and Literary Discourses

Scholarship on aspects of exemplary masculinity in the late nineteenth-century is rich in its assessments of differential gender identities. Gilmore's cross-cultural anthropological study sees femininity as a social icon, characterised by issues of allure and ornament, 'essentially cosmetic behaviours that enhance, rather than create, an inherent quality of character' (1990: 12). Gilmore sees manhood as more than self-discipline. He characterises it as the encouragement to resist 'indolence, self-doubt, squeamishness, hesitancy, the impulse to withdraw and surrender' (38). The construction of masculinity by means of equilibrium with its opposites is central to Gilmore's arguments.

Literary scholar Joseph Kestner addresses similar aspects of gender identity in his study of *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*. He sees adventure fiction as one of the means of representing the subject's transition from a simple biological identity to his attainment of the attributes of masculinity, which for Kestner include aggression and violence as well as high moral standards (2010: 15). Not surprisingly, subtle nuances in the representation of gender are often strikingly made in the visual arts. Kestner's *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* detects male dominance, masculine hegemony and patriarchy in contemporary representations of heroes. He cites Thomas Carlyle's 1840 lectures as a source of archetypes of the late-Victorian heroic

'Les Jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui' the report combines in its idealistic conclusions many of the themes explored by the scholars cited above, perhaps most importantly the problematic equilibrium between Republican individualism and societal co-determination: 'Puisse-t-elle encourager cette jeunesse, par-delà les disputes individuelles, à réaliser, dans l'union joyeuses de ses forces, notre idéal commun, qui n'est rien de moins que le voeu d'un Français nouveau, d'une France nouvelle'. Although Agathon's survey would certainly not withstand expert scrutiny as a valid quota sample or as the product of a statistically significant method, the themes embraced in its summary are very much reflective of the dilemmas of French manhood as evinced by the scholarship which I have cited, namely the reconciliation of individual interests with a fertile and united French nation.

masculine figure, ‘marked by their galvanising energy, vitality, sincerity, intensity, fearlessness, self-reliance, earnestness, valour and silent confidence’ (1995: 9). Kestner contends that ‘masculinity is always constructed in relation to femininity’ (8), a nuance, from the perspective of visual representation, of Gilmore’s assertion that society exaggerates sex roles by ‘defining the proper behaviour of men and women as opposite or complementary’ (1990: 23). Kestner also sees in much Victorian painting a confirmation of Carlyle’s appropriation to masculinity of ‘the tolerance of force and even violence in this process of self-realisation’ (1995: 9). Kestner’s insights are important to my project in that the representation of exemplary masculinity in late nineteenth-century adventure fiction, both serialised in magazines and published in volume form, was not only narrated but also vividly portrayed in accompanying illustrations. Kestner’s work on literature and on paintings in the heroic manner brings the multi-faceted concept of exemplary masculinity to life in a compelling way and has provided a useful framework for my analysis of press reports in the *Illustrated London News* in chapter five.

The most decidedly unambiguous take on gender identities in the scholarship dealing with this period is the work of Poovey. Poovey echoes the precepts outlined by Joan Wallach Scott in her 1986 essay, which characterised gender as ‘a way of referring to the social organisation of the relationship between sexes’ (1986: 1053). For Poovey, the issue of gender identity is absolutely cut and dried: ‘the representation of biological sexuality, the definition of sexual difference, and the social organisation of sexual relations are social, not natural phenomena’ (1988: ix).²⁷

²⁷ Poovey’s concept of ‘unevenness within the construction and deployment of mid-Victorian representations of gender’ (1988: 4) lends itself to a survey of accounts of manly heroes’ interactions with women in adventure fiction. For example, Allan Quatermain, the narrator of Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* is much disturbed by a budding social relationship between his companion Captain John Good and a young

Her identification of a ‘mid-Victorian tendency to foreground a binary representation of sex’ (1988: 199) also resonates closely with the analysis of Nye, Gilmore and Kestner cited above. I apply Poovey’s contention that: ‘in a society characterised by systemic class and gender inequality, literature reproduces the system that makes it what it is’ (1988: 123) to an analysis of parallel discourses of masculinity in fiction and in the mass press.

Poovey’s crystal-clear analysis is nuanced by M. Daphne Kutzer in her study of *Empire’s Children*. Kutzer paraphrases Poovey’s position in her opening comments: ‘stories grow out of particular cultures and societies and reflect the values of those societies’ (2000: xiii). She frames valuable insights within her reading of Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* (1857), which ‘presents the reader with a paradise uncomplicated by women’ (2000: 5). Kutzer’s scholarship sets gender identity in the context of empire, and finds in Ballantyne’s archetypal exploration quest a perfectly suited narrative framework within which to develop her thesis on separate spheres: ‘the lack of women reflects not only the limited possibilities for Victorian women and the wishful thinking of men, but also the reality of the imperial enterprise, which was almost entirely a male endeavour’ (5). Kutzer, like Dawson (1994: 63) highlights the lack of women in British adventure novels. She contends that: ‘although women and domestic space may function as useful symbols of English civilisation, they are also problematic and tend to interfere with boyish adventure’ (2000: 5). Kutzer’s thesis echoes historian John Tosh’s observation that: ‘from the 1870s the view was increasingly held that domesticity was unglamorous, unfulfilling and, ultimately, un-masculine’ (1999: 7).

woman: ‘I consider her removal as a fortunate occurrence, since, otherwise, complications would have been sure to ensue’ (2006 [1885]: 187).

Perhaps for the reasons advanced above by Tosh, patriarchal and military themes featured prominently in Victorian art, and many canvasses featured all male subjects. The nature of this phenomenon is explored by Kestner. He contends that ‘the male body on the canvas reaffirms the patriarchal legitimisation of the phallic order, particularly when the male image is engaged in heroic, chivalric, paternal or martial action’ (1995: 25). It was not only in adventure fiction, therefore, that the ideology of dominant male agency in the absence of (or at best with the meek subservience of) women was propounded. Ideology, as Eagleton suggests, ‘is always most effective when invisible’ (1991: xvii) and its seamless integration within ostensible leisure pursuits such as adventure novels and popular representational art made it putatively more powerful than any overtly political agency could have been. Oppositional rather than collaborative gender roles emerge clearly as primary valences from the scholarship treating British nineteenth-century concepts of gender. This scholarship provides insights into the construction of exemplary masculinity in literary discourses largely through the marginalisation or exclusion of women.

7.4 *The ‘Flight from Domesticity’ and its Antecedents*

On 21 March 1895, the front page of the mass Parisian daily paper *Le Petit Parisien* carried a report of the departure rituals of four infantry regiments, on their way to support the French expeditionary forces in Madagascar. The ceremonials are described as ‘grandiose’, and include trumpet fanfares, drum rolls, flags and speeches. Of particular interest is the way in which the unnamed author of the article attributes a specific set of motives and ambitions to the hundreds of recruits who are embarking for service overseas. The journalist imputes to the young soldiers a desire for glory and honours to be won on the battlefield. He also attributes another set of motives, born of a set of circumstances prevailing in both France and Britain in the last decade

of the nineteenth century. He tells us that: ‘beaucoup ont rêvé les lointaines aventures, beaucoup ont cédé à l’attrait de la guerre inconnue dans un pays nouveau, que les imaginations font merveilleux’.²⁹ The qualifiers ‘lointaines’, ‘inconnue’, ‘nouveau’ and ‘merveilleux’ reflect the adventurous aspirations of a generation of young Frenchmen who have grown up in the two decades following the Franco-Prussian war, and their dissatisfaction with the domestic opportunities offered by a rapidly evolving consumer society in which the dominant patriarchal role of the male was becoming less secure. These qualifiers are also emblematic of a genre of adventure fiction, exemplified by the novels of Verne, Loti, d’Ivoi and Bousсенard, in which a desire for escape from the banality of domestic routine is a catalyst for the quest formula of their narratives.

In Britain, too, the adventure novels of Rider Haggard, Henty and Stevenson evince a similar set of motives, of which the antecedents can be traced back to the overseas adventure novels of the mid-nineteenth century, especially Charles Kingsley’s archetype of the genre *Westward Ho!* (1855), still among the top five most popular novels among young people in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.³⁰ The account of the departure of Amyas Leigh, Kingsley’s Elizabethan boy-hero, on his voyage to the Caribbean has striking ideological parallels with the narrative of the departing French colonial troops. Like the soldiers embarking for Madagascar, Leigh is totemic of a set of widely held patriotic ambitions. He is depicted as a symbol of ‘brave young England longing to wing its way out of its island prison to discover and to traffic, to colonise and to civilise, until no wind can sweep the entire earth that does not bear the echoes of an English voice’ (2009

²⁹ *Le Petit Parisien*, 21 March 1895, p. 1.

³⁰ For a survey of reading preferences among boys and girls in 1888 see Rose (2003[1995]: 199).

[1855]: 11). In their own ways, the French editorial account and the British fictional narrative both resonate closely with a set of precepts outlined by Tosh in his analysis of ‘the flight from domesticity’ (2007[1999]: 170). This escape, according to Tosh, represents how ‘men set off into the unknown, to fulfil their destiny unencumbered by feminine constraint or by emotional ties with home’ (174).

The juxtaposition of these two narratives from different cultural and social contexts, however, is not nearly sufficient to understand the complexity of the core concepts of exemplary masculinity and imperialism current in Britain and France during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Three issues demand closer scrutiny. First, to what extent were late nineteenth-century versions of manliness new, and how did they relate to earlier masculinities or concepts of the heroic? Second, how did attitudes to the colonial world of the type expressed in the two examples above fit within contemporary gender identities? And third, how did late nineteenth-century fictional versions of empire relate to the real-life experiences of the many young men who made the ‘flight from domesticity’ a lived experience rather than an armchair fantasy? In order to address these questions, I will consider versions of heroism and masculinity current in the middle of the nineteenth century and will then analyse how concepts of empire, an emergent consumer society, and female emancipation de-stabilised and modified these versions significantly in the latter years of the century.

7.5 Mid Nineteenth-century Concepts of Heroism and Manliness.

In both France and Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, notions of heroism were still largely based on models of Antiquity and chivalry. Gerbod describes a ‘culte des héros’ in France that was monopolised by Christian apologetics and classical humanities (1982: 409), while John and Eustance refer to a manly ideal in

Britain which was ‘frequently tied to a reworked Christian code of Knightly conduct’ (1997: 4). Vance sees the traditions of ‘physical manliness and chivalry’, which moulded mid-Victorian Christian manliness, as ‘social and literary phenomena’ (1985: 26). These phenomena were given literary expression in mid nineteenth-century Britain by adherents of ‘muscular Christianity’ such as Charles Kingsley. In *The Heroes* (1856), for example, Kingsley’s re-telling of the myths of Antiquity in lyrical prose is imbued with a system of moral precepts and values with a clear pedagogical aim. The condescending tone of Kingsley’s preface betrays his primary intentions in forming renewed concepts of British manhood: ‘Those of you who are boys will, perhaps, spend a great deal of time in reading Greek books, and the girls, though they may not learn Greek, will be sure to come across a great many stories taken from Greek history’ (1929 [1855]: vi). *The Heroes* propounds a concept of manliness in which honour is accorded to a man, not according to social status, but ‘according to his skill and his strength and courage and the number of things he could do’ (xvi). Above all, in Kingsley’s interpretation of the Greek myths, the imperative of duty is central to the narrative, a form of duty that meant that his heroes ‘had left their country better than they found it’ and had suffered pain and grief to ‘do good to their fellow man’ (xvii).

This imperative of duty is also fundamental to notions of heroism current in France in the mid-nineteenth century. The heroes of Antiquity had been mediated three centuries earlier by the dramas of Corneille and Racine, and the resilience of these models is attested by Corbin’s report of ‘la référence fréquente aux hommes illustres de l’Antiquité’ in mid nineteenth-century France (2011: 7). Corneille’s literary rehabilitation had been symbolised by the erection of a monument to his honour in the church of Saint-Roch in the Rue Saint-Honoré in 1821 and *Le Cid*,

Horace and *Polyeucte* were all performed on Parisian stages in the mid-nineteenth century. Central to the struggles between will-power and duty in Corneille's tragedies is the concept of *énergie*,³¹ which was also central to the ideology of national rehabilitation in France in the second half of the nineteenth century. Jules Lemaître, in his *Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française* (1897) attests that 'Corneille demeure notre grand professeur d'énergie'³² and Bénichou contends that Corneille 'nous enseigne l'énergie; à nous de mieux l'employer que ses héros' (1948: 19). Corneille's notion that 'stoïcisme est la réponse de l'orgueil à la nécessité' (38) also has close resonances with the precepts of heroism embraced by Kingsley's code of muscular Christianity.

Apart from these hallmarks of mid-Victorian manly heroism, aptly summarised in the French context by Venayre as 'le sens du devoir et l'esprit de sacrifice' (2002: 281), what were the other important underpinnings of manliness in the mid-nineteenth century? Tosh contends that a 'man's place' for most of the nineteenth century was his home, 'in the sense of being his possession or fiefdom but also as the place where his deepest needs were met' (1999: 1). An important mark of the rite of passage of a boy to masculine status was the attainment of a financial independence that enabled him to set up and provide for a household. As the 'breadwinner', a man exercised unquestioned authority over the household, an authority enshrined in England in the laws of coverture, which denied full legal status to women until the end of the century. This authority, Tosh asserts, was 'necessary to their masculine self-respect' (3) and 'set the seal on a man's gender identity' (108). It is significant that this model of masculine authority in the domestic sphere should have taken root during a period of thirty years of peace for Britain between the 1830s

³¹ For a fuller exploration of the concept of *énergie*, see Chapter 4, section 2.2.

³² Cited by Bénichou (1948: 19).

and 1860s. Opportunities to demonstrate Antique models of manly heroism on the battlefield were scarce, and the status of domesticated masculinity, therefore, took their place.

To a lesser extent, these concepts of male authority in the home were also to be found in France in the mid-nineteenth century, but in their case more closely tied to a family model embracing what Mauge describes as ‘la conception chrétienne de l’épouse-mère, gardienne sacrificielle du foyer’ (1987: 12). The role of the church in the formation of this concept of the family was crucial. French motherhood had been educated largely by Catholic nuns and *les bonnes soeurs* numbered more than 135,000 in France in 1878, more than double those in female congregations in 1850 (Gildea 2009 [2008]: 339). At the end of the century, more than eighty percent of girls were still being educated by nuns in some departments and learned from them the principles of motherhood and family based on the model of the Family of Nazareth.³³ In spite of this implied shared guardianship of the family hearth, masculine autonomy in France was staunchly defended by ‘refrains communs, maximes abâchées, usages éculées dont le patriarcat usait depuis des siècles pour fonder sa légitimité’ (Mauge 1987: 15), indicating a set of gender identities comparable to those in Britain.

7.6 Gender Identities and the Threats to Masculine Autonomy.

What are the key principles of Victorian gender identity which the scholar of adventure fiction should keep in mind in analysing fantasies of manly heroism? Tosh informs us that ‘prevailing conceptions of a deep divide between the sexes were founded on a theory of *natural* or biological difference’ (1999: 103). Tosh’s views reflect the scholarship of Poovey, who identifies a ‘mid-Victorian tendency to foreground a binary representation of sex’ (1988: 199) and Nye, who saw late

³³ By contrast, teaching brothers, according to Gildea, ran only a minority of boys’ schools by the end of the century and enjoyed little popularity.

nineteenth-century personal identity in France as being ‘trapped within a binary opposition of male and female difference’ (1989: 48). This divide, or opposition, found expression in well-defined gender identities at the mid-century. Mid-Victorian manliness cast women as compliant helpmates and faithful and diligent home-makers, the necessary complement to a successful man. Manliness required physical and moral courage, but also the right to command, while women’s role was to obey and support. Roberts describes the ways in which gender identities formed these assigned roles in nineteenth-century France: ‘Nature acted as the authorising fiction here, justifying such a domestic role. Women were thought to possess a maternal instinct that made them inherently nurturing and self-sacrificing’ (2002: 2). In Britain these self-same womanly qualities of domestic diligence and unimpeachable social morality provided convenient opportunities for men to assert their manliness and form their identity outside the home, in clubs for the upper-middle and upper class, and in public houses and working men’s clubs for the lower classes. Women were acknowledged to be sentimental, while the opposite of manliness in Britain, according to Griffin, was ‘an aptness to be swayed by sentiment’ (2012: 173). In France also, the idea of forming an identity which combined a harmonious home life with a manly profile outside the home in a business or social milieu was central to the notion of *virilité*. Corbin describes the ways in which *virilité* was both conceived and given public expression: ‘Pour l’individu de ce temps, elle ne constitue pas tant une donnée biologique qu’un ensemble de qualités morales qu’il convient d’acquérir, de préserver et dont l’homme doit savoir faire la preuve’ (2011: 9).

In spite of the equilibrium implied by the notion of separate spheres and their respective gender identities, the scenarios painted above were not without their tensions. These models of manliness relied on a largely acquiescent domestic female

population, involved either in raising families for themselves or in supporting others to do so by means of employment in domestic service. The industrialisation of both nations and the development of a consumer economy brought with them increased employment for women outside the home, an (albeit low) modicum of financial independence, as well as the emergence of women as key decision makers for household purchases. These aspects of modernity were a cause of anxiety for many commentators in the last decade of the nineteenth century. For example, Gildea informs us that both sides of the Dreyfus divide in France were ‘anxious about the effects of urban modernity on the bodies and minds of the country’ (2009 [2008]: 215).³⁴ Anxieties surrounding the effects of urbanisation on city dwellers recently arrived from rural communities conformed broadly to what Wellmer has described as ‘the transformation of humanity into a breed of merely functioning creatures that lacked any sense of history’ (2007 [1991]: 101). In particular, there were misgivings about ‘the consequences modernity had for the masculinity of men and the femininity of women’ (Gildea 2009 [2008]: 215). These trends were deeply unsettling for men used to unquestioned authority inside the home and displays of manliness outside. The subordination of women was regarded by many men as a means of avoiding domestic strife and family break-ups. Griffin encapsulates neatly the emerging dilemma for male gender identities: ‘If a woman was to be allowed to assert her will, then disagreements would follow and the precious order of the home would be jeopardised’ (2012: 46). Vivid literary expressions of this dilemma began to appear in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

³⁴ Part of the extreme nationalist ideology embraced by Maurice Barrès in *Les Déracinés* (1897) was an invective against the threats to national cohesion posed by what he saw as the urban melting-pot of Jews, Freemasons, Protestants and *apatrides* (stateless persons) of questionable moral probity.

For example, in Henty's historical adventure novel *The Young Franc-Tireurs and their Adventures in the Franco-Prussian War* (1872), the mother of the young protagonists Ralph and Percy Barclay is in firm opposition to their joining the ranks of the defending French army. Likewise, in Henty's *The Young Colonists* (1885), the wife and mother of the would-be settlers in the Cape Colony of South Africa is vocal in her objection to leaving Britain and to having Boers as neighbours. Predictably, masculine authority is exercised and both female objections are quashed (Ralph and Percy join the army and the Cape settlers establish their new home). The perceived dangers of feminine autonomy are also given fanciful expression in the extravagant creations of Rider Haggard, including the evil witch Gagool in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and the despotic Ayesha in *She* (1887). Perhaps the most ideology-laden fictional expression of this type of masculine uneasiness about powerful women in the late-nineteenth century is provided by Cutcliffe-Hyne's *The Lost Continent*. Phorenice, the Empress of the Yucatan, reigns over a kingdom 'where, by the ancient law of the land, a man should rule'. She, like Ayesha, is a despotic ruler and 'has a short way with those who are daring enough to discuss her policies for other purpose than politely to praise them'. By her unsubtle exercise of these prerogatives, 'she has caused the throne to totter' (1972 [1899]: 17). She meets her match, however, in the manly hero Deucalion, who angers the Empress by his refusal to be enticed by her feminine stratagems and declares his independence forcefully: 'you see me still unmarried; I have found no time to palter with the fripperies of women' (19). Fictional creations like Gagool, Ayesha and Phorenice are the literary expression of a growing sentiment among men that, not only is female emancipation a threat to the logical and ordered world of male autonomy, but also that too close an association

with the women's fiefdom of home and hearth could result in a weakened and over-domesticated male population.

7.7 Manly Heroes in Flight from Domesticity.

The combination of the factors outlined above resulted in a change in political and cultural concepts of masculinity in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. A male gender identity under threat from over-domestication, changes in the status of women, economic and cultural changes, and (in the case of France), a punishing defeat by the Prussian army, sought role models outside the paradigm of a well-ordered domestic life accompanied by some kind of public recognition. In particular, the political emphasis given, for different reasons,³⁵ to the expansion of the British and French empires offered convenient role models for men who were increasingly unsure of their masculine status.

In France, Berrong reports, 'physicians and politicians repeatedly explained that loss [of the Franco-Prussian War] not as a result of inferior military leadership but rather as a confirmation that Frenchmen were losing their masculinity' (2011: 182). Corbin highlights the preoccupation that 'des fissures menacent l'emprise de ce code qui implique d'asservir sa domination sur l'Autre' (2011: 10). In Britain, a comparable set of uncertainties is illustrated in Tosh's assertion that 'from the 1870s the view was increasingly heard that domesticity was unglamorous, unfulfilling and ultimately unmasculine' (1999: 7).

Two potential means of allaying some of these anxieties and redefining masculine identities emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century. One was the severance of emasculating domestic ties by joining the ranks of young men who were leaving to expand and control French and British overseas colonies. From the 1880s,

³⁵ See Introduction, section 1, for analysis of social and political factors which determined colonial expansion policies in Britain and France.

the State in Britain nurtured the moral and physical well-being of working class boys who were seen, according to Dawson, as ‘the future colonisers and soldiers, not to mention the traders, who hold the Empire together’ (1994: 148). At the other end of the social spectrum, Tosh reports, more than a quarter of those entering Balliol College, Oxford, took up careers in the Empire, not including army recruits (1999: 176). In France at the same time, an equivalent set of expansionary ambitions is reported by Corbin: ‘La virilité s’épanouit dans l’exploration et la conquête des territoires, dans la colonisation, dans tout ce qui démontre la maîtrise sur la nature, dans l’expansion économique’ (2011: 9).

A second means of rebuilding masculine identities, admittedly vicarious but potentially equally as strong ideologically, was the rapid growth and wide diffusion of the adventure fiction genre, much of it set in past or current overseas territories of the two prominent imperial nations, and all celebrating the manly virtues of courage, honour, integrity, resilience and patriotism while largely excluding or marginalising women. Dawson characterises this literary phenomenon as a ‘leakage between history and fiction through the shared form of adventure’ (147) and Compère, likewise, sees adventure narratives (in this instance those of Paul d’Ivoi) as ‘intimement liées aux relations internationales’ and ‘l’écho des rivalités coloniales qui existaient alors entre les grandes puissances’ (2007: 140).

Above all, whether escape from the potentially debilitating feminine world of domesticity was fantasised from the comfort of an armchair engrossed in a Verne or Haggard novel, or given an often harsh physical reality by joining the exodus of young men to the colonies, the concept of Empire emerged as a reassuring bulwark of masculine gender identity in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

8 *Manliness and Virilité.*

8.1 *British Discourses of Manliness.*

In what follows, I explore further a specifically British brand of exemplary masculinity characterised by both nineteenth-century commentators and contemporary scholars as manliness. In developing their own definitions of manliness, some scholars, including Gilmour (1981: 95) and MacKenzie (1984: 210) cite Thomas Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, as one of the spiritual fathers of the concept. Hughes conceived manliness as a continual struggle: 'a fight which would last all our lives and try all our powers, physical, intellectual and moral to the utmost'.³⁶ Gilmour associates manly ideals with the concept of the English gentleman, which he posits as 'a moral and not just a social category' (1981: 3). He cites as his authorities not only Hughes, but also John Ruskin who saw manliness as 'fineness of structure in the body and of structure in the mind which renders it capable of the most delicate sympathies'³⁷ and Matthew Arnold, who, according to Gilmour, saw in manliness 'the concept of fair play inseparable from the gentlemanly ethic which enabled the English gentleman to wield his powers with more justice'.³⁸

In order to understand the specific aspects of exemplary masculinity embodied in the concept of manliness, it is important to understand how a nineteenth-century male attained manly status. Gilmore reflects on why it is that the rites of passage to manliness demand so many initiation trials, among which he numbers the cruel regime of the British Public school: 'what is there about official "manliness" that requires such effort, such challenge and such investment?' (1990: 20). These rites of passage are also explored in the context of masculine status in Tosh's account of

³⁶ *The Manliness of Christ*, cited by Gilmour (1981: 94).

³⁷ Cited by Gilmour from Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1981: 87).

³⁸ Cited by Gilmour (1981: 99).

masculinity in the middle-class home. Tosh argues that full masculine status is ‘the gift of one’s peers’, to be won by ‘economic or military achievements in the public sphere, often marked by a rite of collective, men-only initiation’ (1999: 3). Gilmore’s anthropological study identifies ‘a precious and elusive status beyond mere maleness, a hortatory image that men and boys aspire to and that their culture demands of them as a measure of belonging’ (17). We see here in Gilmore’s work the intriguing notion of something ‘beyond maleness’ invested with qualities that confer status, in the same way that Nye had identified manliness with the status of citizenship in France (1993: 147).

Social historian Graham Dawson adds to our understanding of how ideologies of exemplary masculinity were inscribed in adventure fiction. He employs the Kleinian theory of ‘Phantasy’ to describe the ways in which fiction was read by contemporary readers. Dawson contends that fictional characters are ‘given textual form through use of specific signifying conventions and accessible only through acquisition of the cultural skills of reading and interpretation’ (1994: 47). The ‘cultural skills’ to which he refers would have been influenced by the rapidly evolving social, political and economic conditions of the time and Dawson contends that adventure fiction had the hortatory capacity to challenge human capabilities ‘against the vicissitudes of a world that remains deeply uncertain’ (53). Dawson’s pen-picture of the real-life military hero Sir Henry Havelock is characterised by him as part of ‘a new tradition of exemplary imperial masculinity’ (83). In particular, Dawson judiciously combines the physical and moral aspects of British exemplars. Above all it is the combination of physical and moral superiority that characterises British soldier heroes: ‘a potent combination of Anglo-Saxon authority, superiority and martial prowess, with Protestant religious zeal and moral righteousness’ (83). This

aspect of Protestantism finds expression in adventure novels through the casting of Jesuits, Spaniards and Catholics in general as spies or as shifty villains in tales set in the Armada years or in the Peninsula War.³⁹

Dawson, among all of the scholars who treat the topic of exemplary masculinity (with the possible exception of MacKenzie), appears the most convinced about the overt ideological nature of much of the writing. He foregrounds the ‘moral example presented by their characters and achievements, highlighted by the narrative so as to invite emulation’ (83). Dawson also refers obliquely to the tenets of Social Darwinism in his definition of a national identity ‘founded upon racial and religious superiority, as the very figure of the nation’ (99). Dawson convincingly aligns the ideological power of accounts of real-life heroes such as Gordon, Roberts and Kitchener with that of exemplars from adventure fiction and, in particular, identifies the ‘exemplary imperial masculinity which remained at the heart of the British national imaginary right up to 1914’ (83). As with other scholars cited above, Dawson suggests that ideals of masculinity were constructed in relation to women, by arguing that discourses of adventure were ‘founded upon the defensive need of men to distance themselves from ostensibly feminine interests in narratives of domesticity and romantic love’ (63).

This somewhat equivocal attitude towards the role of women in the representation of exemplary ‘adventurous men’ is also addressed by literary scholar Deirdre David in her *Rule Britannia*, a study of women and empire (1995: 183). David studies the feminist movement of the late nineteenth century in the context of the rivalry of several European nations in the so-called ‘scramble’ for Africa and other colonial possessions. She reports on the doctrines of the reactionary physicians

³⁹ Examples are Graydon’s *The Fighting Lads of Devon* (1900) and Henty’s *With Moore at Corunna* (1898).

of the time who warned about the physical effects of applied brainpower by women seeking professions: 'too much female thinking would result in maternal anaemia, and female careers would produce weak infants unable to become brave defenders of the empire' (164). For David, women are accorded 'ancillary status' in the male-dominated business of running the empire (79). She contends that those women who did accompany the men who colonised and administered had support roles only 'as subaltern assistant trusted with the moral management of the empire: wife, teacher, missionary and imperishable symbol of civilisation' (159). Womanly aspirations that exceeded these somewhat modest roles were seen as threatening by their male counterparts.

Far from attributing qualities of exemplary masculinity to adventure heroes, David provides a reading of Haggard's *She* as 'a wildly misogynistic text whose fears and fantasies disclose the late-Victorian panic about uncontrollable women' (192). David's reading of Haggard resonates with the interpretation of *King Solomon's Mines* offered by McClintock, who sees Haggard's adventure novel as 'an elaborate, paranoid effort to ward off the frightful melding of mother, working-class domestic servant and black woman' (1995: 246). McClintock's account opens with her assessment of colonies as 'ad hoc and opportunistic affairs' and then develops her argument into a critique of Haggard's novel in which the protagonist's treasure map is interpreted as representing the female body

Neither does David perceive any valid masculine exemplars in her Marxist account of the British colonial project. She indicts the much-honoured colonial pioneer Cecil Rhodes as a major villain and implies that the British multinational company Unilever was instrumental in exploiting and plundering 'extraordinary

wealth' from Africa in the 1890s (1995: 187).⁴⁰ The late-Victorian period does, of course, lend itself perfectly to post-colonialist, Marxist, feminist and queer theory as a historical record of how men behave badly. The narratives of many adventure novels work in a way that offends all but the most reactionary and racist sensibilities. I will show that some scholars, however, argue that the context of its times endowed the adventure novel with pedagogic qualities in the restoration of national pride at a time of crisis.

MacKenzie, for example, outlines the ways in which writers like Kipling and Newbolt, as well as nationalist composers such as Elgar, could inspire the nation and 'achieve that rare combination of critical acclaim and a popular following' (1986: 4). MacKenzie finds in adventure fiction 'a multi-faceted presentation of Englishness, as a moral and ethical baseline, and therefore as a starting point for the justification of the Empire' (78). He sees Kipling's heroes as 'devoted to notions of duty, power and responsibility' and notes their adherence to a set of rules of personal behaviour 'which can loosely be designated chivalric' (81). MacKenzie argues that the adventure novel celebrates mental and physical excellence and self-development as the means by which 'the exceptional boy may achieve a dramatic rise in status and wealth' (84).

Literary scholar Don Randall, in his account of *Kipling's Imperial Boy* echoes some of MacKenzie's contentions. In particular, Randall seems to recognise the notion that ideology does not necessarily have to be prejudicial in its intent or its results. He sees adventure heroes as 'manifesting the youthful form of robust, gamely, Christian manliness' (2000: 55) and considers boys represented in imperial fiction as

⁴⁰ In fact, Unilever was not founded until 1929 and was (and still is) noted for its paternalistic employment ethos and socially responsible policies in its host countries in Africa and elsewhere.

exemplifying ‘values, motivations and patterns of conduct’ that are ‘apprehended and adopted by the boy outside the text: the boy reader’ (18).

In drawing together the principal themes addressed by scholarship on late nineteenth-century exemplary masculinity, and the related concept of manliness in a British context, a number of opposing viewpoints emerge. At one end of the spectrum are those who contend that the masculine hero represented an exploitative, racist, misogynistic ideology that repressed minorities and impeded the evolution of a liberal democracy. At the other end are those, exemplified in the citations from Randall and MacKenzie above, who recognise in the masculine hero a number of admirable traits that tended to form the moral and physical growth of late-nineteenth century British youth. In both cases, British notions of exemplary masculinity and manliness are typically constructed by means of the absence or subjugation of women.

8.2 *French Discourses of Virilité*

Some hints as to how exemplary masculinity was constructed in late nineteenth-century France are provided by historian Odile Roynette. Her article, ‘La Construction du Masculin’ (2002), investigates how the conscripts for the Great War were able to face the extreme challenges of trench warfare. Roynette identifies two primary influences on the construction of masculinity at the end of the nineteenth century. First, she adduces the ‘intensification et généralisation du phénomène guerrier’ and, second, the ‘étonnante liberté féminine’ as two of the core valences which combine in France to form the concept of masculinity. This problematic (for men) role of feminine identity in both undermining and constructing the masculine ideal is also analysed by Mauge, who contends that ‘le discours des sexes demeure essentiellement discours sur la femme: c’est elle qui a des problèmes, elle qui est un problème’ (1987: 7).

Turning to the ‘phénomène guerrier’, Roynette underlines the role of politicians and other public figures in reinforcing the aspiration to renew fragile masculine self-esteem and honour after 1870: ‘L’insistance avec laquelle hommes politiques et chefs militaires soulignent après la fin des combats la pugnacité manifestée par une grande partie des soldats est un indice du soupçon porté sur les qualités morales et physiques de la jeunesse’ (2002: 88). Roynette’s combination of moral and physical qualities in her analysis of masculinity in France in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century is an ideological motif also recognised by Datta, who characterises the Third Republic hero as ‘someone willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good’ (2010: 219). Bertaud, also, in his study of ‘la virilité militaire’ attributes to the exemplary virile soldier ‘le sens des responsabilités tout aussi important que la bravoure’ (2011: 197). Roynette sees the Franco-Prussian war as a watershed in the construction of masculinity in relation to the emergence of feminism: ‘la guerre de 1870 intervient dans ce contexte comme un révélateur et comme un catalyseur des inquiétudes liées à la définition des identités sexuées’ (2002: 89), another indication as to how discourses of militarism and feminism coalesced in building Belle Époque concepts of exemplary masculinity. Seillan echoes Roynette’s identification of the Franco-Prussian war as a watershed in perceptions of the masculine ideal. He contends that, after 1870, ‘une nouvelle forme d’heroïsme militaire’ emerged, a form characterised by ‘l’abnégation et le sacrifice personnel’ (2006: 7). Venayre, also, identifies a form of masculine adventure heroism endowed with ‘les qualités complémentaires d’audace et de persévérance’ and establishes the specific link, in late nineteenth-century France, between ‘promesses de sacrifices utiles et d’aventures exceptionnelles’ (2002: 91). Venayre also, reflecting some of the arguments on ‘binary opposition’ (1993: 7) advanced by Nye, contends that ‘tout ce qui dénote la femme’ is

‘éliminé d’une telle littérature’ (2002: 79). This contention invites debate, in that women certainly do appear, albeit in a subservient and exploited context, in the adventure novels of, among others, Verne, Loti, d’Ivoi and Bousсенard.

The combination of military ideals with male anxieties about femininity is taken up by historians Christopher Forth and Elinor Accampo in their 2010 collection of work on modernity at the end of the nineteenth century. Citing Joan Wallach Scott, Forth and Accampo depict men and masculinities as being ‘inextricably tied to representations of women and femininity, particularly for the period of the Third Republic in which unstable concepts of gender fuelled a national crisis’ (2010: 5). Historian Matt Reed, in his contribution to Forth and Accampo’s collection, explores the ‘deep reservations’ held by the Third Republic about the ‘capacity of its citizens to meet the country’s challenges’ (72). Forth and Accampo attribute some of these doubts to the emergence of an industrial consumer society in which men worked at desks using their brains rather than their muscles. They also contend that men did not always measure up to ‘traditional masculine ideals of action, bravery and aggression that continued to circulate throughout the *fin de siècle*’ (133). They place emphasis on physical prowess as the key determinant of exemplary masculinity, with the notion of heroism being ‘often martial in nature and almost always emphasizing courage, action, or some kind of innovation’ (215). Historian Andrea Mansker, however, in her contribution to Forth and Accampo’s collection, adds some important nuances to this primarily physical concept by her account of an honour code, during the French Third Republic, whereby family members subscribed to the concept of national regeneration, ‘making sexual, marital and economic sacrifices where necessary to ensure the success of the unit’s patrimony’ (182).

This blend of martial and reproductive fitness as masculine aspirations in France following the defeat of 1870 also found its expression in the foundation of athletics and gymnastics clubs. Historian Robert Gildea reports on the activities of Pierre de Coubertin at the *École Libre de Sciences Politiques*, and his concerns about the lack of physical education in France. He established the Union of French Athletic Societies in 1889 under the firm belief that the British tradition for team games was a valuable underpinning of its colonial and administrative strengths (2009: 409). De Coubertin's perception certainly coincides with the account given by J. A. Mangan in his *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (1981). Mangan contends that school games developed physical and moral courage, loyalty and co-operation and cites the 'extensively held belief that they inspired virtue; they developed manliness; they formed character' (1981: 9). Gildea goes on to emphasise the role of conscription to military service in France as an important 'rite of passage' to adult masculinity that was celebrated in the community (432). Military service was fundamental to rebuilding national pride and self-respect and a three-year conscription was made obligatory in 1889, reduced to two years in 1905.

One of the manifestations of masculinity and military honour in France was the duel, a traditional resolution of disputes among men that had survived far longer than it had in England. Historian Christophe Charle recounts how 'the aristocratic model continued to determine officers' conduct, as is indicated by the practice of duelling' (1994: 165). In this notion of personal honour and its defence by duelling, the late nineteenth-century French concept of exemplary masculinity has some overlaps with the British concept of manliness. Nye's 1993 study of masculinity and male codes of honour reverts to the *Littre* dictionaries in order to gain some understanding of the nuances of honour as understood in the second half of the

century in France. He defines honour as ‘applying wholly to personal characteristics, including virtue, courage and the desire for distinction, terms reflecting largely aristocratic preoccupations’ (1993: 18). These characteristics of late nineteenth-century masculine honour codes in France, identified by Nye, have close resonances with Adams’s account of the status of the late nineteenth-century English gentleman, with its ‘inherited distinctions of family and rank’ (1995: 53). The characteristics reported by Nye are also consonant with those identified by historian Martin Wiener in his study of violence and manliness in Victorian England. Wiener identifies self-discipline as ‘proverbially the way to better oneself morally and materially’ (2004: 13).

The late nineteenth-century model of exemplary masculinity in France emerges from this scholarship as intangibly situated somewhere between the valences of paternity and military prowess. Masculine exemplars in the British adventure genre (Quatermain, Holly, Hannay et al.) are invariably characterised as gentlemen, whereas this insistence on a code of manners is absent from many of the masculine characterisations of Loti, Boussenard (Peyral, Yann, Robin et al.) and their contemporaries of the Third Republic. It is significant in this context that Verne casts many of his explorer pioneers as foreigners (e.g. Fogg) and particularly as Englishmen, where their sporting code of manners, especially in competitive quest narratives such as *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours* (1873) is integral to the plot.

Many of the scholars cited above, however, detect an underlying aspiration among the citizens of the Third Republic for an ideal of masculinity that was more than purely physical. Charle goes so far as to say that the demise of monarchy and state religion left an aspirational gap and that this gap was filled by the honour codes of the military: ‘France found a substitute for its nostalgia for the monarchy and State

Catholicism in revanchist nationalism and the cult of the army' (1994: 165). This nostalgia for the trappings of a bygone age in France and its resolution in the cult of the military had one of its expressions in the metonymy of symbols such as flags and uniforms. The need for symbolism may be attributed in part to the erosion of some of the propagandist ideals of benevolent French colonisation embraced by the *mission civilisatrice*, especially the previously dominant core concept of *assimilation*. Historian Alice Conklin informs us that the Third Republic's official *mission civilisatrice*, by the turn of the century, was 'neither assimilationist nor associationist' (1997: 75). French literary scholar Lynn Palermo, in her article 'Identity under Construction', points to 'a recognition of the problem of justifying Republican imperialism once the veneer of the "civilizing mission" is removed' (2003: 297). The significance in late nineteenth-century French culture of a 'veneer' of flags, uniforms and ceremony can perhaps be attributed to an underlying need for signifiers of exemplary masculinity in the context of a fading imperial ethos.

9 Conclusions: Comparative Aspects of Exemplary Masculinity, Manliness and Virilité

The scholarship cited above has enabled me to piece together an initial analytical framework that can help to answer my question on the definitional *lacunae* between constructions of exemplary masculinity in France and Britain in the late nineteenth century. Four key findings emerge from a review of scholarship on nineteenth-century notions of masculinity. First, the representation of masculinity in late nineteenth-century French discourses reflects preoccupations with national regeneration and revenge. Second, these preoccupations lend themselves to the characterisation of male exemplars in powerful paternalistic or military leadership roles. Third, some of the subtleties present in the characterisation of British manly

exemplars, derived in part from the cult of Public School sport and athleticism and associated codes of honour and loyalty, are significantly less developed in the French genre. Fourth, a vacuum left by the monarchy and State religion is partly filled in France by the cult of the army and, in particular, the phenomenon of the duel to settle affairs of honour right up to the outbreak of the Great War.

Taking into account these distinctions between French and British concepts of exemplary masculinity, how might we construct a research framework that can serve as a lens for reading adventure fiction analytically? Manliness is a form of exemplary masculinity that adds moral values (including loyalty, self-discipline and honour) to the core masculine ideologies of strength, power and military prowess. What, then, is the closest French approximation to this concept? Historian Robert Aldrich provides some relevant insights in his review of the collection of scholarly work on *virilité* edited by Corbin, Courtine and Vigarello.⁴⁷ Aldrich identifies two primary areas in which, this anthology of articles claims, virility exerts itself, these being sex and war. Aldrich adds a further insight that helps our understanding of the French notion of *virilité*. He argues that ‘to varying degrees, this virility must be tempered: moralists, medical experts, and arbiters of taste have promoted self-possession, duty and a large degree of sexual continence as virtues that civilise base virility’.⁴⁸ Aldrich implies here that *virilité* is a ‘base’ concept. In the view of the contemporary authorities that he cites, it needs to be ‘tempered’. This modification may be wrought by means of the civilised virtues of moral and sexual discipline and the ideals of duty. I have explored above how these complementary virtues of discipline and duty were innate to late nineteenth-century British concepts of exemplary masculinity embodied in the notion

⁴⁷ Alain Corbin, Jean-Jaques Courtine, Georges Vigarello, *Histoire de la virilité*, vol. 2 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2011).

⁴⁸ Robert Aldrich, ‘Review of *Histoire de la Virilité*, vol. 2’, *H-France Review*, vol. 13 (November 2013), No. 173.

of manliness. Aldrich suggests that they can also enhance the French notion of *virilité* to provide a more 'civilised' version of exemplary masculinity.

Chapter Two

A Qualitative and Quantitative Overview of French Adventure Fiction 1870-1900

1 *Introduction*

1.1 *Social and Political Context*

In the last thirty years of the nineteenth century politicians and press commentators in both France and Britain were concerned about what they saw as shortcomings in the vigour and status of their respective nations. Edward Berenson reports that they ‘found their homelands wanting in virility, energy, spirit and above all, public commitment to national strength’ (2011: 6). He suggests how possible antidotes might be found in ‘heroes whose exemplary lives would inspire fellow citizens’ and how these stories of heroism, both real-life and fictional, reached into the ‘furthest recesses of British and French society’ by means of newspapers, illustrated magazines and children’s books (6). Martin Green, in his study of the sub-genres of adventure fiction in France and Britain also emphasises the formative influences of the adventure novel on national self-image. He contends that ‘the great adventure tales are those acts of imagination and narrative that constitute the imagined communities called nations’ (1991: 7).

1.2 *Research Objectives*

In view of the important remedial and constitutive roles attributed to the adventure genre by these two scholars, I set out in this chapter to study the background to and the significance of adventure fiction between 1870 and 1900.¹ I first provide some definitions of the genre, followed by a qualitative exploration of its

¹ I provide a detailed quantitative analysis based on my conviction that any evaluation of the ideological influence of adventure fiction in late nineteenth-century France necessarily demands a clear vision of the number of consumers in France who read adventure novels in serialised or published volume format.

specific role in both Britain and France in supporting national and colonial projects. I then narrow my focus and concentrate on the landscape of French adventure fiction in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. I do this in reaction to the observations and the reservations of scholars such as Jean-Marie Seillan, who characterises the genre in France as ‘ce qu’on appelle la paralittérature’ (2006: 15) and Sylvain Venayre, who, in his study of adventure in France, asks why ‘l’histoire universitaire, tout au long du XXe siècle n’ait jamais envisagé l’étude de l’aventure’ (2002: 12). Both of these scholars hint at reservations among their fellow scholars about the literary status of adventure fiction. I propose an alternative view. I analyse the uses to which the genre was put by authors and publishers and the sub-genres that it spawned. With the help of scholars of French adventure fiction such as Venayre, Seillan, Jean-Yves Tadié, Lise Queffélec-Dumasy and Matthieu Letourneux, I explore some of the conventions of adventure fiction in France in terms of narrative, language and characterisation. I also consider briefly its role in the inscription of ideology, although I restrict my analysis here in view of a much broader study contained in my chapter dedicated to that topic. Having set out a framework of how the genre participated in the broader landscape of French fiction in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, I illustrate, by means of excerpts from eight serialised adventure novels, how the novels themselves both reflected and refracted contemporary pre-occupations.²

The novels I have chosen were all serialised in a weekly magazine, the *Journal des*

² My decision to analyse excerpts from adventure novels serialised in the *Journal des Voyages* (in addition to the full published volumes that I analyse later in this chapter) is based on my objective to read the novels exactly as they were first read by many subscribers. The serialised format imposes rigorous narrative constraints. Each episode must be relatively self-sufficient, identifying protagonists and geographical settings for occasional readers. It must also create suspense and mystery to inspire purchase of the subsequent edition of the *Journal des Voyages* in which many of the adventure novels were first published. The magazine also allows large-format illustration of key events in the narrative.

Voyages, launched by Georges Decaux and Maurice Dreyfous in July 1877 with financial support from the Ministère d'instruction publique,³ and one of the most important media in the dissemination of the adventure genre. I follow this with two short case studies on the narrative techniques of Paul d'Ivoi and Louis Boussenard, two of the most frequently published authors in the *Journal des Voyages* (Evans 2009: 1). Finally in this first section of my chapter, by means of citations from ten other French adventure novels, I explore how nationalist prejudices might have been reinforced by adventure fiction.

In the appendix to this chapter, I complement my textual analysis of French adventure novels with a quantitative study of adventure fiction in France. In doing so, I explore not only the power of the adventure discourse in the inscription of exemplary masculinities, but also gauge the relative importance of this literary genre in the political, social and cultural life of the nation. How widely read was French adventure fiction in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century? An understanding of sales and readership data is essential to an understanding of the power of this genre. In order to estimate the penetration and the sphere of influence of adventure fiction in France, I have sought to answer the questions that follow. What factors in the development of national literacy and printing techniques contributed to the broad readership of adventure novels? How many novels were published each year in France during these thirty years? How important was the novel within the whole corpus of fiction published during this period? How did the relationships of authors with their publishers affect both the content of, and the marketing strategies for, adventure fiction? What proportion of fictional works could be categorised as adventure fiction? What role did the *roman-feuilleton* and weekly or bi-monthly

³ See Venayre (2002: 264).

magazines such as Pierre-Jules Hetzel's *Magasin d'Éducation et de Récréation* and Georges Decaux's *Journal des Voyages* play in the dissemination of adventure fiction? Within the adventure genre, who were the most important French authors? How many editions and reprints were published of the most popular works? What levels of readership were enjoyed by the most popular authors? My rationale for both a qualitative and a quantitative study of the French adventure genre is that the combination of these two research disciplines will provide a more complete account of the power and influence of adventure fiction at the end of the nineteenth century in France.

2 Adventure Fiction: Overview and Definition

2.1 British Adventure Fiction 1870-1900: a Brief Comparative Overview

In order to provide a basis for comparison and to discern ways in which specific nationalist motifs were embodied in the genre, I first analyse briefly the primary characteristics and the political importance of the adventure novel in Britain. Literary scholar Philip Dine attests to the genre's significance: 'literary representations of colonial adventure and derring-do [were] perhaps the single most important element in the process of juvenile internalisation of imperial culture in the British context' (1997: 182). A similar view is expressed by literary scholar Martin Green, who sees adventure fiction as an 'energizing myth or legend of certain political forces' (1991: 21). Prominent among these political forces was the justification of empire. Literary scholar Joseph Bristow sets the adventure hero within a broader set of preoccupations which included both political and social issues: 'literary representations of imperialist maleness belonged to wider discussions of the moral and physical well-being of boys, especially in relation to schooling, health and military recruitment' (1991: 2). Of all the scholars who have analysed the British

adventure novel of the last part of the nineteenth century, historian John MacKenzie appears to be the most convinced of its ideological workings. He contends that it exploited an interest in warfare and militarism (1984: 6) and that the conflicts of cultures that it depicted acted to provide ‘evidence of superiority’ of the British colonial hero (7). Literary scholar Don Randall, in his study of imperial boyhood in the works of Kipling, echoes Bristow’s views on the pedagogical as well as the entertainment values of the adventure novel. He contends that ‘the late-nineteenth century burgeoning of Empire-related literature for boys [...] conferred new prestige upon boyhood and secured it as a pleasure-yielding site for imperial aspirations’ (2000: 9). Literary scholar Anne McClintock also discerns these two motifs of entertainment and imperial ideology in the work of Haggard, in particular *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885). For her, ‘this Victorian best-seller might remain simply a fictional oddity were it not for the fact that it is symptomatic of fundamental tendencies emerging in the culture of conquest at the time’ (1995: 248). From the scholarship cited above, a picture emerges of the British adventure novel as a literary form intrinsically bound into the ideologies of imperialism, with its associated valences of militarism, warfare, nationalism, racial superiority, physical fitness and daring.

2.2 *French Adventure Fiction 1870-1900: an Overview*

How does the French adventure genre compare with its British equivalent? Dine contends that ‘popular literary expressions of colonial adventure’ never achieved the ‘coherence and self confidence or, crucially, the universal popularity in France that they did in Britain’ (1997: 182). He attributes this to the fact that, unlike the British, the overwhelming majority of French citizens in the late-nineteenth century would never be ‘durably persuaded of the relevance to their lives of what had become known

as “la plus grande France” (177). Seillan’s appraisal of the majority of French colonial adventure novelists is that they are ‘les gagne-petit de l’écriture’ (2006: 101). He contends that ‘la France n’a jamais trouvé son Rider Haggard, son Conrad, ni son Kipling’ (7). This somewhat pejorative picture of French adventure fiction is in contrast to Venayre’s more positive appraisal of adventure at the turn of the century. He depicts it as ‘une valeur extraordinairement positive, qui ennoblit tout ce qu’elle touche, un rêve susceptible de dessiner les grandes orientations d’une existence’ (2002 : 17). Literary scholar Jean-Yves Tadié also attributes to the French adventure novel the ability to transcend the simple relation of historical events and, instead, to evoke concepts of ‘passions humaines élémentaires, la peur, le courage, la volonté de puissance, l’abnégation, l’instinct de mort, l’amour’ (1982 : 9).

Another related facet of the French adventure novel that has attracted the attention of scholars of the period is the rôle of the genre in forming new concepts of heroism in France. French historian Paul Gerbod, in his study of ‘l’éthique héroïque 1870-1914’, discerns a transition in France from a cult of heroism that had been monopolised, prior to the war of 1870-71, by christian apologetics and classical humanities. After 1871, the French cult of heroism evoked military glory and became, according to Gerbod, one of the primary components of a patriotic education : ‘il doit contribuer à exalter la volonté de revanche et à rendre à une nation vaincue et humiliée la foi en son avenir de grande puissance’ (1982 : 409). Venayre, also, contends that one of the factors that prompted the development of the adventure genre was the defeat of 1871 and the centrality of education to the politics of the newly formed Third Republic (2002: 64). In my short case studies of adventure novels that were serialised in the *Journal des Voyages*, I explore how these pedagogical and ideological motifs of the cult of heroism are inscribed, not only in what literary

scholar Roger Bellet calls ‘les romans d’anticipation guerrière’, largely set in the disputed provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, (1985 : 203), but also in French adventure fiction set in far-flung colonial outposts, and against the background of historical events.

2.3 Definitions of French Adventure Fiction 1870-1900

Before I embark on an exploration of the French adventure texts themselves, it is crucial to set some clear parameters for what constitutes adventure literature in France during my chosen period. Definitions from published scholars abound. I have, therefore, drawn together those strands of literary criticism where scholars broadly coincide in their views and which coalesce to provide a coherent working definition. French literary scholar René Guise casts a very wide net when he argues that ‘l’expression “roman d’aventures” nous est devenue si familière que nous ne sommes plus sensibles à son caractère tautologique. Or, l’aventure étant en sens premier ce qui advient à quelqu’un, tout roman est, par définition, un récit d’aventures’ (2008[1983]: 38). Venayre is more specific than Guise in his definition. Nonetheless, he also provides a broad view of the global scope of the genre in his analysis of literary and non-literary discourses of adventure in France in the 1880s, contending that ‘les oeuvres qui incarnent cette nouvelle “littérature d’aventures” ont en commun un trait saillant: chacune semble faire de la Terre entière son véritable personnage principal’ (2002: 45). Venayre’s scholarship underlines the effectiveness of these discourses of global adventure in creating an ideal masculine exemplar, who returns from far-off lands physically transformed and hardened by his experiences (2002: 80). This nearly ubiquitous adventure theme of expatriation or displacement is also central to the definitions provided by Letourneux. He contends that an adventure necessarily involves danger, often mortal danger, and that this explains the fact that ‘l’aventure se

soit si tôt vue associée à la forme du voyage' (2011: 27). For Letourneux, the unknown is also an essential component of the adventure formula: 'le saut dans l'inconnu est aussi une rencontre avec ce qu'on ne peut maîtriser' (27).

Thus far, the scholarship on French adventure fiction cited above is broadly consensual on definitions of the genre, involving the displacement of the protagonist into situations of violence and danger, with consequent high levels of personal risk. I turn now, briefly, to scholarship that addresses the inscription of ideology in French adventure novels. This aspect of the discourse of adventure fiction is analysed by Seillan, who explores the inscription of ideology in fictional accounts of imperial expeditions and discerns in some of them an ulterior motive: 'cette éthique de l'aventure qui fait du voyage une épreuve intérieure censée transformer le voyageur devient dans certaines fictions un discours de pure propagande' (2006: 17). Literary scholar Penelope Brown adds a further important perspective to scholarship on the adventure genre. She identifies aggression as a recurrent motif of the French adventure novel. In her study of French children's literature, she describes adventure writer Gustave Aimard's work as proceeding 'at a breathless pace, depending, like the popular *roman-feuilleton*, on constant thrills, suspense and a great deal of violence' (2008: 28). The notion of adventure was frequently linked in these literary discourses to a military or naval career in the French colonial forces, with all that that meant in terms of inflicting violence on reluctant colonial subjects. Venayre contends, citing Paul Nizan, that the desires of French youth for adventure were harnessed by politicians 'aux fins les plus brutales de leur activité' in the French colonies (2002: 93). Letourneux synthesises the essence of the adventure novel in the following terms: 'ce genre qui combinerait dépaysement, événements risqués (mésaventures) et imagination romanesque' (2011: 33), thus drawing together some of the most

frequently encountered underlying themes of the adventure novel: unknown territory, extreme danger and the fanciful flights of imagination which distinguish the genre from, for example, Naturalist fiction.

These underlying themes, albeit representative of much adventure fiction, do not fully capture the complexity of the tensions surrounding national discourses, the cultural series that articulated them, the literary sub-genres that embodied them and the media in which they were published. National (and nationalist) discourses in France in the last three decades of the nineteenth century sought to define a renewed identity and a sense of self-worth for a defeated and humiliated nation, riven by factional strife and plagued by anxieties related to degeneration and population decline. Rightist and militarist factions promoted *revanche* on the Prussian aggressors as a means of national regeneration, implying the invasion and recapture of Alsace and Lorraine. One of the means by which republican discourses in the Chamber of Deputies and in the press sought to align factional differences was by re-directing the focus of public opinion towards the acquisition of overseas colonies. The expansion of France's empire would not only embellish France's standing as a global power, but also theoretically provide the economic means with which to build a war-chest sufficient to re-engage Germany on the battlefield.

These two social discourses of revenge and empire lent themselves to literary expression in the genres of adventure, educative fiction and accounts of colonial projects. An imaginary landscape was depicted in adventure fiction in which, as Cawelti contends, 'the tensions, ambiguities and frustrations of ordinary experience are painted over by magic pigments of adventure, romance and mystery' (1976: 1). Collective fantasies embodied in colonial adventure fiction had the potential to resolve some of the tensions implicit in factional disagreements over the best means

of regenerating the nation. As Cawelti asserts, readers of adventure fiction were 'capable of tolerating a wide range of political and social ideologies for the sake of enjoying a good yarn' (32).

How were these ideologies of revenge and empire woven into fictional texts, which were marketed by their publishers largely as popular entertainment and often consumed in the first instance in the mass press in serialised form? Two adventure texts mark important milestones in the literary evolution of ideologies of revenge and empire. One of them sets out the grounds for resentment and revenge against the Prussian invader and the other articulates how that revenge might be achieved. The first of these is Erckmann-Chatrian's *Le Brigadier Frédéric* (1874). The narrative traces the events of 1870 as Prussian troops and economic migrants invade two of France's most prized provinces and effectively sequester the factors of production and distribution, depriving the residents of Alsace and Lorraine not only of their homes but also of their livelihoods. The depths of despair that characterise the dispossessed Forestry Officer Frédéric are emblematic of a national sense of degeneration and defeat. Here we have the implicit tension of an ostensible entertainment medium acting as a political manifesto that sets out with unmistakable clarity the justification for revenge and retribution.

Adventure fiction had the potential to ratchet up this tension even further. It is not a large step from this emotionally charged rationale for an uprising by the occupied provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to a strategic blueprint for military action. This is provided, potentially more convincingly than by speeches in the Chamber of Deputies or in editorial commentaries, by the adventure fiction genre. The second seminal text, Capitaine Danrit's monumental war novel *La Guerre de demain* (1898), adopts many of the conventions of adventure fiction in setting a small band of

comrades against apparently insuperable odds. The strong ideological undercurrents, however, reside in the ways in which superior French tactics and materiel (for example *mélanite* shells, aerial warfare in balloons and undermining enemy positions with tunnels) overcome superior Prussian forces and restore the territories to France. The documentary style of Danrit's novel makes his account of an imagined French reconquest of the lost provinces a convincing ideological tract. This documentary method is used to even greater effect to inscribe ideology in Rosny's *La Guerre Anglo-Boer* (1902). In this case, the target for the narrator's invective is the British colonial administration of the late nineteenth century who have deployed vastly superior forces against a notionally civilian population in Southern Africa and have been, according to the narrator, guilty of heinous war-crimes against women and children. A sequential account of the events of the war, heavily biased against the British oppressor of the Boers, leads to the narrator's inescapable conclusion, already reached by the attentive reader, that the war has been a 'preuve manifeste d'impuissance éthique' for the British (1902: 764). Once again, as in Erckmann-Chatrian's and Danrit's texts, an underlying tension is palpably present in Rosny's novel between a work of unquestionable ideological power and a form of popular entertainment, marketed either in cheap editions or serialised in the mass press at the highly accessible price of ten cents per instalment.

Any analysis of the power of these literary sub-genres in the inscription of colonialist and imperialist ideology also involves an assessment of their reach among sectors of the population. Tensions also exist here between the discourses themselves and the widely varying media channels through which they were distributed. Adventure novels in bound volumes priced at FF 3.50 were largely out of the financial reach of large sectors of the population at a time when a skilled artisan

earned FF 10 per day. The serialisation of popular fiction in newspapers, typically selling for 5 or 10 cents, opened the adventure genre to a popular market exemplified by the one million subscribers to *Le Petit Journal Illustré* towards the end of the century (Quéffelec-Dumasy 2007[1989]: 1). In the same way that science was popularised in the *Voyages Extraordinaires* of Jules Verne, nationalist and imperialist discourses were widely disseminated in media which were now within the grasp of an increasingly literate and politically aware generation. Letourneux reports that the late nineteenth-century newspaper reader often read several serialised novels simultaneously (2011: 16) and, by these means, serialised adventure novels and the cheap *colporteur* editions that succeeded them became widespread ‘porteurs des discours colonialistes et imperialistes’ (9). Adventure fiction also exerted its influence on the young people of France and became the primary genre in juvenile fiction as well as being awarded, particularly in the case of Verne, as school prizes. One of the tensions inherent in this dual role of education and entertainment was what Letourneux calls the ‘mauvaise foi’ (24), or double-dealing, of a genre in which a purportedly moral discourse is accompanied by the narration of state-sanctioned acts of violence perpetrated upon colonised peoples and colonialist rivals. The stereotypical structure of the adventure novel became a familiar and expected means of narrating the conflicts of empire. Formulaic accounts constituted a pact between reader and narrator which, in the words, of Cawelti, ‘caused people to believe and act in ways they were already pre-disposed toward’ (1976: 22). These ‘opiates for the masses’ (1), therefore, also appealed to a conservative, if not reactionary, view of nation and empire.

A complex set of interrelationships and tensions emerges between national discourses, the genres which adopted them, and their means of distribution.

Adventure fiction was one of the means of reconstructing the tarnished self-image of a nation but, in doing so, became a vehicle for the wide dissemination of nationalist ideologies. Available in published volumes mainly to the cultured classes, it became democratised by means of serialisation in newspapers and by cheap editions and instalments which succeeded the *feuilleton* as the principal means of distribution towards the end of the century. The definition of adventure fiction, therefore, needs to take account of a genre riddled with tensions and contradictions. It was, at times, both entertaining and educative, moralistic and violent, documentary and fantastic, assimilative and xenophobic, for adults and juveniles, published for the privileged and for the masses, and advocating both *revanche* close to home as well as expansionary colonial projects.

Two further definitional markers need to be set. The first relates to target audiences for adventure fiction. There are few clear distinctions between the readership of those adventure novels originally aimed at juvenile audiences and those intended for general consumption. Brown contends that adventure or travel narratives and those popularising science were ‘often informed by a broader didactic agenda’ (2008: 4), and describes the frontiers between juvenile and adult literature as being ‘shifting and permeable’ (3). Literary scholar Arthur B. Evans also emphasises the permeable nature of the market definitions for juvenile fiction and adult fiction. He observes that, although Verne’s publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel intended that Verne’s texts should ‘be geared to teaching scientific principles to French youth’, the author ‘immediately conquered the adult reading public of his time as well’ (1988: 2).

Literary scholar Lise Queffélec-Dumasy questions what she sees as the imprecise barriers between the adult and juvenile market sectors, especially given the channels of distribution for French adventure fiction in the late nineteenth century, which

typically followed a sequence of serialisation in weekly magazines targeted at the youth market, *feuilletons* or *fascicules*, followed by volume publication. She observes that the designation ‘pour la jeunesse’ was frequently applied, both then and now, to adventure novels ‘quoique leur mode de publication (dans les journaux quotidiens) ni leur destination explicite ne le justifiait’ (2007[1989]: 1). I do not attempt, for all the reasons set out above, to draw firm distinctions between adventure novels targeted at adolescents and those aimed at adult readers. Certain broad parameters, however, can be drawn. As implied by Queffélec-Dumasy’s study, adventure fiction serialised in newspapers was consumed by adults whose primary purchase motivation was to read the news. A review of the Contents page of weekly or bi-monthly publications such as the *Journal des Voyages* (launched in 1877) and Hetzel’s *Magasin d’Éducation et de Recréation* (launched in 1864), however, suggests that they were targeted at both juveniles and their parents, and combined didactic content (science, nature, zoology) with the entertainment values (exoticism, suspense, danger) of serialised adventure fiction. An indication of this dual target group for these journals is given by the original title of Hetzel’s journal, which was *La Bibliothèque Illustrée des Familles*. Literary scholar Daniel Compère attests to the broad appeal of these two publications which, he reports, ‘répondent à cette attente d’un large public avide de savoir et de distractions’ (2011: 85).

My second important definitional marker relates to the subject matter and historical setting of the adventure narrative. The authors that I cite in this chapter wrote adventure novels set in historical periods as widely diverse as the *cape et épée*⁴ period in pre-revolutionary France, the Napoleonic era, the Crimean War, the early stages of tropical exploration in Africa and the far East, as well as in geographical

⁴ A swashbuckling sub-genre of adventure fiction epitomised by Ponson de Terrail’s *La Cape et l’Épée* (1855).

settings which included the disputed provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, French colonies in Tonkin and Senegal, the North-West frontier of India and the South African veldt.⁵ For example, Pierre Ponson de Terrail (1829-1871) achieved notable success with his swashbuckling ‘righter of wrongs’ Rocamboles in the two decades which precede my period of investigation but, at the very end of his career, wrote what Quéffelec-Dumasy characterises as ‘patriotique revanchard’ adventure novels such as *Les Français à Berlin* (1871). The first criterion for inclusion in my own study is that the adventure fiction should be published in the period 1870 to 1900. Within this thirty-year corpus of French adventure fiction, the precise historical setting of the narrative, whether it is Danrit’s fantasmatic re-run of the Franco-Prussian war in the valley of Meuse,⁶ or Verne’s imaginary frontiers of space exploration, is not crucial to my project. What is crucial is the way in which these novels work, both in the construction of the narrative as well as in characterisation and dialogue, to inscribe the types of ideologies referenced by Seillan above. I will, therefore, explore the inscription in adventure fiction of ideologies comprising aspects of exemplary masculinity, heroism, nationalism, xenophobia, imperialism, sexism and racism. In summary of the rationale for the research framework sketched out above, this chapter concentrates on French adventure fiction published between 1870 and 1900, marketed to and consumed by both juveniles and adults. I apply no tight prescriptions on temporal or spatial setting, and focus instead on the inscription of ideology in both narrative structure and characterisation.

2.4 *Short Case Studies of Serialised Adventure Fiction in France*

⁵ Examples of fiction set in these four locations are cited later in this chapter from works by Erckmann-Chatrian, Loti, d’Ivoi and Rosny.

⁶ See Capitaine Danrit’s future war novel *La Guerre de Demain* (1898).

In order to illustrate some of the characteristics of French adventure fiction identified by the scholars cited above, I have chosen excerpts from eight adventure novels serialised in the *Journal des Voyages* in the period 1878 to 1886. I have chosen this timeframe because it coincides with a period of French colonial expansion in South-East Asia and West Africa, with a period of intense political debate around the colonial policies of the Jules Ferry ministries of 1880-81 and 1883-85, and with a press polemic around concepts of national spirit and fitness.⁷

For these reasons, an exploration of how ideologies of colonial daring and bravery, as well as concepts of race and gender discrimination, are inscribed in these eight excerpts is instructive in gauging the tenor of the age expressed in both literary and journalistic discourses. I have chosen three works of the prolific adventure writer Louis Bousсенard (1847-1910), one of the major contributors to the *Journal des Voyages* and, as Venayre informs us, judged (together with his contemporary Paul d'Ivoi) 'de leur vivant déjà comme des sous produits du grand Verne' (2002: 45). I also include works by Bousсенard's contemporary adventure fiction writers Jules Gros (1829-1891), Alfred Séguin (1825-1897), Constant Améro (1832-1908), Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890) and Pierre Delcourt (1852-1931). I have chosen these lesser-known authors in order to provide insights into a broader spectrum of adventure fiction, once the best-selling exponents Loti and Verne have been accounted for, together with their relatively successful imitators Bousсенard and d'Ivoi. I have also specifically chosen works by Séguin and Delcourt because they exemplify the extraordinarily popular sub-genre of the *Robinsonade*, the successors to Defoe's 1719 archetype of a castaway's adventures (literary scholar Roger Little informs us that, by

⁷ For an overview of the political polemics of this period of colonial history in France, see Gildea (2009: 417) and Forth and Accampo (2010: 72).

the time Séguin's *Le Robinson Noir* was first published in 1877, over seven hundred adaptations of *Robinson Crusoe* had been published) (2013[1877]: vii).

My first three examples are taken from the *oeuvre* of Bousсенard and were published in the *Journal des Voyages* in July 1878, January 1883 and July 1885. Before analysing the first of these three works, I will set a context for the journal in which it was published. The editorial column of the first edition of Georges Decaux's weekly magazine, the *Journal des Voyages* (July 1877),⁸ gives a flavour of what its subscribers can expect each week. It promises, in each forthcoming sixteen-page edition, an account of a voyage, an adventure on land or sea (involving a shipwreck or a dangerous hunt), an article on the history of voyaging and an 'attachant roman d'aventures' (JV July 1877: 2). It fulfils these expectations by including in the first edition the adventures of a French sailor in New Guinea, a description of the Spanish sport of bullfighting, and an account of the voyages of Christopher Columbus. It also gives a hint as to its intended target audience by stating that the journal will be 'accessible à tout le monde, aussi bien par les conditions matérielles que par l'esprit qui y régnera' (2). Some idea of what this 'esprit' might constitute is given by the openly militaristic tone of the first edition of the following year. Under the heading of 'Les Forces militaires de la France', the journal provides detailed statistics of the numbers and the geographical deployment of France's armed forces at the end of 1877, including maps showing the location of regiments. The article claims totals of 1,437,000 soldiers, 217,000 horses and 3,174 cannons. In retrospect, it appears imprudent, given the continuing tensions along France's Eastern border, to have been quite so specific with these details in a public forum. The reasons for these apparent security breaches, however, become clear in the editorial comment. Whether or not

⁸ Further citations from the *Journal des Voyages* are labelled JV, together with the date of publication from which the specific citation is drawn.

the numbers are accurate, the key purpose of this article appears to be militaristic posturing as a disincentive to further thoughts of invasion by aggressive neighbours. The army strength is characterised as a ‘total énorme, dont personne ne peut plus douter, mais dont personne non plus n’a envie de pouvoir faire la preuve’ (JV 13 January 1878: 10).

Given the nationalistic and militaristic tenor of accompanying editorial material, it is perhaps not surprising that one of Bousсенard’s first fictional contributions to the journal, in July 1878, should celebrate the bravery and military prowess of its protagonists. *À travers l’Australie* recounts the pursuit of aboriginal tribesmen, who have kidnapped two women travellers, across the Australian outback by a courageous naval commander and his companions. The officers outmanoeuvre the aboriginals by acting with ‘la plus extrême circonspection’ and by ‘décidant par son sang-froid de la victoire remportée sur nos sauvages assaillants’ (JV 14 July 1878: 4). The aboriginals are described as ‘êtres hideux, tournant, hurlant et gesticulant, comme dans un sabbat inspiré par un cauchemar’ (6). Throughout the narrative, the calm resolution of the white European sailors is contrasted with the fanatical antics of the aboriginals who are variously described as ‘démons’, ‘noirs’ and ‘sauvages’ (4,6). A vivid account is given of a final bloody conflict in which the women are rescued. The officers act with conspicuous gallantry towards the women in repulsing the attacks by waves of knife-wielding tribesmen who are mown down by the sailors’ firearms: ‘nous faisons aux deux femmes un rempart de nos corps’ (6). Here, in serialised novel format, we have many of the characteristics of the genre discerned by the scholars cited above in this chapter. The action takes place far from Europe. The protagonists are vastly outnumbered and face death at the hands of what are depicted as savage demons. The Europeans, the narrative implies, demonstrate a superior brand

of civilisation by the measured way in which they combat their whirling, yelling, aboriginal opponents. More than once, we are told that the naval officer ‘ne perd pas la tête’ (1). The violent deaths of the assailants are graphically portrayed. The Europeans, of course, survive to return and narrate their adventures. The narrative marginalises women to the extent that they are either merely prompts to displays of masculine prowess (i.e. they have to be rescued), or hindrances to an otherwise more assertive masculine engagement with the unfriendly outback and its unfriendly inhabitants. Bousсенard’s narrator combines these recurrent adventure themes into a suspenseful narrative that leaves the reader eagerly awaiting the next serialised instalment.

Comparable themes characterise my second example of Bousсенard’s adventure fiction *Le Rajah de Bornéo*, serialised in 1883, and featuring Bousсенard’s fantasmatic creation ‘le gamin de Paris’, Friquet. On this occasion Friquet outwits Malay pirates who have captured a British gunboat upstream in the tropical jungle, thereby asserting his innate superiority over the local native assailants as well as over the European colonial rivals who are in trouble. The narrative is notable for its recurrent ideological motifs, especially those concerned with the impersonal slaughter of modern warfare and the contrast between the exemplary European male and his colonial native counterpart. Friquet’s first encounter with the ambushed British vessel is when he hears the sound of a machine-gun as he makes his way upstream with the leader of the expedition, André Brévannet, and his companion, the Breton sailor le Gall. Friquet recognises the distinctive sound of a Hotchkiss automatic revolver cannon, which he calls ‘un bon outil à tuer les hommes’ (JV January 1883: 1). He goes on to offer his own appraisal of these developments of mass warfare: ‘Oh! Les engins de mort, ce n’est pas ça qui manque à notre civilisation, riposta ironiquement

le Parisien' (1). Once the opposing parties are engaged in a fire-fight, the narrator spares us no detail in his account of the effect of automatic weapons on the human body: 'les détonations se succèdent, régulières, implacables, mortelles [...] l'on entend de temps à autre le bruit mât du plomb crevant la chair, ou le craquement des balles fracassant les os' (6).⁹

The other prominent motif in *Le Rajah de Bornéo* is the way in which the French expedition leader, Brévannet, is shown to advantage as a masculine exemplar, superior to other races. Physically, he is a fine specimen of an adventure hero: 'ses membres, admirablement proportionnés, aux attaches élégantes, possèdent une vigueur irrésistible qui semblerait tout d'abord en opposition avec leur finesse' (5). He is also an athlete and an accomplished shot: 'sa prodigieuse habileté à tous les exercices du corps, son adresse incomparable dans le maniement des armes, en font un redoutable compagnon d'aventures' (5). Brévannet is portrayed in contrast to a young black man who accompanies them, referred to by Friquet ironically as 'Majesté'. He is described only as 'un jeune noir du plus bel ébène' (5) and as a 'colosse noir' with 'la nonchalance d'un lion noir au repos' (5). Here in Bousсенard's account of Friquet's adventures in Malaysia, are inscribed two further examples of the ideological motifs outlined above by Seillan and other scholars of the adventure genre. The horrors of modern warfare are presented in all their unvarnished realism, perhaps a reflection of contemporary French preoccupations with rearmament among Western European nations. Once again, the dominant ideological motif is the apparently effortless superiority of the French protagonists over both native adversaries and colonial rivals, perhaps also a reflection of contemporary concerns over the fitness of French youth to defend the nation.

⁹ Bousсенard's early career as a military doctor would have made these real rather than imagined experiences.

My third example of Bousсенard's work again features his young hero Friquet, on this occasion as the leading protagonist in *Aventures d'un gamin de Paris au pays des lions*, serialised in the *Journal des Voyages* in 1885. This time, Bousсенard's narrative combines the original stated objectives of the founders of the magazine in providing an exciting hunting adventure in Africa, which involves Friquet in confrontations with wild animals including, in Chapter Ten, hippopotami. A lengthy account is provided of the characteristics of the hippopotamus and its reaction to disturbances. These are tested when Friquet's boat runs over a submerged hippo' which grasps the boat's rails in its mouth and begins to shake it violently. The narrator underlines Friquet's habitual measured but decisive approach to such dangerous situations: 'le Parisien, tout en plaisantant comme à l'habitude en présence des situations les plus graves, n'a pas perdu une seconde' (JV 5 July 1885: 7). Surrounded by twenty hippos, Friquet observes ironically that 'leurs manières manquent d'affabilité' (7) and he has to take sterner measures in spite of his avowed reluctance to kill any animal. He muses to himself that 'on ne veut pas rentrer chez soi; et Friquet, qui n'aime pourtant pas tuer, va être forcé de vous envoyer au milieu de la cervelle un des bonbons à M. Pertuiset' (7).¹⁰ Once again, Bousсенard's narrator provides a cocktail of adventure ingredients which would have been familiar to readers of these formulaic tales of exploration but which are, nonetheless, loaded with ideological resonances. The young French explorer is faced with mortal perils far from home. He assesses the situation calmly and takes rapid and effective action. In this way, he potentially becomes an exemplar for a nation still licking its wounds fifteen years after its humiliating defeat in the war with Prussia.

¹⁰ The 'bonbons' referred to here are the exploding bullets used by the French big-game hunter Pertuiset, immortalised in a portrait by Édouard Manet in 1881.

How do other contemporary adventure novelists represent exemplary masculinity? One particularly striking example is provided by Louis Jacolliot's serialised adventure novel *Les Mangeurs de feu* (1886), in which an international group of explorers is pursued across Burma and then Australia by a band of unknown assailants. In this instance, it is an Englishman, an inebriate British clergyman named John Gilping, who is characterised by Jacolliot's narrator as a paragon of British *sang-froid* when the explorers are trapped in an underground cavern by a rock-fall instigated by their mysterious pursuers: '[Gilping] était tout simplement admirable; pas une plainte, pas un regret ne s'échappait de ses lèvres; il avait de suite accepté cette situation, à laquelle il était étranger, avec un stoïcisme et bravoure froide qui était le propre de sa race' (JV 3 January 1886: 10). This double-edged compliment from the narrator is followed by some rather more pejorative observations about the characteristics of France's great colonial rival: 'tous ces Anglais sont à peu près taillés du même bois, et voilà comment ce peuple brutal, égoïste, personnel, hypocrite, mystique et ivrogne, donne parfois des exemples d'heroïsme, de bravoure et de grandeur dont le mobile est toujours anglais mais jamais humain' (10). Jacolliot's adventure narrative itself follows the well-trodden path of displacement to a distant land, inhospitable climate and natives, and threats of imminent death, all met with untiring resilience by the explorers. Jacolliot's narrator, like d'Ivoi's in *La Folle du temple d'or* (1899) uses the adventure formula to point up differences in national characteristics, always in favour of the French, and habitually to the disadvantage of the British.

It is not only d'Ivoi and Jacolliot who feature British protagonists prominently in their adventure fiction. In the second half of 1878, a novel of polar exploration by Jules Gros was serialised in the *Journal des Voyages*. The novel, *Un*

Volcan dans les glaces, subtitled *Aventures d'une expédition scientifique au Pole Nord*, brings together a British and a French explorer who, in spite of initial mistrust, form a strong attachment and mutual admiration. In contrast to the reserved nature of the Englishman, the Frenchman is characterised by 'une mine ouverte' and 'manières faciles' (JV 21 July 1878: 22). The Englishman is won over by the easy-going charm of his French colleague, giving the narrator the opportunity to touch on the national traits of the two adventurers: 'Son collègue d'Angleterre [...] malgré la morgue britannique qui régnait dans toute sa personne, se sentait malgré lui entraîné par une sympathie dont il ne se rendait pas compte vers la physionomie ouverte et les manières pleines de franchise de son collègue de France' (22). The collegiality of the two explorers is not extended, however, to a Russian scientist, who has committed the unforgivable offence of smuggling a woman (his twenty-one year old daughter) onto the exploration vessel. The outrage of the other crew members is vividly expressed in a passage which brings together many of the familiar motifs of the adventure novel in terms of gender bias, danger and suspense: 'qui diable aurait pu supposer qu'il viendrait jamais à l'esprit d'un homme sensé, d'un savant réfléchi, l'idée d'emmener une femme, une jeune fille, dans une entreprise dont chaque pas sera le signal d'un danger et peut-être d'une catastrophe?' (23). The narrator goes on to enumerate the challenges to be faced by the explorers, including cold, danger, storms, icebergs, struggles with the elements and disease. Gros's narrator provides a rationale for the exclusion of women from the arctic expedition that is firmly grounded in contemporary ideologies of masculine duty and glory acquired through great deeds. He contends that the dangers to be faced are 'mille fois plus redoutable encore pour une faible femme que pour des hommes que soutiennent le sentiment du devoir et le légitime désir d'acquérir une grande renommée' (23).

Here, once again, in this fictional account of a polar expedition, are the components of the late nineteenth-century adventure novel that constitute a formula familiar to writers, reviewers and readers. The narrative works to exclude or marginalise women as a hindrance to virile pursuits. The admirable manners and charm of the French protagonist are contrasted with the dour haughtiness of the Englishman and the bizarre behaviour of the Russian. Underlying these gender and racial biases is the ever-present threat of imminent disaster and death that sustains the narrative suspense and, undoubtedly, acted as a stimulus to readers to maintain their subscription to the *Journal des Voyages*. Literary scholar Daniel Compère encapsulates neatly the narrative strategy of the adventure writer: ‘l’auteur cherche à tenir son lecteur en haleine, d’où une forte présence de suspense’ (2011: 84). As Letourneux observes: ‘plus le risque est grand [...] plus l’entreprise paraît aventureuse’ (2010: 27) and it was the colourful accounts of these risky ventures that brought success to the weekly and bi-monthly adventure magazines.

As well as polar expeditions, one of the sub-genres of adventure fiction that found favour with publishers and readers alike towards the end of the nineteenth century was the *Robinsonade*, which derived its formulaic narrative structure from Defoe’s foundational adventure text of 1719. In what follows, I analyse two variants of this sub-genre, both published in the *Journal des Voyages*. The first is Pierre Delcourt’s *Les Robinsons Marseillais* (1884), one of a series of *Robinsonade* sagas written by Delcourt and published in the journal, with others also published in volume form by Jouvett in the 1880s, including *Les Robinsons Français* (1886). Defoe’s archetypal castaway faced two principal difficulties on his desert island. First, he was alone (at least initially) and second, he was inspired to great feats of artifice and invention by a lack of tools and by the very small store of provisions that he had been

able to save from his stricken ship. Delcourt's young castaways appear to be better provided with both company and resources. At the beginning of Chapter Twelve, we find Jacques, Ludovic, Marius, Joannès, Nina and Rose busy constructing stables and chicken runs as well as their own accommodation on their desert island. It transpires that they have managed to rescue not only eight horses from their sinking ship but also two carts to transport their possessions. Nor are they short of material comforts. As well as sacks of rice, maize and oats, they have brought ashore twenty-five casks of Bordeaux wine, together with several cases of fine wine, liqueurs and beer. Their diligence in working hard to make their life more secure is exemplary: 'comme toujours, nos amis se levèrent aux premières lueurs du soleil, et presque aussitôt se mirent au travail' (JV 6 January 1884: 12). The nature of this hard physical labour under the equatorial sun, however, is not entirely to the liking of all the young castaways. Jacques takes the opportunity to set their endeavours in the context of the emerging negotiating power of what Forth and Accampo call the 'militant trade unions' (2010: 2) in early Third Republic France: 'si nous étions en France, à Marseille, je réclamerais, dans une administration, pour un tel surcroît de travail, une augmentation de salaire' (12). The fanciful nature of the account provided by Delcourt's narrator of a shipwrecked group of young French men and women, categorises *Les Robinsons Marseillais* more in the realm of entertainment than of instruction. It is also, apart from the homespun working class ideology embraced by Jacques's words cited above, short on any defined moral principles.

This is certainly not the case with my second example of the *Robinsonade* sub-genre, Alfred Séguin's *Le Robinson Noir*, serialised in the *Journal des Voyages* in the first half of 1879. On the contrary, literary scholar Roger Little sees Séguin's work as 'une réflexion approfondie sur la colonisation et le regard sur l'autre' (2013:

vii). Seguin's novel is also unusual within the publishing conventions of the late nineteenth century, which saw much adventure fiction published initially in *feuilletons*, *fascicules* and magazines before being launched by publishers in volume form. *Le Robinson Noir* was first published in 1877 by Ducrocq in Paris in volume form before being serialised in 1879 in the *Journal des Voyages*. The novel also turns the conventions of the *Robinsonade* sub-genre on their head by means of a role-reversal of the Crusoe and Man-Friday stereotypes. The leading protagonist is a black castaway, Charlot, who is marooned on a desert island with his previous oppressor, the son of a slave-owner who had treated him badly and whipped him for no reason during Charlot's period of servitude. Charlot's real identity is unknown to Georges, his previous oppressor, and the novel recounts the gradual conversion of Georges to an attitude of respect and admiration for his black fellow-castaway, known to him only as Domingo. Georges's growing respect for Domingo's (Charlot's) ingenuity in improving their living conditions, however, is still couched in the language of discrimination: 'une éducation remarquable n'avait laissé de son état primitif que la couleur à celui qu'il nommait encore Domingo' (JV 12 Jan 1879: 11). Little sees *Le Robinson Noir* as 'une méditation complexe et tonifiante sur la colonisation, la religion, l'économie et la moralité' (2013: vii) and attributes this to the 'paradoxe apparent d'un Noir colonisateur et maître de la situation, ce qui va à rebours de nos habitudes de lecture et de pensée' (viii). Little also analyses the ways in which the intense political debates of the 1880s on colonial expansion between Jules Ferry and his rival Clemenceau were to become an incentive to authors of colonial adventure fiction to 'prendre la plume' (xxiv). *Le Robinson Noir* stands out from other adventure fiction published in the *Journal des Voyages*, not because of any distinctive merits in narrative or characterisation, but because of the way it confronts

controversial issues and acts as a stimulus to a more integrative colonial policy. Little goes even further. For him *Le Robinson Noir* constituted ‘une incitation à construire cette “plus grande France” revêe par les politiciens après la défaite de 1870’ (xxiv). One further example of adventure fiction from the *Journal des Voyages* gives me the opportunity to illustrate briefly here how these exemplars for ‘La plus grande France’ were constructed.

In the second half of 1882, the *Journal des Voyages* serialised an adventure novel set in imperial Russia and authored jointly by Victor Tissot (who was to become editor-in-chief of *Le Figaro* between 1888 and 1893) and Constant Améro, best known for *Le Tour de France d’un petit Parisien* (1885). Like Verne’s *Michel Strogoff*, Tissot and Améro’s *Les Aventures de trois fugitives en Sibérie* uses Russian protagonists as exemplars of the brand of masculinity that can survive the rigours of a Siberian winter and thereby enable the heroes to escape across the steppes from their pursuers. In the same way as in many of Verne’s novels, the protagonists fight not only their pursuers but also the unforgiving forces of nature that threaten their survival at every step. The two Yakoute protagonists, Yégor and Tékel, manage to outwit their pursuers and defend their freedom by holding a police chief hostage during their flight across Siberia. The biggest threat to their survival, however, is the bitter cold as they struggle through the night of thirty-eight days: ‘quelquefois, la nuit, il se sentait tellement saisi par le froid que, malgré ses pelisses et le feu allumé au centre de la hutte, il se levait à plusieurs reprises, allait dehors et se mettait à courir autour de la hutte pour rendre quelque souplesse à ses membres engourdis’ (JV 9 July 1882: 7). *Les Aventures de trois fugitives en Sibérie* represents a sub-genre of adventure fiction that privileges a style of exemplary masculinity likely to appeal to Little’s ‘aventuriers en herbe’ who so much wanted a renewed ‘plus grande France’

(2013: xxiv), peopled by men who were resilient and fit enough to defend their homeland.

How do these eight excerpts from serialised French adventure fiction respond to the questions posed at the beginning of this section regarding national spirit and fitness, colonial ambition and daring, and motifs of gender and race discrimination? Each of them, in their own way, complies with Georg Simmel's evocative definition of an adventure as 'an island in life which determines its beginning and end according to its own formative powers' (1971[1911]: 189). The improbable survival of the protagonists in endless impossible situations and against seemingly insuperable antagonists certainly qualifies all of them under Simmel's concept of 'a dropping out of the continuity of life' (187). All of them, in their own way, whether marooned on a deserted tropical island, under attack on a hippo-infested river, buried in an underground mine, frozen on the icy tundra, or fighting off fanatical tribesmen, are exemplars of masculine valour and honour. Physical strength and resilience is a recurrent motif in all of the eight texts that I have chosen. This aspect of masculine exemplarity, however, is not, of itself, sufficient to bring the heroes safely home. As Simmel contends, 'the adventurer relies to some extent on his own strength, but above all on his own luck; more properly on a peculiarly undifferentiated unity of the two' (194). It is this 'undifferentiated unity' that constitutes, in my view, both the ideological power and the peculiar attraction of the adventure genre as pure entertainment.

3 *Two Case Studies of Adventure Fiction Authors*

3.1 *Paul d'Ivoi*

Having illustrated, in novels serialised in the *Journal des Voyages*, some of the recurrent motifs of adventure fiction highlighted by scholars of the genre cited earlier,

I now provide two case studies of works by prominent adventure writers in order to explore more fully the narrative workings, plot functions and strategies for characterisation employed by their authors. My case studies analyse works by writers of adventure fiction who were popular in their day but whom time has consigned to relative obscurity.

First I will consider *La Folle du temple d'or*, part of the series *Cigale: émule de Lavarède* (1899) by Paul d'Ivoi, pseudonym of Paul Deleutre (1856-1915). The on-line catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) lists 261 entries for d'Ivoi. If some collected works and plays are eliminated, together with new editions, reprints, and novels that were given new titles by Tallandier when they republished some of d'Ivoi's work in the early twentieth century, a total of forty-five works of fiction remain. His novels were published between 1881 and 1900 by important but second tier publishers such as Tallandier and Jouvet. Although prolific in his output (fifty-eight works published in thirty-four years from 1881 to his death in 1915), the entries in the BNF Catalogue are notable for the relatively low numbers of editions of each work published. Evans informs us that, after their initial appearance in the Parisian newspapers *Le Petit Journal* and *Le Matin*, as well as wide distribution in popular magazines like the *Journal des Voyages*, d'Ivoi's novels were published in expensive, illustrated, in-octavo, hard-cover editions (2009: 2). For example, one of d'Ivoi's first adventure novels *Le Capitaine Jean* (1890) was published first in *Le Rappel*, the daily newspaper founded by Victor Hugo and Henri Rochefort in 1869, before being published in volume form. Likewise, d'Ivoi's most successful novel *Les Cinq sous de Lavarède* was first published in *Le Petit Journal* in serial form in 1894

before being published the same year in an illustrated hard cover edition.¹¹ In spite of the wide circulation of his fiction in *feuilletons* and (later) in cheap editions, accounting for tens of thousands of copies, this targeting of an up-market segment by his publisher Jouvot may account for low unit sales and therefore fewer reprints of his work in volumes, once serialisation was complete. Even the work for which he is best remembered, *Les Cinq sous de Lavarède*, is shown in the BNF Catalogue to have been published originally in 1894, reprinted once in 1895 by Jouvot and then not reprinted in a new edition until after the end of the century. It is instructive to note that the BNF Catalogue lists only three further editions published between 1900 and 1930, another four between 1931 and 1970, but eight between 1971 and 2010, perhaps indicating a revival of interest in the adventure genre in France among both scholars and the broader reading market. These few editions can be compared with, for example, about forty separate editions of Verne's *Voyages et Aventures du Capitaine Hattéras* between 1866 and 1900.¹² For d'Ivoi, therefore, a picture emerges of an ex-*Figaro* journalist turned writer (Evans 2009: 1) who was able to secure wide circulation of his adventure novels in newspapers and cheap editions, but not able to generate the repeat purchase in bound volumes enjoyed by Verne, whom he much admired and imitated closely in his *Voyages Excentriques*, published between 1894 and 1914 and based conceptually on Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires*, published between 1863 and 1905 (Palewska 2007: 140).

What can we expect, in terms of narrative, plot and characterisation from a prolific writer, characterised by Venayre as a 'sous produit' of Verne (2002: 45)? *La Folle du Temple d'Or* (1899) is a fast-moving fictional travelogue that follows the

¹¹ For an overview of the publishing history of d'Ivoi's *Voyages Excentriques* see Palewska (2007: 141) and Compère (2011: 85).

¹² Thième lists sixty-four separate editions of *Voyages et Aventures du Capitaine Hattéras* between 1866 and 1919.

adventures of d'Ivoi's hero Cigale and his companion Le Docteur Mystère across British-colonised North West India at the time of the guerrilla wars against Afghan insurgents in 1878-80. I choose it as a case study in that it represents a mature work of d'Ivoi (who had begun his writing career in the 1880s) and is representative of many of the ideological preoccupations of this prolific writer, especially aspects of nationalism and xenophobia. Mystère emerges as a protagonist who is in many respects comparable with the masculine exemplars to be found in contemporary British adventure novels by Haggard and Henty. The opening chapters describe his pursuit across Indian foothills by ruthless brigands from the *Dheera* sect. He is described as easily able to outdistance them due to his superior fitness: 'Évidemment cet homme avait vécu de la vie des coureurs de buissons. L'élasticité de ses mouvements, sa résistance à la fatigue, tout le démontrait. Déjà il avait parcouru deux kilomètres et sa respiration restait calme, sa peau sèche. Ses muscles d'acier avaient supporté cette traite sans effort' (1899: 390). Timoteo, Docteur Mystère's young comrade-in-arms, also benefits from the rigorous self-discipline and sporting prowess encouraged by the contemporary cult of physical fitness, sports clubs and gymnasia: 'Pour la première fois, il comprit l'utilité des sports. Son corps assoupli par les exercices violents était bien décidément l'esclave docile de sa volonté. Sans bruit, avec la démarche silencieuse d'un félin, il se glissait sur le sol' (517). Both of d'Ivoi's protagonists, therefore, are portrayed as paragons of self-discipline and physical fitness. In this way, the ideology inscribed within the exemplars put forward for readers by d'Ivoi's narrator is reflective of efforts by legislators and educators in the last decade of the nineteenth century to improve the physical fitness of the nation.

Once embarked on his accounts of encounters with the British, however, d'Ivoi's narrator indulges himself with a series of tirades against British colonialism.

When bargaining for horses with the British Governor General, Cigale is constrained to admit that: ‘Au fond de tout bon Anglais, le commerçant sommeille’ (1899: 410). D’Ivoi’s hero is again firmly anti-British in his admiration of the ‘courageuse tenacité des Boers de Krüger et du général Botha, abandonnant leurs villes pour commencer la terrible et meurtrière guerre de guerillas’ (587). This passing reference to the Boer War of 1881 would have had special impact, in that British rule in South Africa was continuously under threat from a Boer insurrection in the 1890s, and the second Boer War began in 1899¹³, the year of publication of *La Folle du temple d’Or*. D’Ivoi’s characters also relish the fact that the British will face the same fate in Afghanistan as they have experienced fighting a guerrilla war in Southern Africa. He puts this judgement into the mouth of a Boer *émigrée*, Mrs. Wilhelmina Sanders van Stoon, who unaccountably appears to be accompanying Le Docteur Mystère on the North-West Frontier of India: ‘Ah! clamait-elle, les Anglais n’en sont pas encore où ils pensent. La vraie guerre, la guerre d’extermination commence’ (587). It is with great satisfaction that the protagonists speculate on the fate of the invading British army: ‘L’armée Britannique, harcelée par un ennemi insaisissable, fauchée par la maladie, fondra comme un morceau de beurre sur un feu ardent’ (588). Anti-British propaganda of this sort permeates the whole narrative and it is difficult to conceive, by reading d’Ivoi and other accounts of British rule in India, such as Loti’s *L’Inde sans les Anglais* (1903), that the *entente cordiale* of April 1904 was on the horizon.

In addition to encomia to French valour and tirades against the British, d’Ivoi peppers his narrative with scraps of homespun wisdom, perhaps intended to mould the characters of the adolescent segment of his readership. Excessive alcohol consumption was a major social issue in France at the end of the century and had been

¹³ See Bristow (1991: 175) for an account of British exemplary masculinity, both moral and physical, inspired by the second Boer War.

the central theme of Zola's successful *L'Assommoir* (1877). D'Ivoi doesn't hesitate to address the subject by sending his heroes to war sober: 'L'ouvrier, l'agriculteur, croient reprendre de la vigueur en ingurgitant de l'alcool. Ils obtiennent simplement une surexcitation passagère qui leur donne l'illusion de la force' (599). Above all, it is insistent objection to British imperialism that characterises d'Ivoi's account. The Hindu companions of Cigale and Mystère are consistent in their view: 'Nous autres, Hindous, sommes les adversaires acharnés des Anglais qui nous oppriment et nous pressurent sans merci' (758). D'Ivoi's narrator, by implication, contrasts the harsh colonial rule of the British with what he characterises as the enlightened policies of the *mission civilisatrice*, an ideological stance that is at odds with Conklin's view of Third Republic colonisation as 'an act of state-sanctioned violence' (1997: 5). A similar contention is made by historian Martin Deming Lewis's appraisal of the policy as a 'doctrinal justification for the maintenance of French rule' (1962: 151) with 'no serious attempt ever made to undertake the massive work of social transformation which could alone make it a reality' (151). Conklin implies a rather more assertive mechanism than Lewis's concept of 'doctrinal justification' by characterising the *mission civilisatrice* as 'a set of coercive practices' (1997: 9) and Berenson, in his account of the 'secular beatification' of French colonial hero Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, goes further still by referring to 'the dyameters and the decapitators of colonized peoples' (2011: 226). Conklin's study of race, anthropology and empire in France underlines the extent of the prejudice innate within the late nineteenth-century concept of empire. French scientists, she reports, 'insisted that backward societies lacked the cognitive capacity of advanced Westerners and that these societies could progress only when each member acquired the ability for abstract thought— a process that imperialism was supposed to accelerate' (2013: 2).

Fictional accounts of the French civilising mission in adventure novels, therefore, are often very much at odds with reported realities, as illustrated by the admiring and eulogistic presentation by d'Ivoi's narrator of a benign French colonial regime contrasted with the very different experiences suggested by the scholars cited above.

How might we compare the narrative structure, the language and the characterisation of d'Ivoi's novel with that of contemporaries such as Verne and Loti as a gauge of its potential as a vehicle for ideological inscription? Three key conclusions may be drawn. First, the novel is over-long and characterised by loosely structured narrative and scrappy dialogue punctuated by homespun philosophy and nationalist propaganda. The protagonists are thinly drawn. Narrative structure is difficult to discern, as characters wander in and out of the plot, traverse huge distances between sentences and comment on conflicts taking place several thousand miles away. Second, the narrative is over-embellished with gratuitous expressions of the masculine heroic ideal, ranging from physical fitness to moral integrity and strict sobriety. Third, if one strips away the loose narrative framework, the reader is left with a seemingly politically motivated diatribe against the British. In particular British rule in India is heavily criticised, in what appears to be, for d'Ivoi's narrator, a rancorous complaint of missed ambition by the French.

How, then, should we place d'Ivoi within the hierarchy of French adventure writers of the late-nineteenth century? Demand for his fast-moving adventure fiction by publishers of weekly magazines and their readers was sufficient, according to Evans, to make d'Ivoi 'one of the most dependable contributors' of the *Journal des Voyages* (2009: 1). Letourneux compares his novels to those of Verne, in their capacity to instruct while entertaining, discover a world of wonders and daringly imagine modernity. He contends, however, that 'si Jules Verne s'adresse aux bons

élèves, Paul d'Ivoi ne s'acquitte de sa mission pédagogique et éducative que bon gré mal gré' (2014: 1), thereby setting the achievements of d'Ivoi below those of his acknowledged master. Compère, too, asks why the works of d'Ivoi are now almost impossible to buy in a bookshop and why they are very rarely studied in schools (2011: 116, 127). Compère does, however, provide one very favourable perspective on the work of d'Ivoi when he quotes Jean-Paul Sartre's glowing appraisal of *Les Cinq sous de Lavarède*, published in *Mots* (1964). Sartre is cited as follows: 'Je dois à ces boîtes magiques, et non aux phrases balancées de Chateaubriand, mes premières rencontres avec la Beauté' (2011: 126), implying thereby the lasting influence that the adventure fiction of d'Ivoi and his contemporaries exercised on young readers.

3.2 *Louis Boussenard*.

If the plot structure of d'Ivoi's work stretches credibility, then many of the adventure novels of Louis Boussenard (1847-1910) break it completely. His 1891 historical adventure novel *Les Aventures extraordinaires d'un homme bleu*, set in the French Caribbean at the beginning of the nineteenth century, is a case in point. The 'blurb' on the dust-cover of the first edition summarises in six words a plot which Boussenard spends nearly seven hundred pages developing: 'Naufragé, prisonnier, pendu, bleu, puis ruiné' (1887: i). Boussenard's hero is French naval officer, Félix Aubertin, who is mistaken for a notorious British slave trader, James Baker, and subsequently rescued from the gibbet as he is about to be hung. This experience has the effect of turning him blue as a result of asphyxiation, a condition that persists, making him a figure of curiosity wherever he goes. The plot recounts Aubertin's quest to redeem his character, restore his health and reclaim the inheritance of which he has been cheated. All three objectives are achieved in Boussenard's *dénouement*, with the added benefit that Aubertin ceases to be 'l'homme bleu' following a lengthy

court case in which he re-establishes his rights to a bequest: ‘J’ai retrouvé la santé avec ma couleur naturelle’ (663). The narrative is full of lucky escapes, shipwrecks, acts of daring, feats of seamanship and courage, encounters with artful lawyers, affairs of honour, duels and skirmishes with the British.

As with d’Ivoi’s heroes, the natural superiority of a French officer, even one whose skin has turned blue, is central to Bousсенard’s plot. The narrative is strongly biased in favour of the naval officer class. Aubertin’s French supporters in his bloody duel against a British adversary grudgingly admit that even a British naval officer can at times be preferred to what is termed pejoratively as a ‘terrien’ (or landlubber). They are ‘vexés de ce qu’il [Aubertin] ait été blessé’ but concede that: ‘Il est vrai que c’est par un marin. Or un marin, même anglais, n’est pas moins un être d’essence supérieur vis-à-vis d’un terrien’ (655).¹⁴ In the passage cited, the themes of race and class are imbricated with an underlying prejudice in favour of the seagoing rather than the land forces. In spite of the fanciful nature of Aubertin’s adventures and his implausible dermatological condition, the novel’s plot is well structured, if prolix, and is loaded with heroic exemplars of bravery, fortitude, physical fitness and indomitability when faced with apparently insuperable odds.

Bousсенard’s fiction is comparable to that of his British contemporary Haggard in its treatment of class and race, as evidenced by the passages from *À Travers l’Australie* and *Le Rajah de Bornéo* cited above, and the discrimination which characterises Haggard’s narrator’s account of the Kukuana tribe and its leader in *King Solomon’s Mines* (2006[1885]: 104,105,146). Both writers were politically active,

¹⁴ Bousсенard, himself a conscript at the age of twenty-three into the French army as a medical orderly, was part of a brigade that surrendered in 1870 to the Prussians. He subsequently served as a doctor onboard ships of the French colonial navy *en route* to French possessions in West Africa. The narrator’s voice on the relative merits of the two branches of the armed forces is unmistakably strident.

with Haggard deeply involved in issues of land reform at home and in the colonies, while Bousсенard fought the corner of Christian Balkan states overrun by Muslim invaders at the turn of the century. The Balkan conflicts were also the subject matter of his fiction.¹⁵ Although I have not been able to access specific supporting evidence in correspondence or journals that Bousсенard used his experiences in his fiction, parts of his *oeuvre* suggest how the political ideology of French foreign policy was inscribed in literary discourses.

3.3 *Some Recurrent Themes in the Texts of d'Ivoi and Bousсенard*

In the representation, in these two novels, of d'Ivoi's and Bousсенard's peripatetic champions of good against evil, the cocktail of ideological precepts is unmistakable. The narrative emphasises that the heroes behave honourably. They are fit, strong and capable of heroic feats of arms. They express in their words and actions a patriotic zeal that casts all foreign opponents, and especially the British, as dishonourable and ruthless oppressors. A survey of the second tier of adventure fiction writers typified by the works of d'Ivoi and Bousсенard described briefly above, prompts three key observations. First, these novels are products of a publishing industry towards the end of the nineteenth century that demanded sensationalism and fast-moving action for an emerging *petit-bourgeois* leisure-reading market targeted at, although not exclusively read by, adolescents. Second, interwoven with the often implausible narratives, are overt and clumsy tracts of morality and prescriptive behaviour which appear to be intended as a call to arms for a disaffected youth. Third, and most striking, are the eccentricities of narrative structure, language and characterisation of these adventure fiction authors who aspired to the success of

¹⁵ This polemic was later to be expounded at length in Bousсенard's novelistic treatment of *La Terreur en Macedoine* (1912).

Verne and Loti and often imitated their formulae.¹⁶ The relatively low sales of second-tier authors of adventure fiction in published volumes may perhaps be attributed to some of these shortcomings. Although authors of the calibre of d'Ivoi and Boussenard had little difficulty in securing wide newspaper, magazine and *colporteur* distribution, in an eager and dynamic market, of their adventure novels, listings from the BNF Catalogue indicate that they often did not survive more than one or two publishers' volume editions.

3.4 *Ideological Valences in 'second-tier' Adventure Novels*

Before drawing together some conclusions on the reach and the ideological workings of the French adventure fiction genre in the last part of the nineteenth century, I will cluster some of the ideological valences which I have encountered in my reading of examples of the work of ten other writers of French adventure fiction discussed by literary scholar Matthieu Letourneux in *Le Roman d'Aventures* (2011).¹⁷ A relatively small, but nonetheless powerfully inscribed, set of ideologies appears consistently in what I term second-tier adventure novels. These ideologies may be summarised briefly as: first, anti-German propaganda; second, anti-British propaganda; and third, French concepts of heroism and nationalism.

3.4.1 *Anti-German Propaganda*

I will first illustrate the incidence in these texts of anti-German propaganda. Ideology is inscribed most egregiously in the 'future war' genre which became popular at the end of the century and which is exemplified by Émile Driant's three-volume *La Guerre de demain* (1898), published under the pseudonym of Capitaine

¹⁶ Boussenard's *Dix Mille ans dans un bloc de glace* (1890) was an imitation of the Verneian formula.

¹⁷ Matthieu Letourneux, *Le Roman d'aventures* <www.roman-daventures.com>.

Danrit.¹⁸ The narrative takes the form of a virtual re-run of the Franco-Prussian war, except that on this occasion it is the French who vanquish the invaders. Danrit's narrator takes us first to the valley of the Meuse in Lorraine where an army of 15,000 Prussians with six full batteries of artillery have attacked the fort of Lionville. They have not, however, reckoned upon the new *mélanite* shells developed by the French artillery. The *Krupps* armaments employed by the Prussians turn out to be inaccurate and overshoot their targets. At this stage the French bring their new weapons into play for the successful defence of the fort and the narrator exclaims: 'Ah! comme je me sentais vivre en ce moment! Quelle puissante emotion que celle du danger et quelle chose que ces luttes modernes où la science prête au courage des armes merveilleuses' (1898: 59).

The German soldier is portrayed throughout the narrator's account as 'un être de race inférieure' (571). The narrator paints the German soldiers as 'barbares' (509) who are not beneath showing the flag of surrender and then opening fire on their capturers, as they reportedly did at Neufchateau in 1870. The narrator recounts an episode of this ungallant behaviour to the French officer Radice: "'Je me méfiais instinctivement, je venais de me rappeler qu'ils avaient déjà fait la même chose en 1870.'" "Ah! les brigands, les brigands" répétait Radice' (1439). The outcome of the conflict is predictable, and *La Guerre de demain* ends with the French recapturing the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine due to the exemplary valour of their troops. How might we evaluate the ideological resonances of a narrative of this sort? A clue can be found in the preface to early editions. Danrit dedicates his book in a preface of 1898 to 'M. Jules Clarétie de l'Académie Française' and, in return, receives an effusive reply that is printed in full in the first edition. Clarétie attributes a major

¹⁸ Capitaine Danrit was the anagrammatic *nom de plume* of Émile Augustin Cyprien Driant (1855-1916).

ideological victory to Danrit's work in its spiritual and physical regeneration of the young French conscript:

Mes doigts tremblaient d'émotion en vous écrivant, mais votre épée ne tremblera pas dans votre main, ni le fusil au bout des bras de nos soldats. Mais vous avez bien fait encore une fois, d'aguerrir leur pensée par votre livre, comme vous avez aguerris et assoupli leurs corps par les exercices quotidiens.

C'est de la force morale ajoutée à la force physique (ii).

Danrit's narrator invests the 2500 pages that follow this preface with a narrative that characterises the Germans as brutal and perfidious, shows the French as noble and brave, and emphasises the certainty of victory on the Meuse. The youth of France, in spite of their lack of combat experience, is consistently presented as being regenerated physically and morally in the cause of revenge. For example, their repulse of the first heavy German offensive at Lionville is 'dû au courage, au sang froid de tous' and 'obtenu avec des soldats qui voyaient l'ennemi pour la première fois' (123). The closing paragraphs take the form of an admiring appraisal of the French army, attributed to an unnamed Colonel. The Colonel sees the army of today as 'une seule famille' and firmly believes that it is 'redevvenue La Grande Armée', a reference to the achievements of the French armed forces under Napoleon Bonaparte eighty years earlier. The siege of the French fortresses on the Meuse has provided Danrit's narrator with the opportunity to profile courageous and honourable French youth against what is portrayed as the barbarous behaviour of the German invader. The narrative voice functions consistently to make the values of the fantasmatic French soldiers involved in the defence of Alsace-Lorraine exemplary.

3.4.2 *Anti-British Propaganda*

While the anti-German propaganda in adventure fiction is almost visceral in its intensity, anti-British propaganda takes an altogether different form. Britain is typically characterised in French adventure fiction as a colonial rival, often hypocritical and deceitful but, nonetheless, quite often a figure of fun to be satirised rather than a brutal invader to be reviled. For example, the British colonial army in India is satirised in Pierre Maël's 1895 adventure novel *Amour d'Orient*. His protagonist Albert Juigné, tired of his expeditions through the deserts of Arabia and Persia, sets off to explore Britain's Indian possessions. One of his hosts en route is the British colonial officer Jon Fisher, with whom he engages in adventures, both military and romantic. Their attempts at seducing the women attached to the regiments of the Raj have varied success, prompting Fisher to criticise Joigné roundly: "By God!" marmottait-il en se hâtant, "ces damnés Français sont tous les mêmes, couards comme des lièvres, dès qu'il s'agit d'aborder une femmelette" (1895: 75). In this instance, the British officer is characterised as a buffoon, clumsy in his attempts to speak French while retaining English colloquial constructions, and condescending in his views on women, as indicated by the diminutive.

An altogether more critical view of Britain's imperial project is expressed in J. H. Rosny's historical adventure novel *La Guerre Anglo-Boer* (1902).¹⁹ Rosny was best known for his science fiction and was a contemporary of H. G. Wells (who had published *The Time Machine* in 1895 and *The Invisible Man* in 1897). Rosny was also an indirect competitor to Verne in this increasingly popular market sector in the 1890s, a decade during which Rosny wrote *Un Autre Monde* in 1895 (the same year

¹⁹ Although this text was published eighteen months after the main focus of my project (1870-1900), I include it here as it is based on events in Southern Africa at the turn of the century and is, furthermore, one of the most striking examples of anti-British ideology in adventure fiction in the years immediately preceding the *entente cordiale* of 1904.

that Verne's *L'Ile à Hélice* was published) and *Le Cataclysme* in 1896. *La Guerre Anglo-Boer*, however, takes the form of a documentary novel that is uncompromising in its condemnation of British policy in South Africa. For him, the Boer settler would rather do battle with Zulu tribes to extend the frontiers of Boer provinces than submit to British rule: 'Il préfère encore être massacré par les Zoulous que rançonné odieusement, humilié odieusement par les Anglais' (1902: 19). Rosny's narrator characterises the British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, together with his colonial officers Milner and Rhodes, as being ruthless, aggressive and arrogant. He lionises the Boer settlers who manage to hold off and inflict significant casualties upon a British-led army that, he claims, is several times larger than the Boer guerilla forces. He goes on to accuse Britain of a series of war-crimes, including the murder of 12,000 children by the systematic starvation of the civilian population. His conclusion, certainly justified by the figures which he adduces, is that the war has been a total moral defeat for the British: 'La guerre, preuve manifeste d'impuissance éthique de la part du Royaume Uni, n'a été qu'une longue série d'humiliations pour les causes anglaises' (764). Both here and in other examples cited below, this distaste for British colonial policy often persuades the French adventure hero to take up arms against the British oppressor, or at least, as in d'Ivoi's work cited above, to encourage resistance by colonised subjects.

So, for example, in Alfred Assollant's adventure novel *Les Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran*, originally published in 1867 and continued in *L'Aventurier* (1872), his hero fights in the Indian jungles with Hindu insurgents against British rule. He is described as 'résolument de défendre la place contre les Anglais' and 'plein de confiance dans son génie' (1867: 226). In spite of mixed success in achieving his objectives, Corcoran's narrative closes with a resolute

decision to undermine British rule in India: ‘Corcoran n’a pas perdu de vue son ancien projet de délivrer l’Hindoustan de la domination anglaise’ (323). As with d’Ivoi’s account of British colonial rule in India, the sympathy of the narrator lies unmistakably with the repressed Hindu subjects.

3.4.3 *Discourses of French Nationalism*

In contrast to the characterisation of the Germans as inhuman and brutal aggressors, and the British as untrustworthy and exploitative imperialists, the French colonial hero is typically not only chivalrous but also elegant in appearance and manners. Assollant’s Captain Corcoran, for example, exudes openness, refined manners and bravery when he is first introduced to the reader: ‘C’était un grand jeune homme de vingt-cinq ans à peine qui se présenta simplement sans modesté et sans orgueil. Son visage était blanc et sans barbe. Dans ses yeux, d’un vert de mer, se peignaient sa franchise et l’audace’ (5). In the same manner, André Laurie’s hero Raymond Frécol, in his 1890 adventure of Atlantic exploration and engineering, *De New York à Brest en Sept Heures*, is depicted as elegant and courteous: ‘Sa taille élégante et souple, ses cheveux châtains coupés en brosse, ses yeux clairs et la fine moustache qui ombrageait une bouche énergique, le disaient Français, dès pieds à la tête, de type et d’allures comme de langage’ (1890: 3). Once again, in Michel Zévaco’s historical adventure novel *Le Capitain* (1900), set in the reign of Louis XIII, emphasis is placed on the physical presence and elegance of the hero as a gauge of his gallantry:

Mince de taille hardie, il avait une figure irrégulière et narquoise, belle à sa façon, d’une témérité qui s’ignore. Ses yeux disaient sa confiance illimitée en son étoile. Il portait avec élégance une costume en velours gris-perle, quelque peu râpé, et une rapière à poigné de fer ciselé (1900: 8).

I cite the three descriptions above in full as examples of the ubiquitous motif in the French adventure novel of associating heroism with a refined manner and elegant physical characteristics. As an example of the inscription of ideology within the adventure genre, this motif answers a perceived need among legislators, educators and military leaders for young Frenchmen who were not only patriotically inclined, but also physically fit for their duty in defending the nation and avenging foreign aggression. Nationalism of this type is one of the primary ideological valences of what I have termed the second-tier adventure novel. It is often almost as if the narrator is trying to outdo himself in his search for expressions of patriotic feeling. So, for example, in Jules Lermina's adventure novel of spectral mystery, *À Bruler: Conte Astral* (1889), his narrator identifies himself with three badges of patriotism: 'Je suis Français de coeur et de raison. Si ce n'était orgueil je dirais plus que Français: Gaulois, Parisien' (1889: 6). Here, the conflation of sentiment and reason with nationalistic pride is representative of an ideology that is consistently inscribed in the French adventure novel of the late nineteenth century.

From time to time, however, the smallest doubt creeps into the habitual bravado and hubris of the discourse of the French adventure hero, which typically promoted an ideology that Conklin reports as contemporary belief in 'the superiority of French culture and the universal perfectability of humankind' (2011: 174). Against a political background where some journalistic commentators were questioning the need for the government's far-flung colonial projects in place of the recovery of the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, some adventure writers also questioned the benefits of the *mission civilisatrice*. For example, Louis Jacolliot's narrator in his 1879 South Seas adventure travelogue *Histoire des vierges: Les Peuples et les continents disparus*, expresses his reservations about the real benefits of French

colonisation of the gentle Tahitian natives: ‘j’arrivais à me demander si nos colonisations, toutes plaguées de lois, de coutumes, d’egoïsme satisfait, d’appétits à satisfaire, de respects et de vertus hypocrites, étaient un progrès ou un décadence’ (1879: 7). The sentiments expressed here, however, are atypical. Far more prevalent is the lionisation of French colonial heroes, always elegant and gallant, contrasted vividly with brutal aggressors or perfidious colonial rivals.

4 *Conclusions: The Power of Adventure Fiction*

In conclusion of this survey of some of the ideologies inscribed in the work of these ten French adventure fiction writers, how might we judge their impact in the delivery of these ideological precepts? Many of the examples cited above are characterised by loose narrative structure, implausible plot elements and thin characterisation. Nonetheless, I contend that the combined impact of all of these works, which I estimate as approaching two thousand volume novels²⁰ (many published first in magazines and as *feuilletons*) across the last thirty years of the century, would have had a cumulative ideological effect in the establishment of heroic exemplars for a disaffected French youth. Although many of the works in question had single edition print runs of less than fifteen-hundred copies in published volumes, the combined quantity of these second-tier adventure novels in *feuilletons* and cheap editions, and the extraordinary consistency of their core ideologies, would inevitably have contributed to the construction of a masculine heroic ideal. Letourneux makes the following assertion regarding the late nineteenth-century French adventure novel: ‘Il a donné forme aux rêveries nationales et nationalistes, aux fantasmes impériaux et coloniaux, aux inquiétudes xénophobes et obsidionales, aux devoirs, à la puissance et aux valeurs associés à la figure masculine’ (2011: 7). Letourneux’s insights here form

²⁰ See appendix for statistical evidence in support of this estimate.

a valuable touchstone for my own reading of the French adventure genre. In particular, the paradoxical conflation of extreme prejudice and nationalism with the refined and admirable traits of exemplary masculinity comprises an ideological discourse of great complexity and internal contradiction.

Chapter Three

Reading Adventure Fiction for Ideology

1 *Research Framework*

How important was the adventure novel as a medium for the inscription of ideology in France and Britain in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century? Two prominent scholars of the genre provide unambiguous opinions. Matthieu Letourneux underlines its central importance in the formation of national identities. He contends that it was ‘l’un des genres les plus importants des cultures populaires’ (2011: 7) and adds that it ‘participait de façon plus ou moins volontaire à construire les représentations de nombreuses nations occidentales— La France, La Grande Bretagne’ (7). Dennis Butts, in a similar vein, describes the British adventure novel as ‘a reflection of Britain’s emergence from the Napoleonic Wars as a great imperial and military power’ (1989: x) and contends that it was based upon ‘an unquestioning assumption of British superiority over all foreigners’ (x). If we accept these two valorisations of the adventure novel as a formative influence on national identity, how might we best analyse the ways in which nationalistic ideologies were inscribed in the adventure genre in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century? Cultural theorist Raymond Williams provides a useful research framework in his three-part definition of ideology, which he calls ‘the three common versions of the concept’.¹ He defines these three versions as:

- (i) A system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group
- (ii) A system of illusory beliefs— false ideas or false consciousness— which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge

¹ I am indebted to the work of Lennard Davis in *Resisting Novels* for setting the theory of Williams within the context of what he terms ‘public ideas wedded to collective and personal defences’ (1987: 15).

(iii) The general process of the production of meanings and ideas (1977: 55).

In this chapter, I adopt Williams's definitions and use them as a means of organising a reading for ideology of a representative sample of ten adventure novels published between 1870 and 1900.² Because of the recurrence of many of the same ideological motifs both across individual works and across the French and British genres, I have chosen to organise my material by clustering examples of the inscription of these motifs under the broad headings suggested by Williams. So, for example, under Williams's definition of 'a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group' (55), I cite ideological motifs from adventure fiction under the headings of 'Ideologies of Power', 'Ideologies of Honour' and 'Ideologies of Manhood'.

Having analysed my texts for ideological inscription under these three broad headings, I then turn to Williams's third definition: 'the general process of the production of meanings and ideas' (55). I employ this definition to illustrate the ways in which concepts of gender, race and class are instrumental in reinforcing the inscription of these ideologies of power, honour and manhood in adventure novels. Finally, I make use of Williams's second definition, showing how false ideas are contrasted with scientific knowledge, in an analysis of the ideological workings of literary and journalistic discourses of exploration and science.

This organisational framework for my analysis allows me to illustrate how the *topoi* and the recurrent motifs in characterisation, plot, narrative and language work across a sample of French and British novels. In my sections on 'Ideologies of Power' and 'Ideologies of Manhood', I also provide longer comparative case studies of Verne's *Michel Strogoff* (1876) and Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885),

² I have selected novels with plots involving expatriation and danger, two nearly ubiquitous *topoi* of adventure fiction which lend themselves readily to the inscription of ideologies of exemplary masculinity.

because of the compelling parallels between the two texts' inscriptions of these ideologies. I complement these case studies with reference to comparable ideological motifs gleaned from the works of Loti and Erckmann-Chatrion in France and Henty and Kipling in Britain. I do not confine my research framework for the analysis of these texts to the definitions derived from Williams. I have also consulted the scholarship of Eagleton, de Man, Macherey, Bakhtin, Volosinov and Cawelti. I illustrate, in what follows, ways in which these scholars have facilitated special insights into how novels work in the inscription of ideology.

One further aspect of the ideological discourses of the last thirty years of the nineteenth century is essential to my analysis. Letourneux claims that the adventure novel was 'largement l'écho des valeurs de son temps' (9). Dawson, referring to the 'imaginary forms' of adventure fiction, contends that 'their moment of existence as cultural forms occurs under specific conditions of cultural production and consumption that are themselves shaped by configurations of economic, political and social circumstances' (1994: 52). I argue, also, that there is a close reciprocity between the literary discourse of the adventure novel and the social and political discourses of daily newspapers, many of which were carrying articles that treated the same subjects of colonial expeditions, far-away conflicts and accounts of polar and tropical exploration that formed the backdrop to adventure novels. For this reason, I have also included in my analysis some comparisons between ideological motifs inscribed in adventure fiction and nearly identical inscriptions in the mass press. These comparisons are made vivid, not only by commonality of subject matter, but also by similarities in narrative and language. I show that, at times, the late nineteenth-century war correspondent borrows the breathless narrative pace of the adventure writer, while the adventure novelist recounts imaginary conflicts in

journalistic style. The reciprocity between the two media becomes even more compelling when the two discourses, literary and journalistic, appear adjacently (as in the case of serialised fiction in daily and weekly newspapers) and when the novelist, as in the case of Loti, Henty and Kipling, has also been a journalist.

2 Political and Social Background

Both Britain and France faced, in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, the challenge of imbuing a whole generation of young men with precepts of patriotism and commitment deemed necessary by legislators and educators for the defence of the nation. In Britain, colonial expansion had been followed by setbacks, beginning with the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and followed, two decades later, by the Zulu wars of 1879, the guerrilla war against Afghan tribesmen in 1878-80 and the loss of the Transvaal to the Boers in 1881. In France, the defeat of Napoleon III's army in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 had been the catalyst for a debate among legislators and in the mass press on national degeneration, while falling population numbers inspired doubts about the ability of the nation to renew and defend itself.

Against this background, increasing literacy³ was accompanied by the rise of the mass press and the widening of access to works of fiction,⁴ given marketing impetus by leading publishing houses such as Hetzel in France and Blackie and Son in Britain. The adventure novel, in particular, in the words of literary scholar Matthieu Letourneux, 'a donné forme aux rêveries nationales et nationalistes, aux fantasmes

³ Primary education was obligatory in France from 1882. Allen cites reports that 88.4% of French army recruits had basic literary skills in 1886 and 93.8% by 1900 (1991: 59). W. B. Stephens reports that, in Britain, 'universal compulsory schooling (1870) had brought with it the almost total elimination of illiteracy' (1990: 549).

⁴ *Le Petit Parisien*, 12 February 1885, reports that 'aujourd'hui, l'amour des livres s'est démocratisé, répandu partout' and attributes much of this cultural shift to the success of the public library: 'ce grand mouvement en faveur des Bibliothèques populaires [...] est le meilleur gage du prochain et définitive affranchissement intellectuel de notre démocratie'. (12 February 1885) p. 1.

impériaux et coloniaux' (2011: 7). Both the mass press and the adventure novel were potential vehicles for the dissemination of government propaganda, including social and moral values. In particular, these two media lionised the concept of the fearless colonial pioneer. Press accounts and biographies of real-life soldier heroes and explorers such as Jean-Baptiste Marchand and Hubert Lyautey in France and Charles Gordon and David Livingstone in Britain had counterparts in the fictional works of Jules Verne, Louis Boussenard, Pierre Loti and Paul d'Ivoi in France and G. A. Henty, Arthur Conan Doyle, H. Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling in Britain.

On one level, the adventure novel constitutes popular entertainment in which the representation of the colonial hero typically takes the form of a series of challenging episodes that build strong narrative interest and suspense (and therefore sell books). I explore how, on a second level, these representations were also the means of inscribing ideologies of exemplary masculinity. I ask whether discourses of adventure heroism in novels, the mass press, personal correspondence, journals and contemporary biographies can be conceived as what Mikhail Bakhtin calls ideological 'communication events' (1994 [1920-1924]: 5).⁵ I lend particular emphasis to two examples of adventure fiction which, in my view, are deeply imbued with ideological motifs. Verne's *Michel Strogoff* (1876), published five years after the Franco-Prussian war, lends itself as a text for this analysis, both because of its representations of the heroic ideal and because of the moment in history which saw its publication, as does Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), published in the year of Gordon's death at Khartoum.

3. *Ideological Filters: Eagleton, de Man, Macherey, Bakhtin, Volosinov, Cawelti and Althusser*

⁵ A 'communication event' is defined by Bakhtin as 'a responsive interaction between at least two social beings' (1994 [1920-1924]: 5).

Before embarking upon my reading for ideology project, I have judged it prudent to supplement the three-part evaluative framework suggested in the work of Williams with insights from other foundational scholars in the field of ideology. In setting ideological filters for my reading, therefore, I also look to Eagleton, de Man, Macherey, Bakhtin, Volosinov and Cawelti. A reading for ideology inevitably presents some challenges, not least because the ostensible primary goal of these texts, as evidenced by their publishers' advertising, was to entertain rather than to instruct. Having applied an evaluative framework to my primary texts by combining the insights of these scholars, I also study the sub-genres of adventure fiction in the context of Althusser's model of the 'Ideological State Apparatus'.⁶ In what follows, I summarise some of the principal arguments of these six theorists with the intention of applying their thinking to an analysis of adventure fiction.

3.1 *Eagleton*

In the first chapter of cultural theorist Terry Eagleton's *Ideology An Introduction* (1991), he lists sixteen different definitions of ideology, many of which he then goes on to question and interpret. Much later in Eagleton's study, he offers more specific definitions. One of Eagleton's definitions that lends itself appropriately to my work is 'the points where power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them' (223). This definition enhances my basic research framework in that it prompts six pertinent questions: Where exactly are the *points* in the adventure fiction genre where *power impacts*? Who or what constitutes this *power* and what are its objectives? Who is the target group upon which an *impact* is sought? What is the nature of the *utterances* upon which *power* might *impact*? How is *power inscribed* within them? How *tacit* is this inscription? I will examine the construction

⁶ See Althusser's *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984).

of exemplary masculinity in the late nineteenth century through this lens. In reading my chosen texts, I also borrow an investigative concept from Poovey by analysing the ‘unevenness within the construction and deployment’ (1988: 4) of Victorian middle-class ideology.⁷ For example, the deployment of exemplary masculinity is unevenly achieved in the adventure novel, in that it takes the form of characterisation, plot function, narrative and language which are all capable, with varying degrees of emphasis and subtlety, of delivering ideologies of racial superiority, class prejudice and gender bias in support of the construction of the masculine ideal.

3.2 *de Man*

I have also consulted Paul de Man’s 1973 essay on ‘Semiotics and Rhetoric’.⁸ In particular I examine his contention that literary form is a ‘solipsistic category of self-reflection and the referential meaning is said to be extrinsic’ (1973: 27). This contention is potentially of relevance to my study of formula narratives that are so often a reflection of their time and equally often have an impact on history. In his study of the power of rhetoric, de Man also insists on a clear differentiation between metaphor and metonymy in the analysis of literary texts (32). Both metonymy (e.g. the French nation as the Tricolour in Loti’s *Le Roman d’un Spahi*) and metaphor (e.g. ‘blood spouting in fountains’ in the final battle scene from Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* [2006 (1885): 147]) abound in late nineteenth-century adventure novels, which are typically florid in tone and style. I will argue that de Man’s insights on the function and the power of figures of rhetoric in literary discourse are central to the way in which ideology is inscribed in adventure fiction.

3.3 *Macherey*

⁷ Poovey applies this investigative technique to ‘mid-Victorian representations of gender’ (1988: 4). I apply it specifically in this chapter to exemplary masculinity.

⁸ See *Diacritics* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 1973).

Literary scholar Pierre Macherey's *The Object of Literature* (1990) also provides a valuable evaluative framework for an ideological reading. Macherey's scholarship embraces two important concepts. First, he denies the existence of a purely literary discourse. For him, 'there are only mixed discourses wherein language games that are independent in their systems of reference and their principles interact on various levels' (1995 [1990]: 5). Macherey's views on mixed discourses constitute a relevant theoretical concept on which I can build in my study of the nineteenth-century adventure novel. I challenge, however, his concept of 'independent systems of reference' in advancing my own contention that the discourses of the mass press, fiction, personal journals and biography all combine to build concepts of exemplary masculinity, often set in the same historical and social context and often employing precisely the same narrative conventions and language.

I borrow other elements of Macherey's critical framework in my reading for ideology. In particular, Macherey's ideological reading of Verne in his *Theory of Literary Production* (1978 [1966]) provides a model for approaching other contemporary authors. For example, Macherey offers textual support for the ideological basis of Verne's work. He avers that 'the ideological programme (the conquest of nature, the social position of science) enters literature and will express itself there' (1978 [1966]: 194). This two-pronged ideological framework (nature and science) for reading Verne's work is employed by Macherey in his analysis of the narrative of Verne's protagonists, from the self-absorbed Arctic explorer Hatteras, to the obsessive scientist Lindenbrock and the intrepid world traveller Fogg. For my purposes, it has informed my reading of Verne's *Michel Strogoff* in which, I will show, the ideological equilibrium between science and nature is atypically (for Verne) weighted in favour of nature.

Macherey argues that Verne's *oeuvre* is 'a work completely involved in history, which makes no pretence of escaping history' (216), and this label can equally well be applied to a large part of both the British and the French adventure fiction genre. Even when their historical context is not contemporary (for example, historical adventure novels set in the Elizabethan wars with Spain and the Napoleonic Peninsula War), the discourses in these novels around duty, honour, bravery and patriotism are directly relevant to the social and political concerns of the late nineteenth century. Macherey reports that even scholars such as Roland Barthes apply a historicist lens to the adventure novel (215). Macherey, perhaps ironically, attributes this stance to the fact that Barthes is dealing with a work 'which is not a classic, cannot be perfect and therefore is not truly literary' (215). Whether these texts are 'classic' or not, Macherey is in no doubt as to the ideological power of Verne's adventure fiction. For Macherey, 'the work is preceded by an ideological project which is always excessive, which engulfs the conscious intentions of the individual author' (220), a contention that dovetails with the views expressed by Dawson on the shaping of cultural forms by political and social circumstances.

3.4 *Bakhtin*⁹

Partly for the reasons outlined above, my reading for ideology has not attempted an analysis based on deconstruction and prefers instead a socially and historically based analytical framework. By adopting a historicist approach, my project aligns with the precepts of Bakhtin who, according to the thesis advanced by literary scholar Tom Cohen, played an 'iconic role[s] for a return to history (or historicism) that has accompanied the return to mimetic humanism from more theoretical stances' (1998: 61).

⁹ I sidestep debates on the authorship of Bakhtin's and Volosinov's work by combining my comments on both.

The things that heroes say, as well as the things that they do and the narratives that impart these words and deeds, are central to the ideology inscribed in adventure fiction. My reading of the primary texts, therefore, embraces Bakhtin's 'appropriation of the trope of dialogue for an ideology of self and other' (93). In particular, Bakhtin is insightful in illustrating the power of dialogue to recruit the interest and involvement of the reader of fiction. He refers to the interlocutor in fictional dialogue as the 'third participant' (presumably after the narrator and the reader) and illustrates how the sympathies of the reader can be engaged: 'when the third participant is brought into speech through personification or apostrophe, the second person must be antithetically positioned or seduced – hence inscribed – as witness and ally' (85). Bakhtin's stance here on dialogue and engagement with the reader is vividly illustrated in the many examples of the use of apostrophe by first person narrators in adventure fiction.

3.5 *Cawelti*

The appeal of adventure fiction is argued by literary scholar John Cawelti to be due to psychological wish-fulfilment. He contends that the most popular works are those that 'help people to identify imaginatively with actions they would like to perform but cannot in the ordinary course of events' (1976: 22). Cawelti seems convinced of the ideological effect of the adventure genre when he posits formulaic literature as 'a ruling-class stratagem for keeping the majority of the people content with a daily ration of pleasant distractions' (25). Eagleton's scholarship develops further such a position when he proposes that 'ideology denotes the ways in which power processes get caught up in the realm of signification' (1991: 11).

This 'realm of signification' acts as the backdrop to my reading for ideology. I look at ways in which power is inscribed in both the narrative and the dialogue of the

adventure hero through specific signs and semiotic strategies (for example, I look at the ways in which male protagonists' dress and deportment are presented in French adventure fiction as signs connoting class, refinement and status). I look at the inscription of power both overtly and implicitly in the adventure novel.

Manifestations of power include gender roles, imperial conquest and colonial policy, class distinction, race, family, religion, political affiliation and aspects of valour, honour and patriotism. I will show that, inscribed within a formulaic adventure novel with entertainment as its ostensible goal, these discourses of power often exercise a palpable ideological effect

4 Putative Motives for the Inscription of Ideologies of Exemplary Masculinity in Literary Discourses

How might we apply this set of theories to a historicist reading of Verne's *Michel Strogoff*, Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and the other adventure novels of Henty, Kipling, Loti and Erckmann-Chatrian which I read for ideology in this chapter. Eagleton's admonishment to seekers of ideological content certainly lends structure to my own reading of the primary texts: 'ideology is less a matter of the inherent linguistic properties of a pronouncement than a question of who is saying what to whom for what purposes' (9). The 'what' will form the subject of my interrogation of the texts. It is tempting to characterise the 'whom' by borrowing Haggard's narrator's notion of the 'big and little boys'¹⁰ who bought or were presented with adventure novels which enjoyed unprecedented commercial success for their authors and publishers in the last years of the nineteenth century. A more comprehensive quantitative survey of the readership of the adventure novel in France, however, suggests that this 'whom' was comprised of the fifteen percent of all households that

¹⁰ Dedication by the narrator, Allan Quatermain, in the frontispiece to *King Solomon's Mines*.

had consumed adventure fiction by the end of the century. The ‘who’ is worth dwelling on before addressing the texts. Who were these men (and their sponsors) who became household names and who, in the judgment of John MacKenzie ‘could achieve that rare combination of critical acclaim and a popular following’ (1986: 4)?¹¹

It is significant for my project that the authors of these novels were linked by more than just their literary avocation. Nearly all of those whom I cite in this chapter also held administrative or honorary roles in government or had been honoured in some way for their political activities. Verne was a republican Conseiller Municipal in Amiens and was awarded the Légion d’Honneur (Vierne 1992: 462) Loti was appointed to the staff of the Governor of Paris as well as undertaking diplomatic missions to Turkey and North Africa and was recognised with a Croix de Guerre as well as a seat in the Académie Française (Claude Martin 1991: 343). Doyle was knighted and became President of the Boys’ Empire League. Haggard was awarded the Order of the British Empire, offered a knighthood and sat on the Committee of the Imperial South Africa Association. Henty was the editor of the popular nationalist weekly *Union Jack*. Kipling was awarded the prestigious Order of the Garter as well as becoming a Companion of Honour and being awarded a Nobel prize (MacKenzie 1984: 205, 208, 212). It would be reductive in the extreme to characterise the whole genre of adventure fiction as a vehicle for the propagation of a set of reactionary social and political ideas. Nonetheless, I will not ignore the ‘day-jobs’ of these authors in making an assessment of the ideological valences in their work, inasmuch as shades of their political convictions, as I will show, are readily discernible in many of their novels.

¹¹ MacKenzie reports that Henty was selling between 150,000 and 250,000 copies of his adventure stories per year in the 1890s and Verne sold 108,000 copies of *Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-Vingt Jours* (1984: 220).

5 Ideologies of Power

I begin my reading for ideology by considering how power (both physical and institutional) is inscribed in discourses of adventure heroism. Readings of Verne's *Michel Strogoff* (1876) and Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) provide models for the types of ideology that are also encountered in many of the other texts cited, especially in the adventure fiction of Henty, Kipling, Loti and Erckmann-Chatrion.

One overarching theme in representations of late nineteenth-century heroism is the unshakeable self-belief that characterises protagonists of adventure fiction. Michel Strogoff, the eponymous hero of Verne's 1876 adventure novel (set in the 1860s in the Russia of Czar Alexander II), is imbued with a sense of patriotic duty which is continually reinforced by the narrator: 'le sentiment du devoir dominait son âme tout entière' (1992[1876]: 186). After receiving a serious head wound in a skirmish with invading Tartar hordes on the Irtyche River in Siberia, Strogoff escapes by swimming ashore and then relapses into a coma. Nonetheless, according to the narrator, the character 'n'était pas homme à se laisser abattre pour si peu' (187) and Strogoff is soon back on his mission as courier to the Czar. Captured by the Tartar army, he faces a horrible and prolonged death by torture: 'Il s'attendait à mourir, et, cependant, on eût vraiment cherché en lui un symptôme de faiblesse' (311). He defies his tormentors: 'supplier ces hommes féroces, c'était inutile, et d'ailleurs, indigne de lui' (312). This illustrates a personal honour code by which he measures his responses to every situation. At different stages of Verne's narrative, Strogoff is portrayed as 'insensible à toute fatigue' (203) and as someone 'sur qui le sommeil ne pouvait avoir prise' (336). Surrounded by murderous Tartar hordes, 'il n'avait rien perdu de son sang froid' (356). Above all, it is Strogoff's single-minded determination to complete his mission that characterises his particular style of exemplary masculinity, expressed

as: ‘je passerai quand-même!’ (336) and ‘j’arriverai’ (357). The representation of Verne’s adventure hero is in stark and significant contrast to representations in press reports of the under-provided and sickly ranks of conscripts who were to fight the colonial wars of the Ferry administration in the mid-1880s in Cochinchina.

Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* was launched by Cassells in September 1885 into a situation of national malaise which has parallels with the early Third Republic in France. National pride had been tarnished by a series of defeats in British colonies. General Gordon had been murdered on the steps of the Governor’s palace in Khartoum in January 1885 and the relief of the Sudan had run into major difficulties. As in France, overseas initiatives were partly a political expedient to draw attention from social and economic problems at home.¹² MacKenzie defines the role of imperial projects in raising the British ‘from the gloom and apprehension of the later nineteenth century, and creating a national purpose with a high moral content’ (1984: 2).

The characterisation of Michel Strogoff and the underlying narrative voice of Verne’s work have strong parallels in Haggard’s characterisation of Allan Quatermain in *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885). Quatermain’s self-assessment bears an uncanny resemblance to the representation of Verne’s Strogoff, in particular his resilience and ability to survive without sleep. On the eve of the first battle against rebel Kukuana tribesmen led by the fearsome Twala, Quatermain walks among the loyal troops as they rest: ‘the camp sank into sleep. Sir Henry and I [...] descended the hill and made the round of the outposts’ (123). Quatermain’s prescription for stamina and fitness could almost have come from the manuals of the army recruitment doctors: ‘I am very

¹² For social and political drivers of imperialist ideology in Britain, see Bristow (1991: 19, 25, 128) and Randall (2000: 5, 13, 18). For France see Charle (1994: 53, 217), Forth and Accampo (2010: 2, 55, 72, 219), and Gildea (2009: 410, 417).

wiry and can stand more fatigue than most men, probably on account of my light weight and long training' (150). Bristow describes the advent, from the mid-nineteenth century, of 'a new type of public-school ideology, one connected with war, honour and above all doing well on the playing field' (1991: 57) and goes on to describe the 'fitness' which would 'implicitly, build up the physique and intellect of every civilised Briton' (66). The concept of a tireless and resilient leader walking the camp at night as an exemplar for his troops was not only a fictional ideal. The war in Sudan was a matter of grave national concern in Britain in the year that *King Solomon's Mines* was published, and reports of the moral and physical robustness of British military leaders featured in the daily newspapers. Embracing the ideology of the tireless leader patrolling his camp at night, the *Daily News* of 2 January 1885 reports that General Gordon 'spends the nights in a ceaseless watch, visiting the outposts to see that every sentry is on the alert'.¹³

As with Verne's Strogoff, duty and self-sacrifice are at the heart of Haggard's masculine ideal. Quatermain admires the resolute defiance of the vastly outnumbered troops of the 'Greys' regiment: 'never before had I seen such an absolute devotion to the idea of duty, and such a complete indifference to its bitter fruits' (136) and vaunts exemplary discipline and bravery in facilitating a victory: 'perfect discipline and steady and unchanging valour can do wonders' (139). The specifically manly accomplishments of marksmanship, horsemanship, pugilism, seamanship and swordsmanship¹⁴ constitute recurrent inscriptions of power in the ideology of the

¹³ 'Gordon in Khartoum', *Daily News*, 2 January 1885, p. 2.

¹⁴ The '-manship' living suffix deserves attention, especially as these concepts of skill have high currency in the male sports culture of the mid-nineteenth century British Public School and (later) the French *Lycée*. The 'man' syllable precedes feminist discourses on gender specificity in composite nouns. The 'ship' syllable has multiple resonances in the construction of the manly hero in its connotations of status, honour, office and skill from the Old High German *scaf*.

British nineteenth-century adventure hero. Quatermain, attempting a rifle shot against a tempting enemy target five hundred yards distant, misses by inches and the false modesty of his response characterises the schoolboy sportsman turned colonial pioneer: 'I hate to miss in public. When one can only do one thing well, one likes to keep one's reputation in that thing' (127). Inevitably, his second shot finds its mark. Verne's hero is obliged to purchase an unexceptional horse in a country coaching inn in order to continue his pursuit of anti-Czarist conspirators, but, as always, he makes the best of the situation: 'Michel Strogoff, habile cavalier, pourrait [en] tirer un bon parti' (1992 [1886]: 190). The notion of the accomplished gentleman sportsman who is also a skilled equestrian is also a recurrent creation of late nineteenth-century adventure fiction in Britain. For example, Percy Groves, the young Colonial soldier who quells a Sikh uprising in the Punjab in Henty's *Through the Sikh War* (1894), is able to ride with a leather saddle or without stirrups in the manner of a Punjab warrior and boasts: 'I can ride in the Sikh fashion or the English' (1894: 137).

Linkages between accomplishments on the school playing field and distinguished conduct on the battlefield are among the most frequently encountered *topoi* in British adventure fiction. In Henty's *The Dash for Khartoum* (1891), subtitled *The Tale of the Nile Expedition*, his young hero Edgar Smith acquits himself gallantly during the battle of El Teb. Henty's narrator gives emphasis to Smith's history as a talented sportsman at Cheltenham School and relates it directly to his stoicism and bravery while fighting on against Mahdi spearmen in spite of being wounded. He is recommended for a medal and the whole episode is conceived as being one of unalloyed good fortune by a Sergeant in his regiment: 'I won't say you are getting all the luck [...] the fact that you are the best cricketer in the regiment counts for a lot, and now you have got wounded and have been recommended for the Victoria Cross'

(1891: 132). The narrator of *The Dash for Khartoum* consistently points up the bravery and unassuming modesty of Henty's young hero. The narrator sets him as the central protagonist within a sequence of battle scenarios in which his exemplary physical resilience and moral stature can be demonstrated. Finally, one of the recurrent narrative conventions of the adventure genre is evident in the victory of Edgar Smith against all odds and in spite of all obstacles.

Physical prowess and the respect of male peers are also central to Loti's representation of the maritime hero in his 1886 account of intrepid Breton fishermen in *Pêcheur d'Islande*. His young protagonist, Sylvestre Moan, although only seventeen, earns the respect of his hardened shipmates by his skills in seamanship: 'les autres ne se moquaient pas de lui, parce qu'il était très fort, ce qui inspire le respect aux marins' (1927 [1886]: 114). Edward Hughes attributes the narrator's emphasis on physical fitness to the underlying anxieties that characterised the author's semi-autobiographical accounts: 'the cult of the vigorous body and the devaluing of the intellect are part of the regressive politics that remedy Loti's rootlessness' (2001: 18). Lesley Blanch, in her study of Loti's life and works, attributes similar authorial motives when she contends that 'the discipline, the monotony, the comradeship, physical effort and dangers of life on the high seas overcame those anguishing thoughts which haunted him ashore' (2004 [1983]: 152). Verne's exemplary explorers also evince similar emphases on physical fitness. Even Passepartout, the manservant in Verne's *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours* (1872), is endowed with unusual physical prowess. He transpires to have been a tightrope walker like Blondin, then a gymnastics instructor, finally becoming an officer in the Paris fire brigade (1978 [1873]: 27).

Ideologies of physical fitness and duty are also inscribed in Haggard's other works. Ludwig Horace Holly, the hero and narrator of Haggard's *She* (1887), in addition to being a fearless pioneer and explorer in Central Africa, is able to show his skills as a champion swimmer when one of his companions is close to drowning: 'throwing off my hat, I took a run and sprang well out into the horrid slimy-looking pool. A couple of strokes took me to where Billali was struggling' (2008 [1887]: 114). It is not only in fictional works that sporting prowess and bravery are conflated in the depiction of heroism. I provide two examples from the mass press of comparable feats of bravery in rescuing drowning men in order to illustrate how British literary and press discourses of the 1880s mirrored each other closely in aspects of style and narrative voice. The unlikely hero-figure of a Stoke-on-Trent chimney sweep features in the *Illustrated London News* of 24 January 1885. Like Haggard's hero Ludwig Horace Holly, he has plunged into a pool to avert a drowning: 'Compliments and thanks to Mr. Price, a 'sweep' of Stoke-on-Trent who, on the 15th inst., it is reported, saved eight boys from drowning at the risk of his own life. To call a man a 'sweep' has hitherto been considered uncomplimentary; henceforth it should cease to be a term of reproach'.¹⁵ Similar homage is paid to the heroic deeds of volunteer life-boatmen who are recognised for their bravery in the *Illustrated London News*: 'had we space, we might give a description of the good deeds of heroism performed by these sea heroes at these services, many of which entailed great suffering and exposure on the gallant fellows'.¹⁶

The ubiquity in the nineteenth-century adventure novel and in the mass press of accounts of physical and sporting prowess and bravery may be seen as the reflection of an ideological undercurrent which had its origins in a sense of unease

¹⁵ *Illustrated London News*, 24 January 1885, p. 71.

¹⁶ *Illustrated London News*, 10 January 1885, p. 43.

among legislators and educators in both France and Britain about the capability of their respective youth to defend national and colonial interests. They saw the physical fitness of the nation's young men as essential for the country's defence as well as playing a role in social integration. Bristow sums up the standpoint of British legislators: 'fitness, above all, would strengthen the Empire. It would, implicitly, build up the physique and intellect of every civilised Briton, thereby surmounting differences of class' (1991: 66). In France also, as I show below, reports in the contemporary mass press indicate a fast-growing concern with the physical education of young men, a discipline which became compulsory in schools in the 1890s.

On 25 July 1890, *Le Petit Journal* recounts the activities of the Ligue Nationale de l'Éducation Physique, reporting that 'Le président de la République a honoré de sa présence les fêtes de la Ligue au bois de Boulogne.'¹⁷ The unattributed article offers its author's views on the benefits of such activities for the wellbeing of the French nation: 'Il est très bon, en effet, de développer les forces musculaires des jeunes gens par des jeux, autrefois si en honneur chez les Grecs'.¹⁸ *Le Petit Parisien*, on 1 April 1895, provides a report on the spread of 'Tir et Gymnastique' centres in Paris and is scrupulous in 'reconnaisant les efforts des Sociétés de Tir et le concours patriotique qu'elles apportent à l'éducation de la jeunesse'.¹⁹ The same newspaper on 11 April 1895 reports on a martial arts programme at a suburban Parisian lycée: 'le programme, très fourni, comprend, outre les jeux de fleuret, épée et sabre, des assauts de canne et de boxe'. The editorial verdict, under the heading of 'La Vie Sportive', is that 'les amateurs d'exercices physiques seront bien difficiles s'ils ne s'en déclarent

¹⁷ *Le Petit Journal*, 25 July 1890, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Le Petit Journal*, 25 July 1890, p. 4.

¹⁹ 'Tir et Gymnastique', *Le Petit Parisien*, 1 April 1895, p. 4.

pas satisfaits'.²⁰ Significant in these press reports is the characterisation of arms training as sport and education, and as part of a patriotic project. Thus, La Fête de Gymnastique des Tuileries in July 1890 is organised by L'Union des Sociétés d'Instruction Militaire, and there is no mistaking the martial undercurrents as the prizes are awarded by President Carnot: 'Il gravait les degrés de la tribune d'honneur aux sons de la Marseillaise et au bruit des détonations'.²¹ Although these government-sponsored sporting activities have notionally amateur status, the inscription of an ideology of fitness and preparedness in press reports, and their reflection in adventure fiction, hint at preparation for conflict with Germany. Nonetheless, as Berenson informs us, 'few French leaders believed it would be politically or militarily possible to win a new war against Germany in the near future. Revanche was, above all, a tool of domestic politics' (2011: 322).

While the patrons of the shooting ranges and gymnastic clubs in Paris and London were honing their bodies and their marksmanship skills, their neighbours to the East were also preparing themselves. On 2 January 1897, for example, the *Illustrated London News* reports at length on a new regime of winter military exercises for the German army:

The winter season in Germany brings no period of inactivity but a fresh form of exercise and drill for the infantry of the Fatherland. Since the first fall of snow in the upland districts, the German infantry troops this winter have been busily taking exercise on snow-shoes [...] the men wear their guns slung over their shoulders, and each of them carries a couple of long bamboo poles for use in crossing difficult ground.²²

²⁰ *Le Petit Parisien*, 11 April 1895, p. 3.

²¹ *Le Petit Journal*, 6 July 1890, p. 1.

²² *Illustrated London News*, 2 January 1897, p. 3.

Perhaps superfluously at a time when the forerunners of the Maxim and Vickers machine guns were being developed to discharge 500 rounds a minute,²³ the writer adds: ‘In time of war these poles would be carried for travelling purposes only and would be discarded in action’. The language used by the international reporter at the *Illustrated London News* has strong ideological resonances, specifically in the inscription of power. The ‘infantry of the Fatherland’ speaks of patriotic fervour in defence of the nation. The fitness and combat readiness of the potential aggressor is captured in the description of the military manoeuvres: ‘no period of inactivity’, ‘fresh form of drill’, ‘busily taking exercise’. The allusions to ‘in time of war’ are uncannily accurate in their prediction of some of the Alpine battles in the Tyrol and elsewhere in the Alps which were to follow seventeen years later. The inferences to be drawn are unmistakable: do likewise in recruiting and training a serviceable army or run the risk of further defeat at the hands of Germany. Against this background of all-weather army drills and the build-up of the German battle-fleet in the Baltic ports in the 1890s, France and Britain not only coincided in their support of sports clubs for their young men, but also recognised the wisdom of joining forces with their traditional enemies in order to counter a greater mutual threat. The *Entente Cordiale* is characterised by press historian Jean-Pierre Bacot as ‘une prise en compte rationnelle par les diplomates des deux rives de la Manche de la primauté du danger allemand’ (2005: 185).

In discourses as diverse as Verne’s quests, Haggard’s colonial narratives, Henty’s accounts of military daring, Loti’s *Spahi* adventures, as well as the daily reports in the mass press and contemporary personal journals, a number of congruent ideological motifs emerge. First, undercurrents of national malaise and their putative

²³ Vickers acquired the Maxim Company in 1896, at which time projected firing-rate was 600 rounds per minute.

antidote in the power of the fearless colonial hero run through both press and literary discourses. Second, the characterisation of the adventure hero as a slave to duty and an accomplished sportsman combines the two facets of exemplary masculinity most likely to coalesce into a serviceable young army recruit. Third, the adventure novel illustrates in some cases Eagleton's precept that 'ideology is always most effective when invisible' (1991: xvii), and thereby constitutes a potent means of restoring national pride and confidence. In this way, the adventure novel works ostensibly as light entertainment, but is also a vehicle to deliver ideologies of patriotism, honour, bravery and moral probity which are inscribed in nearly every act and speech which their heroes perform. Gender Studies scholar Ann Pellegrini highlights 'the hopelessness of trying to demarcate where performance ends and any "real" begins' (1997: 8). The parallel discourses of exemplary masculinity in the adventure novel and the mass press are illustrative of this fusion of the real and the imaginary in the inscription of late nineteenth-century ideologies of manhood.

6 Ideologies of Honour

Aside from these inscriptions of power in dutiful self-discipline and athletic prowess, what then are the other identifiable character traits of exemplary masculinity in adventure fiction? The list is extensive and includes not only the conventional male characteristics of pure physical strength and bravery, but layers of more subtle nuances in moral probity, loyalty to comrades, honour codes and magnanimity in victory. The ideology of exemplary masculinity at work in these novels also comprises attitudes toward class, gender, race and sexuality that, although a reflection of their time, nonetheless represent an affront to the values of a modern liberal democracy.

I first consider examples of exemplary behaviour in British and French adventure fiction that would tend to imbue a young contemporary reader with the concepts of honour, loyalty and valour that are so consistently part of the construction of the adventure hero. The adventure formula was a powerful means of inscribing less tangible moral precepts of this nature. Historian Sylvain Venayre is perceptive in his view of the French adventure genre as ‘un moyen d’attirer le jeune lecteur et ainsi de lui permettre d’assimiler plus facilement des connaissances qu’un cours magistral rendrait rébarbatives’ (2002: 62). The works of G. A. Henty constitute some of the best examples of honour codes combined with fast moving military action in British imperial possessions. I chose Henty’s work to illustrate aspects of ideological inscription for two reasons. First, he was the most successful adventure novelist of the late nineteenth century and, as Butts informs us, ‘Henty’s literary career coincided with the high-tide of imperialism’ (2008: 151). Second, his younger readers ‘were expected to work there [in the Empire] when they left school, in commerce, the armed forces, or as public servants’ (151).

A recurrent feature of the characterisation of his protagonists is the concept of ‘backbone’, by which he implies a set of masculine attributes unique to the British and an index of their superiority. For example, in Henty’s account of the Peninsular War (1808-14), *With Moore at Corunna*, the questionable honour and valour of what are represented as Britain’s unreliable Portuguese and Spanish allies against Napoleon’s invading armies is continuously contrasted with the unwavering moral fortitude of the British troops. Henty’s narrator is contemptuous in his appraisal of the twenty thousand Portuguese recruits who ‘had been armed and drilled, and could be relied upon to do some service, if employed with British troops to give them backbone’ (1898: 189). The Spanish troops are characterised as impetuous and

wavering in their resolve, and their leader General Royana is said to be ‘full of good but utterly impractical schemes’ (192) while the British soldier, by contrast, is ‘confident in his bravery, regarding victory as assured [...] unable to understand the necessity for retreat’ (154). There is some hope, however, for what Henty’s narrator calls the ‘pusillanimous’ Portuguese once they are installed under the leadership of a British general:

Now Lord Beresford has come out to take command of the Portuguese army, and is going to have a certain number of British officers to train and command them, they will be of some utility, instead of being simply a scourge to the country and a constant drain on our purse (315).

This dismissive attitude of Henty’s narrator towards foreign allies and adversaries is emblematic of a set of principles embodied throughout the adventure genre, characterised by Boyd as: ‘Nothing ever changes and all foreigners are funny’ (2003: 1).

One of the debates among legislators, military leaders, and in the mass press in both Britain and France revolved around the suitability of a conscripted army of young soldiers to do the work of older battle-hardened regular soldiers. This subject is one that lends itself to the adventure novel as a channel of nationalist ideology, in that many of the protagonists of the genre were themselves in their early twenties. Accounts of the conspicuous moral fibre of Kipling’s and Henty’s young soldiers constituted a rallying call which, ideologically speaking, was potentially as powerful as Lord Kitchener’s later appeal for national solidarity: ‘Your Country Needs You!’. As Dawson informs us, ‘imperial imaginings’ were diffused throughout contemporary culture, and ‘images of British soldier heroes and stories of their colonial adventures assumed a new importance at the very centre of these imaginings’

(1994: 145). Veteran soldiers are portrayed as entirely comfortable with the arrival of a young officer class: 'I would rather have a young officer than an old one [...] I feel sure that he has got his head screwed on the right way' (Henty 1898: 242). Terence O'Connor, Henty's young protagonist in *With Moore at Corunna*, is given command of a company of Portuguese infantrymen. When questioned about the willingness of his troops to obey orders he modestly replies: 'it is not I, it is the uniform [...] they obey me when they won't obey their own officers' (308), thereby synthesising the two ideologies of youthful competence and nationalistic superiority. This self-effacing modesty among courageous young officers is a recurrent ideological motif in Henty's novels. When O'Connor is asked: "How did you come to be a staff-officer of the English general?" he simply replies: "I have had awfully good luck" (307).

MacKenzie offers some penetrating insights into the ideological workings of fictional discourses of imperialism: 'the most compelling virtue of fiction as a vehicle for ideology is that it appeals to and employs the reader's imagination' (1986: 76). He contends that 'the elaborated idea of [...] the battle or the expedition, when set in the shapely world of art, may be far more potent than the messy and unsatisfactory reality' (76).

Kipling's narrator, in the short story 'The Drums of the Fore and Aft' (1889), suggests that 'blackguards commanded by gentlemen' (9) constituted the most effective fighting unit. Although this judgement forms part of the fantasmatics of Kipling's Afghan war-story, it is also uncannily prescient of the composition of many of the battalions being recruited in the early years of the next century, with a young officer class barely out of Public school commanding a broad social spectrum of older soldiers. War historian Leonard Smith informs us that 'the French military hierarchy remained far more heterogeneous in class origin than, for example, its British

counterpart. Demographically inferior France could not afford the luxury of high class barriers' (1994: 79).

Nonetheless, these polemical concepts of the vigour of youth versus the wisdom of experience had also become ideological issues in France. The many examples of young military heroes in the adventure fiction of Loti (Jean Peyral in *Le Roman d'un Spahi*; Lieutenant Loti in *Aziyadé*; Sylvester Moan in *Pêcheur d'Islande*) and his contemporaries embody aspirations of a revived and reinvigorated French nation. The French press also played a prominent role in airing this debate. In January 1885, the conservative and staunchly pro-military daily *La Presse* devotes its leading article to the issue and, in a heavily ironic attack on the political opponents of military service, contends that:

Il est des gens qui prétendent volontiers que notre jeune armée n'a ni le sentiment de l'abnégation, ni discipline, ni esprit militaire. Ils s'en vont même répétant que, pour restituer à nos troupes ces mâles vertus qui ont fait la gloire de leurs devanciers, il faudrait revenir à une armée de vieux soldats de profession.²⁴

La Presse refutes strongly the opinion of 'ces gens' by recounting the gallantry of two junior army officers, only recently graduated from the military academy at Saint-Cyr, who have been badly wounded while leading their companies into battle in Tonkin: 'en voici deux qui ont conquis sur le champ de bataille, à moins de vingt-cinq ans, le droit de porter l'insigne de l'honneur sur la poitrine. Ils se sont montrés braves entre les braves'. The unnamed writer of the leading article, digging deep into the history of Gaul to find examples of youthful manly valour and indulging in some revisionist history of the events of 1870, regrets that other newspapers should have cast doubt

²⁴ 'Notre Jeune Armée', *La Presse*, 1 January 1885, p. 1.

upon ‘les mâles vertus qui ont donné un si haut renom à nos troupes depuis la célèbre légion de l’Alouette de l’armée de César jusqu’aux malheureux héros de Metz et de Sedan’.²⁵

For the mass press, the exemplar that best answers the calls for revenge on Germany is a vigorous French youth educated by the wisdom of experience. On 17 July 1890, an article entitled ‘Vingt ans après’ appears in *Le Petit Journal* under the sardonic pseudonym of Jean sans Terre. It commemorates the declaration of war on Prussia twenty years earlier on 15 July 1870, the loss of ‘notre Alsace et notre Lorraine’ and recalls the watchword of the defeated French nation: ‘dans vingt ans, nous les aurons reprises’. It laments the fact that ‘la botte des Prussiens sonne toujours sur le pavé de Metz et de Strasbourg’. As in the article in *La Presse* cited above, the nation’s hopes to end this unpalatable occupation reside in the ideology of a regenerated French youth, inspired by the voices of those who fought valiantly twenty years earlier only to suffer the ignominy of defeat: ‘Faites-vous redire cette vérité par les anciens, avec l’accent qui part du coeur [...] pensez comme eux toujours, jeunes gens, et le grand jour viendra’.²⁶

Propagandist motifs related to revenge on Germany by a renewed French nation had been reflected and refracted²⁷ in French adventure fiction during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A powerful precursor and template for this emergent sub-genre of ‘revenge fiction’ is Erckmann-Chatrian’s *Le Brigadier Frédéric* (1874), subtitled *Histoire d’un Français chassé par les Allemands*. Its

²⁵ The story of Julius Caesar’s Gallic legion, with their distinctive dove helmet device, had been a successful novel, *L’Alouette de Casque*, for Eugène Sue in 1866 and this history is likely to have been known to readers of *La Presse*.

²⁶ ‘Vingt Ans Après’, *Le Petit Journal*, 17 July 1890, p. 1.

²⁷ I borrow this concept of ‘refraction’ from Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship’, in *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. by Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994) p. 128.

protagonist, Brigadier Frédéric, is a forestry officer commanding a force of woodmen in the Rhine valley in Alsace. Following the declaration of war on Prussia by Napoleon III in July 1870, Prussian troops invade the Alsace region, together with hordes of economic migrants who, assisted by the Prussian army, requisition all the natural wealth of the region, together with the employments and the homes of the French Alsatians. Frédéric loses, in turn, his wife, his job, his home, his livestock, his son-in-law and his daughter, remaining alone and embittered with only dreams of revenge to sustain his flagging spirits. The narrator lends particular emphasis to the refusal of Jean Merlin, Frédéric's young son-in-law, to collaborate with the invading forces. Instead, Jean flees the province to join the Provisional forces of Gambetta and his supporters in opposing Prussian rule.

Within a year of its successful publication in France, Erckmann-Chatrian's work had been translated into English by the British clergyman F. A. Malleon and published in London. Using the same metaphor of 'backbone' (connoting character and resilience) employed by Henty, Malleon describes his authors as 'Frenchmen to the backbone, every inch of them; they are French in all the best, and in none of the undesirable, associations connected with that name' (1875: vi). The translator's introduction wholly embraces the same ideological tenor to be found in the narrator's voice in the novel:

We cannot but look upon the seizure of those two fair and rich Provinces of France, and the actual or virtual expatriation of the most French of all the French nation, as a deed utterly unworthy of an age which lays higher claim than any previous age to be guided and controlled by Christian principle in all its most important acts (v).

Inspired, perhaps, by the strong anti-German sentiment that permeates the narration of Brigadier Frédéric's adventures, Malleson, in his Preface, offers only two alternatives to the Prussian invader: 'either the *revanche terrible*, or the graceful and humane concessions on the part of the German conqueror which the strong can well afford to make' (vi). Erckmann-Chatrian's work, published four years after France's defeat by Prussia, constitutes an early example of a sub-genre of French adventure fiction set in the disputed provinces on the borders of France and Prussia. The 'future-war' genre, in which fictional French regiments defeat fictional Prussian invaders of Alsace and Lorraine, was to achieve high popularity in the decade which followed, with Danrit's three-volume adventure novel *La Guerre de Demain* (1898) being the most prominent example.

7 Ideologies of Manhood

The 'mâles vertus', to which *La Presse* alluded in January 1885, had been given vivid expression in late nineteenth-century adventure novels in both Britain and France. In many cases, the word man or *homme* is used as part of a tribute to one of the protagonists by the narrator or an interlocutor and, although unqualified by further description, brings with it a host of associations and imagery. For example, in Verne's *Michel Strogoff*, the Imperial general who introduces Strogoff to the Czar avers: "Votre majesté peut être assurée que Michel Strogoff fera tout ce que peut faire un homme" (1992 [1876]: 44). The weighty import of this last word is reflected in the Czar's response: "C'est un homme, en effet", dit le czar'. Captured by Tartar rebels while on the Czar's secret mission to Siberia, Strogoff is bound and dragged as a prisoner behind one of his captor's horses. Strogoff withstands this treatment without flinching and the narrator once again uses the simple word 'homme', this time qualified by a suitable metaphor, to denote Strogoff's qualities of bravery and

resilience: ‘C’était toujours “l’homme de fer” dont le general Kissoff avait parlé au czar’ (360). Nearing the end of his mission, Strogoff battles treacherous currents and ice floes as he navigates the wintry Angara River on a makeshift raft with two companions. They are in no doubt as to his qualities, and once again the word ‘homme’ is heavy in significance: ‘Et à Michel Strogoff ils pensèrent exactement ce qu’en avait dit le czar à Moscou: “En vérité, c’est un homme!”’ (388). At a time, five years after the Franco-Prussian war, when national sensibilities coalesced around an ideal concept of manhood which would regenerate a defeated nation, the narrator’s account of Strogoff’s heroic exploits, always qualified by the sonorous signifier ‘homme’, are laden with ideological undertones. It is significant that Verne’s narrator chooses consistently to employ the noun ‘homme’ to characterise Strogoff, rather than an adjective such as ‘mâle’ or ‘virile’. There is a hint here that the noun itself brings with it many more ideological undercurrents than a mere signifier of gender would do.

In Britain, Verne’s contemporary, Henty, also sets up the ideal of exemplary masculinity in the context of the historical adventure novel, and his publishers and promoters are in no doubt as to the instructional and improving nature of his works: ‘If any father, godfather, clergyman, or schoolmaster is on the look-out for a good book to give as a present to a boy who is worth his salt, this is the book we would recommend’.²⁸ One of his most commercially successful historical adventure novels recounted Edward III’s battles against the French at Cressy and Poitiers in *St. George for England* (1885). His blurb writers here voice the certainty that an eminently imitable concept of male virtue has been established by Henty: ‘In his own forcible style the author has endeavoured to show that determination and enthusiasm can accomplish marvellous results; and that courage is generally accompanied by

²⁸ From advertising material contained inside back cover of 1898 first edition of *With Moore at Corunna*.

magnanimity and gentleness' (8). Here emerge, in a single sentence, five characteristics that recur in late-Victorian representations of exemplary masculinity: determination, enthusiasm, courage, magnanimity and gentleness. In the same manner as Verne's narrator, Henty's narrator, too, demonstrates these virtues by depictions of young adventure heroes in action, although he does allow himself the occasional moralising reflection on the brave deeds of his protagonists: 'it is to the man that plans, organises and infuses his own spirit into those under his command, that everything is due' (326).

Henty's contemporary (and to some extent his competitor)²⁹ was Rider Haggard. Haggard, too, sets up the concept of a 'man', unembroidered by other qualification, but standing alone as a motivational icon. One such figure is that of Sir Henry Curtis in *King Solomon's Mines*. Here, the masculine virtues lauded by Henty's publicists are conflated with the sheer physical dominance of Curtis. Allan Quatermain, Haggard's narrator, returns continuously to Curtis's physical stature as being evocative of his moral strength. The similarly brave and muscular African warrior Ignosi glances at Curtis and says: 'we are men, thou and I' (2006 [1885]: 34). Haggard's narrative works in a complex way in these passages, being both seemingly conciliatory as well as condescendingly racist. The many differences in culture and attitude between the British adventurer and the 'native' warrior that have been pointed up earlier in the narrative are partly resolved by this shared quality of manhood between Ignosi and Curtis. Quatermain, Haggard's narrator, seals this pact. As Curtis and Ignosi put on their armour for battle, Quatermain opines: 'I never saw before two such splendid men' (125).

²⁹ MacKenzie estimates peak annual sales of Henty's novels at between 150,000 and 250,000 (1984: 220). Butts, in his introduction to Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* informs us that Cassells sold 31,000 copies in the first twelve months of publication (2006 [1885]: vii).

Extreme physical reactions constitute another sign through which ideologies of exemplary masculinity are inscribed within the adventure novel. For example, Michel Strogoff undergoes changes of colour in his complexion that denote mood in a manner corresponding to the medieval medical conventions of the four humours. In particular, the humour of blood characterises his physical response to moments of great danger, as when he is unexpectedly confronted in an inn by the traitor Ivan Ogareff but cannot defend himself against insults for fear of betraying his mission: ‘une rougeur qui ne devait pas être la rougeur de la honte, avait remplacé la pâleur de son mâle visage’ (1992 [1876]: 169). This trait of Strogoff’s instinctual physical responses to situations of danger and stress is one that recurs through the adventure genre at the turn of the century and is, for example, one of the ways in which Sir Henry Curtis’s manly qualities are demonstrated in *King Solomon’s Mines* (2006 [1885]: 145).

In all of the examples cited above, there is no single character trait or figure of rhetoric that could be characterised as overtly ideological in nature. Nonetheless, the composite representation of the adventure hero in each novel, built up cumulatively by a series of physical and emotional reactions to events and opponents, provides exemplars which, in the words of Henty’s publicists, are ‘graphic, exciting, realistic’ and have ‘the tendency to the formation of an honourable, manly and even heroic character’ (1898: 9). In this way, the narrative of the adventure novel has the capacity to imbue ideological concepts with a subtlety not habitually present in press reports and legislative polemics.

Literary scholar Michael Holquist, in his introduction to Bakhtin’s ‘Discourse in the Novel’, provides a research framework that is eminently suitable for analysing the narrative workings of the novels of Henty, Haggard, Kipling, Loti,

Verne, Erckmann-Chatrian and other adventure authors cited above. Holquist synthesises one of Bakhtin's fundamental arguments when he writes that 'so militantly protean a form as the novel raises serious problems for those who seek to confine it to the linear shape of most histories' (1990 [1981]: xxvii). The inherently loose narrative structure of many adventure novels, typically spread across two or more continents and sometimes more than one decade, with a cast of thinly drawn protagonists from which only one or two are detached and depicted in bold brush-strokes, qualifies them under Holquist's (and Bakhtin's) categorisation as 'militantly protean', in the sense that they are variable and versatile in the way in which ideologies are inscribed within them. Examples of the ideological workings of narrative in adventure fiction are the conventions of almost exclusively male narrators, and accounts of colonial expeditions, always told from the point of view of the European masculine hero penetrating the undiscovered territories of potential colonial conquests. Holquist explores Bakhtin's theory that the novel 'dramatises the gaps that always exist between what is told and the telling of it, continually experimenting with social, discursive and narrative asymmetries' (xxviii). This formula is valuable for an ideological reading of adventure fiction. For example, the 'gaps' between what is told and the telling of it abound in Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*. The novel is narrated by Quatermain, a middle-aged game hunter, who invites the reader's confidence by his self-effacing, level headed mien. This quiet, matter-of-fact narrative voice is a vivid counterpoint to the accounts of violent death and the discourses of racism and sexism that permeate the narrative, this contrast being illustrative of the 'gaps' and the 'narrative asymmetries' seen by Bakhtin as inherent to the novel form. Jann Matlock attributes a propaganda effect to Haggard's work, which, she suggests, participated in 'a fantasy that helped the architects of the Boer

War justify leading 22,000 British men to their deaths'. Matlock summarises the view of some Haggard critics that *King Solomon's Mines* 'gave young British men a sense of place and a desire to go to Africa, to seek their fortune there, to become part of the Imperial adventure'.³⁰ Although evidence of a direct motivational effect of this sort is impossible to demonstrate, a broad range of ideological motifs, some of which I outline above, emerge from my reading of *King Solomon's Mines*, which was advertised by its publishers as 'the most amazing book ever written' (Butts 2006: vii).

8 Concepts of Sexism, Racism and Classism

One of the most problematic aspects of the adventure fiction genre in the late nineteenth century is the frequency with which race, gender and class prejudice are interwoven with the narrative. This is not only in the spoken dialogue of the protagonists, but also in the workings of the narrative. These act, as Dawson contends in his analysis of 'heroic storytelling', as a means by which 'the heroism and virtue of the patriotic soldier is secured, not by his actions, but by their narration in terms of the quest structure' (1994: 56). In what follows, I make use of Williams's third definition of ideology as 'the general process of the production of meanings and ideas' (1977: 55). I argue that discourses of gender, race and class prejudice constituted some of the means by which ideologies of exemplary manhood were produced through strategies of condescension and contrast. To illustrate this process, I cite examples of the role of women and of minority racial groups in four works of British adventure fiction by G. A. Henty, *The Young Franc-tireurs* (1872), *The Young Colonists* (1885), *Sturdy and Strong* (1888) and the short story 'Torpedo-boat 240' (1900). I cite comparable instances of racism and gender bias in French literary and journalistic discourses later in this chapter.

³⁰ See Jann Matlock, 'King Solomon's Mines', in *Moving Images of the British Empire* (www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/1067, 2010).

Women in Henty's works typically play one of three possible roles. They are cast as an inhibition to the actions of the masculine hero, as a passive stimulus to these actions, or they are marginalised completely. I will illustrate the first and third of these roles with reference to *The Young Franc-tireurs*, Henty's fantasmatic account of the adventures of two young British soldiers who join the French irregular forces in opposing the Prussian invasion of 1870-71. Mrs. Barclay, as she is named consistently in the novel, is the French wife of a decommissioned hero of the British colonial army, now resident in Dijon. Her two sons, Ralph and Percy, ardently wish to join the French militia as sharpshooters. The first part of the novel is concerned with their ambition to fight, contrasted with their mother's ambition to keep them at home. The argument is finally settled with some help from Captain Barclay, their father. They are jointly able to prevail upon her by assuring her that they are fitter ('stouter') and stronger than their French contemporaries (1872: 18). I will pass quickly over the catalogue of brave and resourceful actions undertaken by the two soldiers during their campaign against the Prussians and go straight to the concluding pages of the book where the two soldiers return to their maternal home. Very little emphasis is given to the reunion of the young men with their mother. Instead, a brief synopsis is given of their new careers back home. Ralph, promoted to the rank of Major, stays in the regular army, while Percy studies for the Bar, 'where he has done exceedingly well' (160). No domestic details, no sweethearts or wives, no offspring, in short no encumbrances on the fulfilment of their manly ambitions. Henty's narrator has provided us with a picture of femininity that is either restrictive (upon the masculine hero) or marginalised.

In Henty's *The Young Colonists*, the basic formulaic plot elements remain the same. The narrative structure also works to cast the female character as an

impediment to the enactment of exemplary masculinity. Tom Jackson and Richard Humphreys, the latter the son of a Derbyshire farmer, join Richard's parents who buy a farm in Southern Africa at the time of the first Boer War (1880-81). The boys are keen to be engaged in the conflict. Richard's mother is opposed to the idea: 'Father says very likely we may buy a farm in the Transvaal, but mother does not seem to like the accounts of the Dutchmen, or Boers as they are called, who live there, and says she would rather have English neighbours' (1885: 27). The narrative combines three of the prejudices (race, class and gender) commonly found in adventure fiction. The Boers are reviled, both because they are Dutch and because they are largely immigrant smallholders, as distinct from British landowning classes. They are characterised as 'sullenly hostile or openly insolent' (272). Women are marginalised as being a restraint on men who are bent on a life of adventure. In both instances, the credentials of the masculine adventure hero are enhanced by contrast with those, it is implied, who are of inferior race, class, or of a weaker sex.

Another plot function typical of adventure fiction is the characterisation of women as helpless victims of fate or of circumstances, who are in need of the action of the exemplary male to rescue them from destitution or danger. So, for example, in Henty's moralistic adventure novel *Sturdy and Strong* (subtitled *How George Andrews Made his Way*) the first stimulus to George's life of ambition, opportunity, perseverance and hard work is the plight of his mother, the widow of a barrister, who is sent to the workhouse, being unable to find regular employment as her eyesight fails. In the course of his picaresque history, he retrieves stolen property, escapes drowning, and is badly burned while trying to extinguish a barn fire. The second springboard to George's success in life is his act of bravery in saving a helpless girl from certain death in milling machinery by putting his foot into the works, an act of

sacrifice for which he is rewarded by the girl's grateful father with a fine education and a career as an engineer. In both instances, women are faceless ciphers whose only role is to create the opportunity for George Andrews to excel.

A similar role is given by Henty's narrator to a wealthy young Canadian woman (allusively named Miss Aspen), who boards the torpedo boat of the heroic Lieutenant Winter as one of a group of visitors in Henty's short-story 'Torpedo-boat 240: A Tale of the Naval Manoeuvres' (1900). The boat is driven out to sea in a heavy storm. Winter acquits himself with distinction in saving his passengers. As the boat is involved in a collision and begins to take in water, Winter springs into action: 'Winter had again run down into the saloon, which was by this time full of terrified passengers. "Ladies and gentlemen", he said in a loud clear voice that made itself heard above the confusion, "I should advise you all to go on deck at once"' (1900: 32). Miss Aspen is reluctant to leave the sinking boat. Again, Lieutenant Winter acts with gallantry and resolve: 'Winter sprang onto the bulwarks and dragged her up, clasped her in his arms and jumped overboard' (32). Winter wins Miss Aspen's heart with this act of selfless bravery. They are rescued and subsequently married. Winter spends much of his time sailing a newly acquired motor-launch, which he christens *Torpedo Boat 240*. Once again, the female character acts as a plot function to enable acts of exemplary masculinity. The leisure pursuits of the married Lieutenant also hint at what is perhaps his first love.

Was Henty's fiction alone in its casual denigration of women and minorities (which for him include foreigners and the lower social classes)? To address this question I explore whether his work is representative of a set of broadly held views that found expression in the adventure fiction of the late nineteenth century. Dawson argues that 'the tradition of British adventure has furnished idealised, wish-fulfilling

forms of masculinity to counter anxieties generated in a social world that is deeply divided along the fracture lines of ethnicity and nation, gender and class' (1994: 282). Deirdre David appears to be even more convinced than Dawson with regard to the paranoia and ideological bias of Haggard's adventure fiction. She characterises *She* as 'a wildly misogynistic text whose fears and fantasies disclose the late-Victorian panic about uncontrollable women' (1995: 192). Prejudice and male supremacy are endemic to the narratives of adventure novels by Haggard, Henty, Doyle, Stevenson, Kipling and their contemporaries, and often take the form of xenophobia and misogyny.

It is not only in Britain that sets of similar attitudes permeate adventure fiction. Casual miscegenation is a recurrent theme in Pierre Loti's colonial adventure novels. Loti's heroes, unlike most of their British counterparts, form relationships with indigenous women. Literary scholar Matt Matsuda perceives a strategy behind these depictions of racial intermarriage: 'Loti used the formulations of matrimony to temper and charm legacies of colonial warfare, unequal treaties, exploited mistresses, and deadly epidemic disease' (2005: 19). In *Aziyadé*, the naval officer hero assigned to a posting in Salonica admits to having 'plusieurs maîtresses desquelles je n'ai aimé aucune' (1927[1876]: 82). In *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, the young officer Jean Peyral 'était amant de Fatou-Gaye, jeune-fille noire, qui avait jété sur lui je ne sais quelle séduction sensuelle et impure, je ne sais quelle charme d'amulette' (1927[1881]: 23). Other forms of racial prejudice permeate the French adventure novel. In *Aziyadé*, Loti describes Salonica as 'une ville sâle et noire où fleurissent les vices de Sodome' (82) and in *Au Maroc* he describes the Jewish quarter of Mehinez as 'une malpropreté qui étonne, même après celle des rues arabes, des puanteurs sans nom' (1927[1889]: 316).

The prejudices cited above are broadly representative of what could be found at the end of the nineteenth century in both the British and the French adventure genres. To what extent did adventure novels act as mouthpieces for such views and in what measure did they reflect prevailing social attitudes? A preliminary means of addressing this question is by analysing a few examples of similar discourses from the mass press in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Journalistic style and editorial opinion are often reflections of society's value systems and prejudices. Instances of racism, sexism and classism abound in the popular daily newspapers of the 1890s. In *Le Petit Parisien* of 16 April 1895, for example, a report is published on a visit to the Zambesi by the Société des Traditions Populaires. The correspondent does not hold back in his account of the shortcomings of his hosts: 'Là, il n'y a pas à en douter, on est avec de bonnes brutes, et ces noirs ne se piquent pas, assurément, de la moindre gallanterie'.³¹ Reporting on a movement in Italy to enfranchise women, *Le Petit Parisien* sounds a warning to its readers: 'Or, dans les pays latins, si l'on a le suffrage des femmes, on va devant soi contre vents et marées. Soyons patient, nous verrons de ce côté-là des choses intéressantes'.³² At a time when the debate between legislators and pressure groups on female suffrage was gaining traction in both Britain and continental Europe, the serialised romantic adventure novel in the *Illustrated London News* expresses no doubts about the appropriate behaviour of a young woman entering society: 'You will dress as they dress. And you must speak as they speak. And you must learn the pretty little nothings, the graces, the pretences, the affectations: they mean nothing, but they please'.³³ Although this style of characterisation of women as passive helpmates is in no way comparable to the

³¹ *Le Petit Parisien*, 16 April 1895, p. 1.

³² *Le Petit Parisien*, 9 April 1895, p. 2.

³³ Sir Walter Besant, 'A Fountain Sealed', *Illustrated London News*, 9 January 1897.

excesses of gender and racial prejudice that I have already cited from the works of Haggard and Loti, it is commensurate with the portrayals of marginalised and cipher-like women cited above from the works of Henty. These three citations from popular daily and weekly publications are illustrative of discourses of racism and sexism in the mass press and appear to reflect similar value systems to those found in adventure fiction.

9. *Narrative Structure as a Vehicle for the Dissemination of Ideology*

It is not only in representations of exemplary masculinity that ideology can be discerned in nineteenth-century adventure fiction. Narrative formulae, such as the exploration quest, are also powerful ideological vehicles. Bakhtin and Medvedev go so far as to call the ‘artistic structure’ of the literary work, ideologically speaking, ‘the most essential thing’.³⁴

In order to analyse the means by which the narrative structure of adventure novels inscribed ideologies of exemplary masculinity, it is essential to set the nineteenth-century adventure genre in the context of the other principal textual practices of the day. Why, for example, has adventure fiction received such limited critical attention and scholarly interest in comparison with the Realist or Naturalist schools, or even with other genres of popular fiction such as the detective novel?³⁵ Green discerns what he calls the ‘traditional gap or split between serious reading and adventure reading’ in Britain (1991: 3), while Seillan contends that none of the great French writers of the nineteenth century embraced colonial adventure themes (1996: 101). Moretti sees the critical attention lavished on the canon of nineteenth-century

³⁴ For an analysis of Bakhtin’s theory of narrative, see *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. by Pam Morris, (London: Edward Arnold, 1994) p. 130

³⁵ Although Victorian detective fiction has received more scholarly attention in recent years, Reitz notes that Arthur Conan Doyle lamented the fact that ‘Victorian England’s most famous detective distracted him from writing in a more serious tradition: big historical novels that could bring the British Empire to life’ (2004: xiii).

fiction as a theological exercise: ‘very solemn treatment of very few texts taken very seriously’ (2000: 49). By contrast, he admits that he doesn’t know how to think about the adventure novel (159). Cawelti highlights the gap between formulaic adventure fiction and ‘serious or high literature’ (1976: 38). Seillan also assigns low status to the adventure genre when he states that literary quality has not been one of his criteria in selecting the corpus of one hundred adventure novels which he analyses (1996: 101). How might differences in narrative structure, plot, and characterisation between adventure fiction and the Realist or Naturalist novel account for this type of scholarly disdain for the adventure genre? In addressing this question, I first consider some of the ways in which Victorian novels ‘wrote within the dominant ideologies of their times’ (Gallagher 2006: 1) and how they became, according to Miller, ‘the primary spiritual exercise of an entire age’ (1988: x).

9.1 *Realism and Naturalism compared with Adventure Fiction.*

Two of the hallmarks of Realist and Naturalist fiction set these movements apart from many of the adventure novels analysed in this thesis.³⁶ First, an emphasis on the

³⁶ Scholarly definitions of nineteenth-century Realism and Naturalism abound. It is not credible to generalise about movements with so many nuances of interpretation and with some notable candidates for membership who were reluctant to be categorised under either heading (Flaubert wrote to Maupassant, on Christmas Day 1876, regarding ‘des mots vides de sens comme celui-là: le Naturalisme’ and goes on to describe *Réalisme* as ‘une ineptie du même calibre’ [1998 (1876): 687]). To provide some focus in comparing these two prominent movements with their contemporary genre of adventure fiction, therefore, I have adopted elements of the theoretical framework of the French art critic and novelist Champfleury (Jules François Félix Fleury-Husson) and of the art critic, journalist and liberal politician Jules-Antoine Castagnary. Champfleury wrote for *l’Artiste* in the 1840s. He formulated the principles of the *École Réaliste* and gave prominence in his articles to the paintings of Gustave Courbet and to Balzac’s *Comédie Humaine*, both of which he admired for their truthful representations of ordinary people in their everyday *milieux*. Literary scholar Luc Herman cites Champfleury’s ‘programmatic stress on *sincérité*’ (1996: 13), as expressed in the short-lived periodical *le Réalisme* (1856-57) and his ‘courageous attack against romanticism as embodied by Victor Hugo’ (1996: 12). Literary critic Harry Levin captures the contemporary mission of Champfleury evocatively: ‘Balzac and Courbet were the avenging gods and Champfleury was their

inner psychological state of the protagonists sets much Realist and Naturalist fiction apart from formula adventure narratives, which are largely driven by the rapid forward movement of the plot.³⁷ Second, particularly in Naturalist novels, the extraordinary attention to detail in the description of the setting, the domestic arrangements of the characters and their personal accoutrements is a narrative motif infrequently encountered in adventure novels, where the survival of the hero against physical threats is the driving force of the narrative. One technique for defining what a literary movement *is*, is to establish what it *is not*. What are the characteristics of the Naturalist novel that are not frequently encountered in adventure fiction? One of the most fervent proponents (and exponents) of the school of Naturalism was Émile Zola who, in 1880, brought together a series of articles that set out a manifesto for Naturalist doctrine in *Le Roman expérimental*. He based his methodology on Claude Bernard's *Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale* (1865) and contended that 'si la méthode expérimentale conduit à la connaissance de la vie physique, elle doit conduire aussi à la connaissance de la vie passionnelle et intellectuelle' (1880: 10). In Zola's *Les Romanciers Naturalistes*, published the following year, he sets out the three principal characteristics of Naturalist fiction. The first is 'l'absence de tout élément romanesque' and an insistence on 'la vie exacte donnée dans un cadre admirable de facture' (1881: 126). The second is the requirement that 'le romancier tue les héros, s'il n'accepte que le train ordinaire de l'existence commune' (127). The

publicist and prophet' (1963: 69). Champfleury's contemporary Castagnary first coined the term *Naturalisme* in 1863 in reference to the work of Jean-Francois Rafaëlli, who painted Parisian street scenes and studies of the labourers and *chiffonniers* (rag-pickers) who inhabited them. Castagnary's review of the *Salon de 1868* defines Naturalism as all art directly confronting contemporary life (Théophile Thoré [1870]: *Salons de W. Bürger 1861-1868*, 413-416).

³⁷ Matlock reports that 'Balzac's contemporaries assaulted him for his physiological mode, for his dissections of the human psyche, and for his obsession with detail' (1994: 167).

third is that the Naturalist author should ‘affecte de disparaître complètement derrière l’action qu’il raconte’ (128). These hallmarks of Naturalist fiction are notably absent from most adventure narratives, which typically present the reader with a hero in the antique or epic mould, doing battle with unfamiliar adversaries or inclement climates in exotic settings where the voice of the author as narrator is often strident in many of the value judgements interwoven with the narrative.

Adventure fiction is not alone, however, in its recourse to the epic tradition for the structure of its narratives. Zola’s *Germinal* (1885), which complies in most respects with his three-point definition of Naturalism outlined above, adopts the epic structure in its portrayal of Étienne Lantier’s arrival at, ordeals in, and departure from the coalfields of northeast France. Zola uses the epic structure skilfully to enhance the impact of his account of the conflict between capital and labour in the mining villages of Anzin. His hero arrives at night on a long straight road across the barren countryside, cold, hungry and desperate for a job. He observes the conditions of extreme deprivation, hardship and poverty in the mining communities. *Germinal* depicts through Lantier’s eyes the social injustices which afflict the miners’ families. He effectively adopts the role of the narrator and, by doing so, is able to communicate vividly the impact that these abject conditions have upon him. As with the Antique epic hero, he suffers, together with his newfound companions, the drudgery of life underground and emerges with his social awareness and his resolve to remedy injustice hardened by his experience. He leaves the coalfield as he has come, alone and empty-handed, across the barren countryside back towards Paris. The epic drama of opposed ideologies which unfolds in *Germinal* is rich in the symbolism of the underground *Hades* of the Antique world and the renaissance concept of the infernal region as a place of atonement. Étienne’s survival and escape from it, no longer a

vigorous and handsome young man but a virtual skeleton with his hair turned white, engender a catharsis of epic proportions. In spite of some parallels between *Germinal's* epic plot structure and that of much adventure fiction, however, adventure novels do not engage as a rule in the intense psychological drama which is central to Zola's account of class wars and labour versus capital. In this way, they do not participate in what Cawelti calls 'the complex and ambiguous analyses of character and motivation that characterise mimetic literature' (1976: 14).

Cawelti's assertion that 'a constant flow of action avoids the necessity of exploring character with any degree of complexity' (19) is well illustrated by Verne's treatment of Michel Strogoff or Phileas Fogg and Haggard's characterisation of Allan Quatermain or Ludwig Holly, none of whom are provided with family history or any account of what has made them what they are. This is in contrast, for example, to Zola's saga of the Rougon-Macquart family, where detailed lineage and fictional biographical details are fundamental to the structure of the narrative. Brooks contends that 'the parentless protagonist frees an author from struggle with pre-existing authorities' (1992: 115) and, although this narrative device is by no means unique to adventure novels in the nineteenth century (cf. the many orphaned protagonists in Dickens's works), it allows the adventure novelist to construct a narrative which derives principally from the immediacy of a fast-moving plot rather than from any pre-conceived psychological factors. Brooks goes so far as to identify plot as the principal characteristic of popular literature, while contending that 'plot has been disdained as the element of narrative that least sets off and defines high art' (4). Within this framework of a plot-driven narrative, how does the characterisation of the nineteenth-century adventure hero differ from that of his counterparts in Realist or Naturalist fiction?

One of the key determinants of the agency of the adventure hero is the quest structure within which he operates. Unlike the Realist novel, adventure fiction rarely offers irony, or subtle nuances of moral principles, or changes of heart wrought by experience. Instead, as Brantlinger observes, it ‘simplifies reality by rendering it in terms of absolute, Manichean antithesis: good versus evil’ (2001: 158). The adversaries that the adventure hero meets while on his quest of discovery, exploration, conquest or rescue are invariably one-dimensional, one of the most vivid examples being King Twala of Kukuanaaland in *King Solomon’s Mines*. The final single-combat to the death between Twala and Sir Henry Curtis is emblematic of this ‘Manichean antithesis’ in every detail of action and characterisation, with no opportunity missed to contrast the deceitful and ungallant behaviour of the ‘savage’ with the exemplary, chivalric, honourable stance taken by his noble, fair-haired British adversary (2006 [1885]: 145). In this way, the construction of the manly hero in Haggard’s work embodies Bakhtin’s contention that ‘in the epic, there’s one unitary and singular belief system’ (1990 [1935]: 334).

What further light can Bakhtin’s thinking shed on how we might distinguish the nineteenth-century Realist or Naturalist fictional hero from his counterpart in adventure fiction? For Bakhtin, the *Bildungsroman* typical of the Realist school is ‘where the very idea of a man’s becoming and developing, based on his own choices, makes necessary a generous and full representation of the social worlds, voices, languages of the era’ (411). No such development or social context characterises the adventure hero. We frequently leave him as we find him, perhaps with his muscles hardened a little by his strenuous quest, but with largely the same set of ideological principles which have prompted his original mission to discover, explore, conquer or avenge. One of Bakhtin’s most insightful observations on nineteenth-century

literature is the notion of ‘testing the hero’. A test of the hero and of his discourse is seen as ‘the most fundamental organising idea in the novel’ (388). By contrast, although the protagonist of adventure fiction undergoes innumerable physical trials of his manly valour, adventure narratives most typically conform to epic conventions where ‘an atmosphere of doubt surrounding the hero’s heroism is unthinkable’ (388). Perhaps for this reason, the *dénouement* of the adventure novel is typically the most unsatisfactory part of the narrative. No deep psychological *impasse* has been breached, no moral dilemma resolved, and no tragic fatal flaw has caused the adventure hero’s demise. He has endured all or any of the challenges posed by hardship, hunger, fatigue, disease, pursuit, injury, imprisonment, torture and shipwreck, but emerges largely unchanged in demeanour and ideology. For example, although Tadié contends that ‘Fogg et Strogoff mariés sont eux-mêmes différents’ (1982: 11), the narrative device of marrying off two such idiosyncratic heroes to pretty young orphans in the final pages of *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* and *Michel Strogoff*, respectively, sits unhappily with the driving force of the preceding narrative and is an unsatisfactory and implausible agent of change for two archetypically one-dimensional and inflexible adventurers.

In this respect, some of Loti’s adventure novels diverge from the narrative *topoi* of the adventure genre. Both the Lieutenant in *Aziyadé* and Jean Peyral in *Le Roman d’un Spahi* do experience some kind of spiritual redemption following their earlier exploitative and cynical behaviour, before meeting their deaths at the hands of Kurdish and Senegalese rebels respectively, thus qualifying them both, potentially, as tragic heroes. Although Loti has never been ‘canonised’ in the same way as the French Realist and Naturalist novelists of the nineteenth century, he was much more highly respected in his own lifetime than he has been since, and can make some claim

to a middle ground between the psychological subtleties and detailed settings of Realism and Naturalism and the formulaic narratives and one-dimensional characterisation of serialised adventure fiction. Leaving aside this partial exception to the conventional characterisation of the adventure hero, many of the protagonists of the French adventure genre conform to a set of well-defined principles, found, for example in d'Ivoi's *Lavarède* and *Cigale*, or Bousсенard's *Robin*. These are succinctly summarised by Tadié when he identifies 'un héros idéal, entièrement fonctionnel, sans aucune faille, sans aucune ambiguïté, venu droit de l'épopée antique' (1982: 79). Variants of this theme, however, do exist and include creations such as Bousсенard's *Friquet* who, as the archetypal *gamin de Paris*, exemplifies a style of happy-go-lucky bravado and an ironic detachment from the risks involved in his exploits, later to be found at the beginning of the next century in characters such as Gaston Leroux's *Joseph Rouletabille* and Maurice Leblanc's *Arsène Lupin* (and in Britain in E. W. Hornung's *Raffles*). In spite of these variations on a theme, the adventure hero in both Britain and France largely conforms to a specific set of ideological precepts revolving around valour, honour, patriotism and selflessness, linked to an unshakeable assurance of his own moral right to assert his will on both friends and foes. In this respect, they differ markedly from some of the psychologically complex characterisations to be found in contemporary Realist and Naturalist fiction. One other important defining trait is fundamental in differentiating adventure fiction from the Realist and Naturalist schools: a formulaic hero typically demands a formulaic plot in order to exhibit his set of heroic qualities to best advantage.

The narrative conventions of adventure fiction provided an easily accessible and comfortably predictable formula for the inscription of ideologies of exemplary

masculinity. In this way, they acted as an antidote and perhaps as an inspiration for those who deplored the degeneracy of modern urban society. This provision by adventure fiction of alternative models for a defeated and declining nation represented one strategy for pointing up the contrast between contemporary social decay and a future distinguished by acts of bravery and heroism. There were, of course, other less comfortable means of suggesting the urgent need for social change. Zola's Naturalist fiction did not shy away from painting contemporary society in its most abject degeneracy. Rather than offering alternatives in the form of manly heroes, many of his *Rougon-Macquart* cycle of novels are a mandate for social change based on the horrors of actuality. One of the most vivid examples of this potential of late nineteenth-century Naturalist fiction to inspire social change is Zola's *Nana* (1880). Rather than offering a hero as a model for emulation, *Nana* offers a picture of depravity and dissolute behaviour that is so shocking in its outcomes that ideologies of reform are readily discerned in its pages. In the final pages of the novel, Nana's legendary youthful beauty is ravaged by smallpox and we witness her end in a fetid hotel room, a putrid mess of puss and blood lying in the shadow as her courtesan friends try to avoid looking at her. Naturalist fiction and adventure fiction, in a curious symbiosis inspired by the social and political concerns of the day, have both mandated change, one by a realistic depiction of degeneracy, the other by offering inspirational manly heroism to a degenerate and defeated nation. In this way the Naturalist school provided a stimulus for change while adventure fiction provided an alternative model for emulation.

9.2 Narrative Structure of Adventure Fiction versus Realism and Naturalism.

The defining scholarship on formula stories as art and popular culture was produced in the 1970s by John Cawelti and still lends itself readily to any analysis of

narrative structure in adventure novels. In Cawelti's view, 'one cannot write a successful adventure story about a social character type that the culture cannot conceive in heroic terms' (1976: 6). This mandate effectively excludes the majority of Realist and Naturalist 'social character types', such as Charles Bovary, Frédéric Moreau, Eugène de Rastignac or Coupeau (the Parisian roofer who marries Gervaise Macquart in Zola's *L'Assommoir*). None of these comply with the model of functional, flawless, unambiguous heroism suggested by Tadié. Neither do their intricately drawn histories follow an identifiable formula. By contrast, the adventure hero brings a set of recognisable traits to a recognisable situation. This familiarity with a formula, for readers of adventure fiction, is one of the ways in which the genre exemplifies Culler's theory of how 'readers produce meaning by making connections, filling in things left unsaid, anticipating and conjecturing and then having their expectations disappointed or confirmed' (1997: 123). In most instances, expectations are confirmed by the adventure hero's despatch of seemingly impossible obstacles, his determination and resilience, and the attainment of his quest objectives. These conventions provide the framework within which the adventure narrative exercised its appeal for mass-market audiences, which included the two million readers of the mass press in the 1880s and 1890s in Paris.

Although many Realist and Naturalist novels were also serialised (e.g. Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* cycle), the adventure narrative exhibits particular characteristics imposed by publication in a mass serialised medium, which demanded suspense and unanswered questions at the end of each chapter in order to prompt continued subscription and to attract new buyers. Tadié captures evocatively the way in which the plot elements of the typical adventure narrative (in this case Verne's *Michel Strogoff*) are organised by chapter in order to sustain reader interest and loyalty: 'il

faut donc un obstacle par chapitre, et par étape du voyage, les chapitres correspondant le plus souvent à celles-ci' (1982: 80). This structural formula represented a complicity between the author and the reader in which individual twists and turns in the plot are eagerly anticipated, often within a narrative structure that is conventional, relatively easy to follow and thus reassuringly familiar to the mass audiences that consumed adventure fiction. Publishers were also well aware of the importance of these narrative structures. Cawelti sums up this three-way relationship succinctly: 'well-established conventional structures are particularly essential to the creation of formula literature and reflect the interests of audiences, creators and distributors' (1976: 9). I will consider these three 'interests' in turn.

First, the interests of audiences were enjoyment and entertainment, delivered by a fast-moving plot and epic styles of heroism, couched in language that was accessible to a broadly literate, but largely uncultured, popular market. Second, the conventions of a formulaic narrative style enabled a prolific output from the adventure writer, whose plot outlines were largely predetermined by the quest conventions of a challenge, a voyage, a band of comrades, a set of obstacles, a reverse in fortune, its resolution and the final attainment of both the objective and the return to safety. The creative challenge of the successful adventure writer was to re-invent continuously, within this basic structure, the geographical settings, the period of history, the objective to be won, the obstacles to be overcome and (within a set of tightly prescribed margins) the traits of the hero and his companions. Third, the interests of the publisher were paramount and closely aligned with the interests of readers and writers outlined above. Both Pierre-Jules Hetzel and Calmann Lévy (publishers of Verne and Loti respectively) exercised significant editorial control over the work of their authors and, especially in the case of Hetzel, moulded the *oeuvre* of his star

writer to meet the conventions of the media which he created (e.g. the *Magasin d'Éducation et de Récréation* in which many of Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires* were first serialised). In this way, the policies of Hetzel and Lévy conformed closely to Cawelti's observation that 'formula stories are created and distributed almost entirely in terms of commercial exploitation' (34).

This commercial exploitation of the serialised adventure novel required that 'l'intensité dramatique croît de chapitre en chapitre' (Tadié 1982: 89) resulting, in the view of Letourneux, in 'un investissement de l'intrigue au detriment de la narration' (2011: 16). A picture emerges, therefore, of a formulaic narrative structure, driven by the needs of the reader and the publisher and providing the prolific writer of adventure fiction with a pre-determined format within which to embroider variations on the adventure theme. Real or imagined exotic countries, fantasised native adversaries, variants on the Antique epic hero, and a series of life-threatening episodes leaving the reader in suspense in the last paragraph of each chapter, were all continuously re-invented within the adventure formula and provided a lucrative project for both authors and publishers. The prolific output of writers of formula adventure fiction is well illustrated by G. A. Henty, who entered into a mutually advantageous contract with the Glasgow publishers Blackie and Son requiring submission of three novels a year, providing part of his total of 122 published works.³⁸ A prolific output, however, seldom results in a long and continuous publication history for an adventure writer. One extreme example of this is R.M Ballantyne, who, Bratton informs us, wrote over a hundred novels of which *The Coral Island* (1858) is the only one 'still remembered and even sometimes read by young people' (1990: vii).

³⁸ See: *Collection of Correspondence and Contracts between George Alfred Henty and his Publishers* (Dartmouth College, Rauner Special Collections Library, MS 1060).

How, then, should we place adventure fiction in relation to other schools of fiction and other textual practices current in the period? Perhaps more than in any other literary form of the late nineteenth century, the publishing requirements of adventure fiction were instrumental in coaching the reader by means of a limited (and limiting) set of narrative conventions of which the fast forward movement of the plot, the quest structure, and the stereotypical manly hero were recognisable features. What David describes as the Victorian novel's 'realistic depiction of social and psychological processes' (2001: 11) is conspicuously absent from the adventure genre. Perhaps for this reason, the late nineteenth-century adventure novel has never enjoyed what Moretti terms the 'solemn treatment' accorded to the Realist and Naturalist novels of the literary canon (2000: 49) and has more often been studied as one of the sociological phenomena of popular culture.

9.3 Exploration Quest Narratives

Williams's second concept of ideology as 'a system of illusory beliefs [...] contrasted with true or scientific knowledge' (1977: 55) is of particular value in framing an analysis of literary and journalistic discourses of exploration and science in the late nineteenth century. Ambitious enterprises such as dangerous voyages of exploration and pioneer flights became popular towards the end of the century and captured the public imagination. The reasons for this can be found in the gradual decline of the colonial soldier hero as a worthy model for disaffected youth. Press reports in the mid-1890s of setbacks and defeats in Madagascar for the French and in South Africa for the British had taken some of the lustre away from the colonial model and, following the so-called scramble for Africa in the 1880s and early 1890s, few new colonial possessions were being added to Empires, which were already

stretching economic and manpower resources to breaking point. MacKenzie contends that the enthusiasm surrounding the British imperial project was effectively extinguished by the end of the century: ‘the outbreak of the Boer War seemed to constitute the final bout of popular imperial fervour’ (1986: 5). Partly for this reason, battles against nature and the elements rather than against rebellious colonial subjects evolved as a sub-genre of the adventure novel and enjoyed considerable success, as evidenced by the million copies of Verne’s *Voyages Extraordinaires* sold between 1866 and 1904 (Gildea 2009: 403). In tracing the evolution of adventure fiction towards the end of the nineteenth century, Letourneux notes the assimilation by the adventure genre of works other than those of military exploits typical of earlier decades. He refers to ‘la fin du XIXe siècle, quand la notion a été forgée, puisque le terme englobait une partie de ce qu’on considère aujourd’hui comme la science fiction’ (2011: 407) and includes under his definition of adventure fiction the ‘roman policier’ and the ‘récit d’espionage’, as well as science fiction (7). This latter emergent sub-genre, best exemplified by the combination of science and nature discerned in Verne’s oeuvre by Macherey, depicted courage and fortitude in hurricanes and on ice floes rather than in hand-to-hand conflict with tribal warriors. Could it also achieve equally satisfactory results in the establishment of exemplary masculine ideals to which a new generation could aspire?

Within the French adventure genre, Verne is a leading exponent of the exploration quest. Macherey makes a convincing argument for the consciously ideological motives of Verne’s work: ‘the ideological programme (the conquest of nature, the social position of science) enters literature and it will express itself there’ (1966: 194). Macherey provides the insight that ‘the French bourgeoisie of the Third Republic found themselves in Verne’s work and tied that work indissolubly to their

own historical moment' (177). He goes on to contend that 'this era has produced a new kind of narrative, one which gives the imaginary its function as reality' (181). Most of Verne's oeuvre complies with Macherey's categorisations. There are, however, notable exceptions. Chris Bongie, for example, shows how *Michel Strogoff* is atypical of the *Voyages Extrordinaires*. In his 1991 study of literature, colonialism and the *fin de siècle*, he endorses Macherey's view that Verne replaces the 'myth of science' in *Michel Strogoff* with a 'novelistic myth'. Nonetheless, the conquest of nature and the social position of science was a central recurrent theme, not only in the majority of Verne's work, but, I will show, in press reports of daring polar expeditions that abounded during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Macherey's concept of an amalgam of the imaginary and the real finds relevant antecedents in the press accounts of daring feats of exploration that proliferated in the late nineteenth century and beyond. Regardless of their nationality, the feats of explorers were often headline news in the national press in both France and England. On 14 January 1885, the London *Morning Post* reports at length on a visit by the British Association for the Advancement of Science to Montreal where they had met the Arctic hero Lieutenant Greely, U.S.A., 'whose sufferings and recent almost miraculous rescue were the theme of every tongue'.³⁹ Embracing a similar ideological stance on the conquest of nature and the social position of science, the *Morning Post's* correspondent reserves his greatest praise for a particular feat of Greely. He is reported to have dragged with him, on his long return trek towards safety, the scientific instrument weighing over one hundred pounds with which he had taken his observations of polar compression and the figure of the earth. General Lefroy, reporting on the visit to Montreal at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute

³⁹ *Morning Post*, 14 January 1885, p. 2.

held on 13 Jan 1885 at the Westminster Palace Hotel, is prompted by Greely's heroic act to a flight of patriotic fervour that is representative of the ideological tenor of the day:

If, from want of wisdom in statesmen, or of patriotism in people, from ignorance of our imperial resources, or want of courage to use them, we allow our present opportunities of colonisation to slip, the future historian of the decline and fall of Britain, whatever we may omit, will not fail to record, to our shame, that she had in her hands the endowment of half a continent, but lacked the vigour to go up and possess the land (2).

Even if read in the context of the *Morning Post's* strong conservative bias, this report is notable for its reactionary bombast. Ranged against the heroic virtues of wisdom, patriotism, courage and vigour are the alternatives of ignorance, omission and shame, all set within an apparent allusion to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as a salutary warning to those who fall short of General Lefroy's expectations of colonial virtue. This style of journalism qualifies under Althusser's description of 'the communications apparatus [...] cramming every citizen with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism etc. by means of the press' (1984: 28). How, specifically, was this 'communications apparatus' put to work in setting up exemplars of masculine prowess at a time when feats of exploration had captured the imagination of mass press?

Someone who would not have disappointed General Lefroy was the Norwegian polar explorer Frithjof Nansen, whose expedition had narrowly beaten the British to the North Pole in 1895. When Nansen was invited to London in February 1897, the *Illustrated London News* was fulsome in its praise of the his achievement, while vaunting the merits of his British hosts:

The truth is, we are a race of hero-worshippers; we have the magnanimity of an imperial world-wide people, lacking the narrow bickering animosities of races that foster the nation caste, and can worship a hero that holds a Norwegian flag best and first, that mans an expedition with his own countrymen, and applies himself exclusively to the honour of his own country.⁴⁰

Nansen was a living exemplar of what Althusser called the ideology of ‘duty’, which he defined as belief in a set of ‘attitudes inscribed in ritual practices according to the correct principles’. (1984: 41). As with Lefroy’s rhetoric, this newspaper report ranges the heroic virtues of magnanimity, honour and patriotism against those of narrow-minded chauvinism. The article evinces a subtle and perhaps somewhat cynical editorial ploy to salvage British self-regard by converting defeat in the race to the pole into a victory of national generosity of spirit and honourable behaviour. In this respect, it resembles British press treatment of events such as Gordon’s campaign in the Sudan, which was turned from a British defeat into a catalogue of incomparable gallantry.

In a similar way, the tactical withdrawal of Major Jean-Baptiste Marchand from a confrontation with the British at Fashoda on the Nile in November 1898 became a glorious act of valour by the time he returned, the following year, to a hero’s welcome in Paris (Berenson 2011: 169). It was not only in Britain that Nansen was lionised. *Le Petit Parisien* on 16 April 1895 carries a fulsome review of Nansen’s account, *La Découverte du Pôle Nord*, setting up this heroic Norwegian’s feats as a

⁴⁰ *Illustrated London News*, 20 February 1897, p. 241.

stimulus to other sailors: ‘La découverte du Pôle Nord. Quelle est l’imagination de marin qui n’a pas été une fois au moins troublée par ces mots?’⁴¹

The formulaic structure of real-life and fictional voyages of exploration in the late nineteenth century afforded ample scope for the ideology of exemplary masculinity. Although there were strong undercurrents of international rivalry, the overt aim of expeditions was the universal desire to conquer nature and, in this way, they harnessed the power of ideological inclusiveness evoked by Eagleton in his appraisal of pragmatic politics: ‘One wants, after all, to advertise one’s own values as natural and universal, rather than as one historical way of life pitted against another’ (1991: xvii). Exploration was an enormously popular literary and journalistic topic. Historian Beau Riffenbergh sums up its appeal: ‘Man’s role as conqueror of the world was a persistent theme during the late nineteenth century: it was perceived that character was built by this challenge and from an early age boys were prepared for competition with nature’ (1993: 33).

The expeditions of international heroes like Nansen and Shackleton and literary creations such as Verne’s *Capitaine Hatteras* were iconic in an age during which exploration of the universe and of the mind were at the forefront of scientific endeavour. Literary scholar Margaret Cohen highlights the commercial motive for many late nineteenth-century voyages of exploration: ‘long-term hopes of profit also drove the exploration of those spaces at the edge of knowledge and beyond’ (2010: 52). An open sea, however, represented for some nineteenth-century thinkers a new freedom of perspective, the most vivid philosophical expression of which was Nietzsche’s notion of the ‘death of God’. It is significant that Nietzsche uses the metaphors of seafaring and exploration to qualify his concept of ‘free spirits’ (Gane

⁴¹ *Le Petit Parisien*, 16 April 1895, p. 1.

2008: 55): ‘at last the horizon seems to us free; even if it is not bright, at last our ships can put out again, no matter what the danger; every daring venture of knowledge is again permitted; the sea, *our* sea, again is there open before us; perhaps there has never been such an open sea’ (55). As putative heroic exemplars, figures such as Nansen and Shackleton, to quote another of Eagleton’s definitions, ‘engage significantly with the wants and desires that people already have, catching up genuine hopes and needs, re-inflecting them in their own peculiar idiom’ (1991: 115). These ‘wants and desires’ included a fascination with the exploits of arctic explorers, ideal raw material for the writers of the international news columns of the mass press. Adventures of exploration formed part of an ideological discourse that opened up for adolescent readers, to borrow Althusser’s words, ‘the path to the freedom, morality and responsibility of adults [...] by knowledge, literature and their liberating virtues’ (1984: 31).

10 *Conclusions: Ideology as Entertainment*

My comparative reading of the discourses of race, class and gender in late nineteenth-century newspapers and magazines convinces me that the adventure novel was by no means alone in embracing such ideologies. As with the other representations of exemplary masculinity (for example the visual and performing arts) the successful transmission of ideological precepts depends in great measure upon the attractiveness of the medium as well as the power of the message. Tosh proposes the theory that, in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, the attractiveness of accounts of colonial adventure as entertainment and as a potential propaganda medium reflected the exacting needs of a declining empire under threat:

The old association of masculinity with adventure resurfaced in the era of high imperialism after 1880— the period of Robert Louis Stevenson and

Rider Haggard as well as Gordon and Kitchener. Domesticated masculinity came under mounting attack, as Englishmen were called upon to colonize the empire and to defend it in difficult times (1999: 7).

MacKenzie's insights enable us further to evaluate how adventure fiction based on historical events formed part of an ideological discourse. For him, the historical novel 'bore a message from a modern imperial race, and the images of England and of English patriotism were part of the energising myth of Empire' (1986:10).

The ideological motifs of the late nineteenth-century adventure novel potentially exert their influence by the very nature of their acceptance by their readers as entertainment rather than pedagogy. A review of G. A. Henty's *The Tiger of Mysore* (1896) in the *Athenaeum* contends that 'Mr. Henty not only concocts a thrilling tale, he weaves fact and fiction together with so skilful a hand that the reader cannot help acquiring a just and clear view of that terrible struggle which gave to us our Indian Empire.'⁴² Here is a vivid illustration, from a prominent publisher of serialised fiction, of the way in which, as Eagleton puts it, 'power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them' (1991: 223). What Eagleton calls the 'tacit' nature of power emerges in the *Athenaeum's* attribution of ideological precepts to a project that is primarily one of entertainment. The 'impact' of imperial power derives from Henty's skilful 'weaving' of fact and fiction. Particularly striking is the author's assumption that Henty's reader will obtain a 'just and clear' view of the events that led to the acquisition of Britain's Indian Empire. It is this confident assurance of the justice and clarity of the imperial project in both Britain and France and its associated valences in the ideology of exemplary masculinity that have emerged most forcefully in my work of reading for ideology. Eagleton's view that

⁴² Cited in advertising material for Blackie and Son's 'Books for Young People' bound into back pages of 1898 first edition of *With Moore at Corunna*.

‘ideology is most effective when invisible’ (1991: xvii) is relevant to my findings. Although some of the ideology of exemplary masculinity is heavy-handed, the underlying propagandist goals in restoring the pride of nations in decline are more subtly and effectively achieved by an entertainment medium rather than, for example, by political tracts or pamphlets. Neither can the political affiliations of adventure fiction authors be ignored.

In summarising my findings, I return to the language theory of Bakhtin in order to educate my contextual reading of the late nineteenth-century adventure novel. In his analysis of the systems of literary language, he contends that ‘the centre of gravity lies not in the identity of the form but in that new and concrete meaning it acquires in the particular context’ (1994 [1927]: 32). In this respect, it is crucial to read adventure fiction with a clear understanding of the national and imperial projects of the late nineteenth century, which constituted its context, in order to understand its ideological significance. The question ‘who is speaking?’⁴³ is essential in unravelling the complex ideological web of first person, third person and meta-narrative typical of the adventure novel. Literary scholar Pam Morris makes the following assertion with regard to Bakhtin and Volosinov’s theory of language: ‘What Volosinov’s survey of reported speech patterns indicates is a historical process in which the boundaries between the speech that is reported and the speech which is doing the reporting (that is between the two centres of consciousness) are increasingly eroded’ (1994: 13). Volosinov’s theory lends itself to the study of late nineteenth century adventure fiction, in which palpable ideological discourses can be discerned in the workings of the narrative (and specifically in the speech performances) of adventure heroes.

⁴³ Foucault contends that ‘Nietzsche maintained his questioning as to who is speaking right up to the end’ (2008 [1970]: 333).

Two further insights from scholars of gender and literature respectively support my arguments. The narrative workings of the adventure novel, and their treatment of gender, race and class, illustrate what has been put forward by Pellegrini as ‘historically contingent, socially constructed categories’ (1997: 6). In particular in the colonial adventure novel, the framing of the narrative and its treatment of indigenous races often tends towards what Pellegrini defines as: ‘homogenisation, the refusal to recognise particularity [...] one of the better known mechanisms of subjugation’ (8). The exploitative prejudices of the colonial adventure novel, both stated and implied in narrative, towards women, indigenous peoples and social inferiors, are all central to the discourse of adventure fiction in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and comprise some of its primary underlying ideologies. Letourneux contends that the adventure novel is ‘largement l’écho des valeurs de son temps’ (2011 : 9). This argument is certainly given credence by the uncannily similar ideologies inscribed in the parallel discourses of the mass press and the adventure novel analysed above.

Chapter Four

Colonialism and Representations of Masculinity in French Literary and Press Discourses 1870-1900

1 Introduction

1.1 Styles of Heroism

On 13 January 1885, an article in the *faits divers* column of the daily newspaper *Le Petit Parisien* reported an act of signal bravery under the headline of ‘L’Accident de Croissy’. A young farrier named Duval had risked injury to rescue a pregnant woman from a vicious dog. When he arrived on the scene in the town of Croissy, the dog had twisted its chain around the woman and was biting her on the ankles. Duval rushed forward, rescued the woman and was himself bitten by the aggressive animal. *Le Petit Parisien* reassures its readers that Duval’s injuries have received medical care: ‘Quant au sieur Duval, qui a fait preuve en cette circonstance de beaucoup de courage, il est soigné à son domicile’.¹ Although in itself of little significance, this article is representative of a style of journalism and type of subject matter which appealed to readers in the hotly contested market for daily newspapers in Paris and the provinces during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. According to press historian Jean-Pierre Bacot, articles of this sort, reporting crimes, accidents, suicides and acts of individual bravery, accounted for around a fifth of all of the published reports (2005: 25). Such events became the subjects of graphic, and sometimes gory, illustrations in the weekly illustrated supplements which were launched in the 1880s by *Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Petit Journal*.²

In spite of the apparent popularity with readers of these *faits divers* columns, another topic increasingly found favour with newspaper editors as a means of

¹ ‘L’accident de Croissy’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 13 January 1885, p. 3.

² Bacot reports that *Le Petit Journal* launched its Sunday Supplement in 1884 and that *Le Petit Parisien* launched its first illustrated supplement in 1889 (2005: 168, 171).

attracting readership. On 2 January 1885, in *Le Petit Parisien*, a report of bravery of an altogether different dimension appeared under the headline ‘Nos Soldats en Combat’. This article celebrated the bravery of four young French conscripts of the Third Infantry Regiment’s expeditionary force in Tonkin, a French colonial protectorate broadly equivalent to today’s North Vietnam. They were withdrawn from the front line after being wounded. Medical orderlies then discovered that they had in fact already suffered bullet wounds before the second set of injuries that had forced their withdrawal: ‘Quatre soldats du III^e régiment reçoivent la médaille militaire comme ayant été blessés deux fois au même bataille de Kep, ce qui prouve qu’ils sont restés dans le rang après la première blessure et peut-être après la seconde’.³

This report is significant for three reasons. First, it celebrates the valour of these young servicemen who had only recently been called up for military service, re-introduced in France as a five-year term in 1872 and generalised as a three-year tour of duty in 1889 (Surkis 2006: 214). *Le Petit Parisien* emphasised that ‘la plupart de ces héros obscurs ne comptent que deux à trois années de service’.⁴ At a time when legislators were deeply divided on the issue of national service,⁵ reports of conspicuous bravery among newly recruited national servicemen were of great value to radical pro-military factions and their supporters in the news media. Second, the fact that these soldiers were likely to have been in their early twenties⁶ supported the views of those pro-military conservatives who argued in favour of universal

³ ‘Nos soldats au combat’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 2 January 1885, p. 2.

⁴ ‘Nos soldats au combat’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 2 January 1885, p. 2.

⁵ See Berenson (2011: 62). The debate surrounding conscription and troop numbers necessary to consolidate the French protectorate of Tonkin led to the denunciation by Clemenceau of Premier Jules Ferry and his resignation in February 1885.

⁶ See Surkis (2006: 214). Call-up in France applied to all able-bodied men over the age of 18.

conscription of the young rather than an ageing standing army.⁷ Third, and most significantly, the reporting of individual acts of bravery on the battlefield in far-flung colonial skirmishes formed part of an ideological groundswell with roots in the 1870 defeat of the French army. Such an ideology envisaged the supposed regeneration of a strong, patriotic, militarily effective young French nation.⁸ This last issue forms the cornerstone of this chapter, where I explore the representation of exemplary masculinity in the context of colonial expeditions. In order to do so, I examine the ideological workings of press articles, as well as diaries and journals relating the experiences of French colonial soldiers. I also analyse ideologies inscribed in fictional accounts of French military exploits and exploration.⁹ I adopt a similar research framework for an analysis of representations of British colonial heroes in chapter five. Although I draw some comparisons between the French and the British adventure genres in each of these chapters, I have chosen to separate them in the interests of

⁷ Pro-military views were often represented in the conservative Parisian daily newspaper *La Presse*. *La Presse* was a minority but still influential newspaper by the mid-1880s. Its proprietor, Émile de Girardin had taken control of *Le Petit Journal* in 1872. *La Presse*, launched in 1836, had been the first daily to publish a serialised novel. By 1858, de la Motte and Przblyski inform us, *La Presse* and *Le Siècle* could claim sales of 275,000 copies, preceding the launch of *Le Petit Journal* (1863), *Le Figaro* (1866) and *Le Petit Parisien* (1876). ‘By 1870 sales [of Parisian dailies] had expanded to one million, and by 1880 to two million’ (1999: 2).

On 1 January 1885 *La Presse* lists the military New Year Honours with particular emphasis on two young officers, recently graduated from the Saint-Cyr military academy, who were wounded leading their men into battle in the Tonkin campaign and awarded the Médaille d’honneur. The article dismisses ‘des gens qui prétendent volontiers que notre jeune armée n’a ni le sentiment d’abnégation, ni discipline, ni esprit militaire’. It counters their views with a celebration of the bravery of these young colonial soldiers: ‘en voici deux qui ont conquis sur le champ de bataille, à moins de vingt-cinq ans, le droit de porter l’insigne de l’honneur sur la poitrine’.

⁸ Nye (1989: 170), Cole (2000: 4) and Surkis (2006: 14,19) all provide valuable insights into the measures taken by legislators to regenerate France in the 1880s.

⁹ Riffenburgh reports that ‘man’s role as conqueror of the world was a persistent theme during the late nineteenth century: it was perceived that character was built by this challenge and [...] boys were prepared for competition with nature’ (1993: 33).

focus and manageability of a large corpus of adventure fiction and material from the mass press in both countries.

1.2 Key Research Questions and Sources

A quantified survey by Bacot of gravure illustrations in the weekend supplement to the daily newspaper *Le Petit Journal* in the 1890s indicates that approximately thirty percent related to domestic politics, twenty percent to *faits divers* and local news stories, and nearly thirty percent to international affairs of which the majority related to the French colonies (Bacot 2005: 25). Assuming that editorial decisions on share of column inches reflected the demands of readers, I ask why reports from France's overseas territories were so heavily reported by newspapers? What were the motives of politicians and their sponsors in diverting the attention of the public from home affairs? What were the reasons behind the debates in the mass press surrounding national degeneration in France in the last quarter of the nineteenth century?¹⁰ How did legislators and military leaders hope to rectify the problem of a disaffected and unfit cohort of young Frenchmen of military conscription age?¹¹ In what ways did the colonies provide a suitable backdrop for representations of exemplars of masculinity, valour and integrity? In navigating through the substantial scholarship on this period and its problematics, my research will develop perspectives by aligning the ideologies present in both press reportage and in fiction.¹² How did colonial adventure novels, in particular, inscribe the ideologies of patriotism, bravery and service to the French nation?

¹⁰ On aspects of degeneration see Berenson (2011: 6), Forth and Accampo (2010: 2) and Gildea (2009: 409).

¹¹ Surkis reports that 'young men's failed social integration expressed related concerns about the potentially unsettling effects of social progress' (2006: 14).

¹² Essential to answering this research question will be the exploration of linkages between authors of adventure fiction and the political establishment, often formed by earlier careers of authors as journalists.

One of my primary sources for addressing these questions has been the *Gallica* digital library of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF). This has provided a wealth of press accounts detailing acts of bravery among French colonial troops. I have selected *Le Petit Parisien*, *Le Petit Journal* and *Le Figaro* as the most relevant sources within the mass press for my project. I have also sampled *La Presse*, *L'Intransigeant*, *La Lanterne*¹³ and *L'Humanité* in order to obtain factional points of view, for example the militaristic views characteristic of *La Presse* and, by contrast, the anti-war and anti-taxation editorial position adopted by *L'Intransigeant*.¹⁴ Although some of these titles are minor publications by the end of the 1880s, I cite them in order to represent a wide spectrum of published political viewpoints. For this chapter, I have concentrated my reading of the French mass press on the first three months of 1885, which witnessed increasing national unease about setbacks to French colonial policies in Indochina, culminating in the resignation of premier Jules Ferry. I have also looked at newspaper reports from the second quarter of 1895, which carried daily accounts of the build-up of French colonial forces in Madagascar, but also witnessed a virulent debate in the press and in the Chamber of Deputies about the nature of colonial empire. This period is of crucial importance for my project in that the mass press also carried frequent reports on the cult of physical fitness in France, and celebrations of the achievements of polar explorers. I also consult early editions of late nineteenth-century colonial adventure fiction.¹⁵

¹³ Henri-Jean Martin reports that 'although a circulation of 50,000 was considered very large under the Second Empire, in the period of the Boulangist movement *La Lanterne* in Rochefort and *La Presse*, the official party organ, reached circulations of 100,000 and even 200,000' (1994 [1988]: 429).

¹⁴ An example of this ideological stance is an article entitled 'Fortune Ruineuse' in *L'Intransigeant*, 15 February 1885, p. 1.

¹⁵ Early editions are essential to this branch of enquiry in that they often contain prefaces not present in later editions, as well as publishers' advertising material in the end-papers providing insights into the press reception of these novels. When not

1.3 Evaluative Framework

In this chapter I consider representations of masculinity in the context of the French colonial project and seek to understand how the penetration of unknown territories and cultures might have constituted a stimulus both to heroism and to readers' interest. How did the workings of the colonial adventure novel serve to construct exemplary masculinity, especially through representations of dangerous human and natural adversaries? How were categories of difference, of the white European heroes from the natives subjugated by colonial initiatives, and from other European colonial rivals, harnessed to justify colonial policies as well as put in the service of creating exemplars to remedy perceived national shortcomings?

In addressing these questions, I consider why tropical forests, arid deserts, stormy seas, craggy mountains, treacherous rivers, strongly defended native citadels, shadowy colonial cities and inhospitable climates might constitute an effective stage on which the performance of the soldierly hero could be enacted. In doing so, I acknowledge Gender Studies scholar Ann Pellegrini's concerns about 'the hopelessness of trying to demarcate where performance ends and any "real" begins' (1997: 8). I hope to show how both press reports and fictional accounts of colonial exploits could have inscribed ideologies of exemplary masculinity. How might these accounts of colonial heroes have eclipsed, both in editorial emphasis and in readership impact, reports of domestic heroic deeds (such as the rescue of a pregnant woman from a savage dog) in the *faits divers* columns? I pose this question in view of the broadly equivalent column inches given to reports of colonial campaigns and to *faits divers* in the sectors of the press analysed by Bacot. I set my enquiries within the

available from the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale, some long out-of-print adventure novels can occasionally be found in the *bouquinistes* of the Left Bank or the antiquarian booksellers in the Charente-Maritime region of France (birthplace of Pierre Loti).

context of the social, political and cultural milieu of the period 1870-1900 in France.

2 Colonial Pioneers and the Lure of the Unknown

2.1 Loti's soldier heroes

Literary scholar Peter Brooks highlights the essential role of plot within the narrative of popular fiction, something which, he argues, is not so important in what he calls high art: 'Plot has been discarded as the element of narrative that least sets off and defines high art; indeed plot is that which especially characterises popular mass-consumption literature' (1984: 4). I contend, citing evidence from my primary texts, that the construction of exemplary masculinity is well served by a plot involving expatriation, uncertainty and danger. I illustrate this contention through a reading of three of Pierre Loti's most successful and influential works: *Aziyadé* (1879), *Le Roman d'un Spahi* (1881) and *Pêcheur d'Islande* (1886).¹⁶ My analysis of these three novels will involve some summaries of key plot elements, in that plot is the vehicle that carries some of the most powerful inscriptions of ideologies of exemplary masculinity.

The narrator of Loti's *Aziyadé* (1879), the fictionalised British naval lieutenant Loti, is obsessed with the mystery of the Balkan states. In particular, he is attracted by the veiled beauties of Salonika, where he is stationed on a mission as part of the gunboat diplomacy that characterised British, Russian and French interventions

¹⁶ My choice of Loti to illustrate my arguments is partly based on my analysis of readership statistics as a proxy for ideological reach. Loti frequently sold more than 100,000 copies of his novels in published volumes (Quinn 2000: 170) while the novels of other adventure fiction writers such as Boussenard and d'Ivoi, although widely disseminated in *feuilletons*, often did not reach a third edition of 1,500 copies in volume form. Hargreaves informs us that Loti 'was celebrated during his lifetime as the most popular exoticist writer in France' (1981: 1). Hughes cites Lyautey's contention that *Aziyadé* 'exerted more influence on public opinion in Europe in the years prior to the establishment of an independent Turkey than did Mustapha Kemal himself' (2001: 11).

in the Aegean from 1850 through to the 1880s.¹⁷ He is eventually killed in action in the second battle of Kars (17 November 1877) having, unaccountably, enlisted in the Turkish army. Before doing so, he invests much of his time paying court to a mysterious veiled young woman whom he spies behind a grill in a building adjoining his quarters. The lure of the unknown eclipses the lieutenant's sense of personal danger as he penetrates the neighbouring roof garden and seduces his Turkish neighbour's wife: 'Après d'elle Loti va passer une heure de complète ivresse, au risque de sa tête, de la tête de plusieurs autres, et de toutes sortes de complications diplomatiques' (1991 [1879]: 40). The lieutenant¹⁸ reports his nightly exploits in a series of letters to William Brown, an officer in the British infantry. There he sidesteps recounting what ensued once he had scaled the walls of his neighbour's house: 'plus loin, mon cher William, il serait imprudent de suivre votre ami Loti; au bout de cette course, il y a l'amour d'une femme turque, laquelle est la femme d'un Turc' (40). Lieutenant Loti paints this collision of cultures by fantasising what might have motivated the young woman the other side of the enclosed roof-garden: 'Aziyadé me regardait fixement. Devant un Turc, elle se fût cachée; mais un giaour n'est pas un homme, tout au plus est-ce un objet de curiosité qu'on peut contempler a loisir' (36).

¹⁷ For background to nineteenth-century naval diplomatic stand-offs, see James Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy: Political Applications of Limited Naval Forces* (London: Institute of Strategic Studies, 1971), p. 14. One of the most famous incidents of gunboat diplomacy in the Aegean was the Don Pacifico Affair of 1850. Pacifico, a Portuguese Jew with British citizenship, had failed to obtain recompense for the looting of his home in Athens. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, sent a British warship to the Aegean, inciting a diplomatic stand-off with France and Russia who, jointly with Britain, considered Greece a protectorate.

¹⁸ As the hero of *Aziyadé* is, confusingly, eponymous with the author's pen-name, I adopt the convention applied by Hughes and will call the hero 'Lieutenant Loti' or 'the lieutenant'.

The lieutenant's fascination with the mysteries of the Bosphorus was evidently shared by the novel's readers. Calmann Lévy sold over 100,000 copies of *Aziyadé* following its anonymous publication in 1879.¹⁹ *Aziyadé* retained its popularity well into the next century with four new editions from Lévy, as well as editions from Plique, Cyral and Hachette.²⁰ The novel's narrator goes on to paint himself as a valiant exemplar at a time when military heroes in France were in short supply. His exploits resemble those of real-life colonial heroes such as Colonel Hubert Lyautey²¹ and Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand²² whose exemplary courage and determination are played out in exotic but threatening tropical locations. Lieutenant Loti dies a hero's death, friendless and far from home, fighting for a cause in which he is represented as believing. His demise is dispassionately reported, using litotes, by the narrator, in the same way that the death of so many servicemen stationed overseas is reported in the press: 'Parmi les morts de la dernière bataille de Kars, on a retrouvé le corps d'un jeune officier de la marine anglaise, récemment engagé au service de la Turquie' (241). These last lines of *Aziyadé* constitute a cold, matter-of-fact statement. Following the hopes and the romance that characterise the narrative that precedes them, they gain emphasis in their bleak sense of finality.

The narrative of *Aziyadé* seems to have touched the popular imagination in two important respects. First, it engaged the interests of contemporary readers in a fantasy world of Central Asian Islamic culture, sumptuously furnished apartments, hashish,

¹⁹ *Aziyadé* marked the beginning of Julien Viaud's (whose *nom-de-plume* was Pierre Loti) success as a popular author.

²⁰ Individual new editions (excluding reprints) listed under entry for 'Loti' by Hugo Thième in his *Bibliographie de la Littérature Française de 1800 à 1930* (1933).

²¹ See Berenson (2011: 228). Lyautey was one of the leading exponents of French colonial policy in the 1880s and 90s and served in Morocco, Indochina and Madagascar.

²² See Berenson (2011: 166). Marchand led the French expeditionary force up the Congo River in 1896, culminating two years later in the standoff with British forces at Fashoda on the upper Nile.

harems, sherbets, exotic spiced food, ruthless tribal tyrants, sultry nights and veiled women. In the 1880s and 1890s in France, fascination with what was termed the *Orient*²³ was reflected in the growing number of exhibitions dedicated to colonial culture, which had started with the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 and was followed by exhibitions on a massive scale in 1889 and 1900. This fascination with the daily life in overseas colonies was evidenced by the millions of visitors to the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle (where historian Odile Georg notes that the ethnographic exhibits included a living diorama of life in Madagascar). Georg describes the ‘folk-type’ shows of colonised peoples, who were shuttled around the French provinces in the 1890s: ‘the visitors became the voyeuristic spectators of a daily life specifically recreated for them in which the [...] customs of native life are on display’.²⁴

A second important way in which *Aziyadé* seemed to have appealed to the popular imagination was in the presentation of a military hero in the person of the lieutenant. The author’s semi-autobiographical accounts of the Bosphorus campaigns (informed by his posting to Salonika in 1876) involve bloody skirmishes between the Ottoman army and insurgents, in which Lieutenant Loti meets his death. The lieutenant is represented as demonstrating exemplary valour in his enlistment as a mercenary in a foreign army to defend the nation that, the narrative implies, had earned his deep admiration and respect. The novel combines, therefore, two key aspects of the Third Republic’s preoccupations: first, an obsession with the exotic

²³ Edward Said writes that the ‘Orient’, in its broadest interpretation, encompassed the 85% of the earth’s surface that had been colonised by European powers between 1815 and 1914. See *Orientalism* (1978: 41).

²⁴ For background on these colonial exhibitions see Odile Georg, ‘The French Provinces and Greater France’, in *Promoting the Colonial Idea. Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, ed. by Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (London: Palgrave, 2002).

pleasures of the *Orient*, and second, the demand by legislators, military leaders, journalists and commentators for a renewed French youth, the young men projected as a future ideal being both brave and physically fit.

The novelist's repertoire extended to colonies without heroes (*L'Inde sans les Anglais* [1903]) and to heroes without colonies (*Pêcheur d'Islande. Première et Deuxième Partie* [1886]), but his most compelling narratives are those in which his young military protagonists play out their role in exotic surroundings where the tensions of an illicit love affair with an indigenous woman are heightened by the ever-present risk of violent death at the hands of rebel tribesmen or unfriendly colonised natives. *Le Roman d'un Spahi* (1881) combines these two narrative themes into a story of reckless adventure, in which the young colonial soldier Jean Peyral not only engages in the off-duty officers' indulgent pastimes in the brothels of Senegalese capital of St Louis but also embarks on a love affair with a Senegalese girl, who bears his child before Peyral is killed in a battle with rebel tribesmen. Once again, the unfamiliar and the mysterious form the backdrop for Peyral's represented exploits. The book was a huge success for Loti's publishers, Calmann Lévy, and, like *Aziyadé*, sold over 100,000 copies from the first 150 impressions.²⁵

In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said characterises the nineteenth-century colonial soldier, perhaps somewhat ironically, as 'a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation and strangeness which he himself had properly distinguished' (1978: 121), thereby implying some kind of redemptive or improving role. As a representative of an occupying colonial army, and of the *mission civilisatrice*, Peyral personifies such a rescue mission. In this respect, Peyral is the embodiment of styles of colonialism which, as historian Alice Conklin contends, 'viewed Africans as

²⁵ Editions reported by Quinn (2000: 170).

barbarians and were continually undertaking– or claiming to undertake, as the case may be– civilizing measures on behalf of their subjects that appeared to make democracy and colonialism compatible’ (1997: 10). Like Emma Bovary, Peyral is represented as having gained his first impressions of the *Orient* from fiction: ‘Il avait dévoré des romans où tout était nouveau pour son imagination, et il s’en était assimilé les extravagances malsaines’ (1881: 47).²⁶ The narrator describes Peyral, on his arrival, as being intoxicated by the place: ‘L’air était chargé d’effluves lourds et brûlants, de senteurs vitales, de parfums de jeunes plantes’ (65).

Peyral’s first impressions of the Senegalese people, however, are couched in much less complimentary terms. The inhabitants are repeatedly characterised in a way that reflects a strain of social-Darwinism that had as its ideological base the delineation of the European colonist as part of a superior civilisation (social historian Alice Bullard characterises this set of attitudes, in her study of the colonised Kanak peoples of New Caledonia, as ‘the intersection of racialised views of mentality [...] with the moral ideal of civilisation’ [2000: 272]). I cite Loti’s text in detail here in order to illustrate the egregious racism that typically imbued late nineteenth-century colonial adventure fiction and which is endemic to this and other texts of one of its most successful exponents. In doing so, I subscribe to literary scholar Edward J. Hughes’s observation that Loti’s racism is ‘uncomfortable reading for the liberal humanist’ (2001: 24). Nonetheless, as Hughes contends, ‘Loti was a dominant figure in the canon and his tales from Oceania formed part of the cultural lexicon of Parisian drawing rooms’ (11).

²⁶ Emma Bovary’s fictional diet includes tales of ‘sultans à longues pipes, pâmés sous des tonnelles aux bras des bayardères, djiaours, sabres turcs, bonnets grecs’ (1966 [1856]: 73).

The discourse of exemplary European masculinity was predicated on the inferiority of other racial groups (and often on upper-class superiority, imagined as inherent, not constructed, in relation to the working class). Social scientist Martin Staum refers to the late nineteenth-century concept in France of ‘a ladder of being of all peoples of the earth, with all its possible consequences for the quest for empire’ (2011: 4). Exemplifying such prejudice, Peyral consistently employs the same metaphors in his descriptions of the indigenous Senegalese people: ‘c’était toujours le même masque simièsque’ (1881: 65). He hears sounds of the market place as: ‘le concert de toutes ces voix de fausset simièsque’ (66). As women grind maize, Peyral again applies this metaphor: ‘les ouvrières, bavardes et querelleuses, mêlent à ce bruit monotone le concert de leurs voix aiguës qui semblent sortir de gosiers de singe’ (85). Peyral’s metaphors illustrate an ideology embodying what Staum describes as ‘the alleged moral, psychological and cultural retardation associated with the physical racial characteristics of vast non-European populations’ (2011: 4). When Peyral and his colleagues from the barracks attend a local festival, he compares the native dancing to the antics of ‘un singe fou, les contorsions d’une possédée’ (1881: 92). Literary scholar Jennifer Yee, in her study of nineteenth-century fantasies of exotic women, sees this repeated rhetoric as specific to the natural environment of West Africa in which *Le Roman d’un Spahi* is set. She attributes this metonymy to an ‘alterité’ which permeates the narrative. According to Yee, this contrasts with the way that Loti treats other colonial settings in his adventure novels. Yee contends, for example, that in *Aziyadé* (set in the Bosphorus) the ‘esoteric’ rather than the unfamiliar is central to the narrative. In *Le Roman d’un Spahi*, she claims, ‘l’alterité c’est, donc, le choc de la différence sans l’adoucissement de l’exotisme’ (2000: 119).

Difference, expressed here by the racist metaphor of Loti's narrative, is one of the means by which exemplary masculinity of the French colonial soldier is represented.

In spite of this prejudice, Peyral is depicted as being irresistibly drawn to the local females and, in particular, to a girl named Fatou who has found her way out of child-slavery to a servant's role in the city. He is shown worrying about the racial implications of such a relationship: 'il lui semblait qu'il allait franchir un seuil fatal, signer avec cette race noire une sorte de pacte funeste' (1881: 71). The novel sketches Peyral's ambivalent sentiments toward this Senegalese girl whom he calls his 'très joli petit singe.' (102). He is attracted by what the narrator describes as the elegance of her manners as she leads him to his lodgings: 'et pour le conduire, à la manière nègre, elle lui tient un doigt dans sa ferme petite main noire, ornée de bagues de cuivre' (96). He observes, however, that 'les mains de Fatou, qui était d'un beau noir au-dehors, avaient le-dedans rose'. Instead of being charmed by this, Peyral reverts to the prejudice of his earlier observations and calls it 'une vilaine impression froide de pattes de singe' (100). He treats his young mistress with the utmost condescension: 'Il la considérait, du reste, comme un être inférieur, l'égal à peu près de son laobé jaune' (111). When his regiment is called back to France for home leave, he ends this relationship which he declares to be unworthy of a European: 'il lui semblait d'ailleurs qu'il avait retrouvé sa dignité *d'homme blanc*,²⁷ souillée par le contact de cette chair noire' (167), a reaction illustrative of the way, as Staum contends, 'republican universalism could not tolerate the reality of difference' (2011: 4).

Scholarship is divided on whether anything other than prejudice and exploitation can be attributed to Loti's view of the colonial world. Hughes sees the nineteenth-century French culture exemplified by Loti and other colonial adventure

²⁷ Author's italics.

writers as ‘articulating the crude prejudice of their day’ (2001: 13). Historian Matt Matsuda, however, detects an ambivalent attitude in Loti’s work towards colonies and colonial subjects: ‘sensitive in his penetration of empire, he [Loti] shaped his most popular fictions with gestures to European marriage and attempts at domestic affection’ (2005: 19). In spite of the racial prejudice and exploitation inherent in the narrative, the conclusion to *Le Roman d’un Spahi* appears (briefly at least) to justify the concept of *assimilation* that was used by legislators to characterise the French overseas project in the late nineteenth century. Matsuda, for example, informs us that ‘French imperialists and ideologues often regarded their “assimilation” of colonial subjects as a genuinely heartfelt meeting of sensibilities’ (2005: 8).²⁸ On his return to Senegal, Peyral comes upon Fatou and her baby on a ferryboat up-river. The narrator claims that his heart softens at the sight of the young mother and child and they exchange symbols of their affection: ‘il la laissa passer autour du cou une amulette d’Afrique et partagea avec elle sa ration du jour’ (1881: 194). This moment of reconciliation does not last long. Soon after the reunion of the *spahi* with his Senegalese mistress, Jean and his platoon are ambushed by rebel spearmen while on patrol and Jean is mortally wounded and left to die of thirst in the desert. Fatou searches for him and finally happens upon his body lying in a wadi. Parted on earth, they are symbolically united in death as Fatou, having killed their child, dies beside him. She is heavily laden with the symbols of her conversion to Christianity, the holy medals and scapula that had been given to her by the priests who had baptised her into

²⁸ Historian Frederick Cooper reports, ‘Europe’s power elites were now taking pains to reassure each other that their coercion and brutality were no longer frank attempts at extraction.’ Cooper contends that, in the 1880s, Europe’s power elites sought ‘a complex structuring of group boundaries, racial identities and permissible forms of sexual and social interaction’ (1997: 31). Conklin contends, however, that ‘colonisation under the Third Republic was in large part an act of state-sanctioned violence’ (1997: 9).

Jean's faith in his absence. On one hand, the novel's late rehabilitation of Peyral from agent of colonial exploitation to attentive lover and father is a cynical representation that exemplifies the myth that Maugue calls 'l'homme, l'héros du progrès ... et son unique héros: pour que le mythe remplisse sa fonction, pour qu'il confère au plus médiocre individu de sexe mâle une identité gratifiante' (1987: 33). On the other hand, however, referring to the reconciliation of Peyral and Fatou, Hughes hints at redeeming features in the representation of Peyral when he contends that: 'however crudely sentimentalised the rapport, a curious brief communication stands out against a backdrop of ethnic denigration and physical violence' (2001: 24). A paradoxical conflation of racism and romanticism, therefore, characterises *Le Roman d'un Spahi's* account of the French colonial project.

The novel's story of the young colonial soldier is loaded with the ideological resonances of the decade preceding its publication in 1881. At home, a rift was developing between the masses and the political elite, partly as a result of the severe economic problems of the mid-1870s. For this reason, tales of the unknown in which heroic masculinity could be played out against a background of the inhospitable tropical jungle or desert were a welcome distraction for politicians and populace from pressing domestic economic, political and social issues.²⁹ Historian William Schneider attributes colonial policy directly to problems at home, arguing that 'the reason that social imperialism developed as an ideology in the late nineteenth century was the dislocation and misery that resulted after the depression of 1873' (1982: 61). This brand of 'social imperialism' was reflected in competition among newspapers and magazines to scoop real-life adventures that were broadly

²⁹ Forth and Accampo refer to 'France's weakened geopolitical status, partly as a result of the defeat of 1870' (2010: 2), and Gildea contends that 'the defeat of 1870 precipitated France into the lower rank of the great powers' (2009: 410).

comparable to the imaginary exploits of Jean Peyral. They were not short of material, as the colonial policies of Jules Ferry and his successors were enacted in Indochina and West Africa. Schneider reports that newspapers were forced to compete for readers by modifying their content, resulting in ‘sensationalism, shock or appeals to patriotism’ (206). Loti’s history of a young military hero would have appeared contemporaneously with press reports of military actions in Senegal and Tonkin, and alongside the daily crime reports in the *faits divers* columns. The potential ideological power of novels such as *Le Roman d’un Spahi* lay in accounts of exemplary bravery, such as Peyral’s platoon’s engagements with rebel warriors. These accounts potentially satisfied the ambitions of policy makers and military leaders anxious to regenerate a nation of valiant young patriots. Matsuda addresses the role of fiction in the inscription of imperialist ideologies: ‘the business of literature was the mapping out and writing of the nation-state, the accumulated narrations of a civilisation’s history and genius’ (2005: 22). The novelistic form, together with weekly magazines such as the *Journal des voyages*, also permitted extensive descriptions and illustrations of far-flung exotic *locales* and customs.

This combination of exoticism with selfless exemplars of military prowess potentially made the adventure novel a means of prompting the disaffected youth of France to enlist in the colonial armed forces. Hughes hints at the ideological power of Loti’s works. Commenting on Loti’s South Seas adventure novel *Le Mariage de Loti*, he contends, perhaps tentatively in light of the difficulties of verifying hearsay, that ‘it served as required reading for soldiers, sailors and administrators posted to Oceania, illustrating how today’s often discarded text was the *vade mecum* for a whole generation embarking on colonial service’ (2001: 11), hereby attributing ideological valences to what was ostensibly an entertainment medium. Loti’s contacts at a high

level within the administration followed from his unusual combination of roles as a serving naval officer and a successful popular novelist. His novels are sensationalist combinations of exotic tropical romance and brutal encounters with unwilling colonial subjects. They are also powerful conduits of colonial ideology in which the combination of French ethnocentricity, acts of individual valour and the physical prowess of the young colonial serviceman can be played out against a backdrop of mysterious tropical *locales*. In this way, they potentially attracted the interest of young readers and promoted such readers' identification with the French colonial project. In the closing pages of *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, an apologia praises colonial soldiers for their bravery in defending the interests of the nation in distant skirmishes that were not always widely reported at home: 'Le choc des deux armées eut lieu plus loin; il fut très meurtrier bien qu'il aît fait peu de bruit en France. Ces combats, livrés en pays si lointain, et où si peu d'hommes sont engagés, passent imperçus de la foule; ceux-là s'en souviennent qui ont perdu un fils ou un frère' (1881: 213). Patriotic flourishes such as this are immanent within the discourses of exemplary masculinity in the adventure novel.

The parallel discourses of adventure fiction and the mass press in the late nineteenth century provide closely comparable representations of masculinity and heroism. Brooks contends that 'literature was one part of a wider range of man's signifying practices, the way he realises his world through the use of signs and fictions' (1984: xiii). The 'signifying practices' of the adventure novel and the mass press in the late nineteenth century extended beyond the discourses of patriotism and pride in the conquests of French soldiers overseas. Exploration of unknown territories during the last quarter of the century also provided a context within which to showcase the valour and resilience of young Frenchmen.

2.2 *Exploration, Ideology and 'Énergie'*

The pace of European colonisation of Africa slowed in the last ten years of the nineteenth century. In France, as Deming-Lewis reports in 'One Hundred Million Frenchmen' (1962), Jules Ferry had been forced from office twice, in 1881 and 1885, by controversy over colonial acquisitions and 'there were those who thought that imperialist ventures ill became a republican government' (1962: 136). Partly because of these undercurrents in public opinion, publishers of both newspapers and adventure fiction found that the world of exploration and science could compete for reader interest with accounts of military expeditions and battles. The conquest of nature, rather than that of colonial subjects, became a platform upon which the heroic exemplar could perform. Literature and the mass press provided fictional and reported accounts of explorer heroes who could compete with colonial soldiers as exemplars of masculinity. These accounts of exploration also embodied the essence of what historian Jennifer Sessions calls (in her account of earlier French colonial projects in North Africa) a belief that France 'had the most advanced civilisation of its day and thus a particular duty to extend the glorious empire of reason' (2011: 30).

On 20 March 1895, *Le Petit Parisien* reports on the departure from Paris of two young Frenchmen on an attempt to circumnavigate the world. They leave with no resources in their pockets other than the willingness to work to earn their passage: 'partir sans un sou en poche et être décidés en route à ne se jamais plier aux corvées humiliantes, voilà qui distingue du commun MM. Leroy et Papillard'.³⁰ The reporter emphasises that the two adventurers have the advantage of being linguists: 'ils connaissent, à eux deux, trois langues: l'anglais, l'italien et l'allemand; c'est, avec le français, un précieux bagage'. Following a century during which over three quarters

³⁰ 'Les modernes Juifs Errants', *Le Petit Parisien*, 20 March 1895, p. 2.

of the earth's surface had been colonised by European countries, this 'précieux baggage', which would certainly have encompassed the official administrative languages of most of sub-Saharan Africa, was deemed by the reporter to be more than sufficient for a world traveller. He does add as an afterthought, however, the reassurance that: 'ils ont quelque chose de mieux: c'est l'énergie'.³¹ This report is emblematic of the spirit of last ten years of the nineteenth century for three reasons. First, it directs the gaze of the 555,000 subscribers of *Le Petit Parisien*³² toward distant horizons, far from the stresses of a divided Republic coming to terms with the dehumanising effects of industrialisation and urbanisation. In this connection Forth and Accampo cite the 'men who worked at their desks and rarely exercised [and] did not always measure up to traditional masculine ideals of action, bravery and aggression' (2010: 133). Second, it promotes the effortless superiority of these two young men who are described as never bending under the necessity of hard manual chores in order to pay their way. Third, and most significantly in the context of reports of European re-armament, is the reassurance that these two young men have *énergie*.³³

The concept of patriotic energy devoted to bold acts of exploration and discovery is once again emphasised in a report under the headline of 'Les Hautes Régions' published in *Le Petit Parisien* on 4 March 1895. The report illustrates how expeditions of discovery in the last decades of the nineteenth century reflected earlier

³¹ Ibid.

³² For press circulation figures see Gildea (2009: 404).

³³ The ideology of 'énergie' is also celebrated by Maurice Barrès in his trilogy *Le Roman de L'Énergie Nationale*, begun in 1897 with *Les Déracinés*. Barrès was a controversial right-wing politician whose extreme nationalism, militarism and racism were reflected in his leading role in the campaign against the accused army officer Alfred Dreyfus, whose supposed treason he attributed to his Jewish background. I cite Barrès here, not as an exponent of the adventure fiction genre, but as a writer whose often unpalatable views were couched in a language of nationalistic propaganda formulated on the foundation of 'énergie'.

fictional accounts. Thirty-one years after the account of Professor Lindenbrock's adventures in Jules Verne's *Voyage au Centre de la Terre* (1864), *Le Petit Parisien* reports that a similar project has been proposed by scientists in Paris to dig wells so deep that they will establish: 'l'hypothèse du feu central'.³⁴ The article continues with the report of a balloonist, who undertakes a feat achieved by another Verne protagonist by taking a hot-air balloon up to ten thousand metres to see if the human body can stand it³⁵. At eight thousand metres he loses consciousness and again, significantly, it is his *énergie* which averts certain disaster: 'pendant quelques secondes, il était pris immédiatement de vertige et de prostration; une fois même, malgré ses efforts il sentit ses yeux fermer, mais il put, grace à son énergie, réagir contre cette défaillance'.³⁶

International as well as national feats of exploration are reported by the press as examples of devotion, energetic or otherwise, to a patriotic goal. When the Norwegian explorer Nansen is reported to have reached the North Pole on 19 April 1895, *Le Petit Parisien* publishes an encomium to the expedition: 'ce même hommage, nous le devons à tous ce qui rêvent de découvrir ce qu'il y a par delà les glaces éternelles, aux confins du monde, et qui périrent dans leur tâche'.³⁷ Here, in a single sentence, are clustered several underlying ideological themes that characterise accounts of heroic exploits both in the mass press and in the adventure novel, especially in the last ten years of the nineteenth century during the most intensive period of polar exploration.³⁸ First, there is the almost reverent panegyric to the heroic

³⁴ 'Les Hautes Régions', *Le Petit Parisien*, 3 April 1895, p. 1.

³⁵ A fictional account of a similar exploit is given in Verne's *Un Voyage en Ballon* (1851).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Le Petit Parisien*, 19 April 1895, p. 1.

³⁸ Riffenburgh reports that the purchase of daily newspapers, in which these expeditions were reported, nearly quadrupled between 1885 and 1900 (1993: 148).

polar pioneer, whose dreams of discovery often end in disaster. Second, there is his fascination with the unknown, of what lies beyond the sea of ice at the very end of the world. Third, there is the ever-present danger of death for those undertaking a voyage conceived as a task rather than just an adventure. The structure of this semi-rhetorical piece mirrors the sequence of factors motivating the young men who were later to volunteer for duty in the French colonial army in Indochina: the call of duty, the lure of the exotic unknown and the excitement of close encounters with death.³⁹ Reports of Nansen's achievements continued for a further two weeks in the mass press as details of his brushes with disaster emerged.

These accounts of Nansen's exploits recalled earlier expeditions led by Frenchmen, and *Le Petit Parisien* does not miss the opportunity to revisit an aborted expedition of twenty-five years earlier. A team led by Gustave Lambert had completed all of their preliminary soundings before planning their final approach to the pole. The declaration of war against Prussia intervened, Lambert was called back to France, and was among the 3500 young conscripts killed at the battle of St. Quentin during the attempted relief of the siege of Paris on 19 January 1871. Lambert embodies the exemplary valour so much vaunted by policy makers and their supporters in the press. Not only was he a polar explorer *manqué*, but he had also sacrificed his life in the noblest possible cause: 'on connaît sa fin héroïque: il tomba le 19 janvier 1871 en combattant pour la France. Une balle stupide avait eu raison de cet homme courageux, savant, prêt aux grandes et nobles besognes'.⁴⁰

Énergie is at the heart of other retrospective encomia to polar explorers inspired by the feats of Nansen. On 20 January 1895, the columnist of *Le Petit Parisien* reports the recent discovery of the journals of an expedition led by British

³⁹ See Obuchowski (1967: 750).

⁴⁰ 'La Conquête du Pole', *Le Petit Parisien*, 19 April 1895, p. 1.

pioneer Captain William Parry, who in 1827 had reached the latitude of 82° 45', a feat not equalled for a further fifty years. The French journalist is impressed by the self-deprecating British manner in which encounters with hungry polar bears are reported in the journals: 'il fallait bien de l'énergie, de la résolution et du sang-froid pour se livrer à la moindre plaisanterie, alors qu'on ne savait si on ne serait pas subitement broyé, le soir ou le lundemain, par un monstrueux choc de glaces'.⁴¹ Here, *énergie* is central to the concept of patriotic valour and initiative embodied in Parry's polar expedition. It is not clear if *Le Petit Parisien*, in these reports, is embracing Maurice Barrès's specific nationalist rhetoric of *énergie*, which was to be given literary expression two years later in his trilogy *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*, or whether Barrès's agenda has permeated everyday discourse, during the mid-1890s, to a point where the word is disconnected from the man and his nationalist, colonialist and racist value system. Berenson reports on Barrès's calls, in the years following the defeat of 1871, for 'professors of energy to free his country from the egalitarian mediocrity and capitalist materialism of its republican regime' (2011: 250), giving us a hint that the latter might be the case.

The celebrity of polar explorers, as Beau Riffenburgh shows, may be gauged by the column inches in the mass press that they generated in the last decades of the nineteenth century (1993: 198). As exemplars, they rated as highly as the military adventurers that had colonised France's African and Asian possessions, although the territories to which they managed to stake claim were of symbolic value only. Riffenburgh strikingly invokes the paradox of a supreme physical challenge with no tangible profit: 'The attainment of the North Pole resulted in no imperial gain, it achieved no great scientific aim, it realised no commercial coup, and it lacked any

⁴¹ *Le Petit Parisien*, 20 April 1895, p. 1.

essential benefit to mankind. Yet it was widely considered one of the most significant triumphs of its time' (1993: 1). It was not necessarily the strategic objective of the expedition itself which captured the attention of journalists and their readers, nor was it the outcome or benefit. It was, far more importantly for those proselytising the concept of patriotic *énergie* in newspapers, the way in which the pioneer hero acquitted himself when faced with the challenge of the unknown that made him a fit exemplar.

3 Colonial Heroes in Danger

3.1 'Whistling Bullets'

Having considered the fascination of newspaper editors and adventure novelists with the unknown as a backdrop to feats of colonial heroism, I will now address the powerful role of danger as a means of foregrounding fantasies of the physical and moral strength of the colonial pioneer. Although danger is a recurrent *topos* of the adventure fiction genre, I contend in this section that there are innumerable subtleties in the late nineteenth-century adventure novel's representation of it, from the brutal peril of a hail of machine-gun bullets to subtle psychological threats. In reviewing specific accounts of danger in both adventure fiction and in the mass press, it is evident that threats can be represented in purely quantitative terms and in much less graphic but potentially more threatening ways. To illustrate this, I provide a short case study of Part Three of Loti's *Pêcheur d'Islande* (1886) and compare it with parallel discourses in the mass press, published almost contemporaneously with the novel's fictional account of the French expeditions in Indochina in the mid 1880s.

One of the most unusual and compelling quantitative evaluations of danger is provided in an article published in *Le Petit Parisien* on 5 January 1885. Fourteen

years after the Franco-Prussian war, the polemical French press is still indulging in post-rationalisations about how France came to be defeated. From sources which are not specified, the writer of the article has estimated that thirty million rifle cartridges were used by the Prussian army during 1870-1871, the implication being that nearly 1000 bullets were required to kill each of the 35,000 French casualties. This macabre statistic can be interpreted in two ways: first, it could be construed as a reflection on poor Prussian marksmanship and a tribute to the resilience of the French soldier; second, it could be interpreted as a further proof of the implacable nature of the Prussian war-machine, an enemy described by historian Bruno Cabanes as ‘perçu comme un être dépourvu de conscience morale, plus proche de l’animal que de l’homme’ (2004: 61). At a time when a serviceable army was essential to French colonial ambitions and national defence, this article suggests a rehabilitation of the reputation of the French soldier for resilience and bravery.

This continuing search for an acceptable explanation for France’s humiliation takes another unusual turn in the purportedly scientific research published in the journal *La Nature*, and subsequently reported in *Le Petit Parisien* on 13 January 1885. Under the heading ‘Le Sifflement des Balles’, the unnamed writer provides a justification for the hurried retreat of those French soldiers who were not found by a Prussian bullet. For these troops, it was the panic reaction induced by the sound of bullets that prompted their flight from the field of battle in Sedan.⁴² According to the article, veterans of the campaign complain that ‘les balles nous sifflaient aux oreilles’, and the researcher reports that ‘ce sifflement produit sur les plus braves, les plus

⁴² The decisive battle of the Franco-Prussian war on 1 September 1870, during which 17,000 Frenchmen were killed or wounded and 21,000 taken prisoner along with the Emperor Napoleon III.

aguerris, une impression désagréable, bien caractérisée par “froid dans le dos”⁴³ In a revealing footnote to this research, the authors note that ‘ce fait se présenta souvent pendant la guerre franco-allemande, notamment à Sedan du côté des Français’, and use this to excuse the hasty retreat of the French army. This concept of French soldiers facing the threat of a pitiless German war machine is taken up once again in a report that appears in the mass press in February 1885 about trials of machine guns by the German army. This new weapon is characterised in *Le Petit Parisien* as ‘le dernier mot dans l’art de tuer’ and, in a chillingly prescient appraisal, the article concludes that ‘jamais rien de plus terrible n’a été imaginé par l’homme pour détruire son semblable’⁴⁴, a further example of how the demonisation of the German army is harnessed to support a call to action by the press.

Faced with surmounting these threats to the French nation, how were the policy makers, their journalistic supporters and the ideologically inclined writers of adventure fiction to restore the lustre of colonial military adventures in the minds of the young men who, from 1885, were obliged to draw lots which would decide when it was their turn to be shipped as conscripts to perform their military service in French colonial theatres of war?⁴⁵ One potentially productive line of persuasion was the representation of French colonial servicemen facing danger head-on and dealing with it through cool nerves and acts of personal valour. In Loti’s novels, West African *spahis* and colonial soldiers in Indochina do not shrink from putting themselves in situations of danger. These novels offer military heroes whose behaviour in the face of enemy fire is stoical. Sylvestre Moan, the young Breton hero of the successful *Pêcheur d’Islande* (1886), is an exemplar whose steadiness under fire indicates that

⁴³ ‘Nos soldats au combat’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 13 January 1885, p. 2.

⁴⁴ *Le Petit Parisien*, 2 February 1885, p. 1.

⁴⁵ See Surkis on French military service call-up (2006: 214).

he is unflinchingly able to withstand the whistle of bullets. His credentials are established in the first part of the novel as he is shown braving the mountainous waves of the frozen Arctic seas on long fishing missions out of the Breton ports of Paimpol and Ploubazlanec. In spite of his youth, Sylvestre is eligible for military service and duly receives his call-up papers to serve in the French naval squadron in the China Seas.

The third part of *Pêcheur d'Islande*, set in the forests and rice-paddies of Tonkin in the mid 1880s, opens as follows: 'Dans l'air, une balle qui siffle! Sylvestre s'arrete court, dressant l'oreille' (1988 [1886]: 159). Coincidentally, the opening paragraphs of this chapter, published shortly after the appearance of the article on 'Le Sifflement des Balles' in the mass press, provide a blueprint of how an exemplary French military hero reacts to the noise of enemy bullets. Instead of submitting to what the press article had called 'le froid dans le dos', or beating a hasty retreat as many did at Sedan, Sylvestre leads his small party of armed sailors forward under enemy fire. Sylvestre can hear the bullets whistling around his ears although the enemy rifle shots are barely audible: 'alors on distingue mieux ce petit bourdonnement de métal, qui file en traînée rapide, frôlant les oreilles' (159). In contrast to the effects of the 'impression desagréable' reported in *La Nature*, Sylvestre and his platoon remain standing as they seek out their aggressors: 'Ils sont tous les six encore debout, l'oeil au guet, prenant le vent, ils cherchent d'où cela a pu venir' (160). They advance into the heart of the enemy position where they are surrounded and end up in hand-to-hand combat using their rifles as cudgels. Sylvestre and his companions are heavily outnumbered but manage to put the enemy to flight.

It is at this point that the narrator switches from a technical account of a military engagement into a homage to the French colonial hero:

Et Sylvestre courait après, déjà blessé deux fois, un coup de lance à la cuisse, une entaille profonde dans le bras; mais ne sentant rien que l'ivresse de se battre, cette ivresse non raisonnée qui vient du sang vigoureux, celle qui donne aux simples le courage superbe, celle qui faisait les héros antiques (162).

In this single sentence, the narrator builds, step by step, the panegyric that immediately precedes Sylvestre's death by a stray bullet. Like the four French soldiers, discussed earlier, who were awarded the Military Medal for their bravery at the battle of Kep in the year preceding the publication of *Pêcheur d'Islande*,⁴⁶ Sylvestre has already been wounded twice. His patriotic fervour is described in terms of an 'ivresse' that seems to make him oblivious to pain. The juxtaposition of the words 'vigoureux', 'superbe' and 'héros' with the word 'simples' is, by implication, a rallying call to all young Frenchmen of whatever walk of life to transcend themselves, although couched in a classist formulation typical of the militarist discourse of the time.

3.2 Ideology and Public Honours

Pêcheur d'Islande was Loti's most successful work. In the twenty years following its publication in 1886, it had sold 260 editions, representing close to 200,000 copies.⁴⁷ Loti was elevated to a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur the year after its publication and, three years later, was elected to the Académie Française. The honours awarded to Loti reflect more on his political acumen than on his credentials as a candidate for what scholars such as Pierre Nora term the literary canon.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Le Petit Parisien*, 13 January 1885, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Publisher's data from preface to Loti's *Pêcheur d'Islande*, ed. by Jacques Dupont (1988[1886]: 7).

⁴⁸ See Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984) for a discussion of the literary canon as conceived by the literary *manuels* of the Third Republic.

Pêcheur d'Islande was launched into the middle of a fierce polemic involving Republican supporters of the deposed Prime Minister Jules Ferry and those of his accuser Georges Clemenceau. The issue at stake was the pursuit of French colonial ambitions following the retreat on 28 March 1885 from the Tonkinese stronghold Lang Son of 2500 French troops, vastly outnumbered by the Chinese army. Ferry's appeal in the Chamber of Deputies on 30 March 1885 for 200 million francs to reinforce the army of General Louis Brière de l'Isle in Tonkin had been rejected by 306 votes to 149. Ferry was forced to resign and his departure opened a new era in French colonial policy. Policy makers, the press and the public became increasingly opposed to what was seen as the waste of the lives of French soldiers.⁴⁹ Loti's novel, *Pêcheur d'Islande*, had captured the spirit of the age in his portrayal of Sylvestre. Engaged in what he qualifies as a meaningless campaign (he and his compatriots choose not to distinguish Chinese, Tonkinese or Vietnamese, whom they call Ammanites),⁵⁰ Sylvestre nonetheless fights with determination in the pursuit of supposed French colonial aims. Having survived Arctic storms, braved the waves of the North Atlantic to provide fish for the French meal-table, and faced disease in the Tonkinese hinterland, he ends his life lying face down in a rice-paddy with a Chinese bullet in his chest.

Pêcheur d'Islande, as a celebration of French military prowess, is a significant landmark in the development of the adventure novel. The dead Sylvestre's clothes and belongings are the objects of an informal auction on the deck of the troop transport ship returning to France, possibly an allusion to the partition of Christ's garments following the crucifixion. While Sylvestre is lionised for his bravery, the cause for which he is fighting does not emerge as so highly valued as that of Peyral in

⁴⁹ For insights on Ferry's colonial policies in Indochina see Berenson (2011: 12).

⁵⁰ Ammanites are Laotian tribesmen.

*Le Roman d'un Spahi*⁵¹ or even that of Lieutenant Loti in *Aziyadé*.⁵² After *Pêcheur d'Islande*, Loti's work turned increasingly toward travelogues with a political bias.⁵³ Sylvestre's potential role as an exemplar for the youth of France was relevant to the notion of regeneration, which remained a topic in the mass press in the 1880s, even as propaganda in support of far-flung colonial projects diminished. In this respect the novel illustrates, as Matsuda observes of Loti's writing, 'how little distinction was often made between official documents and fiction in the writing of the nineteenth-century empire' (2005: 32). Sylvestre is brave and selfless, physically powerful, heroic in life and death. Such exemplars were implicitly ready to defend the nation, as confrontational positions developed and rearmament gathered pace following the erosion of Ferry's European *rapprochement* policies.

Two scholars of the French adventure genre offer valuable insights on the workings of *Pêcheur d'Islande* and other contemporary adventure novels. On one level, Loti specialist Lesley Branch tells us, 'the French public learned something of the strangeness, drama and tragedy of Breton fishermen's lives' (1983: 180). More recent scholarship by Letourneux, however, suggests another ideological level for the narrative workings of the adventure novel: 'il a donné forme aux rêveries nationales et nationalistes, aux fantasmes impériaux et coloniaux' (2011: 7). *Pêcheur d'Islande* exemplifies three specific aspects of the ideologies of exemplary masculinity in both the adventure novel and the mass press. First, the proximity of the protagonists' death, either on the high seas or on colonial battlefields, enables both journalists and authors

⁵¹ *Le Roman d'un Spahi* is set against the background of the French colonial project in Senegal in the 1870s.

⁵² Lieutenant Loti in *Aziyadé* is assigned to a British expeditionary force supporting Turkish forces against rebel Armenian and Kurdish tribesmen in the 1870s.

⁵³ Examples of Loti's travelogues include *Reflets sur un Sombre Route* (1899), *L'Inde sans les Anglais* (1903), *Vers Ispahan* (1904), *Un Pèlerin d'Angkor* (1912), and *Turquie Agonisant* (1913).

of adventure novels to evoke vividly the heroic qualities of valour and resilience. Second, the self-doubt and introspection occasioned by the French defeat in 1870 (as Berenson puts it, ‘a nation whose faith in themselves and their country had been undermined’ [2011: 7]) is potentially neutralised by the appearance of new colonial heroes, both real-life and fictional, who confront the enemy fearlessly. Third, publishers’ success with novels such as *Pêcheur D’Islande* and *Le Roman d’un Spahi* suggests that danger is one of the ingredients of adventure fiction that sells books. Part of the fascination of the unknown lies in its imminent threats to the lives of the protagonists. Loti and Verne are masters in attracting and retaining their reading public by evoking the menace of both nature and of implacable colonial subjects, frequently ending in near disaster in the former case and in lonely death in the latter. Matsuda summarises incisively the cocktail of ingredients employed by Loti: ‘empire was military strategy and civilising mission, yet it was also imagination and fantasy’ (2005: 35), a summary that is also applicable to the overseas adventure novels of Verne.

Having considered the motifs of the unknown, and of impending danger, in the construction of colonial heroism, I now analyse the ways in which policy makers, military leaders, journalists, other commentators and authors of adventure fiction use the notion of otherness to justify and endorse the actions of their protagonists. The literary and the legislative discourses on this topic were aligned according to Matsuda, who contends that Loti’s ‘tales and [France’s] ministerial policies alike were fashioned to win support for colonial exploits, whether by adventure, interest, or romantic shaping of local histories’ (2005: 187). Before analysing representations of otherness in the French adventure genre, it is of value to examine what was at stake for France’s colonial policy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

4 The Colonial Male in Confrontation with the 'Other'

4.1 The 'Scramble' for Africa and Asia: Rice and Gum Arabic

The last three decades of the nineteenth century were a period of rapid colonial expansion for the major powers of Europe. In particular, the unexploited mineral wealth of Africa was a key strategic objective for these European colonial powers, who competed to be the first to fly their flags over new African colonies. During what Bristow describes as 'the scramble for territory among Britain, Germany, France and Italy' (1991: 128), Britain colonised Sudan and Egypt in 1882, Zanzibar in 1888 and East Africa (Kenya) in 1895. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, the British Empire was by no means secure. Berenson highlights the political significance of some of the setbacks to British colonial ambitions in the Nile basin: 'when Gordon died a martyr's death in Khartoum in 1885, it meant that Britain had lost its claims to the Sudan, territory mainly considered crucial to Britain's hold on Egypt' (2011: 12). Setbacks of this nature coincided with expansionary policies by European colonialist rivals.

After 1871, historian Martin Cornick informs us, 'France was transformed from a society contained almost exclusively within mainland metropolitan France to an entity incorporating an extensive empire' (2006: 137). France had developed its own empire from a few barren Atlantic islands in the sixteenth century to a broadly based colonial power with presence in Indo-China, Shanghai and much of Northern, Western and Central Africa. French colonial possessions covered 12 million square kilometres and 65 million colonial subjects by the end of the century.⁵⁴ The political significance of these colonial possessions revolved around both military and economic considerations. Many in the Chamber of Deputies questioned the economic

⁵⁴ For a summary of the geographical profile and population statistics of the late nineteenth-century French empire see Quinn (2000: 3).

value of these colonies in view of the vast investment of both financial and human resource involved in their acquisition and maintenance. Historians Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, however, underline how the mass press supported the French colonial project in the late nineteenth century: ‘papers such as the *Petit Journal* and later the *Petit Parisien* enjoyed massive circulations and exerted a strong influence on public opinion, so it was significant that they were, on the whole, enthusiastic about empire’ (2002: 4). The nature of this ‘strong influence’ is defined by Bacot, who reports on ‘la construction d’un nationalisme militariste et une exigence morale’ by these two newspapers (2005: 171).

In 1880, French colonial forces had achieved a secure foothold in Cochinchina (largely contiguous with the present South Vietnam) and Cambodia. Under the second premiership of Jules Ferry in 1883, however, an ambitious plan was conceived to annex Tonkin (broadly equivalent to today’s North Vietnam). This potentially put the French into direct confrontation with the Chinese. The delta of the Red River gave access to the Yunnan province and to South China and was a fertile agricultural area as well as being, reputedly, a source of mineral wealth. Gilles de Gantès, in his account of migration trends to Indochina in the 1880s and 90s, reports two reactions from those in the Chamber who opposed Ferry’s expansionist policies. First, there were those who believed that ‘the only advantage of occupying Cochinchina was the opportunity to control a good harbour near China’s southern shores’ (2002: 16). More fundamentally, there were those who doubted that the conquest was of any value at all: ‘When supporters of Cochinchina wrote and said that its potential for exporting rice was very promising, most French politicians noted that France’s needs were already supplied by Italy at a better price’ (16).

A lack of economic justification also characterised French colonial policy in West Africa. Africa as a colonial ambition greatly exceeded Indochina not only in size of annexed territories but in the resources and time invested by France across the nineteenth century in its conquest.⁵⁵ French and African Studies scholar Christopher Miller provides insights on how what he calls ‘the scramble for Africa’ parcelled out African territories to the Colonial powers: ‘they are for the most part communities that were imagined on the conference tables of Europe’ (1990: 48). The profit motive behind these ‘imagined’ colonies is highlighted by African Studies scholar Hilary Jones who tells us that the West African gum trade in the middle of the nineteenth century represented a key investment opportunity for European capital into African economies and brought with it the decline of the African middle class.⁵⁶ The limited commercial benefits of France’s colonial empire, however, are vividly highlighted by figures quoted in Winfried Baumgart’s account of the idea and the reality of British and French colonial expansion. Whereas in the 1880s around one third of British exports went to the Empire and approximately one quarter of imports came from British colonies, the figures are much lower for France. In 1882, less than seven percent of French exports went to their colonies and imports accounted for less than five percent (Baumgart 1975: 114). It was understandable, therefore, that Ferry’s

⁵⁵The four *Communes* of Senegal had been legally entitled in 1848 and, from 1871, were able to elect their own deputy to the French National Assembly. Nonetheless, the economic value of these possessions was marginal. The original French trading posts at the mouth of the Senegal River in the seventeenth century had been established to corner supplies of gum arabic, which were brought downstream by native traders. This trade, however, was hardly substantial enough to justify a large military presence and Schneider reports that ‘slaving remained the predominant commercial activity of the French and other Europeans in Africa until the nineteenth century’ (1982: 14). Berenson describes such African colonial projects as being more to do with ‘the future of France’. He reports that the colonial lobby ‘maintained that a policy of active colonial expansion would restore French grandeur and rejuvenate a culture facing decline’ (2011: 60).

⁵⁶ For an account of the West African gum trade see Jones (2013: chapter five).

opponents in the Chamber questioned the need to conquer and defend territories in order to secure uneconomic quantities of commodities such as rice and gum. It was not only politicians who raised these questions. The liberation of the mass press after 1881 meant that events in Africa, previously reported primarily to administrators, were reported to the French people within a relatively short period of their occurrence (Schneider 1982: 5). With such marginal benefits at stake, what were the motivations that sustained French colonial ambition across the last thirty years of the nineteenth century? Schneider, apparently without irony, suggests that ‘politicians used the establishment of the new empires as a means of diverting the attention of the working classes from problems at home’ (1982: 4). Governments, especially that of Jules Ferry, used colonial policy cynically as a tool to repair a fractured social fabric characterised by riots, strikes and a split between the ruling classes and the masses. Cooper and Stoler detect ideological as well as economic issues at play. They see colonial policy as one of the means by which European states developed their moral codes: ‘The last quarter of the nineteenth century stands out as another moment when colonialism became part of a pan-European debate on the practices of civilized status that consolidated an imperialist morality’ (1997: 31). A picture emerges of a colonial empire providing limited commercial benefits but, nonetheless, generating expedient political capital and a testing ground for aspects of national identity.

What, then, were the key ideological resonances of France’s colonial policy under Ferry and his successors? Two particular ideological valences are prominent both in contemporary news reports and in popular adventure fiction. One is the lionisation of the colonial soldier hero (potentially an exemplary stimulus to national regeneration). The other is the symbolic importance of annexation of large tracts of territory, which could be shown as colonial possessions on the world maps

increasingly used to educate French schoolchildren. The drive for colonial expansion was one facet of the fast emerging rivalry between the major powers in Europe. Baumgart's contention is that 'French, Italian and Russian imperialism was intended, to a large extent, to restore national prestige' (1975: 67). One potential restorative, Berenson informs us in his study of colonial heroes, was what he calls 'the ideal of manliness' (2011: 10) and goes on to outline the factors behind the perceived decline in this crucial ideal: 'the more crucial manliness seemed, the more commentators in fin-de-siècle Britain and France lamented its apparent decline. Urbanisation, an expanding consumer culture, the decline of physical labor, and the emancipation of women all conspired [...] to create a weakened male' (10). Baumgart reports that 'the manifestation of the desire for rehabilitation, of the yearning to regain the former great-power status, became almost a ritual in public gatherings, in political meetings' (1975: 57). Joseph Chailley-Bert, the French colonial adviser for Indochina in the 1880s, recognised the ideological power of colonies. Cooper and Stoler inform us that Chailley-Bert was active in disseminating the benefits of colonialism in terms of 'administrative strategy, ethnographic classification, and scientific knowledge' (1997: 28). The sheer scale of colonial possessions, especially when shaded on a map on a classroom wall or in a textbook, exercised a powerful psychological effect.

4.2 Marking the Territory: the legacy of Soil as a Metaphor

In the first decade of the following century, as a build up of international tensions and armaments presaged the outbreak of war in Europe, this imagery of colonial power had survived as a potent political weapon. Joseph Chailley-Bert, who was also the Secretary General of the Union Coloniale Française, founded in 1893, expresses this territorial hubris in a speech given at a Union Coloniale banquet.

France, he claims, is 'a great nation, exercising authority over an area of between six

and eight million square kilometres, and with 50 million subjects, is validation to our 39 million citizens.⁵⁷ The central idea here, that of ‘validating’ the metropole by the extent of its possessions, is one that is frequently encountered in French adventure fiction in the last part of the nineteenth century. One of the most lyrical examples is a passage written by Paul d’Ivoi, the successful author of more than fifty adventure novels between 1881 and 1915. It appears in a preface, appended to an 1899 edition of Antoine Gandon’s *Les Récits du Brigadier Flageolet. Souvenirs d’un Chasseur d’Afrique*, a military adventure novel set in North Africa in the 1850s, originally published in 1859. D’Ivoi invokes the act of marking the territory physically with a colonial soldier’s footprint. He also draws a parallel between the late nineteenth-century colonial soldier, with his *spahi*’s long wooden lance, and the medieval pilgrim:

Ce soldat, ce paysan enrégimenté qui revient d’une expédition lointaine, la main droite armée du long baton des pèlerins du moyen âge revenant de la terre sainte, c’est plus d’un soldat de l’armée; il est le paysan de la patrie qui a marqué de son pied la terre inculte et sauvage au nom de l’agriculture et de la civilisation (1899 [1859]: vii).

D’Ivoi embraces much contemporary nationalist ideology in this highly charged piece. Here, d’Ivoi’s colonial hero is not a Lyautey or a Brière de l’Isle of the elite military establishment. He is instead a farm worker who has been recruited to serve in the *Chasseurs*, a North African colonial regiment. He is not only a soldier; d’Ivoi

⁵⁷ Cited in Baumgart (1975: 58). Even allowing for some imprecision on the colonised area and on numbers of subjects, the scale of the figures quoted by Chailley-Bert were enough to impress his audiences of the importance of the colonial enterprise. Baumgart is judicious, however, in his observation that ‘the masses of colonial territory consisted to a great extent of deserts, steppes and virgin forests’ (1975: 58). Berenson reports that Central Africa was not an attractive investment, citing the ‘refusal by French investors to sink capital into the region, whose economic potential they doubted’ (2011: 209).

presents him as a 'paysan de la patrie' charged with claiming what d'Ivoi characterises as a 'savage' land for France. It is significant, at a time when agriculture still accounted for forty percent of employment in France,⁵⁸ that the French soldier claims ownership of the colonial conquest with a footprint in the earth in the name of both civilization and agriculture. In particular, d'Ivoi's preface to Gandon's novel typifies a discourse that defines the metropole by reference to uncivilised lands that depend on France to civilise them.

A footprint in the earth as a gauge of military victory and, by extension, of colonial ownership is to be found elsewhere in literary accounts of colonial conquests. The scramble for Africa in the 1880s and the ensuing manoeuvring of the European powers in the early years of the next century had laid emphasis on the physical possession of land, not only as a symbolic coloured section of the world map but as a tangible proof of ownership. It is partly to do with the importance of fertile agricultural land as a trope, a concept that found powerful expression in Zola's *La Terre* (1887), in which the prescriptions of the Code Civile of 1804 regarding the division of the smallest parcels of land are at the centre of the strife that consumes the Fouan family.

More significantly in the context of colonial France, the concept of earth as a token of possession is at the heart of the process of assimilation that typifies France's engagement with its overseas possessions and with their indigenous peoples. In Driant's preface to *La Guerre de Demain* (1898), for example, he emphasises the symbolic importance of the land in the Vosges forests, over which the Prussians and the French are fighting, by analogy with tracts of sand dunes in North Africa, won for France by the *Spahi* and *Chasseur* regiments: 'cette frontière, une ligne fictive dans

⁵⁸ See employment statistics in Craig Lindsay, 'A Century of Labour Market Change', (London: Office for National Statistics, 2003), p. 137.

un désert de Tunisie' (1898: ii). Loti's novels, too, use the rich rhetoric of earth in his account of the campaign of the Ottoman army against insurgents in the mid 1870s. In *Aziyadé*, Lieutenant Loti enlists in the Turkish army to defend the cause of Islam. He does so in tribute to the memory of his Turkish mistress. As he prepares to fight over disputed territory, he claims that 'mes larmes tombent sans amertume sur cette terre nue' (1991[1876]: 241). The earth is also a metonymic referent for death and the afterlife. The lieutenant speculates as to whether his death in battle, in 'la sombre poussière' over which he is fighting, will reunite him with the spirit of his dead lover. Her body is described as: 'cette chose sinistre déjà dévorée par la terre' and this motif of earth in life and death continues as Lieutenant Loti, mortally wounded in the second battle of Kars, is interred in the desert earth of Karadjémir.

4.3 *Assimilation, the Mission Civilisatrice and Miscegeny*

I now consider in more depth the implications of the French colonial policy called *assimilation*. In doing so, I will set out its principal tenets by comparison with the British colonial policies and will then address the ways in which this policy of *assimilation* defined France (and, by extension, French colonial heroes) by means of reference to others.

I first provide an example from adventure fiction of how *assimilation* was characterised in literary discourses. Louis Bousсенard's adventure novel, *Les Robinsons de la Guyane* (1882), relates the history of the falsely accused convict Robin who escapes from the penitentiary *bagne* on the banks of the Maroni River in French Guyana. Having survived fever, hunger, snakes, tigers and sunstroke during a pursuit through the tropical jungle, he receives a compromise remission of his sentence that allows his wife and children to join him in exile in Guyana. The young 'Robinsons' respond in the manner of idealised colonial heroes: 'l'esprit des enfants

se développe à merveille. Les Robinsons de la Guyane ne seront pas de petits sauvages. Ils feront honneur aux Français de l'Équateur' (1882: 126). The 'esprit' of the young pioneers confronted with unfamiliar races, and the 'honneur' (126) which they confer by their behaviour are pillars for the representation of the heroic pioneer as coloniser. In the advertising 'blurb' inside the back cover of the first edition of *Les Robinsons de la Guyane*, the publisher goes so far as to conflate the renewed spirit of the age with the authorship of the colonial adventure novel: 'riches en prouesses athlétiques, fertile en exploits sportifs, notre époque a fait naître de nombreux romanciers d'aventures.'⁵⁹ What, then, are the manifestations of what Bousсенard has called 'esprit' and 'honneur', and how do they reflect the policies of *assimilation* which characterised the French colonial enterprise? French colonial policy differed from its British counterpart in a number of important respects. I argue below that this difference may also be understood through the representations of masculinity to be found in adventure fiction set in the French colonies. In order to set this analysis in context, I turn to contemporary press reports, review recent scholarship in the literary and visual arts, assess emerging scholarly perspectives and set my own questions within this framework.

In his appraisal of Loti's (and Gauguin's) exoticism Hughes asserts that 'their blinkered, authoritarian domestication of a silenced alterity exemplifies the response to cultural difference in the age of high colonialism' (2001: 40). The response of Loti's novels to cultural difference is at times ambiguous. Although I have shown that his colonial writing was unambiguously racist, he also indulged in his own personal style of integrative colonial philosophy through his adoption of local Arab and Turkish dress on his voyages to French protectorates in North Africa and

⁵⁹ Advertising material inside book binding of first edition of *Les Robinsons de la Guyane* promoting *Voyages lointains: aventures étranges* (1882).

the Balkans. His heroes Peyral and Loti, in *Le Roman d'un Spahi* and *Aziyadé* respectively, both take indigenous lovers and, in the case of the fictional Lieutenant Loti, die fighting for their adopted fatherland. Cooper informs us that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century colonial powers sought 'a complex structuring of group boundaries, racial identities and permissible forms of sexual and social interaction' (1997: 31). In these novels, the narrators' depiction of the relationships of colonial soldiers with the native population of conquered territories is illustrative of such complex interactions.

The key principles of *assimilation* were part of the *mission civilisatrice* which had been enshrined in the Charter of the original French Acadian colony of 1603 in the following words: 'to attempt, with divine assistance, to bring the peoples to the knowledge of the true God, to civilise them and to instruct them in the faith' (Quinn 2000: 5). By the late nineteenth century this had become a convenient badge for pioneers and traders whose aims were mercenary rather than spiritual. The key enabling factor for the *mission civilisatrice* was the dismantling of local administrative structures and their replacement by French officers. Véronique Dimier, in her essay on 'Direct or Indirect Rule', defines the French notion of *assimilation* as 'the imposition on native societies of a law which was regarded as universal. It was then linked to an idea of government based on coercion and grounded in purely philosophical or legal considerations' (2002: 172). A picture emerges of a colonial rule which is uncompromising in its imposition of its own administrative and legal framework, but which embraces a philosophy of integration, fostering inter-racial relationships and some very limited participation for colonised men in the rights of citizenship. There are, however, defined limits to this philosophy of integration. Cooper characterises colonial moral codes as comprising: 'enhanced expectations of

hard work, managed sexuality and racial distancing among the colonising agents' (1997: 31). In Loti's colonial fiction, what Cooper evokes as 'managed sexuality' (with all the paradoxes that implies), in combination with racism, is given an ambiguous expression.

4.4 Colonial Rule: The French and British Way

British colonial policy was not fully integrative of local administration. Instead, British colonial officers were appointed to direct and control the activities of local rulers whose administrative structures were often left largely in place as long as their leaders subscribed loyally to British colonial aims, both economic and political. French colonial policy was conceived by legislators as more truly integrative, with citizenship and enfranchisement of male colonial subjects taking place as early as 1871 in West Africa. In this way, it reflects more nearly the concept of *assimilation* in the sense of 'intégrer quelqu'un, une minorité à un groupe social, lui faire prendre les caractères de celui-ci'.⁶⁰ The French mass press was frequently used as the debating forum for those who espoused varying degrees of enthusiasm for the concept of colonial *assimilation*. *Le Petit Parisien*, which, Bellanger reports, was selling nearly one million copies daily in 1890 (1972: 301) contributes to the debate on 4 April 1895 in an article entitled 'Les Protectorats'. It characterises the British colonial policy of indirect rule as deceptive: 'Les Anglais qui, depuis les Romains, ont été les plus grands colonisateurs du monde entière, ont pour méthode invariable de laisser subsister l'apparence de l'autorité locale'.⁶¹ Significant here is the use of the word 'apparence', connoting duplicitous behaviour. This is spelt out in unambiguous terms later in the article: 'Vis à vis d'un monarque indien, le résident britannique affecte, en

⁶⁰ Definition derived from on-line edition of *Dictionnaire de Français Larrousse*, (www.larrousse.fr, 2013).

⁶¹ 'Les Protectorats', *Le Petit Parisien*, 4 April 1895, p. 1.

public, beaucoup d'égards. Seulement, une fois la porte close, en tête à tête, il donne des ordres impérieux; et malheur au prince qui essaie de soustraire à obéissance'.⁶²

Again, the newspaper's use of the word 'affecte' imputes a lack of sincerity to British policies of colonial integration.

France, maintains the unnamed author of the article, would do better to enact a more genuinely integrative policy of assimilation in building its colonial presence in Indochina: 'En respectant les idées des peuples, en les gouvernant sans violenter leurs mœurs et leurs usages, en se mélangeant à eux par des unions, ce arrivera mieux que par la force à créer l'Empire français asiatique'.⁶³ Of particular importance here is the notion of 'se mélanger' and 'des unions'. Although it is unclear whether 'union' here connotes marriage, relationships of French colonial soldiers and administrators with indigenous women were much more common than in the British case and are linked by Baumgart with the perspective of multiracialism: 'In contrast to the British, the French long believed in the feasibility of assimilating colonized peoples and of amalgamating them with the metropolis into a multiracial empire' (1975: vi). Cooper modifies this point of view in his assertion that the racial attitudes immanent in French colonialism 'long depended on hierarchies of civility, on cultural distinctions of breeding, character and psychological disposition' (1997: 34). Conklin also identifies selectivity as one of the precepts upon which the French colonial policy of *assimilation* was constructed: 'pre-eminent among those premises [...] was the notion that republican France should be encouraging the selective assimilation of an elite group of Africans' (1997: 166). In spite of the multi-racialist rhetoric of the 1880s, Conklin contends that, by the end of the century, the concept of *assimilation* 'had been rejected in Parisian colonial circles influenced by both racist and progressive

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

trends in the social sciences' (78). A picture emerges, therefore, of a policy which, although in theory more integrative than British colonial policy, achieved progressively fewer of its original aims as the century drew to a close.

Daniel Bivona suggests a very different model in his study of British imperial literature. Bivona characterises the British colonial administrators in the Sudan as 'models of moral restraint', complying with British diplomat Lord Cromer's austere code of personal conduct: 'these administrators return to Britain as monogamous heroes having accomplished a job well done, but a job which typically only their immediate superiors can truly appreciate' (1998: 29). The perceived success of the British Empire in deriving both political and economic benefit from its colonies, however, was not a cause for celebration in its largest colonial rival, France. The French mass press of the 1890s painted a negative picture of British colonial methods and attributed its success to brutality and exploitation. On 30 April 1895 an article, under the headline 'La Colonisation', appeared on the front page of the largest selling daily newspaper *Le Petit Parisien* which amounted to a condemnation of British policy overseas:

Sa supériorité économique tient à ses facultés brutales d'exploiteur méthodique, beaucoup plus qu'à ce que l'on désigne sous le nom d'aptitudes colonisatrices [...] Il est protégé par un gouvernement qui veut que le respect du partout à un citoyen anglais ne soit pas un vain mot. Voilà le secret de sa prospérité.⁶⁴

Even though the British may be prosperous, in the view of *Le Petit Parisien* this does not qualify them as masters of the art of colonisation. According to the unattributed article, France holds this distinction. The newspaper sets out the many reasons why

⁶⁴ 'La Colonisation', *Le Petit Parisien*, 30 April 1895, p. 1.

‘de toutes les races, nous avons le tempérament le plus apte à la véritable colonisation’. One of the talismans of French colonial rule is the symbolic appropriation of a small patch of land as a garden. The unidentified writer of the article relates a meeting with an unnamed explorer, recently returned from the coast of West Africa. During his travels, apparently, he has developed a foolproof means of recognising a settlement of French colonial pioneers:

Quand j’arrivais près d’une habitation de blanc, soit à la côte, soit à l’intérieur, en n’importe quel terrain, je savais de suite si un Français y demeurerait. Il y avait en ce cas toujours un jardinet; de plus les enfants indigènes ne craignaient point de venir jouer près de l’habitation.⁶⁵

Here, united in a single sentence, is what resembles the Acadian principles of the *mission civilisatrice*, as French pioneers cultivate their patch of African soil while indigenous children play nearby. The act of laying out a garden is symbolic of benevolent French colonial rule, a hallmark of *assimilation* in contrast to the rapacious and unsympathetic colonial rule of the British: ‘Toute la différence qui sépare le caractère du colon français de celui du colon anglais tient en ce petit fait: l’un a toujours un jardin près de sa case, l’autre n’en a jamais’.⁶⁶

It is worth dwelling on this article for one more insight into how France’s self-promotion as a benevolent coloniser was constructed in the mass press of the late nineteenth century. Having established France’s caring credentials by emphasizing the symbolism of tending a garden, the writer points up the crucial aspect of *assimilation* which distinguishes French from British colonial rule: the integration of the colonist by means of intermarriage with daughters of indigenous landowners. Significantly, the article characterises the ‘union’ as being between the ‘colon’ or

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

settler and the ‘campagne indigène’, denoting an estate or farm. The meaning is clear as the progeny of a well esteemed and integrated family is celebrated: ‘Le colon français, lui, s’unit à des campagnes indigènes; il crée ainsi des familles respectables et respectées. J’en sais des exemples nombreux dans nos possessions d’Afrique et d’Indo-Chine. Je n’en connais point en colonies anglaises’.⁶⁷ The *hubris* expressed here is representative of the way in which the figure of the French colonist was constructed in the late nineteenth century in both the mass press and in the adventure novel. Three key strands of contemporary ideology are inscribed in this article. First, the *mission civilisatrice* is endorsed by the journalist from *Le Petit Parisien*, in as much as it is the union with a Frenchman that confers respectability on an indigenous family. Second, the French settler forms a symbolic union with a tract of land, the implication being one of benevolent cultivation of colonised territories rather than rapacious extraction of natural wealth. Third, the unique nature of integrative French colonial policy is pointed up by reference to the impersonal indirect rule of the British. How much of this article is part of a politically inspired discourse aimed at enhancing France’s image as a benevolent colonial power is suggested by the postscript cited below.

An afterthought by the columnist is perhaps indicative of his recognition that this rustic idyll has not been achieved without the strife and bloodshed of the original military expedition that had colonised the land in question. In particular, given that on 29 April *Le Petit Parisien* had proudly reported the bloody conquest of the city of Ketnong in Tonkin by Colonel Galliéni and his French colonial army and the complete extermination of the defending rebel forces, the writer is constrained to add, apparently with no trace of embarrassment or conscious irony, the following words:

⁶⁷ Ibid.

‘le colon français pourra parfois être dur, cruel vers l’indigène aux heures de colère, de répression; mais ces pénibles moments passés, il met une coquetterie de race à l’aimer et à s’en faire aimer’.⁶⁸ The strong implication is that, although the French overseas army might occasionally become frustrated with unwilling colonial subjects, a more moderate integrative policy will follow, thereby assuring mutual love and respect. The degree to which this type of journalism reflects genuinely held beliefs by policy-makers and their supporters in the press or, alternatively, a cynical attempt at pro-colonial propaganda, is not clear. It is certainly not the case that the assimilation of indigenous peoples was a philanthropic venture. Berenson’s account of exploitation in the French Congo in 1899, for example, contends that ‘economic extraction in the French Congo depended on the opportunistic, and often creative, use of violence—especially exemplary violence—to squeeze work out of the Congolese at the lowest possible price’ (2011: 211). In the light of these evident contradictions between reported policy and documented practice, how did late nineteenth-century adventure novels portray French colonial policies? In what follows, I provide some examples of how the fictional colonial soldier hero discharges his duties.

4.5 Fictional Representations of Assimilation and Colonial Manhood in d’Ivoi, Loti and Boussenard

In the adventure fiction genre, how do these ideologies of racial superiority, solicitous cultivation of conquered territory, inter-marriage with colonial subjects, benevolent administration and an enlightened colonial policy combine in the construction of the French fictional colonial hero? D’Ivoi’s 1899 preface to the *Récits du Brigadier Flageolet* had characterised the French colonial soldier as follows: ‘Le soldat d’Afrique, c’est le paysan gaulois, obéissant, quoique raisonneur, robuste,

⁶⁸ Ibid.

content de peu, sachant souffrir gaiement' (1899: iv). The colonial soldier Peyral of *Le Roman d'un Spahi* is also a peasant, from a farming community in the Cévennes. As a farmer, he is very much aware of the passing of the seasons, and his reaction to his new quarters in Senegal is couched in terms of the natural environment which surrounds him: 'L'air était chargé d'effluves lourds et brûlants de senteurs vitales, de parfums de jeunes plantes' (1881: 65). His thoughts also return frequently to the passing of the seasons in his home region of the Cévennes hillsides, where he abandoned his childhood sweetheart, having now formed a relationship with a Senegalese girl. Like d'Ivoi's 'paysan gaulois', he is habitually in touch with nature and with the fertile local countryside of his adopted African homeland and it is the soil itself that often figures in his thoughts: 'dans la campagne, le sol s'était couvert de fleurs singulières' (66). Jean Peyral, in these respects, embodies some of the characteristics of the French soldier pioneer with 'le tempérament plus apte à la véritable colonisation' in the article cited above from *Le Petit Parisien*. He is in touch, not only with the fertile earth of the colonised land but has also formed an intimate relationship with one of its subjects.

Like Peyral in *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, the naval lieutenant Loti in *Aziyadé* is representative of a style of integrative *assimilation* that differentiates the French colonial adventurer. Lieutenant Loti's relationship with his Turkish neighbour's wife and the intensity of this union of Western and Oriental cultures is expressed in two ways, first by a feeling of intoxication: 'auprès d'elle Loti va passer une heure de complète ivresse, au risque de sa tête' (1991 [1876]: 40) and second by the sense of total exhaustion which follows their nightly trysts: 'je me trouve fort vieux, malgré

mon extrême jeunesse physique, que j'entretiens par l'exercice et l'acrobatie' (46).⁶⁹ Fired by the intensity of this relationship, the lieutenant goes considerably further than Peyral in his integration into Turkish society. He joins up as a mercenary in the Turkish army and, not atypically of a Loti *dénouement*, meets death at the hands of rebel tribesmen on the field of battle. His final resting place is once again symbolic of the precepts of colonial *assimilation*: 'Il a été inhumé parmi les braves défenseurs de l'islam (que Mahomet protège!) aux pieds du Kizil-Tépé, dans les plaines de Karadjémir' (241). In this case, the *assimilation* is complete, both spiritually and physically. Lieutenant Loti has taken the religion, the costume and the loyalties of his adopted land. Once again, the symbolism of the earth is evoked through the use of the verb 'inhumer'⁷⁰ and the location of his body in the reddish coloured soil of the Stamboul lowlands.⁷¹

The motif of the physical cultivation of colonised land is also part of the ideology inscribed in Bousсенard's *Les Robinsons de la Guyane* (1882). It is worth pausing for a moment to consider the *Robinsonade* genre of French adventure fiction, inspired by Defoe's archetype novel of 1719 and popularised in France by Verne's *L'Île mystérieuse* (1874) and *L'École des Robinsons* (1882). Bousсенard's narrative of the escaped *bagne* exile who eventually finds solace with his family tilling the soil in a small holding on the tropical margins of the mosquito coast, is one of many French adventure novels which treat this escapist theme. During his escape, the

⁶⁹ This insistence on physical fitness is a recurrent motif of the French adventure novel and is central to the concept of regeneration. The notion of acrobatics as a means of keeping fit is not as far-fetched as it may seem. The growth of gymnasia and fencing clubs during the 1870s and 80s in Paris fuelled this trend (Gildea 2009: 408). We are told in Verne's *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours* (1872) that the manservant Passepartout has been, not only a tightrope walker like Blondin, but also a gymnastics instructor and an officer in the Paris fire brigade.

⁷⁰ From the Latin *humus* = soil.

⁷¹ *Kizil-Tépé* may be translated as 'the red hills'.

protagonist Robin is saved from starvation by indigenous tribes and by the inhabitants of a leper colony. In settling with his family on the coast of Guyana, we are told, he integrates completely with the local people and introduces modern agricultural methods. His account of how integration is achieved, however, is couched in the hypocritical rhetoric of the *assimilation* policy which habitually characterises coercion and exploitation as kindness: ‘autrefois, les nègres me produisaient un drôle d’effet, tandis qu’aujourd’hui je vois qu’il y a de bien bonnes gens parmi eux’ (1882: 102). In spite of this attitude of condescension, Robin’s history embodies ideologies of integration, tolerance, racial harmony and the colonial work ethic, conflated in the person of a pardoned convict who has found fulfilment tilling the earth of a humble tropical small holding.

The idyll of a life of solitude on a desert island was not only a fictional construction. There were those who had experienced the reality. On 25 March 1895 an extraordinary account is given in the mass press under the heading of ‘Un Robinson Normand’. It relates the history of a French sailor who had gained permission to leave his ship whilst on naval patrol duties in the South Sea Islands some twenty years earlier. He had set up his home in a native coastal village to live from the land and from fishing and has now returned to Normandy to publish his *Récits de ma vie d’aventures et de navigation*. His experience, however, is not one of *assimilation* of the local islanders into a French cultural and administrative template. It is rather the opposite as the sailor, in a minority of one, integrates himself fully into an unspoilt and simple life: ‘Elle fait l’apologie d’une sorte de retour à la vie primitive, et célèbre les hautes qualités des enfants de la nature que la civilisation n’a pas viciés’.⁷² This reported episode is reflective of a curious ambivalence of the

⁷² ‘Un Robinson Normand’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 25 March 1895, p. 2.

French towards their colonial possessions. Although, contrary to British colonial policy, they promote direct rule from France together with the vestiges of direct electoral representation, they also evince considerable sensitivity towards the history and culture of the lands they have conquered.

This set of attitudes permeates Loti's semi-autobiographical account of a French diplomatic mission in the adventure travelogue *Au Maroc* (1890). Although his protagonist's risky mission to North Africa is to establish closer ties, and therefore stronger political and economic links, with the ruling Sultan, he does not underestimate the task of *assimilation*: 'je regarde longuement ces personnages et ces choses, avec lesquels il va falloir se familiariser et vivre' (1927 [1890]: 6).

Anticipating the views of the columnist in *Le Petit Parisien* of 30 April 1895, who will concede that the French colonist 'pourra parfois être dur', *Au Maroc*'s narrator also admits that strong measures occasionally need to be taken to subdue what he calls a dark alien land: 'il est bien un peu sombre, cet empire de Maghreb et l'on y coupe bien de temps en temps quelques têtes, je suis forcé de le reconnaître' (ii).

Nonetheless, as with the voluntarily exiled French sailor in the South Seas, the narrator here has a sense of the immutability of an ancient culture: 'ici en Maghreb nous sommes encore en plein moyen âge' (109). His instinct is to preserve the past from too forceful an incursion of the *mission civilisatrice*. This instinct is expressed in a hortatory passage which is lyrical in its evocation of the cycle of decay and renewal in the Moroccan earth: 'laissons les vieux murs se fendre au soleil des étés, les herbes pousser sur nos toits, les bêtes pourrir à la place où elles sont tombées. Laissons tout, et jouissons seulement du passage des choses qui ne trompent pas' (iv). Within these sentiments may also reside an element of self-preservation. At a time when the colonial expeditions in Indochina, sponsored by the Ferry government in the 1880s,

were reported to have suffered significant casualties for small gains (Berenson 2011: 62), a relatively benign protectorate in Maghreb is suggested by *Au Maroc*'s narrator as a more palatable and practical colonial policy for France. Historian Benjamin Brouwer's study of violence in France's conquest and control of Algeria provides numerous examples of how initial concepts of peaceful colonisation (as hinted at in *Au Maroc*) proved in reality to be campaigns of brutal repression: 'the French took control of the Sahara through military campaigns involving immoderate forms of violence, including massacres, even as they first conceived of the Saharan conquest as a peaceful penetration' (2011: 6).

A curious ambivalence, therefore, emerges from both fictional accounts and newspapers with regard to the French nineteenth-century doctrine of *assimilation*. Colonial possessions are brutally conquered, and yet a sense of the respect held by fictional and real-life colonial pioneers for indigenous subjects and their culture emerges from some of the newspaper reports and adventure novels cited above. France's claim to large tracts of land is an imperative forced by international colonial ambitions, and yet the cultivation by colonists of a smallholding appears as a recurrent symbol. A spirit of ethnocentricity permeates much of the French colonial discourse and yet the French, more than most of their European rivals, formed relationships with indigenous peoples. The supposed magnanimity of the *mission civilisatrice* was vaunted in contemporary discourses although, Hargreaves tells us, 'educationally, few resources were devoted to the civilising mission'. He estimates that, as late as the 1950s, illiteracy rates of 95% were still common in France's African territories (1981: 11). Conklin underlines the inherent racism of the *mission civilisatrice*: 'to the extent that racism is defined as the perception that certain groups [...] were fundamentally different from and inferior to white Europeans, then French

officialdom was guilty of thinking in racialised categories and implementing oppressive measures throughout the life of the Third Republic' (1997: 9). The sense of a colonial project more symbolic than economically viable inevitably emerges. Although by the outbreak of the First World War, France's overseas possessions covered a territory twenty times the size of metropolitan France, the economic benefits amounted to only five percent of France's world trade (Hargreaves 1981: 7). In spite of their ambivalent objectives and questionable methods, these colonial conquests offered opportunities, for the press and for the authors of adventure fiction across the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to inscribe ideologies of exemplary masculinity.

4.6 'La Fortune Ennemie': Anti-British Propaganda, 'Schadenfreude' and Xenophobia

In concluding this analysis of how the otherness immanent in colonial lands and subjects came to define metropolitan France during these years, I argue that one of the principal ideological impacts of the French colonial project was the contrast of France's supposedly enlightened policies with those of what French commentators saw as exploitative European rivals. In particular, in the twenty years that led up to the *Entente Cordiale* of 1904, it was Great Britain's imperial policy that stimulated the invective of both French news columnists and French adventure writers. The roots of this resentment go very deep. On 9 April 1895, a report appeared in the best selling Parisian newspaper of the erection of a war memorial to French soldiers on the battlefield of Waterloo. The strong conviction of the unnamed reporter is that it was purely bad luck that had led to the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte's heroic army eighty years earlier: 'Pour avoir été trahis par le sort des armes, les soldats français de 1815 ne furent-ils pas des héros?' He goes on to claim that this was their finest hour: 'est-il

même une journée où ils aient combattu plus bravement, avec une énergie plus désespérée?’⁷³ In taking his readers back eighty years, however, it is for the British that he reserves his scorn and his contempt for their hubristic attitudes: ‘à Waterloo tout appartient aux Anglais. Le chauvinisme britannique ne va même pas là sans quelque ridicule. Il triomphe comme si l’évènement était de la veille’.⁷⁴ This article is representative of anti-British sentiments in both press reports and in adventure fiction in the last part of the nineteenth century. These range from pious outrage against what were characterised as cruel and manipulative British colonial policies in India to transparent delight at British military setbacks in Afghanistan, the Sudan and Southern Africa in the 1880s and 1890s.

La Folle du Temple d’Or (1899), d’Ivoi’s account of his intrepid adventurer Cigale’s mission to India and Afghanistan in the 1890s in the company of the inscrutable Docteur Mystère, abounds in anti-British triumphalism. Referring to British setbacks in South Africa, admiration is expressed for the ‘courageuse tenacité des Boers de Kruger et du général Botha, abandonnant leurs villes pour commencer le terrible et meurtrière guerre de guérillas’ (1899: 587) and predicts that the British army will ‘fondre comme un morceau de beurre sur un feu ardent’ (588). These lines, written before the declaration of war by Britain against the Dutch settlers in the Orange Free State and the South African Republic in October 1899, were chillingly predictive of a conflict which would cost the lives of 22,000 British soldiers in battle and from tropical diseases. Cigale’s Hindu bearers on the North West Frontier sympathise with the oppressed Boers and are strident in their invective against the British who, they say, ‘nous oppriment et nous pressurent sans merci’, once again characterising the British as ruthless oppressors (750).

⁷³ *Le Petit Parisien*, 9 April 1895, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

The French mass press is unstinting in its reports of British defeats in overseas colonial expeditions in the years between 1885 and 1900, coinciding with increasingly difficult conditions for the British in Egypt and the Sudan as well as in Afghanistan and Southern Africa. On 28 February 1885, *Le Petit Journal* reports with barely disguised glee that ‘la situation des Anglais au Soudan prend le caractère d’un véritable désastre’ and adds that General Baker’s army has been beaten again and ‘se trouve en pleine débandade’.⁷⁵ The outcome of the British expedition in Egypt and the Sudan had been predicted two weeks earlier in the same newspaper and the article, with more than a touch of *schadenfreude*, congratulates the French government on its policy of non-alignment with the British: ‘les Anglais sont fatalement condamnés à abandonner l’Égypte; fort heureusement, nous n’avons pas fait avec eux cette expedition’.⁷⁶ This policy is justified in the light of what is termed ‘la politique de chacun pour soi’ in Europe, and the readers of *Le Petit Journal* are asked to recall the occasion fifteen years earlier when Britain stood by as France suffered: ‘est-ce que les Anglais nous ont tendu la main, lorsque nous étions sous la main de fer des Allemands et de M. de Bismarck?’.⁷⁷ In an oblique reference to the probity of France’s own *mission civilisatrice*, the columnist urges his readers to show no sympathy for the predicament of France’s colonial rival: ‘et que nous ne nous laissons pas attendrir par les lamentations pseudo-civilisatrices des Anglais à Soudan’. The article concludes with yet another encomium to the French colonial army, while welcoming British setbacks in the absence of their more chivalrous neighbour: ‘oh! Si les bons Français avaient été là! Ils sont chevaleresques, eux; ils auraient fait

⁷⁵ ‘Dernières Nouvelles’, *Le Petit Journal*, 28 February 1885, p. 2.

⁷⁶ ‘Chacun pour soi’ *Le Petit Journal*, 15 February 1885, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

l'expédition et les Anglais auraient recueilli les bénéfices'.⁷⁸ Here, *Le Petit Journal* develops a double-edged ideology of French chivalry contrasted with duplicitous British opportunism.

This brand of xenophobia in the French colonial discourse was not without its critics within France in the last part of the nineteenth century. Chauvinistic attitudes and colonial ambition had been satirised in Alphonse Daudet's burlesque adventure novel *Tartarin de Tarascon*, originally serialised in *Le Figaro* in February and March 1870. Tartarin is a quixotic provincial romantic who sees a foreign expedition as a relief from the tedium of country life. Tartarin longs for the adventure that will pluck him from his provincial roots:

Le grand homme de Tarascon s'ennuyait à Tarascon. Le fait est que, pour une nature héroïque comme la sienne, pour une âme aventureuse et folle qui ne rêvait que batailles, courses dans les pampas, grandes chasses, sables du désert, ouragons et typhons, il y aurait eu de quoi le faire mourir de consommation (2004 [1870]: 43).

Tartarin lives in a state of permanent preparedness to confront unnamed aggressors to whom he refers as 'ils'. 'Ils' are sketchily defined and seem to be a multinational band of brigands and pirates whom he regards as an imminent threat to France and whom he conflates with the colonial expeditions necessary to conquer them: 'c'était encore le Touareg du désert, le pirate malais, le bandit des Abruzzes... Ils, enfin, c'était ils! C'est à dire la guerre, les voyages, l'aventure, la gloire' (45). Tartarin's paranoid xenophobia and obsession with 'ils' became a catchphrase for similar sets of contemporary attitudes and Daudet's satire brought him considerable commercial

⁷⁸ Ibid.

success. There were, however, those for whom these types of external threats were anything but a fictional concept.

Within weeks of the British defeat and the death of Gordon at the hands of the Mahdi in Khartoum in January 1885, news arrived of the defeat of the severely wounded French General de Négrier following the battle of Lang-Son in Indo-China. In a short space of time, the two great colonial powers had been put firmly on the back-foot by those who opposed their colonial incursions and were determined to force them out of their Asian and North African protectorates. A wave of anxiety worthy of Daudet's fictional adventurer appeared in the popular press, as the possibility of a united Muslim world revenging itself upon the European powers began to emerge as a perceived threat. *Le Petit Journal* on 31 March 1885 sets out the peril facing the old powers. The unattributed article points out that half of Africa and a quarter of Asia belong to Islam and evokes the danger of 'le déchainement de l'Orient contre l'Occident, la revanche des croisades, la fin de tout'.⁷⁹ In a flight of rhetoric worthy of Daudet's protagonist, the anxious columnist raises the possibility of a united Muslim attack on the Western powers: 'il ne s'agirait de rien moins que d'une invasion dans la vieille Europe des barbares de l'Asie et de l'Afrique'.⁸⁰ *Le Petit Journal* had been founded in 1863 by Moïse Polydore Millaud, the son of a family of Jewish merchants from Bordeaux. Before founding the hugely successful Paris daily, he had been involved in a series of risky enterprises and high-profile financial scandals, and the editorial style of *Le Petit Journal* was often characterised by sensationalism rather than measured political commentary (Charle 2004: 141). In this article the anti-Islamic undertones are quite evident and Islam in North Africa is characterised as 'une tache noire, continue, rongeuse, d'un bout à l'autre de cette

⁷⁹ 'L'invasion des barbares', *Le Petit Journal*, 31 March 1885, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

masse compacte et grouillante, fermentant partout un fanatisme égal, une haine commune de l'Infidèle'.⁸¹

Even if we eliminate extreme manifestations of chauvinism such as this from a more balanced analysis, there still remains ample evidence of the way in which France defined its status as a colonial power by a series of invidious comparisons with its rival European powers, particularly in the mass press. The ideological discourses tended to celebrate British defeats while accusing them of stirring up trouble in French protectorates. On 15 February 1885, for example, *Le Petit Journal* accuses Britain of fomenting rebellion against France in Indo-China: 'l'Angleterre, persévérant dans son système de haine égoïste, n'a pas cessé d'exciter les Chinois contre nous dans la question du Tonkin'.⁸² The writer continues by accusing Britain of fabricating stories to make France look foolish: 'hier encore, les journaux anglais inventaient les nouvelles les plus fantastiques pour nous ridiculiser en Chine et exciter contre nous les peuples de l'extrême Orient'.⁸³ One journalistic strategy for redressing the ideological balance consisted in the daily reporting of setbacks encountered by Britain's colonial armies. Following the death of Gordon at Khartoum, *Le Petit Journal* looks forward to further defeats of Wolseley's relief forces: 'il se pourrait que le désert lybien dévorât son Wolseley comme il a dévoré déjà son Baker, son Hicks et son Gordon'.⁸⁴ Encouraged by the prospect of this setback, the unnamed columnist goes on to evoke what perhaps would be the ultimate vitiation of Britain's tyrannical colonial rule, always contrasted with the benevolent French *mission civilisatrice*. 'Il

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² *Le Petit Journal*, 15 February 1885, p. 1.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ *Le Petit Journal*, 31 March 1885, p. 1.

se pourrait enfin qu'après avoir perdu l'Égypte, elle perdit l'Inde elle même, le plus précieux joyau de sa couronne coloniale'.⁸⁵

Even the anglophile Jules Verne, who cast some of his most celebrated heroes as English gentlemen, is not averse to a word of reproach for the acquisitive British colonialist. In his account of British exploitation of mineral wealth in Southern Africa in the serialised adventure novel *L'Étoile du Sud* (1884) he makes the following assessment: 'Ces anglais se sentent toujours chez eux, même lorsque la destinée les envoie à quelques milliers de lieues de leur pays et, très apte à coloniser, ils coloniseront la lune, le jour où ils pourront y planter le pavillon britannique'.⁸⁶ There is a note of grudging envy here. It is perhaps reflective of the recognition of Britain's conspicuous imperial success, especially in India, which could certainly have acted as an incentive for the French to seek their own overseas protectorates in Indo-China.

4.7 Ferry 'Le Tonkinois': Opposition at Home to Under-resourced Expeditions

In spite of the strong current of ideology that defined the French metropole by reference to its colonial enterprises and the failed projects of its European rivals, the idea of empire was by no means universally popular. In particular, the colonial adventurism of the two Ferry ministries in 1880-81 and 1883-85 received continuous criticism in some sectors of the French daily press, especially those who expressed extreme forms of nationalism. For example, *L'Intransigeant*, founded after his exile in 1880 by Henri Rochefort and reflective of its proprietor's political journey from socialism to Boulangism to virulent antisemitic nationalism, is unsparing in its criticism of Ferry, whom Rochefort regards as manipulative and cowardly. Following the death of a much admired French military leader, Commandant Rivière, in Tonkin

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Cited by Chesnaux from Verne's *L'Étoile du Sud* (1884).

in January 1885, orders are given that no military pageant should accompany his burial.⁸⁷ *L'Intransigeant* reports this as cynical manipulation of public opinion:

La verité est que le commandant Rivière, tué à l'ennemi, est un gêneur pour les Ferry, qui craignent les comparaisons que la foule ne manquera certainement pas de faire entre la perte d'un homme de cette valeur et l'inutilité de cette expédition misérable, entreprise par quelques pirates dans le but de relever la fortune de quelques filibustiers.⁸⁸

The small far-right nationalist daily is relentless in its pursuit of Ferry and its accusations of his policy of waging overseas war to deflect attention from economic and social troubles at home. Progressively more and more outraged by the mounting casualties of the Tonkinese expeditionary forces, *L'Intransigeant* provides a florid piece of rhetoric in a diatribe by Rochefort against Ferry that compares him to the disgraced emperor Napoleon III:

Ce n'est pas que je veuille faire à Napoleon III l'injure de le comparer à Jules Ferry. Si le premier a commis l'odieuse folie d'une déclaration de guerre à l'Allemagne, du moins est-il allé à Sedan sous les boulets de la Prusse. Le sale et ignoble ventrouillard nommé Ferry n'a même pas risqué un instant sa carapace de cloporte dans cette expédition tonkinoise, où les cadavres se chiffrent aujourd'hui par milliers.⁸⁹

The nationalist *L'Intransigeant* is more vehement than other contemporary newspapers in its personal attribution of France's colonial setbacks to Ferry himself, but there is a commonly held opinion in the mass press that politicians have overreached themselves in ambitious and under-resourced colonial expeditions. As

⁸⁷ Rivière's body was later repatriated and buried in the cemetery at Montmartre.

⁸⁸ *L'Intransigeant*, 31 January 1885, p. 1.

⁸⁹ *L'Intransigeant*, 31 March 1885, p. 1.

Berenson reports: ‘humiliating military reverses in [...] Tonkin inflamed domestic opposition to colonial expansion, uniting the extreme left and monarchist right in an unholy alliance against Ferry and the moderate republic’ (2011: 62).

On 1 January 1885, for example, *Le Petit Journal* reflects on several years of French colonial expansion into Tunisia, Algeria, West Africa and Indo-China. The unattributed article catalogues the setbacks due to opposition by, among others, the Chinese, and to spoiling tactics by the British. Above all, it deplores the pusillanimous behaviour of a French government that is quite willing to sponsor grand plans, but apparently unwilling or unable to resource them adequately: ‘Malheureusement il n’a pas eu bravement le courage de son opinion ou plutôt de ses conceptions; il a agi sans forces suffisantes, il a combattu sans être en guerre, il a marché sans provisions de route’.⁹⁰ Perhaps not entirely coincidentally, this lack of ‘forces suffisantes’ is a recurrent theme in the narrative of the fictional colonial pioneer. For example, *Pêcheur d’Islande*’s Sylvestre is in a patrol of only six men when they are surrounded by Tonkinese rebels: ‘Les Chinois! disent encore les matelots, avec leur même brave sourire. Mais c’est égal, ils trouvent cette fois qu’il y en a beaucoup, qu’il y en a trop’ (1988 [1886]: 161). In the same way, *Le Roman d’un Spahi*’s Peyral dies while part of an under-resourced patrol into enemy territory in Diambour. The minimal strength of his platoon is emphasised by repetition: ‘ils sont douze, douze spahis envoyés en éclaireurs, sous la conduite d’un adjutant, et Jean est parmi eux’ (1936 [1881]: 209). Repetition is again used here for narrative effect as the patrol is ambushed and outnumbered: ‘En même temps, trente têtes sinistres emergeaient des gerbes, trente démons noirs, couverts de boue, bondissaient, en grinçant leurs dents blanches, comme des singes en fureur’ (211). In these examples

⁹⁰ *Le Petit Journal*, 1 January 1885, p. 1.

from adventure fiction and news reports, representations of French heroism on the battlefield are given both narrative vigour and political nuance by their emphasis on undermanned and outnumbered expeditionary forces.

5 Conclusions: Colonial Ambivalence and Perceptions of French Manhood

There is an ambivalence about the representation of the French colonial project in the early Third Republic's mass press and in adventure novels. Underlying both discourses is a palpably uneasy feeling among political and journalistic commentators that these adventures overseas are a diversion of resources and a waste of young soldiers' lives at a time when political priorities should have been the restoration of the ailing domestic economy and, for many, the recovery of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine lost to the Prussians in 1871. As Quinn observes, 'overseas possessions did not interest most French citizens, who expected to live and die within their villages' orbits' (2000: 109). Nonetheless, no doubts are expressed in either novels or the mass press about the commitment and valour of the young Frenchmen sent to implement the colonial policy of Ferry and his successors. In both the daily press and in adventure fiction, they are represented as brave, loyal and resilient. In this way, they are instruments of an ideology bent on rebuilding the self-respect of a nation perceived by many policy makers and opinion formers as degenerate and vulnerable to outside incursions. In spite of the doubts expressed in the mass press about the wisdom of many colonial projects, however, there is no equivocation in the press reports of the 1880s about the beneficial effects on colonial subject races of exposure to French civilisation.

Le Petit Journal once again celebrates France's pre-eminence as a colonial power on 31 March 1885, ironically only days before Jules Ferry is forced from office after losing a vote in the Chamber on further funds for his Tonkin campaign: 'À notre

civilisation, plus libérale et plus généreuse, les musulmannes d'Algérie et de Tunisie ont emprunté le goût du travail, l'amour du repos, la curiosité scientifique et cet esprit de tolérance qui est la meilleure garantie de paix entre les peuples et les races'.⁹¹ The discourse of French colonialism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century emerges as a complex set of ideologies ranging from narrow ethnocentricity to paranoid xenophobia. The paradox of pride in an extensive empire drawn on the map, but with no tangible economic benefit, leads us to look elsewhere for the motives that kept the French colonial project alive. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, much of the rationale and justification for an extensive overseas presence seemed to lie in a diversion of attention from problems at home. With a notable lack of prescience, Jules Ferry wrote, in *Le Tonkin et la Mère Patrie* (1890), that the decisive battles for France's future would be fought elsewhere than in Europe (Quinn 2000: 113). The obvious myopia of Ferry's judgement, at a time when rearmament was already well advanced in both Germany and Russia, can be plausibly set at the door of regret over his earlier failed attempts to lead France to greater colonial hegemony.

One decisive battle that seems to have been won, however, by the discourse of the French colonial adventure hero in both press and in fiction, was the battle to generate popular admiration and respect for the armies of young men who were sent on Ferry's dangerous expeditions. Historian J. P. Daughton informs us of an important gauge of this respect. In the late 1880s, popular hymns celebrating the 'soldier leaving for battle, willing to give his life for his cause', conflated the military objectives of the *mission civilisatrice* with its religious proselytising mission (2006: 234). It was not so much the concept of French colonial hegemony, however, which

⁹¹ *Le Petit Journal*, 31 March 1885, p. 1.

was being celebrated here in the hymns sung in churches all over France, but rather the individual valour of the soldier conscripts who fought for it.

Chapter Five

Colonialism and Representations of Masculinity in British Literary and Press Discourses 1870-1900

1 Introduction

1.1 'Gordon's Grave'

On 23 February 1885, four weeks after General Charles Gordon, Governor General of the Sudan, was killed in Khartoum by Mahdist spearmen, a poem entitled 'Gordon's Grave' was published on the front page of the *Illustrated London News*. It is an extraordinary piece of poetry, not because of its literary merit, but because of the ideological resonances of its content:

Is there a page in our insular story
Fuller of heart, or of vigour, than this?
England, downhearted, re-leaps to her glory
Cheered by her children— refreshed by their kiss.
False though the foe be, and foul though the weather,
Love lights a beacon of hope on the land!
On! to the grave of our hero together,
Shoulder to shoulder and sword within hand!¹

Clement Scott,² author of the poem, spares us no stylistic embellishment in his string of anapaestic tetrameter octets. A rhetorical question is posed, alliteration abounds (children cheer and foes are false), trusty word-pairings (weather and together; kiss and this) are dusted down and incorporated to provide rhyme rather than meaning,³ England is metonymically cast as an agile mother, and exclamation marks stress the

¹ *Illustrated London News*, 23 February 1885, p. 217. Although these lines were written after Wolseley's relief forces had arrived at Khartoum, the main injunction of Scott's poem is the unfinished business of exacting revenge against the Mahdi and providing a Christian burial for Gordon, objectives not achieved until Kitchener's expedition of 1896-98.

² Clement Scott was the drama critic of the *Daily Telegraph*.

³ Peter Brooks, acknowledging Jonathan Culler, asserts that 'at certain problematic moments story events seem to be produced by the requirements of the narrative discourse, its needs of meaning, rather than vice-versa, as we normally assume' (1992: 28). Here Scott's need for a rhyme appears to be dictating the formulation of his rhetoric.

hortatory last lines. The significance of Scott's poem, however, lies not in the lyrical flourishes of his work, but in its juxtaposition in this stanza of many of the ideologies that combine in the construction of the archetypal British colonial hero of the late nineteenth century. These ideologies fall naturally into three clusters, and thereby provide an organisational framework for my primary research objective, which is to enquire how the British colonial adventure novel constructs exemplary masculinity. I concentrate on the period from 1870 to 1900, representing the apogee of the British imperial project, but also a period of national self-examination, given expression in the mass press by political commentators.⁴ My choice of examples from late nineteenth-century adventure fiction draws principally on the work of Henry Rider Haggard, G.W. Steevens and G. A. Henty, who dominated the genre.⁵ The boundaries between adventure fiction targeted by publishers at the youth market and that intended for adults are blurred. Simon Eliot, in 'The Business of Victorian Publishing', asks 'how do you distinguish a story written for older children from a story written for a semi-literate adult?' (2001: 59). Eliot contends that the 'Victorians who compiled subject lists of newly published books finally gave up, and lumped all forms of fiction and juvenile literature into one category' (59). Henty's adventure novels, although awarded as school prizes, were also used as set texts for entry to the British Colonial service (McMahon 2010: 155). I apply discretion in filtering out of my corpus of adventure fiction those novels written about children specifically for children, but include adventures of colonial soldiery, which, in the words of Haggard's narrator in the frontispiece to *King Solomon's Mines*, are 'respectfully

⁴ I compare the inscription of ideology in the adventure fiction genre with that inscribed in contemporary press reports in the *Morning Post* and the *Illustrated London News*, as well as in semi-autobiographical accounts from leading contemporary colonial figures such as Frederick Burnaby.

⁵ McMahon reports that 'including pirated editions, twenty-five million Henty books were sold before 1914' (2010: 156).

dedicated by the narrator to all the big and little boys who read it' (2006 [1885]: 3). To illustrate parallel discourses in adventure fiction and in accounts of exemplary masculinity in the mass press, I also include in this chapter a case-study on the life and the reported heroic deeds of Captain Frederick Gustavus Burnaby.

1.2 Ideological Clusters

The first cluster of ideologies derived from Scott's poem coalesces around the concepts of nationhood, patriotism, family, love and solidarity. For Scott, England is a temporarily discouraged mother figure, suddenly reinvigorated by her children's kisses. I take Scott's metaphors and explore comparable ideological themes in late nineteenth-century adventure fiction. I analyse narratives, in the colonial adventure novels of Haggard, Steevens and Henty (supplemented by references to the works of Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, R. M. Ballantyne and John Buchan), of how the mother country formed young heroes, instilled loyalty and honour in them and acted as a stimulus to duty in the furtherance of her imperial ambitions.

The second cluster of ideologies in 'Gordon's Grave' denotes an almost visceral response to the challenge thrown down by Mahdist warriors through their assassination of Britain's military hero. The notion of 're-leaping to her glory', although a clumsy construction, evokes a restoration of the faded imperial pre-eminence occasioned by British colonial setbacks in India, heavy casualties in the Zulu wars of 1879 and in the guerrilla wars against Afghan tribesmen in 1878, the loss of the Transvaal to rebellious Boers in 1881, and the war of attrition fought by the British armies under Baker, Gordon, Stewart and Wolseley to secure the Nile against Mahdist forces.⁶ I consider ways in which representations of exemplary masculinity in adventure novels combined physical prowess, bravery and

⁶ For insights on British colonial setbacks see Bristow (1991: 128), Kutzer (2000: xviii) and Berenson (2011: 7).

determination. These qualities were deemed necessary by many legislators, educators, medical practitioners, religious and political commentators, and military leaders to remedy their perception of poor moral and physical health among the nation's youth. Scott's alignment of 'heart' with 'vigour' and the 'beacon of hope' represented by these qualities, empowered by 'the sword,' are narrative motifs to be found in abundance in adventure novels recounting the exploits of the colonial pioneers who conquer Britain's overseas territories.

The third cluster of ideologies in Scott's poem is of particular interest because it casts the enemy, both physical in terms of opposing armies and natural in terms of unhealthy tropical climates, as 'false' and 'foul' respectively. The counterpoint of the loyalty, integrity and honour of the British soldier and the treachery of the enemy (whether reluctant imperial subjects or rival European colonialists) is one of the recurrent *topoi* of adventure fiction that has strong ideological valences. I explore ways in which the construction of exemplary masculinity can depend on the existence of a reprehensible Other, against whom British virtue and honour can be sharply delineated. Scott's inclusion of 'the weather' in his verse may appear a quaint British conversational habit or (as suggested above) a convenient rhyme for the together[ness] that is the main burden of his stanza. It is anything but. Adverse climatic conditions, either in the tropical hinterland of Southern Africa or the burning heat of the North African desert, were an enemy every bit as deadly as the opposing armies of African warriors. John Pearman, the British colonial rifleman whose memoirs are published in Carolyn Steedman's *The Radical Soldier's Tale* recounts 'the shock and surprise on landing, the heat, the forced marching, the mosquitoes, the terrible thirst' (1988: 38). The same issues are central to press reports of Sir Herbert Stewart's relief force and their desert crossing from Korti during their failed mission

to relieve Khartoum: ‘only a quart of water could be allowed to each of the soldiers per day, and their thirst was so great that a dollar was offered for a tumbler-full of the water from the wells, which was of the colour and consistency of pea-soup’.⁷ My research in this section encompasses representations in the works of Henty, Haggard and Steevens of the Other as a necessary counterpoint to fantasies of British manly virtue. It also considers strategies, both in fiction and in press accounts and memoirs, for keeping the European colonial soldier alive in the face of the disease and heat exhaustion that could immobilise more than a third of combatants long before any engagement with the enemy.⁸

In summary, the richness of imagery to be found in Scott’s otherwise unremarkable poem suggests three areas of research for exploring representations of British imperial manly heroism. First, there is the concept of mother country with its associated ideologies of nurturing and coaching the citizen in principles of honour, loyalty and patriotism. Second, there is the physical expression of these principles in terms of vigour, energy, athleticism, sportsmanship and the ‘beacon of hope’ offered by the metonymic ‘sword’. Third, we have the recurrent image of the Other, whose lamentable behaviour, as recounted by the narrator of adventure fiction, sets the gallant British soldier hero in favourable relief. This chapter address each of these ideological clusters in turn, with the objective of building a composite picture of the fantasmatic late nineteenth-century British colonial hero. In doing so, I explore the primary research question of this chapter. How do British colonial adventure novels construct exemplary masculinity? I give emphasis in the selection of my primary

⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 24 January 1885, p. 83.

⁸ On 14 April 1895, *Le Petit Parisien* reports eight thousand cases of malaria annually among French troops in Madagascar. On 22 April 1895, the Queen of Madagascar, Ranavalona, is reported by the same newspaper as saying: ‘si vous harcelez les Français pendant l’été, ils prendront la fièvre et on pourra les battre très facilement’.

sources (fiction, journals and press) to the period between the Battle of Khartoum in January 1885 and the Battle of Omdurman in September 1898. I analyse how the mass press privileged the discourse of colonial heroism at this moment in history, and explore why many of the historical events of this period, in Southern and North Africa, India and the North-East Frontier, also provided an ideal context for adventure novels.⁹

2 Nationhood, Love and Family

2.1 Jingoism and Justification

G.W. Hunt's 1878 music-hall song 'We Don't Want to Fight' averred that 'by jingo' Britain had the ships, the men and the financial resources to curb Russia's ambitions to move South Eastwards in its war against the Turks of 1878-79. Hunt's song became the watchword of a brand of nationalism that supported the use of the Royal Navy to control territorial expansion of European colonist rivals. Jingoism illustrated one response to the underlying insecurities, among press commentators and their readers, occasioned by the colonial setbacks outlined above. These insecurities were centred round the perceived unfitness of a generation of urban youths to defend the nation, and political reluctance to introduce obligatory military service. Jingoism was the antecedent of a strain of popular nationalism that found expression, following Britain's costly victory in the Boer War of 1899-1900, in the foundation of Lord Robert's National Service League in 1902 and Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement in 1908 (Bristow 1991: 26, 175). Both of these initiatives are direct antecedents of the

⁹ Examples of these two sub-genres are Steevens's *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (1898) and Henty's *By Sheer Pluck: a Tale of the Ashanti War* (1885).

overwhelmingly positive response to Lord Kitchener's call for volunteers in August 1914.¹⁰

What, then, was the role of jingoism in the discourse of the fictional colonial manly hero in the last quarter of the nineteenth century? One of its most striking manifestations is in the recurrent motif of 'home thoughts from abroad'¹¹ that acts as an inspiration whenever the fictional colonial pioneer is faced with insuperable obstacles. For example, in Haggard's *She* (1887), his hero Ludwig Horace Holly is outnumbered in an attack by spear-wielding Transvaal tribesmen and becomes engaged in a fight to the death with two of them. His reaction is twofold as he locks them both against him with his powerful arms. He is intent on killing them both, but his thoughts as he does so are firmly anchored in the hallowed quadrangles of his British university: 'I slowly crushed the life out of them, and as I did so, strange as it may seem, I thought of what the amiable head of my college at Cambridge would say' (2008 [1887]: 25). Jingoistic nationalism in Holly's narrative takes the form of nostalgic thoughts of a more civilised way of life mixed with confident assertions of British superiority in arms and in moral principles. A set of moral principles based on the British sense of fair play permeates many of the fictional accounts of overseas military intervention.

R. M. Ballantyne, best known for his Robinson Crusoe-style saga of shipwrecked boys in *The Coral Island* (1858), justifies the global peace-keeping role

¹⁰ At the outbreak of WWI, Britain had nearly 250,000 regular army personnel, of whom nearly half were serving in the colonies. Kitchener's 'Your Country Needs You' advertising copy-line was one of the factors that motivated the recruitment of 500,000 volunteers by mid-September 1914.

¹¹ Robert Browning's 1845 poem 'Home Thoughts from Abroad' has particular resonance in the context of the late nineteenth-century British colonial pioneer. Perhaps its most evocative thought is in its final couplet which praises the British buttercup, the 'little children's dower' as being 'far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower', an image that would have been only too real to a British army serviceman facing the heat and disease of a tropical posting.

of Great Britain as his young naval hero Mark Breezy conspires to overthrow the monarchy in 1850s Madagascar in *The Fugitives* (1887). Breezy and his companions are briefed by local insurgents about the ruthless persecution of Christian citizens by Queen Ranavalona's men. This is news to Breezy but he justifies his ignorance by stressing the difficulty for Britain's stretched colonial resources to protect innocent citizens everywhere in the world:

No, we did not know it. For my part I am ashamed to say so, but I will say in excuse that the British Empire is widely extended in every quarter of the globe, and her missions are so numerous that average men can scarcely hope to keep up with the details of all the persecutions that occur (1887: 75).

Breezy and his small band of British sailors take arms against the tyrant Queen's forces and, as he does so, his thoughts wander to his farewells as he had boarded his British naval vessel at Portsmouth several months earlier: 'the morning I left England, the very last person I said goodbye to was a fair young girl, with golden hair, and a rosebud mouth, and such lovely blue ...' (83). He never finishes his sentence as the need for initiating his campaign intervenes, but the image of the archetypal English beauty persists as Breezy protects British interests in a distant tropical island where the indigenous Malgache people are portrayed by the narrator as 'deeply interested in seeing the white men' who are 'objects of curiosity' (120). As with Ballantyne's Mark Breezy, the narrator of the late nineteenth-century colonial adventure novel typically portrays his protagonists as exemplars of British patriotism, resourcefulness and valour.

For example, the narrator of Kipling's adventure novel *The Light that Failed* (1891), set against the background of the 1885 Sudan campaign, describes the stoic self-reliance and resilience of an outnumbered British infantry square engaged in

desperate hand-to-hand fighting at the battle of Abu Klea in January 1885: ‘There was no need for any order. All had fought in this manner before, and there was no novelty in the entertainment: always the same hot and stifling formation, the smell of dust and leather, the same boltlike rush of the enemy’ (1990 [1891]: 25). The litotes of the narrator’s use of ‘novelty’ and ‘entertainment’ in this account of one of the bloodiest and costliest skirmishes of the Sudan campaign is characteristic of the irony and affected indifference with which military actions are portrayed in literary (and some journalistic) discourses of colonial heroism.

2.2 Colonial Exploits as Domestic Propaganda

Kipling’s narrator in *The Light that Failed* (1891), more than other narrators of colonial adventure fiction, emphasises the reciprocity of the relationship between these military champions of the mother country overseas and a receptive audience of newspaper readers at home whose self-image is enhanced by reports of British valour and conquest in the colonies. It is not just Kipling’s fantasmatic soldier who justifies his actions in campaigns against colonial subjects by reference to the rectitude of the British cause. Those who remain at home need similar reassurance, as Kipling’s narrator points out somewhat ironically: ‘With the soldiers sweated and toiled the correspondents of the newspapers [...] it was above all necessary that England at breakfast should be amused and thrilled and interested, whether Gordon lived or died, or half the British army went to pieces in the sands’ (1990 [1891]: 18). The narrator’s evocation of a feeling of mutual trust between an army that recognises what is expected of it and a populace that recognises the valuable role the army plays in the maintenance of British interests is a recurrent theme, not only in adventure fiction, but in the ceremonial that surrounds the coming and going of British regiments on overseas expeditions. Queen Victoria, crowned Empress of India on 1 May 1876, is

clear in her expectations of the Grenadier Guards whom she inspects at Windsor Castle before they embark for Egypt in February 1885: ‘Confident that my Grenadier Guards will ever maintain the honour and reputation of British soldiers, I rely on your equalling the glorious deeds of those who have lately fought in the distant lands to which you are now proceeding’.¹² Her Majesty’s address on this occasion is noteworthy for the multiple expressions of trust conflated in a single injunction. In one sentence she combines her confidence and reliance, the maintenance of honour and reputation, and the anticipated emulation of glorious deeds. The unquestioning loyalty and commitment enjoined by the ideological motifs of Queen Victoria’s address are encountered time and again in the colonial adventure novel.

One of the most striking examples is G.W. Steevens’s account of Kitchener’s revenge of Gordon’s death in the Sudanese campaign of 1896-98 in *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (1898). Steevens’s documentary adventure novel relates both the main events and the histories of the main protagonists in the two-year campaign that was to end with the British defeat of the Mahdist army at Omdurman on 2 September 1898. Steevens’s narrator lionises the individual gallantry of many of the senior officers. General Hunter, for example, is described as ‘going without rest to watch over the comfort of the wounded, he is always the same, always the same impossible hero of a book of chivalry’ (1898: 56). General Gatacre is ‘possessed by a demon that whips him ever into activity’ (61). Colonel Wingate’s rapid advancement in the officer ranks is ascribed to ‘rare gifts and unstinted labour, borne with an inviolable modesty’ (65). The narrator reserves special praise for the Non-commissioned Officers: ‘Their passionate devotion to duty rises to a daily heroism [...] stiffened by marches and fights and cholera camps, elevated by responsibility

¹² Cited in the *Illustrated London News*, 28 February 1885, pp. 234-235.

cheerfully undertaken and honourably sustained, he is a mirror of soldierly virtue' (18). Steevens's narrative, however, accords the highest praise to the rank-and-file infantryman who faces the rigours of climate and exhaustion in pursuit of the Mahdist armies in the desert. His narrator evinces great admiration for the regiment that undertakes a forced march of one hundred and eighteen miles in five days from Surek to Berber in order to outflank the enemy. He engages the reader in a speculative trial of endurance in competition with the British Private foot-soldier: 'you and I could easily walk twenty-four miles a day for as long as anybody liked to name. But how would you like to try it with kit and rifle and a hundred rounds of ammunition?' (67). This apostrophe to the reader is a powerful means of inscribing the ideology of the colonial manly hero. It resembles what Bakhtin has observed of the interlocutor or 'third participant' in a literary discourse: 'When the third participant is brought into speech through personification or apostrophe, the second person must be antithetically positioned or seduced— hence inscribed— as witness and ally' (Cohen 1998: 85). What Bakhtin calls here 'witnesses and allies' are constructions central to the relationship between colonies and the metropole and between colonists and their domestic sponsors.

Throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which witnessed the 'scramble for Africa' (Packenham 1990: 1) between the European powers, news reports from protectorates and annexed territories employ the rhetoric of collaboration between colony and metropole. So, for example, in January 1885, when a British expeditionary force annexed South East New Guinea, naval Commodore Erskine speaks to the newly enrolled British subjects, evoking an implicit contract between colonised and coloniser:

The troops fired a *feu de joie* at these words, the band playing a bar of the national anthem after each of the first two rounds, and two bars after the third. The Commodore made a brief speech, expressing a hope that the protectorate might conduce to the peace, happiness and welfare of the people of the territory. He called for three cheers for the Queen, these were given, and re-echoed among the hills.¹³

It is richly symbolic that the first impression of their new protectors for the people of New Guinea comprises a man in uniform, a salvo of gunfire, a patriotic anthem, and a call for applause for the mother figure embodied in a distant Empress whom they have never seen.

2.3 The Modesty of the Manly Hero

Essential to the fantasmatic mother-child relationship between colonies and the metropole evoked in Scott's poem are notions of duty, care, selfless dedication and trust. For example, in Steevens's *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, the narrator characterises British officers and NCOs, not only as brave warriors, but also as compassionate and caring individuals. They are variously described as exemplars of 'unstinted labour' (1898: 65), 'passionate devotion to duty' (18), 'responsibility cheerfully undertaken' (19) and 'inviolable modesty' (65), all modifiers that can plausibly be applied to a mother's domestic duties in raising a family at home. The virtue of modesty is a paradoxical, but nonetheless recurrent, facet of the characterisation of the colonial pioneer hero. For example, in Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), his hero and narrator Allan Quatermain, although self-reportedly courageous in perilous journeys across the desert and battles against bloodthirsty spearmen, presents himself as engagingly diffident and modest in his

¹³ *Illustrated London News*, 10 January 1885, p. 58.

mien. When praised by his companions as they prepare for their treasure quest in Southern Africa he is bashful: 'I bowed and drank some whisky and water to hide my confusion, for I am a modest man' (2006 [1885]: 15). When they swear him to secrecy, his sensitivity is once again in evidence: "'Of course", said I, for I rather pride myself on my discretion' (16). Quatermain stands fiercely on his honour, however, when his word is questioned. He is 'much put out' and 'does not like to be thought one of those silly fellows who consider it witty to tell lies' (23). There is diffidence once again in his response to a request for advice: 'I rose and knocked out my pipe before I answered. I had not made up my mind, and wanted the additional moment to complete it' (28). Quatermain's self-attributed modesty, however, is not indicative of a compliant nature and he and his fellow-adventurer Sir Henry Curtis react angrily when the king of the Kukuana people suggests that they accept payment in order to compromise their quest: 'Tell him that he mistakes an Englishman [...] a gentleman does not sell himself for wealth' (98). Again, the implicit contract between friendly indigenous tribesmen and their English patrons is underlined as Ignosi, their ally in the quest for King Solomon's gold, avers: 'had ye not been Englishmen I would not have believed it, but English gentlemen tell no lies' (110).

These concepts of honour, discretion, justice and the notion of fair play are emblematic of British literary discourses of exemplary masculinity in the late nineteenth century and also recur in semi-autobiographical adventure novels such as that written by a much celebrated real-life manly hero, Captain Frederick Gustavus Burnaby of the Royal Horse Guards. Burnaby, who was killed at the battle of Abu Klea in the Sudan in January 1885, presents himself as an embodiment of the discretion and fairness of the British colonial pioneer in *On Horseback through Asia Minor* (1877). Burnaby begins his arduous journey by a stormy crossing with his

horse and equipment on a crowded ferryboat across the English Channel. He keeps his counsel and his self-control while his fellow passengers chatter excitedly until seasickness intervenes: ‘A rough passage with a number of Gauls, who all talked loud at starting, but whose conversation gradually died away in mournful strains’ (1877: 2). Following a series of adventures and self-reported feats of horsemanship on his trek across Europe, Burnaby finds himself the guest of a retired Turkish army officer in the town of Bazar. Burnaby’s report of their exchange underlines the solicitously defended reputation of the British officer and gentleman as his host declares: ‘You English are a wonderful nation [...] you reward the Pashas who are brave and skilful. In our country, if a captain has a relation in the harem of the Grand Vizier, the officer is sure to rise to high command, but with you a man must have merit to succeed’ (241). In both the fictional and the semi-autobiographical text the first-person narrator privileges the notion of integrity in his self-presentation. In *King Solomon’s Mines*, Quatermain’s native host Ignosi avers that ‘an English gentleman tells no lies’ (2006 [1885]: 110). This same unshakeable integrity of the British officer class is cited by Burnaby as what most impresses his Turkish host.

2.4 Discretion, Modesty and Fair Play

I set out in this first part of my chapter on colonial heroes to explore the ways in which the literary discourse of late nineteenth-century British exemplary masculinity could provide depth and meaning to the concepts of patriotism, loyalty and honour implicit in Scott’s 1885 poem ‘Gordon’s Grave.’ These virtues are much vaunted in the discourse of the manly hero, particularly by Ballantyne and Kipling.¹⁴ My reading of adventure novels, especially those of Haggard and Henty, however, also reveals a contrasting ideology of modesty, discretion and solicitous fair play in

¹⁴ These heroic characteristics are embodied in Ballantyne’s Mark Breezy in *The Fugitives* (1887) and Kipling’s Dick Heldar in *The Light that Failed* (1891).

the characterisation of fictional exemplars. The ubiquity in their novels of this aspect of the British colonial adventure hero has prompted me to explore how their texts work in the inscription of this ideological motif. I have therefore reviewed recent¹⁵ scholarship on the British adventure genre to seek insights on this duality in the representation of the colonial pioneer. Earlier keynote work by MacKenzie and Brantlinger privileged the physical prowess and valour of the adventure hero over his more sensitive side. MacKenzie leads on aspects of ‘Christian militarism, hero-worshipping cults and public school athleticism’ (1986: 2). Brantlinger sets out to explore the ideologies of ‘militant jingoism shading off into vaguer sentiments of patriotism and racial superiority’ (1988: x). Bristow, likewise, begins with a survey of ‘dominant, or hegemonic, masculinity, endorsed by a longstanding genealogy of violence’ (1991: 1).

A less physical interpretation of ‘manliness’ is explored in James Eli Adam’s 1995 account of the Victorian model of the gentleman in which, citing the Oxford academic and churchman John Henry Newman, he explores the ‘openness, consistency and truth’ embodied in the manly exemplar (1995: 99). Literary scholar M. Daphne Kutzer’s 2000 survey of imperialism in adventure fiction characterises England as ‘the mother country’ and her colonial subjects as ‘dependent children needing to be led to higher moral ground’ (2000: 5). She also strikes an equilibrium between physical prowess and moral probity in her account of heroic qualities, and juxtaposes ‘resourcefulness, leadership and pluck’ with ‘moral virtue and chivalry’ (10). Don Randall’s account of *Kipling’s Imperial Boy*, published in the same year as Kutzer’s work, addresses the idea of ‘Englishness’ in the late nineteenth century and

¹⁵ I have defined ‘recent’ in this context, given the abundance of critical thought on this well-documented genre in the 1980s and 1990s, to denote scholarly work published since 1985.

adduces, along the way, an ‘emotionally and politically charged consciousness of a newly named imperialism’ (2000: 13), peopled by ‘adventure heroes manifesting the youthful form of robust, gamely manliness’ (55).

As scholarship on the discourse of the adventure hero evolved in the early years of the twenty-first century, however, the pendulum of critical thought appears to have swung back towards physical power as the primary valence in the construction of colonial masculinity. Social historian Martin J. Wiener’s 2004 survey of manliness in Victorian England, for example, emphasises the point that ‘many of the young men most prone to violence joined the military or became settlers overseas, in either case finding large opportunities to unleash their aggressive impulses against non-Europeans’ (2004: 13). Wiener also conflates the ‘moral justification of the British role overseas’ with the mission of ‘bringing law and order to those who possessed little of them’ (14). By the time that cultural historians Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose are publishing on the literature of empire in 2006, ‘both the utopian and dystopian sides of imperial relations can be elaborated’ (2006: 192).

I also explore this duality in the representation of the deeds of real-life colonial heroes. Historian Edward Berenson’s *Heroes of Empire* (2011) privileges the physical side of exemplary colonial heroism in his survey of the lives and achievements of, among others, Charles Gordon and Henry Morton Stanley. He sees their lionisation in the press as a response to ‘prominent leaders and commentators who found their homelands wanting in virility, energy, spirit, and above all, public commitment to national strength’ (2011: 6). The demand by mass newspaper readers for stories of singular bravery rather than sensitive diplomacy set the tone for the reporting of colonial affairs. Berenson makes the point that the advent of the rotary press was a prime factor in the conferral and dissemination of heroic status: ‘since these men

registered their feats of bravery and endurance far away from the European stage, they achieved their renown thanks to the penny papers that flew every day into millions of hands' (9). Berenson, in the same way as early scholars of the adventure fiction genre, privileges 'bravery' and 'endurance' as the cornerstones of pioneering colonial renown rather than the softer characteristics of discretion, modesty and fair play.

In summary, my reading of adventure fiction and press accounts, educated by the insights of leading scholars, has amplified for me the notion of the colonial adventure hero. I set out to explore a concept of heroism based on valour and feats of arms. This concept has been substantially modified by the notions of chivalry, modesty and devotion to duty evoked in the fictional texts of Steevens, Haggard and Henty, the semi-autobiographical texts of Burnaby and the memoirs of real-life heroes cited by Berenson.

3 'Sword within Hand': aggression, physical prowess, vigour, energy and athleticism

3.1 Evaluative Framework

The least elegant, but perhaps the most intriguing, line of Scott's 'Gordon's Grave' is: 'England, downhearted, re-leaps to her glory'. I now explore the representation of exemplary masculinity in a colonial context and interrogate the social and political background to Scott's poem with the objective of understanding his choice of the language of despair and resuscitation. First, I address the anxiety among policy makers, military leaders and their supporters in the press concerning the unfitness of the nation's youth to defend Britain and protect its overseas interests. I review briefly some of the setbacks to British hegemony in African and Indian colonial possessions and interrogate the mass press for signs of wavering national confidence as the end of the century approaches. I also address the increased electoral

weight of the young urban male and suggest some of the reasons why the authors of adventure fiction might have actively supported the political aims of their sponsors by representing exemplars of physical and moral strength in their colonial novels.

Second, I illustrate from the works of Henty, Haggard and Steevens the *topoi* of the colonial manly hero and the many subtle, and not so subtle, ways in which the ideology of power, aggression and imperial dominance can be inscribed in adventure fiction. Third, I provide a brief profile of an archetypal real-life colonial manly hero, Frederick Burnaby, together with a fuller survey of his importance to colonial discourse. Finally in this section, I draw together some key valences that putatively made the colonial adventure novel a potent ideological tool in the encouragement and motivation of the young British male to volunteer and fight for his country.

3.2 The Perceived Need for Heroic Exemplars

What were the factors in British colonial policy and domestic politics which might have influenced the ways in which masculinity was represented in literary and journalistic discourses? A reproachful war report appeared on 21 March 1885 in the *Illustrated London News*, normally staunchly nationalistic in its editorial stance. The article deplores the waste of British lives in the pursuit of what appears to be an increasingly elusive military goal in the Sudan: ‘no political or military advantage seems to have been secured on our side by the late operations in the Soudan, which have cost thousands of lives, and have been fatal to some of the best officers in our Army’.¹⁶ The lionisation by the mass press of Gordon as a colonial hero and the measures taken by military leaders to relieve the siege of Khartoum and rescue him had, up to now, rallied public support around Britain’s involvement in Egypt’s struggle against the Mahdi. Once Gordon was dead and Khartoum abandoned,

¹⁶ *Illustrated London News*, 21 March 1885, p. 296.

however, enthusiasm rapidly waned. In an uncharacteristically ironic editorial commentary on 28 February 1885, a month after Gordon's death, the *Illustrated London News* hints at the increasingly vague and impractical nature of British policy in the Nile region:

A complete alteration of the military plans and prospects has followed the fall of Khartoum. They depend, of course, upon the political object in view, which seems to be entirely changed. Since there is no Gordon now to be rescued, and no garrison at Khartoum to be relieved, it is proposed to 'break down the power of the Mahdi' ¹⁷

The tone of this article is symptomatic of an increasingly cynical press who were beginning to understand the futility of putting regimented lines of red-uniformed British soldiers into conflicts characterised by desert skirmishes and guerrilla tactics. These tactics had been used effectively by Afghan rebels on the North West frontier in 1878 and in the Transvaal by rebellious Boer settlers in 1881. Grave setbacks at the hands of spear-wielding Zulu warriors in the conflict of 1879 had also soured public opinion.

On the domestic front, the enfranchisement of young men had created an important new group of voters who were by no means sure to support either the Conservative administration under Derby or those of his Liberal successor Gladstone. The Second Reform Bill of 1867 had given the vote to young urban males and this was followed in 1884 by the enfranchisement of farm labourers (Smith 1966: 2). As a backdrop to these events at home and abroad, the continuing process of industrialisation and urbanisation had raised the spectre of an unfit and unmotivated cadre of young men whose suitability as army conscripts was compromised by poor

¹⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 28 February 1885, p. 217.

health and lack of patriotic spirit.¹⁸ The poor physical condition of many recruits is validated by medical records from army recruitment offices. MacKenzie reports that forty percent of volunteers for the Boer War were rejected as unfit for military service (1984: 229) and the perceived shortage of suitable military recruits led to the establishment early in the next century of the government's Committee on Physical Deterioration, as well as school meals and medical inspections (229). The national statistics cited by MacKenzie are thrown into stark relief by the even more shocking statistics from some of the over-populated urban districts. Bristow cites figures from Manchester where 8000 of the 11000 volunteers for service in the Boer War were judged by medical officers to be unfit for duty (1991: 201).

It is understandable, given the concerns that were to lead to the establishment of a Committee on Physical Deterioration, that legislators, military leaders, educationalists and opinion formers should welcome the inscription of an ideology of exemplary masculinity. Exemplars were drawn from serving colonial regiments or from fictional discourses, whose heroes could putatively inspire British youth to ambitions of physical fitness and service on behalf of their country. Publishers of adventure fiction set in the colonies were quite transparent in their marketing strategies that targeted the impressionable youth sector. The promotional reviews included in the frontispiece of Yates's collection of late nineteenth-century overseas adventure stories reassure prospective purchasers that 'parents may have no hesitation in placing any of these books in the hands of children under their charge'. These

¹⁸ Kipling captures this anxiety in his account of the British soldiers who fought the guerrilla war against Afghan rebels on the North West Frontier in 1889: 'They were made up of drafts from an over-populated manufacturing district. The system had put flesh and muscle on their small bones, but it could not put heart into the sons of those who for generations had done over-much work for over-scanty pay, had sweated in drying rooms stooped over looms, coughed among white-lead, and shivered on lime-barges'. 'The Drums of Fore and Aft' (2009 [1889]: 15).

accounts of colonial conquest are ‘likely to establish tastes and tendencies highly useful to them in their after life’ and have ‘all the requirements necessary for imparting instruction to the young mind in an attractive and interesting manner’.¹⁹ In this connection, the political affiliations and patronage of many popular adventure writers cannot reasonably be ignored. Henty was the editor of the nationalist weekly *Union Jack*, Kipling was awarded the KMCG as well as being a Companion of Honour and a Nobel Prize winner. Haggard was awarded the OBE and sat on the committee of the Imperial South Africa Association, and Doyle was president of the Boy’s Empire League.

What, then, were the ‘tastes and tendencies’ vaunted by publishers such as Yates, Blackie and Son and Wm. Collins that found their way into so many of the colonial adventure texts given to adolescents as gifts and school prizes in the last decades of the nineteenth century? I argue that the construction of exemplary masculinity in many of these accounts of colonial expeditions was a direct response to the feeling of national malaise occasioned by the political factors summarised above.

3.3 The ‘Leap to Glory’ of the Colonial Manly Hero

In Steevens’s historical adventure novel, *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (1898), he paints a short word picture of each of the senior officers who accompany Kitchener’s mission to avenge the death of Gordon on the Mahdi and his armies in 1896. Among them is General Hunter, who leads a regiment drawn from Britain’s Egyptian allies, and is described by the narrator as follows: ‘When there was fighting he always led the way to it with his blacks, whom he loves like children, and who love him like a father [...] from the feather in his helmet to the spurs on his heels, he is all energy and dancing triumph; every moment is vivacious’ (1898: 55).

¹⁹ Yates’s *Graphic Stories of Adventure*. (1906: endpaper).

What ‘tastes and tendencies’ are inscribed in this description of Hunter and how might this pen picture contribute to the ideology of exemplary masculinity in a colonial context? First, there is the unmistakable valour of an officer who leads from the front and would, therefore, be the primary target of opposing marksmen. Second, although there is more than a hint of Social Darwinism in the father-child relationship of Hunter and his Sudanese native regiment, there is no mistaking the genuine warmth and mutual loyalty that binds officer and men together. Third, Hunter is painted as a paragon of boundless energy and enthusiasm, the very antithesis of the ‘drafts from the over-populated manufacturing districts’ described by Kipling (2009 [1889]: 15). Both Scott in his poem and Steevens in his portrait of General Hunter employ the same metaphor of ‘leaping’ or ‘dancing’ to express energy, enthusiasm, and eagerness to restore Britain’s ‘glory’ or, in the specific instance of Hunter, to do so by avenging the death of Gordon. This is not just a question of physical fitness. It is an infectious strain of vigour and a restless impatience that will not rest until justice is served and British colonial interests restored. It is not only Hunter who embodies this notion of a coiled spring ever ready for action. Steevens’s narrator imputes the same characteristics to General Gatacre: ‘He seems possessed by a demon that whips him ever into activity. Of middle height and lightly built, his body is all steel wire’ (61).

The narrator describes Kitchener himself in similar terms: ‘He stands several inches over six feet, straight as a lance, and looks out imperious above most men’s heads; his motions are deliberate and strong; slender but firmly knit, he seems built for tireless, steel wire endurance’ (45). As the Empress of India’s chief representative in the battle to secure British interests in the Nile, the use of the word ‘imperious’ is appropriate. Once again, the concept of a robust and tireless physical presence is underlined by the metaphor of ‘steel wire’ (ironically, the very product of the

industrial revolution that would present the biggest obstacle to infantry advance in the Great War sixteen years later). No reservations are expressed by Steevens's narrator in his encomia to British leadership in the Sudan campaign. The one doubt he voices about General Hunter concerns an excess of bravery, but this is justified by circumstances: 'his only fault was his reckless daring; but that, too, in an army of semi-savages, is a necessary quality of generalship' (56). The narrative of *With Kitchener to Khartoum* is not just the account of a successful British mission to avenge an earlier defeat. It can also be conceived as an ideological treatise with the specific aim of restoring British morale at a time of severe doubt and anxiety about a fading colonial presence. Almost every page is imbued with a sense of purpose, strength, ambition, fitness, bravery and determination— all characteristics in short supply among the poor physical specimens from Britain's northern mill towns who would line up just one year later to volunteer for action against the rebellious Boer settlers in Southern Africa.

It is not only in the late nineteenth-century historical adventure novel that these qualities of manly heroism constitute a beacon of hope for Britain's colonial interests. The vigorous re-instatement of Britain's hegemony in Africa is also a frequent theme of both news reports and editorial comment in the mass press during the final two decades of the nineteenth century. On Wednesday 14 January 1885, for example, the *Morning Post* publishes excerpts from a speech given by General Lefroy at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute in Westminster the previous evening. Lefroy's concern is that British influence should slip away without the committal of sufficient resource and determination: 'she had in her hands the endowment of half a continent, but lacked the vigour to go up and possess the land'.²⁰

²⁰ *Morning Post*, 14 January 1885, p. 2.

The British mass press is scrupulous in reporting the bravery and determination of the British expeditionary forces in the Sudan in the skirmishes that followed the siege of Khartoum in March and April 1885. The army of General Graham pursues the retreating Mahdist army across the heights above Tamai and the enemy's reluctance to engage is reported in the mass press as an indication of the fearsome reputation of the British soldier. On 4 April 1885 the *Daily News*, for example, reports on the action as follows:

It is evident that the enemy dare not face us in force. We only see them in small groups and they are afraid to attack us in the open. Their power is undoubtedly broken, and their spirits are crushed. Our troops behaved with great steadiness under the severe trial to which they were exposed.²¹

Although there are examples of a more critical stance regarding Britain's colonial policy, as in the report on the relief attempt on Khartoum cited from the *Illustrated London News* earlier in this chapter, the prevailing tone of colonial press reports during these two decades is one of encouragement and admiration for British troops. Press reports typically characterise them as physically strong and possessed of extraordinary bravery and coolness under fire. They sound a note of criticism, however, when military commanders stretch self-confidence to the point of foolhardiness, as in the battle of the Nile on 19 January 1885, when a British force under the command of General Stewart is reported by the war correspondent of *Illustrated London News* to have enjoyed breakfast as the Mahdist warriors encircled them:

Turning with a light smile to his staff, General Stewart said: "Tell the officers and men we will have breakfast first, and then go out and fight" [...] in less

²¹ *Daily News*, 4 April 1885, p. 1.

than ten minutes the Arabs were not only all over our front and flanks, but had drawn a line around our rear.²²

Fortified by their breakfast, the British forces fight off the enemy attack but Stewart himself is mortally wounded in the groin during the exchange of fire. This gives the war correspondent the opportunity to depict the affectionate devotion for their leader characteristic of the officer corps, illustrating the more sensitive side of these war-hardened colonial soldiers: ‘one of the most touching incidents in the zerebra was the wounded General tended by his friends, two or three of whom wept like men, silently’ (138).

Britain in the mid-1880s appears to be a nation clinging to a concept of empire that is threatened on many fronts, both at home and abroad, but which is sustained ideologically by a potent combination of press reports, personal journals, historical novels narrating recent military achievements and adventure fiction. MacKenzie summarises the ideological climate succinctly: ‘If party and faction fell apart over specific policies, it was still possible for the British to retain a world view embracing unique imperial status, cultural and racial superiority, and a common ground of national conceit on which most could agree’ (1986: 9).

This notion of ‘national conceit’ which, I contend, embraces the ideal of the British manly hero, is intrinsic to the pages of late nineteenth-century adventure fiction and can be found in the novels of Henty, Haggard, Kipling, Buchan and Doyle in particular. The texts do not always require a contemporary colonial setting in order to transmit the ‘energising myth of empire’ (1986: 10). Whether set in the Elizabethan wars with Spain, in the Napoleonic Peninsula Wars, or in more recent campaigns of exploration in Africa, the protagonists habitually display the moral and physical

²² *Illustrated London News*, 7 February 1885, p. 137.

superiority which is characteristic of exemplary masculinity in the adventure genre. I cite below some examples of a hubristic style of nationalism, illustrating the ways in which the ideology of the colonial manly hero was inscribed.

In Henty's historical adventure novel *With Moore at Corunna* (1898), an appraisal is given of the British soldier and his reaction to an order given for a tactical retreat in order to outflank Napoleon's invading army in Portugal in 1805: 'Confident in his bravery, regarding victory as assured, he is unable to understand the necessity for retreat and considers himself downgraded by being ordered to retire, and regards prudence on the part of his general as equivalent to cowardice' (1898: 154). Published in the year before the outbreak of the second Boer War, at a time when British overseas possessions were looking decidedly vulnerable and when doubts persisted among policy makers and commentators about the fitness of Britain's youth to defend national interests, Henty's narrator imparts an ideology that is, I contend, equally as persuasive to doubters as factual reports of military campaigns in the press. As an antidote to possible doubts engendered by mass rejection of volunteer soldiers on health grounds, here is Henty's narrator conflating confidence, assurance, bravery and victory as an inspiration to failing spirits. Britain's Portuguese allies in the Napoleonic Wars, however, are not vouchsafed any comparable qualities and are only likely to be of 'some service, if employed with British troops to give them backbone' (192).

Fictional narratives of exploration in Central Africa also paint a picture of the rugged colonial explorer who is always equal to the task of defending British interests. On his quest to uncover hidden legend in Haggard's *She* (1886), the Cambridge academic Ludwig Horace Holly is ambushed by a tribe of bloodthirsty Amahagger spearmen. Two of them leap on him, but the narrative voice of a

fantasmatic British colonial explorer of his pedigree is unequivocal in its prediction of the outcome:

For the first time in my life, the great physical power with which Nature has endowed me stood me in good stead. I had hacked at the head of one man with my hunting-knife, which was almost as big and heavy as a short sword, with such vigour, that the sharp steel had split his skull down to the eyes (2008 [1897]: 97).

In Haggard's adventure quest in Southern Africa, *King Solomon's Mines*, his hero Allan Quatermain is also engaged in a desperate battle against an army of spearmen. He sees his allied native tribesmen gradually being forced back by the enemy and his instinct as an archetypal manly hero is not to retreat but to rally the morale and the determination of his men by running forward through his retreating allies in order to engage the enemy. This self-reported example of conspicuous bravery is couched in suitably self-effacing terms by the narrator: 'I made the best of a bad job, and toddled along to be killed, as though I liked it. In a minute or two— the time seemed all too short to me— we were plunging through the flying groups of our men, who at once began to re-form behind us' (2006 [1885]: 129). Here, in a few terse words, Haggard's narrator sketches the moment of reversal in a crucial battle. He vaunts his own bravery and takes pride in his status as a British colonial pioneer who saves the day and the fate of the Kukuana nation. The ideological resonances are striking. For Quatermain, this is a 'bad job', British understatement for a situation of desperate danger. Rather than capturing the moment with a fast moving description of his rush forward, the narrator chooses instead to use the oxymoron 'toddled along to be killed' conflating the tentative steps of an infant with an act of noble bravery and self-sacrifice. Implicit in Quatermain's laconic account is the image of a single British

soldier, running forward as hordes of allied native soldiers run back and inspiring them to turn and re-engage the enemy.

Published soon after the death of General Charles Gordon in Khartoum at the hands of rebel spearmen, this representation of exemplary masculinity is a counterpoint to the flagging morale of a ‘downhearted England’ evoked in Scott’s poem. As MacKenzie contends, novelistic constructions of imperial heroism were some of the more effective means of inscribing this type of nationalistic ideology: ‘Fiction had the advantage of a much more nearly universal availability: anyone educated to the level of basic literacy was accessible through a story. It was also private, enabling the direct messages inculcating imperial ambitions, and national, familial and racial pride, to be received without a blush’ (1986: 76). This implicit private relationship between the narrator of adventure fiction and his reader allows the type of vaulting self-promotion which would be unacceptable to British codes of manners and modesty if communicated on a more public platform.

There is certainly no hint of ‘a blush’ or any sentiment of embarrassment in the account provided by G.W. Steevens’s narrator of the heroic role of the British officer in leading groups of native Sudanese troops against the Mahdi in the Sudan in 1898. Following the defeat of the Mahdist army at the battle of Omdurman on 2 September 1898, Steevens’s narrator describes the sight of the victorious ranks of Sudanese riflemen led by British NCOs approaching the town of Omdurman: ‘here was this little knot of white men among those multitudes of black and brown [...] the finest sight of the whole triumph— so fearless, so tireless, so confident’ (1898: 157). Once again, here is the notion of confidence allied with bravery which had been central to Henty’s 1898 account of the British campaign in the Peninsula War.²³

²³ *With Moore at Corunna* (1898: 154).

The texts cited above suggest significant parallels between the journalistic and the literary discourses of exemplary masculinity in a colonial setting that were such an important part of the ideology of empire at the end of the nineteenth century. Literary texts and newspaper reports echo one another and reflect similar obsessions. It is hard to distinguish the narrative voice and the language of reported fact from that of imagined fiction in the works of Haggard, Henty and Steevens, when compared with the reports of war correspondents in the *Morning Post*, *Daily News* and *Illustrated London News* cited in this chapter.

Michel de Certeau, in *The Writing of History* (1975), provides insights into the ways in which fact and fiction meld together in discourse. Tom Conley's introduction to de Certeau's work provides a synthesis of de Certeau's historiography: 'on many occasions, Michel de Certeau suggests that fiction and history are quasi-identical' (1988 [1975]: xi). Conley goes on to draw parallels between historical and literary studies: 'in its study of the tactics of expression and the rhetoric of mimesis, historiography appears to resemble the detailed workings of literary analysis' (xiii). Although de Certeau's theories relate primarily to seventeenth-century texts, they find resonances in later moments in history where literary and historical accounts reflect comparable preoccupations. In the parallel nature of their obsessions and their narrative style in both literary and press accounts, the discourses of exemplary masculinity illustrate de Certeau's theory.

I also contend that they form part of the nineteenth-century discourse explored by Peter Brooks in his *Reading for the Plot*, especially when he refers to 'the great nineteenth-century narrative tradition that conceived certain kinds of knowledge and truth to be inherently narrative, understandable (and expoundable) only by way of sequence in a temporal unfolding' (1992: xii). Brooks' insights have resonances in

the scholarship of historian Graham Dawson, who reports that school history lessons at the turn of the century became another powerful means of imbuing British youth with the ideological precepts of exemplary masculinity in a colonial context:

Commonly taught in elementary schools from 1895, and compulsory in secondary schools from 1900, history was ‘brightened up’ by narratives of great men and women, with pride of place going to war stories. These became a prime staple of English and History readers such as those published by the Cambridge University Press (1994: 147).

Publishers’ lists, such as those to be found in the back pages of Henty’s adventure novels, make no apparent distinction between history, historical fiction and fiction. In editions published by Blackie and Son, Henty’s semi-biographical accounts such as *With Clive in India* (1884) and *Under Drake’s Flag* (1883) are listed in end-papers together with purely fictional texts such as *A Final Reckoning* (1885) and *Facing Death* (1882). What modern publishers now term ‘faction’ appears adjacent to biographies and adventure fiction, indicating less of a preoccupation with classification and, more importantly in the context of my project, an elision of the genres that resonates with de Certeau’s insights on history and literary texts. For the publisher, the nuances of historical or purely fictional context appear to be less important than the entertainment values and the didactic principles central to their marketing strategy. For example, the first edition of Henty’s *The Bravest of the Brave: or, with Peterborough in Spain* (1887) contains reviews in the frontispiece pronouncing that buyers will ‘read this book with pleasure and profit’ and will

appreciate it as ‘an admirable exposition of Mr Henty’s masterly method of combining instruction with amusement’.²⁴

This section of my project has sought to tease out some of the underlying ideological valences which enabled a ‘leap to glory’ of England’s ‘downhearted’ populace, inspired by the conspicuous bravery of its colonial heroes. One of the most powerful ways of inscribing this particular brand of nationalist ideology is through the lionisation of individual real-life military heroes, in the same way that an equally ‘downhearted’ France had embraced military exemplars like Colonel Hubert Lyautey and Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand.²⁵ I have, therefore, chosen to investigate some of the reasons behind the charisma that surrounds Captain Frederick Gustavus Burnaby of the Royal Horse Guards, who was killed at the battle of Abu Klea in the Sudan on 17 January 1885 as he served in the relief force sent to rescue Gordon from Khartoum.

3.4 A ‘Real-life’ Manly Hero: Captain Frederick Gustavus Burnaby

In the National Portrait Gallery in London hangs a portrait of Frederick Gustavus Burnaby painted by James Jaques Tissot in 1870. He is pictured in the uniform of a Captain of the elite Royal Horse Guards regiment and reclines in a languid posture smoking a cigarette as he contemplates, with an amused expression on his face, something or someone outside the picture. He is seated in front of a map of South Central Asia and his ceremonial uniform and breastplate lie beside him. Burnaby is every inch the archetype of the manly hero. Standing six feet four inches high and proportionately broad, he was an accomplished horseman, swordsman and pistol shot, an utterly fearless cavalry officer with a distinguished record, a plain-

²⁴ Included in Blackie and Son’s first edition of G. A Henty’s *The Bravest of the Brave* (1887: frontispiece).

²⁵ See chapter four: *Colonialism and Representations of Masculinity in French Literary and Press Discourses 1870-1900*.

speaking orator with political ambitions, an amateur balloonist and a daring adventurer.²⁶

My survey of the history of Captain Burnaby asks two principal questions. First, how was it that the life, achievements and death in battle of Burnaby became such a prominent part of the discourse of exemplary masculinity in 1870s and 1880s? I examine the mass press of this period and its many reports of his deeds with British expeditionary forces overseas. In this way, I explore the proposition that colonial expeditions provide the ideal stage upon which the role of the late nineteenth-century manly hero can be played out and ideology inscribed. Second, by a reading of Burnaby's own account of his travels through Turkey in *On Horseback through Asia Minor* (1877), I will interrogate the narratives in which exemplary manly heroes represent their own deeds, looking, for example, for instances of the self-reported modesty (or false modesty) that makes Haggard's Allan Quatermain such a complex and intriguing character.

In my evaluation of Burnaby's achievements, as reported by third parties and as reported by himself, my approach is educated by Peter Brooks's research on 'design and intention' in narrative. In particular I make use of his notion of literature as 'one part of a wider range of man's signifying practices, the way he realises his world through the use of signs and fictions' (1992: xiii). In order to set the two research questions outlined above in context, I will provide a very brief summary of Burnaby's life and deeds. He died in battle at the age of forty-two after a life filled with adventure: 'how very many incidents he had crowded into that short adventurous life led in the barracks, on the platform, in foreign lands amid seething mobs and trampling armies' (Wright 1908: 38). Following his schooldays at Harrow and in

²⁶ *Illustrated London News*, 31 January 1885, p. 132.

Dresden, he had joined the elite Royal Horse Guards where he had a 'strenuous early career'. His enthusiasm for adventure is evidenced by his pioneering flights across the English Channel in hot-air balloons, his exploits as a foreign correspondent during the third Carlist war in Spain in 1876, his rides across Asia Minor on horseback and, especially, the prominent role he played in the British campaigns on the Nile in the 1880s (38).

How was the exceptional history of Burnaby treated by the press and by his contemporaries? And how is his story inscribed within the ideology of the late nineteenth-century manly hero? Perhaps paradoxically, a fruitful place to start is among the many fulsome obituaries that followed his death in the battle of Abu Klea in the Sudan, where he was stabbed in the throat by a Mahdist spearman whilst defending the left flank of the British square on 17 January 1885. Abu Klea was a decisive turning point in the efforts of Wolseley's relief army to reach Khartoum and relieve General Gordon following a march across the desert from Korti. The contemporary news despatches reported the defeat of 10,000 Mahdist warriors by a force of 1500 British soldiers. It was a very costly victory, however, and the British losses were characterised as 'somewhat severe', comprising nine officers, among them General Stewart (who was mortally wounded on 19 January and died a month later) and Burnaby himself, as well as sixty-five non-commissioned officers.²⁷ At 5 a.m. on 28 January 1885, Lord Wolseley eventually sent his formal despatch of the action to London from his desert headquarters at Korti. His report is full of admiration for the conduct of his officers and men: 'Nothing could exceed the coolness of the troops, both when exposed to fire of sharpshooters in the morning, and to the charge

²⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 31 January 1885, p. 112.

of spearmen in the afternoon'.²⁸ The *Illustrated London News*, significantly, gives as much space to the death of Burnaby as to that of his commanding officer, Sir Herbert Stewart, who died nearly a month later of wounds received in the action following Abu Klea.

Burnaby's obituary can be read as an encomium to the type of Englishman who represented all that was exemplary about his race and his class. Although Burnaby's deeds of military valour are scrupulously recorded, the unnamed obituary writer paints the colonel on a very broad canvas, with emphasis on aspects of his learning and culture, his love of adventure, his physical prowess and sporting accomplishments, and the paradoxically gentle and charming mien of this archetypal manly hero. Because of its great significance to my project, I cite in full below a paragraph typifying the obituary's flamboyant style:

Colonel Burnaby was an accomplished linguist, a man of wide reading and much culture, a magnificent athlete, a splendid swordsman, a distinguished soldier, a daring balloonist and a traveller of worldwide reputation. In physique he towered above his fellows. He was six foot four inches in height and round the chest measured about forty-six inches [...] but he was not the less a man of kindest glance and of winning manner and of cosmopolitan good humour.²⁹

The reader is given the impression of an obituary writer struggling to find superlatives that will express his admiration for his subject. Having exhausted the thesaurus of laudatory tributes ('accomplished', 'magnificent', 'splendid', 'distinguished', and 'daring') he turns to physical characteristics. This obituary of a famous national figure is almost certainly unique in specifying the chest measurement of its subject. Once

²⁸ *Illustrated London News*, 31 January 1885, p. 113.

²⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 31 January 1885, p. 132.

again, at the end of the paragraph, we have the recurrent ideological motif, to be found in both press reports and adventure fiction of the late nineteenth century, of the fearless British military hero who is nonetheless a charming and gentle colleague and companion.

In what follows I illustrate, with examples, how the third-person narratives in press reports and contemporary biographical accounts of manly heroes such as Burnaby compare with their own first-person accounts in journals, diaries and memoirs. In this way, I seek further evidence of the natural modesty and self-effacement that is, I argue, a recurrent theme in the construction of the British manly hero in the context of empire and colonies. One of the most celebrated episodes of Burnaby's career occurred when he was a correspondent for *The Times* in Spain, campaigning with Carlist forces during their struggle in 1874 for power against the republic that was declared following the abdication of King Amadeus. He forms close ties with Don Carlos himself, who is a man of similar stature and bravery. Burnaby is present at the battle for the town of Estrella in which 4,000 Republican troops were accounted dead or wounded. His biographer, Thomas Wright, provides an account of what follows as Burnaby observes the ensuing action from the ramparts of the fort of San Marcial. This is representative of a biographical style which is unsparing in its portrayals (apocryphal or otherwise) of the heroic nature of the man: 'A body of the enemy turned an angle of the building and delivered from within one hundred yards a murderous volley which brought down several men near him. Burnaby, however, coolly remained standing and chatting on the spot; nor did he depart until the attack had been repulsed' (Wright 1908: 70). The biographer emphasises that it is not only stoic determination in the face of enemy attack that characterises the heroism and resilience of the British officer overseas. Burnaby also has to contend with the

privations of the foot-soldier living rough during the guerrilla campaigns in northern Spain. We are told that ‘he shared with them their horrible Spanish soup’ and that ‘there were fleas everywhere, but he would always get a little sleep by discarding a bed in favour of a plank’ (70). Tributes to Burnaby’s willingness to withstand extremes of privation and danger in support of causes in which he fervently believed abound in contemporary press accounts and biographies. They typify the ideological discourse surrounding acts of valour on behalf of the mother country, as British imperial hegemony began to wane towards the end of the nineteenth century.

By way of contrast, how does the manly hero recount his own exploits and what can we learn about the discourse of manly heroism through a scrutiny of first-person rather than third-person narrative? How do Burnaby’s diaries and journals exemplify Volosinov’s assertion that ‘the author is a constituent element of the work, to be distinguished from any actual historical person’? (Morris 1994: 4). One rich source of insights is Burnaby’s own account of a five-month ride through Europe and Turkey, accompanied by one trooper from the Royal Horse Guards, during the winter of 1876-77. The title, *On Horseback through Asia Minor*, is (as with Allan Quatermain’s ‘toddling along to be killed’) an example of a peculiarly British brand of litotes. It followed *A Ride to Khiva* and, like the first journey, was partly a mission of lone espionage to assess the strategic strength and tactical options of the Russian Empire in achieving their long held ambition to open up a warm-water port for access to the Mediterranean. Burnaby sets out the political background to his mission in a characteristically conversational tone, almost as if he were recounting the events to a colleague in the officers’ mess. His introduction informs us that ‘news of some terrible massacres in Bulgaria had thoroughly aroused the public’ (1891: x) and adds his economic perspective on Turkey’s misdeeds when he adds that ‘the indignation

against the perpetrators of these awful crimes became still more violent when it was remembered that the Turkish government had repudiated its loans' (x). The title *On Horseback through Asia Minor* evokes something a little more recreational than a hazardous journey through the pitiless Turkish winter, beset by lice, wolves and bandits, in the certain knowledge that his presence in the Balkan region was well known by the Russians who considered him a spy without the (relative) protection afforded by diplomatic status. In spite of reported Turkish atrocities against the Bulgarians and the default of the Turkish government on their sovereign debt, Burnaby's account is partly pro-Turkish, inasmuch as the principal adversary is clearly Imperial Russia. Burnaby's objective is characteristically understated in his own introduction to the journal, first published in 1891 six years after his death: 'to try to discover precisely what the Russians were up to in this wild and mountainous corner [...] and also to gauge the capacity of the Turks to resist a vigorous Tsarist threat towards Constantinople, the warm water outlet to the West so coveted by the Russians' (x).

In comparing the narrative voice of third-person reports and Burnaby's own journal, the most distinctive aspect of Burnaby's own account of this expedition is the consistent matter-of-factness of his narrative. It was a journey that would not be contemplated lightly in the twenty-first century, and yet is presented by Burnaby as the most natural activity in the world. It is almost as an afterthought that he reports the few precautions he takes, other than attempting to secure safe passage from the Turkish Embassy: 'a small stock of medicines was put in my saddlebags in the event of any illness on the road' (x). Here, the use of both 'small' and 'any' denotes Burnaby's perception of the low chances of any misfortune besetting him en route to Constantinople. His perception of what he might find in the area of the reported

Turkish atrocities is also couched in terms of ironic black humour that belie any sense of real threat to himself: ‘should I not behold Christians impaled and wriggling like worms on hooks in every high-road in Armenia?’ (xi). Where he does encounter potential threats from Turkish military detachments on the way, he weighs up his opposition realistically, without being cowed by tales of fanaticism in combat: ‘Some people in England believe that a doctrine of predestination makes the Turkish soldier indifferent to death. This may be true in a few isolated instances, but, as a rule, both Turks and Christians have an extreme dislike to the dread ordeal’ (82). Here, paradoxically, Burnaby characterises as a ‘dread ordeal’ the very threat of death on the battlefield which he has himself so fearlessly courted in countless reported actions, where he has led his troops into battle, remained standing as an obvious target for sharpshooters after orders have been given to take cover, and which he was finally unable to escape as he fought, hand-to-hand and outnumbered, with Mahdist spearmen in the Sudanese desert eight years after his ride *On Horseback through Asia Minor*.

The importance of Burnaby’s own account, as distinct from sensationalist press reports of his exploits, is the way in which his laconic and self-effacing narrative style lends inestimably more impact and value to his achievements than the admiring and adulatory prose of a journalist. In this respect, his accounts provide a disproportionate contribution to the discourse of manly heroism in the latter part of the nineteenth century. They exude the confidence and self-belief that are so intrinsic to the British concept of Empire. There is an assumption of natural and effortless superiority to all other races and potential adversaries that avoids overweening hubris by being couched in the most modest and unassuming language. This modesty, perhaps understandably, has not yet leached into the consciousness of Burnaby’s adjutant,

Trooper Radford of the Blues,³⁰ but the concept of natural superiority certainly has. Radford, as the two travellers cross the Balkan states, observes Russian men greeting each other with a kiss. This outrages and delights Radford in equal measure and prompts him to re-evaluate chances of British victory should a conflict result from the Tsarist domino advance towards the South East: 'I have always heard that one Englishman could lick two Frenchmen and I believed it; but I'll be blessed if I could not lick half-a-dozen Roosians' (106).

In summary, and in response to the questions which I posed myself at the beginning of this section of my chapter, Burnaby's story claims importance within the British discourse of manly heroism in two ways. First, it melds the incontrovertible facts of bloody, hard-won military actions with a chivalric brand of derring-do and an adventure-fiction style representation of personal valour. This style of representation is putatively a highly effective form of ideology in countering national malaise. In this way, Burnaby's history has some resonances with de Certeau's assertion that 'if the narrative of facts takes on the semblance of a 'fiction' belonging to a given type of discourse, we cannot conclude that the reference to the real is obliterated' (1988 [1975]: 43). Second, it suggests that the modesty of the real-life and the fictional soldier hero, far from being a sign of unmanly weakness, is one of the most powerful and enduring inscriptions of ideology within the discourse of late nineteenth-century British patriotism.

My final observation, in this appraisal of the totemic significance of Burnaby to the discourse of manly heroism, relates to one of the ways in which this archetypal British Public school athlete and sportsman has been immortalised in a piece of jingoistic British verse that has been alternately revered and reviled

³⁰ The 'Blues' is the usual sobriquet in military circles for the Royal Horse Guards.

dependent on perspective. In 1892, Sir Henry Newbolt published the lyrical poem ‘Vitaī Lampada’, which conflated the ideals and behavioural code of the British Public school sportsman with those of the army officer that he was potentially to become. The poem takes the form of a parallel narrative of a cricket match in the Close of Clifton College (where Newbolt was educated) and the battle of Abu Klea in the Sudanese desert in January 1885. Of significance to my project is the description of the battle in the second verse:

The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke
The Gatling’s jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.

The broken ‘square’ refers to the left flank of the British formation at Abu Klea that was defended by Colonel Burnaby and his troops. The Gatling is the lethal but unreliable British machine gun that has failed at a crucial moment. The colonel, almost certainly, is Burnaby. Newbolt’s poem returns at the end of each verse to the hortatory injunction that was to become an ironic watchword of the Great War two decades later:

But the voice of the schoolboy rallies the ranks,
“Play up! play up! and play the game!”

From the publication of Thomas Hughes’s *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* in 1857, right up to Rudyard Kipling’s popularisation of England’s strategic stand-off with Russia as the ‘Great Game’ (2008 [1901]: 129) at the turn of the century, the idea of the imperial project as a game for grown-up schoolboys had been inscribed within the ideology of the manly hero. And no one ‘played the game’ better than Frederick Gustavus Burnaby.

4 *'False though the foe be': Representations of the Colonial 'Other'*

4.1 *Heroes at Home and Abroad*

Why is it that acts of heroism, such as those of Frederick Burnaby in the Nile campaign (and those of his fantasmatic counterparts in adventure fiction such as Allan Quatermain), captured the imagination of the mass press and their readers, at the expense of perhaps equally brave but essentially domestic stories of bravery?

Three-hundred yards to the North of St. Paul's Cathedral, in the former churchyard of St. Botolph's in London's Aldersgate Street, is a memorial to unsung heroes. It was established under the patronage of the painter George Frederick Watts in July 1900. Watts's idea was to form a 'Heroic Self-Sacrifice Memorial Committee' and the memorial, which takes the form of rows of hand-painted ceramic tiles, is the result of their deliberations. The unveiling of the first five of these painted tiles took place on 30 July 1900. The Bishop of London celebrated in his sermon 'the things which had been done by those who did their duty bravely, simply and straightforwardly in the place where God had placed them'.³¹ Watts's primary goal in establishing the memorial was to record the heroic deeds of ordinary citizens, who would not otherwise have been celebrated. One example is the signal bravery of four sewage workers who had jumped into a sluice to rescue a fellow-worker and had all perished in the attempt. The inscription painted on the tile reads as follows:

Frederick Mills, A. Rutter, Robert Durrant and F.D. Jones

Who lost their lives in bravely

Striving to save a comrade

At the sewage pumping works

³¹ Address, 30 July 1900, by Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London, at St. Botolph's, Aldersgate.

East Ham July 1st 1895.³²

Other deeds recorded among the fifty-four tiles of the memorial are rescues of children from drowning and house-fires, as well as bravery on sinking passenger steamers and, in one case, the arrest of runaway coach-horses and their terrified passengers. All inscriptions have in common the death of the heroic saviour while bidding to rescue victims of accidents and disasters.

Why give special emphasis to Watts's monument to 'Heroic Self Sacrifice' in a chapter whose central concern is the characterisation of the manly hero in the context of Britain's colonies? The answer lies in the sharp distinction between the representation of acts of bravery performed in a domestic context and those performed in the service of Her Britannic Majesty in one of her overseas protectorates or colonies. Watts had, rightly, perceived that the memory of Messrs. Mills, Rutter, Durrant and Jones would not be retained publicly unless he took the initiative to make it so. Aside from a short report in the local news columns of the mass press, the acts of a sewage worker in the East End of London were unlikely to become part of the masculine ideologies celebrated in boys' comic papers and adventure novels. The discourse of exemplary masculinity in the last years of the nineteenth century, by contrast, derives its subject matter largely from acts of valour performed overseas and largely ignores the bravery of Watts's unsung heroes and their domestic counterparts.

Why should this be the case? I argue that, for a hero to merit inscription within the discourse of exemplary masculinity, his accomplishments should ideally have been achieved in a hostile tropical environment, combating disease and climate, whilst under attack from what were depicted as bloodthirsty, savage and uncivilised natives who are reluctant to accept British imperial rule. In particular, the

³² Inscription in Postman's Park, Little Britain, London EC1.

counterpoint represented by unwilling British colonial subjects and what were seen as their uncivilised ways is central to the discourse of exemplary masculinity by highlighting the qualities of valour, honour, clemency, and integrity of which the manly hero is possessed. I contend that acts of bravery in saving victims of disasters in London and the provinces are not sufficient as ideological themes for the legislators, educators and military leaders who were faced with the prospect of moulding a disaffected and unfit generation of British youth into an effective fighting force. This ideological objective requires nothing less than the representation of effortless British superiority in the conquest and civilisation of so-called alien peoples by manly British pioneers whose physical prowess and inviolable moral code qualify them for heroic status.

How was the status of these exemplars enhanced by reference to the foreign enemy? And how did the imagery of the colonial adventure hero compare with the prevalent reality of the listless, undernourished volunteers who passed through the army recruiting offices in many of Britain's industrial cities? In this context, I interrogate documented evidence of sickness decimating the ranks of British regiments before action with colonial opponents is engaged, and assess how the ever-present scourge of tropical disease is treated (or ignored) in colonial adventure fiction. With the help of army archives and press reports, I ask how the officially documented nutritional records of the British army overseas compare with fictional accounts of military rations and native hospitality in the literary discourse of the colonial pioneer.

4.2 *'False Foes' in the Discourse of the Manly Hero.*

How were Britain's opponents, both the unwilling subjects of the British Empire and Britain's rivals for colonial power, used in literary discourses as foils in the representation of exemplary British masculinity? To answer this question, it is

first valuable to reverse the question in order to gain some perspectives on the way in which Britain was perceived abroad at the end of the nineteenth century. Following the defeat of the Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal by the British army in the second Boer war of 1899-1902, an account of the conflict was published in France by the writers of fantasy and adventure novels Joseph Henri Honoré Boex and Seraphin Justin François Boex, writing under the pseudonym of J. – H. Rosny. The importance of this work to my project lies not in its excoriation of a nation willing to put over 350,000 troops in the field against a reported average Boer strength of 30,000 (Rosny 1902: 53). It lies much more in the (admittedly biased) external perspective that it provides on the ways in which British colonial behaviour and attitudes were perceived by its rivals at the end of the nineteenth century. Rosny concentrates his critique in two areas. First, there is the way in which Britain treats its colonial subjects: ‘Le contact des Anglais avec les sauvages fut toujours néfaste à ces derniers, dans toutes les parties du monde’ (64). The essentially prejudicial effects of British colonial rule are painted by Rosny as part of the unscrupulous policies and propaganda of the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, who is characterised as ‘dépourvu de tout scrupule et encouragé dans son attitude par le mensonge quotidien des journaux et les réclamations d’un peuple dupé et belliqueux’ (6). Perhaps the most telling part of Rosny’s perception of British colonial policy is the way in which he conflates the words and politics of Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner (Governor of the Cape Colony) with those of their contemporaries in the literary, military and ecclesiastical hierarchies: ‘Chamberlain, Milner, Rhodes, dans leur caractère principal, nous les trouverons partout, chez des écrivains comme Swinburne et Rudyard Kipling, chez des prêtres comme le cardinal Vaughn, chez les généraux comme les lords Wolseley et Roberts’ (8). Here, from a well-informed but somewhat

prejudiced commentator, we have the conviction that British colonial policy takes the form of a co-ordinated ideological initiative involving the most influential and powerful men of the day. Literature has, in Rosny's view, become imbricated with the ideology of colonial hegemony.

The second part of Rosny's brief survey of British imperial policy takes the form of an ironic pastiche of Britain's self-image and the relative position within that image of its colonial rivals in the Western world at the turn of the century: 'Il y avait bien encore quelques Français légers, quelques Allemands à tête dure, quelques Américains imbéciles, quelques Russes sauvages sur des coins du globe, mais la grande, grande, Bretagne dominerait tout celà' (113). Here, in a single sentence, Rosny has captured the British stereotypes of foreigners that abound in the works of Doyle, Kipling and, later, Buchan. For example, the eponymous French hero of Doyle's *Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* (1896) is portrayed as absurdly vain and imbued with a peculiarly Gallic style of burlesque gallantry. The German opponents of Richard Hannay in Buchan's later espionage novels are portrayed as hard-headed and ruthless and his American character³³ as an overweight eccentric.

Stereotyping not only the so-called uncivilised indigenous peoples of Britain's colonial territories, but also the rival European powers in the scramble for Africa, enabled the noble qualities of the British hero to be presented in favourable relief. MacKenzie captures the way in which the ideology of British supremacy was translated to theatrical and music hall performances in London and the provinces in the late-nineteenth century: 'imperial subjects offered a perfect opportunity to externalize the villain, who increasingly became the corrupt rajah, the ludicrous Chinese or Japanese nobleman, the barbarous 'fuzzy-wuzzy' or black, facing a cross-

³³ John S. Blenkinsop in *Greenmantle*.

class brotherhood of heroism, British officer and ranker together' (1984: 45). Patrick Brantlinger, in his critique of the politics of Anthony Trollope in *Rule of Darkness* (1988), perceives a comparable discourse in the literary canon of the late-nineteenth century. Referring to Trollope, Brantlinger contends that:

He fully believes in the racial superiority of white Europeans (and the English over all other Europeans) [...] he and his compatriots have a responsibility to import the light of civilisation (identified as especially English), thus illuminating the supposedly dark places of the world. In short, he believes in the 'civilising mission' of Britain, greatest nation in history (1988: 8).

How does the representation of the Other enable the optimum construction of a British colonial pioneer, imbued with the precepts of loyalty, honour, valour, integrity and physical fitness, so much vaunted by authors, their sponsors and their political allies? Haggard's African quest novels offer many striking examples of these motifs. In *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), the climax to the narrative of the overthrow of Twala, who has usurped the kingdom of the Kukuana tribe, centres around a single-handed combat to the death between Twala himself and the British manly hero, Sir Henry Curtis. Twala 'the gigantic one-eyed king' (2008 [1885]: 140) is guilty of endless 'cruelties and misdeeds', although the narrator, Allan Quatermain, conveys a pang of compassion for the 'poor savage' whose armies have been defeated (144). Twala sizes up his opponent with a 'sombre eye' (145) and 'laughs savagely' (146). As they close in their struggle to the death, Twala 'strikes out with a savage yell' (147). Throughout the fight, the narrator depicts Twala as taking deceitful advantage of moments when Sir Henry is temporarily off balance or disarmed to attack him with an axe and then a spear.

In contrast, Curtis, with his imposing physique and blond good looks, is likened to a martial god of Norse legend: ‘his long yellow hair streamed out in the breeze behind him. There he stood, the great Dane, for he was nothing else [...] and none could live before his stroke’ (141). He conducts himself with honour and chivalry on the battlefield and makes a vivid impression on the onlookers who concur that ‘yet more gallant was the vision of Sir Henry’ (141). He dexterously repels the treacherous attacks of his ‘savage’ opponent and, having been struck down and disarmed, finally manages to retrieve a desperate situation by seizing Twala’s own battle-axe and beheading him with a single well-aimed blow. The narrative of *King Solomon’s Mines* exemplifies the well-tried formula of the British gentleman, imbued at his Public school with the precepts of sportsmanship and fair-play, engaged in battle with an opponent who shares none of the British principles of engagement, and who, through repeated demonstrations of what the narrator describes as his ‘savage’ and ‘uncivilised’ nature, endows his British opponent with a special aura of gallantry and honour. The juxtaposition of British behaviour codes in conflict with the unknown Other immeasurably enhances their ideological impact in the context of adventure fiction. Literary scholar Graham Dawson, in his *Soldier Heroes* (1994), underlines the ideological power of conflating imperialism with heroism: ‘During the growth of popular imperialism in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, heroic masculinity became fused in an especially potent configuration with representations of British imperial identity’ (1994: 1).

This ‘potent configuration’ is again well illustrated in Haggard’s second very successful African adventure *She* (1886).³⁴ Having penetrated the kingdom of the Amahagger tribe of Central Africa, Haggard’s narrator, the Cambridge academic

³⁴ Daniel Karlin reports sales of 20,000 copies of Haggard’s next Allan Quatermain novel in a single day (2008 [1887]: xxxii).

Ludwig Horace Holly, finds himself an involuntary guest at a sacrificial feast at which the human victim is to be baked alive on a metal tray above an open fire.

Unable to escape, he surveys his 'hosts':

There I sat and stared at them and at the silent circle of the fierce moody faces of the men, and reflected that it was all very awful, and that we were absolutely in the power of this alarming people, who, to me at any rate, were all the more formidable because their true character was still very much of a mystery to us (2008 [1887]: 93).

Several times in the narrative, comforting thoughts of life in the peaceful cloisters of Cambridge are juxtaposed with the perils and fears of Holly's quest for the hidden realm of Ayesha. He remains stoically confident in his abilities to deal with the unfamiliar. On the journey through the jungle to Ayesha's citadel, Holly has the opportunity to demonstrate the valour of a British manly hero. His elderly native companion, Billali, falls from his litter into a swamp. The native litter-bearers stand and watch him drowning, fearing to go to his aid. Holly steps in: "Out of the way, you brutes", I shouted in English, and throwing off my hat I took a run and sprang well out into the horrid slimy-looking pool. A couple of strokes took me to where Billali was struggling' (114). Here, the narrative interweaves several ideological strands of British colonial manly heroism. Instructions are given in English, the natural language of command. The indigenous litter-bearers are depicted as 'brutes'. Holly himself is shown to be an accomplished athlete as he dives far out into the swamp and reaches the drowning man in a few swift strokes.

The narrator's contrast of the slimy swamp and cowardly 'brutes' with Holly's instinctive bravery and gentlemanly habit of removing his hat before his heroic rescue attempt exemplifies the manner in which imperialist ideology is inscribed in the

adventure novel. The colonial context of Holly's brave actions, thus, enhances the representation of exemplary masculinity in ways that are simply not possible in the accounts of domestic heroism celebrated in George Frederick Watts' monument to 'Heroic Self Sacrifice'. As Graham Dawson contends, 'adventures provide a challenge to assert human will and test human capabilities against the vicissitudes of a world that remains deeply uncertain' (1994: 53). It is not only in accounts of conspicuous acts of valour that the discourse of the British colonial pioneer employs a counterpoint to what are typically termed less civilised peoples to represent the manly hero to best advantage. In the clemency of victory, the British colonist is also portrayed as an exemplar of moral probity and civilisation. After Haggard's protagonist Holly has fought off an attack by bloodthirsty spearmen, he explains to his native companion that they will not be killing their prisoners: 'he was greatly astounded when I told him that it was not our custom to avenge ourselves in cold blood, and that we left vengeance to the law and a higher power, of which he knew nothing' (2008 [1887]: 102).

In both literary and journalistic discourses, the contrast of the so-called uncivilised Other is used to point up the virtues of the British colonial pioneer. News reports of colonial expeditions adopt a similar formula to that employed in adventure fiction. The credentials of the British protagonist are often reported with reference to earlier acts of conspicuous bravery. His opponents are habitually cast as bloodthirsty savages. The British manly hero, however, is typically reported to have conducted himself with impeccable standards of honour and chivalry in subduing reluctant colonial subjects. Thus, for example, when Rear-Admiral H.H. Rawson, CB leads a 'punitive' expedition against the rebellious King of Benin in January 1897, his bravery and prior military record are given prominence in the press. We are informed

that he was mentioned in despatches for commanding a force of 1,300 Chinese troops against rebel forces in Ning-Po. We are also told that he gave ‘further proof of his courage and presence of mind by jumping overboard in the Shanghai River and saving the life of a marine on a dark night’.³⁵ Once arrived in Benin, however, things do not go so well, as Rawson’s small advance party, led by Captain Boisragon, is ambushed by rebel Benin tribesmen.

The press account of the ambush adheres closely to the adventure quest formula. The British protagonists are caught by surprise and heavily outnumbered. They resist gallantly, suffer heavy casualties, strive to assist fallen comrades, and only retreat when the odds become insuperable:

Two hundred natives fell upon the expeditionary party about twelve or thirteen miles from Gwato. Major Copland-Crawford was shot first, and before his fellows could render him any assistance they were attacked on all sides. A desperate stand was made, but at last Captain Boisragon and Mr. Locke realised that all their comrades had fallen, and so they made off into the bush.³⁶

This setback to the expedition required reinforcements and it was not until the end of February that a force of British marines was able to subdue the rebels. Once again, the action is described in terms that set off the heroic endeavours of the British forces, in adverse climatic conditions and terrain, against what is described by the correspondent of the *Illustrated London News* as a ‘heathen’ and ‘abominable’ enemy who are guilty of ‘atrocious’ affronts to civilised codes of behaviour:

The conflict was a running fight with the retreating enemy in the dense bush or forest; the heat was extreme and the troops suffered much from the want of

³⁵ *Illustrated London News*, 23 January 1897, p. 139.

³⁶ *Illustrated London News*, 30 January 1897, p. 173.

water but all behaved exceedingly well. The King of Benin fled from his town, with all the Ju-ju heathen priests, whose atrocious rites of consecrated massacre are proved by abundant relics of human sacrifices in the precincts of their temples. These abominations were speedily cleared away.³⁷

Significantly, it is the reported conduct of the Other that provides the contrast against which to set the exemplary behaviour of the British forces in withstanding tropical heat and drought whilst putting their opponents to flight. Neither do they forget, in line with their scrupulous code of principles, to clear away neatly the traces of their opponents' human sacrifices that they come upon at the temple.

This juxtaposition of civilised and uncivilised, point and counterpoint, remained immanent to the discourse of exemplary masculinity throughout the last years of the nineteenth century. Examples of this juxtaposition occur in the work of G.W. Steevens and G. A. Henty. Steevens was the war correspondent of the *Daily Mail*. He had been a Senior Scholar at Balliol College, Oxford and was a Fellow of Pembroke College before he took up a career in journalism. His unfinished account of the second Boer War in *From Capetown to Ladysmith* (1900) combines extreme forms of racism in its treatment of native South Africans with disdain for the enemy Boer colonists: 'the niggers are very good humoured like the darkies of America. The Dutch tongue sounds like German spoken by people who will not take the trouble to finish pronouncing it' (1900: 3). In G. A. Henty's account of the Nile expedition of 1885 in *The Dash for Khartoum* (1891), the Sudanese rebels of the Mahdi are characterised by the narrator as fanatical, bloodthirsty and unprincipled as they attack the heavily outnumbered British forces at the battle of El Teb. The British, by contrast, are depicted as valiant and resilient. Henty's hero Edgar Smith is dismissive

³⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 27 February 1897, p. 282.

of the wounds he has received while fighting off superior numbers of Mahdist spearmen:

He had received one cut on the top of his head [...] he had another gash on the right cheek. His side was laid open with a spear thrust [...] he had another sword-cut on the hip. He was unable to walk from loss of blood, but he felt that none of his wounds were very serious; and the surgeon said to him cheerfully: "You will do lad" (1891: 128).

The discourse of exemplary masculinity consistently demeaned the colonial subject with the apparent objective of representing the colonial pioneer to advantage. In what follows, I explore some of the ways in which the rigours of climate, disease and poor nutrition threatened to tarnish the lustre of the late nineteenth-century imperial project and suggest some of the strategies by which literary discourses managed this problem.

4.3 *'Foul though the Weather': Adversarial Climate, Disease and Army Rations*

Scott's 1885 lines on the adversaries that will face a restored and re-motivated British nation give equal weight to 'false foes' and 'foul weather'. In this section of my project, I examine the discourses of British colonialism with the objective of establishing how both real-life and fictional colonial heroes were able to withstand tropical climate, typhoid, malaria and poor diet. I ask how the reality of these threats, putatively more lethal than enemy bullets, are handled by writers for whom healthy, vigorous exemplars are essential to their ideological goals. I also assess the contrast between the idealised colonial figures represented in the mass press and in adventure fiction and the poor physical specimens who formed the

recruiting fodder for British expeditionary forces overseas in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

In 1875, at the age of nineteen, Haggard was sent by his father to Southern Africa as an adjutant to Sir Henry Bulwer, Lieutenant-Governor of Natal. He spent the next six years living in Africa and experienced both the Zulu War of 1879 and the opening year of the first Boer War of 1880. He suffered the inconveniences of mosquitoes, extremes of climate and, when campaigning, indifferent food (Butts 2006: xvi). Haggard returned several times to Africa and died of an illness contracted during a visit to North Africa in 1924. Unlike the colonial pioneers of Conan Doyle,³⁸ Haggard's heroes do become ill. I am, however, cautious in interpreting the setbacks faced by Haggard's colonial pioneers as autobiographical references. I take counsel from Catherine Belsey's adherence to the strictures of Roland Barthes: 'Barthes wants us to read the text itself, not something else that we imagine would provide a clue to it, or a guarantee of the correctness of our interpretation' (2002: 20).

I explore the representation of sickness and disease among colonial literary heroes for two reasons. First, I contend that its almost universal absence constitutes a means of underlining the resilience and effortless self-possession of the colonial adventure hero. Second, it covers up the realities of the colonial project and the adversities faced by British colonial armies on expeditions to British overseas territories. In this way I suggest that a reluctance to acknowledge what was putatively

³⁸ Doyle's party of adventurers in *The Lost World* travel several hundred miles through the Amazonian jungle, through 'pools of green-scummed, stagnant water' (2009 [1911]: 103). No mention of mosquitoes, malaria or tropical disease is made. The only emphasis on insect life is entomological: 'at every second step one or other of our professors would fall, with a cry of wonder, before some flower or insect which presented him with a new type' (ibid). Twenty-first century travel advisories emphasise the prevalence of malaria bearing insects: 'There is a high risk of contracting chloroquine resistant falciparum malaria in the Amazon basin area of South America' <www.netdoctor.co.uk> 20 September 2011.

the biggest single impediment to British imperial hegemony constitutes itself an ideological thrust of significant proportions. To set my exploration of this anomaly in context, I begin by examining a partial exception to the norm.

Haggard comes closer to representing the privations and challenges of the tropical expedition than many of his contemporaries in the adventure genre. Before Allan Quatermain embarks on his quest to Kukuluanaland in the company of Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good in *King Solomon's Mines*, he is meticulous in preparing a medicine chest for the journey: 'next came the question of provisioning and medicines, one which required the most careful consideration' (2006 [1885]: 31). The last third of his thousand-mile journey into the veldt from Durban is undertaken on foot 'owing to the frequent presence of the dreadful 'tsetse' fly, whose bite is fatal to all animals' (36). The final stage of the quest involves a trip across the desert. For this trip, all unnecessary weight is jettisoned but Quatermain retains 'a selection of medicine, including an ounce of quinine,³⁹ and one or two small surgical instruments' (48). No wildlife survives on the desert apart from one: 'one insect, however, was abundant, and that was the common or house-fly [...] "Phew," said I, grabbing at the halo of flies, which buzzed cheerfully round my head. The heat did not affect them' (53). Captain John Good is wounded in the leg in a skirmish with King Twala's spearmen and an infection puts his life in the balance: 'I went to see Good and found him quite delirious. The fever from his wound seemed to have taken a firm hold on his system [...] for four or five days his condition was most critical' (153). The narratives of Haggard's exemplary fantasmatic heroes in colonial outposts are punctuated by allusions to the realities of heat, thirst, insects and disease that were to

³⁹ Quinine, synthesised from the bark of the Cinchona tree, was the only effective treatment for malaria from its discovery in the seventeenth century until the twentieth century.

account for nearly a third of the 45,000 British and allied casualties in the second Boer War of 1899-1902.⁴⁰ Unlike the thousands of British troops who died of disease in 1900, many before seeing any military action, Haggard's heroes survive.

In *She* (1887), Ludwig Horatio Holly and his companions Leo, Job and Mahomet make their way upstream, through steamy tropical jungles, from the coast towards the Central African Republic ruled by the White Queen, Ayesha. They are attacked by lions and by crocodiles, but the more continuous threat to their well-being comes from swarms of insects. Having beaten off the predators, Holly relates how they 'managed to spend the rest of the night as quietly as the mosquitoes would allow' (2008 [1887]: 69). The following morning, the travellers are suffering the effects. Job's face is 'swollen out to nearly twice its natural size from mosquito bites' and 'Leo's condition is not much better' (70). Holly ascribes the apparent immunity of their Arab guide to malarial insects to his faith: 'as for Mahomet the mosquitoes, recognising the taste of a true believer, would not touch him at any price' (70).

Haggard's stance is ambivalent with regard to tropical disease. It is putatively more life-threatening than attacks by native warriors, as validated by casualty figures from real-life African expeditions and wars.⁴¹ But, whilst Haggard's narrators acknowledge the discomforts of tropical climate, insects and disease, all his protagonists survive the experience. In other words, Haggard acknowledges the presence of these threats, without compromising his idealised representations of masculinity by having his colonial pioneers succumb to malaria, typhoid, swamp-

⁴⁰ Of 44,906 casualties reported by *Nash's War Manual* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914), 13,250 are reported to have died from disease. A subsequent recalibrated database indicates that, of approximately 55,000 British soldiers killed, captured or wounded, 12,000 died of disease <www.bbc.co.uk/news/10390469> 24 June 2010. Dysentery, typhoid fever and intestinal infection were among the main causes.

⁴¹ Approximately twice as many British soldiers died from disease in the second Boer War as died in action with the enemy.

fever, or heat exhaustion. The absence, in literary discourses, of this central impediment to British overseas military expeditions in the late nineteenth century may perhaps be attributed to ideological constraints. *She* was published to great acclaim and became one of the most popular gifts and prizes for ‘all the big and little boys’ to whom Haggard’s narrator had dedicated *King Solomon’s Mines*. Haggard himself was honoured by the State. Rudyard Kipling, in a letter of congratulation to his friend, was fulsome in his tribute: ‘It’s the most sensible thing that this Government has ever done [...] You’ve done such good work for the State, for so long, that in this case the State truly honours itself in honouring you’.⁴² Unlike the published accounts of the exploration quests of Livingstone and Stanley, which contain realistic portrayals of tropical disease and privation, Haggard’s tales of African adventure sanitise the experience to some extent. Could Haggard’s ideological motives in representing the British colonial hero, and the approbation which these earned him from politicians and their supporters, have precluded him from depicting the realities of life in the disease ridden African bush of which he was only too well aware?

To begin to answer this question, it is instructive to review the content of reports of real-life colonial expeditions in the mass press. Did these reports, unlike the somewhat idealised adventure quests of Haggard and his contemporaries, give a true picture of the massive rate of attrition of British soldiers stationed overseas from causes other than death or injury in battle? To gain an overview of this situation, I have reviewed the war reports of the *Morning Post*, *Illustrated London News*, *Daily News*, and the *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* for the period January through April 1885. This time-segment is chosen because it coincided with a major

⁴² Cited from a private letter from Kipling to Haggard, 3 January 1912, written from Hotel Cattani, Engelberg, South Africa. (University of Sussex Archive collections of Kipling’s correspondence).

build-up of military resource and daily skirmishes in the principal theatre of British colonial warfare in the Nile delta. It also saw the death of Gordon and the massacre of the garrison at Khartoum, the major battle of Abu Klea and the expedition of Lord Wolseley's relief forces to the Sudan. It might be expected, especially as casualty figures resulting from enemy action are reported at length, that some indication of the attrition rate from disease might have been provided.⁴³ This is not the case. Other than a tribute to the fortitude of troops fighting in conditions of extreme heat with limited water supplies, disease and fever are rarely mentioned.

Occasionally, hints appear that indicate how weakened a body of fighting men can become when marching continuously in full uniform under the desert sun, confronted with insanitary water supplies and air-borne infectious disease. For example, a detachment of the Staffordshire Regiment commanded by Colonel Eyre is detailed by Lord Wolseley to form an advanced boat party for the relief expedition from Korti to Merawi on the Nile on 28 December 1884. *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, on 3 January 1885, reports that some difficulty was experienced in assembling a fit fighting unit: 'Colonel Eyre being told to take only men free from even the slightest ailment, thirty of the Staffordshire Regiment were left behind'.⁴⁴ The operational consequences of disease and insanitary conditions are, however, vividly illustrated in the personal journals of combatants. For example, Sergeant J. Ridout of the Scots Guards expresses his concern at the lamentable condition of his fellow guardsmen: 'I keep an eye on the men: some need it very much. The men sent out in

⁴³ Current advisories from the World Health Organisation report that: 'malaria is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Sudan. Symptomatic malaria accounts for 20-40% of out-patient clinic visits' <www.emro.who.int> 2 February 2012.

⁴⁴ *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 3 January 1885, p. 5.

many cases are more trouble than they are worth'.⁴⁵ Sergeant Ridout's observations were not based on a minority of the British soldiers who fought the Sudan Wars. He reports as follows on the ubiquity of intestinal infections: 'I am sorry to say that nearly two-thirds of my men have been unwell, cramps in the stomach being the usual ailment'.⁴⁶

These conditions were not given wide media exposure in Britain. More typical of war correspondents' accounts of the state of health and nutrition of British troops are details of the rations and provisioning with which they were provided. It is almost as if Kipling's 'England at breakfast' (2009 [1891]: 60), poring over their morning newspapers, needed reassurance that their 'boys' were being properly fed before they faced the enemy. I have already recorded General Stewart's order to serve his troops breakfast as the Mahdist forces surrounded them at the battle of the Nile on 19 January 1885, an order which may have cost him his life, as he was wounded a few hours later when outflanked and outnumbered. It is remarkable how many other references to military rations and provisions are interpolated with accounts of enemy actions.

For example, an inventory of the provisions that are loaded for the Nile expedition of the 1st Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment is provided by the *Illustrated London News* on 10 January 1885. It includes: 'tins of corned mutton, 60lbs of flour and 15 pints of vinegar',⁴⁷ although no indication is given as to how many troops this ration would serve or, indeed, to what use the vinegar would be put. Sir Herbert Stewart's advanced force leaves Korti in its vain attempt to relieve Khartoum at the end of December 1884. Each of the force of 1,150 men is issued

⁴⁵ National Army Museum, Archive 2007-08-34-2-1. 'Correspondence Colour Sergeant J. Ridout, Scots Guards, 17 September 1882'.

⁴⁶ National Army Museum, Archive 2007-08-34-2-1.

⁴⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 10 January 1885, p. 32.

with: 'seven gallons of water, seven days' rations, 150 rounds of ammunition, the reserve being 40,000 rounds'.⁴⁸ By the end of March 1885, the actions against Mahdist tribesmen are largely skirmishes. With no casualties in battle to report on Saturday 28 March, the *Illustrated London News* provides more reassurance to readers at home that British troops are being well looked after in their encampments in the Nile delta. The article particularly notes the role of philanthropy in serving this purpose:

Private generosity is doing all it can to ameliorate the condition of our troops in Egypt during the long hot months of comparative inaction [...] Sir Allan Young's yacht *Stella* left Portsmouth on Friday laden with two hundred cases of such comforts as folding-chairs, cutlery, drugs, chemicals, essence of beef, sausages, rosewater, rice-powder and machines, soda-water, games of all kinds and, though last not least, a large number of boxes of books given by WH Smith and Son.⁴⁹

This is, at first sight, a somewhat bizarre list of necessities for British infantrymen camped in the Egyptian desert. Upon consideration, however, the presence of folding chairs, games and books for the soldiers is likely to have resulted from some indication from their commanding officers that boredom, as well as disease, was a scourge for them to endure.

Although not specified as such, the inclusion of 'drugs' and 'chemicals' on Sir Allan's list is another indication of the illnesses that plagued overseas expeditions. Ironically, the most frequent mentions of disease in the colonial discourses of the late nineteenth century have a distinctly commercial bias. As the growth of patent medicines became a lucrative business for entrepreneurs such as Jesse Boot and

⁴⁸ *Illustrated London News*, 3 January 1885, p. 14.

⁴⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 28 March 1885, p. 316.

Thomas Beecham, the back pages of the popular illustrated magazines and newspapers were used to present their remedies to the public. The adverse climatic conditions and infectious diseases of the tropics constituted a stiff test for the efficacy of these patent drugs and, unsurprisingly, were featured in advertising copy towards the end of the century. A campaign for ‘Cockle’s Anti-Bilious Pills’ ran throughout the 1890s with a (posthumous) endorsement by the military hero Captain Frederick Burnaby himself:

Cockle’s Pills, the latter a most invaluable medicine, and one which I have used on the natives of Central Africa with the greatest possible success. In fact, the marvellous effects produced upon the mind and body of an Arab Sheik, who was impervious to all native medicines when I administered to him five Cockle’s Pills will never fade from my memory.⁵⁰

Cockle’s Pills, Beechams Pills, Eno’s Fruit Salts and similar patent medicines are frequently featured in a colonial context and some advertisements make reference to specific military expeditions and engagements where the judicious use of these remedies has helped to save the day.

An example of this marketing strategy is an advertisement on the back page of the *Illustrated London News* on 30 January 1897. It takes the form of an extraordinary personal endorsement for Eno’s Fruit Salts from an unnamed ‘satisfied customer’ who appears to be associated with the Johannesburg conspirators who mounted the failed Jameson Raid on the Transvaal Republic of Paul Kruger on 29 December 1896. It uses a recent and widely publicised colonial adventure to promote the remarkable prophylactic benefits of a remedy that was, at best, a mild antacid, being primarily sodium-bicarbonate. I cite the advertising copy in full as, unlike contemporary

⁵⁰ *Illustrated London News*, 9 January 1897, p. 56.

adventure fiction or reports from war correspondents, it gives a candid assessment of the chances of contracting fever on a military expedition in the African bush. The endorsement is from: ‘a satisfied customer in Lydenburg Cay, New Johannesburg, Transvaal’ and reads as follows:

I came to this country eight years ago and have lived in my capacity of Gold Prospector in some of the most fever-stricken parts of Africa. Just after the Jameson Raid, I and five companions volunteered for service in Matabeleland. I, of course, took a good supply of Eno’s Fruit Salts with me. I may say, that of my five friends, with the exception of one who was killed, the rest were all down with fever, whilst in the fly country. Never in my life have I felt better.⁵¹

It is ironic that an extrapolated universe of this small sample of six adventurer soldiers from a patent medicine advertisement would appear to be a closer representation of actual casualties in tropical campaigns than anything provided by press reports or historically based adventure novels. Six embark on the campaign in Matabeleland’s ‘fly country’. One is killed by Ndebele tribesmen, four are stricken with fever and one escapes both.

My preliminary conclusion from a survey of press reports, literary discourses and commercial announcements is that it is the profit motive that finally overcomes the squeamishness of commentators to paint the grim reality of life as a British colonial soldier. Burnaby’s glorious defence of the British square at Abu Klea and death in combat is lauded in press reports, obituaries, historical novels, and in the lyric poetry of Sir Henry Newbolt. The death of those colonial pioneers who suffered pitifully in makeshift field-hospitals from dysentery and malaria receives scant attention. I contend that the ideological motives of providing exemplars to British

⁵¹ *Illustrated London News*, 30 January 1897, p. 161.

youth imposed a code of reticence on many authors and journalists who were more concerned to represent gallantry and physical prowess in their accounts of colonial expeditions than to hint at a reality where death from disease was twice as likely as death in combat. Recruits to the British colonial armies were by no means adequately equipped to withstand the health threats they encountered. To re-emphasise figures cited earlier in this chapter, forty percent of the volunteers for the second Boer War in 1899 were rejected by military doctors as being unfit for service (MacKenzie 1984: 229). Nearly eighty percent of those volunteering in Manchester were deemed unfit (Bristow 1991: 201). It is understandable that the preferred representations of exemplary masculinity in both the press and adventure novels, intended to inspire a regeneration of British youth, should avoid the uncomfortable truth.

5 Conclusions

I began this chapter by citing Scott's jingoistic poem and by drawing from it three broad patriotic themes which have served as a research framework in exploring how the ideological discourse of exemplary masculinity was inscribed to best advantage in a colonial context. Like MacKenzie, I have questioned 'the extent to which all this constituted self-generating ethos reinforcement, a constant repetition of the central ideas and concerns of the age, and how far it represented conscious manipulation on the part of those who controlled the powerful religious, commercial, military and official agencies' (1984: 3).

Three research findings, one from each section, have made a strong impact on me and have increased substantially my understanding of my chosen period. First, in the context of the mother-nation, I have been impressed by the duality in the representation of manly heroism that has emerged from my survey of the British colonial discourse. By this I mean the strong elements of self-effacing modesty and

diffidence that accompany the more expected notions of valour, power and physical prowess. Second, in the context of ‘leaping to glory’, I have noted the vivid contrast between the heroic exemplars of the ideological discourse and the poor specimens of volunteers for whom the adventure hero putatively acted as inspiration. In particular I was moved by Kipling’s account of those colonial conscripts who had ‘stooped over looms, coughed among white lead, and shivered on lime barges’ in the mill-towns of the industrial North prior to embarking for service in the tropics.⁵² Third, in the context of ‘false foes’ and ‘foul weather’, my project on exemplary masculinity had not originally set out to interrogate databases on the incidence of tropical disease among British colonial soldiers. Nonetheless, this area of my research has been of compelling interest and has indicated probably the largest *lacuna* between the literary discourse and the stark realities of the colonial project, as demonstrated by (for example) casualty statistics. By doing so, it has supported my broader thesis of a conscious ideological intent in both the nineteenth-century adventure novel and in the parallel discourses in press accounts of colonial expeditions. The notion of exemplary masculinity, immune to infection and sickness, is reflective of Volosinov’s contention that ‘any ruling class will attempt to monologize the word, imposing an eternal single meaning upon it’ (1973: 13).

I have explored the power of a colonial context for the inscription of ideological precepts of manly heroism. In what follows I narrow the focus of my project still further by looking at representations of exemplary masculinity on the battlefield.

⁵² Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Drums of the Fore and Aft’ (2009 [1889]: 15).

Chapter Six

Heroes at War

1 Political Context: 'Debout pour la lutte suprême'

In *La Guerre de demain* (1898), Émile Augustin Cyprien Driant, writing under the pseudonym of Capitaine Danrit, provides a fictional account of a future war scenario in which 15,000 German troops launch an offensive against the French border fort at Lionville, close to Verdun in the Meuse Valley. The citadel is successfully defended, and the Commander-in-Chief of the French defence force sends the news by *télégraphe optique* to the Minister of War in Paris. He thanks the young soldiers, who have encountered the enemy for the first time, for their courage and 'sang froid' and concludes his address to them with the following inspirational words:

Debout pour la lutte suprême qui nous rendra les provinces perdues et notre place en Europe! Debout pour la defense de nos foyers! Que toutes les forces de France se dressent pour châtier les barbares qui veulent rayer notre nom de l'histoire contemporaine et notre pays de la carte du monde! (1898: 509).

This short citation is rich in the symbols and the ideology of national defence and with the ideology of exemplary masculinity inscribed within the adventure fiction genre of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At the centre of the Commandant's rhetoric is the concept of revenge for the sequestration of the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine following the defeat of the French army by the Prussians in 1870.

Four powerful ideological valences combine to form this concept. First, there is an acute self-awareness of the reputation and the glory of the French nation. France is defined by

its status within Europe and, at a time when the advent of universal education¹ was accompanied by geography lessons that proudly showed the extent of the *Metropole* and of colonial conquests on shaded maps, refuses to countenance that those shaded areas on the map be diminished. Second, the enemy is characterised as a barbarian horde, a concept frequently contrasted in contemporary literary and documentary discourses with the civilised honour and glory of France.² Third, the Commandant is very specific in his identification of the underlying cause for which his troops have been fighting. It is the hearths of the nation that they are defending, by this denoting the wives and families of the combatants. In this way, he conflates the two key principles of French exemplary masculinity in feats of arms as well as in the role of the *chef de famille* that was central to the contemporary ideology of regeneration, both qualitative and quantitative, of a defeated nation. Finally, the Commandant's choice of words to inspire his troops is loaded with the ideological precepts of a regenerated and proud French nation. 'Debout' is repeated, connoting not only the upright and erect posture of a proud victor, but also the rebirth of a nation that is now alive and risen from an ignominious defeat. This concept is reinforced by the use of the reflexive verb 'se dresser', with its connotations of standing erect as well as rising up against tyranny.

The rhetoric of Driant's narrator is representative of a whole genre of future war fiction in both France and Britain which, following the publication of Sir George Chesney's 'invasion' novel *The Battle Of Dorking* in 1871, the year following France's defeat by the Prussians, had been conceived by their military authors as an effective way of lobbying Government for resources (Clarke 1997: 387). The importance of Driant's text for my project, however, lies not in its exemplification of the sub-genre of future war fiction, but in the ways

¹ Primary education was obligatory in France from 1882. Allen cites reports that 88.4% of French army recruits had basic literary skills in 1886 and 93.8% by 1900 (1991: 59).

² War historian Bruno Cabanes, in *La Victoire Endeillée*, refers to 'une vision radicale de l'ennemi, perçu comme un être dépourvu de conscience morale, plus proche de l'animal que de l'homme' (2004: 61).

in which it demonstrates the power of the military adventure novel for the inscription of the ideology of exemplary masculinity. The battlefield is the ideal stage upon which the adventure hero can play out his manifold roles of feats of arms, valour, loyalty, compassion, honour and *camaraderie*, thereby constructing the exemplar which, I will argue, was central to the ideology of regeneration in France and Britain in the last years of the nineteenth century.

This chapter examines the late nineteenth-century construction of the French and British adventure hero in one of his most typical roles as a soldier. Having analysed representations of exemplary masculinity in various contexts in earlier chapters, I now advance the proposition that accounts of military engagements provide the masculine hero with the most challenging and, therefore, the ideal setting within which to demonstrate his prowess and valour. In particular, I concentrate my analysis on fictional and journalistic accounts of colonial wars, in that they typically combine the *topoi* of adventure fiction relating to expatriation, danger and the unknown. I also explore how the ideology embedded in many of the fictional texts could have served as effective propaganda in moving a nation from self-doubt to war-readiness. In doing so, I look at the need of politicians and military leaders for role models, occasioned by their fear of moral and physical degeneration in both France and Britain. My project assesses the extent to which their need was answered by figures of exemplary masculinity. I explore five specific aspects of the discourse of the adventure hero as warrior. First, I compare representations of fictional heroes on the field of battle with accounts of battles reported in the press, or in the private correspondence of combatants, and form hypotheses as to the ideological content of both discourses. Second, I assess the power of the *camaraderie* of men at war and draw some initial conclusions as to its importance in securing a nation's compliance with military strategies and political ambitions. Third, I consider the glamorisation of warfare, in both fictional and factual representations, by

means of ritual and ceremony as propaganda tools. Fourth, I assess the concept of *la gloire*, or distinction in battle, as a doctrine inspiring acts of bravery and self-sacrifice on behalf of the nation. Finally, I explore the ideals and beliefs implicit in late nineteenth-century military adventure fiction, especially that which is targeted at both the adult and the adolescent market, and advance a preliminary hypothesis on its ideological impact. In the section that follows, I consider representations of soldier adventurers in press reports and in fiction, and pose questions as to their respective ideological resonances.

2 Exemplary Masculinity on the Battlefield

Wartime adventure narratives sell books. This was self-evident to publishers such as Blackie and Son in Britain, and Jules Hetzel and Calmann Lévy in France in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Authors such as G. A. Henty in Britain and Pierre Loti in France sold hundreds of thousands³ of their accounts of young soldiers who distinguish themselves in battle in defence of their homeland or fight to conquer colonial possessions. Educators and publishers considered these novels to be ideal subject matter as gifts, set-texts and school prizes for adolescents. The ideological intent of the texts was quite transparent. For example, the explicit commercial strategy of Hetzel embraced, according to historian Sylvain Venayre, ‘un moyen d’attirer le jeune lecteur et ainsi de lui permettre d’assimiler plus facilement des connaissances qu’un cours magistral rendrait rébarbatives’ (2002: 62). These *connaissances* often comprised the most egregious forms of nationalism and racial prejudice, wrapped up in concepts of honour and glory won in feats of arms. The British adventure genre espoused the same principles. For example, the preface to G. A. Henty’s *Saint George for England* (1885) contends that: ‘the courage of our forefathers has created the greatest empire in the world around a small and in itself insignificant island; if this empire is ever lost,

³ Publishers’ data cited by Gildea (2009: 403) and MacKenzie (1984: 220).

it will be by the cowardice of their descendants'⁴. Authors of adventure fiction marketed to both adult and adolescent readers, published by Blackie and Son and William Collins, openly embraced propaganda as one of their aims, evidenced by the short pen-pictures describing other works in a series, often to be found in the inside back cover of an adventure novel. In the advertising for the various sequels to Yates's *Graphic Stories of Adventure*, published at the turn of the century, potential purchasers are told that 'parents may have no hesitation in placing any of these books in the hands of children under their charge' and that 'the historical facts have been carefully chosen'. The advertising describes these accounts of colonial conquests as being 'likely to establish tastes and tendencies highly useful to them in their after life' as well as having 'all the requirements necessary for imparting instruction to the [young] mind in an attractive and interesting manner' (Yates 1906: 261). Publishers, therefore, openly embraced the ideological resonances that their authors' adventure fiction offered to the parents and educators of the younger segments of their target market.

What I have defined in previous chapters as manly heroism is depicted by these authors in various contexts. I have clustered the primary texts chosen to illustrate the concept of the manly warrior hero into two groups. First is the substantial body of fiction that is set within ongoing or recently concluded military campaigns. Among these is Pierre Loti's 1881 account of the French expeditionary force in Senegal in *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, as well as the Bosphorus campaign in *Aziyadé* (1876). Within the British genre, a representative text is R. M. Ballantyne's 1887 account, in *The Fugitives*, of the efforts of a group of young English sailors to secure justice for patriots against the forces of a despotic regime in Madagascar.

A second group of war fiction comprises texts set in a historical context, with preferred periods being the Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century or the late sixteenth-century Elizabethan conflicts with Spain. Within this group is Conan Doyle's *Uncle Bernac*

⁴ Cited by MacKenzie (1986: 82).

(1897), which, perhaps surprisingly for the British genre, is partly an encomium to Napoleon I. Also set historically is G. A. Henty's *With Moore at Corunna* (1898), which details the British/Portuguese alliance in the Peninsular campaign against the invading French army in 1808. W. Murray Graydon's *The Fighting Lads of Devon* (1900) is set in pre-Armada Elizabethan England. (It is significant that Marryat's *Mr Midshipman Easy* [1836], which had acted as the template for the structure of many of the adventure novels that followed, had also been set in the Napoleonic wars, suggesting the appropriateness of this historical setting for the inscription of ideology). In considering the power of these texts in the inscription of the ideology of manly heroism, however, their precise historical setting is immaterial. The precepts invoked (of honour, valour, glory and selflessness) transcend historical contexts.

Irrespective of historical or geographical setting, a set of narrative motifs of exemplary masculinity recurs in the late nineteenth-century adventure novel. First, the protagonist is invariably heavily outnumbered in hand-to-hand combat, but is able to fight off his aggressors through indomitable courage and superior feats of arms. In Pierre Loti's *Le Roman d'un Spahi* (1881), for example, the young colonial soldier Jean Peyral has to fight off continuous waves of attacking Senegalese spearmen: 'Deux hommes noirs s'étaient acharnés après Jean- Lui était plus fort qu'eux; il les roulait et les chavirait avec rage- et toujours ils revenaient' (1936 [1881]: 212). In the same way, Ludwig Horace Holly, the narrator of Rider Haggard's *She* (1887) is attacked by Amahagger spearmen in the African grasslands:

Then it was that two others sprang upon me [...] they were strong men, but I was mad with rage, and that awful lust for slaughter which will creep into the most civilised of us when blows are flying, and life and death tremble on the turn. My arms were round the two swarthy demons and I hugged them till I heard their ribs crack (2008 [1887]: 97).

The parallels between these representations of French and British colonial warriors are striking. Both Peyral and Holly find themselves alone fighting two African tribesmen. Both texts emphasise the comparative strength of the adversaries as a way of underlining the strength of the adventure hero protagonist. Most significantly, both accounts also use the word ‘rage’ to describe the desperate fortitude with which the hero fights off his attackers. It is not just courage and strength, therefore, which define the hero of the nineteenth-century adventure novel. It is also this additional quality of ‘rage’ that can be characterised as an almost messianic determination to defend the perceived righteousness of his cause.

Second, there is also something of the Homeric hero in the way in which the soldier-adventurer is portrayed in battle. Loti evokes this theme in his description of a desperate conflict between a platoon of French colonial *Spahis* and native warriors in the remote province of Diambour:

O combat héroïque qu’eut chanté Homère et qui restera obscur et ignoré, comme tant d’autres de ces combats lointains d’Afrique! Ils firent des prodiges de valeur et de force, les pauvres spahis, dans leur défense suprême. –La lutte les enflammait, comme tous ceux qui sont nés braves; ils vendirent cher leur vie, ces hommes qui tous étaient jeunes, vigoureux et aguerris! (1936 [1881]: 211).

There is also something of the Greek mythical hero in Haggard’s description of his young protagonist in battle with African tribesmen:

He was still on his feet, but in the centre of a surging mass of struggling men, who were striving to pull him down as wolves pull down a stag. Up above them towered his beautiful pale face crowned with its bright curls [...] and I saw that he was fighting with desperate abandonment and energy that was at once splendid and hideous to behold (2008 [1887]: 98).

A third recurrent motif of the adventure hero is gallantry in his treatment of the enemy. We see for example, the reluctance of the French colonial forces in *Le Roman d'un Spahi* to pursue a retreating enemy force: 'L'armée noir reprit sa course vers les contrées impénétrables de l'intérieur; on la laissa fuir' (1936 [1881]: 213). In *She*, Holly has to explain to a 'friendly' tribesman that his code of honour does not permit the killing of prisoners-of-war. By contrast to the 'rage' displayed in the heat of battle, both the French and the British officers in these accounts display their manliness by restraint rather than by bloodthirsty reprisals on a defeated enemy.

As well as these three motifs of courage against high odds, fierce determination in combat, and chivalric gallantry in victory, the discourse of exemplary masculinity embraces high standards of self-discipline and self-effacement which can be construed as models for a generation of young men who could hardly be considered as embodiments of these virtues. The publishers were in no doubt about the improving nature of their products, as expressed in Blackie and Son's 'blurb' for another of their collections of stories of soldier-adventurers, included in the appendix to the 1898 first edition of Henty's *With Moore at Corunna*: 'a wholesome book, manly in tone; altogether one that should incite boys to further acquaintance with those rulers of men whose careers are narrated. We advise teachers to put it on their list of prizes' (1898: 17).

Many of the authors who gained commercial success with their adventure fiction, including Gaston Leroux and Rudyard Kipling, had started out in journalism and it is therefore not surprising that much of the same narrative style and language is encountered both in reports of acts of valour in the mass press and in fictional representations of exemplary masculinity. So, for example, the style of the adventure novel can be detected in a report in the *Illustrated London News* of 6 February 1897, detailing the defence of Amanda's

Kraal by the Rhodesian Field Force and the exemplary bravery of their leader, Captain James Montgomery.

[He] led an attack on the enemy's flank with conspicuous success. The fugitives took refuge in caves and fissures and Captain Montgomery had a very narrow escape. He was fired at from a cave and wounded in the head, the bullet furrowing his scalp and laying bare the skull. He was carried out of action by his men, and at first his life was despaired of, but under the careful treatment of Dr Wyllie he is progressing favourably.⁵

Henty's fictional account of the conspicuous bravery of two of Wellington's soldiers in the Peninsula Campaign in *With Moore at Corunna*, published the following year, employs a similar crisp journalistic style, characterised by a series of short sentences and phrases reporting the sequence of events:

During the night the light cavalry of the imperial guard rode down. Jackson, one of the sentries, fired and ran back to give the alarm. He was overtaken, and received over a dozen sabre cuts; nevertheless he staggered on until he reached the bridge and gave the signal. Walton, the other sentry, with equal resolution stood his ground and wounded several of his assailants (1898: 154).

Neither of these accounts of military actions would be out of place stylistically in the mass press (or in a contemporary adventure novel).

Naval conflicts, too, are represented in a comparable documentary style in adventure fiction and in the mass press. MacKenzie asserts that, in late nineteenth-century literary discourses, 'naval triumphs are the result of undeniable superiority: it is axiomatic that the small English ships are better sailed, better manned and better fought than those of the enemy, whether French, Spanish, American or pirate' (1986: 84). Both the British and the French

⁵ *Illustrated London News*, 6 February 1897, p. 176.

mass press also adopt the language of adventure fiction in their accounts of naval actions. A report of a daring naval manoeuvre is provided, somewhat admiringly, on 21 April 1895 by *Le Petit Parisien* in its coverage of the Sino-Japanese War:

L'amiral Ito avait du accélérer sa vitesse. Son arrière garde n'avait pu le suivre [...] ces trois navires se trouvaient donc exposés seuls à un feu formidable [...] deux issues s'offraient seuls à eux: prendre chasse en entraînant derrière eux les chinois, ou percer la ligne ennemie pour rallier le pavillon de l'amiral Ito. C'est ce dernier parti qu'ils prirent; et comme le succès aime les coups hardis il réussirent: trois bâtiments, sans grand valeur militaire, trouèrent la ligne des cuirassés chinois, qui, redoutant un abordage, leur livrèrent passage.⁶

Again, the narrative style of this press account of a naval engagement would not be out of place in a Loti or Verne adventure novel.

Both fictional and journalistic accounts had the potential to inspire volunteers for the new 'Ironclad' navies which were being constructed in response to the massive build up of seagoing might by Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century. *Academy* magazine suggests a strong motivational effect in its review of F. H. Winder's *With the Sea Kings. A Story of the Days of Lord Nelson* (1898): 'Just the book to put into a boy's hands. Every chapter contains boardings, cuttings out, fighting pirates, escapes of thrilling audacity, and captures by corsairs, sufficient to turn the quietest boy's head'.⁷ The power of authors as journalists, such as Loti, and journalists as authors, such as Kipling and Leroux, to 'turn boys' heads' by their heroic exemplars was given credibility when the writer was himself a soldier or sailor. Loti's popularity as a writer derived in part from his successful career as a naval captain, and other lesser-known writers were accorded respect for combining the two

⁶ 'Tonkin et Chine', *Le Petit Parisien*, 21 April 1895, p. 2.

⁷ Review from *Academy* magazine published in Blackie and Son's catalogue of adventure novels, bound as end-papers into G. A. Henty's *With Moore at Corunna* (1898).

professions, providing a subtle nuance to Edward Bulwer-Lytton's metonymic adage that 'the pen is mightier than the sword'.⁸ On 1 February 1885 *Le Petit Parisien*, for example, publishes the obituary of Commandant Rivière, a writer and an army officer killed in the Tonkin campaign at the battle of Hanoi. He was buried with full military honours in Paris at La Madeleine and was accorded a glowing tribute by the obituary writer: 'Dans ses oeuvres si remarquables, il y a la fière passion de la gloire, et c'est ici surtout que l'écrivain est étroitement lié au soldat; son juste orgueil ambitionnait une double gloire, celle des armes et celles des lettres; il les unissait dans sa pensée et dans ses espérances'.⁹

3 *Camaraderie at War*

One of the much-vaunted characteristics of the adventure hero is his fierce loyalty, not only to the country that he serves, but also to his fellow officers and men. These traits share a heritage with Kingsley's precepts of 'muscular Christianity' and with codes of sportsmanship and fair play instilled at the British Public School and acknowledged by the French *lycées* of the final part of the nineteenth century. I now look at how aspects of 'homo-sociality'¹⁰ and loyalty intersect with national defence and colonial projects by enhancing the fighting capabilities of an army. I will also gauge the effect of these character traits in making military life a more attractive prospect for conscripts.

Nineteenth-century representations of Greek mythology provided authors of adventure fiction with two potential models of the manly hero's interaction with other men. One is that represented by Theseus, who conducts his exploits, whether it is lifting the stone of Troezene or killing the wild sow of Crommyon, largely alone and with no group of loyal comrades to support him. In Kingsley's account of his adventures, he is interrogated by shepherds while on his quest to confront Procrustes the Stretcher in Athens: 'But the

⁸ Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Richelieu*, II ii (1839).

⁹ 'Tonkin et Chine', *Le Petit Parisien*, 1 February 1885, p. 2.

¹⁰ I intend 'homo-sociality' in this context to denote very close male friendship and not, as Sedgwick posits, 'to draw the homo-social into the orbit of desire' (1985: 1).

shepherds said: “Will you go alone towards Athens? None travel that way now except in armed troops.” Theseus’s response is that ‘an honest man is good enough company for himself’ (1929 [1855]: 178). In contrast to this picture of the lone warrior, the second model is that of the close-knit band of adventurers typified by Jason and the Argonauts who find reserves of energy from a communal sense of purpose:

They came into the northern ocean, the dull dead Cronian sea. And the Argo would move on no longer; and each man clasped his elbow, and leaned his head upon his hand, heart-broken with toil and hunger, and gave himself up to death. But true Ancaios the helmsman cheered up their hearts once more, and bade them leap on land, and haul the ship with ropes and rollers for many a weary day (1929 [1855]: 131).

The hero of military adventure fiction published between 1870 and 1900 typically finds his antecedents in this latter model. He is invariably portrayed as leader of, or part of, a platoon or company or brigade or regiment or ship’s crew. Male bonding is often a stimulus to violent behaviour.

This is succinctly captured in Joseph Kestner’s survey of nineteenth-century heroic art, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting*: ‘Inevitably, maleness and male bonding catalyse aggression, which may or may not be manifest in violence; team sports, war, imperialism and organisational competition are forms of such aggression’ (1995: 18). In Loti’s *Aziyadé*, however, male bonding is of a different sort and is more characteristic of the role of a *confidante*. Although the naval hero, Lieutenant Loti, is eventually killed in the second battle of Kars fighting with Turkish troops against Armenian insurgents, the story of his first forbidden liaison with the wife of a Turkish dignitary is told through an intimate correspondence with William Brown, a lieutenant in the infantry: ‘plus loin, mon cher William, il serait imprudent de suivre votre ami Loti; au bout de cette course, il y a l’amour

d'une femme turque, laquelle est la femme d'un turque' (1991 [1876]: 40). Loti's adventure novels are atypical in this respect. The comradeship of men at war more usually excludes women altogether. The more typical construction in nineteenth-century adventure fiction is for the hero to have one or more close comrades in arms who support him through all adversity. For example, the French colonial troops stationed with Jean Peyral in Senegal in Loti's *Le Roman d'un Spahi* form close bonds that serve them well in skirmishes with rebel tribesmen. Inevitably, role models emerge: 'le beau Muller, grand garçon alsacien qui faisait école au quartier des spahis en raison de son passé de duels et d'aventures, le beau Muller l'avait pris en haute estime, et tout le monde était toujours du même avis que Fritz Muller' (1936 [1881]: 23).

Henty typically centres his historical accounts of military campaigns on the experience of a few men whom we follow together through their engagements with the enemy. He depicts the growing trust and friendship between Ensign Terence O'Connor and Captain O'Grady of the Mayo Fusiliers as they fight Napoleon's armies in Spain in *With Moore at Corunna* (1898). Black humour and irony invariably characterise this style of male collegiality, exemplified by this short exchange between Terence O'Connor and a fellow officer after Captain O'Grady returns from the field hospital having been wounded in action: 'I have not had a hearty laugh since O'Grady went off ten days ago'. 'We are all heartily glad to see him back again', Terence said. 'He does not seem a bit worse for having lost his hand'' (1898: 110). This wry comment on a wounded soldier's amputation is acceptable irony in the context of the nineteenth-century adventure novel but it would be inconceivable to adopt this style twenty years later in accounts of the Great War.

Comradeship is not always restricted to men of the same regiment or nationality. The wrongly accused French officer Robin, in Louis Bousсенard's colonial adventure novel *Les Robinsons de la Guyane* (1882), wins the friendship and trust of a local tribesman after his

escape from the *colonie pénitentiare* in the forests of French Guyana, although the way he expresses this is indicative of the racist condescension present in this Man Friday relationship: ‘Ce bon sauvage...Je m’étais attaché à lui. [...] Autrefois, les nègres me produisaient un drôle d’effet, tandis qu’aujourd’hui je vois qu’il y a de bien bonnes gens parmi eux’ (1927 [1882]: 102). This condescending tone is ironically reversed among the naval comrades in arms on a rescue mission in the unfriendly forests of Madagascar in Ballantyne’s *The Fugitives* (1887). Here it is the black ship’s cook, Ebony, who is able to cross a raging torrent nimbly on an improvised rope bridge while the bullying white sea-dog, Hockins, hesitates and has to be rescued: ‘with a sudden expression of intense pity the negro exclaimed: “Oh! I beg pardon. Didn’t I forget; you’s on’y a white man. But stop; I come ober agin an’ took you on my back.”’ (1887: 17).

Most typical of the representation of comradeship in adventure fiction are the relationships among young ensigns and midshipmen who share rites of passage through their initial training and first combat experiences. This recurrent scenario in late nineteenth-century adventure novels had been popularised as a template four decades earlier by Captain Marryat in *Mr Midshipman Easy*. Jack Easy, the outspoken young protagonist, is berthed in his first assignment at sea with three young midshipmen who will transpire to be loyal and brave companions:

There were at the time but three other midshipmen in the ship, of whom it can only be said that they were like midshipmen in general, with little appetite for learning, but good appetites for dinner, hating everything like work, fond of everything like fighting ‘à l’outrance’ one minute, and sworn friends the next- with general principles of honour and justice (1836: 54).

I return to these ‘general principles of honour and justice’ in detail later in this chapter, but it is important to emphasize here how a seamless transition between adolescent friendships and

battlefield loyalties has become, by the end of the century, central to the discourse of exemplary masculinity.

At the turn of the century, *Boy's Own Paper*, launched in 1867 and providing a weekly diet of tales of sporting and military prowess, had a circulation of over 250,000 (Bristow 1991: 45) with pass-on readership potentially enabling an audience of twice that number. Bristow sums up some of the reasons for its popularity: 'the paper brings together selected aspects of imperialist ideology- aggressive, competitive, and yet gentlemanly behaviour- to make the most of the boy's free time' (1991: 41). One of the most celebrated examples of this elision between playing field and battlefield was Sir Henry Newbolt's 1897 poem 'Vitaï Lampada' which draws a vivid parallel between a hard-fought cricket match in the Close of Clifton College and a military setback in the Sudan campaign in 1885, when the forces of the Mahdi broke a British infantry formation at Abu Klea and inflicted heavy casualties. In both events, the struggling defenders are exhorted to 'Play up! Play up! And play the game!', more appropriate encouragement for schoolboy cricketers than for desperately outnumbered infantrymen fighting in the desert, but not totally out of place in the ideological climate of colonial Britain at the time. A contemporary report of the same battle of Abu Klea, on 1 February 1885 in the *Illustrated London News*, employs a similar trope by eliding the codes of war and sport. It recounts the bravery of one of the war reporters accompanying Lord Wolseley's army in the Sudan:

Mr Henry S. Pearce who, after a fight for life in the British square at the battle of Abou Klea, wrote as the Special Correspondent of the Daily News the lucid and admirable description of the engagement [...] Mr Pearce, who had his horse shot under him in the heat of the combat, is an enthusiastic hunting man, well known at Dulverton with the Queen's Buckhounds.¹¹

¹¹ *Illustrated London News*, 1 February 1885, p. 104.

The juxtaposition of a sporting day's fox hunting in the Somerset countryside and a brutal conflict with fanatical Mahdist warriors was not, apparently, considered inappropriate by the copy editors of the *Illustrated London News*.

In France, following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, a similar set of 'general principles' was central to the ideology of the adventure hero, but with a quite different political motivation. Venayre contends that 'après 1871, le contexte de l'instauration d'une République qui, née de la défaite militaire, place l'éducation au centre de ses préoccupations politiques, contribue à expliquer le développement considérable du discours sur l'aventure destiné aux adolescents' (2002: 64). Although these French political goals of motivating the future defenders of the Republic, with revenge against the Prussians as an ever-present underlying motif, differed greatly from the objectives of Imperial Britain, the rhetoric of exemplary masculinity is broadly comparable in the French and British adventure genres, especially in the accounts of physical prowess enabling superior feats of arms. Physical and moral fitness were central to the principles of educating young men as future defenders of the nation and these principles often transcended class barriers.

In addition to issues of race and gender, the comradeship of the adventure hero is also imbued with ideologies of social class. In general, the development of the French army since the Napoleonic Wars had encouraged a social leavening within the army hierarchy. Because of the relatively lower proportion of an officer class, it was much more prevalent for a French non-commissioned officer to be promoted into the officer ranks. This often had the benefit of establishing trust and loyalty but also had the potential to undermine the command structure, as was seen later in the front-line mutinies of French troops in 1917 (Smith 1994: 81). In Britain, the concept of an officer-class survived much longer and was heavily dependent on the courage and example of front-line officers, typically of Lieutenant or Captain rank, who were expected to lead infantrymen into battle armed usually with a pistol rather than a rifle.

These differences in class-structure in the armies of these two nineteenth-century military powers are touched upon in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1897 adventure novel *Uncle Bernac*, which chronicles the history of the young son of a Bourbon sympathiser who returns to France from England in 1805, only to be betrayed by his revolutionary uncle: 'the continuous wars and the open system by which rules of seniority yielded to merit had opened up a rapid career to a successful soldier' (2001 [1897]: 79). This aspect of army hierarchy is imputed by Doyle's narrator to be a direct result of Napoleon's own leadership style: 'this seemed to me to be one of the survivals of the Revolution, that officer and private were left upon a very familiar footing, which was increased, no doubt, by the freedom with which the Emperor would chat with his old soldiers' (68). Unlike Britain, France had a long-established tradition of compulsory military service that, for those who could not claim physical impairment, influential parentage or clerical orders to escape conscription, lasted for five years in 1872, three years from 1889 and two years by 1905 (Surkis 2006: 14). The fraternal bonding of officer and private soldier in the army of the Republic was to have unexpected and potentially disastrous consequences for France. Smith imputes the behaviour of the deserters who left their posts in the trenches in 1917 to a solidarity of purpose which logically could have resulted from these shared duties of citizenship: 'through sociability, people from a wide variety of backgrounds formed common social ground and acquired common political experience' (1994: 81).

One aspect of class solidarity that, paradoxically, recurs in literary discourses of adventure heroism is that of fraternisation with the enemy. For example, upper class solidarity and fraternisation is a theme of Conan Doyle's account of the Napoleonic Peninsular War in *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* (1896). The young French cavalry officer, Gerard, is taken prisoner by a British patrol and is put under guard by an officer of the British Light Dragoons. As they ride together, they fall into conversation and Gerard reflects:

He was one of the nobility, this brave lad, and he had been sent out scouting by Lord Wellington [...] we spoke our mind to each other as if we were brothers. We were both of the same age, you see, both of the light cavalry also and both with the same hopes and ambitions (2010 [1896]: 58).¹²

Although the levels of solidarity between French troops and officers and the comportment of their British counterparts differed in the ways outlined above, there is little doubt, in the representations of soldier heroes at the end of the nineteenth century, about the genuine concern of officers for their men. In particular, perhaps as a further endorsement of the life of adventure in the military, reports of acts of kindness and valour by officers abounded in the press. These gallant officers do not neglect the material comforts of the men under their command. Thus, it is reported on 3 January 1885 in the same newspaper that the commanding officer of a British battleship has not forgotten Christmas:

Commander the Hon. A. Curzon Howe gave to the crew of *HMS Sultan* on Christmas day a big Christmas tree, with at least twenty pounds' worth of presents. This was true consideration, for a ship cannot be left on Christmas day, more than on any other day in the year, without hands to manage her, and Jack Tar is peculiarly fond of a little fun and jollity.¹³

In this brief survey of representations of comradeship in the fictional and journalistic discourse of the manly hero three recurrent motifs emerge. First, the selfless sacrifices made by heroes on behalf of their colleagues; second, particularly in the British texts, the hazy boundaries between the school playing field and the field of battle; and third, the ways in which the brutality of warfare creates bonds between soldiers, irrespective of social

¹² This episode prefigures a similar scenario in Jean Renoir's WWI film *La Grande Illusion* in which a captured French Air-Force Officer fraternises with the German Camp Commandant. Renoir had enlisted in the elite French Light Cavalry in 1913 and was aware of class attitudes transcending national affiliations.

¹³ *Illustrated London News*, 3 January 1885, p. 1.

background. As evidenced by the passages from my primary texts cited above, Kingsley's concept of being 'honoured by good men' (1929 [1853]: 61) was one of the key imperatives within the discourse of the military adventure hero. Honour, however, was not merely an abstract concept but was signified by a set of visible indicators. I will now, therefore, consider the external signs and symbols of military status and assess their impact as ideological motifs.

4 'Pomp and Circumstance': the Rituals and Ceremonies of War

In the construction of the masculine exemplar, deeds and words were bound up in a complex panoply of military trappings and ceremonies. Smith evokes the paradoxical 'broad-based and ancient notion that soldiers who go off to war should do so as beautifully appointed as possible' (2003: 23). This notion of being 'beautifully appointed' is a consistent theme of the narrative of the soldier hero and, I contend, constitutes a central plank of the nationalistic ideology that permeated much of the war fiction and reported accounts of military campaigns in the last part of the nineteenth century. Symbols were of great importance to the inscription of this ideology and included flags, uniforms, parades, music, ceremonies, flowers, salutes and military honours. Together, they constituted a language that was equally as powerful in the inscription of ideology as were the hortatory discourses of politicians and educators. In this way these trappings of military ceremonial accord with the poststructuralist view, summarised succinctly by literary theorist Catherine Belsey, that 'language, understood in the broad sense of the term to include all signifying systems, including images and symbols, gives us access to information' (2002: 3). The importance of this 'information' can be ascribed to an ambition among military leaders and policy-makers to meld together a group of, often feckless, young men into a fighting force with pride, self-respect, discipline and the unquestioning admiration and regard of a nation watching their exploits.

To understand the significance of this symbolism in the reporting of war, it is instructive to review closely the daily copies of *Le Petit Parisien* during the three-month period of March

to May 1895, which coincided with the largest build-up of French military presence in the island protectorate of Madagascar. There is, in almost every edition, a report of troops departing by train from barracks across the country, either to the Atlantic ports or to Marseilles, where they will embark for the Indian Ocean. Flowers and groups of well-wishers abound: 'La plupart porte encore les fleurs qui leur ont été jétés à Paris. Ils ont été dans toutes les gares du trajet l'objet des manifestations de foules enthousiastes'.¹⁴ It is not only wives and loved-ones who send them off to war. For example, the same newspaper on 17 March reports that: 'c'est décidément le 28 mars que le Président de la République remettra au camp de Sathonay leurs drapeaux aux troupes qui feront partie du corps expéditionnaire du Madagascar'.¹⁵ The following day, a regiment embarking for Madagascar at Cherbourg is addressed by Vice-Admiral Cuverville, who tells them that 'la gloire ne s'acquiert sans efforts'.¹⁶

Two days later, it is the 2nd Regiment of the Marines who are leaving and 'les nombreuses personnes présentes ont fait une ovation aux braves militaires'.¹⁷ By early April, French colonial possessions are also contributing their troops to the expedition and we read of the departure of a company of Algerian soldiers to Madagascar with the by now familiar send-off: 'une foule énorme était aux abords de la gare'.¹⁸ By the middle of the month, the logistics of moving men and materiel has become so challenging that exercises are conducted in moving resources swiftly to the bridgeheads: 'l'expérience tentée à l'improviste a donc parfaitement réussi, tant en ce qui dépendait de l'élément militaire qu'en ce qui touchait le service des chemins de fer'.¹⁹ Sometimes departures take place with less formality but still with the presence of a dignitary to speed the men and their officers on their way; when

¹⁴ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 15 March 1895, p. 1.

¹⁵ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 17 March 1895, p. 1.

¹⁶ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 18 March 1895, p. 1.

¹⁷ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 20 March 1895, p. 2.

¹⁸ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 2 April 1895, p. 1.

¹⁹ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 11 April 1895, p. 1.

General Duchesne parts for the colony in mid-April, the Minister for War accompanies him to the station: ‘Il n’y a pas eu de discours prononcés, et les adieux du Ministre de la Guerre ont été ceux d’un soldat à son camarade qui va loin de France pour tenir haut et ferme le drapeau français’.²⁰ Two days later, the general appears greatly moved by the warmth of his farewell ceremony: ‘Des quantités de bouquets sont jétés dans la voiture. Pour répondre aux acclamations et aux applaudissements, le général Duchesne salua constamment; il paraît profondément ému’.²¹ On 17 April, a report appears in *Le Petit Parisien* of the departure for Madagascar of the 53rd Infantry Regiment. Once again, this regiment is largely composed of men from the French colonies, in this case Moroccans living in Paris. The reporter judges it to be discriminatory that these men have not been allowed to parade through Paris and, instead, have a less ‘glorious’ passage through the provincial town of Le Mans: ‘Les braves volontaires maroquins, qui sont Parisiens pour la plupart, ne pourront donc pas, avant d’aller porter et glorifier le drapeau français dans la grande île africaine, avoir la part d’ovations que la population de Paris ne leur marchandé jamais’.²² As with the report of 17 March, the *tricolore* flag is central to the rhetoric. I address the significance of this symbol later in this chapter.

An altogether more splendid farewell ovation is given to the 13th Regiment of *Marsouins* (colonial soldiers) who leave from Cherbourg the following day: ‘à leur arrivée à la gare les Marsouins étaient radieux; pas un front n’était obscurci. Cependant, nous avons remarqué un grand nombre de soldats d’infanterie de marine venus pour conduire leurs camarades et qui pleuraient de dépit de ne pouvoir les suivre à Madagascar’. Their train departs with military precision and is accorded a musical tribute as it leaves: ‘à quatre heures et quart précises, le clarion a donné le signal du départ et la locomotive, après trois coups de sifflet, s’est mise

²⁰ Ibid. p. 2.

²¹ ‘L’Expédition de Madagascar’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 17 April 1895, p. 1.

²² Ibid.

lentement en marche aux accents de la Marseillaise, jouée par la musique du 1^e regiment'. The enthusiasm of the well-wishers knows no bounds: 'à ce moment l'enthousiasme était indescriptible et les cris de "Vive les Marsouins! Vive l'armée! Vive la France!" ont été poussés par la foule'.²³ Three days later, the first Battalion of the 13th Infantry Regiment, preceded by the band of the 141st Regiment, marches out of the Saint Charles barracks in Marseilles to embark on the troop-ship *Chateau d'Yquem* for Madagascar: 'sur tout le parcours, les soldats ont été accueillis par d'enthousiastes bravos et couverts de fleurs'.²⁴ It was not only the republican *Le Petit Parisien* that reported in this jingoistic manner the movements of the French colonial army to foreign wars. *Le Petit Journal*, often given to more sensationalist accounts, employs similar rhetoric in its military despatches and had consistently reported the departure of the French expeditionary forces for Indochina during the previous decade in a hubristic style. Thus, covering the march of the 11th Dragoons to their port of embarkation, the account of their overnight halt in the town of Assas in the Aveyron region is couched in similar terms:

Les escadrons ont présenté les armes et le colonel a raconté en quelques mots saisissants le trait heroïque qui a rendu le nom d'Assas immortel. La foule qui avait envahi la place, a couvert cette éloquente improvisation de chaleureux applaudissements, et c'est au milieu de cris enthousiastes que les dragons ont pris logement.²⁵

The potential of this style of reporting to influence the national mood and to allay anti-militarist sentiments should not be underestimated. These reports were often carried on the front page of newspapers that had, by 1880, a daily print run totalling 1,947,000 among 60 titles, of which *Le Petit Journal* alone enjoyed a circulation of 583,000 (Bellanger 1972: 137).

²³ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 18 April 1895, p. 1.

²⁴ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 21 April 1895, p. 1.

²⁵ 'Bulletin Militaire et Maritime', *Le Petit Journal*, 31 January 1885, p. 2.

Although the Parisian Press was also distributed widely outside the capital, the ability of this medium to inform and persuade was substantial in a city with an urban population of just over two million.

The elaborate and sometimes politically orchestrated reporting of these farewells apparently had three principal motives. First, there was the widespread notion of military service as a pivotal stage in the rite of passage of a young Frenchman, the time when he leaves his village or town as a boy and returns as a man. Second, there was the political motivation of drawing the attention of voters away from economic and social woes at home with concepts of honour and glory to be won in the name of France, still licking its wounds from defeat by the Prussians. Third, there was the shared objective of both Ministers and Generals to characterise the army as a shining emblem of the new Republic, a source of renewed vigour worthy of respect and honour in its defeat both of unwilling colonial subjects and of domestic *dégénérescence*. Bellanger sums up the services which the press and its agencies were able to render to their political allies in reporting colonial adventures: ‘en politique étrangère en particulier, l’Agence [Havas] rendait au gouvernement des services considérables en filtrant les informations ou en orientant partiellement les commentaires’ (1972: 249).

We should not infer from Bellanger’s comments, however, that the mass press was exclusively supportive of nationalist and militarist causes. A compelling example of how one of the large-circulation daily newspapers, *Le Petit Journal*, embraces even-handedly both sides of the militarist debate occurs in July 1890. Since the beginning of the month, the newspaper had been reporting with increasing excitement the mobilisation of the entire French fleet and the arrival of the Mediterranean Squadron off the West coast of France near to Brest. On 1 July, an unattributed article on the front page speculates as to what could be the reason for this massive show of naval strength. As the week unfolds, *Le Petit Journal*

celebrates the impressive sight of lines of cruisers, torpedo boats and reconnaissance vessels which are clearly visible from the shore and which have attracted great public interest. On 3 July it reports the arrival of large crowds of flag-waving spectators along the shoreline, all eager to witness the spectacle of France's naval might: 'Dès quatre heures de l'après-midi une foule énorme avait envahi tous les points d'où on pouvait voir le plus commodement l'escadre de la Méditerranée. Quelques curieux étaient même allés fort loin en voiture'.²⁶ In contrast to this hubristic celebration of naval power, however, the same newspaper on 3 July 1890 gives extensive coverage to a very different aspect of the national defence debate. It reports a meeting of the Congrès des Peuples²⁷ held to discuss the subject of 'la suppression de la guerre' at the Salle Beaussire on the Rue d'Aboukir in Paris. The strong pacifist tone of the proceedings is summarized as follows by *Le Petit Journal*: 'La guerre a toujours été la ruine des nations, celle du travail, de l'industrie, du commerce et la source de la misère des peuples'.²⁸ The article goes on to assert that the only way to prevent 'la misère des peuples' is to make an agreement between all European nations to melt down stockpiles of armaments in order to make tools for workmen.

In spite of this example of even-handed reporting of the pacifist viewpoint, however, a strong sense of national interest and the defence of the nation is more typical of much of the mass press during the final two decades of the nineteenth century, at a time when Germany was quite evidently engaged in a massive military and naval build-up. The day following the report of the pacifist campaign, *Le Petit Journal* is back on more familiar patriotic territory as it reports the entry of eighty young students of L'École Polytechnique to the Officer Training College at Fontainebleau. Two days later, it is again promoting the cause of nationalistic heroism in its account of the inauguration of a statue of Jeanne d'Arc in Metz, 'la capitale de

²⁶ 'Les Escadres à Brest', *Le Petit Journal*, 3 July 1890, p. 1.

²⁷ A pacifist organisation founded by M.G. Bouys the previous year.

²⁸ 'La Suppression de la Guerre', *Le Petit Journal*, 3 July 1890, p. 1.

notre chère Lorraine mutilée'.²⁹ 'La Pucelle', as the paper calls her, is put forward as 'l'héroïne de la délivrance nationale, celle qui personifie le devoir dans son inspiration la plus sublime, le triomphe, contre vraisemblance et tout espoir, de la cause de l'atrie opprimée'.³⁰

The powerful ideology of Jeanne d'Arc, together with the symbolism and imagery of military ceremonial and naval strength, was no doubt able to steel some wavering spirits, but nothing could have prepared French national service conscripts adequately for what faced them on arrival in the tropics after weeks of poor food, sea-sickness and cramped accommodations on troop-ships. On the day following the departure of the *Chateau d'Yquem* and its flower-bedecked regiment from the port of Marseilles, the tyrant Queen Ranavalona of Madagascar had made an impassioned appeal to her own people, urging them to prevent an alliance between the invading French forces and the questionably loyal coast dwellers of the island: 'Voici est ce que je vous dis: le peuple est bien décidé à ne pas céder à la France une parcelle de notre territoire [...] si vous harcelez les Français pendant l'été, ils prendront la fièvre et on pourra les battre très facilement. Vous connaissez la race des blancs'.³¹ Her predictions of an invader enfeebled by tropical disease were only too accurate. Up to forty percent of the expeditionary force was confined to field hospitals or barracks with dysentery, malaria and the other conditions to which local defenders were largely immune, and many Frenchmen died in the colonies without seeing military action. Nonetheless, for those that survived, the trappings of military might continued to be central to their ideological beliefs. In particular, the French *tricolore* played a powerful part in this imagery.

This symbol of national pride flew over the French colonial project with nuances of underlying pride and patriotism comparable to those enjoyed by the British Union Jack. One of the myths most often repeated in this connection was the bravery at the battle of Lucknow,

²⁹ 'La Religion du Sol Natal', *Le Petit Journal*, 6 July 1890, p. 1.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ 'L'Expédition de Madagascar', *Le Petit Parisien*, 22 April 1895, p. 1.

following the Indian Mutiny of 1857, of Lieutenant Frederick Roberts who was later to become Lord Roberts. The *Illustrated London News* on 16 January 1897 recalls the exploit: ‘his career may be said to have commenced at Lucknow, when plucky young Roberts placed a flag on the roof of the mess-house, and maintained it there too, in spite of all the efforts of the mutineers to shoot it down’.³² The suppression of the mutiny and subsequent reprisals were brutal, but this does not deter the journalist’s admiration for the avenging rescuers at Lucknow and of Roberts’s gallant raising of the Union Jack: ‘cold and unimaginative indeed must be the Briton whose heart does not beat more quickly and more proudly as he reads this thrilling record of one of the most glorious triumphs of his imperial race’.³³ The *Illustrated London News* was one of the primary means by which news of heroic military exploits was disseminated at home. Although the cover price made it a middle-class journal, the readership among the large population of domestic servants and friends of subscribers made its penetration among all classes much more substantial than its circulation implied (Beegan 2008: 37). If the news was of national importance, as in the events at Khartoum, the print run would be increased and, for example, over 300,000 copies were printed on the occasion of the royal wedding in 1863. To put this in context, the *Times* printed 70,000 copies on that day and the *Daily News* 6,000 (Bacot 2005: 48) The format, with columns of vividly written war despatches accompanied by illustrations in heroic style of British expeditionary forces flying the flag, captured the imagination of young and old readers alike, and the tone and manner of the journalism often comes close to that of an adventure novel.

The metonymy of flag as nation was given vivid expression in the foundation by W. H. G. Kingston, a best-selling author of adventure fiction, of the magazine *Union Jack* in 1880. His successor as editor was Henty, whose nationalistic accounts of British military superiority in *With Moore at Corunna* are cited above and whose adventure novels were selling close to a

³² *Illustrated London News*, 16 January 1897, p. 86.

³³ *Ibid.*

quarter of a million copies a year by the end of the century (MacKenzie 1984: 220). Henty was able to enlist the writing skills of Doyle as well as Robert Louis Stevenson and (in translation) the already immensely popular Jules Verne for the adventure fiction serialised in his magazine. MacKenzie gives us an idea of the nature of its content:

The journal's recipe was to blend much of the violence, boisterousness and cruelty which had poured from the penny-dreadfuls with the late nineteenth-century world view [...] the world became a vast adventure playground in which Anglo-Saxon superiority could be repeatedly demonstrated vis-à-vis all other races, most of whom were depicted as treacherous and evil (1984: 204).

These 'treacherous' foreigners, who were typically the adversaries depicted in *Union Jack*, were instrumental in defining the moral probity of the adventure hero by contrast to their own villainy. Both major political parties in Britain espoused nationalistic and militaristic rhetoric, and Conservatives and Liberals agreed on the defence of the Empire.

Flags fly over most of the narratives of the soldier adventurer in both the British and French genre in the nineteenth century. In Pierre Loti's account of an adventurous expedition to the French colony of Morocco in *Au Maroc*, his narrator recalls the way in which a group of Arab women ascribe almost miraculous protective powers to the *tricolore* as they cower from their local oppressors: 'cramponnées à cette hampe du drapeau avec un air de se croire inattaquables' (1927 [1890]: 36). One of them then touches the hem of a French officer's military cape and kisses it, an unmistakeable allusion to the gospel story of Christ healing the consumptive woman. To conclude my exploration of the flag as a symbol of patriotic duty and a catalyst for acts of military valour, I return to the pages of *Le Petit Parisien* to witness the reverence accorded to the *tricolore* following a French victory at the fort of Lang Son during the expeditionary campaign in Indochina of February 1885: 'l'armée française n'a rien perdu de ses ardentes qualités et on retrouve toujours en elle cette même intrépidité, ce même

courage, ce même amour du drapeau qui conduisent au triomphe des soldats de la Révolution’.³⁴ Once again, it is the metonymy of the French *tricolore* as the symbol of love for the nation that the journalist foregrounds in this report.

A week earlier, an extraordinarily impassioned article had appeared in the same newspaper expressing anger and regret at the proposed withdrawal of one of the most distinctive trappings of the French military uniform, the *épaulette*, first used in the eighteenth century to denote rank. It is conceived as one of the badges of honour and one of the aspirations of young French army volunteers: ‘de tous les attributs militaires, elle est un de ceux qui avaient gardé le plus de prestige: “gagner l’épaulette” pour les engagés volontaires, n’était ce pas le but suprême?’.³⁵ This reverence for insignia and uniforms is also a recurrent theme in the discourse of the British soldier adventurer and the badges of rank are cause for great satisfaction and pride among the young heroes. In Henty’s account of Terence O’Connor’s daring military exploits in *With Moore at Corunna*, his hero is concerned at the battle-stained appearance of his uniform: ‘there is no doubt that we are not as smart in appearance as we ought to be, and that other regiments in the brigade show up better than we do’ and is anxious that ‘the colonel himself intended to inspect the regiment closely before marching the next morning and that the men must be warned to have their uniforms, belts and firearms in perfect order’ (1898: 128).

Finally, in this survey of the importance of pomp and circumstance in the discourse of exemplary masculinity, the contentious issue of salutes emerges as another significant aspect of military etiquette. In February 1885, for example, a series of articles appear in both *Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Petit Journal* debating the correct etiquette for naval salutes to honour visiting high-ranking officers. On 18 February *Le Petit Parisien* reports that the Ministry of the Navy has been occupied in resolving the vexed issue of how many cannons should be

³⁴ ‘Salut à Nos Soldats’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 17 February 1885, p. 1.

³⁵ ‘L’Épaulette’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 8 February 1885, p. 1.

fired both within the *Hexagon* and overseas to greet an Admiral of the Fleet. A compromise is finally reached whereby seventeen guns are to be fired at home and nineteen outside France. *Le Petit Journal* provides an international context to the debate that has finally secured agreement of all the principal naval powers, with the significant exception of Russia and Germany:

Le gouvernement français, désireux d'établir, au point de vue international, une règle uniforme pour les saluts "à feu" qui doivent être faits aux commandants d'une force navale, avait adressé des propositions aux puissances maritimes de l'Europe. Ces puissances, sauf la Russie et l'Allemagne, ont répondu à l'invitation de la France [...] Amiral Commandant en Chef: en France, 17 coups de canon; hors de France, 19. Capitaine de Vaisseau Chef de Division: 7 et 11.³⁶

Rear-Admiral H. H. Rawson is accorded the appropriate naval salute on his departure on the punitive mission against the King of Benin in January 1897. The *Illustrated London News* reports the sailing of Rawson's forces on *HMS Malacca* from the Thames in a wintry blizzard:

The *Malacca* sailed from the Royal Albert Docks on Saturday last amid much enthusiasm, a large gathering of people having assembled to wish the departing troops God-speed. The great vessel passed from the wharf in a heavy snowstorm, but to the sound of lusty cheering, even heartier than that which had already sped the Royal Marines and Marine Artillery on their way from Portsmouth railway station after they had been addressed by their commanding officers.³⁷

With the benefit of hindsight, it is almost inconceivable that the command structure of the British and French navies should have been so preoccupied with etiquette and relatively insignificant distant conflicts at a time when the build up of naval power in Europe was

³⁶ 'Bulletin Militaire et Maritime', *Le Petit Journal*, 15 February 1885, p. 1.

³⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 30 January 1897, p. 148.

already underway, especially by the two powers who chose not to participate in discussions of etiquette, while nations adopted positions that would make conflict inevitable. Nonetheless, the international code of naval cannon salutes is but one example of the culture of flags, parades, flowers, insignia, medals, uniforms, salutes and military honours which, in both adventure fiction and in the military ceremonies of France and Britain, celebrated the arrivals and the departures of the warrior hero. Dawson recalls one of the siren calls of the anti-war feminist movement of the 1960s/70s Vietnam era: ‘take the toys from the boys’ (1994: 17). The ceremonial military regalia of the late nineteenth century constituted some of the ‘toys’ that formed an influential part of the propaganda surrounding this ‘game’ (Kipling 2008 [1901]: 129). The discourse of exemplary masculinity is liberally strewn with these symbols. Loti’s accounts of their significance for his own self-image, as well as the consistent mention of these symbols in reports from war correspondents, attest to their importance in attracting recruits to military service.

5 Honour Codes and Glory

While the external trappings of military regalia and uniforms can be construed as part of the symbolism of manly comportment, the late nineteenth century also evolved codes of behaviour which went far more deeply to the heart of what it meant to be a man. Kingsley had formulated the essence of this code of conduct in his words of introduction to the stories of the Greek heroes: ‘a man was honoured among them, not because he happened to be rich, but according to his skill and his strength and his courage and the number of things he could do’ (1929 [1855]: xvi). It was not only the ‘things he could do’ which mattered, but also the *way* that he did them that marked him as manly. It is important to emphasise in this context the distinction that I have already made between ‘manliness’ and ‘masculinity’. The term

‘masculinity’ was only beginning to be widely adopted by 1890 to describe Victorian men.³⁸

Manliness has much more to do with character, moral probity and honour than with physical strength alone.

The adventure fiction of the late nineteenth century is strongly imbued with this concept of honour and its concomitant reward of glory, usually won on the battlefield. So, for example, in Doyle’s *Uncle Bernac* we witness the steely self mastery and sense of personal honour of the young royalist Louis de Leval, who is captured within minutes of landing on the Mediterranean salt flats of revolutionary France: ‘I understood also that, in the heart of that lonely marsh I was absolutely in their power. None the less, I remembered the name that I bore, and concealed as far as I could the sickening terror which lay at my heart’ (2001 [1897]: 25). No matter how desperate the situation and how far removed from civilisation, the manly hero is habitually in touch with a set of honourable principles that determine the boundaries of his behaviour. Thus, when Ludwig Horace Holly is in a fight to the death with two bloodthirsty Transvaal tribesmen in Rider Haggard’s *She*, the point of reference from which he assesses the situation is firmly based at home: ‘I slowly crushed the life out of them, and as I did so, strange as it may seem, I thought of what the amiable head of my college at Cambridge would say’ (2008 [1887]: 97). In order to sustain his own self-respect (and arguably to inspire the adolescent reader to emulate him) the manly hero has to act, not only with conspicuous bravery, but also with honour, loyalty, a keen sense of justice and a policy of clemency in victory.

These characteristics are central to the practice of duelling which was still prevalent in late nineteenth-century France. 598 recorded duels took place in Paris between 1880 and 1889 of which sixteen were fatal (Nye 1993: 185). Nye surmises that the duellists and the many other Frenchmen who practised the arts of *armes blanches* ‘wished to participate in some

³⁸ Bederman reports that, in a U.S. context, masculinity ‘was not usually associated with civilisation, because it dealt with attributes which all men had, including savages’ (1995: 6).

vague way in the fatherland's military rebirth, to be ready in body and mind for some future war of revenge against the Germans' (1993: 170). Duels are frequently arranged to settle affairs of honour between soldiers. *Le Petit Parisien* of 5 February 1885 reports a duel involving six dragoons, which lasts for twenty-five minutes and during which three of the duellists are wounded. The acceptability of this means of resolving a dispute or avenging a perceived insult among soldiers is indicated by the presence of several senior officers at the duel, a presence which is not in line with the civilian codes of the apparently rather self-righteous correspondent: 'il est impossible de comprendre pourquoi ce combat entre six soldats a été autorisé, et ce qu'on explique moins encore, c'est que des officiers supérieurs, loin de le défendre, avaient cru devoir y assister en spectateurs'.³⁹ These codes of military honour permeate through to other walks of life, and a report appears on 31 January in the same newspaper of a duel between two municipal Councillors who have had a disagreement in the Council chamber and have resolved to settle matters accompanied by their seconds in the Bois de Meudon. M. Valliant and M. Lyon-Alamané fight with *épées* until the agenda point is resolved by M. Valliant's withdrawal with a wound in his forearm.⁴⁰

The concept of *la gloire*, or military glory in superior feats of arms, is inextricably bound up with the concept of honour. Acts of bravery against impossible odds are reported in a Homeric declamatory style in the popular press and implausible exchanges of heroic dialogue are quoted as verbatim. A letter, purportedly from a front-line infantryman in the battle of Lang-Son during the Indochina campaign, appears in *Le Petit Parisien* of 22 February 1885. He reports an engagement during which a detachment of 130 French colonial troops face 2,000 heavily armed Chinese-backed rebels. Seeing that the enemy firepower is too great to survive, their officer orders his men to fire from the lying position:

³⁹ 'Un Duel entre Six', *Le Petit Parisien*, 5 February 1885, p. 3.

⁴⁰ 'Nos Informations', *Le Petit Parisien*, 31 January 1885, p. 2.

à ce moment, le capitaine prit le fusil d'un mort et cria: "S'il faut mourir, vendons notre vie aussi chèrement que possible! Vive la France! Baïonnette au canon et en avant mes enfants!" Aussitôt les cris de "Vive la France! Vive la Légion!" se firent entendre; les baïonnettes brillèrent au soleil et nous poussâmes en avant.⁴¹

Allowing for some hyperbole in both the survivor's report and some judicious editing before publication, there is no doubt about the engagement itself, which is corroborated in contemporary accounts and is presented here as the apogee of military *gloire* and an inspiration to young patriots. The stylistic distinctions between reported newspaper accounts and fictional combat narratives are hazy during these last decades of the century and we see almost the same set of words used in the final chapter of *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, published four years earlier: 'ils vendirent chère leur vie, ces hommes qui tous étaient jeunes, vigoureux et aguerris' (1936 [1881]: 211). Is it too fanciful to imagine that the young French infantryman fighting in the 1885 Indochina campaign, or indeed the journalist who transcribes his letter, might have read Loti's account of the colonial *Spahi* soldiers' campaign against insurgents in Senegal and borrowed some of his fine phrases?

Naked nationalism is rife in the reporting of acts of military glory. In the same edition of *Le Petit Parisien* in which the report cited above appears, a much shorter and tersely worded report of a British setback in the struggle to win control of the Sudan from Mahdist tribesmen is included on an inside page: 'les colonnes de troupes, si imprudemment engagés au Soudan, étaient obligés de battre en retraite, de peur d'être entourées par l'armée du Mahdi et submergées sous le flût humain des noirs Musulmans'.⁴² There is an element of *schadenfreude* in the editorial commentary which follows this report: 'Lord Granville, ministre des Affaires Étrangères, a tenté de mettre baume sur l'amour propre anglais, en racontant qu'un homme de guerre illustre parlait des soldats britanniques en les nommant des

⁴¹ 'Le Combat de Chu', *Le Petit Parisien*, 22 February 1885, p. 2.

⁴² 'Le Parlement Anglais', *Le Petit Parisien*, 22 February 1885, p. 3.

héros; l'éloge n'a pas réussi à atténuer qu'il y a d'humiliant dans la lamentable campagne avortée'.⁴³ The editorial stance is to diminish British military achievements while vaunting the honour and heroism of French soldiers.

Although each of the colonial powers suffered their share of 'lamentable' campaigns at the end of the nineteenth century (among them Madagascar for the French and Sudan for the British), there is a consistency, both in news reports and in contemporary military adventure novels, in the presentation of honour and glory as central to the discourse of the soldier adventurer. Kutzer avers that 'as the empire began to shrink, the language of nationalism and patriotism became more pronounced' (2000: xx) and the way in which the adventure heroes of Bousсенard, Loti, Verne, Doyle, Haggard and Henty conduct themselves constitutes an apologia for patriotic duty and manly codes of honour. Honour, however, remains a nebulous concept and Nye neatly captures its ephemeral nature when he writes: 'honour is invoked when integrity, prestige or dignity of an individual or corporate entity has been called into question, though none of these terms adequately captures the word's elusive meaning' (1993: vii).

6 The Discourse of the Exemplary Warrior Hero and the Quest Structure

In the section that follows, I consider the signifiers of military glory and honour in the context of the adventure quest and examine how the construction of the adventure hero, with all of its underlying components of valour, *camaraderie*, ceremony and honour codes, survives the horrors of mass warfare. I explore how the notion of the soldier adventurer, together with all of its codes of behaviour and ceremonial trappings, apparently so important in persuading young men to go to war, can co-exist with the brutal realities of combat.

Adventure novels typically follow the quest structure derived from ancient myth and modelled, among others, on the Arthurian legend of Sir Galahad's quest for the Holy Grail or

⁴³ Ibid.

Virgil's epic account of Aeneas's quest for a homeland. The essential characteristics of the quest narrative comprise a precious object to be recovered, a long journey, a hero with the right upbringing and character, a series of tests, adversaries to be overcome and, lastly, companions who assist the hero. The question posed in this section of the thesis is whether the quest structure, which has so frequently framed the narrative of the nineteenth-century soldier adventurer, survives the horrors of mass warfare. In some important respects it clearly does.

The rituals of departure on a journey are a consistent motif in late nineteenth-century adventure fiction. In Henty's *With Moore at Corunna* (1898) we see the archetypal military departure of a regiment of Fusiliers to fight Napoleon's armies in the Peninsular Campaign:

Three days later the expected order came [...] officers and men were alike delighted that the period of waiting had come to an end, and there was loud cheering in the barrack yard as soon as the news came. At daybreak the next morning the rest of the baggage started under a guard, and three hours later the Mayo Fusiliers marched through the town with their band playing at their head, and amid the cheers of the populace (1898: 22).

In Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), the tests and adversaries to be overcome as the hero Allan Quatermain and Captain John Good approach the final goal of their quest are so demanding that the narrator glosses over the initial trials of their journey: 'We left Durban at the end of January [...] our adventures on the way were many and various, but as they were of the sort which befall every African hunter, I shall not set them down here, lest I should render this history too wearisome' (2006 [1885]: 36). In Ballantyne's *The Fugitives* (1887), the departure of the young hero, Mark Breezy, and his seafaring companions on their quest against 'the tyrant Queen of Madagascar', begins slightly less auspiciously when the boat that has landed them on the island to replenish water supplies is driven away by hostile natives and they have to run for their lives: 'we make no apology to the reader for dragging him

unceremoniously into the middle of a grand primeval forest, and presenting to his view the curious and stirring spectacle of two white men and a negro running at their utmost possible speed, with flashing eyes and labouring chests, evidently running for their lives' (1887: 1). Here, Ballantyne employs a metafictional device to apostrophise the reader and to set the quest formula of his narrative in motion from the very first paragraph.

In the nineteenth-century adventure novel, as in the quest tradition, military heroes often act alone in hand-to-hand combat, even when they have been campaigning together with a band of comrades at arms. Thus Pierre Loti's young colonial soldier in *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, isolated from the main contingent of *Spahis*, wounded and exhausted, fights to the death against three Senegalese spearmen: 'une minute effrayable d'angoisse, pendant laquelle Jean sentait la pression de ce couteau contre son corps. Et pas un secours humain, rien, tous tombés, personne!' (1936 [1881]: 212). Again, in Haggard's *She*, the protagonist deploys his combat skills alone as he fights native warriors hand-to-hand: 'As for myself, I was soon involved in a desperate encounter with two ruffians who, luckily for me, had left their spears behind them; and for the first time in my life the great physical power with which Nature has endowed me stood me in good stead' (2008 [1887]: 97). It is not only in nineteenth-century fictional representations that this *topos* of single-handed prowess in combat recurs. The conservative Parisian daily paper *La Presse* informs its readers on 1 January 1885 of a gallant action by the second-mate of a French gunboat that is overrun by Chinese rebels in the gulf of Tonkin during the French expeditionary campaign. The officer commanding the gunboat is shot dead and the second-mate takes command of the vessel, fights off the boarders and manages to evade capture: 'Le lieutenant qui commandait est tué. M. Lamour lui succède et ses chefs le décorent pour sa conduite héroïque dans les combats du 2e Octobre. Cette mention n'est-elle pas le plus bel éloge?'⁴⁴ Comparable reports of individual bravery abound

⁴⁴ 'Notre Jeune Armée', *La Presse*, 1 January 1885, p. 1.

in the British Press at the turn of the century. Lord Roberts is not only singled out by the war-reporter of the *Illustrated London News* for his conspicuous bravery, but shows no reluctance to publish a journal of his own valiant deeds: ‘scarcely less moving is Lord Robert’s account of his fighting in Afghanistan, an account which he was able to make more complete than the story of his share in the suppression of the Mutiny, as all of the threads of action centred in his own hand’.⁴⁵

The classical quest structure, comprising, not only the departure, the journey and the tests against obstacles and adversaries, but also the return to a hero’s welcome, is woven through the fictional and many of the reported press accounts of the nineteenth-century soldier hero. War discourses, however, were not always imbued with the high-flown rhetoric of classical heroism. Strong notes of irony and bathos emerge from war diaries written towards the end of the century, typified by those of John Pearman of the King’s Own Light Dragoons, edited and collated in Carolyn Steedman’s *The Radical Soldier’s Tale*. When Pearman recalls the heavy losses suffered against Sikh dissidents in India, a note of jaunty bravado is sounded in his bathetic account of a desperate encounter at Ramnagar: ‘they was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Havelock, a very brave officer and they come on in pretty state so steady and strate [...] poor Todd did not go far for a shot come and knocked off his head’ (1988: 155). This style of ironic understatement is echoed in combatants’ accounts of the First Sudan War of 1882. For example, the journal of Corporal Henry Albert Porter of the 1st Scots Guards for 13 September 1882 records that ‘shells were dropping thick and fast as from 50 to 150 yards in rear of us, and straight over our heads at this time of day’.⁴⁶ Private William Wilson of the Left Flank Company, 1st Battalion Scots Guards, affects a similar indifference to the showers of enemy bullets faced by him and his colleagues: ‘we were not in the thick of the fight, but

⁴⁵ *Illustrated London News*, 16 January 1897, p. 90.

⁴⁶ National Army Museum, Archive 87-06-30, ‘Diary of H. Porter, 1st Scots Guards, during the Egyptian Campaign 1882’.

had lots of bullets flopping about and splashing up the pebbles about us'.⁴⁷ Litotes is one of the principal tropes employed in both literary discourses and personal journals in the representation of a brand of manly heroism seemingly unaffected by the dangers of the battlefield.

7 Summary

Reverting to the research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, what were the particular characteristics of war fiction and of the journalism of war correspondents that lent themselves to the representation of exemplary masculinity? First, military expeditions to far-flung colonies, as well as accounts of historical battles, provide a context within which acts of bravado and derring-do can most effectively be interwoven. Acts of signal bravery and heroic feats of arms, typically single-handed against superior numbers of opponents, can be foregrounded within accounts of real-life military campaigns from the recent or distant past. The classical heroic qualities of clemency in victory and noble selflessness can also be privileged within war discourses. Second, the theatre of war lends itself as the crucible for the formation of bonds of masculine *camaraderie* and fraternal loyalty that both contribute to the concept of war as an adventure in which young men participate, by analogy with sport, as team mates. Third, wartime accounts provide a context for the military paraphernalia of uniforms, flags, music and the pomp and ceremony accompanying arrivals and departures, powerful signifiers within the ideology of exemplary masculinity. In these ways, and in the associated *topoi* of superhuman feats of arms, sportsmanship and military regalia, the ideology of war as a noble and attractive proposition for the youth of Britain and France was most effectively inscribed within adventure fiction.

⁴⁷ National Army Museum, Archive 1992-12-136, 'Egyptian War of 1882, Papers of Private William Wilson, 1st Battalion Scots Guards'.

*Ideologies of Exemplary Masculinity in French and British Adventure Novels
1870-1900*

CONCLUSIONS

Overview

In the interests of focus, I have concentrated exclusively in some of my earlier chapters on either French or British discourses of exemplary masculinity. One of the most intriguing aspects of what I have discovered, however, is the number of striking parallels (and some notable divergences) between the two national discourses in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. Born of a very different set of social and political circumstances, doubts and anxieties about the capacity of young men to engage patriotically in the defence of state and empire were rife in both countries during these years. In drawing together my conclusions, therefore, I will illustrate these parallels and divergences under the five headings of ‘Population’, ‘Masculinities’, ‘Empire’, ‘Difference’ and ‘War’.

1 Population

One of the principal political and social concerns which prompted discourses of exemplary masculinity in France towards the end of the nineteenth century was the fear of depopulation. Between 1872 and 1911, the population of France grew by about 10% while that of Germany grew by 58%.¹ Three levels of national anxiety were expressed by political commentators. First, the relative size of the young male populations of France and Germany had evident consequences for national defence. Second, the ignominious defeat of the French armies by the Prussians in 1870 had left doubts about the physical capacity of French youth to withstand combat conditions.

¹ Census figures cited by Nye (1993: 77).

Third, crises of masculine gender identity were undermining the role of the *chef de famille*, so important for the reproduction and cohesion of the Third Republic.

How were these concerns reflected in Britain during the last part of the nineteenth century? Between 1871 and 1891, the British population increased by 6.3 million, not as high as the 8.3 million increase recorded in Germany, but substantially ahead of the growth of 2.3 million in France.² Population figures *per se*, therefore, were not a primary concern in Britain. More prominent were anxieties, expressed by commentators in the press, about the capacities of a newly enfranchised British youth, not only to support their political masters, but also to extend and defend British colonial interests. Two principal factors came into play in stimulating discourses of exemplary masculinity in Britain. First, setbacks to British colonial hegemony in Southern Africa by both Zulus and Boers had shaken national confidence, and reverses in the Sudan campaign had been given added poignancy by the murder of General Charles Gordon in Khartoum in January 1885. Second, the physical calibre of young recruits to the British armies overseas was so poor that many of them were incapacitated before seeing combat.

For different reasons, therefore, France and Britain had need of exemplars to convince both the population at large and potential recruits to colonial armies that their countries had the manpower, the character and the will to foster national interests at home and overseas. One concept that united the two national discourses in the last part of the century was that of revenge, for France on the Prussian occupiers and for Britain on the Mahdist forces that had killed a totemic national hero.

2. *Masculinities*

² See Offen (1984: 652).

Partly to do with the social and political factors outlined above, representations of exemplary masculinity took quite different forms in fictional discourses of adventure in France and in Britain during the last part of the nineteenth century. Notions of exemplary masculinity coalesced around the precepts of manliness in Britain and *virilité* in France. Both of these concepts implied more than masculinity. In Britain, manliness combined physical vigour and power with courage, honour, chivalry, self-discipline and character, based on a template derived in part from Kingsley's notion of 'muscular Christianity' and from Public School behaviour codes. In France, *virilité* modified concepts of masculinity by adding comparable moral characteristics such as honour and patriotism, with the important addition of the legally enshrined position of the man at the centre of the family, a concept embraced in the duties of the *chef de famille*, with all that this notion implied in terms of authority and reproductive responsibilities.

These two overlapping, but distinct, national discourses were both, in part, reactions to advances in the role of women in society that destabilised previously held gender identities in a number of ways. The previously maintained equilibrium of separate spheres for men and women had been threatened by the advent of *feminisme* in the 1890s in France, coinciding with changes in working practices (e.g. working women and men employed in offices) which undermined patriarchal values.³ In Britain, the values of women and domestic space were also seen as an impediment to manly projects and self-fulfilment. Crises in masculine gender identity sought their resolution in different ways in British and French adventure fiction. In Britain, adventure novels gave expression to a 'flight from domesticity'⁴ that cast women either as helpless victims to be rescued, as restraints on manly behaviour, as evil or

³ See Offen (1984: 654).

⁴ See Tosh (2007 [1999]: 170).

manipulative despots or, in many cases, as absentees from the narrative. Women do play a pivotal role, however, in late nineteenth-century French adventure fiction. They are mysterious ‘oriental’ visions to be pursued (sometimes to the death) by Loti’s colonial soldiers, willing helpmates to support latter-day Crusoes in Verne and Boussenard’s *Robinsonade* sagas, vitriolic commentators on the evils of France’s enemies in d’Ivoi’s accounts of campaigns in Afghanistan and, very occasionally, courageous heroines and protectors of weaker men in some of Verne’s and Maël’s later works.⁵ It is a matter of conjecture as to whether these fundamental differences between the French and British adventure genres can be ascribed to the contemporary social and political discourses of each country. Nonetheless, the two genres appeared during a period in which the restoration of fertile and robust French family life was important to Republican ideology and, by contrast, in which the model of the unmarried British colonial officer was linked to rigid codes of self-discipline based on Public School ethics.

French and British discourses of exemplary masculinity differed in other ways. In general, more subtlety is employed in the characterisation of manly heroes such as Haggard’s Allan Quatermain, who is painted as a somewhat diffident and introspective colonial pioneer, as distinct from some of Verne’s or d’Ivoi’s creations (e.g. Michel Strogoff and Cigale) who are represented largely in physical terms. In both French and British genres, however, extremes of violence are meted out upon (and by) the protagonists, aligning closely with the three most frequently encountered *topoi* of the adventure narrative: expatriation, mortal danger and the unknown.

Another prominent difference between the British and French adventure novel relates to the rites of passage of the young combatants. Both countries had espoused a

⁵ *Mistress Branican* (1892) and *Une française au Pole Nord* (1893).

cult of physical fitness in order to remedy the perceived shortcomings of their respective youths to defend their respective nations. In British literary and journalistic discourses this set of values is firmly anchored in the traditions of Public School games which brought with them codes of duty, honour, teamwork, sportsmanship, resilience and bravery. These values are translated from the school cricket pitch to the battlefields of South and North Africa, whether it is in the representation of Henty's boy heroes, real-life manly heroes such as Colonel Fred Burnaby, or in jingoistic anthems such as Newbolt's 'Vitaï Lampada'. In French adventure fiction, comparable values are set more often in military barracks (as in Loti's *Aziyadé* and *Le Roman d'un Spahi*) where military honour codes, symbolised by the duel as a means of settling differences, are more prevalent than any precepts of citizenship learnt from the pedagogy of the Republican *lycée* (as satirised in Barrès's *Les Deracinés*). Significantly, the adoption by France of sports clubs, where athletic pursuits and training in feats of arms were practiced in Paris and the provinces, owed much to de Courbertin's influence by the British Public School system and its sporting traditions. The officer class and its honour codes in Britain were still drawn largely from the Public School system in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. An officer class of noble blood had been the norm in France until the end of the eighteenth century but, as Gildea tells us, 'the Revolution opened it to talent, qualified by survival on the battlefield' (2009 [2008]: 107). This democratisation of the French army, however, was relative. Napoleon's *École Militaire Spéciale* at St. Cyr in Brittany was exclusive and expensive and still attracted families which had previously been part of the French nobility. By contrast, the *École Polytechnique*, although also very competitive, provided a military education to a broader spectrum of high potential candidates, as well as offering courses in Mathematics, Engineering and Natural Sciences (108). The

residual class distinctions implicit in these two levels of education for the army officer corps were to become apparent in the schisms and prejudices following the arrest and trial in 1894 of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, who had been educated as an artillery officer at the *École Polytechnique*.

Gentlemanly codes of behaviour are represented quite differently in British and French adventure fiction. There is a risk of becoming reductive in applying too tight a definition on either of the two genres. Nonetheless, the insistence of an honour code linked to status as a gentleman is more often encountered in British adventure fiction. Many of Henty's boy heroes (e.g. Edgar Smith in *The Dash for Khartoum* and Frank Hargate, the school cricket hero turned African Army officer, in *By Sheer Pluck*), as well as Haggard's Sir Henry Curtis, are representative examples. In French adventure fiction, there is less frequent insistence on lineage as a determinant of behaviour and codes of honour. In fact the opposite is often true, as we see the cunning ploys of Friquet (Boussenard's picaresque *gamin de Paris*) or the sturdy peasant stock of Loti's Jean Peyral in *Le Roman d'un Spahi* or Sylvestre Moan in *Pêcheur d'Islande*. Ironically, Verne chooses in some of his adventure fiction to use British protagonists to embody gentlemanly moral codes, the most celebrated example being Phileas Fogg in *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours*. Just to redress the balance somewhat, Doyle has cast some of his most gallant adventure heroes as Frenchmen, examples being the courageous young royalist Louis de Laval in *Uncle Bernac* and the burlesque, but essentially chivalrous, Brigadier Gerard.

Finally, one parallel set of discourses, with slightly different emphases in each country, forms an important component of late nineteenth-century masculinities. I refer to the notion of laymen as heroes. In France, the virtues of non-military pioneers such as Pasteur and Hugo were widely celebrated, as well as the Republican ideal of

‘ordinary’ heroes whose brave deeds were recorded in the *faits divers* columns of the mass press. In Britain, the sacrifices of ordinary citizens were also recognised, although never lionised to the extent of the deeds of colonial exemplars. One notable exception is the celebration in a memorial in the heart of the City of London in Postman’s Park to the heroism of the ordinary man.

A complex set of gender identities, therefore, emerges from late nineteenth-century French and British adventure fiction. Parallel discourses of exemplary masculinity (e.g. physical prowess and patriotism) as well as divergent sets of moral concepts (e.g. French *chef de famille* vs. ascetic British colonial administrator) are both reflected and refracted in contemporary cultural, political and social preoccupations.

3 *Empire*

Colonial possessions as symbols of national power and influence were important to both France and Britain in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. France had expanded its colonies from a few barren Atlantic islands in the sixteenth century to 12 million square kilometres by the 1870s⁶ with protectorates or colonies in Indo-China, Shanghai and much of Northern, Western and Central Africa. Britain’s participation in the ‘scramble for Africa’ in the 1880s and 90s had yielded colonial possessions in Sudan, Egypt, Zanzibar and Kenya to add to existing interests in India and Southern Africa. French colonial administration was more integrative than that of Britain, examples being the status of Mediterranean Algeria as a Department of France from 1848 to independence, and the electoral enfranchisement of the four *Communes* of Senegal in 1871. Nonetheless, the importance of French colonies as a national symbol (as well as a distraction of media attention from economic problems and social unrest

⁶ See Quinn (2000: 3).

in the *Métropole*) disguised the fact that the military and administrative cost of colonisation was disproportionate to the relatively small economic benefits derived. In 1882 less than seven percent of French exports went to the colonies and imports accounted for less than five percent. British colonial policies differed in two significant ways. First, British colonial administration was often conducted through a policy of leaving existing ruling structures in place but subjecting them closely to the requirements of British administrative protocols and the necessity to contribute towards Britain's economic needs. Second, a much more ambitious trading policy resulted in around one third of British exports going to the Empire while approximately one quarter of imports came from the colonies.⁷

These differing policies were given expression in ideological concepts exemplified by the French notions of the *Mission Civilisatrice* and the policy of *assimilation*. The high moral tone adopted in these policies disguised varying degrees of success in implementation (for example, the high levels of illiteracy still prevalent in French colonies until the mid-twentieth century), but nonetheless did encourage some level of selective integration and intermarriage of French colonial soldiers and administrators with colonised races. This was in contrast to the idealised picture of the British 'monogamous hero',⁸ more frequently encountered in both fictional and journalistic discourses of Empire. In spite of these differences in both ideology and colonial administrative policies, the value of empire as a symbol of energy, strength, confidence and power was fundamental to late nineteenth-century discourses of exemplary masculinity in both countries. Commonality of political strategies (and some degree of *rapprochement* in response to the German threat which was to lead to the *Entente Cordiale* of 1904) however, did not prevent vitriolic critiques of rival

⁷ See Baumgart (1975: 114).

⁸ Bivona (1998: 29).

colonial powers in both the mass press and in adventure narratives. This is strongly in evidence in the criticism of British colonial rule in India and Southern Africa to be found in the French mass press in the 1890s⁹ as well as in the adventure fiction of d'Ivoi and Boussenard.¹⁰

My findings on French and British colonial theory and practice indicate a substantial *lacuna* between the behaviour and the fortunes of the two nations during the period under analysis. The symbolic importance of French colonial possessions was often disproportionate to their economic utility in contrast to the valuable colonial trade balance established by Britain. Policies of administration and integration differed fundamentally both ideologically and in their implementation. Varying ideological discourses of racial superiority and nationalistic *hubris* were embraced by both countries and were inscribed in the mass press and in adventure fiction. A strong unifying factor between the two national colonial projects, however, was the opportunity that a colonial setting provided for both French and British adventure writers to represent exemplary masculinity, under threat from danger and the unknown, as an aspiration and inspiration for disenchanting youth.

4. *Difference*

Fundamental to colonial ideologies were sentiments of patriotism which, if over-indulged, developed into more sinister undertones of nationalism and prejudice, evolving, at its extremes, into social Darwinism, eugenic theory and xenophobia. Late nineteenth-century press reportage and fictional discourses in both countries reflected varying degrees of all of the above. Discourses in both countries typically profiled the colonial soldier as brave, honourable and resilient, often in contrast to the unwilling

⁹ Examples are to be found in *Le Petit Parisien*, 4 April 1895, p. 1, and 30 April 1895, p. 1.

¹⁰ *La Folle du temple d'or* (1899) and *Aventures extraordinaires de l'homme bleu* (1891).

colonised races, who were characterised variously as demonic, savage and uncivilised.¹¹

Thus far, some commonality is found between ideologies of racial superiority and colonial *hubris* in both France and Britain. A fundamental difference, however, can be discerned in ideologies relating to neighbouring European countries or rival colonialist nation-states. French and British adventure fiction both satirise each other's colonial projects and national characteristics to some extent. Examples are the overweening and gluttonous British administrators to be found in d'Ivoi's and Maël's adventure narratives set in the British Raj¹², Doyle's caricature of the absurdly vain and pompous Brigadier Gerard, or the stereotypes of European nationals to be found later in Buchan's adventure fiction. Much deeper-rooted criticism is to be found, however, in France's accusations of British war-crimes in the Boer war expressed both in the mass press and in documentary-style adventure texts such as Rosny's *La Guerre Anglo-Boer* (1902). France reserves its most consistent and vitriolic criticism, however, for the German race. This goes beyond the satire and irony which characterises treatment of the British in French texts. A consistent anti-German ideological motif is inscribed in discourses in the mass press throughout the last thirty years of the nineteenth century as well as in the sub-genre of *revanche* adventure fiction, exemplified by early anti-Prussian texts such as Erckmann-Chatrian's *Brigadier Frédéric* (1874) and later *revanchiste* accounts of victory to come such as Driant's *La Guerre de demain* (1898). The German enemy is represented as brutal, treacherous and merciless both to combatants and civilians. The occupation of Alsace and Lorraine is symbolised by the sound of German military jackboots echoing on the

¹¹ Examples are the representation of Kukuana tribesmen in *King Solomon's Mines* and of Senegalese rebel forces in *Le Roman d'un Spahi*.

¹² *La Folle du temple d'or* (1899) and *Amour d'Orient* (1895)

cobblestones of Metz and Strasbourg, and the invaders are likened to barbarians who are intent to wipe the name of France from maps of the world (1898: 509). The strength of the anti-German vitriol and the underlying resentment and implicit call-to-arms embodied in these French texts, born of the German occupation and exploitation of *La Patrie*, far exceeds any of the satirical treatment of foreigners to be found in late nineteenth-century British popular culture.

5 *War*

Adventure fiction set in contemporary or historic theatres of war formed a major part of the genre in both France and Britain in the late nineteenth-century. Both countries had suffered major setbacks to their colonial projects, symbolised by the death of totemic leaders such as Rivière in Tonkin (1883) and Gordon in the Sudan (1885). Reverses to colonial ambitions in Madagascar and Indo-China for the French and Egypt and Southern Africa for the British had stimulated doubts, expressed by political commentators, about the wisdom of further colonial expansion. Part of the ideological response to these objections was the representation of fantasmatic (and real) French and British manly heroes performing acts of bravery and feats of arms in battles against those who opposed their colonial incursions.

The ways in which French and British military prowess was represented in the respective adventure genres of the two colonial powers, however, are different in some important respects. Loti's and Maël's soldier heroes, for example, are more prone to fraternise, not only with the men under their command but also with the women native to occupied territories. British soldier-adventurers, by contrast, tend to follow the model of restraint symbolised by British diplomat Lord Cromer's austere code of personal conduct.¹³ Doyle's characterisation of Napoleonic army officers in

¹³ See Bivona (1998: 29).

Uncle Bernac (1897) and Henty's account of the Franco-Prussian war in *The Young Franc-Tireurs* (1872) embody less formal codes of behaviour, with French rank and file soldiers on easy terms with their superiors and freely expressing radical opinions. The British tradition of gentleman-officers represented in accounts of the conflicts in the Sudan such as Henty's *The Dash for Khartoum* (1891) or Steevens's *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (1898) reflect a more hierarchical concept of the military, perhaps born of the concept of a standing army and political reluctance in Britain to introduce compulsory military service which had been legislated as a three year tour of duty for most young men in France in 1889.

Two comparable ideological motifs, however, appear in British and French discourses of military heroism in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The first revolves around the reluctance of narrators of both French and British war-fiction to acknowledge the fact that as many servicemen were incapacitated by tropical disease as were wounded in encounters with the enemy. This is in contrast with discourses in the mass press which (particularly in France where political factions in the 1880s were increasingly opposed to the colonial policies of Jules Ferry) emphasised much more prominently the attrition caused by illness. The second ideological motif to be found in both British and French adventure genres and reflected fully in the mass press is the tradition of military regalia and pomp and circumstance surrounding the comings and goings of regiments of colonial soldiers.¹⁴

Summary

¹⁴ See chapter 6, section 4 for an analysis of these rituals.

An analysis of ideologies of exemplary masculinity in late nineteenth-century France and England has uncovered distinctive political and social motives for the imagining of physically fit young citizens, coached and inspired to nurture and defend national and colonial interests. Within this comparative research framework, an intriguing set of parallels and divergences has emerged from readings of adventure fiction and the mass press. Some parallel ideologies can be discerned in concepts of national identity and in racial and gender stereotypes. Some very different ideological motifs, however, can be discerned in notions of citizenship, types of masculinity, attitudes to domesticity and patriarchy, rites of passage to manhood, models of heroism, colonial strategies of economic exploitation and integration, military hierarchies and the European balance of power. Each of these comparative perspectives (many of them based on an impressive corpus of existing scholarship) invites further in-depth research.

Appendix

1 *A Quantified Analysis of French Adventure Fiction 1870-1900*

1.1 *Sources and Limitations*

Having explored qualitatively in chapter two the ways in which the narratives, plots, language and characterisation of French adventure novels combine to form a recognisable set of conventions and motifs, I provide in this appendix a quantitative review of the adventure genre in France from 1870 to 1900. My review of scholarship into the quantitative aspects of late nineteenth-century fiction (and, within it, the adventure fiction segment) has indicated a number of gaps in source material, especially in publishing and readership data. Scholars who have embarked on similar surveys (both soon after the period under investigation and in recent scholarship) have found their path blocked by gaps in their information sources, contradictions in the data, or the sheer intimidation of a task of this scope. James Smith Allen's *In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France 1800-1940* (1991) adopts a very broad scope. Allen tabulates key statistics on published works of literature derived from the *Bibliographie de la France* but, by his own admission, he shares problems faced by earlier scholars in estimating readership numbers. Although he emphasises the necessity to 'specify which of these books were read by identifiable social groups', he contends that 'scholars have addressed this question less well, largely because adequate records are difficult to find' (1991: 16). One attempt at completeness in the specific genre of the adventure novel was that of André Bottin, who in 1978 published his *Bibliographie des éditions illustrées des Voyages Extraordinaires de Jules Verne en cartonnages de l'éditeur de la collection Hetzel*. We have some indication of the scope of Bottin's taxonomy. He identifies and gives details of sixty-four separate editions (excluding reprints), between 1866 and 1919, of

Verne's *Voyages et Aventures du Capitaine Hatteras*. His work includes many well-reproduced illustrations of the Hetzel editions with their characteristic bright red cloth binding, elaborate gilt embossing and gilt page edges. In the same way, he cites twelve different editions of Verne's *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours*, published in double volumes with *Le Docteur Ox* between 1873 and 1916, as well as eleven separate single-volume editions published between 1875 and 1916. The comprehensive scale of Bottin's scholarship is impressive, especially viewed in one of the richly illustrated first editions of his work.¹

In spite of some gaps in publishing and readership statistics for the nineteenth-century novel in France, it has been feasible to piece together a preliminary quantitative overview of the place of the adventure novel within the corpus of fiction in the last part of the century. I have consulted Allen's and Lorenz's analyses (reported by Allen) from the *Bibliographie de la France*, together with the online *Catalogue Général* of the BNF, as well as specialist works on individual authors and publishers' catalogues.² In gauging the power of the adventure novel and the uses to which it was put by publishers, authors and commentators, it is essential to understand the extent of its penetration and the number of exponents of the genre who were published in France in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. In framing my analyses, I have consulted Letourneux's work on the adventure novel (2011), Seillan's study of colonial adventure fiction (2006), Venayre's work on the concept of

¹ Brain Taves, in his 1996 study of Verne, co-authored with Stephen Michaluk, avers that Bottin paid a heavy price for his assiduity in researching the *Bibliographie*, which was 'said to have sent Bottin to an early grave due to the strain of preparing this monumental volume' (1996: 92).

² One further useful source of data for this specialist segment has proven to be Hugo Paul Thième's *Bibliographie de la Littérature Française de 1800 à 1930*. I therefore use this 1933 survey in order to cross-reference data from the BNF *Catalogue Général*.

adventure (2002), Allen's history of reading (1991), Lyons's social history of reading in France (1987) and Thiesse's study of French popular fiction (1984).

Scholarship on Verne is extensive, but it is worth pausing to ask why he alone (among a phalanx of adventure writers that, if we include authors of colonial adventure novels cited by Seillan but not by Letourneux, amounts to between forty and fifty of publishable quality) merits attention, not only by scholars of popular fiction, but also by those whose scope is much broader and whose primary focus is what we would now term the literary canon? Dine provides some clues as to why this should be the case. He offers a political reading of Verne, emphasising the 'key role played by the colonial theme in his oeuvre' and his 'highly successful works of popular history inspired by European expansionism' (1997: 183). Some of these political motifs are present in the work of other authors cited by Letourneux (e.g., d'Ivoi, Rosny) but Verne alone appears to have leveraged these themes, together with his scientific fantasies, within a highly successful formula which, as Dine informs us, 'appealed to two distinct reading publics: adults fascinated by scientific speculation, and adolescents whose avidity for the adventure genre was to ensure the success of new papers aimed at them by the press' (183). Verne, whose works were initially published in serialised form in Hetzel's bi-monthly *Magasin d'Éducation et de Récréation* (Evans 2009: 2) before being published in volume form by Hetzel, was by far the most published author in the adventure genre, rivalled only by Zola in total number of copies of their respective works sold in France. Evans attributes part of this success to the remarkable partnership between Verne and his publisher Hetzel. Using the prolific correspondence between Verne and Hetzel as his evidence, Evans shows how Hetzel was instrumental in refining Verne's adventure novels by 'deepening their characterisation, tightening their structure' (2001: 12), thus suggesting why the

quality of Verne's narratives should have brought him popularity and the repeat purchase that ensured financial success. In embarking on a quantitative survey of the adventure fiction genre in late nineteenth-century France, therefore, my review of prior scholarship cited above gives me confidence that, in spite of the *aporia* in available data, I can construct an analytical model to estimate both penetration and readership.

1.2 *The Adventure of Publishing the Adventure Novel*

1.2.1 *Pierre-Jules Hetzel and his Competitors*

Before embarking on a quantitative survey of the adventure genre, I first look at the market environment in which adventure novels were published during the last part of the nineteenth century. It is essential for my understanding of the market environment of the adventure novel to understand the nature of the publishing business, the most successful publishers, and how their relationships with individual authors prompted them to privilege certain works in their marketing strategies. In 1966 an exhibition was held at the Bibliothèque Nationale celebrating the life and times of Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1814-1886), the most successful editor and publisher of the nineteenth century in France, whose authors included Balzac, Hugo, Baudelaire, Zola and Verne.³ Hetzel competed in the 1870s and 1880s in a hotly contested publishing market in which, Queffélec-Dumasy reports, 'toute la production feuilletonesque passe en livre' and in which 'le modèle le plus courant' was the cheap edition, retailing at between one and three francs, with the major publishing houses being Faure, Dentu, Hachette and Michel Lévy (2007[1989]: 1).⁴ Allen also cites the publishing houses Garnier (founded in 1833), Larousse (1852), Fayard (1855),

³ Marie Cordroc'h, Marie-Laure Chastang, Roger Pierrot, *De Balzac à Jules Verne. Un Grand Éditeur du XIX Siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1966).

⁴ My source for Queffélec-Dumasy's article is the on-line resource *Belphégor*, which does not provide pagination <www.belphegor.at/news.htm>.

Tallandier (1870) and Flammarion (1874), as being ‘prominent French publishers’ in the literary market (1991: 34).⁵ The curator of the Hetzel exhibition, Marie Cordroc’h, highlighted the speculative nature of the publishing business. Huge gains and equally huge losses could be made in the absence of the sophisticated market research and consumer insight that characterise today’s publishing industry (1966: viii). The system of royalties for authors did not become established until 1900 and very substantial sums were advanced to authors as buy-outs of their manuscripts. (Thus, for example, Hugo had been paid FF250,000 by Hetzel for the manuscript of *Les Misérables* in 1862).⁶ In spite of these heavy up-front payments, the economies of scale enabled by steam-powered rotary presses and continuous reels of paper could offer attractive profits to publishing entrepreneurs and Mollier reports that Michel Lévy’s published accounts indicate a margin of 38.33% in the 1860s (1996: 337).⁷ Publishing (both novels and newspapers) was still an uncertain and somewhat precarious profession. The choice by editors of authors and their submitted manuscripts was largely a matter of personal taste, instinctive judgement and rapid reaction to popular demand. For example, Allen reports that Lévy ‘relied heavily on both newspapers and literary reviews to identify authors likely to sell well in book form’ (1991: 33). Cathérine Bonnier de la Chapelle and Antoine Parménie also

⁵ I provide brief case studies on Hetzel and Lévy in order to offer a fuller understanding of the marketing strategies for adventure novels and the complex commercial and personal relationships between publishers and authors of adventure fiction. I single out Hetzel and Lévy specifically because they published Verne and Loti respectively, by far the two most successful exponents of the genre.

⁶ Yves Olivier Martin (1980) *Histoire de la roman populaire en France*, cited in Allen (1991: 36).

⁷ Jean-Yves Mollier, ‘L’Histoire de l’Édition’, *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 43, no. 2 (April-June 1996), 337. This is a high financial return compared with those of modern publishing. Bertelsmann, one of the largest publishing groups and proprietors (among others) of Random House, had earnings before interest and tax of 677 million Euros on a revenue of 7.16 billion Euros in the first half of 2011, representing a net margin of 9.5% (Bertelsmann interim results 2011 www.bertelsmann.com).

provide an appraisal of the young Hetzel's talents in this area when he was first introduced to literary circles by the publishing house of Paulin: 'son sens critique, son gout naturel lui permirent de jouer rapidement de la valeur d'un manuscrit' (1953: 16). The business was, indeed, an adventure, not of the same nature as Verne's exploration quests or Loti's colonial exploits, but nonetheless having its own momentum of fierce competition, legal wrangles, disappointments and conspicuous successes. Cordoc'h emphasises the uncertain nature of the publishing industry in her contention that 'la publication d'un livre devient, la plupart du temps, une spéculation, le lancement d'une collection, une véritable aventure' (1966: vii).⁸ Bonnier de la Chapelle and Parménie sum up how important an experienced editor and publisher was for the author navigating this adventurous and tumultuous period in the history of publishing in France: 'Discrètement, délicatement, Hetzel conseillera les auteurs qu'ils s'est attachés et les soutiendra; il saura les suggérer d'originales idées; il deviendra [...] l'ami de tous, mais un ami franc, même aux maîtres en l'art d'écrire' (19). Hetzel's credentials as an editorial advisor rather than only as a publisher are suggested by his own relatively successful career as a writer of short stories. Mollier accords him high praise when he suggests that Hetzel 'peut être comparé à la Comtesse de Ségur qu'il appréciait et aux meilleurs écrivains pour la jeunesse' (2013: 21). Hetzel wrote his own adventure fiction for the youth market, including *Le Nouveau Robinson Suisse* (1864), under the pseudonym of P. -J. Stahl,

⁸Hetzel himself lived a life of adventure that could easily have formed the plot of one of his author's manuscripts. Following the proclamation of the Second Republic in February 1848, Hetzel was made *chef de cabinet* in the provisional government alongside other moderate republicans including Lamartine, who was *Ministre d'affaires étrangères*, but he (Hetzel) was exiled to Belgium following Louis-Napoléon's *coup d'état* in December 1851. He continued to run his business from Brussels for nearly nine years, whilst publishing anti-government tracts, and was eventually allowed to return to Paris by the amnesty of 1859. See Catherine Bonnier de la Chapelle and Antoine Parménie, *P. -J. Hetzel: Histoire d'un éditeur et de ses auteurs* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1954).

and his short stories for the *Magasin d'Éducation et de Récréation* earned him, together with fellow contributor Jules Verne, the gold medal of the Académie Française in 1867. Mollier sums up the polyglot nature of Hetzel the publisher and Hetzel the public figure. Not only was he, according to Mollier, a 'grand éditeur', but also an 'agent littéraire avant la lettre, écrivain, conteur et moraliste, ami fidèle, épistolier, amateur d'art et de musique' (2013: 22). He exerted a major influence on the early literary experience of the young readers that grew up in France in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, to the extent that 'ses cartonnages, rouge et or, ont fait rêver des générations d'enfants' (2013: 22).

It was not only in the commercial aspects of their trade that publishers like Hetzel supported the adventure writers of the day. Hetzel was a life-long collaborator and confidant of Verne in the choice of subject matter and issues of style. Cordroc'h writes that 'la grande vedette de sa maison fut alors Jules Verne qu'il ne cessa de conseiller et d'appuyer' (1966: ix). Evans contends that, in spite of the innate frictions of this relationship between author and publisher, Hetzel effectively became Verne's censor, 'requiring the latter to conform his narratives to "house rules" in all matters of pedagogy, morality and ideology' (2001: 2). Verne emphasises his disappointment when an accident, while on his way from Amiens, prevented him from attending Hetzel's funeral in March 1886. Verne wrote to Louis-Jules Hetzel (Pierre-Jules's son) on 20 March 1886: 'Ainsi, je n'ai pu assister aux derniers moments de votre père qui était bien le mien aussi, et je ne pourrai pas l'accompagner près de vous à sa dernière demeure', a fitting tribute to a man who had become much more than a business associate to him.⁹ What does an understanding of this close relationship between Hetzel and Verne add to an understanding of the market for late nineteenth-

⁹ See Cordroc'h (1966: 62).

century adventure fiction in France? Both Evans and Mollier imply that the association with Hetzel was to lift the narrative quality of Verne's work above the rest of the adventure genre. Mollier contends that 'la Panthéonisation symbolique de l'écrivain rejaillit sur son éditeur, assurément l'un des plus modernes de son temps' (2013 : 22), thereby suggesting how this partnership functioned in terms of literary distinction and a commensurate commercial success that was not enjoyed by all of his competitors.

1.2.2 *Michel and Calmann Lévy*

In 1986, twenty years after the Hetzel exhibition at the Bibliothèque Nationale, an exhibition was mounted on the career and achievements of Michel (1821-1875) and Calmann (1819-1891) Lévy, editors and publishers of the works (among others) of Flaubert, Gautier, Nerval, Loti and Poe. The curator, André Miquel, emphasises in the exhibition catalogue the excitement and highly competitive nature of the publishing business, and the title of the exhibition, *Une Aventure d'Éditeurs au XIX^e Siècle*, reflects this stance. The story of Michel, Calmann and their brother Nathan Lévy was a 'rags to riches' saga worthy of the pen of Alexandre Dumas *père*, who also wrote for them. They were sons of an itinerant pedlar from Lorraine and set up their bookshop and publishing business in the Rue Vivienne in Paris at the beginning of the Second Empire when 'la concurrence entre librairies-éditeurs est acharnée' (1986: 38). They exercised their judgement of current and future public taste in a society that was advancing in literacy. They entered a publishing market in which, Forth and Accampo report, 'the rise of the mass press and the literacy to consume it [...] transformed perceptions of reality' (2010: 1). Allen also reports that 'the Ferry laws had finally established literacy in the French language throughout the country'

(1981: 237). These trends were allied with much reduced production costs as the price of wood pulp for paper making declined. From inauspicious circumstances Michel and Calmann's business acumen led them to great wealth and public recognition. Calmann was awarded the *Légion d'honneur* in 1878 and the period 1880 to 1890 witnessed the rapid growth of their enterprise during which, Miquel informs us, 'Anatole France, Pierre Loti et Ernest Renan sont les trois phares de la maison' (38).

Calmann Lévy also provided a support role for Loti, comparable to that performed by Hetzel for Verne. The apparent triviality of some of the content of their correspondence provides insights into the almost childlike dependence of a creative mind on the business acumen of a sponsor. For example, on 24 June 1899, Loti wrote from Hendaye to Calmann Lévy in Paris to ask him to renew two journalists' railway passes that the publisher had obtained for him: 'Si celà ne donne aucune peine de les prolonger jusqu'en automne, voudrez-vous être assez bon pour les prolonger?' (1986: 56). Apart from showing the mutual dependence of authors and their publishers, this letter also gives a fascinating insight into the domestic economy of an author who, by that time, ranked alongside Verne and Zola as one of the most published French writers and who apparently found no difficulty in funding the purchase and transfer to France of boat-loads of *bibelots* and exotica to decorate his home at Rochefort in Charente-Maritime, but did not like paying rail fares.¹⁰

The interdependence of authors and their publishers is a continuous theme of the literary world in the late nineteenth century and developed as the industry thrived and then faced more difficult times at the close of the century. Mollier enumerates the many ways in which a successful publishing house representing a stable of authors could be of service to one of their writers: 'L'insertion des écrivains dans les réseaux

¹⁰ See Vercier (2003: 46-47).

sociaux, associations professionnelles, académies, salons, mouvements littéraires, parties ou ligues politiques, rejaillit à son tour sur la relation entretenue avec le libraire-éditeur' (1996: 329), indicating that partnerships such as Verne/Hetzel and Loti/Lévy were crucial in the establishment of an author and, as a consequence, his financial success.

The increase in literacy in France gave momentum to the burgeoning success of publishers such as Hetzel, Lévy and their aggressive competitors Louis Hachette and Ernest Flammarion. The Ferry Laws of the early 1880s had made secular primary education available to all in France. Allen reports that a useful gauge of literacy is the surveys kept by military authorities of the number of soldier conscripts who were considered literate. This measure increased from 88.4% in 1886-90 to 93.8% in 1896-1900 (1991: 59). Hachette built his publishing empire partly on his highly successful initiative of installing bookstalls in railway stations. Flammarion built an efficient distribution network for his publications in Paris and the other major French cities. Mollier claims that, at a time when increased literacy enhanced demand for leisure reading, Flammarion is credited with the realisation that 'la diffusion de l'imprimé l'emportait, en 1875, sur l'édition d'écrivains de talent' (331). This observation implies that literary distinction was not as important to Flammarion's business model as efficient distribution, perhaps presaging the fate of many hundreds of works which did not survive their first serialisation in the press or published edition.

In what follows, I consider the broader context of these partnerships of Hetzel and Lévy with their respective authors. I construct a model to estimate the size of the adventure fiction market and, within it, the conventions of sequential publication by which Verne's novels, for example, were initially serialised in the *Magasin d'Éducation et de Récréation* and Bousсенard's works in the *Journal des Voyages*

before being published in volume form. Having sketched the background of an adventurous and dynamic growth industry, aggressive competition, attractive entrepreneurial opportunities and close personal bonds between writers and their publishers, I now address the quantitative questions posed in my introduction.

2 *A Calibration of the French Adventure Fiction Market 1870-1900.*

2.1 *Publishing Media and Statistics*

One of the most problematic issues for the researcher attempting an accurate taxonomy of the French adventure fiction market in the late nineteenth century is the relatively complex hierarchy of publishing media, which sees adventure fiction being published sequentially (and sometimes almost simultaneously) in daily newspapers, weekly news supplements, magazines and journals, cheap serialised editions and bound booksellers' editions. In addition, any taxonomy of this genre needs to take into account distribution through lending libraries and, particularly for Verne's work, distribution in special editions as school prizes. I seek to establish the place of the adventure novel within the whole corpus of fiction, to include both naturalist and realist novels,¹¹ and the output of little-known authors of romantic novels and suspense fiction, which formed the daily fodder of the *rez-de-chaussée* in daily newspapers¹² as well as being the staple diet of subscribers to lending libraries. Allen reports on the taste of public library subscribers for the broader category of popular fiction in the last part of the nineteenth century: 'The reports of the public libraries during the Third Republic indicate the overwhelming preference of borrowers for

¹¹ See discussion of the notion of the canon in: Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire*, vol. 3 (1992: 929).

¹² Thiesse reports seventy-eight authors of popular fiction at the turn of the century, of which two-thirds are *romans d'amour* and about twenty percent writers of adventure fiction (1984: 213).

Paul Féval, Émile Chatrian,¹³ Hector Malot and Jules Verne' (1991: 51), all of whom include some adventure novels within their extensive *oeuvre* of popular fiction. Allen goes on to contend that La Comtesse de Ségur (1799-1874) and Verne 'provided much of the reading material for French youth by the turn of the century' (50), although he does not provide any statistical evidence of readership to qualify the 'much' in the above citation. Thiesse's survey of former readers of popular fiction informs us that Verne's adventure novels were 'destinés à un public masculine' with 'un nombre de femmes déclarant: "J'ai vu des romans de Jules Verne, mais c'étaient plutôt pour mes frères"' (1984: 41). The popularity of adventure novels in both France and Britain is attested largely anecdotally,¹⁴ with the exception of the core practitioners such as Verne, whose output in Hetzel editions has been documented by scholars such as Bottin. The problem with assumptions about readership of adventure novels is that publishing records are not a satisfactory proxy for readership numbers, with the reliability of publishers' documentation, itself, having been questioned over the last half of the twentieth-century by scholars such as Byrnes (1951: 235) and Allen (1991: 36).

Byrnes is of the opinion that 'no reliable statistics on the total number of books printed in France each year were developed until 1934, and the statistics which were prepared then for the legislature covered only the preceding twenty years' (1951: 235). Byrnes's view highlights a major impediment for scholars of the late nineteenth

¹³ Erckmann-Chatrian is the collective pseudonym of Émile Erckmann (1822-1899) and Alexandre Chatrian (1826-1890) who were best known for their *Contes et romans nationaux et populaires* as well as their comic opera *Myrtille*, first performed at the Théâtre de la Gaité in March 1885.

¹⁴ Beau Riffenburgh, in *The Myth of the Explorer*, provides anecdotal evidence of the great popularity of the adventure story in Britain, reporting that McClintock's *Voyage of 'The Fox' in the Arctic Seas* was among the best-selling books of the 1860s and '70s. Mudie's Subscription Library held over three thousand copies of it, 'more than any other book of that year [1859], including Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Dicken's *A Tale of Two Cities*' (1993: 43).

century and it is therefore important to supplement his findings with insights from more recent scholars. Much valuable scholarship has been published in the intervening sixty years since Byrnes's survey. Nonetheless, significant progress on specifying exactly how many books in different categories were published and how many consumers bought and read them has been difficult to achieve. Allen, for example, has concluded, in his 1991 study *In the Public Eye. A History of Reading in Modern France*, that the records of the *Bibliographie de la France* 'provide a very crude indication of the actual number of titles published each year' (1991: 36). One method employed by scholars is to cross-reference works against copyright filings. Allen's contention, cited earlier, is that a third of new works were not entered before 1881. This is broadly consistent with Byrnes's findings, a situation which jeopardises my own research into adventure fiction from 1870 to 1900. I therefore make due allowance for these gaps in available data in the market modelling which I undertake below.

2.2 Estimating the Market Share of Fiction within Published 'Literature' 1870-1900.

My methodology for assessing the importance of adventure fiction writers among the total corpus of literature published in this period comprises a sample taken at centile intervals from the 2300 authors listed in Thième's *Bibliographie de la Littérature Française*. Before embarking on this exercise I validate the scope of Thième's work against Allen's estimates of market scope (supplemented by the data he cites from Lorenz), gleaned from the publication records of the *Bibliographie de la France*, in order to have a test of reasonableness.¹⁵ My source for some of the

¹⁵ From American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes's concept of the 'reasonable man', implying, in my usage, the uniform and neutral approach that Thième applies, allowing for some eccentricities in his choice of authors.

Bibliographie de la France summary figures will be Allen’s *In the Public Eye*, which usefully provides tables of published works by genre.

According to Allen’s estimates, the total number of all published works registered in France in the late nineteenth century is as follows:

Total Number of Published Works per annum 1871-1900:

Period (five-year means)	Average number of published works registered each year.
1871-1875	11,521
1876-1880	11,809
1881-1885	13,513
1886-1890	13,186
1891-1895	13,439
1896-1900	13,447

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Within these totals, the share of titles published by genre has been computed by Otto Lorenz et al. in their *Catalogue générale de la librairie française, 1867-1945*, cited by Allen (1991: 50). Frustratingly, for my purposes, the intervals reported by Lorenz are not exactly contiguous with the intervals reported by Allen, but they together provide an indicative overview of the market share of the various genres.

Number of Titles of ‘Literature’ and Fiction published annually 1876-1900:

Titles published by genre. Periods (five and ten year).	All ‘literature’ ¹⁷ . Average titles published per year and share of total published works	Fiction. Average titles published per year and share of total published works.
1876-1885	956 7.4%	621 4.8%
1886-1890	1274 9.5%	774 5.8%
1891-1900	1136 8.3%	630 4.6%

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¹⁶ Data cited by Allen from *Bibliographie de la France* (1991: 39).

¹⁷ Includes fiction, poetry and drama.

¹⁸ Lorenz, cited by Allen (1991: 50).

I calibrate the data cited above from Lorenz with Thième's *Bibliographie de la Littérature Française* in order to have as clear a picture as possible of the importance of adventure fiction within the complete published output in France between 1870 and 1900. Analysis of Thième's bibliography indicates that approximately 69,000 works are recorded.¹⁹ Of these, approximately 37% are listed for the first time between 1870 and 1900.²⁰ An approximate total of works of literature recorded for the period 1870 to 1900, therefore, emerges as 25,530. Lorenz's figures, for what he categorises as new or reprinted titles of literature published across this period, vary from 956 per year in the decade 1876-1885 and 1274 in the period 1886-1890, to 1136 per year in the decade from 1891 to 1899. I have taken a mean average of my estimated total from Thième for the thirty-year period and the resultant figure is 851 new works of literature published each year. Allowing for the fact that Lorenz includes reprints,²¹ Thième's total listing of works of literature is an acceptably close approximation, for the purposes of my project, to Lorenz's estimate of the same category. The outcome

¹⁹ Thième includes 2300 authors. Based on sample of 230 authors analysed, an average of approximately thirty works are listed per author.

²⁰ A crude cross-check of the date of publication of first novels involved sampling seventy authors at intervals across the bibliographical period and establishing the year in which they reached the age of 25, a life-stage coinciding remarkably frequently with the publication of first works. This pragmatic methodology attempts to offset sparse or incomplete bibliographical records for many authors on dates of first editions (especially where works have been serialised in *feuilleton* form before publication in one or more volumes). This somewhat crude benchmark was, nonetheless, validated by a qualitative review of major adventure writers which showed that (among others) Verne published *Les Pailles rompues* at the age of 22, Prosper Mérimée *Colomba* at 27, Paul Féval *Le Capitaine Spartacus* at 26, Paul d'Ivoi *Jeu de Dame* at 25 and Maurice Leblanc *Des Couples* at 25. Loti wrote his first novel, *Le Mariage de Loti*, in 1872 at the age of 22 but it was not published until 1880.

²¹ Lorenz's estimate of the average number of works of literature published per year between 1876 and 1900 in France is approximately 1090. A sample derived from Thième's bibliography indicates an average annual total for the period 1870 to 1900 of approximately 850. The difference appears to be the inclusion of reprints (as distinct from new editions) in Lorenz's data, accounting, according to this comparative analysis, for nearly thirty percent of Lorenz's listings.

of this preliminary calibration exercise, therefore, has given me some reassurance that Thième's concept of published literature between 1870 and 1900 in France is of a similar scale and scope to that of Lorenz.

2.3 *Identifying Writers of Adventure Fiction*

Having now established from two different quantitative sources, corroborated by anecdotal citations from scholars of the period, that between nine-hundred and twelve-hundred new works, under Lorenz's (and Thième's) broad heading of 'literature', were published on average each year in the period 1871 to 1900, I now feel confident to delve into Thième's research and establish what proportion of these works could be characterised as adventure fiction.

In order to identify and record works of adventure fiction among the 69,000 entries and the multiple editions of many works, a sampling methodology has been devised which provides an in-depth analysis of approximately 6,900 of the individual works.²² A primary writing genre has been ascertained for each of the 230 authors

²² The sampling methodology involves taking ten authors at each centile interval throughout the bibliography (i.e. authors listed one to ten, one-hundred-and-one to one-hundred-and-ten and so on up to two-thousand-two-hundred-and-ten). Authors that I have categorised subjectively as belonging to what Moretti calls the academic and social canon (2013 [2000]: 68) are not part of the analysis and thus Thième's entries for Barrès, Balzac, Du Camp, Feydeau, Fournier, Flaubert, France, Gide, Giraudoux, Goncourt, MacOrlan, Mallarmé, Maupassant, Mauriac, Maurois, Merimée, Musset, Nerval, Proust, Renan, Rimbaud, Sand, Staël, Stendhal, Ségur, Taine, Talleyrand, Tocqueville, and Zola (among others) are excluded before sampling is initiated. Once a sample is selected, known authors are categorised by the principal genre in which they worked (i.e. as essayists, dramatists, poets, novelists etc.) recognising that some polymaths were active in all categories. Where authors are not recognised, an assumption regarding the primary genre in which they wrote is made by scanning the titles of their works. This qualitative assessment has proven to be surprisingly effective, in that adventure is often palpably present in the title (if not in the use of the word *aventures* itself, then often in the daring, gallantry, danger or mystery implied by the wording, e.g. Fernand Sarnette's *Aventures d'un Français au Maroc* or Jules Mary's *Les Dernières cartouches*). In total, this methodology facilitated an in-depth survey of 230 authors. I assigned a primary literary genre to each of these authors in order to compute overall shares of the various literary genres (e.g. drama, poetry, essays) within Thième's blanket definition of *littérature*.

included in the sample, with special emphasis placed on identifying writers of fiction and, where possible within this sub-set, writers of adventure fiction. Within this total sample of 230, a sub-set of 131 authors has been identified as publishing their work between 1871 and 1900. The outcome of this analysis is as follows:

Primary Writing Genre of Authors (Published 1871-1900):

Genre	Number of Authors	% (N=131)
Novels/ Stories	15	12
Literary Criticism	17	13
Essays/ Letters	12	9
Poetry	11	8
Drama	10	8
Travel/ Journals	7	5
Art/ Music	9	7
Sub-total	81	62
‘Literature’:		
History/ Law/ Politics	27	21
Religion/ Philosophy	16	12
Medicine/ Science	7	5
Total:	131	100
Other/Genre not evident	6	n/a

Five important findings emerge from this preliminary analysis of works of literature published in the period 1871-1900:

First, based on the sample taken, it appears that the most prevalent subject matter for works included in the analysis is history, law and politics. This is intuitively convincing given the large number of tracts and essays listed by Thième, addressing the social issues of a period characterised by intense political debate and dissent. Thième includes within his definition of writers of *littérature* those authors who wrote what we might now categorise as non-fictional historical accounts and commentaries. Some of these authors appear from the works listed to have written not

only history but also historical novels and adventure fiction. So, for example, the entries for Jules de Glouvet (1838-1923), pen-name of Jules Quesnay de Beaurepaire who wrote historical novels and *contes de jeunesse* under the title of *Memoires d'un Chevalier Angevin*, include not only what appear to be political essays, but also the adventure title *Les Bateaux Noirs de Belle-Île* (1893). The strong share of published literature taken by these works of non-fiction, targeted at an educated public, is perhaps reflective of the maintenance of a highly conservative segment within the publishing industry in spite of publishing and printing advances. As Vaillant puts it: 'les mécanismes modernes de production et de distribution se mettent en place sans remettre en cause la conception traditionnelle du livre que véhiculent les élites' (1987: 115).

Second, writers of shorter format works such as essays, letters and literary criticism account for a large proportion of published authors, twenty-two percent in the sample taken. Again, although not all political in nature, these works reflect the intensity of the public debate that accompanied many of the events of the second half of the nineteenth century, including civil insurrection, one major homeland war and three major overseas conflicts,²³ as well as countless ideological debates.²⁴ If religious and philosophical essays and tracts are included, this shorter format category accounts for nearly one third of published works included in the sample.

Third, writers of poetry, plays and art or music criticism, accounting for twenty-three percent of the sample, indicate the vitality of the cultural *milieu* in the

²³ Indochina in the mid-1880s, Madagascar in the mid-1890s and North and West Africa throughout.

²⁴ For an overview of some of these debates see Forth and Accampo (2010: 4, 7, 72).

last part of the century, as evidenced, for example, by the wide offer of dramatic and operatic productions to be seen in Paris during the Belle Époque.²⁵

Fourth, the small share (five percent) of listed entries for medicine and science is not likely to be reflective of the real volume of published scientific papers and treatises at a time of enormous energy and discovery in these areas.²⁶ It is almost certainly the result of Thième's restrictive criteria for creating a literary bibliography, by which only those authors who wrote what he considers *littérature*, as well as the occasional literary scientific study, are listed.

Finally, the relatively low share of authors whose primary avocation was as novelists is striking. Of the one hundred and thirty-one authors (1871-1900) surveyed in my sample, only fifteen, representing about twelve percent of the identifiable total, have fiction as the primary genre within their listed works. Having excluded a subjectively defined list of authors of the academic and social canon from my sample (see footnotes for sampling methodology), it is unsurprising that those authors that remain are writing predominantly in the romantic fiction, suspense, fantasy or adventure novel genres.

Thus far, my comparative research of the bibliographies covering the last part of the nineteenth century indicates the following broad picture. Within a reported average of close to twelve thousand books published each year in the period 1870 to 1900, approximately twelve hundred titles, or ten percent, are classified by

²⁵ This is attested by the daily performances of dramatic, operatic and musical productions listed in *Le Petit Parisien* and the other daily newspapers. On 20 January 1885, for example, the Parisian theatre-goer had the choice of seeing *Aïda* at the Opéra, *Tartuffe* at the Odéon, *Le Grand Mogol* at the Gaîté, *Carmen* at the Opéra-Comique, *Le Voyage au Caucase* at the Renaissance or *Le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre* at the Gymnase.

²⁶ Byrne reports Verne, Zola and the 'extraordinary sale of the popular science books of Camille Flammarion' as being the great publishing successes of the 1880s. (1951: 233).

bibliographers and scholars as being ‘literature’.²⁷ Within these, fiction accounts for between five-hundred and six-hundred titles, of which about sixty percent represent what current scholarship would term the academic and social canon,²⁸ by the 1880s dominated by the naturalists, such as Zola, de Goncourt and Daudet. Having eliminated from the survey the canon authors and writers of romantic fiction, adventure stories may putatively be said to account for an average of between seventy and eighty new titles per year, representing a corpus of perhaps two thousand works over the thirty-year period researched.

As a gauge of the reasonableness of this assumption, I have taken the titles recorded by Thième for six of the most published writers of adventure fiction in the period 1870 to 1900 (or the closest reported equivalent) in the context of their total work. Starting with Verne, a total of eighty-two works are listed of which sixty-two are published between 1870 and 1905 when he died, a prolific output of nearly two new works per year. Loti is credited with sixty-four works of which twenty-eight are published between 1879 and 1898. Hector Malot (*Le Lieutenant Bonnet* [1885], *L’Île Désert* [1897], *Sous Terre* [1897]) has a total of sixty-six entries of which fifty-eight appeared between 1870 and 1898. Paul Féval père (*La Tache Rouge* [1871], *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* [1875], *La Reine des Epées* [1877]) has one hundred and five titles listed of which twenty-three were published between 1870 and 1887 when he died. Paul d’Ivoi (*Les Cinq Sous de Lavarède* [1894], *Le Sergent Simplet à travers les Colonies* [1895]) has fifty-eight listings of which eight are for the period 1881-1899.

²⁷ These figures are significantly below the share of published works achieved by fiction in Britain. Kate Flint reports that, in Britain, ‘by the 1870s this proportion had gone up to 23.3 percent and in the 1880s it rose again to 26 percent’ (2001: 59). A full comparative study would necessarily need to understand the definitions employed and the universe upon which these figures are calculated in both countries.

²⁸ For definitions of academic and social canon, see Moretti (2013 [2000]: 67-68).

These five authors account for nearly nine percent²⁹ of the total number of titles published among a ‘universe’ of writers who wrote adventure fiction of not much more than fifty-five of publishable quality. A classic *Pareto* ratio³⁰ applied to this market would have twenty percent of the authors contributing eighty percent of the sales (i.e., the most popular authors selling many more copies than the others). The crude sampling exercise above shows nine percent of the authors contributing proportionately nine percent of the titles. The solution to this apparent disparity, of course, lies in the number and size of editions of each work published and the number of readers per copy distributed.

2.4 Comparing Publishers’ Sales Statistics with Estimates of Readership

The major shortcoming of the findings presented by my research so far is that, although they comprise cross-checked estimates of the total number and percentage shares of individual titles published in each genre, they have not yet taken account of the huge variation in the size of print runs of each of the works in question in order to have an accurate gauge of their popularity. Nor do my findings provide a clear idea of the numbers of readers of each of the genres. This is a field of scholarship that is characterised by anecdotal evidence and incomplete data from official sources, much of which is inconsistent and, in some cases, contradictory. Nonetheless, I will draw some preliminary conclusions from available records and from research conducted to date by scholars of the genre.

²⁹ A summary of the number of individual titles published cannot be taken as a gauge of the market share of popular authors. The size of the print runs for editions of different authors’ works varied enormously. Many of the titles listed by Thième would have only been printed once with a maximum of one thousand copies, whilst Verne, for example has sixty-four editions of the *Voyages et aventures du Capitaine Hattéras* listed between 1866 and 1919.

³⁰ An 80:20 distribution based on the theory of Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto who, in 1906, observed that 20% of the Italian population owned 80% of the land (a statistical distribution since observed to be valid across a broad range of categories).

First, I will address the size of individual published editions and re-prints, often used interchangeably but not (as emphasised by Thième) the same thing. Allen, for example, citing records kept in the Archives Nationales, contends that the ‘median edition size per year’ was 1,000 between 1871 and 1875 and 1,500 between 1876 and 1880.³¹ The curators of the BNF Calmann Lévy exhibition *Une Aventure d’Éditeurs* contend, however, that for novels published by Calmann Lévy in the 1880s ‘chaque édition est tirée à 6000 exemplaires, tirage honorable d’un romancier en 1986’ (the year of the exhibition).³² Some idea of the scale of the market can be obtained by the figures reported for the sale of individual works in publishers’ records. Jules Verne and Émile Zola emerge as the largest selling authors in the adventure genre and in naturalist fiction respectively. Simone Vierne reports that Verne sold 108,000 copies of *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours* (1978: 273) and, by 1904, had sold more than 1 million books in France. To set these figures in context, Gildea reports that Zola sold 40,000 copies of *L’Assommoir* (1878) and 80,000 copies of *Nana* (1880) (2009: 403). Byrnes reports that Edmond de Goncourt sold 10,000 copies of *La Fille Élisa*, a fictional account of the life of a prostitute, in less than two months following its publication in 1875 (1951: 234). Calman-Lévy published seventy-five editions (more than 100,000 copies) of Loti’s first novel *Le Mariage de Loti* (1880), an adventure narrative set in the South Sea Islands in which a British naval officer marries a young Tahitian girl.³³

³¹ Archives Nationales F18, II, 1-183 cited by Allen (1991: Appendix A.1).

³² See Miquel (1986: 38). A comparison with British edition sizes of the same period, indicates that a publisher such as Chatto and Windus would typically order 2,000 to 3,000 copies of ‘a three shillings and sixpence re-print’.

³³ Although impressive, none of these sales figures approach the popularity of Charles Dickens in Britain. Flint informs us that his most successful novel, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41) was selling ‘about 100,000 copies a month by the end of its run’ (2001: 44). Flint also reports that the *Pickwick Papers* sold ‘in book form alone, some 800,000 copies between 1836 and 1879’ (58).

For every Verne and Loti, however, there are scores of authors who had already sunk into obscurity by the time Thième started his bibliographical project in 1925. Boussenard, for example, does not even make it into Thième's bibliography. In spite of having been popular in France (and Russia) at the beginning of the last century, many of his works appear to be out of print today in France.³⁴

A picture emerges of a handful of very popular authors of French adventure fiction of which the leaders are Verne and Loti and then a much less well-known group including d'Ivoi and Boussenard, together with the list of writers of adventure fiction cited by Thiesse, which includes Verne and d'Ivoi, together with Maël, Danrit, Rosny and thirteen other lesser known writers of serialised fiction (1984: 213).³⁵ In Britain, by contrast, many more adventure authors, including Marryat, Ballantyne, Doyle, Henty, Haggard, Stevenson, Kipling and, later, Buchan were published consistently across the period in volume form.

My analysis, detailed above, indicates the place of the adventure novel within the corpus of French literature in the late nineteenth century at less than one percent of all works of literature published in volume form and around ten percent of all novels, as defined by Lorenz. These relatively low figures based on bibliographical listings do not provide a true gauge of readership as they account for number of titles published rather than number of individual volumes sold. They also omit to take into account the wide access to an emergent readership in Paris and the provinces provided by the serialisation of adventure fiction in the *feuilleton*, in weekly or bi-weekly adventure magazines and in cheap editions sold at newsstands and by *colporteurs*. The

³⁴ The only recently published edition of a Boussenard novel currently available from Amazon is *Le Tour du monde d'un gamin de Paris* (2013[1880]). The few others offered for sale are mostly second-hand editions from the early twentieth century.

³⁵ Thiesse cites Pierre Maël, Paul d'Ivoi and J. H. Rosny, each of whom are subjects of short case studies in this chapter.

important insight for my project, however, is not an estimate of volume sales figures but an idea of what level of household penetration these adventure novels enjoyed as a proxy for their potential to influence groups of readers by their ideological content. Some gauges of the level of popularity of adventure fiction can be adduced.

2.5 *The Roman Feuilleton and its Role in the Dissemination of Adventure Fiction*

The *roman feuilleton* and its history can give an indication of the level of popularity of romantic fiction and serialised adventure novels in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Thiesse, in her study of popular literature, *Le Roman du Quotidien* (1984), provides a useful framework for understanding how the *feuilleton* genre developed. Thiesse reports that, during the Belle Époque, when the average daily wage of a skilled labourer was around ten francs in Paris and a domestic maidservant was paid about fifty francs a month, a bound volume from a bookshop at FF3.50 was a luxury (1984: 16). Partly for this reason, a popular alternative source of *romans d'amour* and adventure fiction was the daily mass press, which typically retailed at five cents a copy. Authors of adventure fiction whose work was serialised in the mass press included Verne, d'Ivoi, Rosny, Boussenard and Driant. The genre had started with the serialisation of Balzac's *La Vieille Fille* in October 1836 and had gained momentum and scale with Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* in 1842-43.³⁶ By the 1880s, the circulation of the mass press had expanded dramatically with improvements in roto-gravure print technology and hub-and-spoke distribution systems in Paris and the provinces for 'the penny papers that flew every day into millions of hands' (Berenson 2011: 9).³⁷ The universal reach of major titles such as *Le Petit Journal* and *Le Petit Parisien* can be gauged by the fact that nearly two million

³⁶ For a summary of the early history of the *roman feuilleton* see Thiesse (1984: 83).

³⁷ Queffélec-Dumasy estimates 12,000 distribution centres in Paris and the *sous-préfectures* for *Le Petit Journal* in the 1870s (2007[1989]: 1).

copies of daily newspapers were in circulation in 1880 of which over half were these two titles.³⁸ These newspapers typically featured two serialised novels running in parallel, and Queffélec-Dumasy reports that the number of episodes per novel often exceeded one hundred (2007[1989]: 1). This pattern of serialisation provided a three-month run to an author. An adventure quest by Paul d'Ivoi, or the narratives of lost or kidnapped children or mistaken identities by Émile Richebourg, published in *Le Petit Journal* of the 1880s, could reach a total circulation of more than half a million Parisians³⁹ at a time when the population of the city of Paris was not much more than two million.⁴⁰

Precisely how important was the *roman feuilleton* in the popularisation of adventure fiction in the late nineteenth century? Queffélec-Dumasy contends that it was the fundamental building block upon which the success of popular fiction was built: 'le journal en cette fin de siècle est plus que jamais le mode privilégié de publication' (2007[1989]: 1). If we broaden this media segment to include the popular weekly magazines (*revues*) such as the *Journal des Voyages* or Hetzel's *Magasin d'Education et de Récréation*, then serialisation in the press becomes the primary means by which readers were introduced to the fictional works of the late nineteenth century. This was not only romantic fiction and adventure fiction. The naturalist writers also launched their literary careers in this medium: 'tout Zola est publié en feuilleton, également de nombreux Goncourt' (2007[1989]: 1). The *feuilleton* also acted as a live test-market for adventure fiction writers, with confirmed successes

³⁸ A combined daily circulation for 1880 of 1,947,000, of which 583,000 copies were *Le Petit Journal*, is reported by Bellanger (1972: 137).

³⁹ Thiesse reports a circulation of one million for the *Supplément Illustré* of the *Le Petit Journal* in the late 1890s (1984: 27). Thiesse also reports that, typically, political commentary had higher readership among men and *feuilletons* among women (1984: 19, 43).

⁴⁰ 1886 census data provide a population figure of 2,344,550 for the city of Paris.

being published in book form soon after serialisation in the press. Verne's adventure novel *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours*, for example, was so popular with *feuilleton* readers that it was published by Hetzel in volume form in January 1873, less than a month after the completion of its serialisation in *Le Temps* in November-December 1872 (Vierne 1978: 5) The importance of this closely coordinated strategy is underlined by Queffélec-Dumasy: 'Le lien entre journal et livre est fondamental: toute la production feuilletonesque passe en livre' (2007[1989]: 1).

As well as Loti and Verne (who was published in *Le Temps*, *Le Journal des Débats* and the *Magasin d'Éducation et de Récréation*), many of the second-tier authors of adventure fiction whom I have chosen as case studies in this chapter were published first in *feuilleton* form. Quéffélec-Dumasy mentions d'Ivoi and Bousсенard (both published in the *Journal des Voyages*), Féval père (published in *Le Constitutionnel*, *Le National* and *L'Époque*), Assollant, Chatrian, Achard, Ponson du Terrail, Aimard, Noir and Gaboriau, all as being authors published initially in *feuilletons*. Given the ubiquity of this publishing vehicle as a means of distributing the works of adventure writers, how did their publishers go about penetrating key markets and sustaining this remarkably successful business venture? Once again, Queffélec-Dumasy's scholarship paints a picture of the multi-faceted marketing campaigns employed by the proprietors of newspapers and weekly magazines. She identifies the key role of the serialised novel in attracting newspaper buyers: 'le roman feuilleton est offert comme tout autre objet de consommation, comme appât et leurre du désir' (2007[1989]: 1). The advertising and promotional strategies were carefully planned and executed to reach the broadest possible audiences in their homes, their neighbourhoods and their places of work. The newspapers in which they appeared were broadly distributed. *Le Petit Journal*, launched in 1863, was

distributed in the 1870s and 1880s through 18,000 distribution centres in *sous-préfectures*, with a network of *crieurs* to sell them on street corners (2007[1989]: 1). One of the most sought-after writers of popular fiction, Émile Gaboriau, had a series of novels published in *Le Petit Journal* between 1867 and 1873 and, Queffélec-Dumasy tells us, ‘atteignait tout de suite la popularité des plus grands, ses romans annoncés à grand renfort de publicité spectaculaire’ (2007 [1989]: 1). Bousсенard became one of the most important contributors to the *Journal des Voyages* and was continuously published there across the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. Large and melodramatic illustrations of episodes from the serialised novels were pasted onto walls in towns and villages, and hand-bills with an illustrated prospectus of the plot were distributed in the street. In the newspapers and journals themselves, advertisements for forthcoming serials were placed two weeks in advance and typically constituted ‘la louange du roman à venir, toujours l’oeuvre la plus poignante et la plus réussie d’un des maîtres du roman’ (2007[1989]: 1). These advertisements used the latest in reprographic techniques to feature reduced versions of the striking illustrations used for billboards in towns and villages. Newspapers found other means of sustaining the popularity and circulation of their daily editions. Some of the most popular *feuilleton* novels, including those of Féval *père* and Achard, were republished in the period 1875 to 1900, and newspapers also sold binders in which to collect the serialised fiction, as well as launching their own pocket-sized cheap editions. This last strategy, perhaps inevitably, led to the gradual decline in the last years of the century of the *feuilleton* in favour of the cheap edition.

2.6 Critical Reception of the Roman Feuilleton

Although the circulation figures of the newspapers which carried *romans-feuilleton* provide a rough indication of the penetration of this publishing medium, it

is also important for the purposes of my project in identifying ideological motifs to understand the ways in which these works were received by contemporary critics. Queffélec-Dumasy describes the ‘rejet politique et critique qui accueillait le roman-feuilleton à ses débuts’ (2007 [1989]: 1) and hints of an elitist concept of this medium as pure entertainment as distinct from the higher ‘truth’ embodied in the naturalist novel. It is possible, however, to find very positive reviews of prominent authors of adventure fiction in the contemporary mass press. Following the serialisation of *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* in *Le Temps*, its publication in book form by Hetzel received glowing commentaries from literary critics. Émile Favre writes in *Le Figaro* of 11 February 1873: ‘Très spirituel, très amusant, très instructif, plein d’intérêt du premier au dernier chapitre — suivant la coutume de l’auteur’.⁴¹ Clément Caraguel writes on 22 December 1874 in the *Journal des Débats* that the novel is ‘digne d’occuper la meilleure place dans la bibliothèque intime de toute maison honnête’. Zola, however, writing in *Le Figaro Littéraire* on 22 December 1878, is equivocal when he states that ‘je suis bien forcé de constater le succès, qui est stupéfiant’, and adds that Verne’s oeuvre ‘n’a aucune importance dans le mouvement littéraire actuel’.⁴²

Loti is another author of adventure fiction who aspires to literary status⁴³ and, in the eyes of some contemporary critics, attains it. Guy de Maupassant, in a review of *Pêcheur d’Islande* published in *Gil Blas* on 6 July 1886, emphasises the tenderness of Loti’s portrait of the tough struggle for existence of the late nineteenth-century Breton peasant and fisherman: ‘le dernier livre de M. Pierre Loti [...] nous donne

⁴¹ Cited in Simone Vierne, ‘L’accueil de l’oeuvre’ in *Le Tour du Monde en 80 Jours* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978[1872]) pp. 251-260 (p. 251).

⁴² *Ibid.* (p. 253).

⁴³ Matsuda acknowledges Loti’s ‘true mastery’ (2005: 32) and casts him as the ‘authoritative narrator of the Orient’ (33).

cette note attendrie, jolie, captivante mais inexacte qui doit, par le contraste voulu avec les observations cruelles et sans charme auxquelles nous sommes accoutumés, faire une partie de son grand succès'.⁴⁴ Octave Mirbeau's view of the same work in *Gil Blas*, one week later on 13 July 1886, expresses a similar view when he describes *Pêcheur d'Islande* as 'un grand souffle de poésie agreste et maritime'.⁴⁵ By contrast, Loti's first published work, *Aziyadé*, published by Calmann-Lévy on 25 January 1879, had received the scant critical attention given to most adventure novels of the period. Lévy's editor, Émile Aucante, writes to Loti on 12 February 1879 that 'le volume a été remis à tous les critiques influents', but with little hope of an early response. D'Aucante's fears are justified in a poor initial reception for the novel, with only one review of substance in the *Revue bleu* by Maxime Gaucher. Gaucher is economical in his dismissal of Loti's text as an account of 'les amours et la mort d'un lieutenant de la marine anglaise qui probablement n'a jamais existé',⁴⁶ an idiosyncratic way of criticising a work of fiction.

Palewska reports that Paul d'Ivoi's *Le Sergent Simplet à travers les colonies françaises* (1895) received a critical reception that was positive enough for it to be selected, as had Jules Verne's adventure novels, as a school prize by the Parisian city authorities. She tempers this positive account, however, by contending that d'Ivoi's work was 'propice à des incohérences' (2007: 144) and that d'Ivoi had a tendency to 'prolonger l'action, fût-ce aux dépens de la recherche stylistique' (145). Venayre sums up the distance in critical acclaim between Verne and his imitators when he argues that Bousсенard and d'Ivoi were 'jugés de leur vivant déjà comme des sous

⁴⁴ Cited in Jacques Dupont, 'Acceuil de l'oeuvre' in *Pêcheur d'Islande* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988[1886]) pp. 317-319 (p. 317).

⁴⁵ Cited in Claude Martin, 'Préface' in *Aziyadé* (Paris: Gallimard 1991[1876]) pp. 7-28 (p. 15).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* (p. 16).

produits du grand Verne (2002: 45). This lack of critical appreciation, however, did not apparently stand in the way of commercial success and Evans reports that d'Ivoi and Boussenard were 'the most dependable contributors' of the *Journal des Voyages* in the 1880s (2009: 1).

2.7 Sequential Publication Strategies of Adventure Fiction

In spite of some mixed reviews and an élitist attitude from self-appointed doyens of the literary world like Gaucher, the *feuilleton* remains one of the most significant publishing phenomena of the nineteenth century. The period of its widest distribution, from 1875 to 1900, saw two *roman-feuilletons* running concurrently each day in many Parisian and provincial newspapers with, as Queffélec-Dumasy informs us: 'longues séries (entre 100 et 200 feuilletons) qui tinrent en haleine leur public sans désamperer' (2007[1989]: 1). Authors that gained popularity initially in this medium, including Verne and Loti, soon became very desirable properties for publishers like Hetzel and Lévy who saw the potential to expand their sales with cheap editions, sold not only in their own bookshops but through *colporteurs* (Thiesse 1984: 41).

Although no detailed statistics are available on readership among specific social groups, the ubiquity of the mass press and the extension of literacy in the last part of the century represent the democratisation of these works of fiction. The authors who graduated from serialisation to publication in bound volumes enjoyed substantial commercial success in their own lifetimes. Verne's adventures of exploration had typically sold over 100,000 copies each by the late 1890s, outselling the naturalist works of Zola, and reaching a cumulative total of more than one million copies by 1904. Loti's most popular colonial adventure novels also sold well into six figures.⁴⁷

If we allow for pass-on readership, *cabinets de lectures* and loans from public

⁴⁷ See publishing data from Vierne, Byrnes and Gildea cited in section two of this appendix.

libraries, at least one of Verne's novels could potentially have been read in 15% of all homes by the end of the century.⁴⁸ Although significantly below the reach of the mass press in Paris in the 1880s where, for example, *Le Petit Journal* reached over half a million subscribers each day,⁴⁹ this level of household penetration for adventure fiction would have qualified it as a topic of discussion in the workplace and the home, in the same way that a high-rating television show in the twenty-first century becomes what is known as a 'water-cooler' topic.⁵⁰ Lyons, although he concedes the difficulties of identifying the social strata from which readers of adventure novels were drawn, saw the *feuilleton* in particular as one of the ways in which fiction was democratised: 'une étage dans le processus par lequel la petite bourgeoisie fut incorporée dans un public de culture et de lecture à dominance bourgeoise' (1987: 149).

3 *Readership*

3.1 *Readership of Adventure Fiction*

Before considering the inscription of ideology in the adventure novels analysed in this chapter, however, it is also essential to have a qualitative overview of

⁴⁸ This household penetration figure is computed by taking the French population figures reported by Quinn (2000: 110) of 36 million in 1875 and 39 million in 1901 and estimating a total number of households by assuming three to four inhabitants per household (current media-buying strategies for Britain and France assume 2.5 persons per household). If we assume that pass-on readership and library loans could double the reach of the 100,000 published copies of successful Loti or Verne adventure stories and their cumulative total of over one million copies, the household penetration of each of these top writers can reliably be computed at above 15%.

⁴⁹ See Claude Bellanger et al., *Histoire générale de la presse française*, vol. 3 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972), p. 137.

⁵⁰ A top-rating TV production such as *Mad Men* or *Downton Abbey* can today (second decade of twenty-first century) typically generate 20 TVRs (television rating points), meaning that 20% of the available audience had watched the programme on a particular evening. To have been read in 15% of all homes, therefore, was a very significant achievement for Verne or Loti at the end of the nineteenth century. It would guarantee discussion (the equivalent of today's discussion of last night's TV shows around the water-cooler in US office buildings) and therefore be a highly effective conduit for the transmission of ideology.

the reading public who consumed these texts in France and in Britain. In particular, it is important to have a broad understanding of the age, gender and social class of adventure fiction readers in order to gauge the reception these texts might have enjoyed within different demographic segments. This task is rendered complex by the paucity of published data on readership during the period 1870-1900 which is the focus of my investigation. Analysts today have the benefit of very detailed demographic profiles of consumers of all print and broadcast media.⁵¹ Little detailed demographic readership data was regularly published at the end of the nineteenth century. Lyons observes that ‘une définition sociale précise des lecteurs du roman-feuilleton n’est pas facile’ (1987: 148) and Boyd, referring to boys’ story papers, goes so far as to say that ‘it is impossible to be precise about the impact of this literature’ (2003: 180).

Nonetheless, in Britain, some data on reading preferences were published by the Statistical Society of London, founded in 1834 and numbering Babbage, Malthus and Florence Nightingale among its adherents. In 1888 the Society published a readership survey based on research by Edward Salmon. Jonathan Rose has analysed this data as part of his investigation into how historians study reader response. 790 boys and 1000 girls were asked to name their favourite authors and books. Adventure fiction figured largely among the boys’ favourites, with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Swiss Family Robinson* taking the top two places, followed by *The Pickwick Papers*, *Ivanhoe* and *Boy’s Own Annual*. Other adventure novels which featured in the top twenty were

⁵¹ For example, IPSOS Mori, the market research agency, conduct weekly audience surveys on behalf of the Broadcasters’ Audience Research Board (BARB) which provide detailed statistics on the age, socio-economic class and gender of audiences for broadcast media. This is a primary mechanism for setting advertising rates. Predecessors of these research sponsors include the Joint Industry Committee for Television Audience Research and the Joint Industry Committee for National Readership Surveys.

Westward Ho!, *Midshipman Easy*, and Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Perhaps surprisingly, girls also chose *Westward Ho!* (first choice), although their other choices do not include adventure fiction to the same extent as the boys. Both boys and girls, however, chose Dickens as their favourite author with Scott in second place.⁵²

These findings should be seen as indicative preferences rather than serving as a proxy for penetration of specific demographic groups by adventure fiction. Rose also cites figures from a catalogue of 1500 books held by the library of the Alliance Cabinet Makers Association. These figures also show Dickens and Scott in first as second place as being the most frequently reprinted, although Rose emphasises that 'catalogues tell us nothing about borrowing frequency, which is an exceedingly difficult riddle to crack' (2003 [1995]: 202). In spite of the essentially qualitative nature of these surveys, it has been possible, with the help of anecdotal data, to piece together an overview of the readership profile of adventure fiction. I will organise this survey of readership by, first, accessing published research on the age and gender of readers; second, summarising prior scholarship on social class; and third, analysing how politics and education policies impacted readership.

3.2 *Age and Gender of Readers of Adventure Fiction.*

An analysis of the age and gender profiles of adventure fiction readers in the late nineteenth century necessarily demands an analysis of the various media that distributed adventure novels, as well as of the publishers' strategies for disseminating them. For example, the *feuilleton*, which was one of the primary means of distributing the adventure genre to a broad general public in France, was also a primary medium for romantic fiction. Readership profiles of the *feuilleton*, therefore, will include a

⁵² All of the above data has been extracted from tables published in Jonathan Rose's 'How Historians Study Reader Response' (2003 [1995]: 199-200).

large proportion of female readers who consumed the latter genre but not necessarily the former.⁵³ By the same token, adventure novels for boys published in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century in Britain are typically included in publishers' lists alongside adult fiction, perhaps an indication that the boundaries between the two readership sectors were permeable. Several leading scholars have provided insights which help us to sort out some of these complexities. There is broad agreement, for example, among scholars of the adventure genre that it was primarily a masculine interest. Letourneux contends that it was one of the formative influences on the fantasies of 'plusieurs générations de lecteurs masculines' (2011: 7) and this contention is supported by both Macherey, who sees Verne's adventure quests as targeted at 'boys who had to be furnished with gigantic dreams' (1978: 236) and Venayre, who ascribes a moralistic or pedagogical role to the genre when he states that 'le désir d'aventures s'accorde à des valeurs qu'il semble utile d'inculquer aux jeunes garçons' (2002: 77). Venayre also emphasises that the genre was not targeted at girls. Butts and Porter coincide in their view that the British adventures of Empire also appealed 'especially to boys' (2008: 151) and 'to young men in particular' (2004: 197), while Boyd goes so far as to say that boys' adventure stories 'formed the central core of young male reading from the middle of the nineteenth century until the second world war' (2003: 1). In spite of this broad concurrence of views on a primarily male readership for adventure fiction, two social trends of the late nineteenth century provide a speculative argument that girls also consumed adventure fiction. One is the award of books by authors such as Jules Verne and G. A. Henty as prizes in schools

⁵³ See Thiesse (1984: 41) for insights on readership of Verne's novels by boys and *ibid.* (43) for female readership of *feuilletons*. Martin also reports that *feuilletons* were read, above all, by a feminine public and this publishing medium made a fortune for romantic fiction writers Émile Richebourg and Jules Mary whose works were serialised in *Le Petit Journal* (1980: 22).

and other institutions. Queffélec-Dumasy reports that Verne ‘servit de livre de prix à tous les enfants à partir de 1864’ (2007[1989]: 1), leaving some ambiguity as to the gender of the recipients of these prizes. The other social trend is that of borrowing from public libraries. Here, Allen reports that the Comtesse de Ségur and Jules Verne ‘provided much of the reading material for French youth by the turn of the century’ (50), from which the inference may be drawn that Verne did not appeal exclusively to boys. Ideologies of resilience and fortitude in the face of adversity were certainly not gender specific and Butts illustrates in his reading of adventure fiction the ways in which ‘even ordinary boys and girls can survive’ (2008: 158).

In this connection, one sub-genre of French adventure fiction is of particular interest. There is a small but significant group of French adventure novels which feature a girl or young woman as their principal protagonist. Foremost among these is Verne’s *Mistress Branican* (1892). The novel relates the adventures of Dolly Branican, whose seafaring husband John is lost on a voyage from San Diego to the North Pacific. She subsequently loses her young son through drowning and then loses her senses. Upon her recovery, she departs on a quest on the sailing ship *Dolly Hope* in search of her lost husband. She survives the rigours of nine years of sea voyages and the evil machinations of her crooked brother-in-law Len Burker, before being reunited with her husband and a second son (born unknown to her while she was insane) in the outback of Australia. The ideological conventions of the late nineteenth-century adventure novel are inverted in *Mistress Branican*. Men are portrayed as either the victims of circumstances, as evil presences threatening the heroine or as a stimulus to acts of feminine valour and determination.

Another prominent example of this sub-genre of heroic female adventure fiction is Pierre Maël’s *Une française au Pole Nord* (1893), published a year after

Mistress Branican (and perhaps Maël's response to its success for Verne). The formulaic adventure quest is once more turned on its head. Isabelle de Keralio, the protagonist, takes on the usual male roles as an intrepid explorer and a crack rifle-shot who saves the life of a Breton sailor through her marksmanship in killing a musk-ox (and later shoots a marauding polar bear). She is a fearless opponent to an evil plot to steal a priceless scientific discovery, also finding time to rescue her marooned father and to nurse her dying maid. Other examples of the sub-genre include an intriguing variation on Louis Bousсенard's serialised adventure novels featuring *Friquet, le gamin de Paris*, in which we meet his female counterpart Friquette, endowed with similar qualities of *insouciance* and bravery. I have found no hard evidence to suggest that these adventure heroines of Verne, Maël and Bousсенard significantly expanded the readership of adventure fiction among young women. G. A. Henty, however, did elicit an enthusiastic female following for his adventure story 'A Soldier's Daughter, A Girl's Adventures in Afghanistan', and writes in *Girl's Realm* magazine (1902: 263), in which it was serialised, that he has received more letters from girls than from boys about his adventure fiction. Letourneux also allows, perhaps, that adventure fiction was more than a specifically male interest when he qualifies it as 'le principal genre de la littérature de jeunesse' (2011: 7).

Nonetheless, despite the development of these relatively small sectors of the adventure genre towards the end of the nineteenth century, scholarly opinion is broadly consensual on the adventure novel as a means of imparting ideologies to young men. Boyd, for example categorises adventure stories as 'windows into the ideologies of masculinity' (2003: 3) and as a channel for 'the ideas boys found acceptable' (10). These ideas, according to Venayre, embrace 'l'idéal d'un homme aguerrri' and adventure fiction is for him a means to 'faire advenir l'homme dans

l'enfant' (2002: 80). This last point merits further scrutiny. Venayre's conceives the adventure novel as developing warlike instincts of young men as they grow into adults and, potentially, into defenders of national security. This transition is accompanied for some young readers by a lasting affiliation with the adventure genre, which saw readership habits being carried from childhood into adulthood. Venayre's 'discours pédagogique [...] d'abord destiné aux jeunes garçons' (281) becomes an adult taste for many. Letourneux depicts 'un genre consommé par les hommes' and contends that this genre constructs a virile image and defines man's 'rôle et sa place dans la société' (2011: 9). For the reasons outlined above, much of the serialised adventure fiction published in Hetzel's *Magasin d'éducation et de récréation* was targeted at adult readers (Brown 2008: 28), while adventure and travel narratives were 'appropriated by a dual audience of adults and young readers' (4). Coinciding with this contention, Bratton argues that some Victorian children's fiction was 'not bought by the young, and indeed not bought for them but for adult readers' (1981: 21).

In summary of this qualitative review of the age and gender of popular fiction readers, a more complex picture emerges than originally allowed. It is not sufficient to categorise adventure fiction as a genre consumed in serialised form by male adolescents. The media, in particular the *feuilleton*, in which it was serialised were also widely consumed by women. An important sub-genre featuring the female adventure heroine also emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century. Nor is it sufficient to view it as juvenile literature. Adults also bought and read it in both serialised and in published volume formats. Nonetheless, in any evaluation of the adventure genre as a means of imparting ideologies of manly heroism, the primary readership group upon which it potentially exerted its influence was the adolescent male. As Letourneux contends, the genre gave shape to 'rêveries nationales' and to

the ‘devoirs, à la puissance et aux valeurs associés à la figure masculine’ (2011: 7). With this age and gender segment as the focus of my investigation of readership profiles, I shall now consider the socio-economic profile of those who bought and read adventure fiction.

3.3 *The Social Class of Readers of Adventure Fiction*

No precise published statistics support an analysis of the socio-economic status of adventure fiction readers in the late nineteenth century. It is possible, however, to construct a broad overview of readership by triangulating purchasing power, costs of publication media and levels of education. A preliminary assessment indicates that increasing levels of literacy and affordability of serialised fiction democratised the genre in the last thirty years of the century. In particular in France, the expansion of the *feuilleton* and the weekly adventure magazine made adventure fiction accessible (at five to ten cents per instalment) to an *ouvrier* class whose daily wage of 10FF did not permit consumption of published volumes at 3.50FF. To a lesser extent in Britain, the publication of serialised fiction in weekly magazines like the *Illustrated London News* made the genre accessible to those classes who rarely visited a bookshop. Although the cover price of one shilling per copy made this journal more of a middle-class habit, the convention of keeping past editions on display in middle-class homes and passing them on to domestic servants following consumption by the subscriber expanded readership significantly. Sinnema reports that the *Illustrated London News* was ‘aimed at a fairly literate market’ (1998: 16), although the reported circulation of 130,000 in 1855 could potentially have been doubled through the ‘pass-on’ readership cited above, particularly as domestic service was one of the largest sources of employment in Victorian Britain. Green introduces the intriguing concept of ‘respectability’ to readership profiles and there is an element

of complicity in what he terms the ‘writer and reader of respectable adventure’ (1991: 30) in middle-class homes where earlier exponents of adventure fiction such as Scott and Dumas (*père*) were ‘side by side with Austen and Eliot’ (32). Beegan, however, casts the readership net wider when he argues that there was no ‘single homogenous middle class’ (2008: 36) in Britain and that classes of readership were partly defined by their behavioural characteristics, such as reading aloud at home (37). One particular readership cluster within this broad middle class is identified by Tosh. He reports on the reading habits of the ‘male clerical workers of the lower middle class’ and their taste for imperial adventure fiction (2005: 46).

Adventure writers themselves played an active role in the democratisation of their works. W. H. Kingston, founder of *Kingston’s Magazine for Boys* in 1855 (later amalgamated into *Boys’ Own Magazine*) targeted his writing at ‘all ages and classes’ and encouraged his sponsors to place his seafaring adventures in military training establishments as well as in schools and public libraries (Bratton 1981: 102). Boyd also reports that ‘readers from all classes’ consumed boys’ adventure stories, although she emphasises that they were targeted primarily at middle class audiences (2003: 47). The key determinant of readership penetration, besides distribution and affordability, was education, and Boyd reports that, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, ‘school had been confirmed as part of working class life’ (18). Nonetheless, the penetration of these texts into all classes was not simultaneous. Rose analyses the lag effect of the gradual expansion of literacy among working class audiences across the nineteenth century and contends that ‘at any given point, the reading tastes of the British working classes consistently lagged a generation behind those of the educated middle classes’ (2002: 116). A picture emerges, therefore, of a genre initially targeted at, and consumed by, middle class adolescents and adults, gradually expanding its

reach into lower middle-class and working-class homes as literacy, purchasing power and accessibility increased through social factors such as governmental education policies and the wage improvements brought by industrial growth.

How did the socio-economic profile of adventure fiction readers in France compare with that of their British counterparts? Thiesse poses the important question as to ‘quelle commune mesure sociologique y a-t-il entre un livre relié acheté dans un librairie et un roman acquis en fascicules hebdomadaires chez un marchand de journaux?’ (1984: 13). In France, as in Britain, the answers to these questions are not straightforward and depend on educational as well as economic and commercial factors. As in Britain, bound publishers’ volumes were largely the province of the upper and middle classes, although the advent of public libraries expanded the availability of the unabridged works of adventure authors such as Erckmann-Chatrian and Jules Verne at a lending fee of ten centimes, within the economic reach of the *ouvrier* class. Allen reports that ‘lending libraries constituted not only the book trade’s most regular clientele for old and new titles, but also the public’s most accessible source of books’ (1981: 139). Although libraries constituted an important conduit for published volumes, however, they were relatively much less significant as a source of adventure fiction than the *feuilletons*, *fascicules* and the weekly adventure and exploration magazines. These serialised formats formed the major source of adventure fiction for a broad cross-section of the populace, and particularly for the approximately two million subscribers to the Parisian daily and weekly press during the heyday of this medium in the 1880s and 90s.⁵⁴ They were only finally eclipsed at

⁵⁴ For an analysis of circulation and penetration statistics of the Parisian mass press see section 2.5 of the Appendix

the end of the century by the advent of publishers' cheap editions, widely sold by ambulant hawkers at railway stations and on the street.⁵⁵

As in Britain, there was a sequential progression of readership of adventure fiction through the classes in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. Macherey emphasises the middle-class origins of Jules Verne and of his readers. For him, Verne is 'a bourgeois of the early Third Republic with all that this implies', citing business and science as key preoccupations (1978[1966]: 218). The challenge to nature, which is central to many of Verne's adventure quests, is also part of a 'bourgeois ideal of progress' (215). Lyons goes further by imputing the spread of imperialist ideology and racial theories to Verne's adventure fiction, aligning these developments with 'les attitudes changeantes des bourgeois' (1987: 168). Serialisation was the most important stimulus to the spread of adventure fiction across the social spectrum. In particular, the serialisation of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* in the *Journal des débats* in the 1840s had initiated a trend towards mass consumption of popular literature. The broad canvas upon which Sue paints Parisian society was reflected to some extent in the broad profile of middle-class readers, many of whom came to the genre because of their fascination with the *bas-fonds* and issues of social injustice explored by Sue's fiction. Lyons underlines the seminal importance of *Les Mystères de Paris* as 'une étape dans le processus par lequel la petite bourgeoisie fut incorporée dans un public de culture et de lecture à dominance bourgeoise' (149). This process resulted in a 'standardisation culturelle' (15), characterised by a reciprocity between adventure writers and their readers, seen by Venayre as 'l'ensemble de de la société, tout à la fois productrice de ce discours et réceptrice' (2002: 17). In many ways,

⁵⁵ See Queffélec-Dumasy (2007[1989]: 1) for an account of how the serialised adventure novel was 'guetté par la concurrence des autres médias: les éditions populaires'.

therefore, the serialisation of popular fiction in newspapers and weekly magazines accomplished a more comprehensive democratisation of literature than the lending libraries had been able to achieve. The social classes from the *petite bourgeoisie* upwards constituted the primary borrowers from public libraries,⁵⁶ and Lyons is uncompromising in his assertion that ‘les bibliothèques n’accomplissaient pas la tâche de donner une conscience à la classe ouvrière’ (1987: 188). Throughout the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, the distribution of popular fiction through daily and weekly newspapers developed a market of new readers from the lower social classes. In particular Hetzel’s *Magasin d’Éducation et de Récréation* and Decaux’s *Journal des Voyages* brought the adventure fiction of Verne, d’Ivoi, Bousсенard and their contemporaries, as well as non-fiction accounts of exotic lands, to a broadly based market which was avid for entertainment and for knowledge. In summary of this analysis of readership of adventure fiction across the social classes, the important trend in France and, to a lesser extent in Britain, was the availability of previously unaffordable literature to a broad and increasingly literate social spectrum through the mechanism of serialisation. Having identified some demographic features of adventure fiction’s readership in terms of age, gender and class, I now turn to the questions of education and literacy as important influences on the development of the genre.

3.4 Educational Profile of Readers of Adventure Fiction

Social class and levels of education were correlated for much of the nineteenth century in both Britain and France. The stereotype of an educated elite and an illiterate working class, however, became less well defined in the last thirty years of

⁵⁶ Lyons estimates that 85% of book loans from the 5000 public libraries in operation in the 1870s were from the *bourgeoisie* and *petite bourgeoisie*, among whom he includes office workers, students and landladies (1987: 188).

the century in both France and Britain. Important stimuli to these changing trends were the Ferry laws of 1881 and 1882 in France which had mandated free, secular education, and the Forster Act of 1870, seen by Boyd as ‘landmark legislation’ which made education mandatory for British children up to the age of ten (2003: 17). By the end of the century, some form of free education was available to all children of working class households. Levels of literacy have been estimated in the work of scholars such as Allen, who has analysed the surveys kept by French military authorities of recruits’ ability to read and write at a basic level. By the end of the century, this measure had reached the level of 93.8% (1991: 59).⁵⁷ The market for adventure fiction published by Hetzel, Lévy and their contemporaries and serialised by the proprietors of *Le Petit Parisien*, *Le Petit Journal* and the *Journal des Voyages*, therefore, found new markets among the *petite bourgeoisie* and day labourers, some of whom could now read at a basic level and for whom familiar formulaic narratives, recounting tales of patriotic bravery in exotic places, constituted a more approachable leisure pursuit than, for example, the Naturalist fiction of Zola, the Goncourts or Daudet. Thiesse goes so far as to categorise late nineteenth-century French fiction demographically, with the Naturalists mentioned above appealing to an educated segment, while a ‘bourgeois’ market consumed Marcel Prévost and Loti, and a ‘popular’ segment preferred Jules Mary and Georges Spitzmuller (1984: 133). In Britain, universal schooling had, by the end of the century, almost eliminated illiteracy (Stephens 1990: 549) and the ‘mass interest and involvement’ (Chafer and Sackur 2002: 1) of the British populace in the changing fortunes of the Boer war can partly be attributed to their ability to follow the journalistic and semi-fictional idealised narratives of the happenings in Southern Africa on a daily or weekly basis.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 3, section 2, for further analysis of levels of literacy in France and Britain in the late nineteenth century.

One further aspect of education has a strong bearing on the development of the adventure fiction genre. Not only was mass consumption of popular literature a reflection of more enlightened governmental education policies, with concomitant increases in literacy rates, but the genre itself also played a small but significant role in educating the population. In France, cultural and political concepts were woven through many adventure narratives and reached a broad cross-section of the population through the mass appeal of the media in which they were inscribed. As Chafer observes, ‘the audiences for imperial propaganda were as varied as the vehicles employed’ (2002: 7). The distribution of adventure novels as school prizes also reflected an educative ambition. Brown reports ‘a huge demand for prize books designed to promote reading as a leisure activity’ (2008: 14), among which Verne was a favourite.⁵⁸ Bratton underlines the didactic strategies of many authors and publishers of adventure fiction, written ‘with the intention of conveying moral instruction’ (1981: 11) and Letourneux echoes this sentiment in his appraisal of adventure fiction as a witness to the ‘ambitions éducatives’ of the nineteenth century (2011: 9). Education, therefore, has two principle intersections with my analysis of readership of adventure fiction. First, a policy of universal education was one of the key enablers of the expansion of the adventure genre among an increasingly literate populace in both France and Britain in the late nineteenth century. Second, adventure fiction was itself one of the means by which the continued education of this broad audience was achieved, albeit an education heavily laced with political and imperial ideologies.⁵⁹

3.5 *Summary*

⁵⁸ See Appendix (section 3) for information on books as school prizes.

⁵⁹ Tosh contends that empire’s place in the popular imagination ‘was mediated through literary and visual images which consistently emphasised positive male attributes’ (2005: 193).

My analysis of the readership profiles of French and British adventure fiction has uncovered complex sets of interactions and overlaps between groups of consumers, as well as some striking parallels between the two countries which are the subject of my research. In the analysis of the primary texts which follows, my focus will be on ideologies of exemplary masculinity inscribed within adventure fiction written and marketed largely with adolescent or young adult males in mind. This, however, is not the complete picture. Adventure fiction in the late nineteenth century was consumed, to a lesser or greater extent, in both France and Britain by men and women, by adults and children, by cultivated middle-class readers and by semi-literate day-labourers. It was bought as expensively bound volumes in bookshops or as cheap editions from street vendors, delivered to subscribers as serialised instalments, borrowed from public libraries and consumed (particularly in France) on a daily basis as the *feuilleton* at the bottom of the front pages of the mass press, as well as in adventure and travel magazines with an ostensibly educative purpose. No complete analysis of the ideological impact of this genre can ignore these potent demographic and commercial valences.

4 *Conclusions*

The quantitative findings from this study of French adventure fiction at the end of the nineteenth century indicate that, although this genre constituted a relatively small proportion of all the literary works published at a time of ascendancy for the publishing industry, sales per title of the most popular authors were substantial and some adventure fiction authors outsold even the most popular of the *avant-garde* and highbrow literary authors. For this reason, the exploits of Loti's colonial hero Jean Peyral in *Le Roman d'un Spahi* or Verne's account of Phileas Fogg's trip around the

world, for example, would have become part of the common currency of social interaction in the same way that the serialised novel, as Thiesse informs us, became a frequent topic of conversation for women: 'le roman feuilleton peut servir de support aux diverses formes de la sociabilité féminine' (1984: 21). The practice of presenting adventure novels as school prizes was also widespread, as it was in England in the late nineteenth century. The popularity of adventure fiction among adolescents may be gauged by the fact that Verne himself attended secondary school prize-giving days and addressed the pupils in his hometown of Amiens in the late 1880s.⁶⁰ The potential ideological influence of these novels is suggested by these examples of their status as topics of social interaction.

Can this conclusion only be drawn for writers such as Verne and Loti, or was ideological content also putatively transmitted by the long tail of second-tier authors who sold relatively well at the time but are now largely consigned to obscurity? In chapter two I addressed this question in three ways. First, I analysed eight excerpts from adventure fiction serialised in the *Journal des Voyages* for recurrent ideological motifs. Second, I provided a case study of two adventure novels, one by Paul d'Ivoi and one by Louis Boussenard. I considered aspects of their narrative structure, language and characterisation as possible conduits for ideology. Having sought specific ideological workings in these two works, I then expanded my investigative scope to a broader range of adventure authors, including Driant, Maël, Rosny, Assollant, Laurie, Zevaco, Lermina, and Jacolliot.⁶¹ I applied an analytical lens to their adventure novels in search of ideological motifs, both in the workings of plot and narrative and in characterisation. I then clustered my findings under the broad

⁶⁰ These accounts from Verne's life are reported in *Jules Verne et Nantes* on the website of the Musée Jules Verne, <www.nantes.fr/julesverne>.

⁶¹ All of these authors are also identified by Letourneux as belonging to the adventure fiction genre.

headings of chauvinism, nationalism and idealism in order to assess levels of consistency in the ideological workings of the adventure fiction genre in France in the late nineteenth century. My conclusions were that there was, indeed, a remarkable level of ideological consistency and power in this widely consumed literary genre.

Having triangulated bibliographical data derived from the *Catalogue Générale* of the BNF, the scholarship of Allen, Lyons, Letourneux, Venayre, Seillan and Thiesse, and Thième's literary bibliography, what further conclusions can I draw regarding the presence of the adventure novel and its ideologies in the public consciousness of late nineteenth-century France? Returning to the questions posed in the opening paragraph of chapter two, I advance a theory that adventure fiction was read in published book form in approximately fifteen percent of French homes during the period (with consumption potentially doubling in Paris if prior serialisation in Parisian newspapers and magazines is taken into account). Literature accounted for eight to ten percent of all published works during the last thirty years of the century and, of this, romantic fiction, suspense, fantasy and adventure accounted for perhaps one third. Even at these relatively low levels of market share within the total literary output of 1870 to 1900, the impact of the adventure genre within popular culture was significant. Familiarity with the literary discourses of authors like Verne may be gauged by the fact that *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* had been serialised in *Le Temps* in 1872, published by Hetzel in twenty-three editions starting in 1873 and produced on stage in Paris from 1874. As I have already noted, Verne's works had sold a million copies by 1904 (Gildea 2009: 403).

Thiesse informs us that eighteen reasonably well-published adventure authors were working in the serialised fiction genre at the end of the century (1984: 213) and Letourneux lists twenty-three adventure authors published between 1871

and 1900, of which seven are mentioned by Thiesse (making a non-duplicative total of thirty-four exponents of the genre reported by these two scholars). Research by Seillan indicates that around forty authors were writing French colonial adventure novels set in Africa between 1863 and 1914 (2006: 8). These findings are based on a longer period than that on which I focus, but nonetheless represent a reassuring confirmatory indication of approximate numbers of adventure novelists. In an area notoriously hampered by sparse and conflicting publishing data, my research (summarised in section two of this appendix) indicates that a total approaching two thousand adventure novels was published between the Franco-Prussian war and the turn of the century, representing approximately ten per cent of the total number of fictional works listed by Allen.⁶² These significant levels of penetration and readership should be considered together with the remarkably consistent set of ideological motifs identified in textual analyses in section three of chapter two.

The adventure fiction genre, therefore, constituted a powerful means of inscribing a set of ideological principles that could only gain in impact and resonance through their inclusion in such an accessible and popular medium. My qualitative and quantitative explorations of the publishing history of French adventure fiction have

⁶² What specific data can be adduced in support of this estimate? No statistical significance can be claimed for results that are calculated from percentages of estimates derived from a range of sources and different data points. Nonetheless, a random sample of Thième's bibliography, applying subjective criteria for categorisation, indicates that approximately sixty percent of novels listed belong to what Moretti calls the academic and social canon (2013 [2000]: 67-68), defined by literary scholar Pierre Nora as 'le patrimoine moral et littéraire français' (1992: 929). Allen estimates an average of 655 novels published, in volume form, per year between 1876 and 1900. Subtracting the subjectively defined canon from this total, therefore, leaves us with approximately 260 other fictional works (primarily comprised of romantic fiction, crime, fantasy and adventure fiction). Using, as a proxy, Thiesse's indication that the adventure genre constituted between a fifth and a quarter of popular fiction by the end of the century (1984: 213), a rough estimate of sixty to seventy adventure novels per year (approaching 2,000 adventure novels across the period 1870 to 1900) may be cautiously estimated.

set a context and laid the groundwork for my detailed analysis of primary texts in chapters three to six. The rationale for a detailed exploration of publishing and readership figures is a specific response to my primary research question regarding the inscription of ideology. Eagleton contends that ‘the single most widely accepted definition’ of ideology is ‘legitimising the power of a dominant social group’ (2007 [1991]: 5). No firm conclusions may be drawn about the role of the adventure novel within such a process of legitimisation without a reasoned estimate of what proportion of the population were exposed to the discourses of the adventure fiction genre.

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Ideologies of Exemplary Masculinity in Late Nineteenth-Century French and British Adventure Novels

Archives, Newspapers and Manuscripts Bibliography

1 French newspapers and magazines

(The notes appended to each item below indicate running stories, editorial articles and by-lines with direct relevance to key research questions).

Le Figaro

October-December 1880 (*uneasy alliances among European powers, demonstrations of naval strength, stand-off in the Balkan states*)

January-March 1885 (*critiques of French army under-strength in Tonkin, international alliances including German collaboration with Chinese forces*)

L'Humanité

January-March 1905 (*demonstrations by school-teachers against internationalism, reports of Russo-Japanese war*)

L'Intransigeant

January-March 1885 (*naval policy and vulnerability of French troop ships in Indian Ocean, criticism of Jules Ferry's rapprochement with Bismarck, anti-war and anti-taxation to pay for war*)

La Lanterne

July-November 1869 (*aspects of British and French colonial policies*)

Le Petit Journal

January-March 1885 (*debates in Chamber on under-resourcing of French colonial armies in Tonkin, anti-colonial, anti-British invective*)

July-September 1890 (*show of naval strength, pacifist campaigns, gymnastics and the fitness of French youth, the cult of Jeanne d'Arc, memories of defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, the ideology of 'revanche', obligations of fatherhood*)

Le Petit Parisien

January-March 1885 (*anti-colonial propaganda, anti-British commentaries on campaigns in Egypt, China and Madagascar, courageous exploits of French soldiers, flags and military ceremonial, anxieties on birth-rate in France*)

March-April 1895 (*mobilisation of French army for Madagascar, shooting and gymnastics clubs in Paris, British and French colonial policies, exploits of polar explorers, behaviour of young Frenchwomen*)

January 1905 (*Algerian colonial administration, political upheaval in Maghreb, issues in Morocco*)

La Presse

January-March 1885 (*ideology of a young army of conscripts, examples of manly heroism in the Indo-China campaigns*)

Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France: Gallica on-line archive

2 British newspapers and magazines

Daily News

January-April 1885

Morning Post

January 1885

April 1895

The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times

January 1885

Illustrated London News

January-March 1885

January-March 1897

Sources: British Library Electronic Resources and Journals (British Nineteenth-century Newspaper Archive) and University College London Special Collections

3 University of Sussex Library Manuscript Archives

Rudyard Kipling Collection:

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with Henry Rider Haggard:
July 1897, January 1912, March 1917

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with Mr. Norton:
May 1901, February 1908

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with E. C. White of Baltimore MD:
August 1903

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with Mr. Harding:
September 1903

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with Captain Duckworth Ford:
April 1907, June 1916

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with H.G. Twite:
October 1915

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with Admiral Slade:
December 1915

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with Richard S. Guinness of Higginsons and Sons, 80, Lombard St. London:
July 1917

Correspondence of Rudyard Kipling with Mr. William Godfrey:

March 1919.

Diaries of Henry Rider Haggard:
May 1918 to January 1919

Rudyard Kipling's Speech to the Sorbonne on the award of an Honorary Degree 1921
(included in Correspondence with William Frierson, March 1925)

4 National Army Museum (London) Archives

Correspondence of Colour Sergeant J. Ridout, Scots Guards, Cairo: September to
October 1882

Letters of Sir Garnet Wolseley, War Office, London: August 1882

Journals of Private William M. Wilson, 1st Battalion, Scots Guards, Cairo, August to
September 1882

Notebooks of Sergeant Harry Heath, 46th Brigade of Infantry, Egyptian Campaign:
1879 to 1885

Pocket Diary of Private F. Wilson, 3rd Battalion King's Royal Rifles, Egyptian
Campaign: September 1882

Letters of Lord Kitchener, Egyptian Campaign: August 1879

Official Correspondence Colonel Frederick Burnaby, Officer Commanding Royal
Horse Guards, Egyptian Campaign: November 1882

Personal papers of Lt. Colonel Sir Henry Earle, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry:
Boer War 1900

Report on British Naval and Military Operations in Egypt. Lt. Commander Caspar F.
Goodrich, U.S. Navy, Washington: 1885

Diary of Major B. La Gerrière, First Sudan Campaign: August 1884 to June 1885

Diary of Corporal Henry Albert Porter, 1st Scots Guards, Egyptian Campaign: July to
September 1882

Personal Papers of Lieutenant (later Major General) Walter Newman, Royal
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