A Type of King:

The Figure of Arthur in Mid-Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth Century Literature

Gabriel W. J. Schenk

Pembroke College

University of Oxford

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of English Language and Literature

for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*

Trinity Term 2014

Abstract

This thesis analyses the figure of Arthur, in a period spanning the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, when that figure became increasingly protean and multifaceted, and the audience for the Arthurian legend grew in both size and variety. It argues that many authors wrote through Arthur, as well as about Arthur, using the figure to understand and test their own ideas about ideals (e.g. of manliness, kingship, or heroism) as well as problems (such as war, despotism, or ungodliness). This thesis analyses Arthur by considering him as a 'type', using a definition of the term that highlights a paradox: a type, in a scientific sense, is both perfect (an exemplary model) and normal (common enough to be representative). When applied to Arthur, it means that he is both a perfect, or near perfect, example, but is also to some extent a 'normal' human being. Different authors analysed in this thesis emphasise different aspects of the figure, according to whether they focus on Arthur's perfection or his normality. Other meanings of the word 'type' are also applied when relevant: the idea is not to force all versions of Arthur into a single or definitive category, but to retain the complexity of how Arthur is characterised and written about in texts. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to put the figure of Arthur into critical focus, and explain why he has been returned to so often in history.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the staff at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, for explaining the archival system to me, and letting me photograph as many documents as I wanted from the T.H. White papers.

I am also grateful to the *The Digital Comics Museum* (http://digitalcomicmuseum.com), for providing scanned images from World War Two comic books that feature Arthur.

Over the course of my DPhil, my mother, Sarah, gave much appreciated support, and my father, Christopher, generously proofread many chapter drafts.

Lastly, I am indebted to my supervisors, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst and Carolyne Larrington, for their dedicated, patient, and wise guidance.

Note on Names

Though I am aware that Malory's Arthurian work is known by many different titles, I have decided to follow P.J.C. Field, rather than Eugène Vinaver, in calling it by its customary name, *Morte Darthur*.[1]

Different authors spell names differently – I follow the spelling of the author under discussion (some use 'Lancelot' or 'Launcelot', and some use 'Guinevere', 'Guenever', or even 'Genevieve'). Fortunately, everyone is agreed on the spelling of Arthur.

[1] See P.J.C. Field, introduction, Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. by P.J.C. Field, 2 vols (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), I, xxiv; Eugène Vinaver, *Malory*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), pp. 10-11.

Contents

Introduction

Ayrshire, Scotland. The Knight of the Swan and the Knight of the Lion face each other on horseback, surrounded by thousands of spectators, and dozens of halberdiers and archers. In the *berfrois* sit the Queen of Beauty and the King of the Tournament. The Marshal raises his baton and the mounted knights charge at each other, shields raised and lances down. The crowd wait for the expected clash, but the two knights pass each other, miscalculating the distance through the thin slits in their helmets. It begins to rain. The riders miss again, and again, and eventually the crowds disperse, carrying a multitude of umbrellas 'like a growth of green mushrooms'.[1] It was 1839 and the Earl of Eglinton was hosting a tournament in his faux-gothic castle.[2] The event was supposedly a return to 'the age of chivalry', when 'King Arthur, and the knights of the round table' existed.[3]

Other similar tournaments were held in the nineteenth century, including two others in 1839 (in Turin and New Orleans), but none were on the same enormous scale, and no tournament, before or since, has had attached to it such clearly expressed claims to revive chivalry.[4] The tournament lasted for three days and included a long procession of expensively costumed men-at-arms, musicians, and heralds; mounted jousting and sword fights; and a lavish banquet and ball. The event was a disaster: heavy rainfall postponed the procession and fighting, drenching the costumes, and flooding the banquet tent; safety measures meant that many were disappointed at the lack of real danger; and most of the

[1] Henry Curling, *Some Account of the Field of Cloth and Gold at Eglintoun [sic]* (London: Low, 1839), p. 24.
[2] Eglinton Castle, Ayshire, Scotland. August 28 – 30, 1839.
[3] Speech by the Earl of Eglinton in Irvine, 29 September 1839, reproduced in John Richardson, *The Eglinton Tournament*, illus. by James Henry Nixon (London: Colnaghi and Puchle, 1843), p. 2.
[4] See Ian Anstruther, *The Knight and the Umbrella* (London: Bles, 1963), pp. 246-8.

knights were unskilled jousters.[5] Despite these obvious failings, some contemporary commentators still tried to spin it into a success story; *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* claimed that 'the imagination began to boil up into the conviction that years had rolled back their tide', as if they 'had been actually cast thereby on the ancient shore of chivalry'.[6] Others mocked it in parody and satire.[7]

The real conflict at Eglinton was not between the Knight of the Swan and the Knight of the Lion; it was the clash that commentators and organisers thought existed between the mundane present and a nostalgic idea of the past. For James Aikman, a Scottish bookseller and author, all the mocking and incredulous reactions to the tournament could be attributed to a lack of contemporary understanding, rather than by anything at fault in the tournament itself: he argued that 'the habits of the present day are [...] opposed to, the manners and customs of the days of chivalry'.[8] In Curling's account, when it rained 'a Macintosh was then more accounted for than an ermined robe', suggesting that one could wear a garment from either the present or the past, but not from both.[9]

---

[5] For consensus that the tournament was a failure, see 'The Eglinton Tournament', *New York Times*, 5 August 1877, p. 4; Michael Trappes-Lomax, 'The Eglinton Tournament', January 25 1936, *Country Life: The Journal for all those Interested in Country Life and Country Pursuits*, LXXIX, pp. 96-7 (96); Anstruther, *Knight*, p. 210. Even the tournament's Queen of Beauty thought it had been 'spoiled by the weather': Letter from Lady Londonderry to Disraeli, August 29th 1839, qtd in Anstruther, *Knight*, pp. 217-8. Disraeli MS, Hughenden. For the lack of danger and poor level of skill amongst some of the knights, see Charles Mackay, *Through the Long Day: Or, Memorials of a Literary Life during Half a Century* (London: Allen, 1887), I, 70-3 and Anstruther, *Umbrella*, pp. 209-10.

[6] 'The Eglinton Tournament', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine for 1839*, November 1839, (Edinburgh: Tait; London: Simpkin; Dublin: Cumming, 1839) VI, 697-716 (p. 713).

[7] For examples, see: an account of a fictional tournament, compared to Eglinton, featuring theatrical horse costumes: William Thackeray, 'August. – A Tournament', in '*The Comic Almanack: An Ephemeris in Jest and Earnest, Containing Merry Tales, Humorous Poetry, Quips and Oddities* (London: Chatto and Windus, n.d.), I, 234-5; a burlesque produced at the New Strand Theatre a few weeks after the event, in which knights appeared on hobby-horses and sang a finale, raising umbrellas '*à la mode d'Eglinton*': 'The Last Burlesque at the New Strand', *Examiner*, 15 September 1839, p. 586; a satirical account of an unnamed tournament similar to Eglinton: *The Tournament: A Mock Heroic Ballad*, illus. Alfred Crowsquill (London: M'Lean, 1839), XIV, p. 12.

[8] [James Aikman with revisions and corrections from 'several of the knights']. *An Account of the Tournament at Eglinton, Revised and Corrected by Several of the Knights*, illus. by W. Gordon (Edinburgh: Paton, Carver and Gilder, 1839), p. 5.

[9] Curling, *Some Account*, p. 24.

The tournament demonstrates the difficulties in trying to recreate a pseudo-historical past, and analysing it magnifies tensions between both ideas of the past and present and claims of theatricality and realism in the mid-nineteenth century. These tensions also underlie many literary depictions of King Arthur in this period and into the twentieth century, as authors attempted to recreate a version of the past, even if their aims and methods differed from those of the Earl of Eglinton. 1839 is also an apposite starting point for an analysis of the revival of interest in Arthurian literature.[10] The roots of the Arthurian revival can of course be traced back further: to 1816, when Malory's *Morte Darthur* was first republished after a 182-year hiatus, or even before, to the late eighteenth century.[11] However, it was only by the 1830s that the Arthurian legend became diffused among a wide range of English-reading people, not only known as a curio, but as an established story, that adult audiences might have read or heard as children (one of the editions from 1816 was edited especially for 'the eye of youth').[12] Spectators and participants of the Eglinton tournament would have known about King Arthur even if they had not actually read about him.

A chivalric setting, like the one described in Arthurian stories, certainly had widespread appeal, as the popularity of the tournament attests, though it was not clear at Eglinton when this setting might be located in history. *Tait's* described people dressed 'all correctly of the olden times of chivalry', without suggesting when these 'olden times'

[10] For Inga Bryden, the 1830s was the first time that the legend gained 'widespread currency', and when production of Arthurian literature first increased significantly: *Reinventing King Arthur: The Arthurian Legends in Victorian Culture* (London: Aldershot, 2005), p. 2. Roger Simpson demonstrates how Arthurian material had 'widespread interest' from the 1800s onwards, and argues against the idea that the rebirth of interest in Arthurian literature begins in the mid-nineteenth century and Tennyson's *Idylls*. Simpson does not mark the 1830s as an especially important decade like Bryden does, but does note that by the 1830s, Arthurian material had become widely diffused: *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-1849* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), pp. 3-4 and 221.

[11] Malory's work returned to print in two editions published in 1816: a two-volume version edited by Alexander Chalmers, and a three-volume version edited by Joseph Haslewood.

[12] Thomas Malory, *La Mort d'Arthur: The Most Famous History of the Renowned Prince Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table*, ed. by Joseph Haslewood, 3 vols (London: Wilks, 1816), p. iv.

were.[13] The archaic 'olden' affirms nostalgia for the past, but also recognised its obsolescence, further distancing these 'times of chivalry' from the present. The tournament did not have a specific historical basis: although the rules were purportedly based on a set from 1465, these were referred to more broadly by *Tait's* as being from 'ancient times', and apart from the jousting, most of the events derived from seventeenth-century riding practices rather than from medieval tournaments.[14] History and literature fused in the accounts, as journalists and commentators turned to Dryden, Scott, and Chaucer to help describe the event.[15] The tournament itself did not feature any impersonations of historical or literary figures, unlike European tournaments in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and tournaments in the southern states of America in the nineteenth century, in which participants sometimes adopted the names of Arthurian knights.[16] The knights at Eglinton were instead known by generic names such as 'The Dolphin' or 'The Burning Tower', though one 'Black Knight' might have been a reference to *Ivanhoe*.[17] The past was therefore used as a thematic colouration for the tournament and its associated banquets, emulating the appearance of a medieval event, but without drawing inspiration from a specific age or fictional universe. It was closer to *recreation* than *re-creation*: a suspension of the present world for the purposes of leisure, rather than a redirection of its practical and ethical priorities.

Many of the spectators were dressed as fictional characters such as 'Shakespeare's Mercutio' and 'Maid Marion', whilst others adopted Highland dress, and even the clothes

[13] 'Tournament', *Tait's*, p. 715.
[14] Ibid.; Anstruther, *Knight*, p. 206; Karen Watts, 'The Eglinton Tournament and the Revival of Chivalry', in *The Eglinton Tournament of 1839* (Leeds: Royal Armouries, 2009), p. 21.
[15] For examples see Richardson, *Tournament*, p. 7, Curling, *Some Account*, p. 7, 'The Eglinton Tournament', *Morning Chronicle*, 3 September 1839, p. 3.
[16] See Ruth Huff Cline, *The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages*, *Speculum*, 20 (April 1945), 204-11 (p. 207); Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), pp. 3-5.
[17] For the names of the knights, see [Aikman], *An Account*, p. 20.

of 'turbaned Turks'.[18] The range implies that spectators thought they only had to dress in clothes from a suitably distant past, and they would then enter the age of chivalry that the event was attempting to recreate. *The Morning Post* answered a supposedly frequently asked question, '[h]ow should I dress for the tournament?', referring to 'works on British costumes' primarily taken from Chaucer's descriptions of the Canterbury pilgrims.[19] Journalists at the time and afterwards regarded the tournament as theatrical, and its participants as actors, donning costumes to play a part, though even in the 1830s, professional theatre practitioners had already begun to find such historical anachronisms and inconsistencies absurd.[20] Some commentators rejected the notion that Eglinton was a piece of theatre. The procession 'was not a theatrical representation,' stressed Richardson in 1843, but 'an actual representation of a real event', and the anonymous writer of *Tournament at Eglinton Castle* insisted that the event had 'no scenic delusion; no dramatic artifice [...it was] all true, all real'.[21] Underpinning this conviction was the supposed antiquity of the armour, which was believed to be from the time of Richard II, or Queen Elizabeth at the latest (though this claim has since been disproven).[22] This supposed authenticity presented difficulties for the combatants when they discovered that their armour was too small; it had to be enlarged before the tournament, though *Tait's* reported that most of the knights were still too large to fit the armour of the past men they were

[18] Curling, *Some Account*, p. 24.
[19] 'Chaucer's Tales [...] present a vivid picture of the dresses of his age': 'Dresses for the Tournament', *Morning Post*, 28 August 1839, p. 3.
[20] *The Times* connected the tournament to the stage, criticising 'ignorant players' who wore Highland dress to the tournament, because it was historically inappropriate for 'the scene'. When the clothes for the pageant were auctioned in 1840, *The Times* advertised them as 'well adapted for the wardrobe of a theatre'. The tournament was also likened to a theatrical production forty-four years later in *Baily's Magazine*, which described it as a 'chivalric drama'. 'The Tournament', *The Times*, 29 August 1839, p. 3; 'The Eglinton Costumes, &c.', *The Times*, 27 May 1840, p. 6; 'Ellangowan', 'The Story of the Eglinton Tournament Retold', in *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes* (London: Baily, 1884), XLI, 64-72. For contemporary attitudes to anachronism in the professional theatre, see James Robinson Planché, *Recollections and Reflections*, rev. edn (London: Low, Marston, [n.d.]), pp. 37-40.
[21] Richardson, *Tournament*, p. 1; *Tournament at Eglinton Castle, Aug. 30, 1839* (London: Day, 1840), p. 1.
[22] [Aikman], *An Account*, p. 8; for the authenticity of the armour, see Sara Stevenson and Helen Bennett, *Van Dyck in Check Trousers: Fancy Dress in Art and Life 1700-1900* ([n.p.]: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1978), p. 108.

imitating.[23] It is likely that the knights assumed their venerated ancestors were physically bigger, to match their metaphorical stature. This idea has been expressed in later times as well: it appeared on a postcard from the First World War, showing a small modern soldier with spurs and riding crop, next to a huge suit of armour, and the caption 'ARE WE WORTHY OF YOU [...]?'[24] A similar anxiety was expressed by the Earl, in a celebratory speech after the tournament, when he said that collections of armour would 'be gaped at only as the trophies of what our ancestors were, and what their descendants must no longer be' if his own generation did not try to mimic their achievements.[25]

In this speech the Earl refers to 'the glories of a Sir Tristram or a Sir Launcelot' when talking about past accomplishments. The indefinite article suggests that he thought that these names were not strictly reserved for the fictional knights of Arthur's court, but were instead symbolic identities that could be adopted by others in the present. The fact that the tournament was open to almost anyone – free to all spectators, with quick and affordable access to the location thanks to newly-established steam train and steam boat services – might suggest that a wide range of people and classes could temporarily become 'a Sir Lancelot' simply by turning up and participating in the tournament.[26] The event, however, was not set up to be so democratic, and some commentators were keen to emphasise that not everybody could hope to relive or even understand past glories. *The Morning Post* did not approve of the crowds and their 'absurd remarks [...] [b]ut then, to be sure, however odd it may sound in a physiological sense, many persons never had any ancestors'.[27] The fifteen contributors to the account in *Tait's* claimed they were personally

[23] 'The Eglinton Tournament', *Morning Post*, July 15 1839, p. 5; 'Tournament', *Tait's*, p. 708.
[24] Reprinted in Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 120. Original from the Imperial War Museum, London.
[25] Speech qtd in Richardson, *Tournament*, p. 2.
[26] The line to Irvine, a town three miles from the castle, had opened only a few weeks before the tournament on 5 August 1839, and new steamers had also recently become available for travellers. See R. V. J. Butt, *The Directory of Railway Stations: Details Every Public and Private Passenger Station, Halt, Platform and Stopping Place, Past and Present* (Sparkford: Stephens, 1995), p. 128, and Anstruther, *Knight*, p. 166-7.
[27] 'The Eglinton Tournament', *Morning Post*, July 15 1839, p. 5.

'so well educated, and above all, so learned in the ancient customs of chivalry as to be altogether better calculated to decide upon the success or failure' of Eglinton.[28] Henry Curling, a writer and soldier, supported the notion that only the well-educated could understand chivalric displays, by supposing that the 'lower orders' could not 'quite understand such exhibition'.[29] The 'lower orders' were also excluded from some parts of the tournament. The knights had to be rich, as they were required to buy their own armour, paying £200 on average – and Lord Glenlyon spent far more than that, £1,500, at a time when the average annual income for an adult male was less than £30.[30] The names and ranks of the knights demonstrate how socially exclusive this group was: they included, amongst many other titled figures, the Marquess of Londonderry and the future Emperor Napoleon III. Even some of the viewing areas were restricted: the seated areas with the best views were only allotted to those who requested them in writing, and non-Conservatives were denied tickets.[31] Chivalry was not specifically confined to nobility, as it was in the Middle Ages, but neither had it yet transcended social rank. Any man could be 'a Sir Launcelot', but only if he could afford the armour. Those of lesser wealth and opposing political ideas later responded with satirical parodies and even their own mock tournaments.[32]

The approach to the past evident from the Eglinton participants anticipates Friedrich Nietzsche's description in 1874 of the 'monumental' approach to history. A 'monumental'

[28] 'The Eglinton Tournament', *Tait's*, p. 697
[29] Curling, *Some Account*, pp. 15, 51.
[30] William Reid, '"Such Sights as Youthful Poets Dream": The Earl of Eglinton's Tournament and Society", *Livrustkammaren: Journal of the Royal Armoury* (1991-2), 104-28 (p. 111).
[31] One man was refused a ticket when it was discovered that he was not a Conservative: see Anstruther, *Knight*, p. 171. For the political motivations of the Earl, see Watts, 'Revival', p. 2.
[32] One example of a mock tournament is from Oxfordshire in 1840, in which knights brandished kitchen-ware on ponies, overseen by a bearded Queen of Beauty. See 'Wormsley Tournament', *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 15 August 1840, no pag. A working-class mock tournament was also described in a fifteenth century text, though it is not known if it is based on any factual occurrence: see 'The Tournament of Tottenham,' *Middle English Romances*, ed. by Donald B. Sands (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1986), pp. 313-22.

historian, Nietzsche argues, sees greatness in the past and reasons that it might be repeated, but is in fact more interested in criticising the present. He or she does this by unfavourably comparing the present to the supposed greatness of the past. The past is therefore only understood in a superficial, theatrical way (Nietzsche uses the term *Maskenkleid*, or 'theatrical costume'), as a means for 'the dead [to] bury the living', rather than for its own value.[33] The focus at Eglinton on recreating the appearance of poorly defined history, and the political motivations for holding the event, match Nietzsche's classification; one of the probable motivations for the tournament was to protest against the Whig frugality that had stripped traditional elements from Victoria's coronation in 1837.[34]

Eglinton thus exemplifies a 'monumental' approach to the past, and a response to undesirable changes in the present. The Earl did not bring chivalry back in the way he intended – there were hopes for other wealthy men to host similar tournaments, but this did not happen in Britain.[35] He did, however, help to bring the idea of chivalry into popular consciousness by encouraging nostalgia for a medieval past, already gaining widespread appeal from the novels of Walter Scott and the re-publication of Malory's *Morte Darthur* in 1816. More specifically, the Earl enabled tens of thousands of spectators to see a version of the past world they had hitherto only imagined; and from that experience, people could interpret for themselves what an age of chivalry meant for them – and then reinterpret it in satirical or favourable ways.[36] In this sense, the Eglinton Tournament was more than an historical oddity; it marked the beginning of a period during which the concept of chivalry

[33] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, trans. by Peter Preuss (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1980), §2, pp. 16-18. First published 1874.
[34] One man was refused a ticket when it was discovered that he was not a Conservative: see Anstruther, *Knight*, p. 171. For the political motivations of the Earl, see Watts, 'Revival', p. 2.
[35] See the Earl's speech qtd in Richardson, *Tournament*, p. 2. Whilst tournaments did not become a popular sport again, they did become part of the duelling culture in the antebellum southern states of America. See Osterweis, *Romanticism*, pp. 168-9.
[36] It was impossible to count how many attended the tournament, and contemporary estimates vary: 'The Eglinton Tournament', *Morning Chronicle*, 3 September 1839, p. 3 ('at least ten thousand people'), and Richardson, *Tournament*, p. 1 (100,000 spectators).

would continue to attract various definitions, and would itself be used to define a range of other aspects of culture, as detailed in the following section.

i. The Effects of Eglinton: Defining Chivalry

Chivalry at Eglinton was largely defined by what it was not: it was not of the present, but entrenched in a past 'age of chivalry'; it was not for the 'lower orders' or those who wanted to strive for a more egalitarian politics, but for those who were wealthy and well-born; it was not merely theatrical, but had a claim to being something 'real'. This is only one possible interpretation of the concept. In 1830, almost a decade before the tournament, the historical writer G.P.R. James defined chivalry simply as protecting 'the weak from the oppression of the powerful'.[37] This idealistic conception of chivalry would be later depicted in art: John Millais's 'The Knight Errant' (1870), and Sir Frank Dicksee's 'Chivalry' (1885), both illustrate attempts to protect the weak. It would also appear in literature: in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the word appears once, exclusively conveying this sense of protecting others, and females in particular.[38] The word was even used in a political sense, in a way that contrasts with the Conservative orientation of the Eglinton Tournament. In 1882, the Chartist writer Thomas Devyr re-classified chivalry as radical, claiming that the reformer is 'the oldest knight-errant of them all'.[39] At the time of the tournament Devyr had fled the country for causing 'agitation', but by 1882 the electoral franchise had expanded, the Chartist movement had dissipated, and Devyr could appropriate the word the Earl had used, 'chivalry', applying it in a new way against those who had opposed him.[40]

---

[37] G.P.R. James, *The History of Chivalry* (London: Colburn, 1830), p. 2.
[38] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London, Penguin, 1994): Mina Harker's Journal: 'chivalrous care', p. 290.
[39] Thomas Ainge Devyr, 'Contents', in *The Odd Book of the Nineteenth Century: Or, "Chivalry" in Modern Days, a Personal Record of Reform, Chiefly Land Reform, for the Last 50 Years* (New York: n.p., 1882), n. pag.
[40] See 'Foreign Movements', *Northern Star and National Trades' Journal*, November 7, 1846, p. 7.

One general trend that can be observed is the separation of chivalry from its medieval association with horses, and a shift from the active to the ethical. Sidney Lanier's 1879 retelling of Froissart removed the fourteenth-century references to chivalry to mean mounted soldiers, and instead described the entire book as 'a picture of chivalry', referring to the 'ideals' of the knights rather than their actions on horseback.[41] Henry Newbolt similarly considered the British airman to be 'chivalrous' in 1916, and in 1933 U. Waldo Cutler compared modern heroes to knights, who owed 'more than they know to those of Arthur's court'.[42] It was no longer necessary, in the twentieth century, for one to joust in armour to be thought of as chivalrous (although aerial dogfights might be considered a modern form of jousting); one could also become a 'knight' simply through association with chivalrous ideals. This was particularly true for children's groups in the early twentieth century, including Robert Baden-Powell's Scouts, who claimed they were founded in spirit by King Arthur, and who shared the Earl of Eglinton's intention to 'revive chivalry among ourselves', though they did not attempt to recreate the appearance of the past.[43]

Mark Girouard argues that chivalry received its 'death-wound' in the First World War, surviving only as an outmoded concept in writers such as Wodehouse and Waugh, or in adventure stories, but ceasing to be a 'dominant code of conduct'.[44] However, the Eglinton Tournament demonstrates that even in 1839, chivalry was more of a fantasy than a practicable 'code of conduct'. The lack of historical understanding and the inability of most of the knights to joust successfully at Eglinton dismantled the idea of chivalry as a 'real' thing in the present, just as the end of cavalry charges and breastplates did in the First

[41] Sidney Lanier, introduction, John Froissart, *The Boy's Froissart: Being Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of Adventure Battle and Custom in England France Spain etc.*, ed. by. Sidney Lanier (New York: Scribner's, 1879), pp. xi, xiii.
[42] Henry Newbolt, *Tales of the Great War* (London: Longmans, Green, 1916), p. 249; U. Waldo Cutler, *King Arthur and his Knights* (London, Bombay & Sydney: Harrap, 1933), p. 16.
[43] R.S.S. Baden-Powell, *Yarns for Boy Scouts: Told Round the Camp Fire* (London: Pearson, 1909), p. 117.
[44] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 290.

World War.[45] Indeed, what united these events was a sense that chivalry was unavoidably bound up with nostalgia; rather than being an ethical code that could be followed in the present, it was a lost ideal, albeit one that might – like King Arthur – return at a future date.

The Eglinton Tournament's unintentional democratisation of a legendary medieval past encouraged the word 'chivalry' to be defined and used in increasingly disparate ways. A similar trend can be observed at a macrocosmic level in the retellings and reception of Arthurian literature, which grew exponentially from the mid-nineteenth century, in terms of the legend's popularity and the range of authors who wrote about it. Just as the variety of uses and contexts for chivalry grew, so too did the variety of cultural uses for Arthur. In addition, the conflict highlighted at Eglinton between an ideal past world and a mundane present persisted in retellings of the legend of Arthur, who, by being depicted as a human individual, did not always match the perfect model of kingship and ethical conduct some expected him to be, just as Eglinton could not match everyone's expectations of a medieval tournament.

Alan and Barbara Lupack argue that the values attributed to Arthur and his knights were 'democratised' from the late-nineteenth century onwards, as Arthurian figures appeared in an increasingly various array of formats and genres, for different audiences and purposes.[46] This was particularly carried through in the context of youth groups and consumer merchandise; the former allowed children to become Arthurian characters, as if 'Merlin' and 'Arthur' were titled roles that could be passed on to others rather than individual characters – and the latter suggested that (for instance) one could become as strong as Arthur by eating bread and cakes made from King Arthur Flour. Both of these

[45] In the First World War, French cuirassiers originally wore shiny breastplates until they were found to attract snipers, and cavalry charges proved inefficient against machine guns. See Richard Holmes, 'The Last Hurrah: Cavalry on the Western Front, August-September 1914', in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, ed. by Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (London: Cooper, 1996), pp. 278-94 (280).
[46] See Alan and Barbara Lupack, *King Arthur in America* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), p. 326.

examples are explored in greater depth in Chapter Three. The Lupacks, however, do not analyse the essential tension that remains in the figure of Arthur during this period, between his normality as a human, and the idealism of his legendary reign. This tension can be identified in 'monumental' attempts to recreate the past, as demonstrated by the Eglinton Tournament, and it is also an integral factor of the Arthurian story: the ideal structure of the Round Table collapses partly because denizens of Camelot (often including Arthur) are flawed humans unable to perfectly maintain chivalric ideals.

ii. Arthur as a Type

Like the concept of 'chivalry', the figure of Arthur became both ambiguous and increasingly active in the popular imagination, stemming from the revival of interest in the middle ages in the early nineteenth century. This thesis approaches Arthur's polyvalency – the way Arthur often exists simultaneously as ideal king and ordinary human in texts and performances – by making it the focus of analysis, rather than a contradiction that should be ignored. Central to this analysis is the term 'type', which was frequently used by writers and audiences in reference to Arthur during the period under consideration.[47] The ambiguity of the term 'type' relays some of the multiple identities that the figure of Arthur has absorbed or produced in literature. Arthur is both *the type* – symbol, model – of kingship, and *a type* – part of a category – of monarchs. As the former, Arthur is a perfect,

[47] The term is mostly used in relation to Arthur from the mid nineteenth century, but some earlier examples can be found. Richard Blackmore writes of the importance of a 'Mystical or Typical Sense', beyond literal meaning, in his preface to *Prince Arthur* (1695). Blackmore's Arthur can be read as a type for kingship modelled on William III. See Richard Blackmore, *Prince Arthur. An Heroick Poem. In ten books.* (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1695). An example from nearly a hundred years later comes from a reader of John Dryden's *King Arthur, or The British Worthy* (1691), who remarks that the semi-opera's Arthur seems to be 'a type of our King that now is', relating Arthur to George III and another character to William Pitt the Younger. See letter to '[Sylvanus] Urban' from 'Aminadab Holdfast', 29 November 1792, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1792, in *The Gentleman's Magazine: And Historical Chronicle. For the Year MDCCXCII.* (London: Nichols, 1792), LXII.2, 1068-9 (p. 1069).

idealised figure; as the latter, he is considered to be a fallible human like any other. The authors analysed in this thesis negotiate these two extremes, some depicting Arthur as *the* type of kingship (e.g. Tennyson), and others emphasising his human normality as *a* type of king (e.g. Housman). Such distinctions are crucial to the developing cultural identity of Arthur, which is why the concept of a 'type' has been returned to so often by authors who have written about Arthur. The term can suggest both exemplary perfection or unremarkable normality, or even both at the same time, though authors often emphasise one aspect over another, either distinguishing Arthur as an ideal model for others, or depicting him as a flawed human being like any other, with only the reputation of a great king. The Eglinton Tournament demonstrated how the intention to recreate an ideal version of the past could be ruined by a more mundane reality (the rain; the lack of skill and danger), but elsewhere in the period under consideration Arthur could be both an ideal, legendary figure, and someone who seemed to be a real human being, fundamentally the same as anyone else. Striking a balance between these two sides is often a challenge for writers.

In 1861, Alexander Henry defined 'type', in scientific usage, as '[t]he perfect normal representation or idea of anything'.[48] This can refer to the most useful example of a wider category, for instance a perfectly preserved but otherwise unexceptional skeleton, which can be used as a control against which to evaluate other examples with unique characteristics. It is the paradox of 'perfect' and 'normal' that make this definition of a type so applicable to Arthur, who is often both ideal (as a king and / or a man) and normal (as an individual human with private feelings). If something is perfect then how can it also be normal? How can it be uniquely perfect, but also representative of a larger number in its 'normality'? These questions strongly apply to Arthur.

[48] Alexander Henry, 'Type', *A Glossary of Scientific Terms for General Use* (London: Walton, 1861), p. 194.

In T.H. White's *The Book of Merlyn* (written 1940-1), Arthur is said to have been 'an undistinguished child, although a loving one'.[49] In fact, White characterised Arthur as undistinguished, at least as a private man, throughout his Arthurian work, making Arthur an ideal mediator figure for thinking through ideas alongside readers (this is argued in greater detail in Chapter Five). He is, in White, perfectly normal rather than abnormally perfect. However, Henry's phrase 'perfect normal' could also refer to someone who is perfection in a normal, human, form: like Tennyson's Arthur, who is 'ideal manhood closed in real man'.[50] These two literary examples represent two attempts to synthesise perfection and normality in one figure, but in other cases the concepts of 'perfect' and 'normal' pull against each other. In 1895, the *New York Times* was disappointed by Henry Irving's portrayal of King Arthur on the stage, declaring that Irving's 'saturnine face and [...] gray hair' did not fit 'his present rôle. He is not the type, he is not the man!'[51] In this example, 'type' is used to mean, in the words of the reviewer, the 'godlike Arthur of our ideal', and the figure should be 'the purest type of brave, ingenious manhood a poet ever imagined'.[52] The reviewer's idea of Arthur, extrapolated from Tennyson's depiction, is such a perfect representation of manhood that he hardly seems to be a man at all, and any actor's performance would most likely have failed to live up to it. Critics hoped for 'the godlike Arthur of our ideal', but were met with the un-ideal Henry Irving, who gave a performance too similar to those audiences had seen previously: what they wanted was perfection; what they got was normality (see Chapter Two).[53]

[49] T.H. White, *The Book of Merlyn*, in *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: Voyager, 1996), ch. 11, p. 754.
[50] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'To the Queen', in *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J.M. Gray (London: Penguin, 1983), pp. 301-2 (302). First published in *Idylls* in 1873.
[51] 'Miss Terry as Guinevere', *New York Times*, 5 November 1895, p. 5.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

Henry's definition of type is useful, because 'perfect normal' aptly describes the broadly encompassing and sometimes contradictory nature of Arthur, as a literary figure in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Henry's is, however, only one definition of 'type'. Since part of the value of the term is its varied and shifting meaning – appropriate for the varied and shifting figure of Arthur – it is worth briefly outlining how else the word can be used. The Greek root of type, τύπος, means 'impression' or 'figure', and is related to the action of beating or striking (hence 'typing' and 'typewriters'). From this come myriad applications. For example, 'type' can refer to an individual model that is taken to represent repeated instances.[54] This usage can be applied to cases where Arthur is a model of manliness or morality, such as Tennyson's 'selfless man and stainless gentleman'.[55] In psychology, dating from the 1930s, Carl Jung used the word interchangeably with 'archetype', referring to 'motifs' and 'primordial images' in people's dreams, fantasies, and delusions.[56] 'Type' can also refer to a species or race, derived from the word's sense as a general form or example of a category.[57]

Another significant way in which Arthur can be understood as a 'type' is through Biblical typology, the purpose of which is to bring the Old Testament into direct relation to the New Testament, understanding past concepts or figures (types) as imperfect symbols

[54] In Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (New York: Webster, 1889), a devoured boar is 'the type and symbol of what had happened to all other dishes': ch. 17, p. 204.
[55] Tennyson, 'Merlin and Vivien', *Idylls*, pp. 142-67 (163), l. 790. First published in *Idylls* as 'Vivien' in 1859.
[56] C.G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. by R.F.C. Hull, 2nd edn ([Princeton:] Princeton University Press, 1968), § 260, p. 153; §308-9, pp. 182-3.
[57] This use of the word is recorded from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In 1869, P. Austin Nuttall defined it as '[t]he most strongly characterised genus or species of an order, tribe, or family': Nuttall, 'Type', *Dictionary of Scientific Terms* (London: Strahan, 1869), p. 312. Bryden considers that Arthur is this kind of racial type in Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur*, as he travels through different lands as an example of his Welsh race, and of good manly behaviour: '[n]ineteenth-century Arthurians fashioned the Caucasian, Christian Arthur as a social model for the young knights of the nation and as a Darwinian type of the modern gentleman'.[57] A reviewer of the 1895 stage production also regarded Arthur in this biological sense: 'Arthur himself figures as a species of seer or prophet [...] Arthur is the typical Briton of romance'. See Bryden, *Reinventing*, p. 34; 40; 'Lyceum Theatre', *Morning Post*, 14 January 1895, p. 3. Darwin does use the word 'type' in his 1859 work to refer to species, as well as using 'archetype' to describe an 'ancient progenitor' of a species. Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: Murray, 1859), p. 435.

fulfilled and realised by later ideas or figures (antitypes).[58] '"Sure our blessed Lord is born again!"' thinks 'one fair maid' in Thomas Westwood's poem 'The Sword of Kingship' (1866), when she sees a 'luminous star' that marks Arthur's birth, as it marked Christ's birth before.[59] It is not suggested that Arthur actually is the returned Christ, but the fact that the maid regards the reappearance of a bright star as the fulfilment of a biblical prophecy is one example of a typological interpretation. Comparisons to Christ are not uncommon in depictions of Arthur as they help to express how Arthur is an embodiment of ideals in an ordinary human form, just as Christ is an embodiment of God as a mortal human.[60]

For C.S. Lewis, Arthur was not a fulfilment of Christ, but rather a fulfilment of humanity's spiritual potential, following Christ's example. Rather than a type to be completed in the future, Lewis's Arthur is instead an antitype of humanity. Most of what Lewis says about Arthur is mediated through the character of Elwin Ransom in *That Hideous Strength* (1945), who is identified as the 79th successor to Arthur's 'pendragon' title, and who ultimately leaves Earth to join Arthur as an immortal on another planet. For one character, Ransom's appearance comes as a surprise, but only because 'she had long since forgotten the imagined Arthur of her childhood', and seeing Ransom she 'tasted the word *king* itself', as if he were an undiluted embodiment of that concept.[61] Ransom, and by association Arthur, are what Lewis calls 'the new men', who have become their '*real* selves' in union with Christ. 'They begin where most of us leave off'; they are humanity's antitypes. Arthur's purpose, and the job of his successors, is to encourage this kind of

[58] See Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, 3 vols (London: Davies, 1814), I, 609; John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Toovey, 1845), pp. 102-3.
[59] T. Westwood, 'The Sword of Kingship: A Legend of the "Morte D'Arthure"' (London: Wilkins, 1866), p. 8.
[60] More recently, the same approach has been used for superheroes, particularly Superman, in graphic novels and films. Greg Garrett argues that superheroes are modern incarnations of religious mythology in *Holy Superheroes!: Exploring the Sacred in Comics, Graphic Novels, and Film* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).
[61] C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairytale for Grown-ups* (London: HarperCollins, 2005), pp. 515, 189. First published 1945.

spiritual awakening, as England otherwise has an 'incompleteness'.[62] This is one way to understand the perfect-normal paradox inherent in Arthur as a type: by making Arthur a holy figure, who, along with other holy people, is a fulfilment of the perfection possible within humanity, rather than a perfect model who seems separate from, and above, everyone else.

The model of Biblical typology can be applied outside theology: instead of revealing a spiritual truth through the type and antitype, a secular application simply highlights a new significance that comes from understanding two separate signifiers as part of a whole. Robert Hollander defines five forms of secular and theological typology, all of them describing a repetition that fulfils a concept or intention established by a previous figure or event.[63] The range demonstrates how the structure of Biblical typology can be applied in multiple ways, some matching the various ways Arthur is depicted. For example, there are numerous cases of historical typology relating to Arthur. 'It is as if King Arthur had come to life again, nerved with the faith of Cromwell, to serve England in the Soudan', claimed W. T. Stead in 1884, describing General 'Chinese' Gordon.[64] The claim was not that Gordon was merely 'like' Arthur, but that he was supposedly an improved repetition of the legendary king. Similarly, *The Boston Sunday Globe* reported on the 'Growing Belief that Lord Kitchener Fulfilled a Prophecy' that Arthur would return.[65] The writer uses

[62] See C.S. Lewis, *Beyond Personality* (London: Bles, 1944), pp. 61-4. Lewis, *Strength*, p. 516. In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lewis implies that Arthur's return is needed to bring people back to Christianity, in the same way that the Pevensie children brought the Narnians back to Aslan in *Prince Caspian*: *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (London: Lions, 1980), p. 15. Originally published 1955.
[63] These five forms are: natural (a very broad class in which unintentional repetition is identified as ordered regularity); historical (when a character is modelled as the successor or precursor of a different historical figure, as Aeneas is arguably constructed to be a pre-figuration of Augustus in Virgil); decorative (as a trope, for instance when one describes a sports player as the 'new' version of a previous sports player); Christian (already discussed); and Improper Christian (when the type/antitype are religious but not supported by scripture): Robert Hollander, 'Typology and Secular Literature: Some Medieval Problems and Examples', in *Literary Uses of Typology: From the Late Middle Ages to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 3-19 (4-12).
[64] W.T. Stead, 'Chinese Gordon', *The Century: Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (New York and London: Century, 1884), XXVIII, 556-61 (561).
[65] 'Did Kitchener Wield Excalibur?', *The Boston Sunday Globe*, October 8th 1916, p. 36.

Arthur as a type to frame recent events in a legendary context. 'It is not strange that the minds of many persons turn back to those dim pages of legendary history for a parallel or a prototype', and, *The Globe* claimed, that 'prototype' is found in Arthur.

Other critics widen the application of 'type' in literary analysis even further. John R. Reed uses it to describe 'conventional types' of characters, who fit recognised patterns in Victorian literature (e.g. the poor but proud scholar).[66] Mordred becomes a conventional incestuous type in White's 'The Candle in the Wind', when his determination to marry his step-mother makes him fixed 'like a bell in a groove', following a 'pattern' of incest established by his father.[67] Reed uses a common application of the word, but this, argues Hollander, confuses a term that should be reserved for individual definitions. Reed's 'conventional type' highlights significance in repetition as biblical typology also does, but both usages emphasise different aspects: Biblical typology is focused on the past prefiguring the future, whilst character typology is focused on the present mimicking the past.

The concept of past establishment and future fulfilment is, in addition, central to the Arthurian story – Arthur fulfils the prophecy that the future king will pull the sword from the stone, and Mordred fulfils the prophecy to usurp Arthur. This relationship even exists in the process of writing about Arthur. Authors who attempt to rewrite the Arthurian story, rather than merely repeat Malory's version in a different form or style (e.g. in children's abridgements), are attempting to fulfil potential in the story or characters that they feel has not hitherto been achieved: for example, by filling out a previous omission, like Arthur's childhood, or providing a new perspective on a character. For C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams's Arthurian work (1938-44) fulfilled the potential meaning of Malory

[66] John R. Reed, *Victorian Conventions* ([Athens]: Ohio University Press, 1975), p. 94.
[67] White, 'The Candle in the Wind', in *King*, chs 11, 14, pp. 671, 688

and other past writers: Williams's poetry 'has grown spontaneously out of Malory [...] [Williams] has penetrated more deeply than the old writers themselves into what they also, half consciously, meant'.[68] Post-medieval Arthurian literature is always a re-iteration, whether in a literary text being rewritten (most often Malory), or the author returning to an idea of the past, such as the ever-lost (and yet always re-imagined) age of chivalry. '"Why should any man / Remodel models?"' asks a character in Tennyson's 'The Epic' (1842). Part of the answer is given in the epilogue to *Idylls of the King*, when Tennyson praises the 'ideal manhood' of his Arthur, in contrast to the half-realised 'gray king' of medieval writers. Arthur is remodelled because the previous iteration was imperfect, Tennyson suggests – '[t]ouch'd by the adulterous finger of a time / That hovered between war and wantonness'.[69] The same typological approach can be observed in much later texts: White claimed that Malory's work was an unfinished 'attempt to find an antidote to war', and 'The Candle in the Wind' ends with the supposed discovery of this antidote, left unspecified by Malory, when Arthur concludes that man must become like most other animals, and dismantle the territorial boundaries that divide us, if there is ever to be an end to war.[70] Rather than merely repeating the previous model, the long-term trend in Arthurian literature is towards variations that emphasise different significances and contemporary preoccupations.

George P. Landow argues that biblical typology features in almost every work of Victorian poetry because Victorian writers had been trained to use the typological approach, even outside the Bible.[71] It encouraged readers to understand minor 'low' details

[68] C.S. Lewis, 'Williams and the Arthuriad', in Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, *Taliessin through Logres, The Region of the Summer Stars, Arthurian Torso* (N.p.: Eerdmans, 1974) pp. 277-384 (383-4). First published 1948.
[69] Tennyson, 'To the Queen', *Idylls*, pp. 301-2 (302), ll. 43-4.
[70] Letter to L.J. Potts, December 6 1940, *T.H. White: Letters to a Friend: The Correspondence between T.H. White and L.J. Potts*, ed. by François Gallix (Gloucester: Sutton, 1984), p. 120; White, 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 14, p. 696.
[71] George P. Landow, preface, *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought* (Boston, London and Henley: Paul, 1980), p. x.

as revelations of 'high' subjects such as divinity and eternity. Landow cites the ending of *Idylls* as an example of a typological structure, when Bedivere 'slowly clomb [...] that iron crag' after Arthur's passing. This follows a tradition of sight developing into revelation whilst on a raised area – the prototype being Moses's vision of the Promised Land on Mount Pisgah (Deuteronomy 34:1-4). Bedivere thinks he hears a city welcoming Arthur, and sees Arthur 'vanish into light'.[72] The scene, claims Landow, is 'a confrontation, of the human and divine, the temporal and the eternal', because it moves from a description of Arthur's body floating away in the barge, to a less clear vision of something spiritual.[73]

It is important to be clear whether a writer understands a type as a theological type, or a character type, or some other type altogether, as the term can be used in such a wide variety of ways. There is certainly no consensus over how the term might be applied to Arthur, or whether Arthur should be considered a type at all. Sarah McNary, in 1894, excluded Arthur from being a type in a theological sense, on the grounds that Arthur is not a figure from a single age and place, and cannot therefore be fulfilled by a later, separate, figure or interpretation.[74] Unlike Beowulf, who belongs to the 'half-savage age of continental Teutonism', and is a type to be fulfilled in a later age by a different figure, Arthur has been developed throughout time by different nationalities and 'belongs to all time and is claimed by all peoples'.[75] For McNary, Arthur is too complex and well-developed to fit into a typological structure; G.K. Chesterton makes a similar point about Arthur when he describes him existing 'between the first and the last' in his poem *The Grave of Arthur*.[76]

[72] Tennyson, 'The Passing of Arthur', *Idylls*, pp. 288-300 (300), l. 468.
[73] Landow, *Shadows*, p. 205.
[74] Sarah F. McNary, 'Beowulf and Arthur as English Ideals', *Poet-Lore: A Quarterly of World Literature*, 6.2 (1894), pp. 528-36.
[75] Ibid., p. 535.
[76] G.K. Chesterton, *The Grave of Arthur* in *Ariel Poems* no. 25 (London: Faber, [1930]), no pag., l. 26.

Other people – not just writers – have regarded Arthur as unfinished, and ripe for future fulfilment. The businessman Frederick Glasscock built a replica of King Arthur's court in Tintagel during 1929-33, in an attempt to realise the 'Ideal of Chivalry which alone will enable all the world to live in peace' in the present.[77] An accompanying pamphlet from the thirties explains the 'symbolic meaning' of Arthur, and describes the ruins of Tintagel castle as 'the remains of the ancient castle [...] where King Arthur was born'.[78] In fact the castle was built by Earl Richard of Cornwall in the 1230s, in order to consolidate his power by establishing a base at the site of ancient Cornish rulers.[79] Glasscock, however, was not interested in historical fact, but in actualising the idea of Arthur's connection with the place. The Cornish cultural activist Henry Jenner argued in 1927 that there was no connection between Tintagel and Arthur, but Glasscock thought that such a statement threw away 'one of the greatest beauties that Cornwall possesses'.[80] Tintagel is a necessary 'centre to which the thoughts of people can return', Glasscock claimed, whether that 'centre' is historically established or not.[81] The idea that Arthur was born at the location may have led to the castle being built there, fulfilling that detail of the legend; and in the twentieth century the castle continued to be regarded as Arthur's birthplace, despite contrary archaeological evidence. Glasscock wanted others to 'return' to chivalry via Tintagel, fulfilling the potential in the location to have a working building related to Arthur, and in the concept of chivalry to unite disparate people together.

---

[77] A pamphlet from the year the building was opened described it as a 'Temple of Chivalry from which inspiration can be obtained by all who are interested in reviving that Ideal of Chivalry which alone will enable all the world to live in peace': *The Hall of Chivalry and King Arthur's Hall, Tintagel* (Tintagel: King Arthur's Hall, [1933]), p. 7.
[78] *The Symbolic Meaning of the Story of King Arthur* (Tintagel: n.p., n.d.), p. iii.
[79] There was no military significance in the castle. See Charles Thomas, *English Heritage Book of Tintagel: Arthur and Archaeology* (London: Batsford and English Heritage, 1993), pp. 17-18.
[80] Henry Jenner, *Tintagel Castle in History and Romance* (Blackford, 1927) repr. in H. Jenner and J.H. Rowe, *Tintagel Castle: Its History and Romance* (Penzance: Oakmagic Publications, 1999), pp. 1-11 (7-8 and 11). Glasscock qtd in Thomas, *Tintagel*, pp. 130-1.
[81] Qtd in Thomas, *Tintagel*, pp. 130-1.

Throughout all these usages and definitions of 'type', only one aspect is constant – it describes the relation between something individual and something else with greater significance and more widespread application. Sometimes, however, it is ambiguous whether the 'type' in question is a subject that is singular and undeveloped (like the Biblical type), or one with greater significance (such as a model or best example of a category). In Edward Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur* (1848), Arthur is described as 'a thought of beauty and a type of fame'.[82] Since 'FAME' is a god-like character later in the poem, the line could refer to Arthur as a corporeal type of 'FAME', when 'FAME' is the corresponding antitype, as if it were a Platonic Form of the concept of fame. There is a degree of ambiguity, though, hinging on the word 'of': is Arthur a thought belonging to beauty, or a beautiful thought? Is Arthur a type subordinate to fame, or a famous type? The ambiguity is compounded by Bulwer Lytton's use of 'type' elsewhere in the poem. In the second volume, for instance, Arthur is 'the classic symbol of the gentle West, / And the bold type of the chivalric North'.[83] In this line, 'type' is paired with 'symbol', suggesting that here it refers to an epitome or best example, rather than an unfulfilled Biblical type. The word 'type' encourages an ambiguity that is also found in Arthur's identity as king. Are kings to be followed as ideal models by their subjects, or are they themselves the model of an ideal defined by their subjects? The question is asked by numerous Arthurian writers after Bulwer Lytton. Is Arthur *a* type or *the* type? Is he the 'director of toil' and mover of pawns (as he appears to be in E.A. Robinson and David Jones, explored in Chapter Four), or merely a pawn himself (as he is in T.H. White, discussed in Chapter Five)?

Arthur is, as Tennyson put it, 'new-old' – part of a long-standing tradition that is frequently updated.[84] This thesis argues that, when writing about Arthur, authors must

[82] Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, preface, *King Arthur: A Poem* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1871), 1. LXXXVIII, p. 25
[83] Lytton, *Arthur*, 3. CXVI, p. 96.
[84] Tennyson, 'To the Queen', *Idylls*, l. 37, p. 302.

negotiate a dichotomy embodied in the Arthurian figure, between what is 'normal' and singular, and what is 'perfect' and more widely significant. Arthur typifies kingship, manliness, heroism, and other traits determined by the author's priorities and his or her audience's expectations. At the same time, Arthur is also an individual, with an established origin and death, failures of judgement, romantic difficulties, and familial complications. This split between universal ideal and personal individuality, contained in the word 'type', is also manifested in wider anxieties, regarding artistic elitism and mass culture, which culminate in the period covered by this thesis.

iii. Writing Through Arthur

Several scholars have surveyed the vast number of Arthurian rewritings from the nineteenth century onwards, and have argued for their critical importance in understanding how authors have constructed national identity, moral idealism, and the past. Nathan Comfort Starr (1954) surveyed writings in the period 1901-53, James Douglas Merriman (1973) those written before 1835, and Beverly Taylor and Elisabeth Brewer's *The Return of King Arthur* (1983) more broadly covers British and American Arthurian literature from 1800 to the 1980s, though they mainly concentrate on the nineteenth century.[85] Jennifer R. Goodman's *The Legend of Arthur* (1988) spans the history of British and American Arthurian literature from its beginnings up to the present, and the author likens her study to 'an aerial photograph'.[86] The same comment could be applied to Taylor and Brewer's

[85] Nathan Comfort Starr, *King Arthur Today: The Arthurian Legend in English and American Literature, 1901-1953* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1954); James Douglas Merriman, *The Flower of Kings: A Study of the Arthurian Legend in England between 1485 and 1835* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1973); Beverly Taylor and Elisabeth Brewer, *The Return of King Arthur: British and American Literature since 1900* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983).
[86] Jennifer R. Goodman, preface, *The Legend of Arthur in British Literature: and American Literature* (Boston: Twayne, 1988), no pag.

broad sweep, as well as Inga Bryden's *Reinventing King Arthur* (2005) which focuses on the nineteenth century, but surveys the 'enormous variety' of Arthurian texts as 'cultural products'.[87] All of these books have Arthur in their titles, but none of them actually concentrate on Arthur as a character, and thus he becomes as it were hidden in plain sight. The central aim of this thesis is to bring Arthur into sharper critical focus.

King Arthur's Modern Return (1998) appears to focus on Arthur, but actually analyses either the cultural effects of his existence – such as the development of children's scout clubs – or the trope of returning itself.[88] In *King Arthur in America* (1999), Alan and Barbara Lupack argue that interest in Arthur in the United States led to a democratisation of the legend, so that Arthur's values became 'accessible to everyone', but readers learn little about Arthur himself beyond the fact that he is protean.[89] Stephanie L. Barczewski's *Myth and National Identity* (2000) argues that the legends of Arthur and his 'doppelgänger' Robin Hood addressed conflicts in the nineteenth century about inclusion and exclusion within the nation.[90] Barczewski analyses Arthur's character and actions, but is more interested in the way authors have used Arthur as a 'vehicle' to carry ideas about national identity.[91] This is more closely focussed than Goodman's 'aerial photograph' approach, but, like Bryden and the Lupacks, still treats Arthur as a mere 'cultural product', whose employment and subsequent effects are the real subjects under discussion.

Previous critics have usually framed their study of Arthurian literature inside defined historical periods, which can be useful in surveying general trends in Arthurian literature, but is not so useful for analysing the variety of ways that authors have written

[87] Inga Bryden, *Reinventing King Arthur: The Arthurian Legends in Victorian Culture* (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2005), p. 3.
[88] *King Arthur's Modern Return*, ed. by Debra N. Mancoff (New York and London: Garland, 1998).
[89] Alan and Barbara Lupack, *King Arthur in America* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), p. 326.
[90] Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[91] Ibid., p. 2.

about Arthur. Bryden begins her study in the 1830s but stops before the 1890s.[92] This limit, explains Bryden, is because of a 'notable shift' at the end of that sixty-year period, when dramatic work replaces prose fiction and poetry in 'Arthurian production', and the '*fin-de-siècle* more clearly abandons the use of Arthurianism as a mode of discussing national, religious and domestic identities'.[93] Bryden's language suggests that Arthurian literature in this period was akin to a factory production line, intentionally changing the focus and format of its output, rather than something more organic, originating from a range of different writers, for a variety of reasons. That is not to say that there was no general shift towards drama, or that it is not worth considering the reasons why this might have happened (as Bryden does) – but the shift is not the whole story. Nineteenth-century authors were not necessarily using the Arthurian legend as a 'mode' to discuss particular topics; whilst some did employ Arthur as a means to explore other subjects – for example, the nature of kingship in Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton – that is usually not all they were doing; the story of Arthur has a narrative importance as well as a potential allegorical meaning. To put too much emphasis on historical trends (like the *fin-de-siècle*) risks reducing the texts, in Bryden's words, to 'cultural products' exclusively formed by their time.[94] Authors writing about Arthur are of course influenced by attitudes from their own immediate surroundings, but they are also typically looking back at a pseudo-historical past age, influenced by a long literary tradition. This is why Arthur is an important cultural barometer – he allows writers and readers to measure what is of the moment (e.g. what constitutes manliness or heroism in their own age) against what might be more lasting (e.g. the fundamental parts of the Arthurian legend, like betrayal and loyalty).

[92] Bryden, *Reinventing*, p. 2.
[93] Ibid., p. 3.
[94] Ibid.

Arthur is difficult to analyse directly because he is a mutable and adaptable signifier, as evidenced by the range of critical approaches outlined above. In 1848, Thomas Miller wrote that, when thinking about Arthur, '[s]omething great and grand seems ever shaping itself before the eye; but ere we are able to seize upon any distinct feature, all is gone, never to appear again'.[95] His words aptly describe the unclear historicity of Arthur, but also Arthur as a literary figure, always changing and never fully realised. In this thesis I argue that the ambiguity of the 'type' concept reflects some of the multiple identities that the figure of Arthur has absorbed or produced in the period under consideration. In particular, I argue that Arthur is both a model for kingship and a private, human character, the two states co-existing in the concept of Arthur as a type (using Henry's scientific definition). I also argue that Arthur is a figure for thinking with as well as thinking about; his unstable cultural meaning enables writers to focus on other unstable, debateable questions through him, such as how far kingship can be reconciled with the growing power of democracy, or what constitutes male heroism. These questions have contemporary relevance but are not necessarily formed by the author's time or circumstances.

My chosen texts explore Arthur's place in literature from his revival in the mid-nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth: a period in which the role of monarchs in an increasingly democratic context is frequently questioned, and which includes the popularisation of chivalry, but also its re-evaluation under the pressures of two world wars. Each chapter provides a case-study of some Arthurian texts that respond to historical shifts which encourage re-evaluations of kingship and the so-called chivalric past. Together their aim is to provide an analysis of the figure of Arthur, and to reveal attitudes about the meaning and value of kingship in the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Examples

[95] Thomas Miller, *History of the Anglo-Saxons: From the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest* (London: Bogue, 1848), p. 78.

of five literary contexts will be examined, and in each a different aspect of kingship, typified by Arthur, is analysed. Chapter One focuses on the relation between Arthur's kingship and his people, as explored in Tennyson's *Idylls*, and Bulwer Lytton's epic poem *King Arthur*. It considers how Arthur's status as a famous model eclipses his private identity. Chapter Two analyses Arthur as a character in a stage production from 1895, and the difficulties in realising, in the theatre, a figure who had grown so large in imaginative scope. This chapter continues the investigation into the public side of Arthur's kingship, but analyses the restricted form permitted by physical representation, rather than the symbolic and ideal forms considered in the previous chapter. Chapter Three moves into the early twentieth century, and considers two authors (Coningsby Dawson and Clemence Housman) who deliberately subverted the popular conception of Arthur, critiquing his character and re-evaluating the ideals Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton associated with him. This re-evaluation is continued by the authors analysed in Chapter Four (David Jones and E.A. Robinson), who address two aspects of Arthur's kingship – his legendary, iconic status, and his role as an authority figure responsible for the deaths of his knights – in relation to the First World War. Lastly, Chapter Five analyses T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*, and the way Arthur is a mediator-figure balanced between two roles: a didactic tool for White's arguments on warfare, and a human individual with personal feelings and desires. It argues that White is the first author to make Arthur's displacement and isolation – an anxiety for earlier writers – positive attributes of Arthur's kingship, enabling the character to think through the problems of warfare with the reader.

These contexts will demonstrate how Arthur typifies different aspects of kingship, and will conclude that authors do not write about Arthur, but instead write *through* Arthur, using him to uncover what constitutes manliness and leadership for them, in their own times and places. Other issues regarding imperialism, nationality, class, and sexual dynamics –

as fundamental to the Arthurian story as leadership and manliness – are discussed when they provide relevant contexts (for instance the imperial context of the 1895 stage production in Chapter Two), but are not part of the primary analysis since other Arthurian scholars have already explored them in detail.[96]

In 1893, William Morris wrote about the Middle Ages, as he understood the period from his historical vantage point at the end of the nineteenth century. For Morris, 'a true insight into the life of the Middle Ages was gained' from a new sense of historical perspective, which avoided the 'dull' approach of the eighteenth century, and the 'sentimental' nostalgia expressed earlier in the nineteenth. Instead, he suggested that people of this period were, in a fundamental sense, no different from those of 1893, and subsequently 'we have no wish (not to say hope) to put back the clock'.[97] May Morris argued that her father's romances – precursors of the fantasy genre – were inhabited by modern personalities, and written by a modern mind, despite being set in a medieval world.[98] The same could be said for Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton, who projected their contemporary ideals of manliness and leadership onto the figure of Arthur; for Housman and Dawson who held Arthur up to contemporary standards of morality; and for Jones, Robinson, and White, who related Arthur to the contemporary wars they were writing about. This trend counters the attitude of the Eglinton organisers that the past was perfect, the present mundane, and the two times both distinct and opposed. Instead, elements of the 'mundane' present are often included in the past world as it is depicted in post-revival Arthurian literature.

---

[96] For examples: the aforementioned Barczewski, *Myth*, which analyses Arthur in the context of British national identity in the nineteenth century, and Bryden, *Reinventing*, which has a chapter on sexual dynamics in Victorian versions of the legend.

[97] William Morris, preface, *Medieval Lore: An Epitome of the Science, Geography, Animal and Plant Folk-lore and Myth of the Middle Age: Being Classified Gleanings from the Encyclopaedia of Bartholomew Anglicus on the Properties of Things* by Bartholomew Anglicus, trans. by John Trevisa, ed. and abr. by Robert Steele (London: Stock, 1893), pp. v-viii (vii).

[98] May Morris, 'Later Years,' in *William Morris, Artist, Writer, Socialist*, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), I, 496-516 (pp. 506 and 514.)

That the figure of Arthur is in one sense ideal, and in another sense merely human, corresponds to the principle that the past is neither wholly ideal nor completely different from a writer's own 'mundane' time. Henry's scientific definition of type neatly describes this split nature of Arthur, and the following chapters will use that definition as the primary framework for analysing the figure of Arthur in different contexts, whilst retaining the complexity in the word 'type', which, like Arthur, has been used to signify different things.

Chapter I

'Larger than Human': Kingship and Human Identity in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur*

i. Arthur and the Victorian Monarchy

This chapter analyses how Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) and Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873) mark Arthur apart from other humans as an ideal figure. One way this idealism is expressed, for both poets but especially Tennyson, is through Arthur's actions as king. The following introductory section outlines some of the anxieties regarding the monarchy as an institution in Britain, aired from the beginning of Victoria's reign, in order to put Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton's ideas about kingship in a contemporary historical context.

Victoria's accession in 1837 catalysed concerns about the nature and preferred gender of monarchs. By extension, it raised questions regarding the role of a monarch in an increasingly democratic British political system that had made autocratic monarchs obsolete. The anonymous *Letter to the Queen on the State of the Monarchy* (1838) poses a question asked 'a million times in the course of the last twelve months' about whether 'the king [is] a mere figure of speech, to represent the executive powers', or whether the king should exercise political power by selecting ministers and be 'a significant figure in our polity' rather than 'a mere cipher'.[1] This question is also asked in Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur* (1848), when, in a vision of what Arthur's rule might be like, 'labour-bow'd [...] Youth [...] wove gay King-robes, muttering "What are Kings?"'[2] The question is not

[1] A Friend of the People, *Letter to the Queen on the State of the Monarchy* (London: Simpkin, 1838), pp. 10-11.
[2] Lord Edward Bulwer Lytton, *King Arthur: A Poem* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1871), 7. XLIV, p. 213.

answered directly, though Bulwer Lytton's Arthur is, himself, a response, as he offers one possible version of what kingship might look like and signify. The difficulty for the author of *Letter* was that Victoria could not easily be a possible version of kingship, because she was not a *king* at all: the 'strength and stamina of kingly power' were exposed to an almost unprecedented crisis because of Victoria's gender and youth (she was eighteen when she became queen). The author asks 'how far can a monarchy stand secure in the nineteenth century, when all the powers of the executive government are entrusted to a woman, and that woman a child[?]'[3] It is easy for us to disregard this concern as mere prejudice, and even in 1838, the *Letter* did not necessarily represent the views of 'the people' the author claimed to be a friend of; *The Dublin University Magazine* called it 'black bile', and *The Monthly Review* thought it exaggerated the crisis it was describing.[4] However, the opposition to the *Letter* arose from its disrespectful tone rather than its misunderstanding of female inferiority, which was widely assumed.[5] Even a poem praising Victoria's 'blameless' reign at the end of the century – echoing Tennyson's description of the 'blameless' Arthur – admitted that 'her woman's acts were weak'.[6] There was in fact a constitutional implication that the rule of a female monarch was an interregnum, until a king re-established normal procedure.[7] As the judge and politician William Blackstone states in *Commentaries* (1753), a queen becomes regent only from 'a failure' in male

[3] *Letter to the Queen*, p. 9.
[4] 'Lord Brougham and his Calumniators—"Letter to the Queen"', in *The Dublin University Magazine: A Literary and Political Journal* (Dublin: Curry, 1839), January 1839, XIII, 104-111 (p. 104); 'Art XI', *The Monthly Review* (London: Henderson, 1839), January 1839, I. 1, pp. 129-36 (129).
[5] See Gail Turley Houston, *Royalties: The Queen and Victorian Writers* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 9-10.
[6] F. Harald Williams, 'Victoria Dei Gratia Regina', in *'Twixt Kiss and Lip: Or Under the Sword*, 3rd edn (London: Gardner, 1896), pp. 148-9; Arthur is referred to as 'the blameless King' six times in *Idylls*, e.g. Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Geraint and Enid', in *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J.M. Gray (London: Penguin, 1983), p. 124.
[7] See Houston, *Royalties*, pp. 14-15.

succession, and her authority is defined according to male terms, having 'the same powers [...] as if she had been a king'.[8]

Gail Houston argues that this bias towards male sovereignty is reflected in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, particularly in its opening dedication to Prince Albert, published a year after his death (in 1862). Albert is the 'father of her [England's] Kings to be', suggesting that he has a central and integral role in the (male) royal institution, whilst Victoria's identity as a female precedes her status as a queen, as if it were more important: she is characterised by her 'woman's-heart', which should 'break not, for thou art royal'.[9] For Houston, Tennyson 'implies that acknowledging the true male possessor of the royal crown is central to the project of *Idylls*', because Albert, rather than Victoria, is presented as the 'active, ruling presence in England'.[10] Houston's reading is valuable, as there is clearly a prejudiced understanding of royalty as essentially male, in Tennyson and other Victorian writers' work – but it is not the whole understanding of royalty in *Idylls.* In the dedication (1862), written shortly after Prince Albert's death, Albert is an 'ideal knight', but he and Victoria 'make one light together'.[11] Tennyson suggests that Victoria contributes to Albert's idealism, and the crown retains 'a splendour' after he dies, even if it is a 'lonely' one.[12]

The Letter to the Queen voiced anxieties about the role of Victoria, and the purpose of the monarchy. The bias towards male sovereignty bleeds into *Idylls*, but the concern about Victoria herself does not, and Tennyson instead uses his Arthurian work to support and reinforce the power of the contemporary monarchy in his 'Dedication' and epilogue. Bulwer Lytton also supports Victoria's sovereignty, legitimising it by a connection to

[8] Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols (London: Cadell, 1825), I, chs 3-4, pp. 195, 219.
[9] Tennyson, 'Dedication', in *Idylls*, ll. 43-4, p. 20.
[10] Houston, *Royalties*, p. 71.
[11] Tennyson, 'Dedication', in *Idylls*, ll. 46-8, p. 20.
[12] Ibid., l. 48, p. 20.

Arthur as the ancient originator of both the British race and the line of British kings. In Book I, Merlin tells Arthur: 'from thy loins a race of kings shall rise', and these kings shall rule an empire larger than Caesar's, on which 'never sets the sun' (an obvious allusion to the British Empire).[13] At the end of the last book, Merlin prophesies that the Saxon race will trace their descendants back to Arthur, and in the note to that passage, Bulwer Lytton suggests this was done through an unnamed daughter meaning that the contemporary monarchy can be related back to Arthur through her.[14] The fact that the link between Arthur and all future kings is supposedly female is a small detail that also acknowledges Victoria's gender in the history of the British monarchy.

For the Queen's Golden Jubilee of 1887, Tennyson depicts Victoria as an ideal figure herself, this time not mentioning (the long-dead) Prince Albert: Victoria is 'crown'd so long with a diadem / Never worn by a worthier'.[15] She also overshadows previous kings who reigned for as long as her: 'Henry's fifty years are all in shadow, / Gray with distance Edward's fifty summers'.[16] Tennyson does not add Arthur to that list, but another writer, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, does compare Victoria to Arthur. In *The Good Hermione: A Story for the Jubilee* (1886), Victoria's life is re-told, using alternative names for contemporary figures and countries, set thousands of years ago in Lyonesse.[17] Hermione, who shares all the characteristics of Victoria, was 'happier and greater than King Arthur', and reigned 'when King Arthur's table was only an acorn'.[18] Braddon not only makes her version of Victoria superior to Arthur in terms of esteem and personal character, but also undermines

[13] Lytton, *Arthur*, 1.LXXXVII, p. 25.
[14] Ibid., note to 12. CXCV, p. 366.
[15] Tennyson, 'Carmen Sæculare. An Ode in Honour of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria', in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1887 (London and New York: Macmillan, 1887), LV, 401-6 (401).
[16] Ibid., p. 404.
[17] [Mary Elizabeth Braddon], Aunt Belinda, *The Good Hermione: A Story for the Jubilee Year* (London: Maxwell, n.d. [preface dated to October 1886]).
[18] Ibid., pp. 7 and 10.

Arthur's role as a mysterious, ancestral foundation for Britain, by setting her queen's reign before his.[19] Arthur's story is even dismissed as 'tarradiddles' by the narrator.[20]

Braddon depicts Victoria as an ideal monarch, but only by turning her into a mythical, semi-fictional figure; the living human Victoria was mythologised as Hermione. Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton sought to do the opposite: not make a real human seem mythical, but make a mythical king, Arthur, seem like a real human, whilst still retaining what makes him special and unique, as an ideal king. The next section introduces the challenges in making Arthur seem both human and distinctive, as well as introducing the texts under analysis in greater detail.

ii. Arthur as 'Majores Humano'

In Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' (1842, later incorporated into *Idylls of the King* in 1869), Sir Bedivere carries the wounded Arthur to the shore of the lake 'looking [...] / Larger than human on the frozen hills'.[21] In one sense, the line refers to Bedivere's larger physical shape: he is 'larger than human' because he is carrying Arthur, and therefore seems to be the size of two combined men. However, the line also relates to a feeling Tennyson had for some past figures. In an unfinished essay on ghosts, written in 1829 when Tennyson was an undergraduate at Cambridge, he refers to the dead as 'colossal Presences of the Past, *majores humano* [larger than human]'.[22] The short fragment does not expand on the

[19] A common attribute of Arthur is that he has no defined beginning or end, making him seem eternal: in Tennyson, for instance Arthur is said to move '"[f]rom the great deep to the great deep"' (Merlin's reference to Arthur appearing on a beach as a baby, and then disappearing across the water to Avalon). Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', *Idylls*, l. 410, p. 32; 'The Passing of Arthur', *Idylls*, l. 445, p. 300.
[20] [Braddon], *Hermione*, p. 7.
[21] Tennyson, 'The Passing of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll. 350-1, p. 297. First published in 1869 but ll .170-440 were originally published in Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' (1842).
[22] [Alfred, Lord Tennyson], 'Ghosts. (Prologue for my Father's Paper Written for the Apostles', in [Hallam Tennyson], *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols (New York and London: Macmillan, 1897), I, 498. The phrase 'humano major' is found in Ovid, *Fasti*, bk II, l. 503, where it describes Romulus.

meaning of this phrase, but the idea is presumably derived from a nostalgic understanding of the past as grander and more glorious than the present (hence the reference to *majores humano*); an idea also expressed by some earlier writers and artists.[23] An early section of *In Memoriam* written in 1834 also uses the phrase 'larger than human' in reference to Tennyson's dead friend Arthur Hallam: '[l]arger than human passes by / The shadow of the man I loved'.[24] The textual history of that phrase suggests that Arthur and Bedivere are not only 'larger than human' in a physical sense, but larger than other humans in a symbolic sense, part of a grander and more glorious past. Tennyson's Arthur is also distinguished from other humans in his own time: to use only one example, Arthur is 'lifted up beyond himself' by his knights, who 'eyed him as a God'.[25]

This chapter focuses on depictions of Arthur that emphasise his idealism in a way that separates him from other humans. Tennyson is one of the authors analysed, and his tendency to depict some past figures as 'larger' than other characters is one way in which he portrays the ideal manhood and leadership that his Arthur embodies. Edward Bulwer Lytton is the other author analysed, who also figures Arthur's idealism in terms that emphasise how distinct he is from other humans. In *King Arthur* (1848, revised in 1849 and 1870), Arthur is repeatedly referred to as a type (here meaning 'best example') of the two ideals of chivalry and fame. Each author takes a different approach to depicting the values Arthur exemplifies, but what they share is a focus on Arthur as a heroic figure rather than an ordinary individual.

---

[23] In 1694 John Dryden described British ancestors as being 'of the giant race, before the Flood' (referencing the Nephilim of the Torah): John Dryden, 'To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve on his Comedy Call'd the Double Dealer' in [William] Congreve, *The Double-dealer, A Comedy* (London: Tomson, 1694) sig. a2r-a3v (a2r). Another example of a similar idea is 'Der Künstler verzweifelnd vor der Grösse der antiken Trümmer' ('The Artist's Despair Before the Grandeur of Ancient Ruins'), a drawing by Henry Fuseli made between 1778-80. In it, Fuseli depicts a male figure weeping beside the disconnected foot and hand of the Colossus of Constantine which dwarf him in size. The man is probably overwhelmed by the level of craftsmanship in the old monument which he can never achieve himself, but the 'grandeur' of the ruin is also expressed by its great size.

[24] Qtd in [Hallam Tennyson], *Memoir*, I, 107.

[25] Tennyson, 'The Last Tournament', in *Idylls*, ll.668-674, p. 265-6.

Alexander Henry's 1861 definition of type – '[t]he perfect normal representation or idea of anything' – is an especially useful lens through which to view Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton's conceptions of Arthur.[26] The 'perfect […] representation' part of the definition reflects the idealism the two poets want to convey through Arthur, but it also hints at a tension between this idealism and human individuality (the 'normal' part of the representation). The latent semantic tension in metaphor – between tenor and vehicle, which are related but never precisely the same – is exacerbated in the figure of Tennyson's and Bulwer Lytton's Arthur. Though regarded in idealistic terms expressed through metaphor – he is god-like in Tennyson and the embodiment of chivalry in Bulwer Lytton – Arthur is still, nevertheless, a single human character.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning also used language of scale and size to describe the figure of Arthur in 1859, just as Tennyson had used magnifying language to convey his admiration for past figures. The first set of Tennyson's *Idylls* inevitably disappointed Browning, because Arthur and his story were 'too large an idea to fit a reality', and were impossible to articulate fully in words.[27] One reason why Arthur may have seemed 'too large an idea' was because, even in 1859, there was a variety of works and versions of texts about Arthur, and no clear authoritative edition. Even though Malory's *Morte Darthur* became the primary version of the legend for most readers in the nineteenth century, multiple versions of Malory emerged for different audiences. In 1816, Thomas Malory's Arthurian work was republished after a 182-year hiatus, in two separate editions: a two-volume version edited by Alexander Chalmers, and a three-volume edition edited by Joseph Haslewood. Both were in part based on the last edition to be printed, the Stansby version

[26] Alexander Henry, 'Type', *A Glossary of Scientific Terms for General Use* (London: Walton, 1861), p. 194.
[27] Letter from Elizabeth Barrett Browning to William Allingham, 9 October 1859, in *Letters to William Allingham*, ed. by H. Allingham and E. Baumer Williams (London: Longmans, Green, 1911) pp. 102-4 (104). Quoted in Ricks, *Tennyson*, p. 253. First published 1972.

of 1634, itself a reprint (East, 1578) of a reprint (Copland, 1557) of a reprint (Worde, 1529). A third version was published in the following year (1817), based on Caxton's printing from 1485. This was followed by seven other editions, some of which were abridged or bowdlerised according to their intended audience – for example, Edward Strachey's 1868 edition removed plot elements including incest and Galahad's illegitimacy.[28] A 1900 edition justified the inclusion of later editorial changes 'because even a printer's conjecture gains a little sanctity after four centuries.'[29] Even this short summary of publishing history demonstrates that Arthur existed within and across a wide range of different printed forms in this period, as if all the versions collectively made him 'too large' to be contained in a single text.

The Arthurian poems of Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton draw on the complex textual history of the figure of Arthur, and are themselves complex works, composed of multiple parts rewritten at different times. In 1832, Tennyson published 'The Lady of Shalott', which references Lancelot, Camelot, and a version of Elaine. This was followed, in 1842, with 'Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere', 'Sir Galahad', and 'Morte d'Arthur'. The last poem was incorporated into *Idylls of the King* in 1869, Tennyson's major Arthurian work, published in instalments from 1859 to 1885. It was one of the longest and most ambitious treatments of the Arthurian legend since the staging of Dryden and Purcell's King Arthur opera (1691), and the publication of Richard Blackmore's two epic Arthurian poems (1695-7). *Idylls* was also one of the most successful: when the first four parts were published in 1859, they sold 11,000 copies in one month in the United States alone.[30] A further four

[28] Thomas Malory, *Morte Darthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and of His Noble Knights of the Round Table*, ed. by Edward Strachey (London: Macmillan, 1868).
[29] A.W. Pollard, 'Bibliographical Note', in Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and of his Noble Knights of the Round Table*, ed. by A.W. Pollard, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1900), I, i-viii (p. viii).
[30] See James D. Hart, *The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, [1950]), p. 131.

parts, included in *The Holy Grail and Other Poems* in 1870, had a pre-publication order of 40,000 copies in the United Kingdom.[31]

There are twelve narrative poems in *Idylls*, two of which focus directly on Arthur ('The Coming of Arthur' and 'The Passing of Arthur', which bookend the collection), though Arthur also features prominently in 'Guinevere' and is mentioned throughout the other nine poems. The narrative arc spans from Arthur establishing himself as king to his disappearance on the barge after his battle against Mordred. It follows the same outline that occurs in Malory, though Tennyson deliberately obscured his sources, conflating plots and characters from Malory, French romances, and *The Mabinogion* of Lady Charlotte Guest, with social customs and imagery drawn from the Renaissance, the Anglo-Saxons, and his own time.[32] Herbert F. Tucker considers it part epic and part domestic novel, as 'Tennyson frequently raises epic possibilities and then as frequently shunts them aside'.[33] These narrative shifts are possible in the blank verse adopted for *Idylls*, which glides between colloquial speech and elevated diction.

Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur* is a narrative poem composed in six-line stanzas, with a strict ababcc rhyming scheme (probably modelled on the ababbcbcc scheme in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*). This form lacks the freedom of Tennyson's blank verse, and some lines appear to be constructed to fit the scheme and not necessarily because they provide clear narration. Bulwer Lytton described the form of his poem using Alexander Pope's definition of epic, which is comprised of 'the Probable, the Allegorical, and the

[31] See Ciaran Cronin, *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman, and Antony H. Harrison (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), p. 357.
[32] See J. Philip Eggers, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), pp. 7-8.
[33] Herbert F. Tucker, *Epic: Britain's Heroic Muse 1790-1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 387-8.

Marvellous'.[34] Bulwer Lytton's Arthur accordingly had some historical and national grounding: his home location in South Wales matches the theory of a historical Celtic Arthur, and therefore satisfies the 'Probable' requirement. In addition, Bulwer Lytton's Arthur is repeatedly described as a 'type' – primarily used here to mean model or symbol – of fame and chivalry (satisfying the 'Allegorical' requirement), and engaged in supernatural adventures (the 'Marvellous'). For Tucker, *King Arthur* consists of so many narrative modes that 'Bulwer Lytton cannot decide where to get a purchase on his Arthurian materials, or where to put an Arthur who will obviously not stay at home'.[35]

The plot moves Arthur away from his kingly duties, and sets him on a quest to save his subjects. It begins with a young, unmarried Arthur seeing a vision of the Saxons conquering his lands (which are identified as South Wales). Merlin advises him to set off on a quest for a magic sword, a magic shield, and a virgin guide, which will all help him protect his people. Led by a dove, Arthur arrives in the Alps, where Queen Æglè falls in love with him. Arthur is called away by Merlin to continue his quest, and the Queen drowns herself when he leaves, recalling the fate of Queen Dido when Aeneas leaves her, most famously in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Bulwer Lytton gives Arthur the same role in order to reinforce the epic pretensions of his work. Arthur then visits the realm of the Lady of the Lake (where he wins the sword), journeys to Norway (where he acquires the shield), and returns home, where the dove merges with Saxon princess Genevieve, his virgin guide. Arthur battles with the Saxons and returns to rescue Genevieve from being burnt as a sacrifice, reworking one of the few episodes shared with other versions of the legend (Lancelot rescuing

[34] Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, preface, *King Arthur*, 2 vols (London: Colburn, 1849), I, pp. x-xi; Alexander Pope, 'Preface to Homer's Iliad', in *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, 6 vols (London: Bathurst, etc. 1787), IV, 268-296, (p. 271). First published 1715. Pope himself built on the work of Aristotle.

[35] Herbert F. Tucker, 'Epic', in *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman, and Antony H. Harrison (N.P.: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), *Blackwell Reference Online* <http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631222071_chunk_g97806312220715> [accessed 14 April 2013].

Guinevere). Arthur performs roles drawn from both epic poetry and medieval romance, making *King Arthur* a combination of the two, within a Bildungsroman frame.

When Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton began writing about the Arthurian legend, Arthurian literature was not crowded with different versions as it would be by the end of the century – though it was far from being an untouched subject, as demonstrated by the publishing history of Malory from 1816 onwards. Even from the start of the century there had been multiple depictions of Arthur – for example, a short poem published in 1815 about Arthur's return, or a 157-stanza poem begun in 1810 and published in 1830.[36] Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton were also aware of each other's work. When *King Arthur* was first published in 1848, Tennyson had already published four treatments of the Arthurian legend, and by the time the first four parts of *Idylls* were released in 1859, Bulwer Lytton's work had been available for eleven years. Both poets were supposedly inspired to write about Arthur independently in their youth, but when they later engaged in their large literary projects, they would have known of the complexity and broad appeal of the subject.[37] Consequently, both poets were aware of the multiple forms that Arthur could take.

As well as a complex publishing history, the figure of Arthur also has a confused historicity, and this is also reflected in Tennyson's and Bulwer Lytton's works. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Sharon Turner's *The History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1799–1805) discussed the 'authentic History of Arthur', listing Arthur's location, occupation, and actions. The idea that the historical Arthur did not exist was, for Turner,

[36] Louisa Stuart Costello, 'A Dream', in *The Maid of Cyprus Isle and Other Poems* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1815), pp. 56-8; Reginald Heber, 'Morte D'Arthur: A Fragment', in [Amelia Shipley Heber], *The Life of Reginald Heber*, 2 vols (New York: Protestant Episcopal Press, 1830), II, 485-525. For a detailed list of Arthurian allusions and texts published from the start of the 19th century, see Roger Simpson, *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-1849* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), Appendix C, pp. 267-70.

[37] Bulwer Lytton claimed his inspiration came in 'earliest youth': Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, preface, *King Arthur* (1871), p. vii. According to Hallam Tennyson, his father began writing about Arthur in his 'earliest years': *Memoir*, II, 121.

'as wild as the romances' written by 'the minstrels and Jeffrey [of Monmouth]' who 'disfigured' the 'authentic actions of Arthur'.[38] Fifty years later, the concept of a real or 'authentic' Arthur could still be referred to, but when in 1856 Thomas Miller updated Turner's work, he was less confident than Turner regarding how much could be known about that earlier version of Arthur.[39] Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton include this sense of indistinctness in their characterisations of Arthur, though unlike Miller they do not think Arthur is lost in the past. Instead, both poets compare Arthur to a phantom, making him seem mysterious and shadowy, but also suggesting he will keep returning like a haunting presence. This is one way the poets distinguish Arthur from other humans.

In Tennyson's 'The Coming of Arthur', the knights are 'pale as the passing of a ghost' when Arthur binds them to follow him.[40] In the penultimate idyll, 'Guinevere', Arthur's voice is 'like a Ghost's', and departs enveloped in mist, so that he 'seemed the phantom of a Giant [...] moving ghostlike to his doom' (again, Arthur is conceived in physically large terms).[41] It is rumoured that Arthur is merely 'a shadow', and Leodagrance dreams of him as 'the phantom king / Now looming, and now lost' by haze on a mountain peak.[42] Arthur is furthermore supposed to be a 'fairy king', though this is only rumoured, by 'some' who also predict that Arthur is destined for 'Fairyland'.[43] Arthur's relation to fairies is taken from Spenser's *The Fairie Queene*, where it is Arthur's destiny to marry the Fairy Queene and so become the Fairie King. Tennyson incorporates aspects of Arthur's reputation – that he is ghostly because of his unclear historicity, and fairylike because of

[38] Sharon Turner, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1807), pp. 97, 101-2.
[39] See Thomas Miller, *History of the Anglo-Saxons: From the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest. Compiled from the Best Authorities, Including Sharon Turner*, 3rd edn (London: Bohn, 1861), p. 78.
[40] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll.260-5, p. 28.
[41] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, ll. 416-8 and ll. 597-601, pp. 280 and 284.
[42] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll. 426-39, p. 32.
[43] Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette', in *Idylls*, ll. 199-204 and ll. 260-2, pp. 41 and 43.

his portrayal in other literature, as rumours of Arthur's character in *Idylls*. These are not intrinsic characteristics; instead, it is only suggested by others that Arthur is supernatural.

In Bulwer Lytton, Arthur encounters 'phantoms' who guide him on four separate occasions.[44] They are described as 'weird, and phantom-seeming [...] dim-outlined [...] shapeless, as in noon-day hangs a cloud', and they advise Arthur on what to do.[45] Arthur is the only one who meets these ghosts, and is described as physically similar to them when 'the pale King stands by the pale Phantom's side'.[46] The comparison with shapeless phantoms is apt for Arthur, who rules over '[g]hosts on the margin' – Welsh people displaced by Mercians – and whose image, writes Bulwer Lytton in the preface, is surrounded by 'confused myths'.[47] Arthur himself is not said to be ghost-like in Bulwer Lytton, as he is in Tennyson, but the figure is still related to ghosts by association.

By depicting Arthur as a ghostly figure, Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton distinguish him from other characters as someone mysterious and otherworldly. Both poets also distinguish Arthur by emphasising how ideal he is, either as a manly hero (Bulwer Lytton) or a moral paragon (Tennyson). If we consider Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton's versions of Arthur alongside Henry's classification of type, then the scales are tipped more towards 'perfect' (having ideal attributes, as defined by these two poets) than 'normal' (fundamentally the same as other human characters). The following two sections analyse how the poets portray Arthur as an ideal man and ideal king (in different ways), and then a third section considers how the poets attempt to relate Arthur, as an ideal figure, to other humans (both his fictional subjects and the readers of the texts). This chapter treats *Idylls* as a single unified work in order to understand Tennyson's overall depiction of Arthur, with

[44] In Lytton, *Arthur*, books 1, 5, 7, and 11.
[45] Ibid., 1. XIII, p. 6.
[46] Ibid., 5. XCIX, p. 160. Arthur is also called 'the pale King' at 10.XXV, p. 299.
[47] Ibid., 1. LVI. p. 17; preface, p. viii.

reference to the first publication dates of individual poems to illustrate development or contradictions.[48]

iii. Arthur's Masculinity in Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton

Tennyson changes several aspects of Arthur's story from the version found in Malory, removing both Arthur's incest with Morgause and his attempt to kill Mordred as a baby. Tennyson's Mordred is merely the son of Lot, who disrupts the Round Table because of his hatred for Lancelot, and acts against Arthur according to his 'beast'-like nature.[49] Similar changes were made to Malory's *Morte Darthur* by some Victorian editors, who attempted to market the text to a particular audience and purpose (for J.T. Knowles in 1862 and Strachey in 1868, Malory was primarily for young boys, for whom a story of incest would be inappropriate and would also confuse the moral teachings expressed elsewhere in the text).[50] Tennyson explained the reasons for his own changes to the legend in 'To the Queen' (1873), where he also responds to concerns he voiced in 'The Epic' (1842): why should a poet write about an old subject rather than a contemporary one ('why should any man / Remodel models?').[51] The answer is that the *Idylls* is not just a reworking of an old story, but something 'new-old', developing and updating previous versions of the Arthurian

[48] Other critics have considered it to only be 'a collection of so many short poems' and 'a group of chivalric tableaux'. See George L. Craik, *A Compendious History of English Literature, and of the English Language, from the Norman Conquest*, 2 vols (New York: Scribner, 1863), II, 557; Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 172.
[49] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, ll. 10-20, p. 269.
[50] Knowles 'suppressed and modified where changed manners and morals made it absolutely necessary to do so,' making a distinction between 'English boys to devour its tales of adventure' (for whom the current version was intended) and 'English men to study' the text (who could look at the unabridged version). See J[ames] T[homas] K[nowles], *The Story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table* (London: Griffith and Farran, 1862), p. i. Six years later, Strachey produced a bowdlerised version of Malory for 'ordinary readers, and especially for boys, from whom the chief demand for this book will always come'. See Edward Strachey, introduction, Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. by Edward Strachey, p. xvii.
[51] Alfred Tennyson, 'The Epic' in *Poems*, 2 vols (Boston: Ticknor, 1842), II, 1-3 (p. 3).

legend.[52] Tennyson's Arthur is explicitly said not to be the same as Malory's, who was 'touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time / That hovered between war and wantonness'; Tennyson has given himself licence to reconstruct the figure of Arthur in a more refined, morally perfect form.[53]

Some writers did not regard Tennyson's version of Arthur as an improvement on Malory's. In particular, Bulwer Lytton and Swinburne criticised him for being unmanly. For Bulwer Lytton, Tennyson's writing lacked a 'masculine quality', and he wondered how 'any *man* could reconcile himself to dwarf such mythical characters as Arthur [...] into a whimpering old gentleman'.[54] Bulwer Lytton's own concept of manliness was formed by early nineteenth-century dandyism, and Bulwer Lytton might have thought Tennyson's Arthur too plain and simple to be considered a real man.[55] Two foci of dandyism are physical appearance and refined speech, and besides having a beard and blonde hair, there are almost no indications of what Tennyson's Arthur looks like. The description of him speaking with 'simple words of great authority' in 'The Coming of Arthur' could equally be applied to most of his other lines of dialogue.[56] Bulwer Lytton's Arthur is not quite a dandy, but neither is he as plain and simple as Tennyson's Arthur. At the start of the poem, it is implied that he is young and beautiful (he is 'the worthy centre of a glittering crowd / Of youth and beauty') and his speech is never 'simple', but always delivered in the same style as the rest of the poem, rich in imagery and metaphor ('When falcons spread the wing / They face the sun, not tremble at the gale' is Arthur's way of explaining why kings should

[52] Tennyson, 'To the Queen', in *Idylls*, l. 37, p. 302.
[53] Ibid., ll. 39-44, p. 302.
[54] Letter from Edward Bulwer Lytton to Mrs Halliday, 1871, qtd in [Victor Bulwer Lytton], *The Life of Edward Bulwer: First Lord Lytton*, 2 vols, (London: Macmillan, 1913), I, 431. Original emphasis.
[55] Bulwer Lytton was himself accused of effeminacy; as biographer Leslie Mitchell writes, his conception of masculinity seemed old-fashioned by the mid-nineteenth century, by others who regarded manliness as more concerned with activity and strength. See Leslie Mitchell, *Bulwer Lytton: The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Man of Letters* (Hambledon and London: Macmillan, 2003), pp. 87-94.
[56] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, l. 260, p. 28.

protect their countries).[57] Bulwer Lytton's Arthur also seems more emotive than Tennyson's, and this emotion is related to the idea of manliness. When Arthur sees a vision of a world rife with despair and famine, he turns away 'with indignant tears in manly eyes'.[58] Tennyson's Arthur expresses his emotions in a more restrained way: when he confronts Guinevere in the convent, his voice is '[m]onotonous and hollow'.[59] Bulwer Lytton's dandyism helps explain why he objected to Tennyson's Arthur, and why his own version of Arthur is comparatively less reserved and plain.

A.C. Swinburne also found fault with the masculinity of Tennyson's Arthur, considering the character as he is in *Idylls* to be so 'ideal' and morally perfect that 'this king is hardly "man at all" [...] by the very exaltation of his hero as something more than man he has left him in the end something less'.[60] The issue is not just that Tennyson's Arthur acts in a way that is too morally perfect to be believable, but that the form this moral idealism takes is also 'unmanly'. Arthur is 'pure as any maid', according to Tennyson's Vivien, and Swinburne's own depiction of Arthur (1857-8) deliberately opposes this, when it is specified that Arthur is 'no maid'.[61] For Swinburne, Arthur must be active and imperfect (or at least sexualised) to be manly – and Tennyson's version is 'less' than this conception of masculinity. More recently, Elliot L. Gilbert has argued that Arthur fulfils a female role in *Idylls,* by drawing his authority from 'a benign nature and […] female energy' rather than patrilineal descent.[62] In this analysis, Arthur is a 'female king' in a symbolic sense, used to explore 'the advantages and dangers of sexual role reversal'.[63] The

[57] Lytton, *Arthur,* 1. VIII, p. 5 and 1. LXXXIX, p. 25.
[58] Ibid., 7. LI, p. 213.
[59] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, l. 417, p. 280.
[60] [Algernon Charles Swinburne], 'Under the Microscope', in *Swinburne Replies,* ed. by Clyde Kenneth Hyder (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966), pp. 35-88 (58). First published in 1872.
[61] Tennyson, 'Balin and Balan', in *Idylls*, l. 472, p. 137; [Swinburne], 'The Day before the Trial', in *Arthurian Poets: A.C. Swinburne*, ed. by James P. Carley (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), pp. 299-300.
[62] Elliot L. Gilbert, 'The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse', *PMLA,* 98 (Oct., 1983), 863-878 (875).
[63] Ibid., p. 895.

contemporary concerns over Arthur's manliness have an effect on whether Arthur is considered realistically human or a symbol of good moral character that transcends common definitions of masculinity: if Arthur can be understood as a man (however that is defined), then he is not merely a symbol.[64]

Clinton Machann identifies three main normative conceptions of masculinity in the Victorian era: the ascetic discipline of Carlyle, the mid-century 'muscular Christianity' of Charles Kingsley, and a late nineteenth-century eclecticism.[65] Machann argues that Tennyson's Arthur does not conform to the 'monastic asceticism' of Carlyle and the pre-Raphaelites because he wishes to be 'join'd with' Guinevere, to 'live together as one life', and in doing so, to have 'power on this dark land to lighten it'.[66] Arthur wants Guinevere to augment himself, so that he can achieve more than he could on his own, in the same way that Albert and Victoria make 'one light' in the dedication.[67] Bulwer Lytton's Arthur has a similar relationship with his wife, Genevieve; although she is barely mentioned in the text, Arthur's companion and guide, the dove, later merges with Genevieve before she marries Arthur at the end of the poem, and it is therefore implied that Guinevere's role is to continue guiding Arthur, complementing his work as king.[68] The dove also enables Arthur to prove his honour: in Book VII, Arthur refuses to sacrifice his dove for the greater good, because he could not live with the dishonour of 'man's worst meanness' were he to kill his 'sweet companion'.[69] This ideal – that through love, a woman can enable a man to fulfil a greater potential – has a long history, traceable to the medieval courtly love tradition, in which

[64] The same would be true if Arthur did not conform to a gender in a non-symbolic way (if he were pan-gendered, neither male nor female), but that is different from what the critics above are arguing.
[65] Clinton Machann, *Masculinity in Four Victorian Epics: A Darwinist Reading* (Farnham UK and Burlington USA: Ashgate, 2010), p. 15 and 42.
[66] Ibid., pp. 42-3, quoting 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll. 85-95, p. 23.
[67] Tennyson, 'Dedication', in *Idylls*, ll. 46-7, p. 20.
[68] Lytton, *Arthur*, 11. CLIX, p. 365. However, the homosocial bond between Arthur and Lancelot appears to be a closer connection: Lancelot shows his loyalty to the king by claiming that he 'live[s]' in Arthur 'as the mother / Lives in her child, [and] the planet in the sky': 12. XXV, p. 377.
[69] Ibid., 7. XCI and XCIV, p. 224.

women can be an ennobling influence.[70] For Tennyson's Arthur, female influence is part of what defines ideal masculinity: loving one maiden can 'keep down the base in man' by teaching their lovers 'high thought, and amiable words / And courtliness, and the desire of fame, / And love of truth, and all that makes a man'.[71]

For Stephen Ahern, Guinevere is the most 'fully human figure in the *Idylls*' because she refuses to conform to the model of courtly love advocated by Arthur, which would benefit his own work as king at the expense, argues Ahern, of her own individuality and will.[72] In other words, Guinevere seems human to Ahern because she acts for herself, rather than being an emblem, like 'the angel in the house', or else a didactic example of the fallen, dangerous woman (which is what Guinevere is accused of being, but not necessarily, Ahern argues, what she is). In his relationship with Guinevere, Arthur stands as the paragon of purity – he tells her he was 'ever virgin save for thee' – seemingly lacking the flaws that make Guinevere a more realistically human figure.[73]

Both Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton thus place greater focus on Arthur's work as a heroic figure, rather than on any masculine qualities that might have highlighted his humanity. The next section will explore Arthur as king, and the goals he pursues, in greater detail. To begin with, the section will focus on Tennyson's *Idylls*.

iv. The Nature of Kingship in Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton

[70] See Stephen Ahern, 'Listening to Guinevere: Female Agency and the Politics of Chivalry in Tennyson's *Idylls*', *Studies in Philology*, 101 (Winter, 2004), 88-112 (pp. 89-90).
[71] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, ll. 477-80, p. 281. This list of positive qualities would appeal to Thomas Hughes, whose conception of Christian manliness advocates self-restraint, loyalty to truth, and not necessarily physical strength (marking a difference from Kingsley), though for Hughes the inspiration comes from following Christ rather than loving a maiden. See Thomas Hughes, *The Manliness of Christ* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1880), pp. 28-9. First published 1879.
[72] Ahern, 'Listening', p. 97.
[73] Ahern does include the possibility that Arthur may be lying about his sexual history, however: ibid., p. 108; Tennyson, 'Guinevere' in *Idylls*, p. 283, l. 554.

Tennyson uses both upper and lower case versions of 'kingly', and the distinction between these two forms correlates with the concept of the king's two bodies. This legal notion distinguishes between the king as a mortal human being – a body natural – and as one who inhabits a body politic, which is a legal and corporate entity continuing after the deaths of individual monarchs, defined by eternal natural law. The idea was formulated in the Middle Ages, but the corporate nature of the monarch was also discussed by Victorian jurists.[74] In 1895, F.W. Maitland and Frederick Pollock questioned whether the monarch was 'merely a natural person' or whether there was also, in a legal sense, 'some non-natural, ideal person' beside or within him.[75] The fact that 'natural' and 'ideal' are opposing options suggests that, for Pollock, a king cannot be both an ideal leader and a natural, living human at the same time; he cannot be the perfect embodiment of the legal notion of kingship without also being 'non-natural'. This tension between idealism and humanity runs throughout *Idylls*.

Tennyson appears to use upper-case 'King' to designate the continuous body politic of kingship, and lower-case 'king' in reference to Arthur's body natural. When Arthur draws the princedoms to his rule in 'The Coming of Arthur', Tennyson uses the lower-case 'king', because Arthur is acting as an individual leader, rather than as the embodiment of the enduring institution of monarchy.[76] Arthur is not only 'king' when he does this, though: he is, more fully, 'king and head'.[77] Richard D. Mallen uses this description as evidence for the dual-kingship model, where 'king' refers to Arthur's body

[74] See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 7-10. Originally published 1957. Richard D. Mallen contextualises the concept in the nineteenth century, in 'The "Crowned Republic" of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*', *Victorian Poetry*, 37.3 (Fall, 1999), 275-290 (p. 277).
[75] Sir Frederick Pollock and Frederick William Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Boston: Little, Brown, 1895), I, §13, p. 495.
[76] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, l. 19, p. 21.
[77] Ibid.

natural, and 'head' to the enduring body politic of kingship.[78] In 'Guinevere', Tennyson uses the upper-case 'King' when referring to the institution of kingship that his knights must swear loyalty to: Arthur 'made them [his knights] lay their hands in mine and swear / To reverence the King, as if he were / Their conscience'. [79]

Tennyson also emphasises the importance of Arthur's knights in the consolidation of his power. Arthur's realm is formed by 'the puissance of his Table Round'.[80] In 'Gareth and Lynette', Arthur tells Kay that '[w]e sit King, to help the wrong'd / Thro all the realm'.[81] Arthur may be using the majestic plural, or he may be referring to his court as collectively acting the role of the body politic. A few lines further on, he says 'I may judge the right, / according to the justice of the King', once again separating himself (his body natural) from the monarchy.

In 'The Last Tournament' (1871), Dagonet accuses Tristram of

> babble [...] to show your wit –
> And whether he [Arthur] were King by courtesy
> or King by right.[82]

Dagonet is referring to the question of Arthur's lineage, discussed in the first idyll (1869): is Arthur the son of the previous king (which would mean he has a hereditary claim), or have others merely permitted him to assume kingship, because they have been tricked by Merlin or convinced by Arthur's charisma? Did Arthur inherit the crown, or win it? If Arthur is king 'by right', he would still be a king (in a metaphorical sense) even if he were deposed and had no power. If Arthur is king by courtesy, he is only king so long as he occupies that role. What hinges on this distinction is whether Tennyson conceived of Arthur as innately special compared with most other humans, or whether his Arthur is, on a

[78] Mallen, '"Crowned"', p. 279.
[79] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, ll. 465-6, p. 281.
[80] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, l. 17, p. 21.
[81] Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette' in *Idylls*, ll. 363-4, p. 46.
[82] Tennyson, 'The Last Tournament', in *Idylls*, ll. 340-2, p. 257.

fundamental level, an unremarkable human who simply becomes remarkable by taking on the role of king.

There is also a third possibility, which combines the two previous options. 'King' might be a state that Arthur is born into, as well as being a description of his performance and role. A person who was not born king could act in a kingly way; a crowned king might also lack attributes other kings possess. At times, Tennyson suggests that Arthur performs the role of king: when Arthur lies dying at the end of *Idylls*, for example, he remembers wearing Excalibur 'like a king' all his life, as if it were a role he had adopted.[83] Arthur also has a powerful kingly presence, which Gareth feels when he sees Arthur for the first time, beholding 'the splendour of the presence of the King'.[84] Since the splendour is attributed to the 'presence' of Arthur, and not merely his royal rank, it is evidence for Arthur's own personal charisma reinforcing his position as king. Tennyson also includes the possibility that the appearance of kingship is only a façade, and that kingly behaviour is not a sufficient condition for kingship: acting in a kingly way implies one is a king, but does not confer it as by right. In 'Gareth and Lynette', it is rumoured that 'this King is not the King, / But only changeling', and that Camelot does not physically exist, but is 'all vision'.[85] Some commentators on the Eglinton Tournament suggested that behaving like a jousting knight would make that person chivalrous by default, but there is no evidence that the same belief is present in *Idylls*.[86] In his 1832 *Poems*, Tennyson rejects mere appearance: in the prefatory verses to 'The Palace of Art', the speaker argues that 'Beauty, Good, and Knowledge' are always linked, and 'Beauty' should not be loved alone.[87] Arthur is even used in an example

[83] Tennyson, 'The Passing of Arthur', in *Idylls*, l. 201, p. 293.
[84] Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette', in *Idylls*, ll. 311-13, p. 44.
[85] Ibid., ll. 199-200, p. 41.
[86] See 'The Eglinton Tournament', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine for 1839*, November 1839, (Edinburgh: Tait; London: Simpkin; Dublin: Cumming, 1839) VI, 697-716 (p. 713) and the analysis of Eglinton in the Introduction.
[87] Alfred Tennyson, 'To ———, With the Following Poem', *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1833 [December 1832]), pp. 68-9.

of isolated beauty. The main poem describes a palace constructed to promote beauty alone, and one of the subjects portrayed in the palace is Arthur in Avalon, who is simply 'dozing [...] on sloping greens' without any other context, and with no indication of his character or virtues.[88] Tennyson continued to critique mere appearance in 'Lady Clara Vere de Vere' (1842), where he extols moral virtue over heraldry – 'a simple maiden in her flower / Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms'.[89]

Tennyson rather suggests that Arthur's kingship is part of his innate character. A time before Arthur was made king is described, in retrospect, in 'Lancelot and Elaine', when Arthur was 'roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse'.[90] However, it is specified that this was only before Arthur was 'crown'd', and not necessarily before he was king, in a symbolic, and not yet publicly recognised, sense. A few lines later, Arthur feels a murmuring 'in his heart' saying 'thou likewise shalt be King', even before he knows how this might happen, suggesting that Arthur's kingship is to some extent predestined, either by divine sanction or simply because of his royal blood, and can be felt privately before it is acknowledge publicly.

In 'Gareth and Lynette' (1872), Bellicent says of Arthur:

> in mine own heart I knew him King
> When I was frequent with him in my youth,
> And heard him Kingly speak.[91]

Despite this, Arthur is still 'not proven King' according to Bellicent; though she knows he is 'King', others do not. In response, Gareth argues for Arthur's kingship according to action and effect, rather than behaviour or tone. 'Not proven, who [...] made the people

[88] Tennyson, 'The Palace of Art', *Poems*, XVII, p. 74.
[89] Tennyson, 'Lady Clara Vere de Vere', in *Tennyson's Shorter Poems & Lyrics 1833-1842*, ed. by Beatrice C. Mulliner (London: Oxford University Press, Henrey Frowde, 1909), p. 37. Tennyson may have been thinking of his uncle, who built an elaborate medieval shell around his manor house, adorned it with armour from the Eglinton Tournament, and changed his name to Tennyson d'Eyncourt.
[90] Tennyson, 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, l. 35, p. 169.
[91] Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette', in *Idylls*, p. 39, ll. 121-3. Bellicent is Tennyson's version of Morgause, Arthur's half-sister.

free? Who should be King save him who makes us free?' he asks. In this exchange, Arthur is first deemed 'Kingly' by an innate feeling of the 'heart', presumably generated by his charisma, but he is then proven 'King' by his actions (freeing others). Bellicent's assertion that she 'knew him king' before that title had been proven by wide acceptance by the barony is related to the idea of innate kingship, which was a contemporary concept even in Tennyson's time. Seven years before 'Gareth', John Ruskin argued that kingship, 'crowned or not', is derived from 'a stronger moral state' than others, and is determined by an 'eternal law'.[92] Five years later, *Victoria Magazine* reviewed *The Holy Grail and Other Poems* (which includes the 'Coming' and 'Passing of Arthur', alongside 'Pelleas' and 'Grail'). The reviewer wrote of 'the innate Kingliness of his [Arthur's] character' that had been 'revealed with all its grace and courtesy'.[93] This is not based on mere performance, as these manners are related to his actions and innate character: '[t]hough having but a doubtful title to the throne, he was born to rule through innate force of character. He was the true king, or able man, according to Carlyle's definition of the word'.[94] In 'The Hero as King', a lecture delivered by Carlyle in 1840, a heroic king is defined as 'The Ablest Man [...] the truest-hearted, justest, the Noblest Man', who tells the public 'what to do'.[95] A distinction is made here between hereditary kingship and the hero as king; a person does not become a hero as king simply by being crowned, but instead an 'Able-man' will become a hero as king because he has the right characteristics and acts forcefully.[96] Following this particular definition, as *Victoria Magazine* does, Arthur's kingship is determined independently of

[92] John Ruskin, 'Of Queens' Gardens', in *Sesame and Lilies: Two Lectures Delivered at Manchester in 1864* (London: Smith, Elder, 1865), p. 121.
[93] 'Review of Books', *Victoria Magazine* (London: Faithful, 1870), February 1870, XIV, 376-83 (377).
[94] Ibid., p. 381.
[95] Carlyle, 'Lecture VI: The Hero as King. Cromwell, Napoleon; Modern Revolutionism', in Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus (1831). Lectures on Heroes (1840)* (London: Chapman & Hall, n.d), pp. 332-68 (332).
[96] Carlyle, 'Hero as King', p. 334.

his royal heritage, not because of it: he is the 'Able-man' because he has become king by force, drawing 'in the petty princedoms under him' and battling '[t]he heathen hordes'.[97]

Carlyle's model corresponds to the idea that 'right is might' – the antithesis of T.H. White's Arthur in the 1940s, as discussed in Chapter Five – and Carlyle even derives the etymology of 'king' as '[m]an that *knows* or *cans* [*sic*]'.[98] Tennyson's Arthur does not completely conform to Carlyle's conception of kings; after Arthur establishes his power by force he seems to be much less active (as is usually the case in medieval versions of Arthur's story). According to Guinevere, Arthur becomes '[r]apt in this fancy of his Table Round', and has a 'vast design and purpose', but there is no evidence of the 'constant practical teaching' that Carlyle advocates.[99] Mallen argues that Tennyson deliberately portrays a figurehead monarchy.[100] An increasingly enfranchised public – the Reform Act of 1867 doubled the number of men who could vote, particularly in the urban working class – made the continuing appearance of absolute power in royal ceremonies seem redundant; but Arthur's lack of legislative action, argues Mallen, openly demonstrates the actual, ceremonial, nature of monarchy as it was conceived in the late nineteenth century. For Mallen, this is a positive portrayal of kingship, celebrating constitutional monarchy, but this view is arrived at with historical hindsight. *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1893) did not think that Arthur's lack of practical governance was a reflection of how a contemporary figurehead monarchy should work, but rather an encapsulation of the gulf between practicality and idealism. Arthur's realm is 'unreformable', not for any personal fault of the king's, but because Arthur is 'hemmed by the limitations of his fellows', who cannot

[97] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll. 516-8, p. 35.
[98] Carlyle, 'Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity. Odin. Paganism. Scandinavian Mythology', in *Lectures*, p. 193. Original emphasis.
[99] Tennyson, 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, l. 129, p. 171;'Guienevere', in *Idylls*, l. 664, p. 286; Carlyle, 'King', in *Lectures*, p. 332.
[100] Mallen, '"Crowned"', p. 275.

match him as 'the most illustrious type' of good moral character.[101] A similar idea is expressed by Guinevere – Arthur, she says, tried to swear 'men to vows impossible', and argues that her husband's 'passionate perfection' distanced himself from her.[102] Arthur's passivity does not necessarily make him less of an ideal figure, but it suggests that he is not a very practical or active king.

It is apparent, from the above analysis, that Tennyson's Arthur is unique among other characters in the poem because of his inner charisma – a metaphorical kingship – as well as because of his literal kingship. Tennyson emphases how distinct Arthur is from other humans in a description of kingly duties at the end of 'The Holy Grail', after a vision of the Grail is seen in Camelot. All the knights swear a vow to seek it, and Arthur responds to the accusation that he too would have sworn a vow, had he been there at the time. He would have done so:

> ['']Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
> That which he rules, and is but as the hind
> To whom a space of land is given to plow
> Who may not wander from the allotted field
> Before his work be done['']103

Acting as 'the King' is like working as a farm labourer, who must 'weed this land' (as Arthur phrases it in 'Geraint and Enid').[104] This behaviour is a necessary condition for kingship, or at least good kingship – a king 'must' do these things, and 'may not' do otherwise. Instead, Arthur must wait until 'his work be done' before letting 'visions of the night or of the day / Come' – unlike most of the other characters in the poems, who are free to seek visions of the grail.[105]

---

[101] Walter Walsh, 'Tennyson's Great Allegory', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1893, CCLXXIV, 500-7.
[102] Tennyson, 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, ll. 130, 122-3, p. 171.
[103] Tennyson, 'The Holy Grail', in *Idylls*, p. 230, ll. 901-3.
[104] Tennyson, 'Geraint and Enid', in *Idylls*, l. 906, p. 123.
[105] Tennyson, 'The Holy Grail', in *Idylls*, p. 230, ll. 899-915.

Tennyson's Arthur is even unique amongst other kings. In 'Geraint and Enid' and 'Lancelot and Elaine' (both 1859), he is described as 'the King of kings', implying that he is the model-type of Kingship, which all kings (note the lower case) should replicate.[106] The line aligns Arthur with Christ, who is also the 'King of kings' – as if Arthur is a type (in the theological sense) of Christ.[107] Arthur is not necessarily distinct from *all* humans in either *Idylls* or *King Arthur*, however; both Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton relate Arthur's kingship to their own work as poets, as if they are in some ways similar to Arthur. The unpublished fragment of Tennyson's 'To the Queen' describes poets as a 'kind of kings' whose words 'fly over land and main', creating an 'empire' of the printed text analogous to the flying of the Queen's flag in 'Austral ice [...] Northern morn' and 'golden Ind'.[108] According to Bedivere in 'The Passing of Arthur' (1869), the king's 'name and glory [will] cling / To all high places like a golden cloud / For ever'.[109] Arthur is not a poet himself, but Tennyson symbolically relates poets to kings, and Arthur's lasting influence will be spread by words, just as poets forge their 'empires'. Bulwer Lytton's Arthur is also poet-like. In Book VII, he is named 'the Poet-king' by the narrator, though this title is not explicitly explained – possibly it only reflects the figurative, poetic way Arthur speaks (he calls a hill 'heav'n-kist'). [110]

Bulwer Lytton also describes how Arthur will become a literary figure, in the Merlin's prophecy about him:

> And thou thyself, shall live from age to age
> A thought of beauty and a type of fame;–
> Not the faint memory of some mouldy page,
> But by the hearths of men a household name[111]

[106] Tennyson, 'Geraint and Enid', in *Idylls*, l. 799, p. 120; 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, l. 422, p. 179.
[107] 1 Timothy 6:15, and Revelation 17:14, 19:16 (King James).
[108] Tennyson, 'To the Queen', in Ricks, *Tennyson*, ll. 11-13 and 6-8, pp. 986-88 (987).
[109] Tennyson, 'The Passing of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll. 53-4, p. 289.
[110] Lytton, *Arthur*, 7. XLIX, p. 213.
[111] Ibid., 1. LXXXVIII, p. 25. In the 1848-9 edition the quotation ended with an exclamation mark.

The primary meaning of the word 'type' in this passage is a symbol or representative figure of a concept – in this case, 'fame'.[112] However, beneath this meaning is an underlying ambivalence regarding the subject of the line, and whether Arthur's fame eclipses the character's individuality. Unlike a later description in the poem of Arthur as '*the* bold type of the chivalric north', the line '*a* type of fame' lacks the definite article, suggesting that 'fame' is the dominant concept, and Arthur is only a particular example of it, rather than its definitive model.[113] Being described as 'a type of fame' undermines Arthur's individuality to a greater extent than being *the* type of chivalry does. Adding to this notion of Arthur as indistinct is the first part of the line, which describes the king as 'a thought'. He is, in this example, not so much a poet king as one whose memory is disseminated throughout time by poets as an idea, similar to Bedivere's description of Arthur's name and glory in *Idylls*, cited above.

For most of the poem, Bulwer Lytton separates Arthur as king from Arthur as adventuring knight: he mainly acts as a 'pilgrim knight', seeking 'such fame as gallant deeds can bring'.[114] Arthur's sabbatical from ruling is justified by acquiring 'experience' and 'thought from toil', so that he may 'learn as man how best as king to reign'.[115] A distinction is made here between man and king, suggesting that they are two separate states, and that Arthur could not learn kingship without first being a man. Kingship is achieved at the very end of the poem; the last image of Arthur is: '[f]air as in fable stands the Dragon King'.[116] Arthur is no longer the 'pilgrim knight', and his identity as a man has been

[112] Though 'type' can also refer to a specimen of a race, class, or species, and Inga Bryden cites this line as evidence for King Arthur as an ethnological text. See Inga Bryden, *Reinventing King Arthur: The Arthurian Legends in Victorian Culture* (London: Aldershot, 2005) p. 40.
[113] Lytton, *Arthur*, 3. CXVI, p. 96. My emphasis.
[114] Ibid., 2. LII, p. 48.
[115] Ibid., 2. LII. p. 48.
[116] Lytton, *Arthur*, 12. CC. p. 421. The name references the Pendragon title attributed to Uther in Geoffrey of Monmouth and Malory, and understood by Sharon Turner (1807) to be the name of 'the paramount sovereign'. 'Pendragon' derives from pen meaning 'head' (either the body part, or the top of something, or the most important member of an organisation) and 'dragon' meaning 'warrior', 'war leader' or 'dragon'.

obscured by the non-anthropomorphic 'Dragon King' title, as well as the comparison to 'fable'. In a note to this section, Arthur is also named as the ancestral father of British kings.[117] Bulwer Lytton keeps this role to the very end of the poem, first establishing Arthur as an ordinary human, albeit one who is on an extraordinary quest.

To summarise, Tennyson distinguishes Arthur's body natural from his body politic, but then suggests that the two are intertwined: Arthur's performance of kingship cannot be untangled from the sense of charismatic kingliness that seems to be part of his innate character. Bulwer Lytton separates Arthur's body natural and body politic more cleanly, focusing on Arthur as a private individual before he emerges finally as a king. Both poets also connect Arthur's kingship with the dissemination of stories and ideas, suggesting that while kings may be different from most other humans, they share similarities with poets. The next section analyses how the poets relate the figure of Arthur to his subjects, as well as to the readers of the poems, whilst emphasising Arthur's uniqueness and individuality.

v. Arthur and his Subjects

The general population do not feature directly in *Idylls*, and Arthur does not interact with them: instead, they are only mentioned as unspecified voices in the background, interested in gossip and rumour, and seeming more like a mob than a monarch's subjects. Arthur is 'the dread Pendragon' according to Sir Lavaine, '[o]f whom the people talk mysteriously'.[118] 'The people' also 'scoff and jeer and babble' about Geraint, who they think has lost his 'manhood'; and Elaine's father says 'all the people know' of Guinevere

See Turner, *History*, I, ch. 2, p. 103; *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: A Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, 4 vols, (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1950-2002), I, 1081.

[117] Lytton, *Arthur*, note to 12. CXCV, p. 420 (431).

[118] Tennyson, 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, l. 422, p. 179.

and Lancelot's affair.[119] The effect of public talk is felt by Guinevere in the penultimate idyll, when 'even here [a convent] they talk at Almesbury / About the good King and his wicked Queen', and she wants protection from 'the voices crying "shame."'.[120]

Disembodied voices in chorus are heard in a positive context at the end of 'Morte', when the speaker dreams of Arthur returning, and 'all the people cried, / "Arthur is come again"'.[121] This is echoed by another group on a hill and, again, by another group further away. When the ending was revised for *Idylls* in 1869, the speaker who frames the poem was removed; but in his place, when Arthur disappears on the barge, Bedivere hears 'sounds, as if some fair city were one voice / Around a king returning from his wars'.[122] In both examples, the people have been brought together by acclaiming Arthur rather than through rumours or a scandal. In the revised version, however, the sounds of the city seem 'one voice' from one location, rather than coming from three separate locations as echoes. Tennyson may simply have wanted to emphasise the unifying effect of Arthur, but the change (made after a twenty-seven year gap) suggests a different feeling about crowds: that they are single, united entities, rather than being comprised of smaller parts.

The rise of newspaper circulation during that twenty-seven year period may have encouraged Tennyson to think of crowds as united entities. When the Stamp Act and paper duties were repealed in 1855-61, newspapers became more widely available to working and lower-middle classes. This also created a more unified newspaper market, as distribution had previously been largely split along class and political lines, with the

---

[119] Tennyson, 'The Marriage of Geraint', *Idylls*, l. 58, p. 77; 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, l. 1074, p. 196.
[120] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, l. 206, p. 274; l. 666, p. 286. Tennyson was himself affected by anonymous voices in the form of reviews from periodicals and newspapers. One article published in 1842 called his 'Morte d'Arthur' a piece of 'mere [...] fancy' which 'hardly avails to enchant us', and Tennyson claimed that review (and other negative ones like it) stopped him writing more Arthurian poetry for a long period. When he did return to his plan for an Arthurian epic, he decided to publish in smaller, less noticeable and ambitious, instalments. See [John Sterling], 'Art. IV.—Poems by Alfred Tennyson' (London: Murray, 1842), LXX, no. 140, pp. 385-416 (401). Tennyson's response to the review is qtd in Ricks, *Tennyson*, p. 250 and Ricks, *Tennyson*, pp. 250-1.
[121] Alfred Tennyson, 'Morte d'Arthur' in *Poems*, II, 4-18 (p. 17).
[122] Tennyson, 'The Passing of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll. 460-1, p. 300.

cheaper unlicensed papers containing more radical views. The unity of the people in *Idylls* is not considered to be negative in itself, but Tennyson's depiction of a crowd as a single entity with one voice makes them a potential threat to Arthur's kingship; as the journalist and editor W.T. Stead phrased it in 1886, government by kings had gone 'out of fashion', and now 'an editor is the uncrowned king of an educated democracy'.[123]

Bulwer Lytton dabbled with writing for mass audiences about popular subjects, which were generally considered 'low'. For example, *Lucretia* (1847) is a Newgate novel based on the life of the contemporary serial killer, Thomas Wainewright. Bulwer Lytton defended his choice of subject by arguing that a high artistic form could 'weave an epic from adventures with gamekeepers and barbers', and even the meanest of subjects might be 'ennoble[d]' by artistic treatment.[124] W.M. Thackeray parodied Bulwer Lytton's defence, writing (under a pseudonym referencing the name Bulwer Lytton), that 'the Artisan hath his voice as well as the Monarch. The People To-day is King, and we chronicle his woes'.[125] Bulwer Lytton argues that common people can be elevated by art, and Thackeray humorously extends this idea to suppose that common people have become the new kings in the eyes of poets. However, 'The People' have become a singular (and male) persona, defined by 'the Artisan'. They are not common anymore.

[123] W.T. Stead, 'Government by Journalism', *Contemporary Review*, May 1886, vol. 49, 653-674 (p. 664). Mark Twain explores the effect of actual newspapers on Arthur's world in *Connecticut Yankee*. Arthur's power, and the nature of his world, are revolutionised by the work of nineteenth-century time-traveller Hank Morgan; among other innovations, Morgan introduces a newspaper industry. In *Idylls*, the news of Lancelot and Guinevere's affair is spread quickly and far, as if by newspaper circulation; but in *Connecticut Yankee*, news actually is spread by newspapers, and Lancelot's 'blind fury' whilst rescuing Guinevere is photographed and available 'for sale on every news-stand': Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (New York: Webster, 1889), ch. 42, p. 534.

[124] [Edward Bulwer Lytton], 'A Word to the Public: Containing Hints towards a Critical Essay upon the Artistic Principles and Ethical Designs of Fiction', in *The Works of Edward Bulwer Lytton (Lord Lytton)*, (New York: Collier, 1892), VI, 713-34 (723-4).

[125] [William Thackeray], E. L. B. L. B B. L L. B B B. L L L., 'Punch's Prize Novelists: George de Barnwell', *Punch* (London: 1847), XII, 136-7 (136). The numerous initials in Thackeray's pseudonym refer to Edward Bulwer Lytton's various ways of writing his name.

Thackeray's parody makes Bulwer Lytton's argument – that base subjects can somehow be elevated by art – seem ridiculous and insincere. In *King Arthur*, Bulwer Lytton does not try to treat common people like kings, but he does try to make kings – or at least, Arthur – connected in some way to common people. The attempt is not a success because, as Thackeray's parody suggests, Bulwer Lytton cannot put kings and common people on the same level without changing them; either common people are elevated so that they are no longer common, or a king is brought down to his subjects, and thereby does not seem like a king. Bulwer Lytton's solution is to connect Arthur to his people through long-lasting fame after death. In Book VII, Arthur must choose between different possible futures.[126] In one he observes himself relaxing in a silk pavilion with no cares (this vision is called 'Pleasure'). In another he sees himself resplendently dressed, 'the dazzling king', but with his people hidden behind a curtain, impoverished 'beside fireless hearths' (this vision is 'Pomp'). Lastly, Arthur sees himself dead, and he chooses this option, '"for in death I seize the life of fame, / And link the eternal millions with the dead"'.[127] Bulwer Lytton does not want to depict Arthur as a king set above his people by wealth and power, but his way of connecting Arthur to his subjects involves distinguishing the king from other people as a famous dead figure – like one of Tennyson's *majores humano* – rather than as someone who has anything in common with them.

In 'The Hero as Man of Letters' (1840), Carlyle describes how the Man of Letters reaches people through 'Printed Books', and a parallel can be drawn from this to Bulwer Lytton's Arthur.[128] The Man of Letters rules 'whole nations and generations' after his death, through his sincere and true words that are spread by his fame.[129] Death is a necessary

[126] Lytton, *Arthur*, 7. XXVI—LIII, pp. 207-214.
[127] Ibid., 7. LXXXV, p. 222.
[128] Carlyle, 'Lecture V [May 1840]: The Hero as Man of Letters' in *Heroes*, pp. 300-331 (300).
[129] Ibid., pp. 300, 329.

part of this heroism – for Carlyle, the Man of Letters is unappreciated whilst he is alive; similarly, Bulwer Lytton's Arthur believes that 'Death / Can oft achieve what life may not fulfil'.[130] Thus, Bulwer Lytton's decision to depict Arthur striving for fame does not necessarily make Arthur egocentric or selfish, but rather shows him conforming to a 'Man of Letters' model that works through reaching great numbers of people in a literary form. Carlyle's hero is 'the soul of all', but he also rises above 'the weak many' who are ignorant.[131] This also applies to Bulwer Lytton's Arthur, who, despite an apparent desire to be connected to his subjects, does not actually interact with them in the poem.[132]

Arthur is not only distanced from his subjects in the text, but – for many reviewers, and to some extent Bulwer Lytton himself – as a literary figure he also remains distanced from the common reading public, because of the form that Bulwer Lytton used to write about him. Many reviews of *King Arthur* foregrounded issues about literary ownership, and by extension which audiences might understand an epic poem about Arthur. In 1848, *The Examiner* assumed a hierarchy of understanding amongst readers: the reviewer did not think the poem would appeal to any single group, apart from those with 'poetical feeling and knowledge'.[133] *The New Monthly Magazine* (1849) appeared to celebrate the mass appeal of *King Arthur* – declaring that with it, 'the country has a poem' – but the reviewer reveals a hidden anxiety about the masses when he states that those who do not appreciate

[130] Ibid., p. 300. Bulwer Lytton, *Arthur*, 7. LIV, p. 191.
[131] Ibid., p. 301. Original emphasis. Bulwer Lytton also seems to share Carlyle's dislike of utilitarianism; Carlyle considered it admirable but misjudged, an '*eyeless* Heroism', because it empowers the majority rather than the great individual. Likewise, utilitarianism is presented unfavourably and parodied in Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur*, when the logic of '[t]he greatest pleasure of the greatest number' nearly leads to Gawaine being cooked alive, because it would have pleased 'Odin's greatest number'. Carlyle, 'Letters', in *Heroes*, p. 314; Lytton, 8. LXX-LXXIV, pp. 246-7. Bulwer Lytton paraphrases Jeremy Bentham's summation of utilitarianism as 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. See [Jeremy Bentham], preface, *A Fragment on Government: Being an Examination of What is Delivered, on the Subject of Government in General, in the Introduction to Sir William Blackstone's Commentaries: With a Preface, in which is Given a Critique on the Work at Large* (London: Payne, Emily, and Brooks, 1776), p. i-lvii (ii).
[132] As Roger Simpson notes, 'common people are only ever seen in the poem as 'gloomy, pauperised and famished creatures of the hungry 1840s': Simpson, *Camelot*, p. 49.
[133] 'The Literary Examiner', *The Examiner*, 4 March 1848, no pag.

it are 'the snarling pack'.[134] *The Christian Remembrancer*, a High-Church periodical that mainly focused on theology but occasionally commented on literature and history, published an enthusiastic forty-page review of the poem in 1850. The reviewer strongly approved of the epic form: firstly, because the hero must 'embody juster and nobler thoughts than the melo-dramatic hero of a novel', due to the greater difficulty of constructing a long poem, and secondly because the epic poem, unlike the novel, was not 'light reading', and therefore 'the mass of readers' would not read it; 'people commonly choose, not the noblest or most intense pleasures, but those which are easiest come at'.[135] The aversion to a mass readership was expressed through the description of soiled pages: according to the reviewer, a popular book was 'contaminated with the stains and odours of a hundred slatternly tables', whilst *King Arthur* was written 'for a smaller, more deserving, a more fastidious class of readers', and consequently Bulwer Lytton will never see 'a soiled copy of "King Arthur"'.[136] In 1833, Bulwer Lytton had quoted Aristotle's affirmation of 'the people at large' as the best judges of art, stating that this was absolutely true and profound. However, this was in the context of criticising Tennyson, who he claimed had been praised by reviewers but condemned by the public, and Bulwer Lytton had also called the English public 'asses' and 'the vulgar many'.[137] Despite this, he expressed a desire to have *King Arthur* read by as many people as possible, stating that he worked on the 1870 edition 'not without the hope of a wider audience'.[138]

Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur* was neither a popular nor a critical success, despite the huge popularity of the author's novels.[139] In the same year that Tennyson's *The Holy*

[134] 'King Arthur', *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist*, March 1849, pp. 307-14.
[135] 'King Arthur', *Christian Remembrancer* (London: Mozley, 1850), XIX, 69-109 (pp. 70-1).
[136] Ibid., pp. 70-1.
[137] Edward Bulwer Lytton, 'The Faults of Recent Poets', *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, January 1833, pp. 69-74 (69); see Mitchell, *Man of Letters*, p. 110.
[138] Lytton, preface, *Arthur*, p. vii.
[139] See Mitchell, *Man of Letters*, p. 109.

Grail was published, Bulwer Lytton lamented that his book had been 'out of print nearly twenty years, except in a wretched ill-printed, uncorrected, cheap edition'.[140] A new edited version was released in 1870, but this sold slowly.[141] The poet wanted his work to be popular without it becoming 'vulgar' and losing critical appreciation, and this anxiety runs throughout his literary career. 'The Master to the Scholar' (1842) is a poem that outlines the problem and suggests a solution: instead of writing for the 'vulgar many' or the 'pedant few', one might simply write for 'All'.[142] Leslie Mitchell argues that Bulwer Lytton only 'pretended that there was no conflict of interest' in this poem, as writing for 'All' is a rhetorical circumnavigation of the issue rather than a genuine resolution (making all of humanity one's intended audience does not seem a practicable target).[143] 'The Master' again demonstrates Bulwer Lytton purporting to reach out to a wide range of people, without actually making any meaningful connection to that audience.

In *King Arthur*, the 'All' are referenced in a sequence when Arthur is alone in a snowy wasteland, and Bulwer Lytton describes Arthur's soul. In one sense Arthur's soul is 'aloof from men' as it will 'divinely dreaming go' up to heaven in 'its sphere of thought' (like the Platonic conception of the ideal soul, which in the *Phaedrus* chariot analogy flies up to the realm of the forms, guided by the rational mind).[144] However, Arthur's soul can also feel emotions, and when it does, 'social moves the man [Arthur] among mankind'.[145] Arthur's soul is thus 'twofold', and this makes it 'lone, and yet how living in the All' – distinct from other living beings by means of intellectual thought, but connected to them by feeling.[146] It is another example of Bulwer Lytton promoting both elitist isolation as

[140] Letter from Edward Bulwer Lytton to Mrs Cosway, 1870, in [Victor Bulwer Lytton], *Life*, II, 472-3.
[141] See [Victor Bulwer Lytton], *Life*, II, 472-3.
[142] Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, 'The Master to the Scholar', in *Eva, a True Story of Light and Darkness, the Ill-omened Marriage, and Other Tales and Poems* (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1842), p. 105.
[143] See Mitchell, *Man of Letters*, p. 111.
[144] Lytton, *Arthur*, 9. XLVI, p. 270; see Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246a-c.
[145] Ibid., 9. XLIX, p. 271.
[146] Ibid., 9. XLIX, p. 271.

well as some kind of obscurely-defined, and practically limited, desire to connect with people in general. It is clearer to see how Tennyson's Arthur might be distinguished as an ideal man without being totally alienated from other humans; he can be a model to aspire to. As Tennyson's son Hallam phrases it, *Idylls* is 'the world-wide war of Sense and Soul, typified in individuals'.[147] In other words, Arthur symbolically represents ('typifies') the highest form of the Soul, and other characters (such as Mordred) typify 'Sense', following a Platonic model of the Soul opposing the body. [148]

Tennyson wanted to emphasise that Arthur's fame and glory were not the sum of the king's identity, and neither were they the real focus of *Idylls*. In the published version of 'To the Queen' (1873), he claims that *Idylls* is not about 'that gray king, whose name, a ghost, / Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak, / And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still' – but is instead about 'shadowing Sense at war with Soul'.[149] Tennyson stresses that *Idylls* is not about the pseudo-historical Arthur whose name is attached to various geographical locations, but is instead concerned with a figure who functions as a moral ideal standing against sensuality of the flesh.[150] In 1891, Tennyson inserted an additional line before the description of 'that gray king' – '[i]deal manhood closed in real man'.[151] This was the last change to *Idylls*, made, according to Hallam, because Tennyson 'thought that perhaps he had not made the real humanity of the King sufficiently clear in his epilogue'.[152] Tennyson may also have felt that he did not make Arthur's 'real humanity' clear in the *Idylls* as a whole. The added line re-expresses Guinevere's description of Arthur

[147] [Hallam Tennyson], *Memoir*, II, 130.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Tennyson, 'To the Queen', in *Idylls*, ll. 37-41, p. 302.
[150] See David G. Riede, *Allegories of One's Own Mind: Melancholy in Victorian Poetry* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), pp. 89-90. More widely, sense warring with soul recalls the Platonic distinction between mind/body and soul, and the struggle between them outlined in the chariot analogy of *Phaedrus*.
[151] Tennyson, 'To the Queen', in *Idylls*, l. 38, p. 302.
[152] Note for 'To the Queen' l. 38, in *Idylls*, p. 371.

as both 'the highest and most human' (from 'Guinevere', 1859) in a clearer way, by distinguishing Arthur's idealism from the corporeal body that encloses it, rather than making Arthur's humanity part of his idealism.[153]

For Tristram in 'The Last Tournament' (1871), Arthur seems too ideal to be human, and is rather a spiritual symbol – Arthur is 'no man / But Michaël trampling Satan'.[154] Some reviewers of *Idylls* propounded an allegorical reading of the poems as a whole, spurred by lines like Tristram's, which encourage a symbolic understanding of Arthur. J.T. Knowles, for example, argued that Tennyson's Arthur symbolises the conscience, and his knights signify 'the strength of the body'.[155] According to his son, Tennyson thought the reviews 'explained some things too allegorically'.[156] Readers are less likely to regard Arthur as a mere symbol if his manhood is emphasised, as it is in the line added in 1891, though Arthur might still represent wider ideas alongside this human identity; in fact, Tennyson identified a 'parabolic drift', rather than a purely allegorical meaning, running through *Idylls*.[157] Such an approach enables multiple readings to co-exist in the text – Arthur is not only a man, nor only a symbolic type of the conscience, but both, and perhaps more. There is a 'drift' towards parable and metaphor, but not towards one specific meaning, and thus the narrative stands for itself rather than being only a means to an end.

vi. Conclusion

In *Idylls*, being the king is a role that Arthur performs, but also an aspect of his personal character, meaning that even without the title and duties of a monarch, Tennyson's Arthur

[153] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, l. 644, p. 286.
[154] Tennyson, 'The Last Tournament', in *Idylls*, l. 668, p. 266.
[155] [J. T. Knowles], 'The Meaning of Mr Tennyson's "King Arthur"', *Contemporary Review*, 21 (December 1872), 939-48 (p. 942).
[156] [Hallam Tennyson], *Memoir*, II, 126-7.
[157] Ibid.

would still be unique when compared to other humans. Bulwer Lytton separates Arthur's role as king from his actions as a questing knight, but even when Arthur is not acting as king, he is still distinguished from the rest of the other characters by seeming ghostly, acting alone, and (most importantly) by living on as a famous name in the future.

Neither Bulwer Lytton nor Tennyson manage to convey Arthur as a believably human character, because neither poet explores Arthur's faults. The closest Tennyson comes to criticising Arthur is through the comments of Vivien and Guinevere, though Vivien is an unreliable and malignant source, and Guinevere later realises her 'mistake' in initially turning away from her husband, so neither presents a very strong attack on Arthur.[158] Bulwer Lytton frees Arthur from the restrictions of the court, but does not use that opportunity to explore Arthur's character, instead making him a bland questing hero who has a desire to connect with his people, without ever sharing anything in common with them, or even encountering them. Both poets instead focus on Arthur as an ideal figure, but they disagree on what constitutes that idealism. This focus, coupled with the popularity and long-lasting influence of *Idylls*, meant that Arthur was more likely to be considered an ideal king than a flawed human character by nineteenth-century audiences, as the next chapter will analyse.

[158] Vivien calls Arthur a 'coward, and fool' because he ignores all the bad things his knights supposedly do: Tennyson, 'Merlin and Vivien', ll. 781-87, pp. 162-3. For a summary of Vivien as unreliable and malignant in Tennyson, see Carolyne Larrington, *King Arthur's Enchantresses: Morgan and Her Sisters in Arthurian Tradition* (London and New York: Tauris, 2006), pp. 155-6. Guinevere tells Lancelot that Arthur 'cares not' for her, and is too '[r]apt in this fancy of his Table Round', though she later realises that it was her 'duty to have loved the highest' (Arthur): Tennyson, 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, ll. 130, 122-3, p. 171; 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, l. 652, p. 286.

Chapter II

'He is not the Type': Actualising Arthur as an Ideal Figure in Henry Irving's 1895 Stage Production

i. Arthur at the End of the Nineteenth Century

Western countries experienced speedy change in every decade of the nineteenth century, but the last decade not only brought rapid development, but also increased awareness among many writers of a transition from one century to another. Opinions about the nature of this transition were varied. The most commonly used term for the period – the 'Fin de Siècle', used in Britain from around 1890 – was chronological rather than evaluative in nature, and was used in both positive and negative contexts.[1] In Britain, the Empire was frequently considered to be in decline, and in America, there was uncertainty as to whether the best days of the United States lay behind or ahead of it – though in both countries there were optimists who cited scientific developments (such as faster railways and photography) as exciting signs of progress, and celebrated the end of the century as the chance to move in new directions.[2] Whether the future would be good or bad was contested, but what both optimists and pessimists shared was the understanding that further change was inevitably coming.

The 1890s and 1900s were particularly fruitful decades for the production of Arthurian theatrical scripts. One reason for this may have been the continuing popularity

[1] See Karl Beckson, *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1992), p. xv. The term means 'end of the century' in French.
[2] Ibid., p. xiv; H.W. Brands, *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 4-5. First published in 1995.

of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, encouraging authors to write about Arthur (hoping for similar success) but also to opt for a different form from poetry, to limit unfavourable critical comparisons (though comparisons were still inevitably drawn between Tennyson's poetry and other writers' Arthurian plays). For Beverly Taylor and Elisabeth Brewer, *Idylls* also 'revealed the dramatic potential' of the Arthurian legend to other authors, who were inspired to pursue the topic in a purely dramatic form.[3] Other critics have argued that *Idylls* is a fundamentally dramatic work: F.E.L. Priestley divides the idylls into three groupings corresponding to the three acts of modern drama, and Henry Kozicki regards *Idylls* as a tragic drama, even if it is not in a conventional dramatic form.[4]

Another reason for more Arthurian drama may be related to the increasing popularity of the figure of Arthur himself, and more specifically the way in which knowledge of the figure had percolated throughout English-speaking readerships. The popularity of Tennyson's *Idylls* encouraged a tourist industry in Arthurian locations such as Tintagel, but it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that Arthurian characters, locations, and items become comprehensively commercialised. It is likely that theatre managers would have seen economic sense in bringing the Arthurian legend to the theatre, because Arthur had grown from being a predominantly literary figure to also being a cultural icon, well known to the general public as well as readers of poetry, and with a burgeoning commercial status that matched this greater recognition. The nature of this commercialisation is discussed below, in order to establish the popular context for Arthurian drama at the end of the nineteenth century.

[3] Beverly Taylor and Elisabeth Brewer, *The Return of King Arthur: British and American Literature since 1900* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983), p. 207.
[4] F.E.L. Priestley, 'Tennyson's Idylls', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 19 (October 1950), 35-49 (p. 47); Henry Kozicki, 'Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* as Tragic Drama', *Victorian Poetry*, 4 (Winter, 1966), 15-20 (p. 16).

The name of Arthur was used in numerous commercial products and enterprises, including hotels, chocolates, coat buttons, postcards, and ceramic tiles.[5] Most of these items appeared at the end of the century, though the tiles were first produced in 1874. The advertising for each product drew on ideals associated with Arthur, like manly authority, strength, and honour, suggesting that these were not reserved for a rich upper-class elite (as was the case at Eglinton), but could be adopted by anyone who bought the product. As Julian Barnard writes, the Arthurian tiles portraying scenes from *Idylls* were 'an early attempt to provide mass-produced decoration for the popular market: an art form that was available to everybody'.[6] In 1857-9, some of the young Pre-Raphaelites painted the murals in the Oxford Union Society's debating chamber, depicting scenes from the Arthurian legend – but by 1896 Arthur had moved into a more public space, the Trocadero restaurant, where, as the *The Penny Illustrated Paper* exclaimed, '"all the world and his wife"' could see the Arthurian friezes in the entrance hall.[7] Harold Watkins wrote that Arthur had been chosen because his values were 'compatible with this good new English restaurant', being 'solid, substantial and honest' – and now anyone who ate there would, it was suggested, become associated with those same ideals.[8]

In the same year that the Trocadero restaurant opened, the American advertiser George Woods was inspired by an Arthurian musical performed in Boston, and named his new brand of flour after King Arthur. The initial advertising made only a weak attempt to connect the two together, stating that the company was 'leading the way to Better Bread and Pastry' alongside a picture of Arthur on a horse, drawing on the figure as an

[5] 'King Arthur's Castle Hotel' (now 'Camelot Castle Hotel') was opened in Tintagel in 1899, and Fuller's produced a range of King Arthur chocolates in the 1920s and 30s. Alan Lupack discusses late Victorian/early twentieth century Arthurian buttons, postcards, and tiles in 'Popular Images Derived from Tennyson's Arthurian Poems', *Arthuriana*, 21 (Summer 2011), 90-118 (pp. 111-6).
[6] Julian Barnard, *Victorian Ceramic Tiles* (London: Cassell, 1972), repr. 1979, p. 7.
[7] 'The New Trocadero Banqueting Palace', *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 17 October, 1896, p. 247.
[8] Harold Watkins, *The Art of Gerald Moira* (London: Dickens, [1922]), p. 13.

adventurous leader.[9] Arthur is portrayed as a completely unremarkable knight, without a crown, almost like a silhouette (see Appendix A, p. 243). *The Boston Post*, in their article on the new flour, expanded on the advertisement's idea: King Arthur 'was a champion without fear and above reproach', the *Post* claimed – and, like this healthy new flour, was 'the peerless champion of modern civilization'.[10] The most recent attempts to explain the connection between the flour and Arthur only reinforce how arbitrary the link is, as every explanation cites slightly different reasons.[11] *King Arthur Flour* demonstrates how malleable the figure of Arthur had become by 1896, applicable to almost any product, and depicted in a way that made Arthur an all-purpose symbol of chivalry more than a king. For Alan and Barbara Lupack, the inclusion of Arthur in American popular culture made 'the legends accessible to everyone' and promoted 'the ideals of the Arthurian realm as attainable by anyone who cultivates the right values'. [12] However, these values were only broadly defined by commercial advertising: as Zia Isola argues, Arthurian branding generally works simply by inciting 'comfortable nostalgia'.[13]

[9] David A. Anderson, *Images of America: King Arthur Flour Company* (Charleston SC: Arcadia, 2002), p. 21.
[10] *Boston Post*, November 14, 1896, qtd in Gloria A. Lemieux, 'The King Arthur Flour Company', *International Directory of Company Histories* (Farrington Hills: St James's Press, 2000) XXXI, 292-5 (p. 293).
[11] According to former owner Frank Sands in 2010, the name was chosen because 'all these attributes that are related to the King Arthur story are perfect for what we think about our flour... there is purity, there's strength (because we had higher protein), so let's call it King Arthur'.[11] However, Lemieux (2000) cites 'strength, purity, and honesty' as the Arthurian attributes appropriated by the flour, whilst the CEO of the company, Steven Voigt claimed the qualities were 'quality, purity, integrity' (2002), and Anderson (2004) describes the ideals as 'purity, loyalty, honesty, superior strength, and a dedication to a higher purpose'. See Frank Sands, 'King Arthur Flour: History in the Baking', 1m 13s – 1m 40s, uploaded 2010 <http://youtu.be/l3wq5zQtAm4> [accessed 29 September 2011]; Lemieux, 'Flour Company', *Company Histories*, p. 292; Joyce Marcel, 'Profiles in Business: Steven Voigt: King Arthur Flour', in *Vermont Business Magazine*, 1 December, 2002 < http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3675/is_200212/ai_n9160698/pg_3/?tag=content;col1> [accessed 29 September 2011]; Anderson, *Flour*, p. 20.
[12] Alan and Barbara Tepa Lupack, *King Arthur in America* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer 1999), p. 326.
[13] Zia Isola, 'Defending the Domestic: Arthurian Tropes and the American Dream', in *King Arthur in Popular Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth S. Sklar and Donald L. Hoffman (Jefferson: McFarland, 2002), pp. 24-35 (31).

One might expect that the commercialisation of the Arthurian legend in the late nineteenth century would have helped define and fix the figure of Arthur, by distilling his appeal into an established set of values, and repeating his image until a common appearance emerged. However, as the commercial marketing of Arthur shows, the opposite happened: the figure of Arthur became more variously defined the more it was depicted, just as chivalry had become more open to interpretation even after ambitious attempts to actualise and define it, as in the Eglinton Tournament. At Eglinton, most of the spectators were seeing a medieval tournament for the first time, but many already had the idea of a tournament in their heads from reading the popular and influential description in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, and they could compare their own imagined ideas of a tournament with the disappointing reality; likewise, when audiences saw an actor portray Arthur on the stage in the late nineteenth century, many were coming to the portrayal with their own preconceived notions of who Arthur was, from Tennyson and commercial products, even if it was difficult to establish his precise appearance, or what he stood for. This chapter analyses the *King Arthur* stage production from 1895, in which Henry Irving's portrayal of Arthur had to live up to the idea of Arthur in audiences' minds: an idea that by 1895 had grown large in imaginative scope.

ii. Translating Arthur onto the Stage

The American playwright and critic Stark Young has used the concept of 'translation' to describe the reproduction of the play-text by the actor: when a script is performed on a stage, it is 'recreated in new terms [...] It is no longer a word on a page but is translated now into another medium, the theater'.[14] This is also true, to a lesser extent, for the

[14] Stark Young, 'Translations', *The Theater* (New York: Doran, 1927), p. 41.

adaptation of a legend or romance into the form of a stage-play, even if this adaptation is never performed; because it now relies on dialogue to advance the story, and practical restrictions on the number of locations and characters, the legend has been translated into a different format.

Young's own Arthurian play, *Guenevere: A Play in Five Acts* (1906), is an example of 'translation', because it reproduces characters and plot from literature within a physical environment, the stage.[15] It concentrates on the affair of Lancelot and Guenevere, a storyline that many Arthurian plays adopt because of its emotional content and self-contained narrative (the story of Tristram and Isolde is also popular, for similar reasons). Translating Arthur from Tennyson, and to a lesser extent, from Malory and other medieval writers, is more problematic: as Kay states in Young's script, '[i]t is no king men see, / But is a mist' and Guenevere tells Arthur that people love him 'as a mystic symbol [...] not as frail man'.[16] In other words, Arthur is both perceived, and desired to be, something more than human, but to translate him onto the stage involves the figure being embodied by an actor, who is only human. There is a further level of translation, and it occurs when the text is performed on stage, adding the physical appearance of scenery and characters, the actor's personal delivery of the lines, and the influence of a director. Stage productions actualise Arthur within a single production, unambiguously translated from a textual character into a physical, human individual.

This translation affects the composition of Arthur as a 'perfect normal representation' (following Henry's definition of 'type'). For those wishing to portray Arthur as a figure who is more perfect than normal (as he is in Tennyson), the process of translating Arthur into a stage character creates additional difficulties: how does a

[15] Stark Young, *Guenevere: A Play in Five Acts* (New York: Grafton, 1906).
[16] Ibid., I. 1, p. 12; III. 1, p. 59.

production make Arthur seem perfect, when he appears, through the portrayal of an actor, to be a human like any other? The 1895 stage production of *King Arthur* was a fertile breeding ground for these difficulties. It came at a time when the influence of Tennyson's *Idylls* was arguably at its strongest, still hugely popular thirty-six years after the first set of poems had been published, and ten years since the final version, meaning that the poems were long-established but still recent. As the critic Clement Scott wrote of the 1895 production, 'we come to the theatre with our minds saturated with and steeped in the Tennysonian version of the Arthurian legend'.[17] Since the Tennysonian version of Arthur emphasised his perfect idealism rather than his humanity (see previous chapter), it follows that many audience members would have been expecting something similar to be expressed, somehow, in Irving's characterisation. A tension lies between a desire for an undefined ideal symbolism, and the practical limitations of the stage and a single actor's performance. This tension even existed behind the scenes, between the set and costume designer Edward Burne-Jones, who wanted the production to be mysterious and symbolic, and the theatre manager/lead actor, Irving, who wanted to make the legend easily understandable, appealing to as many people as possible.

As this chapter's introductory remarks about commercialisation explained, by 1895 Arthur had become associated with a form of cultural nostalgia, and feelings of strength, purity, and leadership that meant slightly different things to different people. However, this protean understanding of Arthur did not mean that individuals did not have strongly felt ideas about how he should be represented. The *Freeman's Journal* praised Irving's performance, calling it 'a remarkably fine impersonation' of Arthur, using the word 'impersonation' in the contemporary theatrical sense, to simply mean the dramatic

[17] Clement Scott, 'King Arthur', in *From 'The Bells' to King Arthur* (London: MacQueen, 1896), pp. 371-84 (374).

representation of a character.[18] The use of the word does suggest that there was one authoritative version of the character that Irving could only imitate, however, and this is also strongly implied when George Bernard Shaw uses the term in his own review. According to Shaw, there was only one moment when Irving successfully 'impersonated' the king: when he learned of his wife's deceit in Act III, and only then was he 'the King Arthur of all our imaginations'.[19] This is the moment when Arthur acts decisively for the first time in the play, dismissing Lancelot and Guinevere, and rallying his knights for battle against Mordred. Shaw refers to the 'Arthur of all our imaginations', as if everyone agreed on what characteristics were fundamental to the figure – but not everyone regarded Arthur's decision-making in Act III as the character's quintessential moment. For some other audience members, the most important thing was for Arthur to be presented as a figure of light and hope; for others, he should be a figure of mystery and indistinctiveness. According to Scott, everyone 'had a dreamy, undetermined view of how "King Arthur" ought to be done': the views were probably 'undetermined' because most audience members thought of Arthur as a mysterious, loosely-defined ideal, rather than as a figure who could be understood in the same way as any other human character.[20] The idea of Arthur as a mysterious figure was important for many, as Tennyson's *Idylls* emphasised a sense of mystery and indefinability. This was deliberately developed by Tennyson: when he rewrote 'Gareth and Lynette' (1872) from his earlier notes, Camelot's 'driving showers' were changed to a supernatural mist '[t]hat rose between the forest and the field'; and 'Merlin', explicitly named in the prose draft, was instead referred to more obscurely as 'an Ancient

[18] '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 15 January 1895, p. 3. 'Impersonation, n.' in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/92331?redirectedFrom=impersonation> [accessed 22 July 2014].The OED cites two examples of this definition, used in theatre reviews, from 1825 and 1881.
[19]George Bernard Shaw, *Our Theatre in the Nineties: Criticism Contributed Week by Week to the Saturday Review from January 1895 to May 1898* (London: Constable, [1932]).
[20] Scott, 'Arthur', in *Bells*, p. 373.

man'.[21] All these preferences (man of action; symbol of hope; figure of mystery) drive the figure of Arthur towards a level of perfect idealism and away from human mundanity. Other Arthurian dramas – unperformed plays and smaller, less documented productions – provide context for understanding why and how Irving's Arthur was represented as he was.

iii. Background to the 1895 Production

On January 12th 1895, the Lyceum Theatre in London staged the opening night of *King Arthur*. It was produced by Henry Irving and featured him in the title role, co-starring Ellen Terry as Guinevere, with sets and costumes designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and music composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan. It was the most well-documented, artistically ambitious, and commercially successful Arthurian play in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was performed 191 times; its run included a tour of the United States where President Cleveland was amongst those in the audience; and it would have continued for longer had the scenery not burnt in a fire in 1898.[22] Doug Kirshen describes it as 'the 1890s equivalent of a Hollywood blockbuster', and Jennifer R. Goodman regards *King Arthur* as a play that brought 'key issues of the Victorian era' into focus, citing the Pre-Raphelite visuals, the Tennysonian clash between passion and moral duty, and the depiction of the British Empire as a predestined institution.[23]

---

[21] See Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette [Prose Draft]', in *A Variorum Edition of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'*, ed. by John Pfordresher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 130, and 'Gareth and Lynette', in *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J. M. Gray (London: Penguin Books, 1983) l. 188, p. 41.
[22] Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1906), I, 255; 'The President Sees Henry Irving', *Washington Post*, 18 January 1896, p. 4.
[23] Doug Kirshen, 'Embodiment of the King: Henry Irving's *King Arthur*', in *Henry Irving: A Re-Evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager*, ed. by Richard Foulkes (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 65-85 (84). Jennifer R. Goodman, 'The Last of Avalon: Henry Irving's *King Arthur* of 1895', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, ed. by Kenneth E. Carpenter, 32 (Summer 1984), p. 239-55 (255).

Unlike other Arthurian plays from the period, *King Arthur* did not bear a sub-title advertising it as a 'tragedy', but it could be placed in that genre, with Guinevere as the catalyst for Arthur's tragic downfall ('in that gift of beauty lurks thy doom', Merlin warns Arthur in the prologue).[24] *The New York Times* deemed it a 'Melodrama', however, and *The Sketch* also used that term when describing the speeches that were accompanied by Sullivan's musical score.[25] The word 'melodrama' arises from the combination of theatre with music, but also involves clearly differentiated strands of didactic morality and heightened emotions. Arthur's line to Merlin – 'get thee hence, / And never more shall that dark face of thine / Pass [...] through these halls' is a combination of Biblical language with a trope most associated with Victorian melodrama, in which a character is told to leave and never darken one's home again.[26]

Michael R. Booth connects melodrama with pantomime, arguing that both depend on spectacle, stage technology, and authentic detail in costumes and props.[27] *King Arthur* was pejoratively compared to a pantomime by *The New York Times*; and when a journalist for *The Sketch* approached the Box Office at the Lyceum Theatre he was asked 'Pantomime or King Arthur?'[28] It was a practical question, as the pantomime *Santa Claus* was playing in the same theatre until March, but the person who asked the question inadvertently suggested that the two productions were interchangeable. The question at least encourages us to think about how a King Arthur play is different from a pantomime. Both have

[24] J. Comyns Carr, *King Arthur: A Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1895), prologue, p. 5.
[25] 'The Theatrical Week', *New York Times*, 10 November 1895, p. 12; 'The Production of "King Arthur,"' *Sketch*, 16 January 1895, in *The Sketch: October 31 1894 to January 23 1895* (London: Ingram, [n.d]), VIII, 548.
[26] Carr, *Arthur*, I. 1, p. 28. Compare with Matthew 4:10 'Get thee hence, Satan' (King James Bible), complementing the tradition that Merlin was the son of the devil; for the melodrama trope, see 'darken someone's door', Christine Ammer, *The American Dictionary of Idioms* (Boston, MA: Mifflin, 1997), p. 154.
[27] Michael R. Booth, 'Melodrama and Pantomime', in *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850-1910* (Boston: Paul, 1981), pp. 60-92.
[28] 'The Theatrical Week', *New York Times*, p. 12; 'Behind the Scenes at the Lyceum," *Sketch*, p. 549.

superficial similarities: *Santa Claus* and *King Arthur* each featured legendary figures in semi-historical settings (the pantomime also included 'Richard Coeur de Lion' and 'Robin Hood'), and both would have appealed to children.[29] One important difference between them is intended tone: a pantomime was considered to be trivial entertainment, whilst the script of *King Arthur* is serious and focuses on the tragedy of Arthur and his relationships with Guinevere and Lancelot. However, the Arthurian legend has not always been staged so seriously. In 1835, Drury Lane produced Purcell and Dryden's 'Dramatick Opera' based on King Arthur, featuring 'glorious fighting' and knights that 'perform all the feats usual at Astley's [Amphitheatre]', but the way that such recreations of the past were viewed by Victorian audiences had changed between 1835 and 1895, particularly because of the events surrounding the Eglinton Tournament of 1839.[30] Irving's *King Arthur* had very little action, which meant that the play did not descend to the level of a pantomime or a circus display, though for Burne-Jones and the play's critics, it still fell short of the standard required for art.

Arthur was also the subject of a Christmas pantomime in 1863 at the Haymarket Theatre, written in comic rhyming couplets. Fitting this tone was a light-hearted plot which contained no incest or adultery.[31] The 1863 pantomime emphasised general traits found in other Arthurian plays, including the 1895 production. For example, the archaic diction of the 1895 production is closer to Shakespeare's language than Malory's; the speech in which Guinevere urges a knight to 'put up thy sword' recalls *Othello* as well as the King James Bible.[32] Likewise, the 1863 pantomime also draws on Shakespeare in its dialogue; Merlin

[29] For details of the *Santa Claus* pantomime, see J.P. Wearing, *The London Stage 1890-1899: A Calendar of Plays and Players*, 2 vols (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976), I, 449-50.
[30] Henry Crabb Robinson, *The London Theatre 1811-1866: Selections from the Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, ed. by Eluned Brown (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1966) pp. 168-9.
[31] William Brough, *King Arthur: Or, the Days and Knights of the Round Table. A New and Original Christmas Extravaganza in One Act* (London: Lacy, [1863]).
[32] Carr, *Arthur*, IV. 3, p. 63; Othello: 'keep up your bright swords' (I. 2. 60.); '[t]hen said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword'; Matthew 26:52.

almost exactly repeats the line of the Second Witch in *Macbeth*.[33] The Shakespeare-style language effectively conveys a sense of antiquity (the opposite of the naturalistic language employed by continental writers like Zola and Ibsen in the 1890s), but it is not so old, or so alien to the stage, that it is hard to follow for most audiences, as Malory's language may have been. Reviewers of the 1863 pantomime, like many reviewers of the 1895 production, compared it to Tennyson's *Idylls*, and predominantly remarked on the spectacle of the scenery and costumes.[34]

What Irving was most interested in – and what he achieved, according to the reviews – was creating a series of separate but harmonised 'stage pictures', a phrase that was repeated by critics.[35] These stage pictures were formed by the set design and the positions and poses of actors at key moments. One example of a stage picture comes at the end of the prologue, when Arthur stands as a 'knightly figure on the margin of the lake, with the gleaming sword held aloft'.[36] This moment was so popular on the opening night that 'five or six times the audience insisted on the curtain going up, in order that it might feast its eyes on the scene'.[37] All the other acts also end with stage pictures, and anything that detracted from the visual impact of a scene was removed before opening night.[38] Irving also darkened the stage for each scene change, emphasising the visual independence of each act of the play – before 1879, he had followed the older convention of scene-changing

[33] '[T]he pricking of my thumbs / Informs me something human this way comes': Brough, *Arthur*, I. 1, p. 6. In *Macbeth* the line is '[b]y the pricking of my thumbs, / Something wicked this way comes' (IV. 1.).
[34] See 'The Christmas Pantomimes and Burlesques', *Era*, 3 January 1864, Gratis Supplement, n. pag.; 'Christmas Entertainments', *Standard*, 28 December 1863, p. 2.
[35] 'Mr Irving has never presented a more beautiful and appropriate series of stage pictures': '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Derby Mercury*, 16 January 1895, p. 7; also, 'the main impression [...] will not improbably be a series of exquisite stage pictures', '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Standard*, 14 January 1895, p. 3.
[36] Carr, *Arthur*, prologue, p. 7. The quoted description is from 'Mr Comyns Carr's 'King Arthur,'' *Leeds Mercury*, 14 January 1895, p. 5.
[37] 'Mr Comyns Carr's 'King Arthur,'' *Leeds Mercury*, 14 January 1895, p. 5.
[38] For example, Irving removed mermaids from the production shortly after they had been designed and created, because he did not think they visually complemented other elements of the scene they were in. See [Alice Carr], *Mrs J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences*, ed. by Eve Adam (London: Hutchinson, [n.d.]), p. 206-7.

in full view of the audience – and this visual independence was accentuated by the long gap between each act (twelve minutes being estimated as a maximum time for set changes).[39] The audience talked freely between acts, often over Sullivan's music.[40] The implication was that the play consisted of five separate parts which formed distinct images in the mind of each audience member. Arthur was part of these images, as if he were a figure in a painting.

Creating staged images with people – *tableaux vivants*, or living pictures – was a popular art form in the nineteenth century. Tableaux could be formed on stage as part of a production, as in *King Arthur*, or could be performed on their own, outside the theatre. It was considered a more respectable form of play-acting in polite society than a full production. In Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), an aristocratic prejudice against theatre is expressed by Edmund's father, as he claims it perverts 'decorum'.[41] The characters go ahead with a full play and do not settle for a series of tableaux, but in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), characters perform a tableau rather than a private play for reasons of propriety.[42] Eliciting the right associations was important for Irving's production: as Kirshen argues, *King Arthur* was a 'high-minded', artistic production, and if it had reminded audiences of a pantomime or circus-show, it would have failed to reach its intended audience.[43]

[39] 'Behind the Scenes at the Lyceum', *Sketch*, 16 January 1895, in *The Sketch: October 31 1894 to January 23 1895* (London: Ingram, [n.d]), VIII, 548-50 (p. 549); Alan Hughes, 'Henry Irving's Artistic Use of Stage Lighting', *Theatre Notebook*, 33 (1979), 100-9 (p. 102).
[40] See 'The Music of "King Arthur,"' *Graphic*, 12 January 1895, p. 34.
[41] Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park: A Novel in Three Volumes*, 3 vols (London: Egerton, 1814), I, ch. 13, pp. 260-1.
[42] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 2 vols (New York: Harper, 1876), I, bk 1, ch. 6, p. 60.
[43] Kirshen, 'Embodiment', p. 69.

iv. Arthur in The Script

The script for the 1895 production was written by Joseph Comyns Carr, a journalist and gallery director. Irving had originally approached Tennyson to write an Arthurian play in the 1880s, but the poet had declined. According to Bram Stoker, who worked for Irving as his business manager at the Lyceum, this was because Tennyson did not feel he could cover the subject in drama, having already done it in verse.[44] Tennyson may also have felt unable to translate the Arthurian legend onto the stage, having previously aborted an attempt to write an Arthurian masque sometime between 1833 and 1840, and had already experienced poor commercial and critical success with his other dramatic works.[45] W.G. Wills, a painter and playwright, was asked by Irving to write a play based on King Arthur, after Tennyson had refused to do so, and Irving purchased rights to Wills's text in 1890, though it was never produced.[46] According to Stoker, Irving did not move forward with Wills's version because 'he did not think it would act well', though Wills's brother claimed that Irving had been 'well satisfied' with it, and it was only Wills's poor health that stopped him making the changes 'necessary before a play is put upon the stage'.[47] Wills died in 1891 before amendments could be made. Finally, when Carr was approached by Irving to edit Wills's version, he decided to write an entirely new script, which was finished in 1893.[48] One aspect that Carr seems to have taken from Wills's draft is a scene when Arthur arrives in disguise, drawing from the *Bel Inconnu* motif, in which a nobleman appears to be of a lower social class. In Wills's version, Arthur loses his memory and becomes a beggar; in Carr's, Arthur

[44] Stoker, *Reminiscences*, I, 253.
[45] See Hallam Tennyson, introduction, *Idylls of the King*, in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London: Longmans, Green, 1969), pp. 1460-4 (1461).
[46] For a summary of Wills's script, see Freeman Wills, *W.G. Wills: Dramatist and Painter* (New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1898), pp. 233-262. The full script is not published, and the location of the manuscript is not known.
[47] Stoker, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 253.
[48] J. Comyns Carr, *King Arthur: A Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts* (London: Macmillan, 1895).

disguises himself as an ordinary knight when he defends Guinevere, though he gives no explicit reason for doing this. The idea's dramatic potential – the big reveal is an exciting moment – may have appealed to Carr and Irving, but the move away from Arthur as an amnesiac beggar to Arthur as a deliberately disguised knight is a shift from a comedic to a serious, more obviously heroic, tone. Mark Twain's *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, published six years before the 1895 production, includes a section in which Arthur becomes a beggar, to comic effect. Twain is drawing on the 'king incognito', rather than the *Bel Inconnu* motif, when a king disguises himself to understand his own people better, but the image of a beggar king remains the same as it is in Wills's script, and the association may have contributed to the trope seeming too comedic and ridiculous for Carr's serious version.[49]

Carr's script consisted of a prologue and four acts, beginning with the young Arthur seizing Excalibur at dawn, continuing with the development and exposure of Lancelot and Guinevere's affair, and ending when Arthur is wounded almost to death by Mordred. It is a condensed adaptation of the legend, focusing on Guinevere and Lancelot's affair as the catalyst for the downfall of Arthur's kingdom, as revealed by the machinations of Mordred and Morgan. According to numerous newspaper reviews, Carr took inspiration from Malory rather than Tennyson, though the *New York Times* did not think Carr 'brought very much from Malory'.[50] One of the few details taken from Malory rather than Tennyson was the importance of Arthur's scabbard, which Morgan le Fay steals (in Malory, she does this to destroy the invulnerability the scabbard grants its owner – in Carr, Morgan steals the scabbard only knowing that it has a greater value than the sword, and the reason for that

[49] Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (New York: Webster, 1889), chs XXVII—XXXVIII.
[50] 'Mr Irving's "King Arthur,"' *New York Times*, 29 January 1895, p. 4. Other newspapers that claim Malory as Carr's primary source include 'Theatrical and Musical Intelligence', *Morning Post*, 7 January 1895, p. 3 and 'Music and Drama', *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 5 January 1895, p. 6.

value is never explained).[51] It is far easier to see what Carr took from Tennyson. One example is how Carr's Guinevere refers to Arthur's 'god-like gaze', recalling the close link between Arthur and God in *Idylls* (e.g. Arthur forgives 'as Eternal God / Forgives').[52] Tennyson is also quoted in the scene titled 'The Passing of Arthur' (IV. 1.), and when the chorus tells Arthur '[t]hou shalt rule from sea to sea', Carr is mimicking typical Tennysonian syntax that ranges from one thing *to* another (e.g. Bellicent in *Idylls* – 'I beheld / From eye to eye').[53] More significantly, Carr removes Arthur's incest and made Mordred his nephew only, rather than his son and nephew. This follows Tennyson rather than Malory, though some editions of Malory, like Edward Strachey's well-read 1868 edition, had also omitted Arthur's incest.

Other changes were also made to the plots of Tennyson and Malory. Uniquely, Lancelot decides not to join the other knights in seeking the Holy Grail, and he misses the vision of the grail in Camelot, as Arthur misses it in Tennyson. In addition, Lancelot does not rescue Guinevere from the stake, as he does in Tennyson and Malory; that task is left to Arthur, who fights as her champion.[54] *The Pall Mall Gazette* did not consider Carr's script original enough for it to have dramatic impact; the issues of the legends were 'outworn, ancient or modern as the handling might be' and they lacked a 'touch of unexpectedness'.[55] Others, such as W. Thomas, took the opposite view, regretting the absence of much-loved scenes associated strongly with *Idylls*, such as the return of Excalibur to the water, and the parting of Arthur and Guinevere in the nunnery.[56] According

[51] Arthur interprets the value of the scabbard as a symbol of Guinevere and peace, though Merlin later implies that the scabbard does protect the user of the sword from death, in a confusing explanation regarding what will happen if the scabbard is stolen: '[w]ho steals the scabbard doth but draw the sword, / Who holds the sword, holds all save life, and wins, / Though life be spent, a deathless crown from death': Carr, *Arthur*, I.1, p. 16; II.1, p 35.
[52] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, ll. 541-2, p. 283.
[53] Carr, *Arthur*, IV. 1, p. 56; prologue, p. 7; Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, l. 269, p. 28. The words 'sea to sea' are also repeated by Arthur in Carr, *Arthur*, I. 1, p. 29.
[54] Ibid., IV. 1, pp. 62-3.
[55] '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 January 1895, p. 1.
[56] W. Moy Thomas, *King Arthur*, *Graphic*, 19 January 1895, p. 70.

to Lena Ashwell, who played Elaine, 'the play was neither Tennyson nor Malory', and as a result it 'disappointed many' who wanted to see either writer's conception of Arthur realised on the stage.[57]

For Henry Newbolt, the pressure of measuring up to Tennyson meant that his own Arthurian play, *Mordred: A Tragedy*, published in the same year Irving's *Arthur* was performed, was criticised because 'a greater poet had made the subject peculiarly his own'.[58] In fact, Newbolt intentionally reacted against Tennyson, claiming that his whole intention in writing *Mordred* 'was to put upon record my alternative to Tennyson's sentimental and – as I thought – unwarranted picture of Arthur as the "blameless king" – this being inaccurate to the original source, Malory [...] The Arthur of my play is a despot'.[59] It is worth considering Newbolt's Arthur further, in order to put Carr's Arthur into a contemporary dramatic context.

Newbolt's Arthur refers to himself as 'Arthur and his sins', and one of these sins is Mordred, who is himself described as 'sin incarnate'.[60] In Malory, 'sin' is not attributed to Arthur, but is repeatedly used to describe Lancelot's adulterous love for Guinevere.[61] Newbolt's emphasis on Arthur as a sinner is not, therefore, derived from Malory; rather, it is a part of the dramatic form Newbolt is using. At the beginning of the script, Newbolt quotes from Georg Hegel: '[i]n genuine tragedy [...] Two opposed rights come forth [...] both alike and justified'.[62] This moral equilibrium shapes the sinful Arthur, but the Hegelian

[57] Lady Simson [Leena Ashwell], 'Irving as King Arthur', in *We Saw Him Act: A Symposium of the Art of Sir Henry Irving*, ed. by H.A. Saintsbury and Cecil Palmer (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 325-31, (p. 326).
[58] Henry Newbolt, *Mordred: A Tragedy* (London: Unwin, 1895); Newbolt, *My World as in My Time: Memoirs of Sir Henry Newbolt, 1862-1932* (London: Faber, 1932), p. 189.
[59] Newbolt, *My World*, p. 190.
[60] Newbolt, *Mordred*, V. 3, p. 124; II. 1, p. 29. The relationship between Arthur and Mordred in Newbolt recalls Satan and his daughter Sin in Book II of *Paradise Lost*.
[61] For a description of Lancelot as sinful, see Caxton XVI. 4. However, Malory attempted to justify Guinevere and Lancelot's love as free from sin in XVIII. 15.
[62] [Georg Hegel], 'Tragedy and the Impiety of Socrates', in *Hegel on Tragedy*, ed. by Anne and Henry Paolucci, trans. by E.S. Haldane and others (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1962), p. 364. Newbolt used Walter

tragic form also reinterprets Mordred as a genuine alternative to Arthur, rather than an antithesis. Newbolt's Mordred does not want to destroy the Round Table, only reform it so that it is less ordered and 'tyrannous'.[63] Hegel argued that the result of two justified powers coming into opposition is guilt, followed by 'the downfall of the individual who has disturbed its [ethical life's] peace'.[64] This is also represented in Newbolt's script: Arthur claims he has paid the debt of his incest '[t]o the upmost', and 'still bear[s] his [Mordred's] punishment', whilst, Mordred 'grieve[s] to war / With Lancelot', expressing guilt for the conflict he created.[65] In Carr's script, Mordred is merely a villain, prophesied since birth as 'Arthur's doom', and his relationship with Arthur recalls the dynamic between Shakespeare's Iago and Othello.[66] He implies that Guinevere knew of Lancelot's secret love, but, when asked by Arthur to elaborate, he replies evasively 'I'll not answer that' in the style of Iago.[67] Carr's Arthur claims he is 'one' with both Lancelot and Guinevere, but he is not as close to Mordred, who forms his partnership with Morgan.[68] Carr's script emphasises the contrast between good and evil, often in terms that suited the Lyceum's focus on visual imagery: the good Arthur first appeared in the sunrise during the prologue, and the ambiguous Merlin, contrastingly, leaves in the sunset, as a 'dark face' and a 'shadow', following a tradition of Victorian melodrama.[69] If Newbolt's script is based on the idea of two opposing rights, then Carr's is based on a right meeting an opposing wrong.

Pater's translation, from *Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1893), p. 80-1.

[63] Newbolt, *Mordred*, II. 1, p. 23.

[64] See G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. by T.M. Knox, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II, 1195-7.

[65] Newbolt, *Mordred*, IV. 1, p. 49; IV. 2, p. 96.

[66] Carr, *Arthur*, I. 1, p. 13.

[67] Ibid., III. 1, p. 48. Compare to William Shakespeare, *Othello*, when Iago implies that Desdemona has been unfaithful. 'OTHELLO: By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts. / IAGO: You cannot [...]', in *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), III. 3, ll. 183-4, p. 2120.

[68] Carr, *Arthur*, I. 1, pp. 17 and 29.

[69] Ibid., prologue, p. 1 and I. 1, p. 28. See David Mayer, 'Encountering Melodrama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. by Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 145-63 (148).

In both cases the theatrical format – Hegelian tragedy or Victorian melodrama – define the relationships between Arthur and the other characters.

Newbolt also makes Arthur seem stronger and more active than he is in Carr's script: the 'wild North' is 'guarded by […] [Arthur's] hand of iron', and the 'swift lightning flash of Arthur's sword', whilst in Carr, Arthur's 'sword lies sheathed' from the time he meets Guinevere until the final scenes of the play, when he uses it again.[70] Wilfred Campbell's play about Mordred, also published in 1895, provides a further level of contrast. In that script, Arthur is depicted as a strong and active figure comparable to Newbolt's version – he is both '[t]he mighty monarch and the splendid warrior' – and even Arthur's incest is described in forceful, perhaps even violent terms: he 'violated a maid's sanctuary'.[71] When Carr was asked to write a script for Irving's production, he knew that it had to appeal both to Irving, who would play the lead role, and to the Lyceum's large and varied audience. Newbolt and Campbell were not writing under commission, and were therefore free to depict Arthur as a more interestingly flawed, but less heroic, character.

The following section considers how Carr attempted to balance his depiction of Arthur between, on one side, the despotism and ferocity present in Newbolt and Campbell, and, on the other side, the danger of Arthur becoming an overly passive and dramatically uninteresting character. The flaws in Newbolt and Campbell's Arthur make him seem like a human individual, in a tragic sense, but do not make the figure seem ideal. The challenge for Carr was to move towards the idealism that audiences desired to see in a depiction of Arthur, whilst retaining enough sense that Arthur was a human individual.

[70] Newbolt, *Mordred*, I. 1, p. 3; Carr, *Arthur*, I. 1, p. 16.
[71] Wilfred Campbell, 'Mordred: A Tragedy in Five Acts', in *Mordred and Hildebrand: A Book of Tragedies* (Ottawa: Durie, 1895), I. 5, p. 34; 'I violated a maid's sanctuary, / And afterwards I found [...] She was my sister!': I. 1, p. 14.

Arthur discovers that he is England's true king in the prologue of Carr's script, after learning about his heritage (he is Uther Pendragon's son) and acquiring Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake. The nature of Arthur's kingship is established as a justified wielding of force for the protection of others. Excalibur's 'might alone shall bring the realm peace', but only if used by one 'whose arm is strong to wield it in the fight'.[72] Arthur's use of the sword is also proleptic of the rise of the British Empire; with Excalibur, Arthur will be '[m]onarch of a mighty land / That, in unborn years, shall be / Monarch of the mightier sea'.[73] These are stirring, crowd-pleasing lines, though the strict seven-syllable rhyming scheme does not make the meaning as clear as it might be in prose or blank verse. Arthur's recollection of a dream is even less clear: it features 'an unborn empire' that claims Excalibur, presumably meaning that Arthur must use Excalibur in his own rule, in order eventually to pass it on to the British Empire (Excalibur symbolically representing might).[74] Carr could not have written this scene twenty-five years later without seeming ironic, and the lines were disliked by some even at the time; Burne-Jones objected to the 'jingo bits about the sea and England which Carr should be ashamed of'.[75]

In Act I, Carr attempts to make Arthur more than just the wielder of Excalibur, by emphasising his emotional sensitivity as well as a deep desire for peace. Carr gives a short speech to Lancelot, describing Arthur's character to the audience, and how he will respond to the threat of his enemies:

> […] he knows not fear
> Whose warrior heart was bred where spears have grown
> Thick as the river reeds. Yet in that heart
> Dwells a fond nursling hope this news [of conspiring enemies] will slay;
> For since the coming of Queen Guinevere

[72] Carr, *Arthur*, prologue, pp. 2-3.
[73] Ibid., p. 6.
[74] Ibid., p. 3.
[75] Qtd in Penelope Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2003), p. 263.
The New York Times also disliked the lines, writing that 'no one who is not an Englishman cares anything about' the parts referring to the 'idea of British marine glory': 'The Theatrical Week', *New York Times*, 10 November 1895, p. 12.

> The sword Excalibur hath hung at rest
> Within its jewelled scabbard, and he dreamed
> The lust of blood was past.[76]

In the prologue, Arthur is both 'warrior king' and 'warrior knight', suggesting that 'warrior' is only a descriptive adjournment, modifying Arthur's primary roles as king and knight. In the above lines, however, Arthur's warriorship is a more integral aspect of his character – part of his 'heart' and formed by his upbringing. At the same time, his heart contains a wish for the end of blood lust. Guinevere is the influence that tempers Arthur's integral warrior-like character, related here (and later on, in Act III), to Arthur's scabbard, in imagery that Kirshen notes would be amusing to post-Freudian audiences.[77] Outside the fictional world of the script, the reason for making Arthur seem both fierce and peaceful can be explained by wanting Arthur to conform to contemporary ideas about heroism and leadership. As *The Observer* wrote, 'the unidealised King Arthur of the legend [...] [would] be held, nowadays, a wholly unfitting hero for glorification on the score of his prowess in perpetual warfare' – and the 'substantial issues' of 'medieval chivalry [...] would be wholly out of tune with the tastes and sympathies of a modern audience'.[78]

Historians such as Walter E. Houghton have written about the upper class 'worship of force' in British Victorian society, and T. J. Jackson Lear argues that by the 1890s, in America and Europe, the celebration of male strength and power was also widely celebrated by the bourgeoisie.[79] This appreciation of strength was not necessarily associated with warfare; although, by 1900, *Atlantic Monthly* noted the 'phenomenon' of 'a revived love

[76] Carr, *Arthur*, I. 1, p. 9.
[77] Kirshen, 'Embodiment', p. 79.
[78] Qtd. in '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum Theatre', *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 January 1895, p. 7.
[79] Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1890* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 196-217; T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), pp. 107-8.

of war', strength was also associated with sports and outdoor pursuits.[80] *The Observer* was not critical of a warrior Arthur, only of an Arthur who did nothing but fight (the objection was specifically with 'perpetual' warfare). In the late-nineteenth century, leaders who were not engaged in wars could prove themselves strong and active in other areas – Grover Cleveland, US President 1893-97 was a persistent hunter and fisher, and William Gladstone, whose sixth premiership ended in 1892, famously cut down trees in his spare time – but Carr did not show Arthur as similarly active when he was not fighting. One way to avoid Arthur seeming too bloodthirsty, but still active, would have been to distinguish Arthur as leader from Arthur as an individual man of action. Stark Young does exactly this in his Arthurian drama (1906), separating Arthur's role as king from his underlying character as an emotional, private human. As king, Young's Arthur is a frustratingly passive (but diplomatic) ruler who refuses to confront Lancelot and Guinevere over their affair; as Mordred says to Arthur, 'thou striv'st not / For certainty, loving the peace of thy court / More than thy wife and honour'.[81] When it is the appropriate moment in the narrative for Arthur to take action, Stark shifts the focus on the character from that of king to human individual, when Arthur 'flings off his crown' and rallies his knights to battle against Mordred.[82]

Carr's Arthur does not transform himself from king into fighter. Instead, Carr attempts to merge the two when Arthur is named 'warrior king' in the prologue.[83] This characterisation is not developed further on in the script, however; Arthur is not described as a warrior after the beginning of the first Act, and there is very little display of any fighting prowess on stage. Act III ends with rebels about to besiege Camelot. The stage 'fills with

[80] See Lears, *Grace*, p. 108; Goldwin Smith, 'War as a Moral Medicine', *The Atlantic Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics*, vol. 86 (December 1900), 735-37 (p. 735).
[81] Young, *Guenevere*, II. 1, p. 32.
[82] Ibid., III. 1, p. 62.
[83] Carr, *Arthur*, prologue, p. 3.

knights' and Arthur raises his sword. In answer, all the other knights raise their swords, and the curtain falls. Despite the call to arms and the 'warlike music', we do not see any part of the battle on stage: the rebellion is crushed between the acts. The decision not to show the fighting was probably related to preferring a tone of seriousness over spectacle – as *The Times* wrote, 'no prodigies of valour are performed, since these would necessarily assimilate the theatre to a circus'.[84] In fact, most of the fighting took place among the knights playing with the prop swords and armour behind the curtain, suggesting a level of frustration from supers unable to use the swords for anything other than set decoration in the actual play.[85]

The promise of action came when 'ARTHUR *runs on* LANCELOT', but '*the uplifted sword drops from his hand*'.[86] The moment formed one of the play's tableaux, reproduced in *The Graphic* by Henry Paget (Appendix B, p. 244), as well as in a souvenir booklet, and Kirshen regards it as a deliberate reference to 'Generosity', one of the Arthurian frescoes in the Palace of Westminster completed in 1864 by William Dyce.[87] However, unlike in Dyce's painting, Carr's Arthur does not spare Lancelot as an act of 'generosity'. Instead:

> Some sudden palsy doth beat down this arm:
> Its strength is gone. Yet think not 'tis the love
> I bore thee once; that's clean forgotten now.
> Nor is it mercy[88]

The moment could have been used to make Arthur seem a more active figure without a degeneration into savagery, or devolving the whole production to the level of a circus.

[84] 'Mr Irving's Production of *King Arthur*' *The Times*, 14 January 1895, p. 11.
[85] In one instance, a super fought so vigorously they even knocked another actor unconscious before the play began. Stoker, *Reminiscences*, II, 261-2.
[86] Carr, *Arthur*, III. 1, p. 53. Original emphasis.
[87] See '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Graphic*, 19 January 1895, front cover; *Souvenir of King Arthur: Presented at the Lyceum Theatre,* illus. by J. Bernard Partridge and Hawes Craven (London: Cassell & Co. 1895); Kirshen, 'Embodiment', pp. 67-8. The fresco shows Lancelot forbidding a swordsman to draw his weapon, whilst an unhorsed Arthur lies on the ground before them.
[88] Carr, *Arthur*, III. 1, p. 53.

Instead, Arthur only seems weak, sparing Lancelot because of a 'palsy', and he is even unsure about why he feels like that:

> Is this a curse that Heaven hath set on kings
> Who may not love nor hate like common men?
> Or is there some rank poison in a crown
> That stamps the brand of coward on the brows
> Of him who wears it?[89]

In this passage, Carr's Arthur does not know whether he is acting as a king, distinguished by having different feelings from 'common men', or as an individual, distinguished only by wearing a crown, which may make him act as a coward. The result of this uncertainty is that Carr's Arthur – in this moment at least – appears neither as a human individual nor as an ideal king; he expresses neither human emotion nor god-like forgiveness.

Carr attempted to strengthen Arthur's role in the plot by making him, rather than Lancelot, rescue Guinevere.[90] In most versions of the story, Arthur sentences Guinevere to be burnt for adultery, only for her to be rescued by Lancelot at the last moment – in Carr, Mordred condemns Guinevere, having assumed the throne in Arthur's absence. Arthur arrives as Guinevere's champion, and fights Mordred to save her life. Arthur does not, as he does in Tennyson, forgive Guinevere – indeed, Guinevere does not even know her champion's identity, as Arthur hides his face behind his helmet. Instead of justifying his presence, Arthur merely appears, and does not even take responsibility for the outcome of his fight against Mordred, simply saying 'Death stands betwixt us twain, and Death shall choose'.[91] Carr may have been trying to balance the earlier promise of a 'warrior king' with a more civilised passivity, so that Arthur engages in violence without actively seeking it out or taking control, but the result is that Arthur seems strangely unconcerned by the situation. Carr's Arthur does not even kill Mordred, who is instead slain by a dying Lancelot

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., IV. 1, pp. 62-3.
[91] Ibid., IV. 2, p. 64.

off-stage.[92] Carr is probably unique in making anyone other than Arthur kill Mordred, and in Wills's unperformed draft, as with most versions of the legend, Arthur is the one who kills Mordred, in full view of the audience.[93] The change may have been made to avoid either Mordred's dead body cluttering the stage, or the awkwardness of it being dragged or carried away. Irving may also have wanted the focus of the scene to be on Arthur and his wound, rather than share the stage with an actor performing a death; according to anecdotal reports, Irving wanted the audience's attention to be on him, rather than on other actors, when he was playing the lead role.[94] In all these examples, the promise of power and strength, implied by the prologue, is not realised on the stage: Carr and Irving's Arthur is neither an ideal warrior-king taking charge and winning fights in view of the audience, nor a particularly developed character, engaging on an emotional level with Lancelot, Guinevere, and Mordred.

Some reviewers regretted Irving's passivity. For *The Western Mail*, Irving's Arthur lacked the 'impetuosity of youth', and the journalist criticised the fact that he did not seize Excalibur from where it rose out of the lake, but instead waited for it to 'amble along' and be 'thrust out' at him by a stagehand, who was carrying the sword under the gauze.[95] *The Pall Mall Gazette* regarded Irving as 'beautiful and picturesque', but someone who never had the chance to 'act' in the play, and *The Glasgow Herald* deemed Irving's Arthur 'even more of a picturesque lay figure than the Arthur of Malory'.[96] Malory's Arthur is often a

[92] Ibid., IV. 2, p. 65.
[93] In Newbolt Arthur and Mordred kill each other; in Campbell's *Mordred*, Arthur is killed by an anonymous knight rather than Mordred, but Mordred still dies from a wound inflicted by Arthur. For a more lengthy comparison between Carr, Newbolt and Campbell, see Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, 'King Arthur Plays from the 1890s', *Victorian Poetry*, 28 (1990), 153-176. Wills, *Dramatist*, pp. 259.
[94] For example, Alice Comyns Carr, who designed the costumes for multiple Lyceum productions including *King* Arthur, recalled how the bold red cloak she designed for Ellen Terry's Lady Macbeth was taken by Irving for his Macbeth. Carr was then told to make a 'more discreet garment' for Macbeth's consort. See Laurence Irving, *Henry Irving: The Actor and His World* (London: Faber, 1951), p. 502.
[95] Babil, 'King Arthur at the Lyceum', *Western Mail*, 2 February 1895, p. 2.
[96] '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 January 1895, p. 1. 'Friday, January 18, 1895', *Glasgow Herald*, 18 January 1895, p. 6.

background figure, save for Book V, in which he leads a successful military campaign to conquer the Roman Emperor Lucius. The role of a medieval king did not lend itself to seeking adventure; once the king had won the throne, he was not expected to risk his life, and the Arthurs of Malory and Chrétien generally follow this model, restricted to their courts after they have established their power. In Tennyson, Arthur's conquests are given even less attention: in 'The Coming of Arthur', the king simply fights 'in twelve great battles [...] and made a realm' (as was credited to the historical Arthur).[97] The decrease in fighting is, however, balanced by an increase in other activities: Tennyson's Arthur 'charged before the eyes of ladies and kings' in tournaments, and was '[r]apt in this fancy of his Table Round'.[98] Carr did not manage to convey this balance between fighting prowess and social activity: his version of Arthur seems ineffectual and passive, because he wanted to avoid pantomime spectacle but could not find an alternative way to show action and strength.

v. Arthur on the Stage as an Ideal Figure

I now turn to the production itself, to Irving's own portrayal of Arthur, and Burne-Jones's approach to the production as costume and set designer. In particular, this section analyses why it was so difficult to realise Burne-Jones's ideal version of Arthur on the stage. For Burne-Jones, presenting the Arthurian legend as mysterious and indistinct was integral to conveying its 'beauty'. Burne-Jones only found this at one point in the 1895 production: 'when the knights gather for the San Graal there is a moment of beauty— of real beauty. It

[97] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, ll. 517-8, p. 35.
[98] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, ll. 390-3; 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, l. 129. For a summary of passive depictions of Arthur in medieval literature, see Rosemary Morris, 'Peacetime', in *The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1982), pp. 70-93 (85).

is gone before you can measure it,' he wrote.[99] Burne-Jones was not just critical of Irving's production; he was also critical of the very idea of an Arthurian play for the general public:

> I can't expect people to feel about the subject [the Arthurian legend] as I do, and have always. It is such a sacred land to me […] I don't like plays — don't like the theatre at all. I see that people like the pageant in it and are civil to me about that — it only shows how useless it is to make pictures for them; they need to be roared at or they can't hear […] [Irving] thinks it is better for people to see an Arthurian play than not — that there are enough people who like romance and they might be fed — and perhaps he is right […] In the main I should like to keep all the highest things secret and remote from people; if they wanted to look they should go a hard journey to see.[100]

Burne-Jones's anxiety was that popularising art would degrade it, as if the only way to make the Arthurian legend accessible is to 'roar' it at people. Unfortunately for Burne-Jones, it is difficult to keep things 'secret and remote' when they are presented in front of people on a stage, though he nevertheless tried to make his designs as mysterious as possible. *The Sketch* guessed that the costumes were based on the 'fourteenth century', and the sets were modelled on architecture from the 'eleventh century', whilst *The Yorkshire Herald* did not think the knights were clad in 'authentic armour from any given period'.[101] Burne-Jones claimed he had designed the costumes in such a way as 'to puzzle the archaeologists' – though he may also have wanted to puzzle the audience, in an attempt to mystify the subject.[102]

Burne-Jones also attempted to make the sets and costumes convey the 'real beauty' he thought existed in the Arthurian legend, but the stage format did not make this easy. Burne-Jones's designs for curved, ivy-like pauldrons and poleyns gave the armour an elegant organic look, as if it had grown around the characters rather than being made in a forge – but, whilst that style of armour was fine for the stained glass images Burne-Jones

[99] Qtd in Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1904), II, 248.
[100] Ibid., pp. 247-8.
[101] '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum Theatre', *Yorkshire Herald*, 15 January 1895, p. 2.
[102] Stoker, *Reminiscences*, I, 254.

designed for the chapel of Manchester College, Oxford in the same decade, on the stage, the armour proved difficult to act in, as the curves meant that the actors' arms naturally 'took strange positions'.[103] Burne-Jones's scenery designs were also ill-suited to the theatre, and were applied by Hawes Craven 'with a certain nervousness'.[104] At one point, Burne-Jones was told that 'the suggested scenes were impossible to work in accordance with stage limitations', being too elaborate, though Irving supported his artist and forced the theatre craftsmen to overcome the practical difficulties.[105] Burne-Jones became frustrated by his limits as a theatre designer, regretting that he could not design the faces of actors, as he could for figures in a painting, and lamenting the 'terrible grays' of the cast.[106]

One of the production's 'terrible grays' was the grey-haired Irving himself. Both *The New York Times* and *The Western Mail* claimed that Irving, who was in his late fifties, was too old for Arthur, and his hair too straight or too grey.[107] 'He is not the type, he is not the man!' lamented *The New York Times*, criticising Irving's 'long, sanguine face and shock of iron-grey hair' as ill-befitting the king 'who could forgive, and die forgiving' (paraphrasing Tennyson's Arthur).[108] The implication was that Arthur needed to be blond, bearded, and blue-eyed, as he is described in *Idylls*, and the grey Irving did not match the Arthur 'type' (the word here referring to a category of appearance).[109] Irving may also have been so famous and popular that he diverted attention away from the character he was

[103] Burne-Jones's designs for Manchester College chapel (later named Harris-Manchester College) were installed between 1893-8; Stoker, *Reminiscences*, I, 254.
[104] [Alice Carr], *Reminiscences*, p. 205.
[105] Stoker, *Reminiscences*, I, 254-5.
[106] Letter from Burne-Jones to Mary Gaskell, qtd in Martin Harrison and Bill Waters, *Burne-Jones*, 2nd edn (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1989), pp. 156-7. First published 1973.
[107] 'The Theatrical Week', *New York Times*, 10 November 1895, p. 12; Babil, 'King Arthur at the Lyceum', *Western Mail*, 2 February 1895, p. 2.
[108] 'Miss Terry as Guinevere', *New York Times*, 5 November 1895, p. 5. Tennyson himself did not think Irving was suited for the role, having expressed strong doubts in 1891, though without giving specific reasons. ''Irving will not do for King Arthur': letter from Tennyson to Sir Baldwyn Leighton, 10 September 1891, in Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. by Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, 3 vols (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1981-90), III, pp. 438-9.
[109] Tristram describes Arthur's 'steel-blue eyes' and 'golden beard' in Tennyson, 'The Last Tournament', in *Idylls.*, ll. 662-3, p. 266.

portraying. *The Morning Post* praised his 'histrionic skill', but found it 'impossible to separate' his portrayal of Arthur from 'the influence exercised by the actor-manager of the whole production'.[110] From *The Standard* we know that 'the action was interrupted' by volleys of cheers 'as soon as his [Irving's] mail-clad form was recognised', and it is far more likely that audiences were applauding their ideal actor rather than their ideal king.[111] The review of the play in *Punch* highlighted this unintentional doubleness, referring to Arthur as '*King Arthur Irving*' and then as '*King Henry Irving Arthur*', as if Henry Irving's fame gradually eclipsed Arthur's, and the heroic idealism of the legendary king was in competition with the audience's appreciation for the legendary actor-manager.[112] Goodman thinks that Irving's previous roles may have been another possible distraction for the audience, noting that he was best known for playing villains such as Mephistopheles in an 1885 production of *Faust*, and Macbeth in 1888, and that his 'infamous quirks' and mannerisms were too associated with these parts to be convincingly used in an heroic role.[113]

Some reviewers criticised the dark colour of Arthur's armour, considering it symptomatic of a wider problem. Scott wrote that Arthur's black armour made him 'a man unromantic, unheroic, unideal,' but this was because, in contrast to Burne-Jones's design, Scott had wanted Arthur to appear as 'a ray of light in this mysterious, shadowy picture'.[114] Thackeray and Tennyson also thought of Arthur in bright visual terms.[115] Burne-Jones's

[110] 'Lyceum Theatre', *Morning Post*, 14 January 1895, p. 3.
[111] '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Standard*, 14 January 1895, p. 3.
[112] 'The Comyns and Goin's of Arthur', *Punch*, January 26 1895, in *Punch or the London Charivari*, vol. 108, 37.
[113] Goodman, 'Last of Avalon', pp. 233-55 (253).
[114] Scott, 'Arthur', in *Bells*, pp. 375-6.
[115] In a letter to Tennyson, Thackeray wrote of 'Arthur in gold armour': letter from W. Thackeray, October 1859, qtd in [Hallam Tennyson], *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A* Memoir, 2 vols (New York and London: Macmillan, 1897), I, 444-6 (p. 445). Tennyson never described Arthur's armour as 'gold', but whilst working on 'Guinevere', he once spoke to his wife about the need of great men (like Arthur) whose 'brightness' make the 'dark spaces look the darker': [Hallam Tennyson], *Memoir*, I, 424. Tennyson later used the image of gold armour in 'The Holy Grail', though this armour belongs to 'the Lord of all the world' in Percivale's vision, rather than to, explicitly, Arthur: 'The Holy Grail', in *Idylls*, ll. 410-14, p. 217.

design for the armour, in contrast to Scott's, Thackeray's, and Tennyson's ideas, was 'bluish grey', and this was made even darker under Irving's direction.[116] Burne-Jones must have appreciated the sombre effect of the black armour, as he used the same colour in his last painting of Arthur, which he worked on during the time of the production, between 1881 and 1898.[117] However, Scott's criticism was focused on the first appearance of Arthur in his armour, when he was a young man standing in the prologue; black armour was more fitting for the Burne-Jones painting as it depicts Arthur on his deathbed. It would have been more appropriate to dress Arthur differently as a 'younger man', but the identification of Arthur as the man in the black armour was important for consistency in a play that spanned the whole of Arthur's career, and the dark armour helped make the figure seem mysterious by marking him out from most other figures of history and romance.[118] The issue for some reviewers was that what Burne-Jones thought should be part of the portrayal of Arthur (mystery and a sense of 'real beauty') did not match the anticipation of a bright appearance to visually match his symbolic light.

Irving's approach to the production differed from Burne-Jones's in that he wanted to invoke mystery but also provide a level of clarity and realism. The theatre of 1895 had long been moving towards the use of more historically authentic props, costumes, and

[116] See Christine Poulson, 'Costume Designs by Burne-Jones for Irving's Production of "King Arthur,"' *Burlington Magazine*, 128 (1986), 18-25 (p. 21).
[117] Edward Burne-Jones, *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, 1881-93, oil, 11x254m, Museo de Art, Puerto Rico.
[118] A knight or king wearing lighter, uncoloured armour is a more conventional image than one wearing dark armour; Edward, the Black Prince, stands as an notable exception, and Malory draws attention to characters who wear black armour as if it were unusual – though historically, dark armour was not uncommon in the middle ages due to anti-rusting techniques that coloured the metal. Tristram dons black armour in 10. LXVIII of Malory (Caxton) and one of the knights that Gareth fights against wears black armour in 7.VII (Caxton). In literature, black armour has also been related to anonymity – in the Prose *Lancelot* (13th century), Lancelot wears black armour as a disguise, as does Richard the Lionhearted in Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820), and in Tennyson's *Idylls* the Black Knight can disguise himself as both 'Night' and 'Death' though he is in fact a human. See [Walter Scott] *Ivanhoe; a Romance*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820), I, ch. 12; Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette', in *Idylls*, ll. 621-8, p. 53. In a basic visual sense, the dark armour made Irving's Arthur appear mysteriously adumbral, and the overall effect was, according to costume assistant Alice Carr, 'unusually becoming': [Alice Carr], *Reminiscences*, p. 208.

scenery, sometimes reproducing past items in microscopic detail. John Kemble's *King John* of 1823 was the first production to dress the entire cast in historically accurate clothing, and in the 1850s Charles Kean undertook meticulous research to recreate authentically detailed sets and costumes: his wife once stole material from the Vatican so that she could accurately reconstruct the exact details of a Cardinal's robe.[119] In some productions Irving participated in this realist movement – his 1892 staging of *Henry VIII* featured a silk robe, woven specifically to imitate one from the sixteenth century, which was then sent to Rome to be dyed a particular shade of red.[120] Irving did not apply this archaeological approach to *Arthur*, but that was not because doing so would have been impossible: in 1891, the American photographer H. McMichael spent six months researching how Lancelot's shield would be shaped, and how Arthur's clothes would have been made, so that he could reproduce those items in an 'historically realistic' photograph, in a fifth century setting.[121] It is simply that Irving did not think plays should always strive for that level of authenticity: in 1885 he said that 'absolute realism on the stage is not always desirable any more than photographic reproduction of Nature can claim to rank with the highest art'.[122] For this reason, according to Stoker, Irving attempted to combine mystery with clarity in *King Arthur*: the setting of the whole production was 'a sort of fairyland' but was also 'an actuality'.[123]

This sense that Arthur dwelt in a 'sort of fairyland' was produced by Carr's script as well as the staging: in the prologue, Merlin described the lake as 'no earthly shore', but one composed from 'fairy sands'. The scene is dark, as the script states that it is 'dawn',

[119] See Alicia Finkel, *Romantic Stages: Set and Costume Design in Victorian England* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1996), pp. 29-30 and 120.
[120] Richard Findlater, *Six Great Actors* (London: Hamilton, 1957), p. 158.
[121] 'The "Elaine" Pictures at the Convention', in *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*, ed. by Edward L. Wilson, 3 October 1891 (New York: Edward L. Wilson, 1891), XXVIII, 577-80 (p. 577).
[122] Henry Irving, 'The Art of Acting [Harvard, March 30, 1885]', in *The Drama: Addresses* (London: Heinemann, 1893), pp. 49-69 (69).
[123] Stoker, *Reminiscences*, I, 254.

with the only light coming from the breaking sun and Arthur's sword that 'gleams with supernatural light'. The script suggests a mysterious, magical atmosphere, but this was not necessarily realised on stage: as *The Times* recorded, '[t]he twilight of romance [...] accords ill with the glare of the footlights'.[124] The footlights used for *King Arthur* would have been electric (installed at the Lyceum in 1891), but Irving retained gas battens to light the scenery until 1902, most likely to provide a softer illumination for the sets, as electric lighting was initially criticised by some for ruining the effect of flat wooden sets that seemed more realistic in crepuscular gas lighting.[125] The *King Arthur* actors would therefore have been lit in the foreground with unwavering electric footlights, framed against darker backgrounds illuminated only by a softer, flickering gas light. The actors, including Irving, could never be part of the shadowy fairyland described in Carr's script, at least in their appearance on stage.

In 1901, the pictorialist photographer H.P. Robinson wrote of the difficulties of actualising the Arthurian legend in photography, but his words have relevance to Irving's production as well. Robinson was writing about a late-nineteenth century micro-trend in photography, inspired by Julia Margaret Cameron's photographic illustrations to Tennyson's *Idylls* in 1875, in which models were dressed as Arthurian characters. For Robinson, Arthurian photography would always be doomed to fail because Arthur is an inherently uncertain figure, and 'you cannot photograph a doubt […] these myths are very lovely when left in the mist, but they won't bear the fierce light of the lens'.[126] In addition, for Robinson, the very fact that a model is being used to represent Arthur is problematic: he writes that it is a 'folly' to call someone else by Arthur's name, and photograph 'the

[124] 'Mr Irving's Production of *King Arthur*' *The Times*, 14 January 1895, p. 11.
[125] See Percy Fitzgerald, 'The True Principles of Stage Scenery', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, (May 3 1901), 445-53 (p. 447) in *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 49 (London: Bell, 1901).
[126] H.P. Robinson, 'Impossible Photography,' *The Photographic Quarterly*, 3 (1892), 96-105 (p. 103).

substitute'; the photographer 'cannot restore King Arthur to life'.[127] In other words, the mysterious ideal Robinson looked for in representations of Arthur was undermined both by the clarity and precision of photography, which reproduces the exact light conditions in a single moment, and the necessary artifice of using a model to stand in for a mythical figure. Some Arthurian photographers tried to preserve a sense of mythical uncertainty by obscuring certain details; Cameron's photos are a combination of clarity in some details and blurriness in others – the result of experimenting with focus and rejecting as many as a hundred negatives in the process – whilst the photographer Frank Eugene used low lighting and dark, painted backgrounds behind his models.[128] These approaches match Irving's decision to keep his backgrounds dimly lit by gas, as if by blurring the focus. By reducing the light, photographers and stage managers could keep a sense of mystery and indistinctiveness in their versions of the Arthurian legend, but for Robinson, both Arthurian photography and Arthurian theatre 'abolished the poetry' of the legend.[129] His comments provide another critical perspective on the difficulties of translating Arthur from a figure mainly understood from poetry and commercial reproduction, to one actualised by a real actor. For Robinson, as for Burne-Jones, Arthur is an ideal, enigmatic figure, rather than an ordinary human who can be fully actualised in a staged setting, whether in the theatre or a photograph.

[127] Ibid., p. 96.
[128] See Virginia Woolf, 'Julia Margaret Cameron', in *Literature & Photography Interactions, 1840-1990: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Jane M Rabb (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 86-92 (89); Michael Bartram, *The Pre-Raphaelite Camera: Aspects of Victorian Photography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), p. 179.
[129] Robinson, 'Impossible', pp. 97-8.

vi. Conclusion

Most audience members, including Burne-Jones, regarded Arthur as a figure marked out from other humans, either by being better than other characters (e.g. more commanding and active), or by being more mysterious. For many, Irving's portrayal failed to satisfy the high expectations they had for the character, either as an ideal king or a mythical figure – but what of Irving's portrayal of Arthur as an ordinary human? Carr's script did not explore this side of Arthur, though one critic reviewing Irving's performance did mention Arthur's humanity in tandem with his magical appeal: the *Freeman's Journal* praised Irving's 'consummate art in preserving throughout the mystical side of the King's personality, without sacrificing any of its human interest'.[130] In this comment, the reviewer suggests that there is a 'mystical' quality to the figure of Arthur which is in some opposition to Arthur as a human character – but Irving, for this reviewer at least, managed to harmonise the two. If the *Freeman's Journal* reviewer was right, it could be said that Irving's portrayal of Arthur loosely corresponded to Henry's definition of a 'type', incorporating both perfect and normal aspects within it. Without video footage of the performance it is difficult to make a personal judgement on whether this was the case, but what is easier to identify is the critical focus on the figure of Arthur in 1895, which mostly emphasised Arthur's idealism over his private human character.

The Arthurian plays written at the end of the century were old-fashioned when compared to the so-called New Drama of playwrights like Ibsen, whose work catalysed a renaissance in the English theatre, moving it beyond melodramas and spectacles towards plays with a greater level of realism that challenged fundamental conceptions of human

[130] '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 15 January 1895, p. 3.

relationships.[131] Arthurian plays of the period were not, generally speaking, part of this movement, though Taylor and Brewer argue that many of these Arthurian plays bridge the new interest in psychological character studies (e.g. by focusing on Guinevere's love affair) with the old lingering interest in spectacle and romance (which comes with the chivalric setting).[132] In addition, Taylor and Brewer note 'a new skill in handling character, situation, and dialogue' in some of the Arthurian plays at the end of the century, even if most of these plays were written in an archaic language, following the style of Tennyson and Malory, rather than the more naturalistic style of other contemporary plays.[133] Irving and Carr do not demonstrate these skills as successfully as Newbolt or Campbell do, but by forgoing large battle scenes and basing the plot around Lancelot and Guinevere's affair, *King Arthur* can still be considered a bridge between the spectacle of Astley's amphitheatre, where large chivalric displays were performed until 1893, and the more realist, psychological plays of the late nineteenth century English stage.

Arthur: A Tragedy, written by Lawrence Binyon and performed in 1923, was a spiritual successor to the 1895 *King Arthur*.[134] A brief analysis of it demonstrates to what extent the expectations and difficulties of the 1895 production were shaped by the British late-nineteenth century historical context, and to what extent they were endemic to the limitations of the stage and the subject. Like the earlier production, the 1923 *Arthur* featured music from a popular composer, this time Sir Edward Elgar, and was 'moulded on the old Lyceum lines', as Sir John Martin-Harvey, one of the play's producers, recalled.[135] Martin-Harvey had previously played Sir Dagonet in the 1895 *King Arthur*, and wished

[131] See Beckson, *London in the 1890s*, p. 160.
[132] Taylor and Brewer, *Return*, p. 204.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Laurence Binyon, *Arthur: A Tragedy* (London: Heinemann, 1923).
[135] Martin-Harvey was an actor who had commissioned Binyon to write the script for *Arthur*, based on his own draft outline. He also helped finance the intended first production in Covent Garden Opera House in 1918 (this production had to be cancelled due to casting difficulties). See John Martin-Harvey, *The Autobiography of Sir John Martin-Harvey* (London: Low, n.d. [1933?]), pp. 494, 496.

that the 1923 production could have recreated the scale and success of the 1895 production, blaming 'trade union tyranny' for its failure to do so.[136] The story begins with Lancelot returning to court after a self-imposed exile. He then reunites with Guinevere; Arthur discovers their adultery; Arthur goes to war with Lancelot and then Mordred; and the play ends when Arthur and Mordred kill each other simultaneously. It starred Wilfred Walters as a forty-one year old Arthur, an actor fifteen years younger than Irving was when he first performed the role. The play was written between 1912 and 1919 but not performed until 1923, and it is likely that the intervening Great War would have changed what most audience members looked for in their leaders: not warriors, as some audience members had wanted Irving's Arthur to be, but policy makers. *The Times* reviewer certainly wanted Arthur to be more like a contemporary politician than a medieval king, regretting that Binyon 'passed over lightly the King's absorption in affairs of State, and has not taken the opportunity which the theme presents to make Arthur alive in the council chamber'.[137]

The 1923 production featured a lengthy battle on stage, with a storm of 'blinding violence', compared to the war in heaven when 'angels fell'.[138] Like Carr, Binyon also wrote a scene in which Arthur spares Lancelot's life, but whilst Carr's Arthur had appeared weak and indecisive, Binyon's Arthur seems moral and civilised, sparing Launcelot because he should not kill another man outside of battle.[139] Richard Barber considers Binyon's *Arthur* as 'greatly superior' to Carr's *King Arthur*, as it has a good 'dramatic structure', even if the speeches do not 'read well'.[140] The play was much less successful than Irving's production, however, even if the script was technically better. By 1923, the moment for Arthurian extravaganza had passed; Binyon's play closed nineteen days after

[136] John Martin-Harvey, *Autobiography*, p. 134.
[137] '"Arthur": Poetic Romance at the Old Vic', *Times*, 13 March 1923, p. 12.
[138] Binyon, *Arthur*, I. 7, pp. 105-6.
[139] Ibid., I. 7, p. 109.
[140] Richard Barber, *King Arthur: Hero and Legend*, 3rd edn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), p. 180.

it had opened, having completed only ten performances, and a limited budget meant that Elgar's score was performed by an orchestra of just ten people.[141] The smaller budget can be attributed to the less affluent post-war theatre marketplace, but the disappointingly short run suggests that 1923 audiences were less interested in seeing King Arthur played on stage than 1895 audiences had been.

It is significant that Binyon had dropped 'king' from the title – the intention, perhaps, was to distance the character from a Kaiser-like despotism – but the absence of 'king' also suggests an interest in Arthur as a private human, rather than as a public figure with all his associated ideals. This is illustrative of a shift in focus in the history of tragedy: by the mid-twentieth century, the Aristotelian idea that tragic heroes should be of high social class was replaced by a greater focus on less socially elevated figures: as Arthur Miller argued in 1949, 'the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were'.[142] Binyon's Arthur is not a 'common man', but omitting the 'king' in the title is perhaps a step in that direction. However, Arthur as a private man, rather than Arthur as king, is only briefly seen in the text. According to Lancelot, Arthur is 'so kingly a King' who has 'made this isle of Britain such a realm / As famous Alexander might have throned / or Cæsar bled for.'[143] Arthur comes on stage in the second scene, but in a formal, kingly role (Bedivere asks for permission before speaking) until all the other characters have left. At this point he says, 'I grow old, I begin to doubt and fear'.[144] It is the only moment that Binyon's Arthur is alone, and almost the only time he reveals his private feelings.[145] For

[141] Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 763-4. Sir John Martin-Harvey gives the entire budget as 'fifteen pounds, ten shillings' in 1923 (*Autobiography*, p. 497).
[142] Arthur Miller, 'Tragedy and the Common Man', in *Death of a Salesman: Text and Criticism*, ed. by Gerald Weales (New York: Viking Press, 1967), pp. 144-7 (144).
[143] Binyon, *Arthur*, I. 1, p. 16.
[144] Ibid., I. 2, p. 24.
[145] One other moment is at the end of the play, when Arthur and Guinevere share an emotional scene in the nunnery, and Arthur asks Guinevere to forgive him (a notable reversal of Tennyson) for failing to avoid civil war: ibid., I. 8, p. 121.

most of the play, Arthur acts as a king: for example, he justifies his war against Lancelot by reasoning that 'a man may pardon, but the King may not'.[146]

In 1902, W.B. Yeats summarised the contemporary focus in drama: 'Shakespeare's age was interested in questions of policy and kingcraft […] We are interested in religion and in private morals and personal emotion'.[147] Binyon's *Arthur* is more focused on Arthur's personal morality and feelings than Carr's *King Arthur* was, though Binyon still foregrounds 'policy and kingcraft' over 'personal emotion'. Other late nineteenth/early-twentieth century writers were more interested in Arthur's private morals and emotions in a religious context. Newbolt is one: his *Mordred* explores Arthur's 'sinful' actions as a private man, rather than his more public actions as a supposedly great king. Coninsgby Dawson and Clemence Housman are two other early-twentieth century writers who concentrate on the private side of Arthur's character, and they are analysed in the next chapter.

[146] Ibid., I. 7, p. 109.
[147] W.B. Yeats, 'The Freedom of the Drama', *United Irishman*, 1 November 1902, p. 5, rpt in W.B. Yeats, *Uncollected Prose*, ed. by John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1970-5), II, 298.

Chapter III

'The King Sat Among Them': Arthur's Private Morality in Clemence Housman and Coningsby Dawson

i. Criticising Arthur in the Early Twentieth Century

Clemence Housman's *The Life of Sir Aglovale de Galis* (1905), and Coningsby Dawson's *The Road to Avalon* (1911), are two novels that criticise Arthur, judging the character within Christian frameworks.[1] Housman (1861 – 1955), the sister of A.E. and Laurence, was an English author and illustrator, whose writing career was succeeded by activism and participation in the Suffragette movement. Housman's criticism of Arthur is driven by a wish to return to Malory, and an interest in Arthur's character as a man rather than a king. Dawson (1883 – 1959) was an English novelist who moved to America when he was twenty-three to train as a priest, but dropped out from the Presbyterian New York Union Seminary to pursue, in his father's words, a 'vocation' for writing.[2] Dawson is also interested in Arthur as a man rather than a king, and considers Arthur in a working class context.

There was an increase in the number of texts that criticised Arthur at the beginning of the twentieth century. One reason for this may have been a greater sense that Arthur, as a cultural figure, belonged to everyone rather than to an intellectual elite, and could be interpreted in a large variety of ways. The previous chapter discussed the idea that by the

[1] Clemence Housman, *The Life of Sir Aglovale de Galis* (Oakland: Green Knight, 2000). First published in 1905. Coningsby Dawson, *The Road to Avalon* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911).
[2] W. J. Dawson, introduction, Coningsby Dawson, *Carry On: Letters in War-time* (New York and London: Lane; Toronto: Gundy, 1918), pp. 7-20 (8).

late nineteenth century, the popularity of Tennyson meant that 'everyone' had an idea of who Arthur was, and (problematically for a stage play) what he should look like. This image was not standardised, but varied by the range of commercial products that referenced the figure, as well as by the increasing number of different authors who wrote about the legend. This sense that Arthur belonged to a wide range of people may have emboldened authors to be more imaginative with their own versions of the character and story, and to criticise what may have been previously considered 'sacred', to use Burne-Jones's word.[3]

The strong association that most people made between Tennyson and Arthur was also beginning to weaken. The popularity of Tennyson meant that the Arthur from the *Idylls* was the authoritative version of the character for most people in the nineteenth century, but there had always been others who had criticised this version, or argued that it was not compatible with the other 'authoritative' version of Arthur from Malory. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Tennyson had been dead for almost ten years, and it was time for a re-evaluation. Since Tennyson's Arthur was morally perfect, any author who wanted to make a clear departure would naturally be drawn to making him more flawed as a character. Some early twentieth-century authors turned away from Tennyson's version by drawing directly from Malory, supported by new editions that claimed to give readers unmediated access to 'the original edition', such as H. Oskar Sommer's three volumes in 1889-91, and the volume from Pollard in 1900 that was unexpurgated but translated into modern English. The poet John Masefield, who first encountered Malory in 1895, considered *Morte Darthur* to be something 'genuine', and thought that 'Tennyson's poems seemed lifeless next to it'.[4] For Masefield, Malory was 'the source of sources'.[5] Drawing on Malory rather than

[3] Qtd in Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1904), II, 247.
[4] John Masefield, *In the Mill* (London: Heinemann, 1941), p. 44.
[5] John Masefield, *So Long to Learn: Chapters of an Autobiography* (London: Heinemann, 1952), p. 91.

Tennyson also meant that there were, potentially, more aspects of Arthur's character to criticise.

There was, furthermore, a greater awareness and interest in working people in the early twentieth century than there had been during much of the nineteenth, and this interest created a new context in which to criticise Arthur as an outdated feudal king. David Trotter notes how labour and labouring people were becoming more 'visible' from the late-nineteenth century onwards: empirical sociology was a burgeoning field, providing unprecedented detail about working-class life; huge advances were made in the political representation of working-class men through union organisation and franchise extension; and British Socialism was increasingly prominent due to its numerous rallies and large production of pamphlets.[6] It is surprising, for Trotter, that working-class life is not a more present feature of early twentieth-century British fiction, considering how it was affecting politics – but despite this general trend in English literature, in some Arthurian literary texts of the early twentieth century, an interest in working people is easy to identify.[7]

One of the most obvious examples is by Thomas Wood Stevens, an American writer and artist, whose short story 'King Arthur in Michigan' was published in 1906.[8] Mining was a booming industry in Michigan, which Stevens had visited in 1904, powered by Welsh and Cornish miners who had been striking intermittently since 1872 for better payment and working conditions.[9] Stevens's story is set in one of these mining communities, where an old man resembling Merlin raises a boy he claims is a reincarnation of Arthur, and unveils him to the other miners as the returned king. Arthur's identity is proved when he pulls a mining pick out of a lode. Arthurian literary tradition is dismissed by Merlin, who thinks

[6] David Trotter, *The English Novel in History 1895-1920* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 29-30.
[7] Ibid., p. 28.
[8] Thomas Wood Stevens, 'King Arthur in Michigan', in *The Reader: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, vol. 8, July 1906—November 1906 (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill), vol 8, 612-20.
[9] See Melvin R. White, 'Thomas Wood Stevens: Creative Pioneer', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 3. 4 (December 1951), pp. 280-293 (281).

that reading about the legend will confuse Arthur's followers, some of whom are reincarnations of his knights, as it will obscure the distinction between what they are recollecting from their past life, and what they are learning from legend. As a result, Arthur believes that 'by such works I shall not come into my kingdom'.[10]

Stevens therefore jettisons past retellings, suggesting that the modern setting called for a different version of Arthur than the one presented in past writing. This is further supported by the story's ending, in which Arthur is voted out by the miners who object to Arthur as an idle king. He has not demonstrated good governance, nor any other value, to the common populace, and he only knows how to rule in a feudal system. Instead of working productively, Arthur spends his time hunting for pleasure, which the miners can only do on their 'infrequent holidays', and his failure to bring back any game for others is noted.[11] In addition, Arthur's return to leadership is justified by his lineage rather than by any skill or display of ability: Mortre, a version of Mordred, attempts to take the pick from the lode by secreting ice in his glove, shrinking the pick so it might be released from its enclosing rock, but is told that this way of choosing a leader 'takes the blood' rather than ingenuity.[12]

Dissatisfaction with the idea of kings as rulers had been expressed before in an Arthurian story, but in Stevens's 'Arthur', the popular dissatisfaction leads to the king being ousted.[13] None of the miners doubt Arthur's claim to be the reborn king, but, as Mortre states:

> [Arthur] is King over you because your mothers have told you that it [the return of Arthur] would come; because your fathers and their fathers have

[10] Stevens, 'Arthur', p. 617.
[11] Ibid., p. 616.
[12] Ibid., p. 615.
[13] An early example, discussed in Chapter One, is from Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur* (first published 1848), when a 'labour-bow'd [...] Youth' rhetorically asks 'What are Kings?' whilst stitching the king's robes: Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, *King Arthur: A Poem* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1871), 7. XLIV, p. 213.

> waited for him [...] But who of us wants him? [...] the world is changed from the old world.[14]

This new world is populated by relatively empowered labourers rather than peasants who accept a feudal hierarchy – Mortre tells the miners to 'obey no man, and you will drive him [Arthur] away with all his idlers'.[15] Arthur even agrees to leave, because 'it is not as it was before', and because renouncing his kingship is a desirable option – '[s]ometimes I wish it might all slip', he tells the narrator, 'and me be just a plain man'.[16] The same desire to stop being king, and merely become a 'plain man', is also expressed much later by T.H. White's Arthur, in the 1940s, as discussed in Chapter Five.[17] It is a more viable option for Stevens' Arthur, however, because his subjects do not need him; they are not even, strictly speaking, his subjects. As the mine superintendent tells Arthur: "[w]hatever your authority may be [...] I don't recognise it. Nobody has anything to say here but by order of the Federated company'.[18] Mortre's wish that the miners should 'obey no man' is already, technically, fulfilled; they are controlled by the company rather than a single ruler. There is no need or desire for Arthur to rule anyone, so he goes at the end of the story to 'sit and wait my years by the shore, till the queens come for me'.[19] Stevens's Arthur gives up being a king, stripped of his authority by the greater power of the mining company, and forced out by the organisation of Mortre/Modred, who forms a union-style 'committee' of workers, and threatens to strike if Arthur does not leave.[20]

Stevens asks how Arthur would fit into a contemporary world of empowered workers who are striving for greater autonomy, and concludes that Arthur could not fit into

---

[14] Stevens, 'Arthur', p. 618.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., pp. 620; 617.
[17] T.H. White, *The Book of Merlyn*, in *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: Voyager, 1996), ch. 17, pp. 783-4. Stevens and White may be drawing inspiration from Christ's Agony in the Garden, when Jesus asks God if his responsibility to die can be taken away.
[18] Stevens, 'Arthur', p. 619.
[19] Ibid., p. 620.
[20] Ibid., pp. 618-19.

that setting without renouncing his kingship and becoming a common worker, which he is unwilling to do in the text. In contrast with most other writers of Arthurian literature, Stevens is critical both of Arthur's private character and the idea of kingship. Another text that includes criticism of Arthur is Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee* (1889). In a late section of the text, Twain's Arthur appears prejudiced against peasants. According to the protagonist Hank Morgan, Arthur would imprison a group of farm labourers 'without proof, and starve their kindred', thinking it 'was no harm, for they were merely peasants': Arthur's 'veins were full of ancestral blood that was rotten with this sort of unconscious brutality'.[21] As in Stevens, Twain's criticism of Arthur is related to the social inequality inherent in his position as king. Other writers objected to Arthur on purely personal grounds. Corinne Roosevelt Robinson's 'The Failure of King Arthur' (1912) finds fault with Arthur's personal character, depicting him as someone who has failed in love by being 'untrue' to an unnamed woman, and must ask for forgiveness, reversing the relationship between Arthur and his wife in other versions of the story.[22] Criticism of Arthur also continues into the First World War, as discussed in the next chapter, focusing on Arthur as an irresponsible war general.

The strand of literature that criticises Arthur can be traced back to the Middle Ages, to a selection of French romances and Welsh hagiographies that depict Arthur as jealous or selfish. In Welsh hagiography of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Arthur often appears as spoilt and petty, only to be subdued by a saint's power, thereby reinforcing ecclesiastical authority over secular rule.[23] Some medieval French romance writers are even harsher critics. In *Le Vallet a la cote Mautaillie*, Arthur contemptuously laughs at a young knight

[21] Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (New York and London: Harper, 1889), ch. 30, p. 280.
[22] Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, 'The Failure of Arthur: Eight Sonnets', *The Call of Brotherhood and Other Poems* (New York: Scribners, 1912), pp. 65-72.
[23] See Elissa R. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987), p. 301.

because he is poorly dressed; in the *Lai du Cor*, Arthur angrily tries to stab his wife when he learns that she had been unfaithful.[24] The early-thirteenth century French romance *Yder* features Arthur as a stupid villain, who eventually wants the heroic protagonist killed, out of misjudged jealousy of his friendship with the queen.[25] In these medieval French texts, Arthur is used as an example of bad kingship and poor personal character. In the medieval Welsh texts, criticism of Arthur comes from the spiritual context he is placed in – he is not necessarily an ineffective king, but he is not good in the ways he needs to be. This is not entirely different from Stevens's Arthur, who is not necessarily a bad king; just an inadequate figure for the setting he is in.

Arthurian texts in the early twentieth century were not all concerned with criticising Arthur. Most Arthurian publications were either new editions of Tennyson's *Idylls*, or rewritings of the legend that combined elements from Malory and Tennyson. There was also an increasing emphasis on versions marketed for children – a trend that began with J.T. Knowles's *Story of King Arthur* in 1862, and intensified in the late nineteenth century with the founding of children's societies based on the Arthurian legend. These societies encouraged boys and girls to imitate Arthurian figures and thereby improve their social behaviour. They were especially popular in the United States, but similar groups also appeared in Britain.[26] 'The Order of the Knights of King Arthur', established in the United States in 1893, was intended to turn boys into gentlemen, inspired by the 'pure chivalry of King Arthur'.[27] The handbook gives an example of how boys rallied against another group of children who were disrupting a fair, whilst crying '"Knights of King Arthur to the

[24] See Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*, trans. by Margaret and Roger Middleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 64-7.
[25] Ibid., pp. 93-5.
[26] For example, the British Boy Scouts were said to be founded by King Arthur in spirit. See R.S.S. Baden-Powell, *Yarns for Boy Scouts: Told Round the Camp Fire* (London: Pearson, 1909), p. 117.
[27] William Byron Forbush and Frank Lincoln Masseck, *The Boys' Round Table: A Manual of the International Order of the Knights of King Arthur*, 6th edn (Potsdam, New York: Masseck, 1909), p. 22.

rescue!"' even though 'a few months before they themselves would have been the offenders'.[28] What is interesting about this particular society is how the figure of Arthur is envisaged. A song included in the 1908 handbook states that 'everybody works but Arthur, and he sits around all day', before admitting that this was only a joke, as 'Arthur, everybody knows / is bravest of the brave' and fights to save the weak.[29] Arthur's passivity once he has established himself as king – a feature in the French tradition and continued in Malory – is acknowledged as a possible characteristic, but this idleness is rejected as the model for the children to follow. Other aspects of Arthur's character are also refashioned, including his kingship: '[a]lthough the framework of the order is a monarchy, there is nothing dictatorial about its management', write the authors of the handbook, and it is suggested that elections to find a new King Arthur should take place every month.[30]

A literary text that also refashions Arthur as a force for social good is Hamilton Wright Mabie's *Heroes Every Child Should Know* (1906), a collection of abbreviated stories about various historical and mythical male figures, in which Mabie argues that 'the hero is just as necessary as the farmer, the sailor, the carpenter and the doctor; society could not get on without him'.[31] King Arthur is included alongside Robin Hood, Abraham Lincoln, and Father Damien: the choices emphasise social activism as well as bodily strength. William John Courthope's *Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon* (1906), a satire of contemporary laissez-faire government policy and parliamentary inefficiency, admits that if Arthur returned to a modern democracy, he would find himself 'obsolete',

[28] Ibid., p. 17
[29] James Yeames, 'Everybody Works but Arthur! (Song of the King's Jester)', in Forbush and Masseck, *Boys*, pp. 151-2.
[30] Forbush and Masseck, *Boys*, pp. 18 and 32.
[31] Hamilton Wright Mabie, introduction, *Heroes Every Child Should Know: Tales for Young People of the World's Heroes in All Ages*, ed. by Hamilton Wright Mabie (London: Doubleday, Page, 1906), p. xi. First published 1905.

and his way of ruling would not be 'up to date'.[32] However, this is a fault of twentieth-century Britain rather than Arthur; not 'Parliament […] but joint Renown […] Shall link a hundred states about a central Crown'.[33] King Edward VII, who reigned from 1901-1910, was generally not considered obsolete – as an American journal wrote in 1910, 'the retirement of Queen Victoria seemed to suggest that the crown had lost its usefulness in the constitutional system of England. The conduct of Edward as king without overstepping constitutional restraints showed that the crown has not spent its force'.[34] The issue for some writers was that Arthur was not subject to the same 'constitutional restraints' that helped to justify a king in a democracy. Edward could still intervene politically – his work for British foreign relations, particularly with the French, earned him the title 'peacemaker' – but he did so by exercising influence rather than direct control. By contrast, Arthur, as a medieval king, had direct control of his kingdom, making him seem comparatively despotic.

ii. Housman and Dawson

The examples above demonstrate a renewed appetite for criticising Arthur's kingship and character, fuelled by the new context of a more prominent and empowered working class, which put pressure on Arthur as a heroic figure. To analyse the figure of Arthur as a 'perfect normal' type, however, we must return to Dawson and Housman.

Housman's novel is an expansion of Malory's *Arthuriad*, focusing on the life and career of Sir Aglovale, a character only mentioned a few times by Malory, mostly in

[32] [William John Courthope], *The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon and of the Lifting of Lyonnesse: A Chronicle of the Round Table Communicated by Geoffrey of Monmouth* (London: Murray, 1904), ch. 11, p. 73; ch. 15, p. 103.
[33] Ibid., ch. 15, p. 106.
[34] James Brown Scott, et al., 'Editorial Comment: Edward VII', *The American Journal of International Law*, 4 (July 1910), 662-4 (p. 664).

passing. Housman expands Aglovale's story by connecting the moments when he is referenced by Malory, and filling in the gaps. The Dutch romance *Morien* may also have been an influence.[35] Aglovale is linked to many important events through his family – he is the son of Pellinore, and brother of Percivale and Lamorak – even though he is not himself an important or well-known character in the legend. He is also excluded from Arthur's circle of court favourites, and can therefore judge Arthur from a relatively objective viewpoint: he is both a knight and an outsider in the court, who can observe and expose the failure of Arthur's personal character and public rule. The text begins with his childhood, and ends with his death attempting to prevent Launcelot from rescuing Guenever. After a promising beginning, Aglovale commits a series of immoral acts, including piracy and attempted rape, and falls from the king's favour.[36] As well as these moral failings, the novel also charts Aglovale's spiritual development, framed by a quotation at the beginning of the text from the *Theologia Germania.* This states that a man who considers himself truly wicked will find himself in a living hell that he thinks he deserves, and from that he will begin to desire the Eternal Good alone, and seek it for the honour of God rather than the honour of man.[37] This describes Aglovale's spiritual and moral journey, and is part of Housman's conservative Christian framework, emphasising one's personal relationship with God over worldly appearance or reputation. Arthur is

[35] According to Elizabeth Oakley, Malory was Housman's only source, though *Morien* had been published in an English translation four years before *Aglovale* was published. The stories are different but the focus on Aglovale as an imperfect figure, especially compared to his brother Percivale, is similar. See Elizabeth Oakley, *Inseparable Siblings: A Portrait of Clemence and Laurence Housman* (Studley: Brewin, 2009), pp. 60-1; *Morien: A Metrical Romance Rendered into English from the Middle Dutch*, trans. by Jessie L. Weston (London: Nutt, 1901). Housman was living in London between 1883 and 1914 and could therefore have had access to the text.

[36] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 2, p. 22-5.

[37] *Theologia Germanica: Which Setteth Forth Many Fair Lineaments of Divine Truth, and Saith Very Lofty and Lovely things Touching a Perfect Life*, trans. by Susanna Winkworth (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1854). The quotation appears to be taken from William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London; New York: Longmans, Green, 1902) as both Housman and James abridge ch. 10 of Winkman's translation in the same way. The original text was written anonymously in the fourteenth century.

judged within this framework at the conclusion of the novel. It is a homage to Malory, but also a radical criticism of Arthur's ideal image and his court's biased system of values, based on honour rather than truth.

Dawson's *Road to Avalon* is also an expansion of the conventional Arthurian legend, continuing past where other writers ended, after Arthur's battle against Mordred. The protagonist is an anonymous charcoal-burner's son, who embarks on a quest to find Avalon, so that King Arthur may 'come again'.[38] Dawson constructs a complex metaphysical framework for the novel: male souls are born to Adam and Eve, who live in a castle between our world and Avalon, which is equated with both the Garden of Eden and heaven. These souls travel to the 'World of Men', where they are born again into earthly bodies, and when these bodies die, the souls travel back to the castle, and thence to the lands beyond, in search of Avalon.[39] Dawson does not specify what female souls do. Like *Aglovale*, the emphasis of the novel is on spiritual fulfilment: the Charcoal-burner's Son must avoid temptations and 'live chivalrously and well, so that [his] memory may be stainless for all men'.[40] The biggest and most repeated temptation on the journey is from the seductive Lilith, Adam's first wife from Jewish folklore, who was revived in late nineteenth-century literature and art, and who ensnares the souls of men on their way to Avalon.[41] When the Charcoal-burner's Son finally reaches Avalon, he discovers that he is himself King Arthur, even though Arthur died after he had been born. The explanation for this is that 'some souls are so great [...] that they cannot be contained in one human body',

[38] Dawson, *Avalon,* ch. 1, p. 12.
[39] Ibid., ch. 12, pp. 118-9.
[40] Ibid., ch. 18, p. 209.
[41] See Dante Gabriel Rossetti's oil painting Lady Lilith (1869), and the accompanying poem 'Lilith' (1868, later renamed 'Body's Beauty'); Robert Browning's poem 'Adam, Lilith, and Eve' (1883); and George MacDonald's *Lilith*, 1895.

and so Arthur's soul co-existed in two separate bodies: one as the king, and one as the Charcoal-burner's Son.[42]

The rest of this chapter begins by considering Dawson's *Avalon*, analysing in particular how Arthur can be written about in a narrative that features working-class anxieties without making him seem completely outmoded, as he is in Stevens. Dawson's focus is on Arthur's private moral behaviour and spiritual attainment, rather than on his public reputation, though the author struggles to develop Arthur as a convincingly human character. The chapter then turns to Housman's *Aglovale*, which also focuses on the spiritual health of characters, promoting private behaviour over public reputation. Housman is more successful than Dawson in making Arthur seem human. Both authors write about Arthur from a critical perspective, set by the private moral standards of their Christian backgrounds, and focused by the social contexts they were putting Arthur into. For Dawson, this context is manual labour instead of a royal court, similar to the setting of Stevens' story; for Housman, the context is a failing Round Table that needs to have different priorities.

iii. Ideal and Working Man: Arthur in Dawson's Avalon

From the beginning of *Avalon*, it is clear that Dawson is interested in the effect that appearance has on the way others might judge social class, and how a low social class might impair someone from achieving their goals. The Charcoal-burner's Son – hereafter abbreviated as the Son – enviously watches Arthur's court as they pass through his part of the forest, knowing that he could 'never join the King's chivalry because of his humble

[42] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 22, p. 277.

lineage'.[43] Despite this, he decides to 'live the courtly life'. Dawson defines this as, firstly, dealing 'gently with all women'.[44] This requirement is also found in Malory's Pentecostal Oath, in which Arthur swears his knights to 'doo ladyes / damoysels / and gentylwymmen socour'.[45] The rest of the oath is concerned with avoiding violence, treason, and cruelty: virtues that focus on social behaviour. The next aspect of Dawson's courtly behaviour refers to the Son keeping himself 'pure', which does not feature in Malory's conditions. Living purely may simply mean avoiding immoral – not necessarily sexual – temptation, like Gareth's desire to '[l]ive pure, speak true, right wrong, [and] follow the King' in Tennyson's *Idylls.*[46] Later on in *Avalon,* the word seems to mean sexual abstention, but in Dawson's *The Unknown Soldier* (1929), a short story about Jesus reincarnated as a soldier in the trenches, 'purity' is defined as not swearing and not telling 'certain stories' (presumably obscene anecdotes) like the other soldiers.[47] Whatever the exact meaning, Dawson's usage is related to personal moral character, rather than to how one's behaviour affects others. The third aspect of the Son's courtly lifestyle concerns his attitude to his parents and work: he 'served his mother and father with cheerfulness, and made glad over his lowly task', corresponding to the Judeo-Christian commandment to honour one's parents.[48]

According to one of Arthur's knights, Sir Bors, abiding by this concept of courtly life is enough to make one a knight, in spirit if not appearance: '"[i]f you do your work well [...] and are honourable toward women"', he says, '"you are already a knight"'.[49] Despite

[43] Dawson, *Avalon,* ch. 1, p. 11.
[44] Ibid., ch. 1, p. 11.
[45] Syr Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: The Original Edition of William Caxton,* ed. by H. Oskar Sommer, 3 vols (London: Nutt, 1889-91), I, 3.15, p. 118.
[46] Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette', in *Idylls of the King,* ed. by J.M. Gray (London: Penguin, 1983), l. 117, p. 39.
[47] King Arthur (in his first incarnation) was said to be 'so pure' that even 'Lilith could not tempt him aside', and Lilith ensnares knights by making them fall in love her: Dawson, *Avalon,* ch. 3, p. 29. Dawson, *The Unknown Soldier* (London: Hutchinson, [1929]), p. 31.
[48] Dawson, *Avalon,* ch. 1, p. 11.
[49] Ibid., p. 11.

this apparent reassurance that having a lowly lineage and performing basic labour does not exclude someone from being a knight, the Son still expresses social insecurity throughout the first half of the novel. He assumes that, should he find Arthur, the king would reject him, saying '"[p]shaw! The son of a charcoal-burner! Who would return with him?"'[50] When a mysterious maiden does not answer a question, the Son assumes it is because 'having met with fine lords, she guesses my lowly pedigree. She despises me because I ride a wretched nag'.[51] He yearns to prove himself in battle 'and live as knights are used', but when he tries to engage in a fight, he is mocked by the other combatants, who call him 'Sir Charcoal-burner', and note 'the leanness of his nag'.[52] In the next chapter, the Son says 'my poverty drags me down', but is then told that his real error was trying to fight for the wrong side: he should have been fighting against Mordred and his knights, whose souls have been corrupted by Lilith.[53] 'I have learned to be humble and to know my own weakness', the Son announces, identifying his fault as pride rather than poor appearance. Following this, he is knighted by one of his guides, and procures a set of armour. One message that can be extrapolated from *Avalon* is that poverty and humble birth do not preclude someone from becoming a knight, in a symbolic if not necessarily a socially accepted way, or from rescuing a king – though their own personal insecurities, and the mocking words of others, may need to be overcome. However, this message is undermined by the fact that the Son and Arthur are both physical embodiments of the same soul, which might mean that the Son only becomes a knight, and is successful on his quest to find Avalon, because he is unknowingly a 'great' soul (as he is eventually told).[54] The idea is

[50] Ibid., ch. 10, p. 95.
[51] Ibid., p. 92
[52] Ibid., p. 97
[53] Ibid., ch. 11, pp. 99, 107.
[54] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 22, p. 281.

supported by the Son's countenance, which is said to be 'of knightly bearing', even when he is dressed poorly.[55]

Comparisons can be drawn between Dawson's Son and Malory's Tor, who is made a knight despite ostensibly being the son of a cowherd. Like the Son, Tor seems to be of humble birth, but stands out from his brothers: 'Tor was not lyke none of hem al in shap ne in contenaunce / for he was moche more than ony of hem'.[56] It is later revealed that Tor's father is really King Pellinore, and only his mother is low-born. Similarly, Dawson's Son is the child of two charcoal-burners, but his soul is the same as the one that inhabited Arthur's body, and is considered 'great' in itself, even though it was born in a lowly labourer's body. Even the Son's horse, though 'ancient', is revealed to be a previous inhabitant of Arthur's stables, before he had 'sunk to be a charcoal-burner's nag'.[57] In Malory and Dawson, therefore, what at first appears to be social mobility is revealed to be the feudal social order righting itself despite initially misleading appearances. Both authors are drawing from the *Bel Inconnu* motif, in which a man of unknown identity and lineage proves to be worthy of knighthood, and is ultimately revealed to be nobly born anyway.

It is difficult to separate the incognito figure's virtue from his noble origins; to know whether his noble blood is an unnecessary qualification, as he has already proven himself of high status from his actions, or whether that noble blood is the thing that secretly enabled him to act virtuously from the start. Likewise, it is initially difficult to distinguish the virtuous actions of the Son from his origins: is he a labourer who is acting like a great king, or is he simply shedding an outer layer of poverty to reveal the true soul that was inside him all the time? At the end of the novel, the Son takes off his helmet to show another character, the embodiment of fear, his face. 'At first glance [of the Son's face] Fear fell

[55] Ibid., ch. 2, p. 18.
[56] Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 3.3, p. 102.
[57] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 19, p. 226.

upon his knees and bowed his head in the dust', and from this reaction the Son guesses that Fear knows his true identity ('I know it well', Fear confirms).[58] This might mean that the Son has the same physical characteristics as Arthur, so that even his face had been determined before birth, or it might mean that by this stage of his quest, the Son has come to resemble Arthur in his expressions and countenance, so much so that Fear knows he also shares the same soul with Arthur. A third possibility is that the Son has developed the virtuous countenance that Arthur also had, and Fear recognises this appearance and deduces that the two figures must be connected. Even in this reading, however, it is still unclear whether the Son would have developed his virtuous character had he not secretly had the same great soul as Arthur.

Daniel P. Nastali and Phillip C. Boardman offer a different reading of Dawson's Arthur, claiming that the Son 'discovers that, by sharing a great soul, he has become Arthur himself'.[59] This reading suggests a degree of agency in the Son's transformation: perhaps others could share a great soul, and 'become' Arthur. This is not a reading supported by the text. The Son knows himself to be Arthur because he sees his 'lowly peasant's face' and is told this is the visage of the king by the Laughing Maid, the Son's magical companion and guide, who always knew his true identity.[60] Dawson is clear that the Son's change into Arthur is a rediscovery rather than a becoming; the Son has not risen up socially to become Arthur, but rather Arthur had momentarily forgotten who he really was. Dawson is not claiming that anyone could become Arthur, but rather that Arthur could take the form of anyone: even a charcoal-burner riding a poor nag.

[58] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 21, p. 266.
[59] Daniel P. Nastali and Phillip C. Boardman, 'Return to Avalon', *The Arthurian Annals: The Tradition in English from 1250 to 2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 217.
[60] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 22, p. 281.

There is, therefore, no inherent difference between the Son and King Arthur, though the apparent social difference between them is highlighted throughout the romance. Sir Douloureux, a knight corrupted by Lilith, attempts to make the Son feel insecure about his social standing by asking him:

> why should God summon a charcoal-burner to the accomplishment of a task wherein He had caused [...] Arthur, who was an accepted king, to stumble? Shall a charcoal burner run to the rescue of a king?[61]

From the end of the novel, we know that a charcoal burner is not rescuing a king, but rediscovering his full identity, though there is still the question as to why Arthur should be incarnated in the body of a charcoal-burner's son. The answer can be found at the start of the novel, when Eve tells the Son that though he is 'very simple', it is because of his simplicity that he has been 'called' to the task of finding Avalon.[62] He is called 'simple' because he is ignorant of what he is doing, but the word also describes his poor appearance, and might suggest moral purity. Others had tried to find Avalon before and failed, ensnared by Lilith. Since they were all knights, and the Son (at least for the first half of the novel) is not a knight, it is implied that a plainer man might succeed when others, higher in social order, have failed – too blinded by their own high status to know that they are fallible.

One of the knights who fails in the quest to find Avalon is Sir Vanitas. As his name suggests, Vanitas is vain, and 'for a pretty face or a flattering word, he was ready to turn aside' from his journey.[63] He justifies his behaviour by doing 'many deeds of mighty prowess to prove [...] he was still strong', as if his bodily strength were more important than focusing on his task.[64] Vanitas is erotically tempted by Lilith, who captures his soul, and makes him her slave. The Son is also tempted by Lilith's apparent beauty, but

[61] Ibid., ch. 16, p. 184.
[62] Ibid., ch. 3, p. 28.
[63] Ibid., ch. 12, p. 132.
[64] Ibid., p. 133.

ultimately resists her. Unlike Vanitas, the Son is not part of the courtly culture where knights are measured by strength of arms or noble deeds. As a result, he only attempts to fight once, but finds that 'this warfare brought [...] no honour, but only shame' because of his mistake of choosing the wrong side.[65] The Son rejects martial activity and devotion to a lady (Lilith) – key aspects of chivalric behaviour – for a spiritual chivalry, though Dawson does not suggest that these actions are wrong in themselves; only that they are potentially corrupting.

iv. The Son as King Arthur

Arthur, in his kingly incarnation, is also considered a failure in the novel, but for a different reason to Sir Vanitas. Whilst he does successfully journey to Avalon, after his defeat at Camlan, it is only so that he might be healed of his 'grievous wound', and not to help others follow him there.[66] According to Eve, King Arthur 'did attain [Avalon], and yet he also failed. He sought out Avalon for himself; but what of us who remain?'[67] Eve's criticism of Arthur is that he did not manage to raise his knights to the same level of purity that would have meant they could pass through Lilith's domain. Purity, in this context, means resisting sexual temptation. King Arthur was so 'pure' that 'Lilith could not tempt him aside', but the knights of the Round Table all fall into temptation in her realm before they can reach Avalon, which lies beyond her domain. Dawson's Arthur is a moral paragon, but so uniquely perfect that he seems impossible to follow. Dawson's Arthur is the only figure since Jesus to cross Lilith's land and reach Avalon, and he is even absolved of blame for

[65] Ibid., ch. 11, p. 107.
[66] Ibid., ch. 21, p. 262. Dawson is citing Malory ('greuous wounde'), and the same phrase is also quoted by Tennyson: Malory, *Morte Darthur*, Sommer, 21.5, p. 848; Tennyson, 'The Passing of Arthur, in *Idylls,* l. 432, p. 299.
[67] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 3, p. 29.

the implosion of the Round Table, which is the sole fault of Lilith's corrupting influence.[68] Mordred is named as Arthur's son, but there is no suggestion of incest.[69] If Arthur is considered to be a type in the sense of a 'perfect normal' representation, then Dawson's King Arthur is too perfect to be representative of anything apart from himself. What is the point of a perfect moral leader, asks Dawson, if others cannot follow him? Eve's criticism of Arthur echoes the one made by Tennyson's Guinevere – that the king swears 'men to vows impossible', and 'is all fault who hath no fault at all' (1859).[70] Once he is in Avalon, Dawson's King Arthur realises that he should have done more when he was in the World of Men: 'as he grew stronger, his thoughts returned homeward to the deeds which he had left undone, or half-wrought'.[71] When he listens to the songs of Avalon, he desires to 'return to the world that had slain him, that he might sing them in the ears of toilsome men. For in those songs was healing'.[72] The fact that the men he needs to heal are 'toilsome' is significant, considering that the second incarnation of Arthur is someone who has 'wearied from labouring in the forest', and whose parents have engaged in 'ceaseless toil'.[73] The implication is that Arthur should shift his attention to the general populace – hence the idea of healing people through the easily transmittable form of music – and focus on labouring people in particular.

Merlin also realises that he failed during his time in the World of Men. In contrast to some other iterations of the legend, Dawson's Merlin intentionally chooses to leave the world to be with his lover, Vivien, and is not trapped by her.[74] When the Son finds him on

[68] Ibid., ch. 9, p. 81.
[69] Ibid., ch. 10, p. 98.
[70] Tennyson, 'Lancelot and Elaine', in *Idylls*, ll. 130-2, p. 171.
[71] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 21, p. 262.
[72] Ibid., p. 263.
[73] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 1, p. 9;
[74] In the Prose Merlin, Nimiane traps Merlin, wanting to spend time with him alone; in Malory, she entombs him to escape from his unwanted attention; in Tennyson, Merlin is worn down by Vivien, who wishes to best him. See Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 4.1, pp. 118-20; *Prose Merlin*, ed. by John Conlee (Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), pp. 318-322 (321); Tennyson, 'Merlin and Vivien', in *Idylls*, p. 167, ll. 963-4.

the way to Avalon, Merlin awakes, and becomes magically aware of all the deaths and betrayals that have happened since he left Arthur, which he could have prevented had he not chosen to stay with Vivien out of love for her.[75] He decides to return to the World of Men, but as an anonymous presence: 'I shall labour unseen', he tells the Son, 'and will work mightily for men; through me, though they know it not, they shall grow wise'.[76] Merlin does this as his 'penalty' for forsaking humanity, forgoing the renown and 'glory' he had before.[77] When the Son learns that he is Arthur, he decides to return to the World of Men anonymously, but not as a penance. Instead, he realises that he 'must journey homeward to the old life and toil in the forest', in order to 'rescue the World of Men'.[78] Both Merlin and Arthur emphasise labour and toil in their explanations for why they are returning to the world, chiming with King Arthur's earlier desire to focus on the working people, rather than the knights and nobles. In addition, both Arthur and Merlin will work anonymously, forgoing fame and reputation; Arthur hides his 'secret name' from everyone, and returns to being the Son in name and appearance.[79] What Arthur and Merlin actually do once they are back in the World of Men is not specifically stated. Arthur 'did his work well and uncomplainingly; and bore himself honourably toward all women and was always kind' – whilst Merlin simply plans to meet Arthur in disguise, and make him 'ever grow more wise'.[80] Unlike Stevens's Arthur, Dawson's does function as a labourer even though he knows and has proven his royal identity: Arthur 'dwelt with his parents and was called a *charcoal-burner*'.[81] His birth parents receive some benefit from his presence – 'because of his love their [lost] memory did come back', and sometimes Arthur can see traces of Eve

[75] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 19, p. 240.
[76] Ibid., p. 242.
[77] Ibid., p. 242.
[78] Ibid., ch. 22, p. 283.
[79] Ibid., 288.
[80] Ibid., p. 288; ch. 19, p. 243.
[81] Ibid., ch. 22, p. 287. Original emphasis.

in the eyes of his birth mother.[82] Dawson places Arthur in a labouring setting, with the purpose of helping others to rediscover their true selves: identities that have been obscured by mind-numbing toil.

The description of Arthur's behaviour at the end of the novel almost matches the description of the Son's 'courtly life' at the start.[83] One difference is that he is now 'kind', suggesting that he is more inclined to help others after his quest has ended. This is only a small development, and it may seem anticlimactic for Arthur to have developed so little during the course of his quest – but it is Dawson's attempt to make Arthur a 'perfect normal' type in the context of Christian morality. By acting in an ideal manner – focusing on one's work, treating women with respect, being kind to others – but living as a seemingly insignificant labourer, Arthur is not an impossibly perfect model, distanced from ordinary people. He is simply a man who acts well, and, by being kind, encourages the people he helps to act in a similar way. This will ultimately, it is implied, help men pass through Lilith's land and find Avalon, because they will become morally superior and resist Lilith's temptations. The symbolic ramifications of Arthur and Merlin's anonymity are more apparent. Eve's criticism of the first Arthur – that he 'sought out Avalon for himself' and not for others – is countered by the actions of the second Arthur, whose anonymity implies a rejection of personal renown, and a focus on helping others for its own sake.[84] Anonymity also addresses the issue of the first Arthur's isolated perfection; rather than being an apparently impossible model of 'purity' to follow into Avalon, an anonymous Arthur leads from the back instead, pushing others to remember their true identities (as his birth parents begin to) and, with Merlin's help, make them wise to Lilith's dangers.

[82] Ibid., pp. 287-8.
[83] Ibid., ch. 1, p. 11.
[84] Ibid., ch. 3, p. 29.

Dawson's approach also attempts to make Arthur and Merlin less distanced from the labouring people who are clearly a focus in *Avalon*. The fact that Arthur is reincarnated in a labouring family, overcomes social prejudice, rediscovers his royal status, and then chooses to return to his working life, suggests that poverty and social status are more important topics for the author than life at a royal court. However, it is not necessarily true that Dawson is socially motivated in reincarnating Arthur as a working-class man, advocating equality of wealth and power. Considering the theological elements of *Avalon's* plot and world, as well as the author's Presbyterian background, Arthur's new profession as a charcoal-burner may instead relate to the notion that labour and frugality are spiritual values.[85] In other words, Arthur may be more likely to succeed in spiritual fulfilment as a poor labourer than a rich king. This was a message that some reviewers took from *Avalon* – *The Queenslander* considered it a book 'to teach high thoughts and high spiritual duty', and a research journal on the occult regarded *Avalon* as a 'spiritual romance' and a personal teaching tool, even if Dawson 'does not deal with the evils of modern social conditions'.[86] Nevertheless, there is some interest in social inequality, even if the main focus is on spiritual development. Dawson may have been influenced by his father's concern for those in poor urban areas – his father was a Methodist minister in Glasgow who had, according to one anonymous biographer, 'a passion for social reform […] and preferred neighbourhoods which yielded the highest percentage of souls fit for reclamation'.[87] Working-class characters and conditions abound in Dawson's other work, particularly in

[85] The idea can be traced to Matthew 19:23-24: '[i]t is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God' (King James version).
[86] 'Literature: Publications Received', *The Queenslander*, 9 December 1911, p. 20; Albert Gresswell, 'Mental Health of the Psychic', *Light: A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research*, 32, (10 February 1912), 65.
[87] 'Sketch of the Author', in Dawson, *Unknown Soldier*, pp. 5-12 (5).

his writing from before the war, though there is no evidence that this interest extended to social reform as it apparently did for his father.[88]

There is, in fact, a strange distance between Arthur and the working-class position to which he returns. When he comes back to his parents, they do not know how long he has been away, and have forgotten his name.[89] He cannot simply tell them, 'for he knew that because of their weariness they would not understand'; their labour has alienated them from his knowledge.[90] It has even eroded their own memory: they 'worked so hard and so drudgingly in the forest that they have forgotten their names [...] they have forgotten all things past and future in searching for things needful for today'.[91] In the world of *Avalon* this is more than simple forgetfulness: when Arthur (as the Son) meets one of Lilith's female servants, she tells him '"I have no name [...] and therefore I have no soul"'.[92] It is therefore suggested that Arthur's charcoal-burning parents, in forgetting their names, have lost their souls. The logic may partly be based on the importance the Bible places on names, and how they relate to a person's origin, identity, and purpose.[93] The link between hard work and forgetting one's name is stranger, but as John Carey explains in *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, the idea that labouring people were nameless, lacking individuality and even souls, was a 'common allegation' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century period.[94] This attitude derives from an intellectual snobbery regarding the dramatic increase

[88] See, for example, Coningsby William Dawson, 'The Worker', in *The Worker and Other Poems* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1906), pp. 1-10. The poem describes 'vile' labour but advocates accepting bad conditions rather than changing them. After the war Dawson wrote a book about the poor and vulnerable in central Europe, but it focuses on the effects of war rather than social inequality, arguing for compassion towards old enemies rather than reform: Coningsby Dawson, *It Might Have Happened to You: A Contemporary Portrait of Central and Eastern Europe* (New York and London: John Lane, 1921).
[89] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 22, p. 287.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., ch. 1, pp. 11-12; ch. 2, p. 17.
[92] Ibid., ch. 11, p. 105.
[93] For examples of names relating to identity and purpose, see Abram to Abraham in Genesis 17:5; Cephas to Peter in Mark 3:16; Saul to Paul in Acts 13:9. The idea of people having a hidden name revealed to them after death is in Revelation 2:17.
[94] John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880—1939* (London: Faber, 1992), p. 10.

in population from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the corresponding power of this larger population in terms of democratic rights and access to knowledge. Thomas Hardy, observing a throng of people in 1887, distinguished between 'a small minority who have sensitive souls' and the rest who are 'mentally unquickened, mechanical, soulless'.[95]

This distinction is explored in Dawson's *The House of the Weeping Woman*, published three years before *Avalon*.[96] In that novel, the protagonist, Gabriel, joins an elite group of self-proclaimed dreamers, who know that 'the truths of an individual are always false when applied helter-skelter to the masses'.[97] Gabriel leaves London, and its 'harpy multitudes' who have given their souls to their work, to live alone in the countryside, in a valley where King Arthur is supposedly sleeping, and where his knights used to joust.[98] Here, the distinction between individuals and masses is made geographically, by the difference between London and the 'knightly valley [...] of banished chivalries'.[99] *Avalon* is set entirely in a romantic medievalised landscape, and so the separation between Arthur and the nameless masses is not as clearly defined. Lilith's 'Scarlet City' is the closest equivalent to Dawson's previous depiction of London, and it is there that Arthur (as the Son) is most clearly set apart from deliberately undefined multitudes. The denizens of Lilith's city are referred to as a 'rabble', and fight amongst themselves for Lilith's affections every night, in a pointless cycle of automated death and rebirth; half are killed and then resurrected the following night, whilst the other half dwell in the city until they are also killed.[100] Lilith's land appears as a giant eye to the Son, with 'palace for pupil, and

[95] Thomas Hardy, journal entry for February 13 1887, qtd in Thomas and Florence Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2007), p. 191. First published 1928-30. Carey cites Nietzsche (e.g. in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1883-5), T.S. Eliot (in *The Waste Land*, 1922), and George Orwell (*Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, 1936) as other authors who promoted the idea that most people had lost their individuality in a larger collective mass. Carey, *Masses*, pp. 10-12.
[96] Coningsby Dawson, *The House of the Weeping Woman* (Toronto: Westminster; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908).
[97] Ibid., ch. 5, pp. 50-51.
[98] Ibid., ch. 21, p. 234, and ch. 16, p. 161; mentions of Arthur: ch. 23, p. 255 and ch. 26, p. 284.
[99] Ibid., ch. 23, p. 255.
[100] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 7, p. 62.

city for iris, and wasted lands for bruised, disfigured flesh [...] the entire landscape seemed to stand still and to concentrate its gaze evilly upon him [the Son], as if it were indeed alive'.[101] The danger for the Son is that he might join the large group of Lilith's lovers, losing his individuality by becoming part of the seemingly unified collective mass, imagined as one disembodied eye: an ungodly version of the Eye of Providence. Whilst the Son's quest ostensibly involves journeying to Avalon to find King Arthur and bring him back to the World of Men, his actual quest is to learn his real identity. This is not as simple as being told his true name; the Son must develop his individuality, starting as the Charcoal-burner's Son (an epithet based on the work of his parents), becoming the Unknown Knight (a title based on his own profession), and finally becoming Arthur. He may only know his name when he reaches Avalon, which is a state of mind rather than a physical place: it is 'the home of every righteous man's desires', and the Son is told that it 'grew up about thee all along the road as thou didst travel and strive'.[102] Along this road to Avalon, the Son must avoid joining the mass of Lilith's followers, or becoming a nameless worker like his parents. As well as tempting the Son by her beauty, Lilith also tries to make the Son stop thinking about the names, and therefore the unique identities, of things. When he asks whether he has reached Avalon, she responds: '"[n]ames, names, names [...] why trouble about names when the heart is singing with delight? [...] Are you happy? [...] Let that suffice"'.[103]

Dawson's Son is threatened by multiple dangers – the sexual temptations of Lilith which will lead to his enslavement; entrapment; failing to find Avalon; being killed by Mordred or another undead knight. However, behind all these dangers is a larger threat: losing, or failing to establish, his true personal identity. If he falls to Lilith, he will be one

[101] Ibid., ch. 5, p. 46.
[102] Ibid., ch. 22, 282.
[103] Ibid., ch. 7, p. 65.

of her minions like any other – she discourages him from thinking about names, because she wants to define him as one of her knights rather than as an individual person. Failing to find Avalon would mean never learning who he really is; he can only be told once he has become worthy of that knowledge. Death at Mordred's hands would also mean that he never learns his real name.

Once the Son discovers his unique identity as Arthur, he goes back to his old role as a charcoal-burner. In this way, *Avalon* is different from most other examples of fiction in the early twentieth century that focus on working-class characters who rise from humble beginnings: as Trotter notes, the trend is for characters' progress to be measured by the distance they have travelled (metaphorically as well as physically) from their original state.[104] Trotter argues that identity, in the majority of his examples, emerges from a rejection of anti-bourgeois values and working-class conformity. Trotter's examples include the life of Welsh miner-turned-writer Joseph Keating, who was 'invisible' among other miners until he began to study, which enabled him to form a new, more individual middle-class identity as an author and a dandy – a 'walking antidote to coal dust'.[105] It would be tempting to place *Avalon* in the same trend – the Son escapes from charcoal-burning to become a king – were it not for the fact that the protagonist returns to his previous life. The difference means that Dawson's Arthur can be both working-class and royal – a working king, modelled on Christ's humble status as a carpenter, but also probably shaped by William Morris's socialist credo that 'fellowship is life and lack of fellowship is death'.[106] This idea is expressed in Morris's romances: in *The Well at the World's End*, the paradise the hero sought is found to exist in his homeland after all; equally, the Son

[104] David Trotter, *The English Novel in History 1895-1920* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 38.
[105] Ibid., p. 34.
[106] See William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball*, vol. XVI of *The Collected Works* (n.p.: Elibron, 2005), pp. 215-288 (230). The text was familiar to Dawson, as he quotes it at the beginning of *Woman*.

discovers that Avalon is a state of mind rather than a solely geographical place, and can therefore be found around the charcoal-burning hut he originally vacated.[107]

It is worth comparing the ending of *Avalon* with the ending of *Woman*, as the protagonists of both texts share comparable journeys, but the way in which their progress is described is notably different. In *Woman*, the narrator directly compares Gabriel to Lancelot because he is involved in an unfortunate love triangle, but Gabriel is closer to *Avalon*'s Arthur: both leave the world of industrial labour to discover their individual potential in a mythic landscape, only eventually to return to help the people they originally left. For Gabriel, this is due to a spiritual transformation – he emulates Christ by aiding the rejected. This is motivated by a desire for spiritual health rather than politics: Gabriel is not striving for social equality, which is dismissed by Dawson as a 'lost cause'.[108] The reasons for Gabriel's change of direction are clearly given in the book's final chapters, describing how he no longer wishes to be different, and no longer fears obscurity in the Turnpike Thoroughfare, a dilapidated working-class area of London:

> Talent in song had differentiated him from the rest of his fellows. Now his most earnest wish was to be named one of them. Since Lancaster's death he no longer feared to die obscurely in the Turnpike [...] Intellectual pride had been his hindrance; now that the gift itself was withdrawn, and he had become one of the common people, it was possible for him to serve.[109]

Conversely, Arthur's return to his parents in *Avalon* is more briefly and vaguely described, with no reference to a critical plot point, like the death of a major character, or indication of personal development. The reader can only assume that Arthur returns to help others traverse Lilith's land, since this is not explicitly stated. Arthur merely says:

> I know that I must leave this garden [Avalon], which I have reached with so much pain, and must journey homeward to the old life and toil in the forest,

[107] See Amanda Hodgson, *The Romances of William Morris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 192; Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 22, p. 287.
[108] Dawson, *Woman*, ch. 4, p. 37.
[109] Ibid., ch. 32, pp. 354-5.

> and dwell again in my father's hut: for thus only may I save Sir Vanitas and bring joy to the heart of Adam, and rescue the World of Men.[110]

Gabriel and Arthur both end up in similar positions, but there is a significant difference in the way Dawson explains and narrates their final roles. In *Woman*, the protagonist's progression is given developed explanation, but in *Avalon* the reasoning is brief and obscure. Gabriel acts because of the effect of recent events; Arthur because he has eaten of the tree of knowledge which has given him some undefined wisdom.[111] Moments like this led critics to call *Avalon* 'synthetic', 'an elaborate piece of literary artifice', and a text that alienates the reader from the characters (the ending is one example, but Arthur lacks clear motivation throughout).[112] By considering *Woman*, it is clear that the author was capable of narrating a similar character arc in a more accomplished way (and the reviews for *Woman* were better than for *Avalon*).[113] *Woman* predates *Avalon* by three years, so what had changed in Dawson's ability to write? The answer lies in the difficulty of Arthur as a type, both human and ideal, who is not as malleable as Gabriel: Dawson struggled with the idea of Arthur serving others as Gabriel does. Gabriel loses his intellectual pride, by forsaking writing to help others, and by becoming 'one of the common people' in 'serving' Christ. It does not make sense for Arthur to be truly 'common', however, as it would remove a core part of his identity: his kingship and status as a great figure. As a result, *Avalon* does not state that Arthur will actually become a common labourer; instead, he is still a king, albeit one in disguise:

> When he [Arthur] heard men say it had been prophesied that King Arthur should come again [...] then would he smile; for he *knew* that the King sat among them even while they spake'.[114]

---

[110] Dawson, Avalon, ch. 22, pp. 282-3.
[111] Ibid.
[112] George H. Doran, *Chronicles of Barabbas: 1884-1934* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), p. 338; '"The Road to Avalon"', *New York Times*, 18 June 1911, p. 385; *Irish Times*, 20 October 1911, p. 9.
[113] For example, an Australian reviewer thought the novel was 'capably worked out', which is at least more positive than most of the comments on *Avalon*: 'Recent Fiction', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 1909, p. 4.
[114] Dawson, *Avalon*, ch. 22, p. 288. Original emphasis.

Stevens could not reconcile Arthur with the miners, and so expels Arthur from that community; Dawson also cannot reconcile Arthur with his fellow labourers, but keeps them together by making Arthur's identity a secret, and obscuring the details of his role so that he still seems to be a king, albeit one with a greater awareness of his spiritual responsibility to others. The two aspects of Arthur do not quite fit, leading to an unconvincing narrative – a problem Dawson managed to avoid in *Woman* – though *Avalon* is still valuable as an attempt to bring Arthur down to the level of his subjects.

v. King and Judged Man: Arthur in Housman's Aglovale

A more successful attempt to write about Arthur as a human figure, written six years before *Avalon*, is Housman's *Life of Sir Aglovale de Galis.* The Arthur of this work remains unaware of his spiritual responsibility throughout, though he is still placed in a context that values spiritual fulfilment over worldly appearance. Housman wrote it over a fourteen-year period, between 1889 and its publication in 1905.[115] She was a committed and morally conservative Anglican, but also someone connected to contemporary feminist politics; once *Aglovale* was finished she became a full-time suffragette activist, and was even incarcerated for political resistance.[116] Elizabeth Oakley asks why Housman, 'a committed feminist on the brink of suffrage activities by the time she finished her book, chose such male-oriented subject matter and passes over important female characters such as Guinevere'.[117] One possible answer, Oakley suggests, is that in writing *Aglovale* Housman was crossing gender boundaries, by writing about conventionally male subject matters, and engaging in her own

[115] Douglas A. Anderson, introduction, Housman, *Aglovale*, pp. 5-10 (7).
[116] See Oakley, *Siblings*, p. 36.
[117] Ibid., pp. 61-2.

academic scholarship, a mostly male preserve in her time.[118] For Peter G. Christensen, Housman's decision to focus on a minor character from Malory, and to depict Arthur in a way that opposes the popularly accepted version of the figure, is itself an act of rebellion, which fits with the author's political radicalism.[119] The poet Lex Banning also considered the question, suggesting that one of the text's central ideas was consistent with Housman's political views: 'Aglovale's fanatical and tragic preference [...] for Truth above Honour was exactly the sort of trait which would appeal to Miss Housman'.[120] Like Dawson, Housman judges Arthur in a Christian framework that emphasises the importance of private morality over public status.

Housman draws on the depiction of Arthur in Malory, rather than the more idealised version popularised by Tennyson. Malory is cited throughout the notes, as well as being referenced on multiple occasions as the narrator's 'dear master'. Passages from Malory are even transferred into Housman's narrative.[121] For Housman's brother Laurence, writing about *Aglovale* in 1951, the decision to go back to Malory's Arthur meant that the 'true story of King Arthur and his Round Table', which had been bowdlerised by 'the smug taste of the Victorian public', could be recovered.[122] 'People who read Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* think they know all about it [the Arthurian story]. They know next to nothing', he claimed, citing Arthur's incest and his murder of the May-born infants, as well as Arthur's complicated relationship with Lot's offspring, as examples of what most people did not know. Tennyson's *Idylls* do not explore these aspects, and some Victorian editions of

[118] Oakley argues that Housman emended A.W. Pollard's 1900 edition of Malory, using Sommer's unexpurgated Caxton text from 1889-91. Ibid., pp. 62-3.
[119] Peter G. Christensen, 'Clemence Housman's Attack on King Arthur in *The Life of Sir Aglovale de Galis*', *Housman Society Journal*, 31 (2005), 63-88 (p. 85).
[120] Lex Banning, 'Fanatical Knight at Arms', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 1954, p. 10.
[121] One example is Percivale's speech in 10.10 (Caxton), which is copied verbatim in Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 8, p. 92.
[122] Laurence Housman, 'A Story of Truth Without Honour', *The Housman Society Journal*, 33 (2007), 40-45 (p. 41). The article was broadcast on BBC radio in 1952.

Malory, such as Edward Strachey's 1868 version, followed *Idylls* as an example of how 'we may deal best with this matter for modern uses', removing details such as Arthur's incest in order to 'remedy the moral defects' of Malory's text.[123] Even in 1907, two years after *Aglovale* was published, Francis Coutts removed Arthur's incest from the story, though this was reportedly for artistic reasons rather than matters of taste.[124] In Housman, Arthur's unknowing incest with his half-sister Morgause is referred to early in the plot, when Mordred is described as the 'son and nephew of King Arthur'.[125] The 'horrid deed' Arthur committed when he attempted to kill the infant Mordred, and in so doing killed 'many May-day innocents', is mentioned near the end of the novel.[126] Housman also returns to Malory to inform other parts of Arthur's characterisation. In the battle against the eleven kings, Malory's Arthur 'ferde wood as a lyon' and slaughters twenty knights before resting.[127] Tennyson's Arthur is 'mightiest on the battle-field', but there are no details as to how he fights, and certainly no sense of a lion-like ferocity.[128] In Housman, Arthur is closer to Malory's warrior king: he 'bore down' upon his enemies whilst they were still grieving for their dead.[129] Arthur's fierceness also extends to his manner away from the battle-field. For Aglovale, Arthur's disapproval is described using metaphors of weaponry: his 'looks bit like swords' and his 'words struck like spears'.[130] Even his 'face is a very sword'.[131]

Housman emphasises Arthur's fierceness and sinful past, and thereby makes her Arthur closer to Malory's than Tennyson's. However, Housman's Arthur is not a carbon

[123] Sir Edward Strachey, introduction, *The Globe Edition. Morte Darthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and his Noble Knights of the Round Table* (London: Macmillan, 1868), pp. vii-xxxvii (xviii).
[124] Coutts removes the incest because, he argues, 'unconscious incest no longer acquires dignity from belief in a special divine retribution'. Francis Coutts, preface, *The Romance of King Arthur* (London and New York: Lane, Bodley Head, 1907), pp. v-viii (vii-viii).
[125] Housman, *Aglovale,* ch. 2, p. 21.
[126] Ibid., ch. 26, p. 272.
[127] Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 1.15, p. 56.
[128] Tennyson, 'Gareth and Lynette', in *Idylls*, p. 49, l. 486.
[129] Housman, *Aglovale,* ch. 1, p. 18.
[130] Ibid., ch. 26, p. 269.
[131] Ibid., ch. 19, p. 213.

copy of Malory's. The most noticeable characteristic Housman gives Arthur is his repeated use of 'well well' in his dialogue, the phrase 'denoting surprise, resignation, or acquiescence' according to the OED.[132] In Malory the phrase appears three times, and is used only once by Arthur, but in Housman it appears thirteen times, and is uttered by Arthur six times, always as an independent exclamation. In Malory, the way Arthur uses the phrase is to denote surprise at the treachery of Lancelot.[133] In Housman, the phrase stands out as particularly associated with Arthur, as it occurs almost every time Arthur appears in the narrative, and at every occurrence it seems to be at odds with the grave situations in which it is employed.[134] The clearest example of this occurs at the very end of the text, when Arthur is being told which of his knights died guarding Guenever, and asks:

> 'Sir Aglovale de Galis? What of him?'
> 'Sir Aglovale is dead.'
> At that the king breathed a deep breath that was no sigh. 'Well, well!' said Arthur.

Considering the gravity of the news, and the intensity of their last conversation the night before, when Aglovale openly criticises his king, Arthur's response is anticlimactic as well as obscure. Unlike Dawson and Tennyson, Housman does not describe Arthur as simple, but his repetition of 'well well' is a simplistic response, expressing only surprise in the instances it is used, without attempting to understand or comment in further detail. In Dawson, Arthur's simplicity as the Son suggests a purity and focus on his quest, but in

[132] "well, adv.", in *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2014 <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/226983> [accessed 5 August 2014], 24. a.
[133] Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 20. 15, pp. 823-4. The phrase is also used by Dinadan and Gawaine: Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 10.48, p. 491, and 20.12, p. 817.
[134] 'Well well!' is Arthur's response upon hearing that Percivale is avoiding his brother (on this occasion said twice); seeing Aglovale fail to heal Sir Urre's wounds (perhaps said sarcastically, considering his low opinion of Aglovale); listening to Aglovale admit his sins; learning that Aglovale has refused to help Launcelot rescue Guenever; and finally upon hearing that Aglovale has died (this is also the last line of the novel). Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 11, pp. 119 and 120; ch. 24, p. 252; ch. 26, p. 269; ch. 26, p. 270; ch. 28, p. 299.

Housman, Arthur's repeated 'well well' appears simple-minded instead, born from a stubborn refusal to engage more thoughtfully or emotionally with a situation.

Housman also modifies the details of Arthur's death from the commonly known version, in which a mortally wounded Arthur is tended by three or four Queens, and is taken on a barge to Avalon, where he will possibly be healed and return in the future. Malory describes Arthur departing on the barge, but does not state that he will certainly return; only that 'somme men say in many partyes of Englond that kyng Arthur is not deed'.[135] In Dawson's *Avalon*, there is no doubt that Arthur does return in some form, albeit in a secret way. Housman explains that the three Queens 'hated' Arthur, and 'took keep of King Arthur to ensure that he should die and not live on by enchantment […] So he died, and they buried him'.[136] This emphasises Arthur's natural (not supernatural) humanity, and excludes him from the tradition of sleeping heroes and undying gods who will one day return. The association between Arthur and Christ had grown in the nineteenth century, and by refusing the possibility of Arthur's return, Housman is removing one possible parallel between the two figures.[137] By removing the association between Arthur and Christ, Housman returns to a depiction that is closer to medieval versions than Victorian ones, as well as asserting the ordinary humanity of Arthur.

Whilst Housman's Arthur is not Christ-like, the moral idealism he represented for many by the end of the nineteenth century is reflected in his reputation. According to the narrator, Arthur is 'the greatest King in all the world, upright, noble, righteous, could rule nations wisely and well, and had learned to rule himself'.[138] This only describes Arthur as

[135] Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 21.7, p. 851.
[136] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 14, p. 164.
[137] The connection between Arthur and Christ is evidenced in previous chapters, but for one example, see: '[m]y God, thou hast forsaken me in my death', in Tennyson's 'The Passing of Arthur' (1869), echoing Christ on the cross: 'my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Tennyson, 'Passing of Arthur', in *Idylls*, l. 27, p. 288; Matthew 27:46 (King James Version).
[138] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 26, p. 273.

king, however, and not Arthur as a private man. Towards the end of the novel, Aglovale is called to the king's side, where he delivers a long speech criticising Arthur 'man to fellowman'.[139] The narrator concludes that 'the justice of God awaited Arthur to smite low his honour, and bring him as a mere man to worship the law he had broken and overborne'.[140] This 'law' is Christian moral law, rather than the law of Arthur's court. Aglovale's speech mentions Arthur's unknowing incest and his accidental infanticide, as well as the inability to stop the feud between the families of Lot and Pellinore, and his failure to punish atrocities committed by both sides in that conflict. These do not affect Arthur's status as 'the greatest king', but they are still failures that affect how Arthur, as a man, will be judged before God. In a different example, Arthur *qua* man acts more positively than Arthur *qua* king. Arthur *qua* king 'had no force to rule his sister's son [...] Yet in this defect of Arthur the King, the heart of Arthur the man was proved noble in its weakness; for [...] affection grew between him and these nephews'.[141] Housman even makes a further distinction between Arthur as a private man and Arthur as a soul. The following passage refers to the effects of the Pellinore/Lot conflict, and its lack of resolution: '[t]hough latent dread troubled the King, never did any personal apprehension cramp him down; but his soul was daunted, seeing the wrong he had done not to be dead and gone, neither lived down nor redeemed'.[142] In these passages Housman is going further than simply returning Arthur to Malory's 'true' version (to use Laurence's problematic term); she is dissecting the components that make the figure of Arthur, revealing a great king, a man who has made mistakes, and a soul awaiting judgement.

[139] Ibid., p. 276.
[140] Ibid., p. 275.
[141] Ibid., pp. 273-4.
[142] Ibid., p. 274.

The different aspects of Arthur are furthermore said to have different faces: Kay asks Arthur to show him 'either the face of my king or the face of my beast-brother'.[143] Here, 'face' refers to the external characteristics of Arthur, indicating his disposition and mood. Faces are frequently referred to throughout *Aglovale*. Arthur's response to the tolling bells of Carlisle, signalling the morning of Guenever's execution, is to utter the following prayer: '"Ah, God, but keep me my face!'"[144] Arthur's prayer probably refers to his face as his reputation and honour; his desire to 'keep' his face is similar to the idea of 'saving' face, a meaning the OED dates to 1836.[145] It is possible that Arthur only means to keep a passive, unemotional appearance befitting a king, but since his prayer comes just after Aglovale's criticism of his personal character as being at odds with his public reputation, it is more likely that he wants to keep the appearance of his good character intact in the eyes of his court, now that he knows that Aglovale has seen through it. Arthur's face is also related to his character and judgement. In one section, he does not allow Aglovale to tell the court about his adventures, and Aglovale suspects that Arthur is trying to cover up 'his nephews' villainy', but 'before the face of Arthur so dishonouring a suspicion could not stand. The face of Arthur, sombre to sadness, altered before his eyes [...] Suddenly Aglovale understood: Arthur held him an approved liar worth no credence'.[146] The ability to judge internal feelings from external appearance extends to Aglovale, whose 'guilt looked out of his blasted face for all to see', when accused of wrongdoing.[147] Face furthermore refers to the judgement of individuals or a collection of people – Aglovale says that Launcelot 'has spoken for me when your [Arthur's] face was set against me', and Launcelot says that

[143] Ibid., ch. 27, p. 278.
[144] Ibid., p. 279.
[145] "face, n.", in *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2014 <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/67425 > [accessed 5 August 2014], P8. h (b)
[146] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 17, p. 194.
[147] Ibid., ch. 4, p. 44.

Aglovale 'heeds not the face of man nor the breath of man'.[148] When Arthur prays to 'keep' his 'face', he is probably alluding to his reputation and honour, but also an important part of his identity – the means by which other characters judge and understand him, and a representation of his judgement against others.

The fact that Arthur prays for his face, rather than his wife, more generally suggests that the way he appears and presents himself is of great importance in the novel. This is supported by the description of Arthur's and Lot's tombs, fashioned by Merlin at Arthur's command. Around Lot's tomb there are 'twelve tapers [...] upheld by images of kings vanquished, they lighted up an image of King Arthur triumphant'.[149] Lot is buried in an adjacent tomb to Arthur's, and 'above the tomb of Lot, his [Arthur's] worldly power stood figured'.[150] Designing one's tomb before death, in order to express worldly power, recalls the actions of Pharaohs and Emperors, and enforces the impression of Housman's Arthur as a man overly concerned with his appearance, demonstrating a desire to control his 'face' that extends to posterity.

vi. Housman's Criticism of Arthur's Order

Dawson's Arthur is initially concerned with his appearance as a low-status labourer, and must shift his attention to his moral behaviour in order to succeed in his quest. Housman's Arthur is also concerned with social status and appearance, but does not move beyond them: he is trapped in a value-system that prioritises courtly reputation above all else. This system is partly based on an idea of 'worship' that is found in *Morte Darthur*. The word 'worship' occurs 384 times in Malory, where it denotes both reputation and a personal ideal. Raluca

[148] Ibid., ch. 26, p. 270; ch. 25, p. 264.
[149] Ibid., ch. 14, p. 154.
[150] Ibid.

Radulescu summarises it as a fulfilment of duty to the Round Table according to the Pentecostal Oath, and a reward for knightly prowess that is defined by courage, strength, and accomplishing quests.[151] Housman uses 'worship' in a similar way to Malory, and the word occurs almost as frequently, but she emphasises that it is socially constructed, and related to a blind following of protocol.[152] The primary means of accruing worship is through success in tournaments or on the battlefield, making it a masculine endeavour; no female is said to have 'worship' in Housman. For example, after suffering a serious injury, Aglovale is told that he will 'win no worship' with his body, and although this is to his spiritual benefit, as he is forced to forgo his 'old lust for earthly worship' and concentrate on Godlier virtues, his loss of physical prowess also entails a turn away from masculine power.[153] Another such turn comes after he is assumed to have raped a maiden because of his reputation as a bad knight. When his innocence is proved, he is described as 'passing good, gentle, and honest' – not ascribed the masculine virtues of worship or strength.[154] Aglovale's dissension from Arthur's worship system can be read as a redirection of masculine strength, and as the importance of moral standards in male sexual behaviour would later become a major tenet of the Suffragette movement, it is another way in which Housman's politics intersect with her writing.[155]

Another aspect of Arthur's 'worship' system that is criticised by Housman is its emphasis on public performance and chivalric ritual. The artificial nature of worship is exposed when Aglovale fights another knight in a trial by combat, after he is accused of a

[151] Raluca Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory's Morte Darthur* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), pp. 83-4.
[152] The word 'worship', along with its derivatives, appears in *Aglovale* 105 times in 98,000 words. In Malory it appears 384 times in 348,000 words.
[153] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 23, p. 248; ch. 3, p. 42.
[154] Ibid., ch. 22, p. 240.
[155] Christabel Pankhurst coined the slogan 'Votes for Women, and Chastity for Men' in 1913. See David Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics, 1899-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 155.

crime: if Aglovale is guilty, he will be killed, and if he is innocent, God will ensure that he will win.[156] Aglovale defeats the knight he is fighting, Sir Grifflet, who refuses to yield. Arthur will not call off the fight, because he deems that Grifflet would rather lose his life 'than give occasion against the worship of the Table Round'.[157] According to Arthur, Aglovale must kill Sir Grifflet, even though he is 'so noble a knight', because failing to complete the trial would harm the worship of the Round Table.[158] The situation is made more absurd because the court knows that Aglovale is guilty anyway. When Sir Aglovale was first accused of his crime, he replied honestly rather than giving the 'right answer', which would have been: 'prove it on my body'.[159] His mistaken answer is met with 'an angry hum', and Aglovale believes that this one time he 'answered unknightly' was the 'most dire offence in your [Arthur's] sight', as if Aglovale's lapse from protocol was worse than any crimes he committed.[160] In the end, the situation is only resolved by Launcelot taking Sir Grifflet's place and defeating Aglovale, so that he could yield honourably.

Arthur is in a difficult situation of his own at the end of the novel, when he must decide how to respond to Launcelot and Guenever's adulterous affair. In this case, Arthur's honour is said to be at stake, rather than his worship, but the difference between the two terms is barely perceptible in this context, and Malory seems to use both words interchangeably. In Malory, 'honour' (like worship) denotes high status and renown: Derek Brewer cites the example of Uther, who is not dishonoured by his desire to seduce another's wife, but Ygraine and her husband would be dishonoured if Ygraine succumbed to Uther.[161]

---

[156] For an account / discussion of trial by combat in Malory, see Jacqueline Stuhmiller, '*Iudicium Dei, iudicium fortunae*: Trial by Combat in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*', *Speculum* 81.2 (April 2006), pp. 427-462 (427-8).
[157] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 4, p. 53.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 4, p. 44.
[160] Ibid.; ch. 26, p. 269.
[161] Derek Brewer, 'The Compulsions of Honour', in *From Arabye to Engelond: Medieval Studies in Honour of Mahmoud Manzalaoui on his 75th Birthday* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999), pp. 75-92 (85).

There is clearly, as Brewer writes, a 'strained relationship' between honour/worship and morality in Malory, and Housman focuses on and elaborates this strain in her novel, through the example of Arthur.[162] Arthur's situation again concerns threats to his social standing that force him to act in particular ways. It is well known that Guenever has committed adultery – 'the long dishonour done to Arthur was uncloked [*sic*]' by Agravaine and Mordred – and Arthur is faced with two possible ways in which he can react, outlined by Housman in a long passage at the end of the novel:[163]

> But now Arthur must needs learn; for before him lay two ways, one way of honour, and one of honesty, dolorous both, and leading to shame and loss. By the way of honour lay no fair issue. Could he sleep on his bed defiled and call it sweet, were Launcelot so to answer for it with his great might? Were he so to choose, then might such noble custom and order as he had exalted stand, but to stand out as a ghastly mockery, revolting to scorn all the honest part of man: a rotten pretence indeed.
>
> And no fair issue would he find by the way of honesty, but open dishonour and great loss, though the name of wittol he should purge away with blood and fire. Also that way he went to lose the better part of his knights of the Round Table, who would not abide by their lord and king when, by the rule and custom he himself had established, himself he would not abide.[164]

Should Arthur pardon Launcelot after he has successfully defended his honour in battle, or punish Launcelot based on the evidence, ignoring his highly-regarded status? Housman does not enter into Arthur's personal feelings in the above passage, but instead attempts to judge his position objectively, arranging all the facts as if Arthur himself were on trial. The role of Arthur as 'lord and king' affects the options available, but the different options are framed within his personal development: he 'must needs learn', like the knights who learnt to follow truth over honour in the Grail quest, as detailed by Housman in the previous paragraph.[165]

---

[162] Brewer, 'Honour', p. 85.
[163] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 25, p. 258.
[164] Ibid., p. 275.
[165] Ibid., ch. 26, pp. 274-5.

Arthur's choices can be characterised as acting either for public recognition or private fulfilment. Acting according to honour and worship implies following the path of social conventions, and acquiring high status and approval from others; acting honestly implies focusing on one's own moral character, and acting truthfully even if it contradicts etiquette, or damages one's reputation. In Malory, by the time Guinevere is about to be executed, Arthur has already chosen to avoid trial by combat in favour of the honest approach, as Housman would term it, letting others catch Lancelot in the act and then condemning Guinevere to be burnt. Housman exacerbates Arthur's quandary by equating Launcelot's rescue of Guenever with the same principles of the trial by combat system, referring to 'a champion at the pass' who might match Launcelot 'body to body in battle' when he tries to rescue Guenever.[166] Such a victory would win 'the judgement of God', but no knight still lives who could defeat Launcelot.[167] Arthur is therefore faced with making only one possible response, should he honour the trial by combat system: pardoning Launcelot because of his ability to overcome Guenever's guards, and thereby allow him to answer for his crimes 'with his great might'.[168]

Housman does not describe which path Arthur takes, because her protagonist, Aglovale, dies trying to prevent Guenever from being rescued by Launcelot, and the narrative ends. In Malory, Arthur's decision regarding Lancelot is resolved partly by the Pope, who orders Lancelot to give Guinevere back to her husband, and then, finally, by Lancelot and Guinevere retiring to lives of religious devotion. In Housman, the issue is left open and unresolved, and this openness emphasises how irreconcilable honour and virtue are in Arthur's situation. The lack of resolution also distinguishes Arthur as a man from Arthur as a king: prioritising honour is associated with his leadership, as he 'established' it

[166] Ibid., p. 275.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.

as a court custom, whilst being truthful is related to spiritual health, and his judgement as a man. The knights who returned from the Grail quest found that 'the appraisement of man for honour turned to confusion', and only 'pure integrity […] found favour from on high […]'.[169] This wisdom does not reach many in Arthur's court, as 'few learned by that teaching, and Arthur was not of these'.[170] For Constance Scheerer, Arthur's inability to learn spiritual wisdom is his own fault: comparable with C.S. Lewis's assertion that 'Satan *wants* to go on being Satan' in *Paradise Lost*, so too does Housman's Arthur want 'to go on being King Arthur', choosing to follow his own system of earthly worship.[171] Scheerer points to Arthur's 'puzzled and inadequate' response to Aglovale's criticisms as evidence that he does not understand, or chooses not to understand, his own faults – Arthur is too invested in his own system of reputation to know what he should do as a man.[172]

According to the narrator, Arthur is 'the greatest king in all the world', whilst Aglovale is 'the worst knight that ever Arthur made' because of his public 'fall to truth and dishonour'.[173] The juxtaposition of truth and dishonour suggests that a person cannot be entirely truthful without having some dishonour, reaffirming how, in Housman, honour is essentially an artificial quality. Privately, however, Aglovale is the model that Arthur as a man should follow. Arthur does not recognise this, but Launcelot does; he tells Aglovale that he envies him above all else, and wishes he were 'such a man' as him.[174] Launcelot enters Arthur's hall with 'high acclaim and gladness', followed by Aglovale who enters 'like a ghost' – but Launcelot has a 'guilty heart', and Aglovale has no secrets.[175] Arthur's

[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost: Being the Ballard Matthews Lectures Delivered at University College, North Wales, 1941, Revised and Enlarged* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2005), p. 98. Original emphasis. Constance Scheerer, 'Looking Past Romanticism: Clemence Housman's Presentation of the Romantic Hero', *Housman Society Journal*, 5 (1979), 20-26 (p. 25).
[172] Scheerer, 'Romanticism', p. 25. Arthur's decision to ignore truth is also found in Malory – 'for the kynge had a demynge / but he wold not here of hit': Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 20.2, p. 799.
[173] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 26, pp. 273 and 276.
[174] Ibid., ch. 24, p. 257.
[175] Ibid.

worship system has made Arthur the ideal king and Launcelot the ideal knight, but neither is presented as an ideal human. Instead, it is Aglovale who, having overcome his 'old lust for earthly worship', stands as a human model of Christian virtue by the end of the novel: a model that challenges Arthur's decisions as king, and brings his private morality into further disrepute.

Aglovale's transformation into a model of Christian virtue begins half-way through the novel, when he is beaten, knifed, and thrown into a lake with stones tied around his waist by Gaheris and Agravaine. Their attack is one part of a long bloody feud between the lineages of Lot and Pellinore. Gaheris and Agravaine wait until they see bubbles of air appearing on the surface and then leave, but a fisherman, who has been hiding nearby, rescues Aglovale before he is drowned. Aglovale then recovers in the fisherman's house, but during the night he hears screams of distress from his attempted murderers, who have become stuck in the dark quagmire. Aglovale leaves his lodgings, and, at risk to his own safety, pulls his enemies out of the mud and onto solid land. The deed is given divine blessing when a statue of Jesus extends its arm towards Aglovale, recalling a medieval tradition of knights who forgive blood feuds being granted visions of Calvary shrines coming alive.[176] Despite this, Aglovale feels 'utterly ashamed' of his charitable deed, because of the 'treason' of helping the enemies of his family, on whom he might have taken vengeance with no loss of honour to himself.[177] Aglovale keeps his charitable actions a secret, and when Gaheris finally learns who rescued him, at the end of the novel, he is astonished that Aglovale never took credit for his rescue. Gaheris says he would have 'published his [Aglovale's] worship to my own shame' – but by not seeking worship,

[176] For example see Edward Burne-Jones's *The Miracle of the Merciful Knight*, 1863, watercolour and bodycolour, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, inspired by the story of Giovanni Gualberto in [Kenelm Henry Digby], 'The Forgiveness of Injuries Required by the Spirit of Chivalry', *The Broad Stone of Honour: Or the True Sense and Practise of Chivalry*, 5 vols (London: Lumley 1848), II, 238.
[177] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 15, p. 174.

Aglovale has dismantled the importance of the honour system. For Gaheris, Aglovale's actions 'blast and crush the pattern of our knighthood', and therefore undermine an integral part of Arthur's rule.[178] Aglovale's behaviour also leads to his redemption: by the end of the novel, he appears saint-like, when Gaheris wants to be buried with a sliver of his heart, described as 'a holy relic', so that he may have 'peace in the grave'.[179] In Housman's two other novels (*The Were-wolf*, 1896, and *The Unknown Sea*, 1898), the sanctification of the protagonists' bodies is the way their heroism is expressed.[180] Aglovale therefore joins Housman's list of self-sacrificial heroes. Arthur does not.

Allen J. Frantzen, in his study on chivalry in the Great War, identifies both vengeance and forgiveness as two integral but opposed components of chivalry in conceptions from the middle ages to the twentieth century.[181] In Malory, for example, the desire to avenge is often expressed by knights, and even by Arthur, who is 'passyng glad that he myghte be auengyd vpon sire Mordred' in his final battle, but mercy is also part of the Pentecostal oath Arthur swears his knights to.[182] Mark Girouard argues that nineteenth-century conceptions of chivalry 'worked in favour of war', promoting battle as an honourable and manly activity.[183] For Frantzen, this is not the whole case; many nineteenth-century writers and painters emphasised forgiveness and mercy as the most important knightly virtues.[184] Both virtues are found in Housman's work: forgiveness and mercy from Aglovale, and action and prowess from Arthur, who prefers 'the stout heart and arm than

[178] Ibid., ch. 27, p. 282.
[179] Ibid., pp. 296-8.
[180] In *Were-wolf*, the protagonist's blood is like 'holy water' when he sacrifices himself to kill a were-wolf. In *Sea*, the virtuous protagonist's bloody wounds make him seem like 'Christ Himself': Clemence Housman, *The Were-wolf*, illus. by Laurence Housman (London: John Lane; Chicago: Way and Williams, 1896), p. 106; Clemence Housman, *The Unknown Sea* (London: Duckworth, 1898), ch. 15, p. 253.
[181] Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 17-22.
[182] Malory, *Morte*, Sommer, I, 21.3, p. 843.
[183] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 276.
[184] Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, pp. 17-18.

the good head'.[185] Nathan Comfort Starr writes that 'Arthur's is a violent, lawless age' in Housman's novel, where 'the high heroic is gone', and the focus is on brutality and violence.[186] This is not entirely true: whilst Arthur's masculine worship system prioritises physical strength, the rejection of that system, through honesty and avoiding worship by anonymity, is also expressed in the actions of Aglovale.

vii. Conclusion

Unlike Stevens, Dawson and Housman offer models for heroism that Arthur could adopt, just as children's material refashioned Arthur within a more socially-aware context. This model relies on anonymity, allowing a person to remain, in appearance, unremarkably human like anyone else, while achieving ideal spiritual fulfilment. Dawson's Arthur becomes an ideal figure, but only by acting privately as a normal man rather than as a king; Housman's Arthur is privately flawed, but has the public reputation of an ideal king. These two novels are the clearest examples from the Edwardian period of Arthur as Henry's 'perfect normal' type, when Arthur's public reputation as an ideal conflicts with his private morality as a human.

Dawson's depiction of Arthur is not as clearly defined as Housman's, and he struggled to synthesise Arthur's status as both an ideal king and a common worker, because the two roles are so different. Housman's Arthur is easier to understand: he is simply a man with a great reputation, who should value private morality over earthly worship/honour, to please God rather than other men. Arthur does not do this, but Aglovale does, and in this way he demonstrates how even a morally reprehensible person can find redemption by

[185] Housman, *Aglovale*, ch. 2, p. 26.
[186] Nathan Comfort Starr, *King Arthur Today: The Arthurian Legend in English and American Literature 1901-53* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1954), p. 5.

acting anonymously, rather than seeking reputation and renown. Ultimately, Aglovale is the man Arthur should be, and Dawson's Charcoal-burner's Son is the better man that Arthur becomes.

Both authors are curiously uncritical of Arthur's position as king. Though Housman vilifies Arthur's court, she does not attack the institution of kingship itself; likewise, though Dawson's Arthur succeeds as an anonymous working man after he has failed as a king, Dawson does not suggest that kings are bad, or that Arthur failed because of his kingly role. The next chapter considers Arthurian texts related to the First World War, and to a number of authors who draw more attention to the negative aspects of Arthur's kingly power.

Chapter IV

'The Director of Toil': Negative Portrayals of Arthur in E.A. Robinson and David Jones

i. King Arthur and the First World War

In 1917, six years after *Road to Avalon* was published, Coningsby Dawson was wounded at the Battle of Lens. He had been serving as an army lieutenant since 1916. In 1929, he reflected on his life before the war:

> we had once [...] been chivalrous and kindly. Before I had come to war I had been a novelist. I had written about many things, none of which, now that I was faced by stark reality, seemed essential [...] everything I had done seemed futile.[1]

Dawson's comments seem to support the claim that chivalry died – or at least, as Mark Girouard argues, received its 'death-wound' – in the trenches of the First World War.[2] It is certainly hard to imagine *Road to Avalon* written by an author who had been in the trenches; there is no suggestion of discomfort or horror in the short battle sequences, and the 'synthetic' nature of the narrative, analysed in the last chapter, suggests that the author was not, at that time, drawing on experiences that his time as a soldier might have provided. This does not mean that Arthur has no place in the First World War, however, and Dawson returns to the figure in his popular collection of fictional letters, *The Love of an Unknown Soldier Found in a Dug-out* (1918).[3] In the eleventh letter, the soldier describes how in the

[1] Coningsby Dawson, 'How the Story was Written', in *The Unknown Soldier* (London: Hutchinson, [1929]), pp. 15-16.
[2] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 290.
[3] [Coningsby Dawson], *The Love of an Unknown Soldier Found in a Dug Out* (New York: John Lane, 1918). The letters were purportedly found in an abandoned trench in France, but were in fact all invented by the author. *Love* was published anonymously but linked to Dawson through the title page of *The Unknown*

trenches he has 'fallen back on that old trick in childhood', when he would feel braver at night, and regard himself as 'quite a King Arthur kind of person, who rode to the rescue of great ladies and challenged all the world'.[4] Unlike *Avalon*, where the figure of Arthur is a human character, albeit one in an unrecognisable form, in *Love* he is evoked as a way of behaving, an old 'trick' that can make anyone a 'kind' of Arthur.

Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869–1935) and David Jones (1895–1974) write about Arthur in detail in a First World War context, though Jones deliberately fragments the figure of Arthur by drawing from multiple traditions, and Robinson only brings the First World War into his narrative indirectly. Before analysing their works in detail, this chapter will first provide an overview of King Arthur and the First World War, in order to put Robinson and Jones in a literary context.

Indirect references to Arthur are made in 'The Armoury', a short story by American academic and civilian Edmund Kemper Broadus, which was originally written in 1910, but republished in 1935 with a new introduction that sets it during the war.[5] In the text, a soldier has returned from the trenches and 'long[s] to be back' in battle, though his 'nerves have not recovered yet'.[6] The narrator takes him to an armoury, containing items belonging to a range of historical and legendary figures, including Galahad, Count Roland, Alexander, and Jack the Giant Killer. Excalibur is the blade 'that heads the line', but notably Arthur is the only figure whose weapon is included while he is not mentioned as the owner.[7] Instead, Excalibur is simply identified as the sword which Sir Bedivere threw into the water, suggesting that one of Arthur's knights, rather than the king himself, would be a

Soldier, and the authorship was confirmed to Ron Bontekoe by Dawson's grandson: see *The Nature of Dignity* (Plymouth: Lexington, 2008), p. 160, 175 38n.

[4] [Dawson], *Love*, ch. 11, p. 131.

[5] Edmund Kemper Broadus, 'The Armoury: A Fantasy', *Saturday and Sunday* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1935), pp. 210-5; [Edmund Kemper Broadus], 'My Armoury', *Atlantic Monthly*, 106 (August 1910), 276-8.

[6] Broadus, 'Armoury', p. 210.

[7] Ibid., p. 211.

more appropriate figure for a story about a common soldier. Excalibur, like the other items from the distant past, does not belong in the First World War: though it is recognised as a blade that shone 'like thirty torches' (a detail remembered from Malory), the sword no longer glints 'in these forward times', and the light from the window falls on it 'as with the ray of an autumn sunset'.[8] Excalibur has 'not been wielded in battle' since Arthur's time, and the narrator explains that he discovered it 'in a certain glorious summer of my boyhood'; like Dawson, Broadus regards Arthur as a part of his childhood.[9] The Arthurian legend had an especially strong association with childhood for early twentieth century readers. Not only were there specific versions of Malory for boys (*The Boy's King Arthur* was published in 1880), but there were also numerous children's societies based on the legend from the late nineteenth century onwards, as discussed at the beginning of the last chapter.[10] Drawing on this link emphasises how, for Dawson and Broadus, the Arthurian legend belongs, not only to the distant historical past, but also to the personal past of the narrator, from before the war.

Wilfred Owen aligns the figure of Arthur more closely with contemporary soldiers in his poem 'The Hospital Barge' (1917).[11] The poem describes a steam-barge passing down the Somme canal, watched by a person reading on the bank, based on a time when Owen was recovering from neurasthenia in a French hospital, and one day sailed down a nearby canal in a steam-tug.[12] The first stanza is alliterative and unhurried in its description of a barge's slow passage as the engines 'chuckled softly', but in the second stanza there is

[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] For an overview of Arthurian children's societies and literature in this period, see Jeanne Fox-Friedman, 'The Chivalric Order for Children: Arthur's Return in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-century America', in *King Arthur's Modern Return*, ed. by Debra N. Mancoff (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 137-57.
[11] Wilfred Owen, 'Hospital Barge', *Nation*, 23 (15 June 1918), 284.
[12] See Wilfred Owen, Letter 509, 10 May 1917, *Selected Letters*, ed. by John Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 242.

a shift to a less relaxed tone when the barge's funnel 'screamed', and this 'lamentation' makes the speaker 'wise / How unto Avalon, in agony, / Kings passed in the dark barge which Merlin dreamed'. This change from relaxation to pain fits the situation of the speaker, who is outside battle but not removed from its effects, and Arthur is used as an example of another figure who has lived through battle but remains in 'agony'. As Owen writes in a letter explaining the genesis of the poem, 'it was not more difficult to imagine that my dusky barge was wending up to Avalon and the peace of Arthur, and where Lancelot heals him of his grievous wound'.[13] The idea that Lancelot, rather than the Queens in the barge, tends to Arthur's wounds is almost certainly unique to Owen. The poet may have added that detail deliberately, or simply misremembered another account; whatever the reason, it shows that Owen thought of Arthur, at least in that moment, as a figure more like a soldier than a king, aided by a fellow fighter of a lower rank, rather than by queens, who are closer to Arthur in social class and conform to the convention of female nurses.

According to Kenneth Simcox, Owen was probably influenced by Tennyson – the 'dark' shade of the barge, and the words 'agony' and 'lamentation' are used by both poets, although in Tennyson, the 'agony of lamentation' comes from the queens who attend Arthur, and not from Arthur himself.[14] In Owen, 'the agony' is felt by Arthur as one of the 'kings' that pass in the barge, emphasising the effects of his wounds and making him a comparable figure to the speaker and other wounded soldiers. Arthur is only obscurely alluded to, though, as he is in Broadus; evoked through associated imagery, rather than by specific mention. He is not even 'the king' who travels on a barge; he is one of many 'kings'. This approach was chosen by Owen after some thought – an earlier draft contains the crossed-out line '[h]ow Arthur, with his wound, had passed in the dark barge' in place

[13] Owen, Letter 509, 10 May 1917, *Selected Letters*, p. 242.
[14] Kenneth Simcox, 'Hospital Barge', 2001, *Wilfred Owen Association* < http://www.wilfredowen.org.uk/poetry/hospital-barge> [accessed 28 January 2014].

of '[h]ow unto Avalon, in agony, / Kings passed in the dark barge'.[15] Below 'Arthur' is another crossed-out word, 'knights', suggesting that Owen experimented with replacing Arthur altogether, opting instead for figures who were more obviously analogous to First World War soldiers. 'Kings' was settled on in the final draft; a compromise between Arthur's journey on the barge and the more general idea of wounded knights.

In her study of war literature, Kate McLoughlin argues that the massive scale of war is often, paradoxically, communicated through 'localised, focused images', as a way of making sense of experience that is otherwise too large for comprehension.[16] By localised, McLoughlin means images or figures from the war that are taken out of a large-scale context, such as telling the story of thousands of refugees by focusing on a single orphan. Arthur is not 'localised' to the First World War, but he is focused on by Owen – and, to a lesser extent, by Broadus and Dawson – in a way that makes sense of the larger-scale conflict. Arthur, as a human individual, is obscured in the examples given above, because the authors are not really writing about him, but rather writing about the war *through* him. Owen is writing about recovering from war, and uses the famous example of Arthur to help him express his own personal experience; Broadus is making sense of the First World War in a wider historical narrative; Dawson is writing about the horrors of trench life but cites Arthur as an inspiring figure to use as a coping mechanism.

As well as focusing on the figure of Arthur to filter war experiences through, some writers used chivalric imagery, more generally, to narrate the war. Paul Fussell notes that a 'special diction' was used by many propagandists and journalists of the First World War: an archaic lexis that was influenced by Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and William Morris's

[15] Wilfred Owen, 'Hospital Barge', British Library MS ADD 43720. Dated 8 December [1917].
[16] Kate McLoughlin, *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from 'the Iliad' to Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 72.

prose romances.[17] For example, instead of using the term 'combatant', some newspapers employed 'warrior'; instead of 'danger', they wrote 'peril'; instead of 'die', they wrote 'perish'. The popularity of *Morte Darthur*, and the mimicking of Malory's style of language in most retellings and adaptations of the Arthurian legend, should also be considered a major influence in the use of this archaic diction. The word 'chivalry' was even used to describe aspects of the war: George Bernard Shaw described Field Marshal Douglas Haig as 'chivalrous', and Haig himself declared, in 1919, that they had been fighting against an enemy 'without chivalry'.[18]

Fussell argues that this style of language became associated with a belief in a positive, purposeful, coherent perception of history.[19] Archaic diction, particularly the type used by Morris and Tennyson, had a timelessness about it, easily understandable by contemporary audiences, but flavoured by the idea of the medieval past. It was therefore an appropriate language to use for those who believed that the social and moral ideals of 1915 were identical to those of the past, and would be identical to those of the future. *The Times* reported on the Somme attacks using, as Fussell writes, 'the rhetoric of the heroic romance', as if the current war could be described in the same language hitherto used for chivalric romance: the combat was a 'battle', there was 'fair field', and the conflict was a 'quarrel with the Germans', all leading to 'effective progress'.[20] Post-war audiences were more likely to reject this view, having experienced a war that seemed so wasteful and destructive it could not be compared with previous conflicts. As a result, Fussell argues, some writers after the war took positive words associated with chivalry and heroism, such as 'glory', 'honour', and 'sacrifice', and re-interpreted them as dated terms with little or no

[17] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 21-22.
[18] Ibid., p. 72, and Leo Braudy, *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity* (New York: Knopf, 2003), p. 191.
[19] Fussell, *Memory*, p. 21.
[20] Ibid., p. 88.

contemporary relevance.[21] Ernest Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms*, which was published in 1929 but set during the war, describes these words as false, ironic, obscene, and 'without dignity'.[22] They were 'slapped up by bill posters', but also heard 'almost out of earshot' in the rain, 'so that only the shouted words came through'. The physical distance between the words and the hearers suggests a temporal distance as well, as if the words were now so dated they could only be understood if they were 'shouted'.

This rejection of heroic language does not necessarily mean that the images common to the Arthurian legend, often expressed with that language, were also rejected. Unlike Girouard, Allen J. Frantzen argues against the idea that chivalry was 'born in the court of King Arthur and laid to rest in the trenches of World War I', and Frantzen also disagrees with Girouard's assertion that chivalry 'meant nothing' to most of the people who fought in the war, arguing that pacifist and anti-aristocratic uses of chivalry continued to be used in popular literary genres, particularly in morality guidebooks for the young, even when the more aristocratic definition of chivalry seems to have died.[23]

In addition, Leo Braudy argues that only the state's co-option of heroic language was rejected following the war; personal honour was still a meaningful concept, even if aspects of nineteenth-century warrior honour, such as the promise of purification in the Arthurian grail quest, had to be rethought after the squalor and senseless annihilation of the trenches.[24] Even a progressive view of history was not completely rejected after the First World War, although it was strongly challenged by some writers. In 1925, Captain B.H. Liddell Hart wrote an account of a battle in which the British utilised tanks to great effect. The article begins in AD 378, detailing a cavalry charge from 'barbarian' Goths against the

[21] Ibid., p. 21.
[22] Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (London: Vintage, 2005), p. 165.
[23] Alex J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 1; Girouard, *Camelot*, pp. 276 and 290; Frantzen, *Bloody*, pp. 16-17.
[24] Braudy, *Chivalry to Terrorism*, pp. 380-1.

Roman Empire. Hart then describes the 'charge' of tanks 'exactly fifteen hundred and forty years' later, insisting that warfare moves in 'progressive circles' and that the tank assault 'is but the long-awaited re-birth of the cavalry charge'.[25] Even though cavalry had ceased to be an effective part of modern warfare, they are still referenced by Liddell as a means to understand recent events in a wider historical context. Likewise, the figure of Arthur has no obvious place in a First World War narrative, but can be referenced to help make sense of the war by putting it in a wider mythological or pseudohistorical context.

The poets analysed in this chapter write about the figure of Arthur in the context of the First World War. As in the examples above, the war is written about through Arthur – but Arthur is also written about through the war. This unique context puts new pressures on the figure, and in particular the difficult balance between Arthur as an individual human and as the representation of ideals.

ii. E.A. Robinson: King Arthur, the War, and America

E.A. Robinson was an American poet and playwright. His poetry is typically written in a simple, unadorned style, often focusing on people who had failed, either romantically or more generally, but who were otherwise unremarkable. The academic Edward Bliss Reed hailed Robinson as 'our foremost American poet' in 1917, and President Roosevelt was an enthusiastic patron who wanted Robinson to improve America's global literary standing.[26] Given his usual choice of ordinary subjects, and his reputation as a national poet of America, it is perhaps surprising that in 1916 Robinson turned to the story of a mythical British king to produce his longest and most ambitious poems yet. Robinson's Arthurian

[25] Captain B.H. Liddell Hart, 'Medieval Cavalry and Modern Tanks', in *The English Review* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1925), XLI, 83-96 (pp. 87, 85, 96).
[26] Edward Bliss Reed, '*Merlin*', *Yale Review*, 6 (July 1917), 863-4 (p. 864); see Scott Donaldson, *Edwin Arlington Robinson: A Poet's Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 232-3. Roosevelt supported Robinson by giving him a job in New York that would allow him to continue writing poetry.

poetry consists of three major works: *Merlin* (1917), *Lancelot* (1920), and *Tristram* (1928), all long narrative poems.[27] For the American poet and critic Harriet Monroe, Robinson's Arthurian poetry was not as 'authentic' as his work set in America, as the poet had 'scarcely stepped west of New York, and only once crossed the sea to England [in 1923]'.[28] Monroe argued that Robinson's main theme in the poems – 'the endless war between man and fate' – could as easily be found in America as Camelot, and therefore it was 'futile' for him to draw from a foreign country's mythology when there were contemporary subjects closer to his own experience.[29] The poet Marguerite Wilkinson agreed with this sentiment, wishing, in a review of *Lancelot* published in 1920, that Robinson 'would interpret modern American life' instead.[30]

Later critics have tended to support the idea that Robinson's Arthurian poetry is more contemporary and American than Monroe and Wilkinson believed, citing the dialogue and introspective passages as particularly modern.[31] Alan and Barbara Lupack argue that Robinson 'Americanizes' the Arthurian story, by using Arthur to demonstrate how flawed the old monarchical system is in comparison to American democracy.[32] In addition, note the Lupacks, Robinson reinvents Merlin's relationship with Vivien to speak to contemporary concerns. Unlike most previous iterations, Merlin is not trapped by Vivien using magic, because here neither has any magical powers, but he is instead trapped

[27] [E.A. Robinson], *Merlin*, in *Arthurian Poets: Edwin Arlington Robinson* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 15-94; *Lancelot*, in *Arthurian Poets*, pp. 95-179; *Tristram*, in *Arthurian Poets*, pp. 181-382. In 1929 Robinson published *Mordred: A Fragment* – a section removed from *Lancelot* because the publisher thought the poem was too long.
[28] Harriet Monroe, 'Comment: Edwin Arlington Robinson', *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, 25 (January 1925), 206-17 (p. 211); Monroe, 'Comment: Robinson as Man and Poet', *Poetry*, 46 (June 1935), 150-7 (p. 152).
[29] Monroe, 'Man and Poet', *Poetry*, p. 154.
[30] Marguerite Wilkinson, 'Mr. Robinson's New Arthurian Poem', *New York Times*, 11 April 1920, p. 170.
[31] Rebecca Cochran gives an overview of later critics defending Robinson, and argues that his Arthurian poems are 'modern in tone': 'Edwin Arlington Robinson's Arthurian Poems: Studies in Medievalisms?', *Arthurian Interpretations*, 3 (Fall 1988), 49-60 (p. 52).
[32] Alan Lupack and Barbara Tepa Lupack, *King Arthur in America* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), pp. 118-128.

between two possibilities: pursuing his personal interests by loving Vivien, or attempting to save a doomed world by returning to Camelot. The Lupacks do not assume that Merlin necessarily represents America's position in the early years of the First World War, choosing whether to remain neutral or to engage in the conflict; such a reading reduces the text to allegory. Rather, they suggest more loosely that Robinson's emphasis on the overshadowing of personal concerns by global responsibilities helps to distinguish his retelling from European Victorian and medieval versions, flavouring it as both contemporary and American. The Lupacks write about Robinson's Merlin as the central figure of this tension between the personal and the political, but Robinson's Arthur could also be used to argue to the same effect.

Robinson defended his Arthurian poetry in a letter written in 1930. Rather than writing about Arthur and ignoring his own time, the poet claimed that he was to some extent writing through Arthurian characters, and indirectly addressing matters relevant to his own time and country:

> there is a certain amount in *Merlin* and *Lancelot*, which was suggested by the world war – Camelot representing in a way the going of a world that is now pretty much gone. But possibly these two poems may be read just as well as narrative poems with no inner significance beyond that which is obvious.[33]

Robinson does not see the Arthurian legend as something that is exclusively of the past, but instead as something that can 'represent' a comparable situation in the present: the end of Arthur's Round Table, being triggered by war, is a mirror of changing social order in his own time, many of these changes also being triggered by war. This link, between Arthur's story and the poet's own time, is 'suggested' in the poems, although Robinson is also keen

[33] E.A. Robinson to Helen Grace Adams, 1 January 1930, in *Selected Letters of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p. 160.

to emphasise that the Arthurian story works as a standalone narrative, and is not a mere allegory of other topics.

One of the ways that Robinson uses the First World War to 'suggest' parts of his Arthurian poetry is by using language that is apt for the massive scale of that war. Gawaine describes the oncoming troubles in Arthur's court, at the beginning of *Merlin*, as 'a cloud coming over Camelot / Larger than any that is in the sky', suggesting that Arthur's downfall will be the biggest event in the world of the poem, and evoking a common trope of darkness covering Europe used by writers during the war period.[34] Arthur and Lancelot's opposing armies are described using similarly large-scale terms of destructive power: Lancelot's force might 'have razed all Britain', and Arthur's could 'operate a way through hell and iron, / And iron already slimy with blood'.[35] Lancelot is also figured in terms of mass destruction: he is an 'engine', and a 'hewer down daily / Of potent men by scores'.[36] The sequence of battles between Arthur and Lancelot's forces is, likewise, enormous in its scale of time and ferocity. It is so violent that 'even in hell [it] would be superfluous', and it is considered to be an 'endless war', reflecting the idea that the First World War might have no end, frequently proposed by writers from around 1916.[37] Sir Lucan furthermore believes that Arthur's war is unparalleled with all other wars in its 'vicious inhumanity' and 'skilful frenzy', echoing similar assertions used by American journalists on the outbreak of war in 1914.[38]

---

[34] Robinson, *Merlin*, i, p. 21. The most repeated example of darkness covering Europe is 'the lamps are going out all over Europe', attributed to Edward Gray, but only recorded ten years after the event. However, similar phrases were expressed publicly and privately in that period: see Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992), p. 3.
[35] Robinson, *Merlin*, ii, p. 27 and *Lancelot*, ix, p. 165.
[36] Robinson, *Lancelot*, i, p. 101.
[37] Ibid., vi, pp. 133 and 141. See Fussell, *Memory*, pp. 71-4.
[38] Robinson, *Lancelot*, v, p. 125. The New York newspaper *The World* marked out the war from all previous conflicts as soon as it had begun, predicting an 'incomparably fast, incomparably destructive, incomparably cruel' war, on a scale that had never been possible before: qtd. in 'New York Press on War', *New York Times*, 3 August 1914, p. 6.

Yet Robinson does not just depict Arthur's war as big and brutal. As Laurence Perrine argues, Arthurian literature has always focused on martial prowess; what is most notable about Robinson is his 'new attitude', which focuses on the waste of war and the sacrifices of common people.[39] Guinevere speaks of 'the King's move' causing '[o]ne more magnificent waste of nameless pawns', and asks '[h]ow many thousand men / Are going to their death before Gawaine / And Arthur go to theirs—and I to mine?'[40] These men, Arthur's army, are 'warrior slaves' who '[f]ought for their weary King and wearily / Died fighting'.[41] Robinson does not give these common soldiers their own voices or personal identities, but simply draws attention to how the actions of Arthur and members of his court have large-scale ramifications, illustrated by the vast number of soldiers who fight and die in battle. Robinson's work reflects the massive scale of the First World War in another way. In 1919, Edmund Gosse wrote of the 'unparalleled [...] flood of verse' that had come in the first three years of the war (he estimates that over five hundred volumes of war poetry were published in that time).[42] Robinson fits into a context where the experiences of war are expressed by many different voices – there are eleven main speakers in *Merlin* and *Lancelot*, and the lower members of Arthur's court, like Dagonet and Lionel, are given as much space as Arthur and Kay (Arthur only appears in two of the sixteen sections, though he is talked about throughout).

In another letter, Robinson admitted that the characters in the poems could be read, to some extent, as symbols of First World War powers – Lancelot could be considered 'a rather distant symbol of Germany' – but he believed that 'the reader will do well not to

[39] Laurence Perrine, 'Contemporary Reference of Robinson's Arthurian Poems', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 8 (April 1962), 74-82 (pp. 76-8).
[40] Robinson, *Lancelot*, p. 136.
[41] Ibid., vi, p. 131.
[42] Edmund Gosse, *Some Diversions of a Man of Letters* (London: Heinemann, 1920), p. 264. First published 1919.

make too much of this or carry it too far'.[43] Robinson's Arthurian poetry is not just about the First World War, even if some of the passages are suggested by it: the poems are also about the deficiencies of Arthur's leadership and the monarchical system of government.

The first time Arthur appears in *Merlin*, he walks 'a lonely floor / That rolled a muffled echo, as he fancied, / All through the palace and out through the world'.[44] This short description symbolises how Arthur's small actions might have wider ramifications. Robinson frequently compares the small personal drama of Camelot with the larger world: caught within Arthur and Lancelot's two-person conflict is 'a squeezed world that elbows for attention', and Bedivere wonders if the 'kingdom of the world' is doomed 'to go down in sound and blood / And ashes and sick ruin, and for the sake / Of three men and a woman?'[45] Gawaine phrases it most succinctly when he says '[t]he world has paid enough for Camelot'.[46] Robinson considered this to be the most significant line in *Merlin* and *Lancelot,* 'from a purely practical point of view', presumably because it illustrates how damaging he thought bad governments are to the world.[47] The negative relation between the drama in Arthur's court, and the outside world, is furthermore expressed by Robinson's expansion of the Sword of Damocles story, found in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* 5.61. In Cicero, a courtier named Damocles remarks how fortunate Dionysius II, ruler of Syracuse, is for having so much wealth and power. Dionysius offers to swap places with Damocles so that he can experience what it is like to rule. Damocles agrees, and Dionysius

[43] E.A. Robinson to Hermann Hagedorn, 8 September 1918, *Selected Letters*, pp. 112-3 (112). Thirty years later Emery Neff did carry it further, arguing that Arthur represents Britain and Gawaine America; though other critics, such as Mark Van Doren, argue that these comparisons were reductive: Emery Neff, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (London: Methuen, 1948), p. 194; Mark Van Doren, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York: Literary Guild of America, 1927), p. 67. Conversely, Chard Powers Smith argues that *Merlin* and *Lancelot* were inspired by events in Robinson's family life as much as by the war, and proposes a reading of the poems in which *Merlin* presents humanism and *Lancelot* Christian self-loss, rather than anything directly related to the war: Chard Powers Smith, *Where the Light Falls: A Portrait of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 243-4.
[44] Robinson, *Merlin*, iii, p. 29.
[45] Ibid., vii, pp. 82 and 81.
[46] Robinson, *Lancelot*, viii, p. 163.
[47] E.A. Robinson to Hermann Hagedorn, 8 September 1918, *Selected Letters*, pp. 112-3 (113).

orders fine food, wine, and company to be given to him, as he sits on a golden couch. Dionysius also arranges for a sword to hang by a strand of horse-hair from the ceiling, over Damocles's neck. The anecdote illustrates the unhappiness and apprehension of rulers, and helps to justify their existence; although they have wealth and power, they also live in unenviable danger; although they may create brutal laws, their actions are explained by needing to seem strong against threats to their leadership. In Robinson, however, 'Gawaine's hate for Lancelot is the sword / That hangs by one of Merlin's fragile hairs / Above the world'.[48] Robinson removes the justification for despotic rule in Cicero's story, instead conveying how everyone is affected by the actions of a few powerful people at court. 'Arthur wears the crown', but does not have the sword dangling above his neck – so what is the point of him?[49] What is evident from the above analysis is that Robinson is writing about the First World War through Arthur – but, in addition to this, he is also writing about the deficiencies of monarchical governments, and how ill effects spread from the king's actions to the general populace.

The following section considers how Robinson's Arthur is characterised, and how Robinson explores various topics through his character: the dilemma of reconciling personal and political duties; the inadequacies of kingship as a system of governance; and the mass destruction of the First World War. This analysis will elucidate how Robinson's Arthur is balanced as a type (in Henry's definition), between degrees of perfect idealism and human normality. I argue that Robinson subordinates Arthur's idealism as a king to Arthur's failings as a private man. This makes Robinson's Arthur similar to Housman's, analysed in the last chapter – but whilst in Housman, Arthur's flaws seem only to affect his court and his soul, in Robinson, Arthur's flaws affect the whole world. *Merlin* and *Lancelot*

[48] Robinson, *Merlin*, vii, p. 86.
[49] Ibid.

are considered together, as if they were one poem, for although they were published three years apart, they were written consecutively during the First World War, and the author considered them to be two parts of the same whole.[50] *Tristram*, though concurrent with the events of *Lancelot*, only features a few scant mentions of Arthur, and is therefore not included in this analysis. After the section on Robinson, the chapter will turn to David Jones, who provides an alternative way of writing about Arthur in relation to the First World War. Jones does not focus on Arthur as a private man as Robinson does; in fact, he has no particular focus on Arthur. Instead, he attempts to evoke the figure in a variety of different forms taken from myth and history: some heroic, and some not.

iii. Arthur's Character in Robinson

In 1945, Richard Crowder analysed the characters in Robinson's work, placing them in different categories: theoretic, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious.[51] Arthur might be expected to belong to the political group of characters, but by the time of the action in *Merlin* he has lost any ambition for power or influence that he might once have had: he has 'little heart [...] now for crowns'.[52] Nor does he belong in the religious group: although at one time he 'thought himself a little less / Than God', at the time *Merlin* is set he realises that he built 'palaces / On sand and mud, and hears them crumbling now', an allusion to those who do not follow God's teaching, from Matthew 7:24-7.[53] Instead, Crowder considers Robinson's Arthur to be in the 'social' category, consisting of characters whose love for something dominates their life and mind, as Arthur has devoted his life to

[50] E.A. Robinson to Hermann Hagedorn, 8 September 1918, in *Selected Letters*, pp. 112-3 (112).
[51] Richard Crowder, '"Here are the men..."; E.A. Robinson's Male Character Types', *New England Quarterly*, 18 (September 1945), 346-67. Spranger's types of individuality are taken from his work *Die Lebensformen* (1914), published in English in 1928.
[52] Robinson, *Merlin*, iii, p. 29.
[53] Ibid., p. 31.

loving Guinevere, rather than ruling his kingdom.[54] This is evident in *Merlin*, which is set in a short period of time after Arthur has learnt of his wife's unfaithfulness, but before he has taken any action against her or Lancelot. According to Merlin, 'Arthur made of love / More than he made of life and death together'.[55] Crowder argues that those in the social category are the most complex characters in Robinson's work, though he does not outline what those complexities are in Arthur's characterisation: the following paragraphs will analyse Arthur's characterisation, and the effects of his love for Guinevere, in closer detail.

One change that Robinson made from most previous versions, including Malory's and Tennyson's, is that his Guinevere does not shift her affections from Arthur to Lancelot, but instead marries Arthur after she is already in love with Lancelot. Arthur is even aware of this from the beginning: he thinks that Guinevere had an 'unsworn allegiance' to Lancelot, and that marrying her '[m]ust one day bring along the coming end / Of love and honour and of everything'.[56] Because of this, Merlin says that Arthur '[f]orgot the world and his example in it', knowingly making an unstable marriage that would have disastrous consequences.[57] The American architect Ralph Adams Cram, in his Arthurian play *Excalibur* (1909), also depicted Guinevere as loving Lancelot before she meets Arthur, who fights Lancelot for the right to marry her.[58] Both Cram and Robinson represent Arthur as obsessed with his desire for Guinevere, which helps to ameliorate Lancelot and Guinevere's adultery. The difference between the two versions is that Cram's Arthur does not believe Guinevere would ever betray him once she is his wife, and so, unlike Robinson's Arthur, does not 'know' that his decision will lead to the end of his kingdom.[59] Cram's Arthur is

[54] Richard Crowder, '"Here are the men..."; E.A. Robinson's Male Character Types', *New England Quarterly*, 18 (September 1945), pp. 346-67 (361).
[55] Robinson, *Merlin*, iii, p. 37.
[56] Ibid., vi, p. 69.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ralph Adams Cram, *Excalibur: An Arthurian Drama* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1909), II.1-2, pp. 79-103.
[59] Cram, *Excalibur*, II.3, p. 113.

furthermore fated to be a cuckold even if he married a wife 'as pure as flame', meaning that he has almost no agency in his situation, at least according to Merlin, who explains that Saturn cursed him at his birth.[60] In Robinson, as Merlin tells us, Arthur's awareness and free will make his decision to marry Guinevere a 'sin', which, together with his sinful incest, establishes a kingdom built on 'two pits / Of living sin', where he awaits 'a sure doom' of his own creation.[61]

In order to understand the nature of Arthur's love for Guinevere, it is first necessary to understand how Robinson communicates information to his readers. As Scott Donaldson writes, Robinson tells stories 'by indirection, by inference, by suggestion. Never in his best work does Robinson yield to the temptation of the omniscient narrator and *tell* us what to think'.[62] We do not see Arthur and Guinevere meet and marry in the narrative; instead the reader learns about their relationship, and Arthur's sexual history, through what is implied by other characters. According to Merlin, Guinevere is 'yet another woman—one of many' whom Arthur pursued, the information being communicated in a story about an anonymous king who is clearly but not explicitly the same figure as Arthur, strongly implying that Arthur was promiscuous and Guinevere was merely one of many other women.[63] Why, then, did Arthur marry her, and according to Dagonet, go 'mad for love' when she remained in love with Lancelot?[64] The answer is found in Robinson's description of Arthur after he sees Guinevere look lovingly at Lancelot: Arthur has 'a wounded heart, / A wounded pride, and a sickening pang worse yet / Of lost possession'.[65] Since this feeling of lost possession is 'worse' than his wounded heart and pride, it is likely that a desire to

[60] Ibid., II.3, p. 113.
[61] Robinson, *Merlin*, vi, p. 69.
[62] Scott Donaldson, 'The Alien Pity: A Study of Character in E.A. Robinson's Poetry', *American Literature*, 38 (May, 1966), 219-229 (p. 220). Original emphasis.
[63] Robinson, *Merlin*, vi, p. 69.
[64] Ibid., vii, p. 83.
[65] Ibid., iii, p. 37.

possess Guinevere was an important part of Arthur's feelings of love, and might explain why he married her to begin with: because she belonged to Lancelot, and he sought to own her instead. In short, Arthur's love for Guinevere is based on male rivalry and competition, as well as Arthur's obsessive personality, rather than Guinevere's own qualities.

Lamorak also hints at Arthur's sexual history. He talks to Bedivere about Guinevere and Lancelot, and then says '[t]he King, if one may say it, set the pace, / And we've two strapping bastards here to prove it', naming Mordred and Borre.[66] 'Set the pace', in the context of Guinevere and Lancelot, alludes to sexual impropriety, although only the 'bastard' nature of Arthur's children is mentioned directly. Arthur's other sexual act, his incest with Morgause, is acknowledged later by Merlin, but is not directly talked about by Lamorak.[67] However, Lamorak does say '[t]he story goes abroad; and I believe it' in connection to Mordred, either referencing the incest or the prophecy that Mordred will kill Arthur.[68] Robinson's Lamorak is not clear, and he is not intended to be. Even Arthur's personal feelings are surmised by other characters: Lamorak assumes that 'the King, no doubt, / Is angry, sorry, and all sorts of things', the line degenerating into a vagueness appropriate for a character who is indistinctly described through the gossip of others.[69] This narrative style makes Robinson's Arthur a complex human individual whom other characters discuss and judge. For critic Ben Redman in 1926, Robinson gives the Arthurian characters 'the life of modern individuals', contrasting with Tennyson's 'pale phantoms gliding over lawns of dreamland'.[70]

Lancelot adds further layers to Arthur's characterisation. Guinevere's perspective on her marriage, first given in *Lancelot*, makes Arthur seem menacing rather than

[66] Robinson, *Merlin*, ii. p. 23. Bore is a second bastard son of Arthur's, mentioned twice in passing by Malory, and usually ignored by later writers.
[67] Ibid., iii. p. 32.
[68] Ibid., ii. p. 23.
[69] Ibid., p. 25.
[70] Ben Ray Redman, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York: McBride, 1926), p. 74.

victimised: she was, she claims, 'bought' by Arthur 'with a name / Too large for my father to relinquish', and she 'prayed' that she would not have to marry him.[71] Guinevere does not love Arthur any more than 'cats love rain', and her unwillingness in the relationship continues throughout her marriage: she says that Arthur will 'whip' her back to 'bury' herself in Camelot, after the Pope's intercession orders Lancelot to return her.[72] Lancelot attempts to comfort her, saying that she need not 'fear' Arthur, and insisting that '[t]he King will not molest or pursue you; / The King will be a suave and chastened man', implying that molestation by Arthur is at least a possibility.[73]

Robinson is not only interested in Arthur as a flawed, private man; he is also interested in Arthur as a king. Indeed, Merlin intended Arthur to become a paragon of kingship, to be 'a king / Who would have made his reign a monument / For kings and peoples of the waiting ages / To reverence and remember'.[74] That did not happen – Arthur is not a great king, and this is plainly apparent in *Lancelot*, when the titular character accuses Arthur of remaining wilfully ignorant about his kingdom, in the same way that he purposely ignored Lancelot and Guinevere's affair. Arthur 'will see nothing but what's passing here / In Camelot, which is passing', says Lancelot, and even in Camelot Arthur 'has no eye for what he will not see'.[75] Robinson additionally links Arthur's personal feelings as a man to his ability to rule as a king – as Bedivere says, 'the king must have the state, and be the state' or the country will fall into lawless anarchy.[76] This means that Arthur's own personal torment necessarily results in bad kingship: as Merlin tells Arthur,

[71] Robinson, *Lancelot*, vii, p. 154.
[72] Ibid., viii, p. 162; vii, p. 154.
[73] Ibid., vii, pp. 143 and 153.
[74] Robinson, *Merlin*, vi, p. 68.
[75] Robinson, *Lancelot*, iii, p. 113. Lancelot's line alludes to 'the kynge had a demynge / but he wold not here of hit' in Syr Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: The Original Edition of William Caxton*, ed. by H. Oskar Sommer, 3 vols (London: Nutt, 1889-91), I, 20.2, p. 799.
[76] Robinson, *Merlin*, ii, p. 24.

'you are the King / And if you starve yourself, you starve the state'.[77] If Arthur continues to let his own mental health suffer, and continues to ignore the world outside Camelot, then he may find that he is 'King no more, / But a slack, blasted, and sad-fronted man, / Made sadder with a crown.'[78]

This is in fact an accurate description of Arthur's personal character in Robinson. As well as being potentially 'sad-fronted', Arthur is also lonely – 'the loneliness of kings' surrounds him; self-hating, according to Guinevere; and sometimes hysterical, as when he thinks of himself as a '[f]ool, fool, fool, fool!', the repetition denoting a crazed desperation.[79] This emphasis of the negative aspects of Arthur as a private man is comparable to Housman, analysed in the last chapter – but in Housman, Arthur is understood nevertheless to be a great king, and Aglovale is the only one who perceives him as a flawed human individual. In Robinson, Arthur is not even considered to be a good king, but merely a flawed man who had the potential to be ideal.

iv. 'The End of Kings'

If Arthur is not an effective ruler in Robinson's poetry, then what is his purpose in the narrative, and why did Robinson choose him as a subject to begin with? The nature of Arthur's identity as a king is openly queried throughout *Merlin* and *Lancelot*. Lancelot asks '[w]ho is this king, this Arthur?' which leads onto two related questions: '[w]hat are kings? / And how much longer are there to be kings?'[80] Bulwer Lytton had, as mentioned in the first chapter, asked a version of the same question in 1848, but there it is a rhetorical

[77] Ibid., iii, p. 30.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., pp. 34 and 36; *Lancelot*, vi, p. 135.
[80] Robinson, *Lancelot*, iii, p. 114.

question asked in a dream, and offers no direct criticism of Arthur's personal actions.[81] Dawson and Stevens criticise Arthur as king, but they do not explicitly ask what kings are, or what they are for. In Robinson, the question is not only asked, but answered, albeit in the poet's typically indirect style. Rather than state a single answer, Robinson's characters provide different perspectives on what kings do, and what their purpose is. Guinevere supposes that God wrought Arthur's empire 'for the world's knowing of what kings and queens are made for', though she does not elaborate on what that might be.[82] Arthur believes that kings should have god-like powers: 'if I were strong enough to make you vanish / And have you back again with yesterday', he tells Gawaine and Bedivere, '[t]hen I should know at last that I was King'.[83] However, Arthur also admits that 'kings are men', and that such god-like powers are impossible.[84] Merlin thinks that kings 'hold the world' in their fingers, though he implies they do not know what it is they are holding.[85] He tells Vivien that he made Arthur a king 'thereby to be a mirror for the world', and by this Vivien assumes that Arthur is supposed to reflect the best human qualities, showing the world what it should be like.[86] Vivien believes that Merlin made Arthur a king 'to be a moral for the speckled ages', and 'a mirror for the millions' – but she also knows that Arthur is himself 'a speckled king', and therefore thinks 'the world will see itself in him [...] and wash its face'.[87] She does not think his kingship works as an ideal for others to emulate, because he is too much like the rest of the flawed world. Merlin did not necessarily mean for Arthur to be a mirror of perfection, though: he later expands on his idea to Dagonet, explaining that

[81] A 'labour-bow'd [...] Youth' rhetorically asks 'What are Kings?' whilst stitching the king's robes: Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, *King Arthur: A Poem* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1871), 7. XLIV, p. 213.
[82] Robinson, *Lancelot*, vii, p. 150.
[83] Ibid., iv, p. 121.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Robinson, *Merlin*, i, p. 16.
[86] Ibid., v, p. 62.
[87] Ibid., vi, p. 73.

Arthur was 'to be a mirror wherein men / May see themselves, and pause'.[88] This is an alternative to Arthur being an ideal model to be copied; rather, the point of Arthur is that others are able to see themselves in him as they really are, not as they should or should not be. Merlin says he 'saw [him]self' in Arthur, and this was 'a sight no other man has ever seen', though he does not elaborate on what that means.[89]

Arthur's twin identities of man and king are strongly distinguished from one another in *Merlin*. Bedivere sees Arthur as both a 'broken man' and a 'broken king', suggesting that man and king could exist in separate states.[90] This idea is supported by Kay's judgement on Arthur: 'the King is dead; / The man is living, but the king is dead'.[91] This inverts one of the principal aspects of the king's two bodies, the legal notion that the king exists as an eternal body politic as well as a mortal body natural. Robinson's Arthur has ceased to act recognisably as a king, as if his kingship had withered away whilst the human body who wears the crown still lives.

Robinson has often been accused of pessimism, and it is easy to see how a depiction of Arthur as a bad king, who 'starves the state' by focusing on his own grief, supports that judgement. However, this was not Robinson's view; he claimed that he was an optimist.[92] *Merlin* ends with Dagonet deciding that Arthur is 'mad', and no longer his master, and the image of 'darkness over Camelot' – but Robinson insisted that this ending, and the poem as a whole, had 'nothing especially sad' about it, because Merlin was striving for 'the end of kings and the redemption of the world'.[93] If Robinson's Arthur is a model,

[88] Ibid., vii, p. 93.
[89] Ibid., iii, p. 114.
[90] Ibid., ii, p. 24.
[91] Ibid., ii, p. 28.
[92] See Edith Pipkin, 'The Arthur of Edwin Arlington Robinson', *English Journal*, 19 (March 1930), 183-95 (193).
[93] Robinson, *Merlin*, vii, p. 94; E.A. Robinson to Edith Brower, 24 June 1917, in *Edwin Arlington Robinson's Letters to Edith Brower*, ed. by Richard Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 169.

he is not one for ideal kingship, but for the problems with a monarchical system, and being such a bad example will lead to a better system of government in the future, one that is not connected to the personal life of a single human. It is tempting to think that this criticism of monarchy was related to Robinson's perspective as an American, but he also criticised American capitalism in his other poetry, as well as communism; no system of government seemed to satisfy him.[94] Put simply, Robinson shows what does not work more than he suggests what might work in its place, and Arthur is just one more example of what does not work. As Robinson phrased it in a letter from 1918, Merlin uses 'Arthur and his empire as an object lesson to prove to coming generations that nothing can stand on rotten foundations'.[95]

In *Lancelot*, the desire to remove these 'rotten foundations' is vocalised by Bedivere, who dreams of 'a sword over kings, and of a world / Without them', thereby restoring the original meaning of the sword of Damocles so that it hangs over rulers, rather than the whole world as it does in *Merlin*.[96] This dream is partly realised by the end of *Lancelot*, after Arthur and Mordred's battle, when 'there was no Camelot now', and 'a king's world had faded [...] and a king with it'.[97] No better system of governance appears as a replacement for this lost 'king's world', but Robinson implies that this will happen when 'a Voice' tells Lancelot that 'a world has died [...] that a world may live'.[98] The ending inverts that of *Merlin*; instead of complete darkness lying over Camelot, Lancelot rides into a darkness which holds 'the Light'.[99] Robinson frequently uses images of light and darkness in his poetry, and 'the Light' (with a capital) has previously been referenced in *Lancelot* to denote spiritual truth, though the image could also stand for perception and

[94] For an overview of Robinson's political views, see Donaldson, *Poet's Life*, pp. 452-5.
[95] E.A. Robinson to Hermann Hagedorn, September 8, 1918, in *Selected Letters*, pp. 112-3 (112).
[96] Robinson, *Lancelot*, iv, p. 119.
[97] Ibid., ix, p. 168.
[98] Ibid., p. 178.
[99] Robinson, *Lancelot*, ix, p. 179.

enlightenment, following the end of Arthur and, with him, the implied end of monarchy.[100] The idea that Arthur could return again is, as in Housman, denied. Unlike Malory and Tennyson, Robinson does not suggest that Arthur might have survived his battle against Mordred, and though the narrator mentions 'tales told of a ship', alluding to the barge that takes Arthur to Avalon, the narrator more clearly states, twice, that 'Arthur was dead'.[101] Robinson's narrative style is indirect, but the poet's depiction of Arthur's kingship is decidedly negative, and Arthur is clearly a mortal and flawed human rather than a supernatural ideal.

Robinson's Arthur is, as Yvor Winters writes, relieved of the 'impossible burden of perfection assigned him by Tennyson'; instead of standing as an ideal to emulate, Robinson portrays Arthur as a bad example that should be, and is, removed forever.[102] As a man, Arthur is a tormented failure, and if he is an ideal at all, then he is only an ideal representation of why monarchies should not exist – a feeling emphasised by a context with parallels to the First World War, where defects in the leadership resulted in suffering among the many. Jones, the next poet under consideration, continues the negative representation of Arthur in a First World War context, but he also emphasises how fractured the figure of Arthur can be, and this allows Arthur to have positive attributes at the same time as being aligned with irresponsible war leaders.

[100] Charles T. Davis summarises the various ways light is referenced by Robinson in 'Image Patterns in the Poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson', *College English*, 22 (March 1961), 380-86 (pp. 381-2).
[101] Robinson, *Lancelot*, ix, pp. 166 and 169.
[102] Yvor Winters, *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, rev. ed. (New York: New Directions, 1971), pp. 72 and 77.

v. The Multiple Arthurs of Jones

Born near London to a Welsh father and English mother, David Jones was drawn from a young age to his Welsh heritage, to which he connected through literature, history, and art.[103] Jones trained as an artist and enlisted in the Artists' Rifles as soon as he could, initially eager to fight but later feeling appalled at the army's brutality, and its occasionally imperialistic actions in Ireland.[104] After the war, Jones returned to his life as an artist, and wrote *In Parenthesis* between 1928 and 1937.[105] It began as a series of captions for drawings of trench soldiers, but the text became the main focus and eventually all but two of the illustrations were removed.[106] It is a poem – the publisher and reviewers called it an 'epic' – which details the first two years of the First World War in seven parts, following soldiers from training to enlistment in the trench, and ending with a battle.[107] Disparate sources, including many Arthurian ones, are used in the narrative to provide similes, metaphors, notes, or brief allusions. Jones also references Arthur in his other major work, *The Anathemata* (1952), but this poem does not add anything substantial to Jones's treatment of Arthur from the one in *In Parenthesis*, and more generally features Arthur in brief references, rather than in active roles.

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) was an influence on *In Parenthesis*; both poems append notes which add detail and meaning beyond the main text, and both contain elements from other literary traditions. Jones, however, stated that the layering of history and mythological allusion was not derived from Eliot's work, but was an effect of the

[103] See Keith Alldritt, *David Jones: Writer and Artist* (London: Constable, 2003), pp. 10-11 and 18.
[104] Ibid., pp. 30 and 37.
[105] David Jones, *In Parenthesis: Seinnyessit e Gledyf ym Penn Mameu* (London: Faber, 2010). First published 1937. Jones gives the date he first started working on the poem in 'Autobiographical Talk', 29 October 1954, in *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London: Faber, 1959), pp. 25-31 (30).
[106] Alldritt, *Jones*, p. 82. Some editions contain a frontispiece and endpiece.
[107] See 'Books and Authors', *Observer*, June 6, 1937, p. 6.

'groping age' he was writing in, 'with its specialist preoccupation with this and that and the other branches of science and history and idea, [which] have filled the air'.[108] The Arthurian legend was also spreading into a variety of different areas, from predominantly history and poetry in the mid-nineteenth century, to (increasingly) plays, novels, and commercial products from the end of the century onwards. This trend may also have encouraged Jones to take a more fragmented approach to Arthur. Between the end of the war and 1928, when Jones began writing *In Parenthesis*, the flow of new and republished Arthurian literature remained as high as it had been from the middle of the nineteenth century, mostly in the form of poetry and children's retellings, though it had been 36 years since Tennyson's death, and for Harold Nicolson in 1923, *Idylls* was already so dated it had 'no appeal whatever to the modern mind'.[109] There was therefore a mixture of new versions with no new authoritative work to replace Tennyson's arguably dated version of Arthur, which meant that many readers were aware of the figure, but also aware of different versions of him.[110] This is reflected in Jones's work, which evokes Arthur in multiple guises.

In Parenthesis combines colloquial dialogue, prose, quotations, and poetry, and shifts between first and third person narrative. It is an explosion of perspectives and narrative styles, like the shell attack at the end of Part Two: 'all barrier-breaking, all unmaking'.[111] Jones additionally fuses together different words and images, often taken

[108] Letter to Helen Sutherland, November 25 1941, Tate Gallery Archive, qtd in Jonathan Miles and Derek Shiel, *David Jones: The Maker Unmade* (Bridgend: Seren, 1995), p. 240.
[109] Harold Nicolson, *Tennyson: Aspects of his Life, Character and Poetry* (New York: Books for Libraries, 1972), pp. 230-1. First published 1923. Nicolson condemns all of Tennyson's work in the mid-Victorian period, but marks out *Idylls* and *Enoch Arden* in particular.
[110] For a sense of Arthurian literary output in the period between *Lancelot* in 1920, and the beginning of *In Parenthesis* in 1928, Daniel P. Nastali and Phillip Boardman list 151 new published texts on Arthurian subjects (including 61 poems or collections of poetry and 34 texts aimed at children), 23 new essays, and 9 new translations, from the beginning of 1920 to the end of 1927. 56 new texts were published that referenced Arthurian characters, objects, and locations, but only in passing. A similar level of output occurred between 1928 and 1937 (when *In Parenthesis* was published). See Daniel P. Nastali and Phillip Boardman, *Arthurian Annals: The Tradition in English from 1250 to 2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 247-74.
[111] Jones, *Parenthesis*¸ Part Two, p. 24.

from disparate sources and literary traditions. Peter Larkin describes this technique using the simile of a dry stone wall, in which each fragment 'can never be reunited with its bedrock [...] but which finds its appropriate fit within a new whole'.[112] This way of combining can be seen, for example, in Jones's frequent use of hyphens, which fuse different words and parts of sentences together (e.g. 'yellow-ochre toffee-apple'), but also keep their parts distinct from each other.[113] As James McFarlane wrote of modernist literature, it is notable that elements do not simply 'fall apart' and become split, but they 'fall together' as well.[114] Juxtaposing different versions of Arthur with other traditions and contexts is another way in which Jones explodes and reforms words and images, as will become evident in the analysis below.

In Parenthesis was written, according to Jones, 'in a kind of space between – I don't know between quite what'.[115] In fact, the poem seems to have been written in between many different things. For example, it was written in between eras: Jones felt that the early twentieth century lay between two temporal worlds, one more established and simple, and another new and mechanical: '[e]ven while we watch the boatman mending his sail', he wrote in the poem's preface, 'the petroleum is hurting the sea'.[116] Jones's sentiment echoes W.M. Thackeray's in the middle of the previous century: 'your railway starts the new era, and we of a certain age belong to the old time and the new one. We are of the time of chivalry [...] We are of the age of steam'.[117] This perceived gap between times allows an author to observe both eras, able to nostalgically recall aspects of the old order whilst

[112] Quoted in Merlin James, *David Jones 1895-1974: A Map of the Artist's Mind* (London: Humphries, 1995), p. 49.
[113] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Four, p. 90.
[114] James McFarlane, 'The Mind of Modernism', *Modernism: 1890-1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (London: Penguin, 1976), pp. 71-93 (92).
[115] Jones, preface, *Parenthesis*, pp. ix-xv (xv).
[116] Ibid.
[117] William Makepeace Thackeray, 'Roundabout Papers—No. VIII: De Juventute', *Cornhill Magazine* (October 1860) in *The Cornhill Magazine: July to December 1860* (London: Smith, 1860), II, 501-12 (p. 504).

simultaneously noting them as anachronistic and fading. 'We don't have lances now nor banners not trumpets', states the protagonist John Ball at the beginning of the poem, as if this war is completely different from the wars of the distant past, but in the same sentence he also references the Battle of San Romano (1432).[118] Wars of the distant past are not forgotten, and can be used to understand the present conflict, even if they are completely different. Arthur is also not forgotten in *In Parenthesis*, and figures in the poem as a past figure who is both connected to and distanced from the experiences of Private John Ball, who is himself connected, by name, to a Lollard reformer and rebel of the fourteenth century. Jones believed that Malory occupied a space in between times as well. For Jones, Malory was 'part of that decaying world that knew the shadow of feudalism', but was also 'just in time' to experience the Middle Ages, which were 'not quite dead'; Malory could still write of knights 'authentically' from his own experience, but was not so far back in time that his language was too archaic to be easily understood by twentieth-century readers.[119] This liminal position is also implicit in the figure of Arthur, existing in between Roman and medieval histories, and in between history and romance.

Jones thought Malory could enable 'part-Welshmen' such as himself to 'connect to their Welsh past' through their primary English language (Jones could not read Welsh).[120] *In Parenthesis* was written in between the influences of Wales and England, as well as in between different eras: the two countries are represented by two languages in the text, Welsh and English, as well as by the Cockney and Welsh identities of Jones's trench soldiers. Jones considered Malory to be 'a connecting link between the tradition of Wales

[118] Jones, *Parenthesis*¸ Part One, p. 2.
[119] Jones, 'The Myth of Arthur', in *Epoch*, pp. 212-59 (244-5). Originally written 1940-1 and published in *For Hilaire Belloc: Essays in Honour of his 72nd Birthday*, ed. by Douglas Woodruff (London: Sheed & Ward, 1942), pp. 173-214.
[120] Jones, 'On the Difficulties of One Writer of Welsh Affinity Whose Language is English', in *The Dying Gaul and Other Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London & Boston: Faber, 1978), pp. 30-4 (33).

and that of England', and *Morte Darthur* is directly quoted sixteen times in the poem.[121] In other words, the Arthurian legend itself could potentially unify British people through a shared mythology. The 'Arthurian thing', writes Jones, is 'the common property of all the inhabitants of Britain (at all events of those south of the Antonine Wall)'.[122] However, this 'Arthurian thing' is itself fractured: in Jones's essay 'The Myth of Arthur' (1940-1), he is emperor, eternal king, mysterious chief, 'and a good deal more'; later in his essay Jones adds Celtic war-god, agricultural deity, and Roman cavalry leader to the list.[123] *In Parenthesis* refers to Arthur in various ways in the text, referencing him as both a unifier and divider, in a poem that is concerned with both fracturing and wholeness, and Jones employs Arthur as a figure of absence and the periphery, never fully realised in any single depiction.

The most extensive description of Arthur occurs in Part Four, when Dai – a Welsh soldier whose nickname 'Dai de la Cote male taile' equates him with one of Arthur's knights – engages in a 'boast'.[124] The boast is a literary form in which the speaker relates him or herself to a historical tradition, claiming that they witnessed various important events in time, either as an observer or participant. Jones cites a few examples in his note, including Arthur's gatekeeper in 'Culhwch and Olwen'.[125] Dai begins by citing his 'fathers', who were with 'the Black Prinse of Wales'.[126] The misspelling of 'prince' reflects Dai's pronunciation of English, which is 'with an alien care', suggesting that it is not his first language, because there is no soft 'c' in Welsh, but 's' is phonetically identical.[127]

[121] Jones, 'On the Difficulties', *Gaul*, p. 33.
[122] Jones, 'Myth of Arthur', in *Epoch*, p. 216.
[123] Ibid., p. 213-5.
[124] The boast is at pp. 79-82 of Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Four. Dai's nickname is a reference to 'La Cote Male Taile' of Malory IX 1 (Caxton). The name means 'of the badly-fitting coat', which Malory's character wears to remember his dead father; no explanation is given for why Jones's character might have such a garment. See Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Four, p. 70.
[125] Ibid., Part Four, note 37, p. 207.
[126] Ibid., p. 79.
[127] Ibid.

Dai's speech is between languages, and this makes him seem, like Arthur, to be between nationalities. Dai's narrative shifts to the first person, as he personally identifies himself as the 'spear in Balin's hand', which 'made waste King Pellam's land', a reference to the 'dolorous stroke' Balin gives King Pellam, which destroys three countries in Malory.[128] Dai's identity as 'the spear', rather than as Balin, suggests that he is an instrument of war, and not the cause. Similarly, Dai also claims that he is 'the adder in the little bush', referring to another story found in Malory.[129] An adder bites a soldier's foot, inadvertently beginning the war between Arthur and Mordred when the soldier draws his sword to repel the adder, and the gesture is misinterpreted by the other side.[130] Jones adds a detail not found in Malory: the adder's 'hibernation-end', rather than biting the soldier, 'undid' the peace negotiations. The adder seems more innocent and even less in control in Jones than it is in the version from Malory, starting a war by merely waking up after a natural cycle, rather than by reacting in a hostile (albeit instinctive) manner to a soldier. Like Dai as 'the spear', Dai as 'the adder' is only an instrument of war.

Arthur is introduced after these two examples, using a variety of titles that are all, claims Jones, attributable to him.[131] Firstly he is 'the Bear of the Island', following the link between Arthur's name and the Welsh word for bear, 'arth'.[132] Jones also used this title to describe the second-century Roman leader [Lucius] Artorius [Castus] in 'Under Arcturus' (1971), who in this poem is an early prototype of King Arthur.[133] 'The War Duke' is also used, referencing Nennius's description of Arthur as a 'dux bellorum' in *Historia*

[128] Ibid.; Caxton, 2. XV-XVI.
[129] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Four, p. 80.
[130] See Malory, Caxton, 21. IV.
[131] See Jones, supplementary notes to note 37 of *Parenthesis* Part 4, p. 209.
[132] Ibid., Part Four, p. 82.
[133] Jones, 'Under Arcturus', in *The Roman Quarry and Other Sequences*, ed. by Harman Grisewood and René Hague (London: Agenda; New York: Sheep Meadow, 1981), pp. 64-83 (69 and 71). The link between Artorius and Arthur was first posited in Kemp Malone, 'Artorius', *Modern Philology*, 22 (1925), pp. 367-74.

Brittonum.[134] This title identifies Arthur as Roman, but for Jones 'The Bear of the Island' is a Romano-Celtic hybrid: in 'The Sleeping Lord', a fragment composed in 1966-7, the title is used to describe one of the sleeping figures of Celtic legend.[135]

The next titles are entirely Celtic in origin: one is 'The Island Dragon', quoting Gildas's description of Maelgwn Gwynedd, a sixth-century Welsh king.[136] Jones claims that this is one of Arthur's titles, but Gildas does not mention Arthur in any of his works. A further title is 'The Bull of Battle', taken from 'Cad Goddeu' ('The Battle of the Trees') found in the *Book of Taliesin*, a fourteenth-century Welsh manuscript. Like 'The Island Dragon', the title does not actually refer to Arthur, though he is referenced further on in the poem.[137] These titles hint at Arthur, but when the references are followed to their sources, Arthur is not there. *Y Gododdin* also mentions Arthur as an absence, only stating that Gorddur 'was not Arthur'; Arthur himself does not appear in the text.[138] The poem, which survives in a thirteenth-century manuscript but was probably based on a much older tradition, is quoted at the beginning of each part of *In Parenthesis* and in the sub-title.[139] The description of Gwanar in the poem, 'he was a gap', could also apply to Jones's Arthur, as his Celtic titles are taken from sources which do not refer to him directly, or at all in some cases.[140]

---

[134] The title is discussed in R.G. Collingwood and J. N. L Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), chapter XIX, pp. 320-1.
[135] Jones, 'The Sleeping Lord', in *The Sleeping Lord and Other Fragments* (London: Faber, 1995), p. 76. First published 1974.
[136] *The Works of Gildas and Nennius, Translated from the Latin*, trans. by J.A. Giles (London: Bohn, 1841), §33, p. 29.
[137] The poem would have been available to Jones as 'The Battle of the Scrub', *Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. by J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Tremvan: Llanbedrog, 1915), pp. 27-41. 'The Bull of Battle' refers to a tree.
[138] *Y Gododdin*, in *The Celtic Hero Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe & Early Ireland & Wales*, ed. by John T. Koch and John Carey, 4th edn (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies, 2003), p. 326.
[139] The sub-title for *In Parenthesis* is 'seinnyessit e gledyf ym penn mameu', from *Y Gododdin* XXVII: 'his sword rang in the heads of mothers'. See Jones, General Notes, 4, *Parenthesis*, p. 191.
[140] *Y Gododdin*, p. 324.

The fifth and final title attributed to Arthur in this passage is 'The Director of Toil'. It is a quotation from the sixth-century Welsh poem 'Gereint filius Erbin', using a translation by John Rhys.[141] The speaker of that poem describes a battle at Llongborth, and 'brave men hewing with steel', overseen by Arthur. This title is more relevant to the twentieth century than the others; as Jones writes in 'The Myth of Arthur', Arthur is 'more significantly for us "the Director of Toil"'.[142] The next year Jones explained the modern significance of the term more fully: he argued that 'man-as-machine-user' will become prevalent in the twentieth century, and will be a new kind of 'Director of Toil', directing industry, and also directing men to conform to a rational plan 'to which there may be no alternative', rather than to fight. Neither the sixth- nor twentieth-century usages are positive, and the title distances Arthur from the trench soldiers, who do not even direct themselves, instead marching 'unchoosingly as part of a mechanism'.[143]

The negative characterisation of Arthur is developed further by Jones, using an example of Arthur's actions taken from one of the medieval Welsh Triads: 'Tri Chud a Thri Datcud Enys Prydein' (Three Concealments and Three Disclosures of the Island of Britain), also alluded to in the Second Branch of the Mabinogi.[144] In the triad, Arthur removes Bran the Blessed's head from the 'White Hill' – placed there to magically protect Britain from plague and enemies – because he prefers to hold the island with his own strength. This is one of the three ways in which Britain became vulnerable to invasion and 'oppression'.[145]

---

[141] See John Rhys, preface, Thomas Malory, *The Birth Life and Acts of King Arthur of his Noble Knights of the Round Table their Marvelous Enquests and Adventures the Achieving of the San Greal and in the End le Morte Darthur with the Dolorous Death and Departing out of this World of them All* (London: Dent, 1893), pp. xi-xxxvj (xxiij).
[142] Jones, 'Myth of Arthur', p. 237.
[143] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Two, p. 19.
[144] *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* 37R, early fourteenth century, published in *Trioedd ynys Prydein*, ed. by Rachel Bromwich, 3rd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), pp. 94-95. One of the medieval versions of this triad was available to Jones in *The Text of the Mabinogion and Other Welsh Tales from the Red Book of Hergest*, ed. by John Rhŷs and J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Oxford: Evans, 1887), p. 300, based on Jesus College MS 111, fol. 144v.
[145] The word used is 'ormes' (gormes without the mutation). The word carries the associations of tyranny and invasion as well. See *Trioedd*, ed. Bromwich, p. 90.

The story was available in English in Lady Charlotte Guest's version, since she included it in her collection of medieval Welsh texts published as *The Mabinogion* (1841). Guest adds an adjective not found in literal translations of the triads' text, stating that Arthur 'proudly' disinterred Bran's head.[146] In Jones's version this motivation is expanded even more: Arthur 'broke it [Bran's cist] with great pride, and over-reach of his imperium'.[147] The last word means control or jurisdiction of power, and is also related to 'imperial'. Coupled with the physical metaphor 'over-reach', this implies a greed for land, as if Arthur was not only taking too much power but wanting to extend the area he controlled. In addition, Arthur does not merely 'disinter' the head, as in Guest's translation, but 'burst the balm-cloth' and 'unbricked the barrow', which Dai had 'trowelled' himself.[148] 'Unbricked' implies a careful and deliberate action, though Arthur also 'broke' the cist, meaning that his destruction was irreparable. This grave desecration leads to the march of 'cruel feet', identified as foreign enemies in Jones's note and echoed by the 'stamp' of 'foreign feet' heard in the trenches.[149] Arthur is, in this example, a destructive figure, whose selfish actions lay the country open to invasion and war, contrasted with Dai who has no control over his actions. So far Jones's Arthur is not very different from Robinson's: both are depicted through indirect references, and both are figured as irresponsible war generals contrasted with front-line soldiers. One difference is that Robinson's Arthur is a human who is fundamentally the same as any other character, whilst Jones's Arthur is a shadowy figure drawn from disparate sources, rather than a single person.

---

[146] *The Mabinogion from the Llyfer Coch a Hergest, and Other Ancient Welsh Manuscripts, with an English Translation and Notes,* trans. by Lady Charlotte Guest, 3 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans; Londonderry: Ress, 1841), III, 131-2.
[147] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Four, p. 82.
[148] Guest translated 'datkudyavd'(modern Welsh: datguddiad) as 'disinter'; Rachel Bromwich uses the more literal 'disclosed', but the word is used to mean the same in both cases. See *Trioedd*, ed. by Bromwich, no. 37, pp. 94-5, 102.
[149] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Four, p. 82; Part Four, note K, p. 209; Part Four, p. 98.

Arthur could also be a positive figure for Jones. In 'The Hunt', an Arthurian fragment composed between 1950 and 1964, Arthur is still one who 'directs the toil', but here he has 'care for the land / and for the men of the land'. This Arthur is also present in *In Parenthesis*, though he is shrouded in the text and only mentioned directly in the notes. In Part Three, John Ball is on night watch duty, and Jones alludes to the Celtic underworld and Arthur's journey there in *Preiddeu Annwn*, but this reference is only explained in the accompanying note.[150] This poem, dating to the eighth or ninth century and attributed to Taliesin, describes Arthur travelling to the Celtic underworld in a ship, in search of a magical cauldron. The text repeats the fact that only seven of his men returned with Arthur, and Jones quotes this repetition in his note – but rather than use this to demonstrate that Arthur is a careless leader, Jones does the opposite, citing Arthur as 'the Protector of this Land', 'the Saviour', and 'Lord of Order carrying a raid into the place of Chaos', emphasising Arthur as a Jesus figure journeying to Hell.[151] There is evidence, according to Jones, of this more messianic Arthur 'shining through considerable obscurity': obscurity that was partly generated by authors from the Middle Ages onwards, who made Arthur into a more mundane leader than his Celtic prototype.[152] Jones refers to the land where Arthur travels to as 'the Celtic underworld', but also as 'hell' and 'Hades', drawing together three separate traditions in one account of a medieval Welsh poem, just as Jones also draws on different traditions to reference Arthur.

Jones was, furthermore, interested in Arthur as a wounded figure – not unlike Owen. His drawing 'Wounded Knight' (1929-30, Appendix C, p. 245) is clearly a template for two later illustrations that more explicitly depict Arthur – 'Merlin Appears in the Form

[150] Ibid., Part Three, p. 52 (note 42, pp. 200-1).
[151] Ibid., note 42, pp. 200-1.
[152] Ibid.; Jones later criticised Tennyson for leaving out 'the hidden strata' of Arthur's character: Jones, 'Myth of Arthur', in *Epoch*, p. 234.

of a Young Child to Arthur Sleeping' (1931, Appendix D, p. 246) and a proposed title page for *Morte Darthur* (1933, Appendix E, p. 247). In these latter images, Arthur is merely a slumped figure, either asleep or injured, undistinguished and not clearly recognisable. In a letter from 1929, Jones wrote about his approach to the *Morte Darthur* title page: 'I think there are about six "real" ideas in King Arthur – I mean universal ideas that one might with thought recreate in the wood engraving'.[153] Arthur as a wounded figure is one of the 'universal' ideas that Jones saw in the character and his story – universal because pain and trauma can be experienced by anyone, and not just kings. The images show how Arthur could be seen sympathetically by Jones as a human like any other, as well as less sympathetically as an individual war leader.

vi. '[W]here's Pendragon': Arthur as Absence

At some points, it is notable that Arthur is not directly mentioned by Jones. In Part Three, sleeping soldiers are related to legendary figures who will reawaken at a future date, and Jones's attached note mentions Arthur as part of the 'Celtic theme of armed sleepers under the mounds' – but the poem itself uses an Irish god of love and youth, Mac Og, as a comparable figure to one of the sleeping soldiers, who is 'fair as Mac Og sleeping'.[154] As Thomas Dilworth notes, 'the omission of Arthur is glaring and significant', and 'Mac Og is an Arthur replacement'.[155] Unlike Arthur, Mac Og is not a king, and therefore cannot be easily related to the officers and rulers, who are distanced from trench soldiers.[156] As a figure of Irish legend, Mac Og can be aligned with the oppressed – Jones himself was

[153] Letter from David Jones to Douglas Cleverdon, 14 February 1929, qtd in Douglas Cleverdon, *The Engravings of David Jones* (London: Clover Hill, 1981), p. 20.
[154] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Three, p. 51; note 36, pp. 198-9.
[155] Thomas Dilworth, *Reading David Jones* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), p. 47.
[156] For the general tension between soldiers and officers in the trenches, see Fussell, 'The Enemy to the Rear', *Memory*, pp. 82-90.

involved in the British occupation of Ireland in 1918 – and can form a simile for common soldiers who are controlled by others. Moving Arthur out of the main text and into an academic note also makes it easier for Jones to explain how Arthur fits into British mythology as a whole. Jones's note not only lists Arthur as a sleeping king, but refers to three separate traditions that place him in Wales, England, and Scotland.[157] This retains Arthur as 'the common property of all the inhabitants of Britain', and keeps the '*complexity* of our [Arthurian] tradition', which Jones regarded as an important aspect of Arthur and his legend.[158]

Lance-Corporal Aneirin Lewis is entrenched in 'cooked histories', unlike his fellow soldier Watcyn, who 'might have been an Englishman' because he was unaware of 'Geoffrey Arthur' (another name for Geoffrey of Monmouth).[159] For Lewis, 'Troy still burned, and sleeping kings return'.[160] Arthur is again notable as an absence, but not replaced as he is in the Mac Og example. Rather, Arthur is retained as one possible example of the sleeping king, in a continuous cycle of return that is similar to Owen's emendation 'Kings passed' instead of 'Arthur passed' in 'Hospital Barge'.

In Jones's later work *The Anathemata* (1952), Arthur is directly named four times in the main text, and referred to eight times in footnotes.[161] Jones traces British and Welsh history and myth in that poem, and Arthur is an obvious name to mention. In *In Parenthesis*, Arthur is a less obvious figure to reference, and perhaps because of this is only named once in the main text. This occurs in Part Seven, when Aneirin Lewis, who 'worshipped his ancestors', is killed and 'sleeps in Arthur's lap'.[162] This would seem to make Arthur a

[157] Craig-y-Ddinas, Avalon, and the Eildons: Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Four, note 36, p. 198. Avalon is not necessarily English (it is a Welsh name), but it is most famously associated with Glastonbury.
[158] Jones, 'Myth of Arthur', in *Epoch*, pp. 216, 231. Original emphasis.
[159] Jones, *Parenthesis*, p. 89.
[160] Ibid.
[161] David Jones, *The Anathemata* (London: Faber, 1952): named in the text on pp. 55, 79, 160, and 198. Named in notes on pp. 79, 80, 164, 195, 197, 198, and 199.
[162] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Seven, p. 155.

positive, paternal link to one's cultural heritage.[163] However, the note cites Shakespeare's *Henry V* II. 3 as the source, and in that play the one who went to 'Arthur's bosom' is Falstaff, the comically vain and cowardly knight.[164] In addition, Lewis's respect for his ancestors makes him, according to the narrative voice, 'like a Chink' – a racist Army slang term that referred to Chinese labourers doing menial tasks. Arthur forms a bridge between the soldier and what he believes to be his cultural heritage, but the context suggests that this link naïvely idealises Arthur, and this connection to the past is not shared among the other soldiers who dismiss him as a 'Chink'. For Jones, Arthur is a figure who can unite different British people under a common mythology, but this does not mean that Arthur is a figure to whom everyone will respond favourably, or even think about at all. Part Four includes the following question:

> where's Pendragon
> where is his anointed face in
> all time of our necessity[165]

The sergeant-major is present, 'down in his deep dug-out', but Arthur is absent despite the legend of the sleeping king who will return at a moment of great need.[166] Jones acknowledges the tradition of mythological and redemptive figures, but also the literal absence of such figures at the Front.

Jones's use of Arthur and Malory has been criticised by some writers. Fussell argues that Jones attempts to raise the trenches to the same poetic level as 'the old matter of

---

[163] The idea that Arthur could act as a paternal, ancestral figure to soldiers is not unprecedented. A Welsh poem written during the American Civil War describes Arthur as 'our father' even in the fight against the South, though this is a work of propaganda by a civilian who did not fight in the war himself. The speaker urges soldiers to remember Arthur when striking 'the treacherous hosts of Virginia' with bayonets, and thereby equates the Welsh Arthur's fight against Anglo-Saxon oppression with the Union forces fighting the Confederacy. See Ionoron Glan Dwyryd, 'Baner yr Undeb' [Union Banner], *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad [The Friend from the Old Country]*, December 1861, quoted in Jerry Hunter, *Sons of Arthur, Children of Lincoln: Welsh Writing from the American Civil War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. 136-143.

[164] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Seven, note 4, p. 220. Shakespeare's line is itself an allusion to Lazarus and 'Abraham's bosom' (Luke XVI, 22-3, King James Version).

[165] Ibid., Part Five, p. 129.

[166] Ibid., p. 129; note 39, p. 217.

Britain', so that the war could be 'understood' using an historical, literary perspective.[167] For Fussell, however, 'the war will not be understood in traditional terms', and Jones's formula is 'wrong'; the First World War cannot be put into the same tradition as Arthur.[168] Elizabeth Ward refutes this interpretation, arguing that *In Parenthesis* does not seek to unify separate traditions, nor to align one set of experiences with another. Instead, rather than use Arthur and other mythological figures to rationalise the war, Jones may have used the war to rationalise his interest in Arthur and myth, collating disparate sources to make an intentionally chaotic whole.[169] Examples of this can be found in Jones's use of quotations from Malory. For example, Jones quotes Mordred's siege of London at the beginning of Part Six:

> And bade him be ready and stuff him and garnish him... and laid a mighty siege about... and threw many great engines… and shot great guns... and great purveyance was made on both parties.[170]

This paragraph appears to have one meaning and source, but it is comprised of five quotations from three sections of Malory. The ellipses fuse the lines together but also mark their separateness, as if Jones was constructing a dry stone wall of words, to use Larkin's simile. The three sources refer to battles led by Uther, Mordred, and Arthur respectively, and this combination describes a cycle in which a burst of mechanised action is placed between two descriptions of battle preparations. By blending three separate battles, Malory's writing can also describe the nature of trench warfare, and Arthur's battle forms one part of that description.

Jonathan Miles also argues against Fussell's judgement, citing Jones's differences from the medievalism of Morris and Tennyson, such as his focus on betrayal, fratricide,

---

[167] Fussell, *Memory*, p. 153.
[168] Ibid., pp. 153-4.
[169] Elizabeth Ward, *David Jones: Mythmaker* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p. 106. For an overview of critical responses to this issue, see Evelyn Cobley, *Representing War: Form and Ideology in First World War Narratives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 194-8.
[170] Jones, *Parenthesis*, Part Six, p. 135. Quotations from Malory, Caxton, I. 1., XXI. 2, XX. 12.

and waste, rather than 'chivalry' or knightly honour.[171] For Miles, Jones uses Arthur and the 'chivalric tradition' to emphasise how trench soldiers were 'one with a pattern in history'; to bring the heroic tradition down to the level of the Somme, rather than to elevate the war through the heroic diction used by Morris and Tennyson.[172] As Jones wrote in 1948, his own generation had 'been forced to live history as Tennyson's generation was not'.[173] Jones's essay 'Art in Relation to War' (1942-3) also expresses this idea: '[t]he battles are not "long ago" [...] We can guess, better than our immediate forebears, something of what a paid foot soldier at Crécy *felt* about a damp bow string and the heavy Picardy mud'.[174] The word 'felt' is significant: as *The Observer* wrote in its review of the poem, Jones restates the war 'not in terms of fact or fiction, but in the unalterable phrases of the spirit'.[175] Arthur is not in *In Parenthesis* to make the war part of Arthur's tradition, or to bring Arthur directly into the war, but to align traditions together to describe feelings and experience.

vii. Conclusion

In Robinson, Arthur is a type with a strong emphasis on his flawed humanity, and his perfection only exists as an unrealised potential, or else in the sense of being a perfect example of what leaders and men should not be. Jones's fragmented Arthur does not fit into either end of the perfect/normal scale. Jones does describe Arthur as a type in one address from 1953, when he talks about Arthur as an historical figure who takes on attributes of a Jungian archetype from the Welsh Collective Unconscious, and is later metamorphosed into the 'guise of a medieval king'. This, says Jones, is an example of

[171] Miles, 'King Arthur and the Somme', *Backgrounds*, pp. 78-96 (87).
[172] Ibid., pp. 85-7.
[173] Jones, 'The Arthurian Legend', in *Epoch*, pp. 202-11 (205). Originally published in *The Tablet*, 25 December 1948.
[174] Jones, 'Art', in *Gaul*, pp. 127-8. Original emphasis.
[175] Humbert Wolfe, 'The Soul in Dark Places', *Observer*, 27 June 1937, p. 10.

'prototype and type' becoming one, though Jones uses 'type' to mean historical type rather than Henry's 'perfect normal' representation.[176] Indeed, it would be an over-simplification to apply Henry's definition to Jones's Arthur, as Jones clearly considers Arthur to be a combination of different 'types' from various sources. This makes his depiction of Arthur unique among the works analysed in this thesis. As his writing shows, the figure of Arthur resists classification as defined by Henry's 'type' when an author attempts to capture the whole complexity of Arthur, not as a single character, but rather as an amalgamation formed from different sources and perspectives.

At the end of 'The Myth of Arthur' Jones writes, '[f]rom the machine-age […] Arthur may return from "fairie" in the least expected of guises'.[177] Arthur does not return in a new form in *In Parenthesis*, though his depiction as a complex, multi-layered, and fragmentary figure, in a modern war narrative, is a new version of an old tradition. In the same essay Jones outlines his approach to Arthur, and his approach to mythology in general: 'to conserve, to develop, to bring together [...] without dilution or any deleting, but rather by understanding and transubstantiating the material'.[178] A reviewer in *The Manchester Guardian* thought that this had been achieved in *In Parenthesis*: the 'legendary soldiers of the Middle Ages have been caught up without archaism into a plan of the most modern of wars'.[179] In 'Map of Themes in the Artist's Mind', a heavily annotated spider diagram depicting how Jones's mind works, Arthur is 'present in, but not central to, main primitive Welsh tradition' (see Appendix F, p. 248). Instead, he is referenced in many different areas, sometimes named (e.g. in a note on Nennius) and sometimes only implied

[176] Jones, 'Wales and the Crown', in *Epoch*, pp. 39-48 (45-6). First broadcast on 23 July 1953. Jones is following a similar historical approach to that used in James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) and Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) – two works referenced in Jones's notes – that argue that myths like the dying god and the Holy Grail are cultural phenomena, traceable from early pagan forms to later Christian iterations.
[177] Jones, 'Myth', p. 259.
[178] Ibid., p. 243.
[179] E.C.H., 'Warriors', *Manchester Guardian*, 9 July 1937, p. 7.

by association (e.g. in the entry on Malory). Likewise, he is present in, but not central to, *In Parenthesis*, and this enables him to be included in the context of the First World War without dilution or archaism – neither making the war seem medieval, nor reducing the Arthurian story to its most basic elements so that it might fit into the trenches. Nor is Arthur central in Robinson – Merlin, Gawaine, and Lancelot affect the plot more than Arthur does, and most of what readers learn about Arthur is through other characters' descriptions of him. The next chapter, however, turns to a writer who attempted to bring the figure of Arthur into a central focus, both in terms of his ideas and his narrative style.

Chapter V

'Centre of it all': Shaping Arthur in T.H. White

i. King Arthur and the Second World War

The following chapter analyses the Arthurian novels of T.H. White (1906–1964), first published in a complete collection in 1958 (with a fifth part published posthumously in 1977), but all written during the Second World War. Before analysing the texts, I will give an overview of how other writers incorporated the figure of Arthur into a Second World War context, by propelling Arthur into the 1940s through time travel, by referencing Arthur as an ideal that contemporary figures can imitate, or by establishing parallels between Arthur's story and the war against Germany. The trend is for writers to invoke Arthur as a symbolic ideal, rather than a human individual, and this analysis will put White's work in a literary context of Second World War Arthurian stories.

Norris J. Lacy notes how 'extraordinarily reluctant' writers have been to make the 'natural' connection between the desperate situation of the British in the Second World War, and the promise of Arthur's return to protect the country.[1] Lacy only finds two exceptions to this trend, both from the 1990s: Dennis Lee Anderson's *Arthur, King*, in which Arthur and Mordred are sent forward in time and fight each other in the Battle of Britain, and Donald Barthelme's *The King*, in which Arthur and all his court are sent forward in time to World War Two Britain. Arthurian texts written during the war generally

[1] Norris J. Lacy, 'King Arthur Goes to War', in *King Arthur's Modern Return*, ed. by Debra N. Mancoff (New York and London: Garland,1998), pp. 159-69 (159).

did not weave Arthur and contemporary events together so completely and obviously. In 1940, Robert Moore Williams' pulp fiction story 'Trouble in Avalon' transplanted Arthur and his knights from their medieval setting into World War Two, but they stand out from the other soldiers as oddities, preferring to use swords rather than 'foul' guns.[2] They are supernatural beings, fighting in numerous wars throughout time, resurrected by Merlin every time they die. Sightings of them in battle are dismissed as mass hallucinations, and only the protagonist, who has talked to Arthur, knows the real identity of the 'strange figure clad in ancient armour [...] wielding a heavy broadsword'.[3]

Arthur is also invoked as a ghostly figure, reappearing throughout history, in the seven-part BBC radio series *The Saviours* (1940-2), written by Clemence Dane.[4] This is a history of seven heroes who have saved Britain, all of whom are related to Arthur in some way. It begins with Merlin and continues with Arthur, then Robin Hood (who reminds Merlin of Arthur), the Earl of Essex (who is said to have Arthur's passion), Queen Elizabeth (a blood descendent of Arthur), Nelson (explicitly said to be a reincarnation of Arthur), and ends with the interment of the Unknown Warrior in 1920.[5] Arthur is not directly related to the Second World War by Dane, though the Saxons in Merlin and Arthur's stories are equated with the Nazis.[6] However, Dane did think of Arthur as a figure with contemporary relevance. By using Arthur as a point of comparison throughout time, running up to recent history, she promotes Arthur as a constant figure who could always return, and in the *Radio Times* preview, she wrote that '[i]f ever an Arthur were needed he is now'.[7] Note that she

[2] Russell Storm [Robert Moore Williams], 'Trouble in Avalon', *Fantastic Adventures*, 2.6 (June 1940), pp. 30-40 (35).
[3] Ibid., p. 40.
[4] Clemence Dane, *The Saviours: Seven Plays on One Theme* (London: Heinemann, 1942). Clemence Dane was the professional pseudonym of Winifred Ashton.
[5] The links between Arthur and the other saviours are reiterated in the last play: Dane, 'The Unknown Soldier', in *Saviours*, pp. 245-6.
[6] See Roger Simpson, *Radio Camelot: Arthurian Legends on the BBC, 1922-2005* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), p. 46. Before Arthur becomes king, 'Germans harry the towns': Dane, 'The Hope of Britain', in *Saviours*, p. 26.
[7] Dane, 'The Men Who Saved Our Land', *Radio Times* (22 November 1940), p. 5.

refers to 'an Arthur' rather than simply 'Arthur' – for Dane, Arthur is not a single human from a past time, but a symbolic figure who can be replicated repeatedly. In the preface to the published play-script, Dane states that all seven plays demonstrate 'how that prophecy [that Arthur will return] has been and will be fulfilled', and this is borne out in the text in the way she relates all the heroes back to Arthur.[8] As Merlin says of Nelson: 'Arthur has come again […] he passes and he comes again – again – again!', even if the form he returns in is not immediately recognisable.[9]

In the last play, broadcast on 11th November 1942, two women comment on a group of soldiers marching past their house in 1914. 'My Arthur's in this little lot', says one, who then discusses the soldier's mixed British heritage – he could have signed up with either the London Scottish or the West Kents – before repeatedly calling out his name.[10] The name 'Arthur' echoes into the next scene, when Merlin repeats it, saying 'Arthur! The name quivered in the air', and then asks how Arthur can continue to sleep through the war.[11] The soldier Arthur and King Arthur are not the same figure, but they share the same name and a mixed British heritage, connected by Merlin's narration. Later in the play, Arthur is more directly connected with the common solider when he returns as one of the narrators, and comments on conditions in the trenches, such as the extreme cold and the 'duckboard slippery with blood', as if he were there himself.[12] Arthur tells Merlin that he will 'come home' at the end of the war, lying 'unknown' at this point.[13] The 'Unknown Soldier', Dane's name for the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey, then takes over the narrative, emphasising that he is anonymous and could have come from any British locality.

[8] Dane, preface, *Saviours*, p. v.
[9] Dane, 'Remember Nelson', in *Saviours*, p. 239, originally broadcast on the Home Service, 19 October 1941.
[10] Dane, 'Soldier', in *Saviours*, p. 254.
[11] Ibid., p. 254.
[12] Ibid., p. 269.
[13] Ibid., p. 270.

The four queens historically present at the Unknown Warrior's interment in 1920 are thus related to the four queens (usually three queens) that take Arthur's body to Avalon.[14] Arthur's voice concludes the monologue, conflating the Unknown Soldier with the figure of Arthur, though the two retain their separate voices.

The Unknown Soldier is not literally the same figure as King Arthur in *The Saviours*: Arthur says the soldier will be himself 'or another one', the ambiguity highlighting how unimportant the specific identity of the physical body is.[15] The Unknown Soldier is a symbol for 'nearly three million men of the Empire'; the body is only a way to express that symbol.[16] The same point can be made about the figure of Arthur, as he is portrayed in *The Saviours*: Arthur is only one of the characters written about, but he is also, more importantly, an ideal saviour of Britain who can be symbolically connected to all the other so-called saviours of Britain, and used to situate the current conflict in a wider historical narrative. Indeed, Dane's Arthur is a presence that can be related to almost any hero, whether they are one of Dane's chosen 'saviours', or a common soldier of the First World War. Tennyson had rejected this malleable figuration of Arthur in 1873 – *Idylls* was not, he wrote, about that 'man-shaped' ghost that 'streams like a cloud' – but in Dane's series, Arthur acts as this kind of nebulous figure, breaking out from his historical period to inspire leaders and speak for common soldiers.[17]

The gap between monarchs and subjects had decreased since Tennyson – the last two chapters have analysed some attempts to connect Arthur with workers and soldiers – and this gap had also decreased since the First World War, as two examples from British kings' speeches illustrate. In 1911, George V spoke of the 'difficulties [that] lie before me

[14] Ibid., p. 272. The four queens present at the internment were Queen Mary, Queen Alexandra, the Queen of Spain, and the Queen of Norway.
[15] Ibid., p. 271.
[16] Ibid., p. 272.
[17] Tennyson, 'To the Queen', in *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J.M. Gray (London: Penguin, 1983), l. 40, p. 302

and my people'.[18] His subjects are referred to with the possessive, and distinguished from the king himself. In 1940, George VI spoke collectively, saying 'we are all in the front-line and danger together'.[19] The Unknown Warrior, in addition, was set 'among the kings', as the writing on his tomb states, despite having no personal status or known social class. Considering this, it makes sense for Dane to conflate Arthur with common soldiers, either through a shared narrative, as in the account of the Unknown Soldier, or simply by sharing a name with a marching soldier.

In the same year that *The Saviours* concluded on the radio, *King Arthur was a Gentleman* was playing in movie theatres.[20] Like Dane, the writers – Marriott Edgar and Val Guest – invoke Arthur not as a human historical figure, but as a symbolic ideal, in this case, of bravery and fighting prowess. The protagonist is Arthur King, a soldier who believes he has found Excalibur, and is inspired by the legend of King Arthur to act more bravely. Arthur King discovers that the sword is in fact a fake, but has nevertheless done good deeds with it, such as capturing Germans and rescuing his allies, which he would not have felt brave enough to do otherwise. When Arthur King throws the fake Excalibur away into a pond, a hand reaches out to clasp it, suggesting that though Arthur King is not a reincarnation of King Arthur, and his sword is not really Excalibur, by taking inspiration from the legend he has become an Arthur-like figure, sharing a narrative moment with the legendary king. As Kevin J. Harty writes, 'despite his name, Arthur King is not Arthur as King; he is rather Arthur as Everyman': the film invokes Arthur as a model of inspirational behaviour, which can be adopted by almost anyone to help them fight in the war.[21]

[18] [George V] 'Buckingham Palace, June 29, 1911' in F.A. Mackenzie, *King George V In His Own Words* (London: Benn, 1929), p. 15.
[19] [George VI], 'Christmas Day 1940', *King George VI to His Peoples 1936-1951: Selected Broadcasts and Speeches* (London: Murray, 1952), pp. 25-27 (26).
[20] *King Arthur Was a Gentleman*, dir. by Marcel Varnel (Gainsborough Pictures, 1942).
[21] Kevin J. Harty, 'King Arthur Goes to War (Singing, Dancing, and Cracking Jokes): Marcel Varnel's 1942 Film *King Arthur was a Gentleman*', *Arthuriana*, 14 (Winter 2004), 17-25 (p. 23).

As well as appearing in radio drama, film, and pulp fiction, Arthur also featured in comic books during the Second World War, the less established nature of these modern formats perhaps encouraging writers to experiment with the figure more than poets and novelists, who generally did not relate Arthur to the contemporary conflict. Sometimes Arthur is only referenced in another character's name and backstory. In 'Shining Knight' (from 1941), the hero, Sir Justin, wakes up in America during World War Two. Though Arthur is not sent forward in time with him, Justin is known as a knight of Arthur's court, and adopts the alias 'Justin Arthur' in his civilian life. In order to function as an effective hero against gun-wielding enemies, Sir Justin has a suit of armour that repels bullets, and a flying horse.[22] 'Shining Knight' is an example of Arthur being invoked by name in a World War Two context, and also shows how an Arthurian figure was modified to fit into a contemporary setting.

'The Sword' (1942-5) features a hero more closely related to King Arthur, though still changed to fit into the Second World War setting, and the format of comic book serialisation. Its protagonist is Arthur Lake, 'an ordinary boy of today', who is transformed into a hero with increased speed, strength, and toughness, every time he pulls Excalibur out from the stone.[23] This sword was found by Arthur Lake whilst on vacation in England, and his ability to draw the sword is dependent on his pureness of heart rather than his lineage.[24] Arthur Lake lives in the United States, where he thwarts the plans of Nazi agent Fay Morgana (employed directly by Hitler to disrupt American war production) alongside his two companions, based on Lancelot and Merlin.[25] The Arthurian connection waned as the

[22] 'The Shining Knight', in *Adventure Comics*, 66 (September 1941), 14-26 (p. 14).
[23] 'The Sword', in *Lightning Comics*, 3.1 (June 1942), 20-31 (p. 20).
[24] Arthur lake finds Excalibur in *Captain Courageous Comics*, 6 (March 1942), 12-21; the requirements for drawing the sword are established in *Lightning Comics*, 3.1 (June 1942), p. 27.
[25] Fay Morgana's motivation and relation to Hitler is revealed in *Super-Mystery Comics*, 4.1 (January 1944), 28-40. The Lancer is introduced in *Super-Mystery*, 3.3 (January 1943), 32-43, and Merlin in *Super-Mystery* 3.6 (October 1943), 28-40.

war progressed, however. Fay Morgana was replaced by a more generic evil genius in 1944, and Merlin disappeared in 1945, his absence unexplained.[26] In one of the last 'Sword' stories, from April 1945, Arthur Lake travels back in time and meets King Arthur. The story emphasises that Arthur Lake, rather than King Arthur, is the hero, implying that readers should venerate figures from the present instead of the past; as King Arthur tells Arthur Lake, 'if you have read of me, remember that much of it may have been only legend!'[27] Arthur Lake is as strong as the legendary King Arthur, fighting off bandits 'with the fury of the king himself', but also has the advantage of being a contemporary American fighting off the Nazis, rather than a mythical foreigner whose heroic acts may never have happened.[28]

The character was revived in 2010, with one notable change: he is no longer split between the ordinary Arthur Lake and his superhero identity; rather, he always appears in The Sword's chainmail, but is still called Arthur throughout, and at one point is addressed as 'my liege'.[29] The distancing of 'The Sword' from King Arthur is, therefore, a more prominent feature in his Second World War iteration, suggesting that the writers behind the 2010 Sword characterisation were more comfortable with Arthur as a famous royal figure than the more secretive or mysterious versions found in examples written during the Second World War. The reason for this difference is most likely related to authorial intention: with the exception of 'Trouble in Avalon', all the above examples from the war are concerned with patriotically inspiring large audiences for the war effort, and the idea that Arthur could

[26] The Genius is introduced in *Super-Mystery*, 4.4 (October 1944), 27-39; he replaces Fay Morgana in 4.5 (January 1945), 27-39.
[27] *Super-Mystery*, 4.6, 37.
[28] Ibid., p. 39.
[29] Jim Kruege, Alex Ross, and Edgar Salazar, *Project Superpowers: Chapter Two* (Runnemede, New Jersey: Dynamite, 2010), no pag.

be imitated by anyone is a more effective way to mobilise people than trying to make them believe in the fanciful return of a legendary figure.[30]

ii. Defining The Once and Future King

T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* (1958) is unlike the other examples of Arthurian literature written during the war, as the author depicts Arthur as both a human individual and a perfect ideal, conforming to Henry's definition of type. It is an amalgam of genres, characters, and tones, in four (or five, depending on the edition) constituent books that cover Arthur's life from childhood to his final battle.[31] Although it was not published as a whole until 1958, the parts were all written between 1937 and 1941. The first book, *The Sword in the Stone* (1938), was described by one reviewer as a 'fairytale for adults', and White himself was unsure whether it was 'for grown-ups or children'.[32] It is an adventure story and Bildungsroman influenced by John Masefield's *The Midnight Folk* (1927) and Richard Jefferies' *Wood Magic* (1881), in which Arthur (nick-named the Wart) is turned into various animals for educational purposes, by Merlyn, his tutor.[33] The book ends when the Wart is revealed to be King Arthur, having pulled the sword from the stone in the final chapter. Its sequel, *The Witch in the Wood* (1939) introduces the Orkney children, whose father, King Lot, rebels against Arthur.[34] The Orkney children's mother is Queen

[30] For further examples of literature that bring together the Second World War and Arthur, see Roger Simpson, 'King Arthur in World War Two Poetry: His Finest Hour?', *Arthuriana*, 13. 1 (Spring 2003), 66-91.
[31] T.H. White, *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: Voyager, 1996). Contains *Sword*, *Witch*, *Knight*, 'Candle' and *Merlyn.*
[32] T.H. White, *The Sword in the Stone* (London: Collins, 1938). Ralph Thompson, 'Book of the Times', *New York Times*, 2nd January 1939, p. 28. Letter from T.H. White to L. J. Pottes, 14th January 1938, in *T.H. White: Letters to a Friend: The Correspondence between T.H. White and L.J. Potts*, ed. by François Gallix (Gloucester: Sutton, 1984), pp. 86-7.
[33] Elisabeth Brewer lists the influences on White in *T.H. White's The Once and Future King* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), ch. 2, pp. 17-47 (27-31).
[34] T.H. White, *The Witch in the Wood* (London: Collin, 1940).

Morgause, who is also Arthur's half-sister, and mother of Mordred. Arthur is no longer the only focus, and chapters alternate between him and the Orkney family, establishing the importance of the Orkney brothers for the last book in the series, though a later revision expanded Arthur's chapters, fleshing out his presence in greater detail. *The Ill-Made Knight* (1940) focuses on Lancelot and his romance with Guenever, and Arthur is merely a background figure.[35] Part Four, 'The Candle in the Wind', is the tragedy of Arthur's downfall, begun by Mordred's exposure of Lancelot and Guenever's affair.[36] A fifth volume, *The Book of Merlyn*, brings Merlyn back from a self-imposed exile with Nimue, on the eve of Arthur's battle against Mordred.[37] Arthur visits his old tutor and a 'committee' of the animals from *Sword*, who are living in a badger sett. They discuss why humans go to war. For various reasons analysed below, it was not published in White's lifetime, and did not form the conclusion for *King* as published in 1958. Despite Arthur shifting in and out of narrative focus, White still describes him as 'centre of it all' at the end of *Merlyn*, and forms the books into a unity around Arthur.[38]

According to Susan Chapman, White's work has not received much critical attention because it is difficult to classify, often a pre-requisite for evaluation.[39] She argues that this feeling is caused by common reading practices that favour single genres or formats, rather than a lack of unity in the writing itself, and that *King*'s multiplicity of genres 'co-exist effectively'.[40] Chapman concludes that the work is 'unified by Arthur's character', though she does not consider that Arthur himself might be a riven figure.[41] Alan Lupack

[35] T.H. White, *The Ill-Made Knight* (London: Collins, 1941).
[36] T.H. White, 'The Candle in the Wind', in *King*. The title is not italicised because it was never published separately.
[37] T.H. White, *The Book of Merlyn*, in *King*.
[38] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 20, p. 809.
[39] Susan Elizabeth Chapman, 'A Study of the Genre of T.H. White's Arthurian Books' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, 1988), p. 3. Since this was written more critical work has appeared on White, most notably from Elisabeth Brewer and Kurth Sprague.
[40] Ibid., pp. 5-6.
[41] Ibid., p. 395.

also argues that *King* is a unified work, citing 'obvious structural devices employed to tie everything together': namely, an overarching structure in which the ageing of characters runs parallel to the increasingly mature and self-reflexive text, fusing all the separate elements into one 'artistic construction'.[42] White himself insisted on the unity of *King*, arguing that it must be published as 'an epic in one piece', because the last parts did not have 'a unity of their own' and could not be published separately.[43] The previous instalments were even re-written to match the new conclusion, which fitted on top of the other books 'like a hat'.[44] White also modelled his structure on *Morte Darthur*, which he considered to be another unified work (unlike Eugène Vinaver in 1929): the revised *Witch* ended with a new assertion, that the Arthurian 'narrative is a whole, and it deals with the reasons why the young man [Arthur] came to grief at the end'.[45] That is 'why Sir Thomas Malory called his very long book the Death of Arthur' – because even though 'nine-tenths of the story seem to be about jousting and quests', it is the 'Aristotelian and comprehensive tragedy' of Arthur's downfall that is at the centre.[46] In an unpublished introduction to *King*, written in 1939, White argued that the 'Aristotelian perfection' Malory created from disparate sources was one of the 'miracles of literature', and that in his own Arthurian work he 'respected' this tragic structure.[47] The next year (1940) White 'discovered' that Malory's 'central theme' was an 'attempt to find an antidote to war', and his own work would now find this antidote, clarifying Malory, but working within the tragic unified structure formed by *Morte Darthur*.[48]

---

[42] Alan Lupack, 'The Once and Future King: The Book That Grows Up', *Arthuriana*, 11.3 (Fall 2001), 103-114 (pp. 104-5).
[43] Letter from T.H. White to Billy Collins, 8th December 1941, in 'Trouble with Collins' (unpublished collection of letters between White and his publishers), T.S., 1940-3, no pag.
[44] Ibid.
[45] White, *Witch*, in *King*, pp. 334-5; Eugène Vinaver, *Malory*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), pp. 10-11.
[46] White, *Witch*, in *King*, pp. 334-5.
[47] 'Journal 1938-1939', 28th March 1939. A. Ms, no pag.
[48] Letter from T.H. White to L.J. Potts, 6th December 1940, *Letters to a Friend*, p. 120.

These two strands – Arthur's tragic downfall and the quest to abolish war – correspond to two sides of Arthur's figure explored in this thesis: he is both an individual character whose life and actions are at the centre of a tragic narrative, but also often a symbolic model used to signify some universal meaning, in this case an attempt to understand, and find a solution for, warfare. Unlike other critics, and White himself, this chapter does not impose a unified structure on *King*, nor emphasise running themes; instead, it explores the compositional process and development of Arthur, including what was rejected or rewritten in the final published version. Draft manuscripts, journal entries, and fragmentary notes, are all analysed in this chapter, using the T.H. White Papers at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas. By focusing on this process, the contradictions in Arthur's character and roles are made apparent, and a more comprehensive account of Arthur's split nature can be ascertained, which in White's version of the story hovers between perfect model and normal individual.

The publishing history of *King* is tabulated below for clarity:

Title:	**Date written:**	**Date published:**	**Notes:**
The Sword in the Stone *The Sword in the Stone* (American version)	1938 1939	1938 1939	Three sections of the American version were modified, on the request of the American Book of the Month club. The fight against the Anthropophagi was replaced by a less violent encounter with Morgan le Fay.
The Witch in the Wood	1939	1940	When *Witch* was included in *King*, it was largely rewritten (most of Morgause was taken out, replaced with more of Arthur) and renamed *The Queen of Air and Darkness*. It is referred to as *Witch* throughout this chapter for the sake of clarity.[49] White said it was his fourth draft.[50]

[49] In the first version twenty-nine chapters were on Orkney and just five on Arthur, but in the revised version six chapters are on Orkney and eight are on Arthur. One reason why this change occurred was to lessen the negative effect of 'that bloody bitch Morgause' in the story, whom White based on his own mother. See Letter to Garnett, February 3rd 1942, in *The White/Garnett Letters*, ed. by David Garnett (London: Cape, 1968), p. 86. Brewer describes how much White's mother figured in *Witch*, and how rewriting it allowed his negative feelings about her to be 'exorcised' (Brewer, *King*, ch. 3; pp. 54-7)

[50] See 'Diary 1939-41', 25th October 1940, A. Ms, no pag.

The Ill-Made Knight	1939-40	1940	Only small stylistic changes were made between this 1940 version and the final version in *King*, such as adding contractions in the dialogue: 'need not' changed for 'needn't', for example.
'The Candle in the Wind' (Play) 'The Candle in the Wind' (Prose)	1939 1940	1958 (in *The Once and Future King)*	The dramatic version was abandoned (Noel Coward advised White that it would be difficult to perform) and was turned into prose, with only minor changes. White still wanted the dramatic version performed up until the end of his life.[51]
The Book of Merlyn	1940-1	1977	Originally intended to end *King* as a five-book series, but for various reasons (discussed below) was left out and only published posthumously in 1977.
The Once and Future King (comprising *Sword*, *Witch*, *Knight*, and 'Candle')	1938-57	1958	Parts of *Merlyn* were incorporated into *Sword*, and *Witch* was re-written as *Queen*. *Knight* remained mostly the same, and 'Candle' was published for the first time in its prose form.
The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition (London: Voyager, 1996)		1996	Includes *Merlyn* with the other four volumes. The blurb claims that 'White himself always wished' for the five parts to be published together, even though this edition has chapters repeated in both *Sword* and *Merlyn* when White re-used the contents of the latter book, and *Merlyn* refers to incidents cut from the revised *Sword*.

White wanted to make Arthur seem realistically human, with complex personal feelings and desires, but the character also needed to function as a didactic tool, articulating the different viewpoints White wanted to dissect. The process of rewriting *King* often involved striking a balance between these different sides of the character. This chapter argues that White's Arthur is poised between human individual and perfect model in a more balanced way than in any other text analysed in this thesis, because White makes the split an integral part of Arthur's characterisation, and does not try to ignore it, or push Arthur towards one extreme or another, as other writers considered in this thesis have done. The way that White makes the split integral is by emphasising the character's 'centrality'.

[51] See François Gallix, *T.H. White: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), G7, p. 83

White 'had a good eye for the individual as well as the type', wrote Sylvia Townsend Warner in her biography (1967).[52] She is referring to White's paintings, but her comment applies equally well to his literary work, because as well as characterising Arthur as an individual, in *King* he belongs to a category of rulers, mostly acting in the way that White thinks rulers should act. Nor is that the only 'type' to which Arthur belongs. In sections of *Witch*, and throughout *Merlyn*, he also joins a category of characters whose function is to ask questions and enable the wise figure (in this case, Merlyn) to explain his theories: like Glaucon to Socrates, or Watson to Holmes.

'We shall have a regular king in that young candidate', says one character about Arthur when he is nick-named 'king of the Merlins' (at the time he is magically in the form of a Merlin falcon) before he has become king of England.[53] The contrast between 'regular' and 'king' summarises Arthur's paradoxical dual nature in White, as in the other texts analysed in this thesis. Arthur is a model of English kingship and justice because of his fame and title – he walks into a room in *Merlyn* and 'it was England who came in', as if he were a national symbol rather than a human – but he is also 'typical' in a different sense, by being so 'regular' or normal, so that in the same book he is described as 'perhaps [...] a rather dim old gentleman, who would have been better off at Cranford or at Badger's Green, arranging for the village cricket and the choir treat'.[54] What is special about White's Arthur is where he is situated in relation to the other characters, and to the author's own agenda. As well as being 'centre of it all', Arthur's court is also 'centre of the new world'.[55] Centrality conveys importance in the work, but it also implies a split nature, caused by being in the middle of, or in between, extremes. This is most starkly illustrated in *Merlyn*,

[52] Sylvia Townsend Warner, *T.H. White: A Biography* (London: Cape, 1967), p. 205.
[53] *Sword*, ch. 8, p. 139.
[54] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 11, p. 754.
[55] Ibid., ch. 20, p. 809; *Knight*, ch. 26, p. 173.

when Arthur realises that, all his life, 'Merlyn had been behind him – that very ruthless old believer – and man in front: ferocious, stupid, unpolitical'.[56] In this example, Arthur is centrally placed between Merlyn's philosophical idealism and the practicalities of ruling a 'stupid' people, neither sharing their characteristics nor being totally distinct from them. This centrality (and other similar ways that Arthur is 'central' in White's work) mirrors Arthur's own division, between perfect model and normal humanity.

Michel Foucault argued that the Author is a mode of discourse invented to impose a 'thrifty' order of meaning and unity on a work, and it distracts critics from asking more important questions than 'who is speaking?'[57] For *King*, however, 'who is speaking?' is an integral question for understanding the text, because in this case Arthur and Author are inexorably linked. Before settling on *The Once and Future King* for a title, White referred to his work simply as 'Arthur', and in 1939, he wrote in his journal that 'if I contrive to finish Arthur at all, I will have given all my self in giving self to him'.[58] This demonstrates both how personal White considered the work to be, and how far he considered *King* to be identified with Arthur, even referring to the work using a male pronoun. In the following year, White wrote that 'the only hope for Arthur is for me to survive the war and write in peace', making Arthur's fictional existence dependent on White being alive to write about him.[59] Arthur is also aligned with the reader, coming to understand Merlyn's theories on war, which are the same as White's, as he formulated them in his journals. These are discussed from *Sword* to 'Candle', but are most fully outlined in *Merlyn*. Arthur is therefore 'centre of it all', not just in terms of plot, but in his relation to author and reader.

---

[56] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 11, p. 755.
[57] Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' , trans. Josué v. Harari, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 101-20
[58] Qtd in Warner, *Biography*, pp. 182-3.
[59] 'Diary 1941-2', 20th June 1940, A. Ms, no pag. All citations to typescript and autograph manuscripts are taken from the T.H. White papers at the Harry Ransome Center, Texas.

iii. Arthur's Character

Before White abandoned *Merlyn*, he planned to re-write it, and one of the concerns he was going to address was that 'Arthur's character and age and state of mind are too dim in Book 5.'[60] This was also pointed out in a reader's report from White's publisher, Billy Collins: 'Arthur himself, who is admirable as a little boy in THE SWORD IN THE STONE, never really grows up at all. He remains a puzzled, very good-natured, chivalrous, stupid, pre-adult'.[61] White intended to address the 'objection that Arthur does not grow into an adult' by 're-writing the last book', but the fact that he later abandoned *Merlyn* suggests that the requirement for Arthur to become mature and intelligent could not be reconciled with his function in the book: to be turned into various animals to illustrate Merlyn's points, and then to be uncomprehending enough in the ensuing debate that readers learn alongside him.[62] The form that *Merlyn* takes is a philosophical dialogue, each point debated and set forth plainly for the benefit of Arthur, and, through him, the reader. White's characterisation of Arthur consistently supports this format: his Arthur is 'only a simple and affectionate man' (*Knight*); one who had been 'thinking all the time' ('Candle'); and 'never clever, but [...] patient' (*Merlyn*).[63] This 'simplicity' moulds Arthur's purpose in *Merlyn*: to be made to think alongside author and reader.

Arthur has to perform other narrative roles in *King*, besides thinking through ideas. Chapter Six of *Knight* demonstrates how complicated Arthur's role could be, and how difficult it was for White to convey the characterisation he wanted. In this chapter, Lancelot angrily tells Arthur that he is going away on a quest, and Arthur lets him go. Lancelot only

[60] T.H. White, '[The Once and Future King]. Book Two: The Queen of Air and Darkness', n.d., TMs with A Revisions and printed pages, 309pp in two notebooks. The notes are written on the inside covers.
[61] Letter from Billy Collins to T.H. White, 23rd December 1941, in 'Trouble with Collins', T.S., no pag. Original emphasis.
[62] Letter from T.H. White to [Jonathan] Cape, 27th May 1942, in 'Collins', T.S., no pag.
[63] *Knight*, ch. 16, pp. 114-5; 'Candle', in *King*, p. 602; Merlyn, in *King*, ch. 17, p. 784.

wants to leave in 'an attempt to escape from Guenever', who he is secretly in love with.[64] Arthur's role in the scene is to a) establish that Lancelot wants to leave the court; b) establish that this is an odd thing for him to do, so that it can be clear to readers that he is only leaving to escape from Guenever; whilst being either c) genuinely unaware of Lancelot's reasons, or d) wilfully ignorant. If he is pretending to be ignorant then he might be acting kindly to spare Guenever and Lancelot the pain of being publicly exposed, or acting for political reasons to avoid disorder, or both. Arthur asks '"What do you mean, you ought to go away?"' to Lancelot, fulfilling functions a) and b), and then saying '"You needn't get excited about it. If you want to go, of course you can do whatever you like"'.[65] White noted a concern about Arthur, prompted by this exchange: '[i]t's Arthur's dialogue that worries me. He must have been a strong man – even if he was a mild one. He was more than an Air Commodore – a genius? Of course many geniuses <u>are</u> mild mannered men – and yet...'[66]

White's concern is that Arthur's dialogue does not convey Arthur's character, which he thinks should have mildness but also strength in some form. Clearly he thinks that Arthur should have more power and control than an 'Air Commodore', which is the most junior Air Officer rank in the RAF, sometimes only given as an honorary position; Churchill was made one in 1939. Yet it is hard to show that Arthur is more than this when he does not exercise power or control over the matter of Lancelot and Guinevere's affair. Perhaps, White supposes, Arthur is strong in an intellectual way instead: by being a 'genius', and knowing Lancelot's true intentions, but deliberately ignoring them. Arthur

[64] *Knight*, ch. 7, p. 47.
[65] *Knight*, ch. 6, pp. 45-6.
[66] White's personal copy of *Knight* (London: Collins, 1941) at the H.R.C., with autographed notes. The note is found on the reversed side of the front cover. It does not have a page reference next to it, but it comes between notes for pp. 42-3 and p. 49, which is where the conversation between Arthur and Lancelot is found. It is therefore likely that White was prompted by that exchange to write down his concerns about Arthur.

could be both a genius and a mild man, but the sentence trails off in uncertainty, and White never explicitly states how much Arthur knows about Lancelot and Guenever.[67] White was not trying to define Arthur in this note, but working out how to balance the character between appearing strong and acting mildly. The uncertain, self-revising quality of his narrative, both within and between its various iterations, makes 'and yet…' a perfect miniature of his approach.

White also wanted to balance the narrative focus on the public and private sides of Arthur, rather than emphasise one over the other. Elisabeth Brewer regards Arthur in *Sword* as 'too young to have much individuality' and therefore 'fairly typical', but argues that by 'Candle', White has become more interested in Arthur as a private individual.[68] Brewer cites the scene when Arthur watches Guenever's planned execution, which adds 'the reactions of Arthur as a private person, which Malory does not represent'.[69] What Brewer does not engage with, however, is the importance of Arthur's public side conflicting with his private role, both in that scene and throughout White's work.

The private and public sides of Arthur are portrayed simultaneously in Chapter Eight, when Guenever is due to be executed. For most of the scene, Arthur is referred to as 'the King' by the narrator, though twice he becomes 'the old man', when he asks '"[w]hat is right?"' and when he proposes to Gawaine that they should pray, suggesting that his more

[67] In the play version of 'Candle', written as a first draft of the prose, Arthur walks in the background whilst Lancelot and Guenever are talking, 'without eavesdropping for a moment'. This implies purposeful ignorance, and in the prose version, Mordred believes that Arthur 'doesn't want to hear' about Guenever and Lancelot's relationship. Later in 'Candle', it is stated that Arthur 'was fighting for her [Guenever], *perhaps* for all of them' when he tries to prevent Mordred raising the subject of the affair (my emphasis). 'Candle' includes the possibility that Arthur is more aware of the affair than he seems to be in *Knight*, but White does not explicitly state what Arthur's position or knowledge is. This idea is also found in Malory, who refers to Arthur having a 'demynge' that Guenever and Lancelot were unfaithful, but choosing not to 'here of hit' because he loves Lancelot too much. See T.H. White, 'The Candle in the Wind [Play]', Sc. 2, p. 14; 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 1, p. 563; 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 5, p. 604; Syr Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: The Original Edition of William Caxton*, ed. by H. Oskar Sommer, 3 vols (London: Nutt, 1889-91), I, 20. 2, p. 799.
[68] Brewer, *King*, pp. 141; 115, 120.
[69] Ibid., p. 115.

private identity as an elderly and uncertain man is flickering behind his more public identity as the king.[70] Arthur *qua* king must observe Guenever's execution from a window overlooking the square, for 'unless he was present at the execution it would not be a legal one'.[71] In order to do this, Arthur and Gawaine repress their personal emotions, watching 'like people who must not feel'.[72] Mordred enters the room and tells them that the foot soldiers were killed during Lancelot's rescue. Gawaine turns 'like a mechanism', and Arthur has a 'face of stone' in response to this news.[73] This unfeeling characterisation makes Arthur and Gawaine seem like non-human automatons, but in the same scene Arthur also expresses personal emotions, when he wonders whether he should wave to Guenever when she is rescued, as 'it would be nice'. [74] Ultimately, he decides that 'it would not be right'.[75] In the previously-written dramatic version, and in the typescript of the first draft, Arthur decides that it would not be 'kingly', but White later crossed this out and wrote in 'right'.[76] The original word suggests that kingship is a role Arthur performs, and that a division exists between what he wants to do as a private individual – wave to his wife – and what he ought to do as king. The revised word 'right' reveals a contrast in Arthur's character as well. 'Right' can mean morally correct as well as publicly appropriate, and it implies that Arthur is thinking of his personal duty as well as his public image. 'I have tried to do my duty', he tells Gawaine after overseeing the fullest precautions to ensure that Guenever is executed.[77] To wave at his wife when she escapes would trivialise his serious regard for his own laws. The king is relieved that she escapes execution – he receives the

[70] 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 8, pp. 629 and 632.
[71] Ibid., p. 631.
[72] Ibid..
[73] Ibid. pp. 636-7.
[74] Ibid., p. 635.
[75] Ibid.
[76] T.H. White, 'The Candle in the Wind [Play]', Sc. 6, p. 65, A. Ms, p. 41, T.S.; [T.H. White], 'Book Four: The Candle in the Wind', ch. 8, p. 112, T.S.
[77] Candle', in *King*, ch. 8, p. 629.

news 'joyfully' – but he must repress his feelings, both publicly (based on what people see of him) and according to his private commitment to justice. In the revised version, the tension is therefore intensified: it is generated not only by the conflict between public and private personae, but also between how Arthur feels, and the manner in which he lives both publicly and privately. At other points in *King*, Arthur only seems divided between his public duty as king, and his personal feelings as a private man. In Chapter Five, Arthur explains the justice system to Mordred, and how he should prove that Guenever is unfaithful, according to his kingly duty to uphold justice, but at the end of the chapter he speaks momentarily as 'a private person', expressing his wish that Lancelot will kill Mordred in self-defence.[78]

White also depicts a different Arthur from Malory, though he still refers to Malory as a basis for his characterisation. 'For the King, at least this is how Malory interprets him, was the patron saint of chivalry [...] As Malory pictures him, Arthur of England was the champion of a civilisation'.[79] Arthur is depicted 'as he was' at the end of 'Candle': not as 'a hero of romance, but a plain man who had done his best – not a leader of chivalry, but the pupil who had tried to be faithful to his curious master [...] not Arthur of England, but a lonely old gentleman'.[80] The concept of Arthur as 'not a leader' is established in the first book, where Wart is described as 'a born follower' and 'a hero-worshipper'.[81] This reverses the 'hero of romance' that Arthur had become, both in literary terms outside White's work, and also in the novels which followed in White's sequence. By the third book, the young knights of Arthur's court worship the king, and 'the sight of Arthur [...] was like seeing the idea of Royalty'.[82] White presents Arthur as a 'hero of romance', and 'an idea' at a

[78] Ibid., ch. 5, p. 608
[79] Ibid., ch. 3, p. 579.
[80] Ibid., ch. 5, p. 602.
[81] *Sword*, ch. 1, p. 14.
[82] *Knight*, ch. 25, pp. 165-6.

superficial level only, also portraying his more individualised human characteristics. For friend and writer John Wyllie, it was important that both viewpoints of Arthur should be presented; in the notes he provided for White, he wrote that Arthur 'can be kind and gentle and, even, not very clever - but he must be a King'.[83]

Arthur is furthermore torn between being a legendary king and what White called being a 'real' character. The genesis of *King* occurred in 1936, when White re-read Malory's *Morte Darthur* and discovered that 'the characters were real [...] Arthur, Lancelot, and even Galahad were really glorious people – not pre-Raphaelite prigs'.[84] White makes a similar comment in 'Candle': '[a]n observer of the present day, who knew the Arthurian legend only from Tennyson and people of that sort, would have been startled to see that the famous lovers [Guinevere and Lancelot] were past their prime'.[85] For White, Tennyson and 'people of that sort' – presumably most other Victorians, including the Pre-Raphaelites – idealised the Arthurian characters too much, making them models that should be copied, and who priggishly wanted to be imitated, rather than more 'real' complex human individuals who could age and have moral defects. Having psychological depth was another way White thought figures could seem real. In a journal entry from 1941, he wrote that Henry II was 'a very real person' because he was 'psychologically understandable', and was 'like Arthur' in this respect.[86]

More generally, individual personality makes things seem real for White. In his children's story *Mistress Masham's Repose* (1946), the six-inch Lilliputians of *Gulliver's Travels* are referred to as 'real ideas' by the narrator, as contrasted with the thoughts of The Governess who only thinks of money and power.[87] In his adventure story *The Master*

[83] [John Wyllie], '[Queries]', point 67, p. 5. Original emphasis.
[84] Letter from T.H. White to L.J. Potts, 14th January 1938, *Friend*, pp. 86-8 (86).
[85] 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 3, p. 574.
[86] In journal entry, June 24 1941, qtd in Brewer, p. 205.
[87] T.H. White, *Mistress Masham's Repose* (New York: Putman, 1946), ch. 13, p. 112

(1957), the star called Arcturus is 'real' for the children who look up at the night sky, 'because they had been told that it had the same name as King Arthur in Sir Thomas Malory', unlike the other 'random ones'.[88] The Lilliputians and Arcturus are called 'real' because they are both related to individual personalities. One of the difficulties for White was creating Arthur's individual personality – what makes him 'real' – whilst covering the final parts of the Arthurian story, in which Arthur must act as a king more than a private man who has feelings and personal characteristics, overseeing justice and leading armies, and ultimately becoming a legendary figure after his journey to Avalon.

In 1940, White wrote about his plans for the last two books in his Arthurian series, asserting that '[Arthur] Pendragon can still be saved'.[89] Two points can be drawn from this statement. First, even though, according to the conventions of the legend, Arthur's Round Table must fall to civil war, ideas associated with the Table could have topical relevance and be 'saved' for contemporary use, in order to promote peace – an idea that is discussed at the end of this chapter. Secondly, 'Pendragon can still be saved' might refer to Arthur's individual character being 'saved' from becoming a mere figure of legend at the end of the story, when he fights in his famous battle and ultimately sails off to Avalon. By the end of 'Candle', Arthur is acting as a legendary king more than a private individual, referring to himself simply as 'the King', and asking Malory, who has appeared as a character, to narrate his story as if he has already become part of established legend.[90] When Malory leaves, Arthur as a private man returns, but only in a broken, utterly dejected form. The 1958 version later incorporated parts of *Merlyn* for the conclusion, and the hope of 'better

[88] T.H. White, *The Master: An Adventure Story* (London: Cape, 1956), ch. 15, p. 122.
[89] See Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Afterword', *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: Voyager, 1996), p. 820. Kurth Sprague argues that White is actually referring to himself rather than Arthur in this comment – that by working on *King* he might justify his absence from the war and so 'save' himself morally. See Kurth Sprague, *T.H. White's Troubled Heart: Women in the Once and Future King* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), pp. 151-2.
[90] 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 14, pp. 691-5.

days' when Arthur would return, but the earlier draft only describes Arthur 'drained of his last effort', weeping silently, paralysed by the grief of fighting his son and losing his friends in a civil war. [91]

In *Merlyn*, the wizard gives Arthur a 'brain tonic', and it is like trying 'to revive a drowned man with artificial respiration, who was nearly too far gone'.[92] Once the treatment is administered, Arthur notices all the items in the tent he is in, as if for the first time. His observations ('"look at that falcon's beak: it has a tooth in it like a saw!'") are closer to those of his younger self in the earlier books, particularly *Sword*, as White melds his portrayal of Arthur as a young boy with his established role as a king.[93] For Elisabeth Brewer, White 'individualise[d]' Arthur by giving him a leading trait – kindness – in an attempt 'to reveal to the reader the "real people" within the types that he found them to be'.[94] This trait of kindness reappears in *Merlyn*, when Arthur notices that he has signed hanging orders for criminals and asks 'who has betrayed us into hanging people?'[95] The surprise and regret contrast with his earlier actions, upholding justice by ordering the execution of Guenever. It also sets him apart from other versions of Arthur, such as the controlling strategist found in E.A. Robinson and suggested in some of David Jones's works, or the *dux bellorum* of his earlier appearances in chronicle tradition. However, this kind personality, and the idea that Arthur is a 'real' person, also conflicts with another narrative role performed by Arthur in *King*, and especially *Merlyn*, when he is also a mouthpiece who voices White's views. In Robinson, Guinevere speaks of 'the King's move' causing 'one more magnificent waste of nameless pawns', but in White, it is Arthur

[91] [T.H. White], 'Book Four: The Candle in the Wind', T.S. with A. revisions, ch. 14, p. 200.
[92] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 2, p. 708.
[93] Ibid., ch. 3, p. 714.
[94] Brewer, in *King*, p. 208.
[95] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 3, p. 713.

who is moved 'like a piece of chess' by Merlyn, in the wizard's attempt to explain war through Arthur's example.[96]

In *Merlyn*, Arthur complains that he 'never had a life' of his own, accusing the wizard of using him to test the ferocity of humans.[97] His Round Table is described by Merlyn as 'an experiment' to see if such an organisation could help resolve the need for conflict and war, but for Arthur it has been his life's work.[98] In 1959, a reporter asked White 'why are you writing about Arthur?' and he replied: 'because my grandfather was a judge; a very upright, just, good old man, who believed in right and wrong, and he had these standards of value which King Arthur and [Queen] Victoria and good people have'.[99] White's characterisation of Arthur oscillates between one side, in which he makes Arthur an ideal of goodness and justice who is used as a model in Merlyn's social experiment, and another side, in which he is a human individual who wants a life of his own.

White's Arthur is caught between different forces as well: he refuses to condemn individual sides in the conflict between the sons of Lot and Pellinore, or Mordred and Lancelot. In *Merlyn*, he stands between two armies of ants, 'ready to oppose their passage with his life', mirroring the stance he later takes between the two armies of men, when he returns to confront Mordred.[100] Positioning Arthur in between various ideas and forces is another way to demonstrate that the character is 'centre of it all', and mirrors the way Arthur is split between perfect model and normal human. The following section analyses how Arthur is used to think through the concepts of war and chivalry, in this central position, as well as work through White's personal anxieties about the Second World War.

---

[96] E.A. Robinson, *Lancelot*, in *Arthurian Poets: Edwin Arlington Robinson* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), p. 135-6; *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 17, p. 784, ch. 2, p. 709.
[97] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 17, pp. 783-4.
[98] Ibid., ch. 2, p. 709.
[99] Robert Robinson and T.H. White, *Monitor: TH White in Alderney*, filmed interview for BBC Television, 13 September 1959, 11m 50s – 12m 15s.
[100] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 9, p. 748; ch. 20, p. 805.

iv. Analysing War and Chivalry with Arthur

For Brewer, White's 'horror at the carnage of World War II inevitably affected his view of the [Arthurian] past', and one reviewer contrasted the 1958 edition of *Sword* with the 'flippancy' of the 1939 edition, considering it to have been rewritten by one who remembered 'the gas-chambers of Belsen'.[101] *Sword* was no more flippant in 1939 than it was in 1958, however, and White was more affected by his anxieties and guilt about not fighting than he was about the 'carnage' of the battles. In particular, White's concerns regarding pacifism and whether he should sign up to serve were diverted into his work, which he used as a justification for staying out of battle, having retreated to Ireland in 1939. Later that year he decided to 'make civilisation' with 'Arthur', rather than 'fight for' civilisation in the war.[102] In 1941, after the five books were written, White hoped 'desperately' that he had helped the war effort, 'or at least the next peace effort', with *King* and the last two books especially.[103] *King* therefore helped to assuage White's guilt for not fighting or helping more directly, but it also encouraged him to apply for the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, an application that was ultimately rejected. In his journal he reflected on the reason for wanting to return to England, as he would have been required to do had his application been successful, concluding that '[t]he book itself [*King*], particularly Book 2, Chapter 5, and Book 5, Chapter 18, is my reason for going back [...] If I had not written and believed these last two chapters, I should not have needed to go'.[104] The allusion to Book 5 Chapter 18 is plain to understand: Arthur has decided not to return

[101] Brewer, in *King*, p. 206; 'Arthurian Achievement', *Times Literary Supplement*, April 25 1958, p. 224.
[102] Journal entry, September 21 1939, qtd in Brewer, *King*, p. 9.
[103] Undated letter to Garnett, between September and October 1941, in *Garnett*, pp. 99-100 (100).
[104] Journal entry, October 24 1941, qtd in Sprague, *Troubled*, p. 170.

to battle, and leaves the badger sett with the hedgehog. Once outside, the two climb a 'mountain' to see England spread out before them. This corresponds to other moments when leaders survey their kingdoms from high places, the most prominent example being Christ seeing the world from a mountain during the Temptation in Matthew 4:1-11. Arthur realises he is part of the same tradition as Jesus: of martyrs who are killed because they see the truth.[105] He decides to return to the badger's sett, and thence to battle, because of 'pity of the world' and his love of England and its people.[106] By citing this scene as a reason for going to war, White reveals how closely his own anxieties and situation had bled into Arthur's story. White placed the character under the same pressures that he was under, in an experiment to see what Arthur, his paragon of justice, would do.

When Sylvia Townsend Warner discussed White's letter, she only quoted 'Book 5 Chapter 18' as the reason for White wanting to return to the war – perhaps because Book 2, Chapter 5 has a more obscure message than the other passage.[107] In this chapter, the Irish St Toirdealbhach voices his disgust at war, before two 'Sassenachs' arrive in Orkney, unaware that 'England was at war with Orkney'.[108] The initial hostility that the villagers show the English 'invaders' reflects the distrust that White experienced from Irish villagers during the war.[109] The chapter may, therefore, express White's eagerness to return to a more welcoming country. The more likely reason is found in a story that St Toirdealbhach tells, concerning an Irish king who runs out into a storm with his sword 'in righteous passion' caused by learning about the Crucifixion, and dies from a rupture in his brain due to an old lodged bullet, a 'brain-ball'. '"He was trying to do good"', says Gareth, naïvely echoing

[105] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 18, pp. 788-9.
[106] Ibid. Tolkien's Arthur is also motivated to fight for 'pity' and 'love of his land': J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fall of Arthur*, ed. by Christopher Tolkien (London: HaperCollins, 2013), V, ll. 37-8, p. 56. Originally written in the 1930s.
[107] Warner, *Biography*, p. 183.
[108] *Witch*, in *King*, ch. 5, p. 259. At this time the passage had been revised as it appears in *King*.
[109] See Sprague, *Troubled*, p. 150.

the sentiments of Arthur when considering all the people who had gone to war: they 'had meant well'.[110] The apparently pointless death is given significance by Gareth's remarks, and Arthur's later observation. 'It was chivalrous?' says Gareth. The example of doing good and acting chivalrously, despite danger, may have inspired White to try and enlist in the armed forces. The question mark at the end of Gareth's statement highlights how unstable that word is in *King*, however, and hints at White's own uncertainties about chivalry. White works through his uncertainties through the character of Arthur, by showing Arthur's discussions about different models.

When Merlyn tells Arthur the history of Arthurian literature in *Merlyn*, he includes White, 'who thought that we represented the ideas of chivalry'.[111] The plural is significant, as White explores different models of chivalry, which relate to medieval ideas of warfare. In *Witch*, various definitions of chivalry are given, all negative. For Merlyn, chivalry means 'being rich enough to have a castle and a suit of armour, and then, when you have them, you make the Saxon people do what you like'.[112] For the young Gareth, hunting a unicorn seems 'chivalrous', but it turns into a horrible, bloody endeavour, written to set up a later scene in which Agravaine murders his own mother.[113] Finally, King Lot describes Arthur attacking the nobles, rather than the foot-soldiers, as 'unchivalrous'.[114] According to Brewer, White 'detested the very idea of chivalry', though she uses the singular 'idea' rather than the 'ideas' that White referred to. Whilst one idea of chivalry is bound to a tradition of oppression and brutality, there are other forms of chivalry in *King* as well. Womack identifies three types of chivalry in the work – Old Chivalry, Arthur's Chivalry,

[110] *Witch*, in *King*, ch. 5, pp. 252-3; 'Candle', *King*, ch. 19, p.p. 788-9. The story about the Irish king is based on the legend of Conchobar. See Kuno Meyer, *The Death-Tales of the Heroes of Ulster*, Series: Royal Irish Academy Todd Lecture, 14 (Dublin: Figgis; London: Norgate, 1906), pp. 2-21.
[111] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 1, p. 702.
[112] *Witch*, ch. 3, p. 32.
[113] Ibid., ch. 1, p. 93. See letter to Garnett, September 14 1941, *Garnett*, pp. 96-7 (97).
[114] *Witch*, in *King*, ch. 12, p. 320.

and New Chivalry.[115] The first of these is the type that Lot practises, summarised by the phrase 'Might is Right'. Arthur's version of chivalry is epitomised in the Round Table, designed to re-route Might into Right, by diverting knightly force into good causes.[116] It is first described by the Wart in *Sword*, when he thinks that knights are 'bound by their vows to help people in distress'.[117] Lastly, 'New Chivalry' is a more theoretical stage discussed by Merlyn's committee of animals. It is not based on people's reputation or on violence, and requires everyone to have a similar education to Arthur, which Womack calls 'individualistic pacifism'.[118] It is expressed in the last page of *Merlyn*, in which White hopes that Arthur and the committee will return 'when not only England but the world has need of them [...] and then, perhaps, they will give us happiness in the world once more and chivalry'.[119] Arthur's form of chivalry is a central stage between 'old' and 'new'.

White also depicts different types of warfare in *King*, and again Arthur enables White to analyse the different forms war might take. In *Witch*, Gareth describes war as a 'gentleman's occupation [...] like hunting'.[120] The large armies are assembled for 'scenic purposes' – like the display at Eglinton – and 'the poor kerns', not the mounted nobles, are the ones who are killed.[121] Lot's war is related to the First World War; both are called 'the war to end war', and Lot inters an Unknown Warrior.[122] Arthur fights in this war against Lot, but he does not act as a 'gentleman' by letting the foot soldiers do all the fighting, as Lot does. Instead, Arthur 'pressed on with his cavalry against the kings themselves'. [123] These kings tactically retreat, and use foot soldiers as infantry screens, whom Arthur

[115] Carol Anne Womack, 'Chivalric Values as an Educative Force in *The Once and Future King*', in *Critical Essays on T.H. White, English Writer, 1906-1964*, ed. by Gill Davies, David Malcolm, and John Simons (Lewiston; Lampeter: Mellen, 2008), pp. 55-70 (55-6).
[116] First outlined in *Witch*, ch. 7, pp. 68-9.
[117] *Sword*, ch. 2, p. 26
[118] Womack, 'Chivalric', pp. 55-70 (67).
[119] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 20, p. 812.
[120] *Witch*, ch. 16, p. 133.
[121] *Witch*, in *King*, ch. 12, pp. 316-7.
[122] See *Witch*, ch. 27, p. 229. 'War to end war' quotes H.G. Wells's title for the First World War.
[123] *Witch*, in *King*, ch. 12, p. 320.

purposely ignores. Arthur 'ought to have charged this screen of terrified men', according to the rules of gentleman's warfare that Lot follows, but instead he only attacks the nobles. This removes the physical and metaphorical distance that other kings, such as Lot, have from their men. Arthur is again placed 'centrally'– neither distanced from his fighters like Lot, but not one of the foot soldiers either, unlike Merlyn, who joins the footmen.[124] Arthur's ideas only percolate to the lower ranks:

> Something of the young man's [Arthur's] vision had penetrated to his captains and soldiers. Something of the new ideal of the Round Table which was to be born in pain, something about doing a hateful and dangerous action for the sake of decency.[125]

The language is vague – only 'something' is understood by the soldiers, and only 'something' of the idea is expressed to readers. The next section will demonstrate that this vague language is symptomatic of a wider strategy in the final version of *King*, to make ideas available without brazenly lecturing readers about them, as happens in *Merlyn*, and thus without trying to force readers into understanding. This approach, which balances the narrative between being overly didactic and having no relevant message for contemporary audiences, was developed after failed experiments with Arthur's character and role in *Merlyn.*

v. Arthur and Didacticism

In *King*, the relationship between Arthur, his fictional subjects, and his readers, is not unidirectional. 'When the kings are bullies who believe in force, the people are bullies too', explains Arthur to Lancelot in 'Candle', but his description of a king also reveals a paradox:

[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., ch. 12, p. 319.

'a king is the head of his people, and he must stand as an example to them, and do as they wish'.[126] This is a more democratic version of kingship than ones offered by previous authors studied in this thesis, expanding the ideas of Tennyson (in which the king is 'head' of all the 'princedoms') and E.A. Robinson (in which Arthur should be an 'example' for the world) by adding a level of responsibility for kings to act as the people wish.[127] The paradox is that the king is an example to follow but must also follow the wishes of the people to whom he is an example; White's Arthur is raised to be a model of kingship through Merlyn's education in *Sword* and *Witch*, but in order to be a model for readers he must also conform to the reader's expectations of how a king should act. It is, furthermore, important that these expectations should not change. At one point in *Witch*, Arthur asks 'what sort of people will they be?', referring to humans in the future, after hearing that he and Merlyn are destined to return 'after hundreds of years'.[128] Arthur cries out in 'anguish' (changed to 'unhappily' in 1958) because he does not know if his future people will 'remember about our Table', or whether all his work will be for nothing. The concern might also be White's – will people in the future forget the Round Table, or will they embrace the model that he is describing? If they do forget, then Arthur – and White's work about Arthur – becomes irrelevant. White considered making Arthur visit 'men from the future' in his draft for *Merlyn*, but left it out, presumably because it would have seemed too forced.[129] The problem for both Arthur and White is, how does one convince people of something without being forceful, either with the sword or with an obvious narrative device like time travel? Kay, Arthur's foster-brother, raises this question in the revised version of *Witch.* Merlyn talks about Hitler – Merlyn lives backwards through time and can remember the

[126] 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 4, p. 597.
[127] Tennyson, 'The Coming of Arthur', in *Idylls*, l. 19, p. 21; Robinson, *Merlin*, vi, p. 69.
[128] *Witch*, ch. 18, p. 160; *Witch*, in *King*, ch. 10, p. 307.
[129] T.H. White, 'Diary 1939-41', 15th June 1940, A. Ms, no pag. The line has two question marks after it.

future – 'an Austrian who [...] tried to impose his reformation by the sword, and plunged the civilised world into misery and chaos'.[130] Kay points out that 'Arthur is fighting the present war [...] to impose his ideas on King Lot', as Hitler did, and the chapter ends with this comment. Merlyn has previously argued that wars are justified 'if the other man starts it', so Arthur's actions can be vindicated in the text, but Kay's question nevertheless raises an uncomfortable similarity between oppressors and those who fight oppression with force.[131]

The best approach to this problem, Merlyn tells Kay, is to be like Jesus: to 'make ideas *available*, and *not* to impose them on people', even those who will only respond to force.[132] This is what Arthur ultimately does: at the end of 'Candle', he orders a young Malory to 'tell everybody who would listen about this ancient idea [...] that force ought to be used, if it was used at all, on behalf of justice'.[133] Malory is 'a kind of vessel to carry on the idea', and he will give it to 'other people' for them to carry it after him. The hope for humans to renounce warfare is for them to 'read and write, not just eat and make love', so that in reading and writing they may come across the 'ancient idea' that has been made available to them through Arthur, Malory, and White.[134]

This didactic approach was developed at a late stage, when *King* was being finalised. It was not used in *Merlyn*, where the titular wizard tells Arthur, '[i]n the course of a long experience of the human race, I have learned that you can never make them [humans] understand anything, unless you rub it in'.[135] What Merlyn/White wanted to 'rub in' was an understanding of man as an animal, and war as an unnatural phenomenon that could be avoided if territorial boundaries were relinquished. White believed that his

[130] *Witch*, in *King*, ch. 8, p. 284.
[131] Ibid., p. 246.
[132] Ibid., p. 284. Original emphasis.
[133] 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 14, p. 693.
[134] Ibid., p. 697.
[135] Ibid., ch. 6, p. 735

solution to war was central to Arthur's story, but the way that this idea was presented to readers did not always fit harmoniously within the rest of the work.

Merlyn's comments about rubbing it in is White's attempt to justify spending two and a half chapters describing human inadequacy – he is 'rub[bing] it in' to readers, using arguments taken from his journal and an unpublished thesis he had written ('The Insolence of Man', 86 pages written in 1942-3). The arguments in *Merlyn* follow the ones in 'Insolence', which aimed to decide whether 'Man is the most important of the animals' by analysing the human race in the context of other creatures.[136] There are two narrative episodes when Arthur is transformed into different animals by Merlyn, to learn their nature as he did in *Sword,* but otherwise *Merlyn* is a quasi-academic thesis using Arthur, Merlyn, and a 'committee' of talking animals as White's mouthpieces. The critical feedback that White received about this format was not favourable. Milton Waldman, the literary advisor for White's publisher, wrote that:

> The introduction of the animals in THE SWORD IN THE STONE suggests the first book, but the purpose is sadly different. White has changed into a political moralist [...] He is trying to reconstruct an allegory which his fable can be forced to bear but which is irrelevant and detrimental to it. Fun and fancy have abdicated in favour of a purpose.[137]

A similar viewpoint was also raised by another reader, who worked for Jonathan Cape. White called this 'a very good report' and underlined parts of it in pencil.[138] It says:

> Up to the end of part IV I think the book is a fine unified piece [...] Part V <u>is a good deal of a letdown</u> [underlined by White in his copy]. The central idea is all right [...] but I don't like the form it takes [...] The Wart as a fish is perfectly acceptable; poor old King Arthur, whom we have known for so long, wandering around as an ant, is somehow harder to take. And I might say that I found the king's romance with the female goose rather distasteful

[136] [T.H. White], 'The Insolence of Man', T.S. Ms, ch. 2, p. 13.
[137] Letter from Billy Collins to T.H. White, 23rd December 1941, in 'Collins', no pag.
[138] White discusses the report in his letter to [Jonathan] Cape, 27th May 1942, in 'Collins', T.S., no pag. The anonymous readers report is titled 'THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING', in 'Collins', T.S., no pag.

> […] And another thing is that I don't think that White is quite ready to solve the affairs of the universe yet [White's emphasis][139]

Both readers' comments criticise White's new didactic form, and suggest that Arthurian material cannot fit harmoniously within this schema. The second report cites the character of Arthur himself, rather than simply the 'fun and fancy' of the first book, as an aspect that clashes with the form of *Merlyn*. The objection that an Arthur whom 'we have known for so long', both in White's work and outside it, should not be turning into different animals was partly expressed by White in the text: in *Merlyn*, Arthur 'felt that it was strange to be visiting the animals again at his age'.[140] White did consider turning Arthur back into his younger self in one plan of the book, but did not do this in the finished draft, because it would have lost the character development of the last three volumes.[141] Consequently, Arthur's advanced age and the experience of turning into animals had to exist together, even if the combination was unsettling. The other concern from the reports is that White's serious topical message clashed with the more trivial, fantastical 'fable' of Arthur. The nature of this message was criticised by White's friend David Garnett, who wrote that: 'the condemnation of man as stultus, impoliticus ferox [stupid, unstatesmanlike, fierce] etc. makes us [in London] cross. We think so vividly & so continuously of our chaps on rafts [...] of aircraft crews beating out fires with their bare hands. And we do not feel man to be what you describe'.[142] For Garnett, topical subjects 'should really be written about some time afterwards'. White's desire to be topical came from an ambitious goal – he wanted *King* to be used for 'the next peace', and a copy given to 'Roosevelt, Churchill, Ghandi [*sic*] and Chiang-Kai-Shek [...] Also Stalin'.[143] The delay in *Merlyn*'s publication meant

[139] 'THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING', in 'Collins', T.S., no pag.
[140] White, *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 7, p. 737.
[141] Letter from T.H. White to David Garnett, 8th June 1941, *Garnett*, p. 86.
[142] Letter from David Garnett to T.H. White, February 3 1942, in *Garnett*, p. 107. Garnett is quoting the possible names for the human species discussed in *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 5, pp. 729-31.
[143] Letter from T.H. White to David Garnett, August 28, 1941, in *Garnett*, pp. 90-4 (93).

that the war was over, and the peace settled, by the time *King* was eventually published. White no longer needed to include an extensive examination of war, because such an examination could not be topical, or seem as vital, as it would have been in 1941.

Merlyn was abandoned for unspecified reasons – Sylvia Townsend Warner cites paper rationing, but this was only the publisher's initial excuse.[144] Based on the feedback White received, it is likely that the unfavourable response to employing the figure of Arthur for a didactic purpose, and transforming him into animals as an older man, were the main reasons it was abandoned, although White did try to condense the entire book into a fifteenth chapter and appendix for 'Candle'.[145] This addition, written in his journal sometime in 1947, begins with Arthur dreaming about Merlyn on the eve of his last battle. Merlyn has arrived 'to explain' the significance of the animals in the first book, which was to make Arthur (and White's readers) think of humans as animals. '"I see it now!"' says Arthur. '"Wars only take place when ~~you make~~ one makes a claim to territory"'.[146] In the following draft appendix, White expands on Arthur's realisation, by explaining how a world without territories would function in practice. He is aware of the contradiction between his role as 'an entertainer' and the 'serious subject' he discusses, which is why he does not include his argument about territories in 'the body of the novel'.[147] In addition, he hopes that the appendix is printed 'in the smallest italics, and preferably upside-down', so that readers who only want entertainment would not find it, and would therefore avoid the same disappointment the publisher's readers had experienced.[148]

White's final decision was to remove Merlyn from the end of 'Candle' (Arthur thinks he comes into the room but then realises that no one is there) and make the king see

[144] See Warner, 'Afterword', *King*, p. 825.
[145] T.H. White, '15' In 'DIARY 1945-1948', A. Ms, pp. 69-77, and 'APPENDIX.', in 'DIARY 1945-1948', A. Ms, pp. 79-85.
[146] Ibid., p. 75.
[147] White, 'APPENDIX' in 'DIARY 1945-1948', p. 79.
[148] Ibid.

'the problem [war] before him as plain as a map' by remembering the animals by himself. Over one hundred pages of *Merlyn* had been reduced to nine pages for a draft ending to 'Candle', and thence to two pages in *King*. In the draft nine pages, Merlyn tells Arthur that he is 'beginning to remember' when he mentions the geese, and then, when he mentions the ants: 'you are beginning to think'.[149] In the final version Arthur does not 'think' in the sense of constructing an argument for the abolition of territorial boundaries; instead, it simply states that 'he remembered the belligerent ants', and 'how mad the frontiers had seemed' to the geese.[150] Arthur suggests that 'countries would have to become counties', relinquishing political powers but not cultural identities – but this is not argued for in *King* as it was in *Merlyn* and the draft ending. Instead, White states that 'it was too late for another effort' for Arthur, and no doubt for the author as well.[151] In this fashion, White implies, but does not explicitly state, that readers should take White's/Arthur's idea for peace (removing boundaries), and promote it in their own time, in the same way that Malory promises to preserve Arthur's idea of the Round Table, protecting it like a candle from the wind until others are ready to receive it.

Readers can do more than simply learn about Arthur's idea and repeat it for others, though. The first version of *Witch* begins with two lines from Brian Merriman's Irish poem *Cuirt an Mheán Oíche* (1780), which translates as: 'the powerful desist from inflicting wrongs / and the right thing enthroned as the right thing'.[152] These lines are not used in the 1958 *King* – White chose to quote English texts at the start of each book instead – but it is useful to recall them when regarding the relationship between Arthur and White's audience. Arthur's role, as one of the powerful, is to avoid inflicting wrongs; but the second line

[149] White, '15', '1945-1948', p. 71.
[150] 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 14, p. 696.
[151] Ibid., p. 697.
[152] 'Is caithfidh an teann bheith ceannsa tláth libh, / Caithfidh an neart gan cheart so stríocadh': *Witch*, p. 7.

refers to prioritising right for its own sake (it could be paraphrased as 'right is right' rather than 'might is right'), and that is in the power of everyone, including readers.[153] The Round Table attempted to harness the force of kings and knights, and direct it towards justice or 'Right', but Arthur realises at the end of *King* that 'two wrongs did not make a right', and he had only redirected the problem of violence and warfare.[154] Abolishing boundaries would resolve the issue, but that is not something a general readership can practically do in their own lives. Readers can prioritise moral correctness over strength, however, and this is the message that White, indirectly and obscurely, aims to give to readers through Arthur's example, in the final version of *King*.

The advantage of this new, more subtle, approach was two-fold: it stopped the anti-war message from being 'irrelevant and detrimental' to the Arthur 'fable', as the first reader's report had complained it was in *Merlyn*, and it also retained the form of a 'unified piece' that the second report had wanted. In *Merlyn*, the didactic argument interfered with the central plot, taking Arthur 'far from Mordred and Lancelot'.[155] In one note for the revisions of *King*, White responded to a suggestion that St Toirdealbhach's moral tales were too long: 'WE MUST STICK TO THE STORY, THE STORY, THE STORY', he wrote, highlighting the importance of returning to the central plot, whilst also emphasising that 'the story' is itself a repetition.[156] By abandoning *Merlyn*, White was also prioritising 'the story' – Arthur's personal narrative – over the points he was trying to express to readers, which took Arthur away from his own narrative. Arthur could help White work

[153] White's own translation of the lines emphasise how right for its own sake is contrasted with right for the sake of force: 'It must be the Right without Might (to be) falling / And it must be the Right in the Right to be settled (established)'. Entry for 27.vii.xxxix in 'Journal 1938-1939', A. Ms, no pag.
[154] 'Candle', in *King*, ch. 14, p. 685-6.
[155] *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 5, p. 727.
[156] T.H. White and [John Wyllie], '[Queries re. the Once and Future King by T.H. White]', A. Ms, 10pp, p. 9. White was aware of this repeated quality when writing *King*: he said he was 'looking *through* 1939 *at* 1489 [Malory] itself looking *backwards*'. See Letter from T.H. White to Sydney Cockerall, June 28 1939, Warner, pp. 133-5 (134). Original emphasis.

through his own concerns about chivalry and warfare, but as the development of *Merlyn* and *King* demonstrates, White had to be careful to avoid making Arthur too much like a didactic tool, and not enough like a 'real' character, with his own feelings and story.

vi. Conclusion

In *Merlyn*, the titular wizard mentions White in a list of authors who have written about Arthur. '"Who is this Wight?"' asks Arthur, confusing 'White' (a particular person) for 'Wight' (any human being). '"A fellow", replied the magician absently', deflecting attention from the author at the same time that the author is made visible.[157] Similarly, Arthur becomes obscured whenever precise attention is directed at him. In an unused draft for the beginning of *Witch*, White begins with the 'controversial subject' of when the story takes place, since the 'epic poet' tells us that Arthur reigned from 1216 until the War of the Roses, whilst historians list other kings who reigned at that time. The issue is 'complicated by the fact that Arthur does not seem to be more than seventy years of age after he has reigned for two hundred and fifty years'.[158] White asks readers to 'swallow it whole if possible', but he avoids the controversy in the published version by not addressing the issue at all. Likewise, the date of Arthur's death is originally given in a family tree, in the type-script of the second published edition (in *King*). It is 1445, but the 'd.' for 'death', is followed by a question mark.[159] The mystery of Arthur's final state, mentioned by Malory and referenced in the final title that White chose for his completed work, conflicts with the citation of a precise date, as if the 'historian' and the 'epic poet' that White refers to in his

[157] White, *Merlyn*, in *King*, ch. 1, p. 703.
[158] [T.H. White], 'Book Two: The Queen of Air and Darkness', A. Ms with T.S. additions. 2 Notebooks.Third draft of Chapter One, no pag.
[159] [T.H. White], 'The Witch in the Wood', T.S. with Autographed amendments, p. 156.

draft opening are both being represented simultaneously. In the final version, neither question mark nor date are included, and no more attention or detail is given to Arthur than any other character in the tree.

It is notable that White includes long character descriptions of Lancelot, Morgause, and Guenever in his journals, but nowhere does he give the same treatment to Arthur, as if attempting to describe him would only confuse his identity more. White experimented with how closely he could focus on Arthur before obscuring the character entirely, when, in 1941, he produced fifteen possible titles for *King*. Nine of these referred directly to Arthur, and at the end the list is exclusively based on that character:

> The Dreaming King
> King Arthur
> Arthur
> K.A.
> A.
> (To Hell with it)[160]

In trying to find the core of his work, White distils it into Arthur himself; but the more closely he focuses on that character the less substantial the title is, until it becomes almost nothing, a mere initial. White reverts to his third attempt at a title, *The Once and Future King*, which diffuses the focus on Arthur himself, and includes both aspects of him as analysed in this thesis: the particular 'Once' implying a mortal, human normality, and the non-specific 'Future' implying a legendary, ideal heroism.

There is nothing particularly distinct or unusual about Arthur's character in *King*. What makes him unique is his magical education, 'THE STORY' he is part of, and his 'central' position in that story: he exists between private and public worlds, and different concepts of chivalry and warfare. These are the particular conditions that make him King

[160] 1940-1 Journal, 9th December 1941, A. Ms, no pag.

Arthur, and, theoretically, anyone else could have been in his place. In 1963, White visited Disneyland in California. A Disney film of *The Sword in the Stone* had just been released, and in a corner of the gift shop, White found a model of Excalibur, stuck sideways in a stone. 'If you could pull it out', explains White in one of his journals, 'you were at one time allowed to write your name in a book but the apparatus is now out of action'.[161] The story suggests that anyone could be Arthur by pulling the sword from the stone, if only the conditions were right, and the mechanism functioned.

The Second World War writers analysed at the beginning of this chapter, similarly, suggested that almost anyone could be an Arthur figure if they shared particular characteristics with him, like owning Excalibur, or having a similar voice, or the same name. However, these heroes, like The Sword, and Arthur King, and Danes's Saviours, are not Arthur himself. They are kept distinct from him, and only become like him by meeting the right conditions. White's Arthur also meets the right conditions, but he is not distinct from the hero of romance: he is both the ideal, legendary king, and the human individual behind the legend.

[161] T.H. White, *America at Last: The American Journal of T.H. White* (New York: Putnam, 1965), p. 143.

Conclusion

The Type Returns

Two historical trends have emerged from the last five chapters. In the first place, the Arthurian legend became something that belonged, and had relevance, to an increasingly wide range of people during the period under consideration: a growth in popular cultural appeal that also had a more surprising political dimension in terms of the development of democracy. Secondly, the figure of Arthur, like the word 'chivalry', became more protean the more it was replicated. Together these trends indicate that, from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the Arthurian legend was not just something that authors, artists, and others thought *about*. It was something they used to think *with*.

It was the success of Tennyson's *Idylls*, in particular, that broadened the appeal of Arthurian legend from a small social elite (as chivalry had been at Eglinton) to a general readership. Yet even this success came at a price. Neither Tennyson nor Bulwer Lytton ever succeeded in making Arthur seem believably human (though both tried), and neither was particularly interested in the relationship between a king and his people. Such narrowly focussed views of the subject were inevitably vulnerable to parody – William Aytoun's poem 'La Mort d'Arthur' (1843), for example, satirises Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' (1842), by depicting Arthur as a figure wearing armour made by a common manufacturer of household goods, as if he frequented the same shops as everyone else.[1] It was not until

[1] Arthur's armour 'bore / The magic stamp of MECHI'S SILVER STEEL'. 'Silver Steel' is a chromium-steel alloy first created in the 1820s that improved steel-hardness and rust resistance, most commonly in saws and shaving blades; John Joseph Mechi sold a wide assortment of household items, but his biggest success was a so-called 'magic strop' used for shaving. Aytoun combines Mechi's 'magic' slogan with a household material, bathetically relating the mythical Arthur to the modern, mundane, and commercial. For an example of Mechi's advertising, with the 'magic' slogan, see *The Liverpool Mercury, and Lancaster General Advertiser*, Friday, March 3, 1843 col. E, p. 1. 'Not by Tennyson' [William Edmonstoune Aytoun],

the end of the century that Arthur became a truly popular cultural figure. Mass-produced commercial branding of Arthurian images and characters, and the increasing numbers of Arthurian plays and popular shows in the 1890s, meant that it was no longer just readers of poetry who could encounter the legend. At Eglinton, only the well-educated were said to understand chivalry, and only the wealthy could actively participate in its display, but for the 1895 production of *King Arthur*, according to the critic Clement Scott, an opinion on the subject matter was held by 'everyone known and unknown'.[2]

Rising literacy rates in the nineteenth century also contributed to Arthur becoming more widely known, even by the unknown. The Elementary Education Acts passed in the last three decades of the century, and organisations such as the National Home Reading Union (established in 1889), helped to create a new generation of working-class readers. From the late nineteenth century onwards, workers eager to 'improve' themselves intellectually and socially could do so by reading texts chosen by people like the politician and scientist Sir John Lubbock (who first gave his recommendations to the London Working Men's College in 1886), or from affordable publishing ranges such as the 'Everyman's Library' (established in 1906).[3] Malory's *Morte Darthur* featured in both of these lists.[4] Marketing the Arthurian legend for popular consumption alongside other classic works of literature was not uncontroversial, and nor was it always welcomed by the intellectual elite: Burne-Jones, as discussed in Chapter Two, wanted to keep the legend

'La Mort d'Arthur', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine for 1843* (Edinburgh: Tait; London: Simpkin; Dublin: Cumming, 1843), October 1843, 10.10, 651-2.

[2] See The Eglinton Tournament', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine for 1839*, November 1839, (Edinburgh: Tait; London: Simpkin; Dublin: Cumming, 1839) VI, 697-716 (p. 697) and Henry Curling, *Some Account of the Field of Cloth and Gold at Eglintoun [sic]* (London: Low, 1839), p. 51; Clement Scott, 'King Arthur', in *From 'The Bells' to King Arthur* (London: MacQueen, 1896), pp. 371-84 (373).

[3] See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 170; Clare Hutton, '"The Promise of Literature in the Coming Days:" The Best Hundred Irish Books Controversy of 1886', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 39 (September 2011), 581-92 (p. 581).

[4] *Dictionary Catalogue of the First 505 Volumes of Everyman's Library*, arr. by Isabella M. Cooper and Margaret A. McVety, pp. 130-1. *The Mabinogion* and an academic book on the Holy Grail are also included: pp. 116 and 121; Sir John Lubbock, *The Choice of Books* (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1896), p. 18.

'secret and remote from people' in 1895, and C.S. Lewis, in 1921, was horrified to find Lubbock's collection of one hundred books in the lounge of the King Arthur Hotel, Tintagel, bewailing 'such culture for the many, such tastes ready made'.[5]

However, some twentieth-century writers, such as Dawson and Stevens, did succeed in bringing Arthur into a working-class context. The political implications of this development did not always sit comfortably with the legend itself. The notion that Arthur could be turned into a proto-constitutional monarch at the head of a political democracy, in particular, went deeply against the grain of a legend in which Arthur had routinely been distinguished from the common people, even as he had been idealised as their perfect representative. Yet in other ways Arthur proved capable of being viewed sympathetically within a modern context. The rise of psychology and psychobiography in the early decades of the twentieth century, for example, encouraged other writers to treat Arthur and his fellow characters not as legendary *exempla* but as complex, flawed individuals (Housman, Robinson, and White are notable examples). This way, Arthur did not need to be wearing armour made from a popular commercial brand, or to work in a mine or as a charcoal-burner, in order to make his increasingly large and varied audience view him sympathetically. He may have been a king, but psychologically he was the same as everyone else.

The second trend, in which Arthur became an increasingly protean and multifaceted cultural figure, saw him escaping from Malory's literary narrative into a wide range of different forms: comics as well as novels, poetry and plays; commercial products; films and artwork; radio plays, and musical scores. These differences of form often reflected

[5] See Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1904), II, 247-8; letter from C.S. Lewis to Warnie Lewis, 7 August [1921], in *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, ed. by Walter Hooper, 3 vols (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), I, 570-84 (p. 581). Lewis also complained about the fake armour, the cement walls painted to look like stone, and the chairs tackily stamped with a K.A. monogram.

differences in outlook; in each case, adapting a literary work allowed for different kinds of ideological work. Arthur could be returned to in order to save Britain from the Nazis; to promote a sexless, bloodless version of the Victorian Christian gentleman; to play the hero in generically and tonally uncertain mock-epic; to demonstrate the need for pacifism; to model a mad, mystical version of chivalry; to lay bare the elitist and reactionary nature of monarchy; to stand for England, or for Britain, or to become dissolved into the common soldier. To borrow the title of Joseph Campbell's influential work of comparative mythology, since the mid-nineteenth century King Arthur has become the hero with a thousand faces.

Some of these faces have yet to be revealed. Since the period covered by this thesis, Arthur has appeared in many new forms, such as video games, television series, and even interactive tourist attractions. Others, such as films and comics, remain as thickly populated by Arthur's imaginative progeny as ever. Why should this be so? The answer advanced by this thesis is that the legend of Arthur has enabled authors to address larger philosophical and political questions, such as versions of manly heroism (Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton), or the antidote to war (T.H. White). The fact that this legend is both long-established and enduring gives it a stability against which contemporary ideas can be measured, and its malleability means that these ideas can be incorporated directly into the story and setting. The figure of Arthur can also mediate between different theoretical claims: for instance, writing about him can appeal to humanists who argue that character is a model of selfhood, because Arthur's character (his charisma, his personal qualities) can be an example to others (as they are in Tennyson) – but Arthur can also appeal to post-structuralists, for whom literary character is nothing but a textual illusion, because he can equally be viewed as a textual cipher, whose lack of historical reality and psychological flatness allows later authors to read and rewrite him as they please.

This only suggests why authors might find the legend rewarding to write about – it does not answer why it has such an appeal to audiences. One possible answer to that question is that Arthurian characters are archetypes rather than individuals. John Boorman, the director and co-writer of the Arthurian film *Excalibur* (1981) thought that this explained Arthur's long-lasting global appeal: like other myths, he explained in a 1980 magazine interview, the Arthurian legend is 'a good story' that people have heard 'a thousand times, but it holds us, we listen, we want to know what happens next. Why? I think we're hearing echoes of some deep pattern of early happenings in the human race that is now being repeated'.[6]

The characters in the film *Excalibur* certainly seem like archetypes, in the sense of symbolising collectively understood ideas and images. For example, Arthur, played by a 35-year-old Nigel Terry, is mystically linked to the land – as Merlin tells him, 'you will be the land and the land will be you. If you fail, the land will perish' – drawing from the Fisher-King story, in which the king's wound makes the land barren, as well as from later forms of nature mysticism more associated with Nazi myth-making.[7] Sometimes Arthur seems to symbolise multiple ideas and figures in a single section: Norris J. Lacy argues that, in the Grail section of the film, Arthur is both the king who sets the quest and the wounded man who will be healed from the Grail, as well as representing, in a vision to Percival, the healing power of the Grail itself (so a spiritual version of Arthur heals the corporeal version).[8] Arthur is furthermore referenced as Perceval's 'lord', in the place where one would expect Christ to be named.[9]

---

[6] *Excalibur*, dir. by John Boorman (Warner Bros., 1981). Interview qtd in Philip Stick, 'John Boorman's Merlin', *Sight and Sound*, 49.3 (Summer 1980), 168-71 (p. 171).
[7] *Excalibur*, 29:54 – 29:58. See Brian Hoyle, *The Cinema of John Boorman* (London: Scarecrow, 2012), pp. 127-8 and Adam Roberts, *Silk and Potatoes: Contemporary Arthurian Fantasy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 112-3.
[8] Norris J. Lacy, 'Mythopoeia in Excalibur', in *Cinema Arthuriana: Twenty Essays*, rev. edn, ed. by Kevin J. Harty (Jefferson: McFarland, 2002), pp. 34-43 (39-41).
[9] Lacy, 'Excalibur', in *Arthuriana*, p. 39.

Excalibur also encourages a symbolic reading of character through its iconography. One example is Arthur's fight against Mordred, which is framed against an enormous red sunset emphasising the end of the era as well as the bloodiness of the battle.[10] Another example is the green glow that backlights Excalibur, representing Arthur's connection to nature. However, even in *Excalibur*, which is so obviously referential, Arthur escapes attempts to pin him down to a single source. The scene in which Arthur meets Guinevere in the convent is a relatively personal, tender moment, away from the shouting, fighting, and operatic music that characterise the rest of the film. It takes place at dawn, and the natural pastel reds of the external establishing shot contrast with the more overtly symbolic sunset in the later scene against Mordred. Arthur enters a cell wearing gleaming armour, and a white-clad Guinevere turns to face him:

> ARTHUR
> Guinevere. Accept my forgiveness, and put your heart to rest. We have suffered too long. I have always loved you, and I still love you.
>
> GUENEVERE
> I loved you as King, sometimes as husband. One cannot gaze too long at the sun. *[She stifles a sob]*.
>
> ARTHUR
> Forgive me, my wife, if you can. I was not born to live a man's life, but to be the stuff of future memory. The fellowship was a brief beginning, a fair time that cannot be forgotten… and because it will not be forgotten, that fair time may come again. Now once more I must ride with my knights to defend what was, and the dream of what could be.[11]

The scene then resumes the high heroic tone of the rest of the film, when Guinevere takes Excalibur from under the bed where she has been hiding it, and returns it to Arthur. The king holds the sword up so as to catch the light. Siegfried's Funeral March from Wagner's

[10] See *Excalibur*, 2:07:50 – 2:07:59. The shot probably imitates the illustration of the same scene by N.C. Wyeth, printed in *The Boy's King Arthur*, ed. by Sidney Lanier, illus. by N. C. Wyeth (New York: Scriber's, 1922), p. 306.
[11] *Excalibur*, 1:53:50 - 1:54:54.

Götterdämmerung, the main theme music of the film, plays for a few seconds, before fading out, and the scene momentarily shifts to the intimate and personal, as Arthur says to Guinevere:

> I've often thought that in the hereafter of our lives, when I owe no more to the future – can be just a man – that we may meet, and you will come to me, and claim me yours, and know that I am your husband. *[Pause]*. It is a dream I have...[12]

With this, Arthur leaves and the scene ends.

Part of this dialogue, by screenwriters Rospo Pallenberg and John Boorman, echoes Tennyson: in *Idylls*, Arthur similarly tells Guinevere that he still loves her, and hopes they might meet again 'hereafter', when Guinevere will 'claim' Arthur, and 'know' that he is her husband.[13] In both *Idylls* and *Excalibur*, furthermore, Guinevere compares being married to Arthur with gazing at the sun, and Arthur forgives Guinevere (though in *Idylls* Arthur uses the opportunity to compare himself with God).[14] Yet the film's dialogue moves beyond Tennyson. Crucially, Arthur also asks Guinevere to forgive *him* – which he does not do in *Idylls* – demonstrating that this Arthur is at least more emotionally sensitive than Tennyson's. Most important of all, Boorman's Arthur talks with a high degree of self-consciousness about being a legendary, archetypal figure ('the stuff of future memory'), but he also mentions the dream of being 'just a man' in the afterlife, perhaps echoing White's Arthur, when he wishes he could retire from the world to live as a man rather than a king.[15] The fact that Arthur speaks of this dream demonstrates how even Boorman's Arthur has his own feelings and desires, separate from the more archetypal role he plays as a heroic king, defending 'what was, and the dream of what could be'.

---

[12] *Excalibur*, 1:55:29 – 1:55:58.
[13] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J.M. Gray (London: Penguin, 1983), ll. 556-63, p. 283.
[14] Tennyson, 'Guinevere', in *Idylls*, ll. 541-2, p. 283.
[15] T.H. White, *The Book of Merlyn*, in *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: Voyager, 1996), ch. 11, pp. 755-6.

At the end of the film, Arthur urges Perceval to throw Excalibur into the lake. When Perceval fails to do so, Arthur tells him that he must, as 'one day a king will come, and the sword will rise again'.[16] Arthur does not say that he himself will return, although the final scene, when he floats away on the barge with the three queens, suggests that he does not die. Instead, Arthur merely says 'a king will come'. The line emphasises the power of Excalibur – it is the sword that will return, not a specific king – but the words also form a fitting conclusion to this thesis. In 1839, the Earl of Eglinton said that as a boy, he would have 'given up his bright future for the grave that enclosed the glories of a Sir Tristram or a Sir Launcelot'.[17] He did not say 'a King Arthur', but perhaps he should have done. The words 'King Arthur' do not refer to a specific Arthur, because there are too many versions, and all of them are different. Tennyson's Arthur will not return; neither will Boorman's Arthur. They are representations tied to their individual works. What will return is the idea of King Arthur: for Arthur is, as I have argued, a type. For some, Arthur is an archetype, representing something deep and basic that most of us share. For others, Arthur may be a Biblical type, one part of a larger truth realised in full by Christ as an antitype. For most, however, Alexander Henry's definition of '[t]he perfect normal representation or idea of anything' encapsulates the complexity, and part of the appeal, of the figure of Arthur.[18] Perfect and normal; a model and only human – Arthur is more than just all things to all men. He is us.

[16] *Excalibur*, 2:10:20 – 2:10:26. In this scene, Perceval takes the role usually left to Bedivere.
[17] Speech by the Earl of Eglinton in Irvine, 29 September 1839, reproduced in John Richardson, *The Eglinton Tournament*, illus. by James Henry Nixon (London: Colnaghi and Puchle, 1843), p. 2.
[18] Alexander Henry, 'Type', *A Glossary of Scientific Terms for General Use* (London: Walton, 1861), p. 194.

Appendix A
p. 72

[King Arthur Flour Advertisement], 1896, printed in David A. Anderson, *Images of America: King Arthur Flour Company* (Charleston SC: Arcadia, 2002), p. 21.

Appendix B
p. 91

[Henry Paget], H.M.P., illus., '"King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Graphic*, 19 January 1895, front cover.

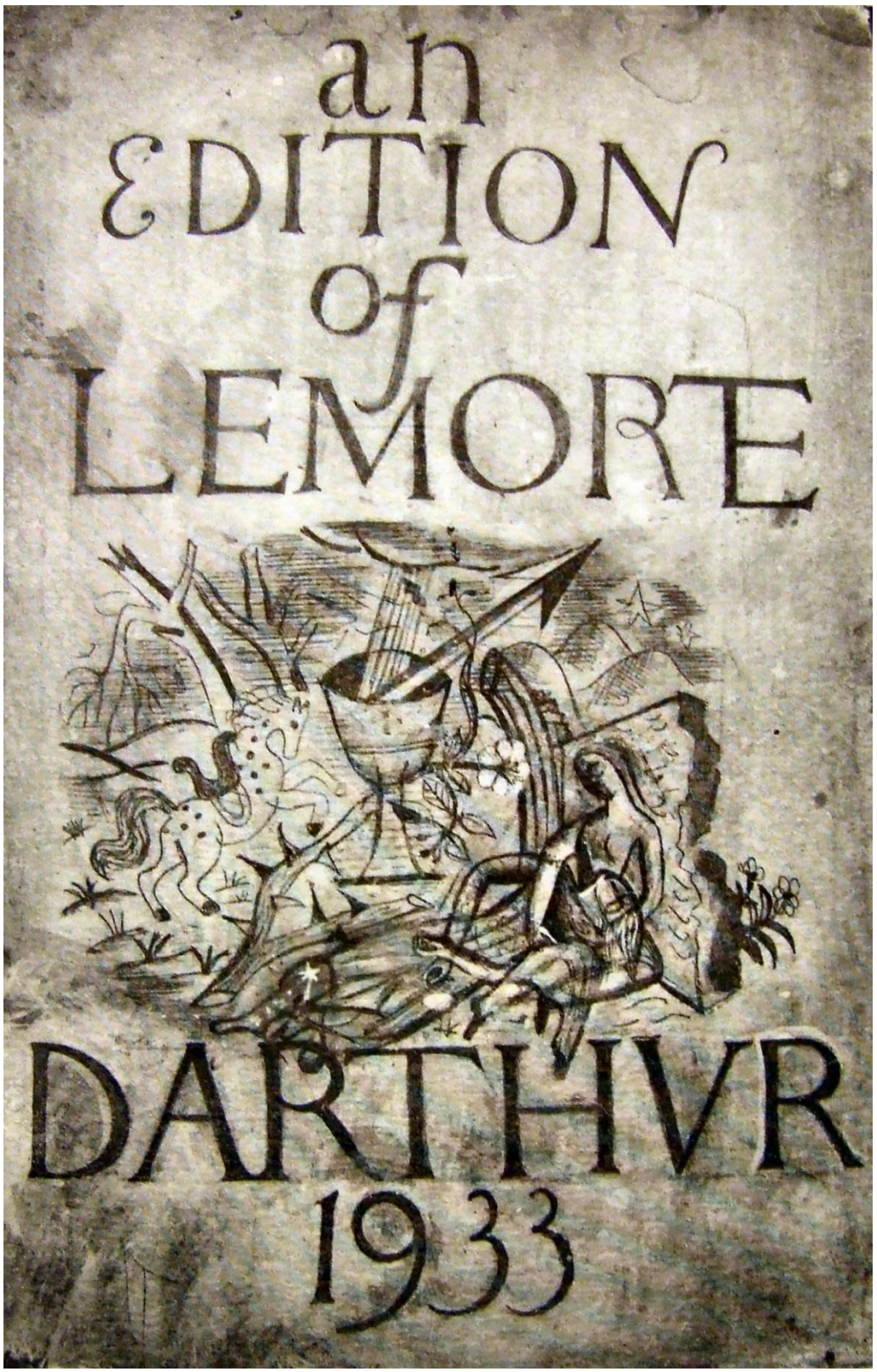
Appendix C
p. 186

David Jones, 'Wounded Knight', 1929-30, drypoint on paper, 8 x 6 ¼ inches, 4th state, reproduced in Douglas Cleverdon, *The Engravings of David Jones* (London: Clover Hill, 1981), E204, p. 94.

Appendix D
p. 187

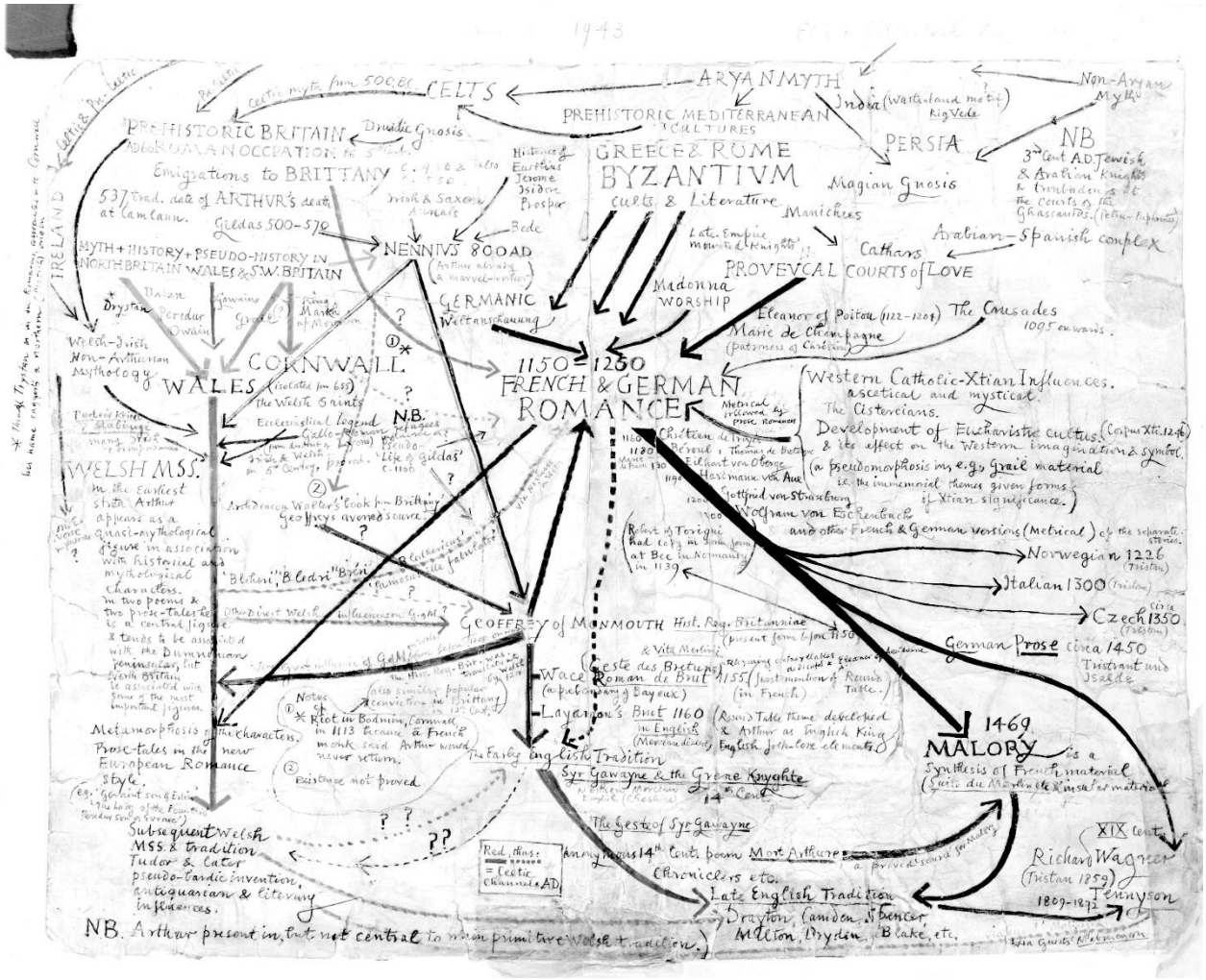
David Jones, ‘Merlin Appears in the Form of a Young Child to Arthur Sleeping [also called ‘Merlin-land’]’, 1931, 10 x 8 inches, illustration for Jones, *Anathemata*, ‘Mabinog’s Liturgy’, p. 185; reproduced in Nicolete Gray, *The Paintings of David Jones* (London and Hatfield: John Taylor and Lund Humphries, 1989), pl. 42.

Appendix E
p. 187



David Jones, '[Title Page of *Morte Darthur*]', 1933, drawn on woodblock (reversed), reproduced in Cleverdon, *Engravings,* p. 21.

Appendix F
p. 192



David Jones, 'Map of Themes in the Artist's Mind', 1943, pencils, ink, watercolour and body colour, 20 x 24 inches, reproduced in Merlin James, *David Jones 1895-1974: A Map of the Artist's Mind* (London: Humphries, 1995), pp. 50-1. The note about Arthur is at the bottom left of the image.

Works Cited

Films and Footage

Boorman, John, dir., *Excalibur* (Warner Bros., 1981)

Robinson, Robert, and T.H. White, *Monitor: TH White in Alderney*, filmed interview for BBC Television, 13 September 1959

Sands, Frank, 'King Arthur Flour: History in the Baking', uploaded 2010 <http://youtu.be/l3wq5zQtAm4> [accessed 29 September 2011]

Varnel, Marcel (dir.), *King Arthur Was a Gentleman* (Gainsborough Pictures, 1942)

Harry Ransom Center Materials, University of Texas, Austin

[John Wyllie], [Queries re. the Once and Future King by T.H. White], A. Ms

[T.H. White], 'Book Four: The Candle in the Wind' T.S. with A. revisions

——, 'Book Two: The Queen of Air and Darkness', A. Ms with T.S. additions

——, 'The Insolence of Man', T.S. Ms

——, 'The Witch in the Wood', T.S. with autographed amendments

——, 'Diary 1939-41', A. Ms

——, 'Diary 1941-2', A. Ms

——, 'DIARY 1945-1948', A. Ms

——, 'Journal 1938-1939', A. Ms

——, 'Trouble with Collins', T.S., 1940-3

——, 1940-1 Journal, A. Ms

——, '[The Once and Future King]. Book Two: The Queen of Air and Darkness', T. Ms with A. revisions and printed pages

——, 'The Candle in the Wind [Play]', A. Ms

——, 'The Candle in the Wind [Play]', T. Ms

Paintings and Illustrations

[King Arthur Flour Advertisement], 1896, printed in David A. Anderson, *Images of America: King Arthur Flour Company* (Charleston SC: Arcadia, 2002), p. 21

Burne-Jones, Edward, *The Miracle of the Merciful Knight*, 1863, watercolour and bodycolour, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham

——, *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, 1881-93, oil, 11x254m, Museo de Art, Puerto Rico

Jones, David, 'Wounded Knight', 1929-30, drypoint on paper, 8 x 6 ¼ inches, 4th state, reproduced in Douglas Cleverdon, *The Engravings of David Jones* (London: Clover Hill, 1981), E204, p. 94

——, 'Merlin Appears in the Form of a Young Child to Arthur Sleeping [also called 'Merlin-land']', 1931, 10 x 8 inches, illustration for Jones, *Anathemata*, 'Mabinog's Liturgy', p. 185; reproduced in Nicolete Gray, *The Paintings of David Jones* (London and Hatfield: John Taylor and Lund Humphries, 1989), pl. 42

——, '[Title Page of *Morte Darthur*]', 1933, drawn on woodblock (reversed), reproduced in Cleverdon, *Engravings*, p. 21

‘Map of Themes in the Artist’s Mind’, 1943, pencils, ink, watercolour and body colour, 20 x 24 inches, reproduced in Merlin James, *David Jones 1895-1974: A Map of the Artist’s Mind* (London: Humphries, 1995), pp. 50-1

[Paget, Henry], H.M.P., illus., ‘“King Arthur” at the Lyceum’, *Graphic*, 19 January 1895, front cover

Primary

i. Newspaper and Journal Articles

‘Did Kitchener Wield Excalibur?’, *The Boston Sunday Globe*, October 8th 1916, p. 36

‘Dresses for the Tournament’, *Morning Post*, 28 August 1839, p. 3

‘Ellangowan’, ‘The Story of the Eglinton Tournament Retold’, in *Baily’s Magazine of Sports and Pastimes* (London: Baily, 1884), XLI, 64-72

‘Foreign Movements’, *Northern Star and National Trades' Journal*, November 7, 1846, p. 7

‘The Eglinton Costumes, &c.’, *The Times*, 27 May 1840, p. 6

‘The Eglinton Tournament’, *Morning Chronicle*, 3 September 1839, p. 3

‘The Eglinton Tournament’, *Morning Post*, July 15 1839, p. 5

‘The Eglinton Tournament’, *New York Times*, 5 August 1877, p. 4

‘The Eglinton Tournament’, *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine for 1839*, November 1839 (Edinburgh: Tait; London: Simpkin; Dublin: Cumming, 1839) VI, 697-716

‘The Eglinton Tournament’, *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine for 1839*, November 1839, (Edinburgh: Tait; London: Simpkin; Dublin: Cumming, 1839) VI, 697-716

'The New Trocadero Banqueting Palace', *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times,* 17 October, 1896, p. 247

Trappes-Lomax, Michael 'The Eglinton Tournament', January 25 1936, *Country Life: The Journal for all those Interested in Country Life and Country Pursuits,* LXXIX, pp. 96-7

Thackeray, William, E. L. B. L. B B. L L. B B B. L L L., 'Punch's Prize Novelists: George de Barnwell', *Punch* (London: 1847), XII, 136-7 (136)

——, 'Roundabout Papers—No. VIII: De Juventute', *Cornhill Magazine* (October 1860) in *The Cornhill Magazine: July to December 1860.* (London: Smith, 1860), II, 501-12

[Aytoun, William Edmonstoune], 'La Mort d'Arthur', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine for 1843* (Edinburgh: Tait; London: Simpkin; Dublin: Cumming, 1843), October 1843, 10.10, 651-2

ii. Books

'The Battle of the Scrub', *Poems from the Book of Taliesin,* ed. by J. Gwenogvryn Evans (Tremvan: Llambedrog, 1915)

The Hall of Chivalry and King Arthur's Hall, Tintagel (Tintagel: King Arthur's Hall, [1933])

'The Shining Knight', in *Adventure Comics,* 66 (September 1941), 14-26

'The Sword', in *Captain Courageous Comics,* 6 (March 1942), 12-21

'The Sword', in *Lightning Comics,* 3.1 (June 1942), 20-31

'The Sword', in *Super-Mystery Comics,* 4.5 (January 1945), 27-39

'The Sword', in *Super-Mystery Comics,* 4.1 (January 1944), 28-40

‘The Sword’, in *Super-Mystery Comics*, 4.4 (October 1944), 27-9

‘The Sword’, in *Super-Mystery Comics*, 3.3 (January 1943), 32-43

‘The Sword’, in *Super-Mystery Comics*, 3.6 (October 1943), 28-40

The Symbolic Meaning of the Story of King Arthur (Tintagel: n.p., n.d.)

The Tournament: A Mock Heroic Ballad, illus. Alfred Crowsquill (London: M’Lean, 1839)

‘The Tournament of Tottenham,’ *Middle English Romances*, ed. by Donald B. Sands (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1986), pp. 313-22

A Friend of the People, *Letter to the Queen on the State of the Monarchy* (London: Simpkin, 1838)

[Aikman, James] *An Account of the Tournament at Eglinton, Revised and Corrected by Several of the Knights*, illus. by W. Gordon (Edinburgh: Paton, Carver and Gilder, 1839)

Allingham, H., and E. Baumer Williams (ed.), *Letters to William Allingham* (London: Longmans, Green, 1911)

Austen, Jane, *Mansfield Park: A Novel in Three Volumes*, 3 vols (London: Egerton, 1814)

Baden-Powell, R.S.S., *Yarns for Boy Scouts: Told Round the Camp Fire* (London: Pearson, 1909)

Banning, Lex, ‘Fanatical Knight at Arms’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 1954, p. 10

Binyon, Laurence, *Arthur: A Tragedy* (London: Heinemann, 1923)

Blackmore, Richard, *Prince Arthur. An heroick poem. In ten books.* (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1695)

Blackstone, Sir William, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols (London: Cadell, 1825)

Brough, William, *King Arthur: Or, the Days and Knights of the Round Table. A New and Original Christmas Extravaganza in One Act* (London: Lacy, [1863])

[Braddon, Mary Elizabeth], Aunt Belinda, *The Good Hermione: A Story for the Jubilee Year* (London: Maxwell, n.d. [preface dated to October 1886])

[Broadus, Edmund Kemper], 'My Armoury', *Atlantic Monthly*, 106 (August 1910), 276-8

——, 'The Armoury: A Fantasy', *Saturday and Sunday* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1935), pp. 210-5

Bromwich, Rachel (ed.), *Trioedd ynys Prydein*, 3rd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006)

Bulwer Lytton, Edward, 'The Master to the Scholar', in *Eva, a True Story of Light and Darkness, the Ill-omened Marriage, and Other Tales and Poems* (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1842), p. 105

——, *King Arthur*, 2 vols (London: Colburn, 1849)

——, *King Arthur: A Poem* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1871)

——, 'A Word to the Public: Containing Hints towards a Critical Essay upon the Artistic Principles and Ethical Designs of Fiction', in *The Works of Edward Bulwer Lytton (Lord Lytton)* (New York: Collier, 1892), VI, 713-34

[Bulwer Lytton, Victor], *The Life of Edward Bulwer: First Lord Lytton*, 2 vols, (London: Macmillan, 1913)

Burne-Jones, Georgiana, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1904)

Butt, R. V. J., *The Directory of Railway Stations: Details Every Public and Private Passenger Station, Halt, Platform and Stopping Place, Past and Present* (Sparkford: Stephens, 1995)

Campbell, Wilfred, 'Mordred: A Tragedy in Five Acts', in *Mordred and Hildebrand: A Book of Tragedies* (Ottawa: Durie, 1895)

Carlyle, Thomas, *Sartor Resartus (1831). Lectures on Heroes (1840)* (London: Chapman & Hall, n.d)

Carr, J. Comyns, *King Arthur: A Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1895

Chesterton, G.K., *The Grave of Arthur*, in *Ariel Poems* no. 25 (London: Faber, [1930])

Conlee, John (ed.), *Prose Merlin* (Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 1998)

Cooper, Isabella M., and Margaret A. McVety, arr., *Dictionary Catalogue of the First 505 Volumes of Everyman's Library* (n.p.: n. pub., [1910])

Costello, Louisa Stuart, 'A Dream', in *The Maid of Cyprus Isle and Other Poems* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1815), pp. 56-8

Cram, Ralph Adams, *Excalibur: An Arthurian Drama* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1909)

Curling, Henry, *Some Account of the Field of Cloth and Gold at Eglintoun [sic]* (London: Low, 1839)

Cutler, U. Waldo, *King Arthur and his Knights* (London, Bombay & Sydney: Harrap, 1933)

Dane, Clemence, *The Saviours: Seven Plays on One Theme* (London: Heinemann, 1942)

Darwin, Charles, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: Murray, 1859)

Dawson, Coningsby, 'The Worker', in *The Worker and Other Poems* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1906), pp. 1-10

——, *The House of the Weeping Woman* (Toronto: Westminster; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908)

——, *The Road to Avalon* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911)

——, *The Love of an Unknown Soldier Found in a Dug Out* (New York: John Lane, 1918)

——, *It Might Have Happened to You: A Contemporary Portrait of Central and Eastern Europe* (New York and London: John Lane, 1921)

——, *The Unknown Soldier* (London: Hutchinson, [1929])

Dawson, W.J., introduction, Coningsby Dawson, *Carry On: Letter's in War-time* (New York and London: Lane; Toronto: Gundy, 1918), pp. 7-20

Devyr, Thomas Ainge, 'Contents', in *The Odd Book of the Nineteenth Century: Or, "Chivalry" in Modern Days, a Personal Record of Reform, Chiefly Land Reform, for the Last 50 Years* (New York: n.p., 1882)

[Digby, Kenelm Henry], 'The Forgiveness of Injuries Required by the Spirit of Chivalry', *The Broad Stone of Honour: Or the True Sense and Practise of Chivalry*, 5 vols (London: Lumley 1848)

Doran, George H., *Chronicles of Barabbas: 1884-1934* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935)

Dwyryd, Ionoron Glan, 'Baner yr Undeb' [Union Banner], in *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad [The Friend from the Old Country]*, December 1861

Eliot, George, *Daniel Deronda*, 2 vols (New York: Harper, 1876)

Field, P.J.C., introduction, Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. by P.J.C. Field, 2 vols (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), I, xi-xliii

Forbush, William Byron and Frank Lincoln Masseck, *The Boys' Round Table: A Manual of the International Order of the Knights of King Arthur*, 6th edn (Potsdam, New York: Masseck, 1909)

Gallix, François (ed.), *T.H. White: Letters to a Friend: The Correspondence between T.H. White and L.J. Potts* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1984)

Garnett, David (ed.), *The White/Garnett Letters* (London: Cape, 1968)

[George V] 'Buckingham Palace, June 29, 1911' in F.A. Mackenzie, *King George V In His Own Words* (London: Benn, 1929), p. 15

[George VI], 'Christmas Day 1940', *King George VI to His Peoples 1936-1951: Selected Broadcasts and Speeches* (London: Murray, 1952), pp. 25-27

Giles, J.A. (trans.), *The Works of Gildas and Nennius, Translated from the Latin* (London: Bohn, 1841)

Guest, Lady Charlotte (trans.), *The Mabinogion from the Llyfer Coch a Hergest, and Other Ancient Welsh Manuscripts, with an English Translation and Notes*, 3 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans; Londonderry: Ress, 1841)

Gosse, Edmund, *Some Diversions of a Man of Letters* (London: Heinemann, 1920)

Heber, Reginald, 'Morte D'Arthur: A Fragment', in [Amelia Shipley Heber], *The Life of Reginald Heber*, 2 vols (New York: Protestant Episcopal Press, 1830), II, 485-525

Hegel, G.W.F., 'Tragedy and the Impiety of Socrates', in *Hegel on Tragedy*, ed. by Anne and Henry Paolucci, trans. by E.S. Haldane and others (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1962)

——, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. by T.M. Knox, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)

Hemingway, Ernest, *A Farewell to Arms* (London: Vintage, 2005)

Henken, Elissa R., *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987)

Henry, Alexander, 'Type', *A Glossary of Scientific Terms for General Use* (London: Walton, 1861), p. 194

Housman, Clemence, *The Life of Sir Aglovale de Galis* (Oakland: Green Knight, 2000)

——, *The Unknown Sea* (London: Duckworth, 1898)

——, *The Were-wolf*, illus. by Laurence Housman (London: John Lane; Chicago: Way and Williams, 1896)

Irving, Henry, 'The Art of Acting [Harvard, March 30, 1885]', in *The Drama: Addresses* (London: Heinemann, 1893), pp. 49-69

James, G.P.R., *The History of Chivalry* (London: Colburn, 1830)

James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London; New York: Longmans, Green, 1902)

Jenner, H., and J.H. Rowe, *Tintagel Castle: Its History and Romance* (Penzance: Oakmagic Publications, 1999)

Jones, David, *The Anathemata* (London: Faber, 1952)

——, 'Autobiographical Talk', 29 October 1954, in *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London: Faber, 1959), pp. 25-31

——, ‘The Arthurian Legend’, in *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London: Faber, 1959), pp. 202-11 (205)

——, ‘The Myth of Arthur’, in *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London: Faber, 1959), pp. 212-59

——, ‘Wales and the Crown’, in *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London: Faber, 1959), pp. 39-48

——, ‘Art in Relation to War’, in *The Dying Gaul and Other Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London & Boston: Faber, 1978), pp. 123-166

——, ‘On the Difficulties of One Writer of Welsh Affinity Whose Language is English’, in *The Dying Gaul and Other Writings*, ed. by Harman Grisewood (London & Boston: Faber, 1978), pp. 30-4

——, ‘The Sleeping Lord’, in *The Sleeping Lord and Other Fragments* (London: Faber, 1995)

——, ‘Under Arcturus’, in *The Roman Quarry and Other Sequences*, ed. by Harman Grisewood and René Hague (London: Agenda; New York: Sheep Meadow, 1981), pp. 64-83

——, *In Parenthesis: Seinnyessit e Gledyf ym Penn Mameu* (London: Faber, 2010)

Jung, C.G., *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. by R.F.C. Hull, 2nd edn ([Princeton:] Princeton University Press, 1968)

K[nowles], J[ames] T[homas], *The Story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table* (London: Griffith and Farran, 1862)

Koch, John T. and John Carey (eds.), *Y Gododdin* in *The Celtic Hero Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe & Early Ireland & Wales*, ed. by, 4th edn (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies, 2003)

Kruege, Jim, Alex Ross, and Edgar Salazar, *Project Superpowers: Chapter Two* (Runnemede, New Jersey: Dynamite, 2010)

Lanier, Sidney, introduction, John Froissart, *The Boy's Froissart: Being Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of Adventure Battle and Custom in England France Spain etc.*, ed. by. Sidney Lanier (New York: Scribner's, 1879)

—— (ed.), *The Boys King Arthur*, illus. by N. C. Wyeth (New York: Scriber's, 1922)

Lewis, C.S., *Beyond Personality* (London: Bles, 1944)

——, 'Williams and the Arthuriad', in Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, *Taliessin through Logres, The Region of the Summer Stars, Arthurian Torso* (N.p.: Eerdmans, 1974)

——, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (London: Lions, 1980)

——, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, ed. by Walter Hooper, 3 vols (New York: HarperCollins, 2004)

——, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairytale for Grown-ups* (London: HarperCollins, 2005)

Lubbock, Sir John, *The Choice of Books* (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1896)

Mabie, Wright Hamilton, introduction, *Heroes Every Child Should Know: Tales for Young People of the World's Heroes in All Ages*, ed. by Hamilton Wright Mabie (London: Doubleday, Page, 1906)

Mackay, Charles, *Through the Long Day: Or, Memorials of a Literary Life during Half a Century*, 2 vols (London: Allen, 1887)

Malory, Sir Thomas, *Morte Darthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and of his Noble Knights of the Round Table*, ed. by Edward Strachey (London: Macmillan, 1868)

Malory, Syr Thomas, *Le Morte Darthur: The Original Edition of William Caxton*, ed. by H. Oskar Sommer, 3 vols (London: Nutt, 1889-91)

Martin-Harvey, John, *The Autobiography of Sir John Martin-Harvey* (London: Low, n.d. [1933?])

Masefield, John, *In the Mill* (London: Heinemann, 1941)

——, *So Long to Learn: Chapters of an Autobiography* (London: Heinemann, 1952)

Miller, Arthur, 'Tragedy and the Common Man', in *Death of a Salesman: Text and Criticism*, ed. by Gerald Weales (New York: Viking Press, 1967), pp. 144-7

Morris, May, 'Later Years,' in *William Morris, Artist, Writer, Socialist*, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), I, 496-516

Morris, William, preface, *Medieval Lore: An Epitome of the Science, Geography, Animal and Plant Folk-lore and Myth of the Middle Age: Being Classified Gleanings from the Encyclopaedia of Bartholomew Anglicus on the Properties of Things* by Bartholomew Anglicus, trans. by John Trevisa, ed. and abr. by Robert Steele (London: Stock, 1893), pp. v-viii

Morris, William, *A Dream of John Ball*, vol. XVI of *The Collected Works* (n.p.: Elibron, 2005), pp. 215-288

Newbolt, Henry, *Mordred: A Tragedy* (London: Unwin, 1895)

——, *Tales of the Great War* (London: Longmans, Green, 1916)

——, *My World as in My Time: Memoirs of Sir Henry Newbolt, 1862-1932* (London: Faber, 1932)

Newman, John Henry, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Toovey, 1845)

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, trans. by Peter Preuss (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1980)

Nuttall, Austen P., 'Type', *Dictionary of Scientific Terms* (London: Strahan, 1869), p. 312

Owen, Wilfred, 'Hospital Barge', British Library MS ADD 43720. Dated 8 December [1917]

——, 'Hospital Barge', *Nation*, 23 (15 June 1918), 284

——, *Selected Letters*, ed. by John Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Partridge, J. Bernard, and Hawes Craven, illus., *Souvenir of King Arthur: Presented at the Lyceum Theatre* (London: Cassell & Co. 1895)

Pater, Walter, *Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1893)

Planché, James Robinson, *Recollections and Reflections*, rev. edn (London: Low, Marston, [n.d.])

Pollard, Alfred J., *The Romance of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table*, illus. by Arthur Rackham (New York: Macmillan, 1917)

Pope, Alexander, 'Preface to Homer's Iliad', in *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, 6 vols (Edinburgh: Balfour, 1764)

Rhys, John, preface, Thomas Malory, *The Birth Life and Acts of King Arthur of his Noble Knights of the Round Table their Marvelous Enquests and Adventures the Achieving of the San Greal and in the End le Morte Darthur with the Dolorous Death and Departing out of this World of them All* (London: Dent, 1893), pp. xi-xxxvj

Rhŷs, John, and J. Gwenogvryn Evans (eds.), *The Text of the Mabinogion and Other Welsh Tales from the Red Book of Hergest* (Oxford: Evans, 1887)

Richardson, John, *The Eglinton Tournament*, illus. by James Henry Nixon (London: Colnaghi and Puchle, 1843)

Robinson, Corinne Roosevelt, 'The Failure of Arthur: Eight Sonnets', in *The Call of Brotherhood and Other Poems* (New York: Scribners, 1912), pp. 65-72

Robinson, E.A., *Selected Letters of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York: Macmillan, 1940)

——, *Edwin Arlington Robinson's Letters to Edith Brower*, ed. by Richard Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968)

——, 'Merlin' and 'Lancelot' in *Arthurian Poets: Edwin Arlington Robinson* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990)

Robinson, Henry Crabb, *The London Theatre 1811-1866: Selections from the Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, ed. by Eluned Brown (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1966)

Ruskin, John, *Of Queens' Gardens*, in *Sesame and Lilies: Two Lectures Delivered at Manchester in 1864* (London: Smith, Elder, 1865)

Scott, Clement, 'King Arthur' in *From 'The Bells' to King Arthur* (London: MacQueen, 1896), 371-84

Scott, James Brown, et al., 'Editorial Comment: Edward VIII', *The American Journal of International Law*, 4 (July 1910), 662-4

[Scott, Walter], *Ivanhoe; a Romance*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820)

Stead, W.T., 'Chinese Gordon', *The Century: Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (New York and London: Century, 1884)

——, 'Government by Journalism', *Contemporary Review*, May 1886, vol. 49, 653-674

Stoker, Bram, *Dracula* (London, Penguin, 1994)

Storm, Russell [Robert Moore Williams], 'Trouble in Avalon', *Fantastic Adventures*, 2.6 (June 1940), pp. 30-40

[Swinburne, A.C.], 'The Day Before the Trial', in *Arthurian Poets: A.C. Swinburne*, ed. by James P. Carley (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), pp. 299-300

Tennyson, Alfred Lord, *Poems* (London: Moxon, 1833 [December 1832])

——, *Poems*, 2 vols (Boston: Ticknor, 1842)

——, 'Carmen Sæculare. An Ode in Honour of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria', in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1887 (London and New York: Macmillan, 1887), LV, 401-6

——, 'Lady Clara Vere de Vere', in *Tennyson's Shorter Poems & Lyrics 1833-1842*, ed. by Beatrice C. Mulliner (London: Oxford University Press, Henrey Frowde, 1909), p. 37

——, 'Gareth and Lynette [Prose Draft]', in *A Variorum Edition of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'*, ed. by John Pfordresher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973)

——, *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. by Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, 3 vols (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1981-90)

——, *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J.M. Gray (London: Penguin, 1983)

[Tennyson, Hallam], *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols (New York and London: Macmillan, 1897)

——, introduction, *Idylls of the King*, in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London: Longmans, Green, 1969), pp. 1460-4

Thackeray, William, 'August. – A Tournament', in '*The Comic Almanack: An Ephemeris in Jest and Earnest, Containing Merry Tales, Humorous Poetry, Quips and Oddities* (London: Chatto and Windus, n.d.), I, 234-5.

Thomas, Charles, *English Heritage Book of Tintagel: Arthur and Archaeology* (London: Batsford and English Heritage, 1993)

Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Fall of Arthur*, ed. by Christopher Tolkien (London: HaperCollins, 2013)

Twain, Mark, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (New York: Webster, 1889)

Weston, Jessie L. (trans.) *Morien: A Metrical Romance Rendered into English from the Middle Dutch* (London: Nutt, 1901)

Westwood, T., 'The Sword of Kingship: A Legend of the "Morte D'Arthure"' (London: Wilkins, 1866)

White, T.H., *Loved Helen and Other Poems* (London: Windus, 1929)

——, *The Sword in the Stone* (London: Collins, 1938)

——, *The Witch in the Wood* (London: Collin, 1940)

——, *The Ill-Made Knight* (London: Collins, 1941)

——, *Mistress Masham's Repose* (New York: Putman, 1946)

——, *The Master: An Adventure Story* (London: Cape, 1956)

——, *America at Last: The American Journal of T.H. White* (New York: Putnam, 1965)

——, *The Book of Merlyn*, in *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: Voyager, 1996)

——, *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: Voyager, 1996)

——, 'The Candle in the Wind', in *The Once and Future King: The Complete Edition* (London: HarperCollins, 1996)

Williams, F. Harald, 'Victoria Dei Gratia Regina', in *'Twixt Kiss and Lip: Or Under the Sword*, 3rd edn (London: Gardner, 1896), pp. 148-9

Winkworth, Susanna (trans.), *Theologia Germanica: Which Setteth Forth Many Fair Lineaments of Divine Truth, and Saith Very Lofty and Lovely things Touching a Perfect Life* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1854)

Yeames, James, 'Everybody Works but Arthur! (Song of the King's Jester)', in William Byron Forbush and Frank Lincoln Masseck, *The Boys' Round Table: A Manual of the International Order of the Knights of King Arthur*, 6th edn (Potsdam, New York: Masseck, 1909), pp. 151-2

Young, Stark, *Guenevere: A Play in Five Acts* (New York: Grafton, 1906)

Secondary

i. Newspaper and Journal Articles

'Art XI', *The Monthly Review* (London: Henderson, 1839), January 1839, I. 1, pp. 129-36

'Art. IV.—Poems by Alfred Tennyson' (London: Murray, 1842), LXX, no. 140, pp. 385-416

'Arthurian Achievement', *Times Literary Supplement*, April 25 1958, p. 224

'Behind the Scenes at the Lyceum', *Sketch*, 16 January 1895, in *The Sketch: October 31 1894 to January 23 1895* (London: Ingram, [n.d]), VIII, 548-50

‘Books and Authors’, *Observer*, June 6, 1937, p. 6

‘Christmas Entertainments’, *Standard,* 28 December 1863, p. 2

‘Friday, January 18, 1895’, *Glasgow Herald*, 18 January 1895, p. 6

Irish Times, 20 October 1911, p. 9

‘King Arthur’, *Christian Remembrancer* (London: Mozley, 1850), XIX, 69-109

‘King Arthur’, *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist,* March 1849, pp. 307-14

‘Literature: Publications Received’, *The Queenslander*, 9 December 1911, p. 20

‘‘‘King Arthur” at the Lyceum Theatre’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 January 1895, p. 7

‘‘Arthur”: Poetic Romance at the Old Vic’, *Times*, 13 March 1923, p. 12

‘‘King Arthur” at the Lyceum Theatre’, *Yorkshire Herald*, 15 January 1895, p. 2

‘‘King Arthur” at the Lyceum’, *Derby Mercury*, 16 January 1895, p. 7

‘‘King Arthur” at the Lyceum’, *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 15 January 1895, p. 3

‘‘King Arthur” at the Lyceum’, *Pall Mall Gazette,* 14 January 1895, p. 1

‘‘King Arthur” at the Lyceum’, *Standard,* 14 January 1895, p. 3

‘‘The Road to Avalon”’, *New York Times*, 18 June 1911, p. 385

‘Lord Brougham and his Calumniators—“Letter to the Queen”’, in *The Dublin University Magazine: A Literary and Political Journal* (Dublin: Curry, 1839), January 1839, XIII, 104-111

‘Lyceum Theatre’, *Morning Post*, 14 January 1895, p. 3

‘Lyceum Theatre’, *Morning Post*, 14 January 1895, p. 3

‘Miss Terry as Guinevere’, *New York Times*, 5 November 1895, p. 5

‘Miss Terry as Guinevere’, *New York Times*, 5 November 1895, p. 5

‘Mr Comyns Carr’s ‘King Arthur’’, *Leeds Mercury,* 14 January 1895, p. 5

‘Mr Irving’s “King Arthur”’, *New York Times*, 29 January 1895, p. 4

‘Mr Irving’s Production of *King Arthur*’ *The Times*, 14 January 1895, p. 11

‘Music and Drama’, *Berrow’s Worcester Journal*, 5 January 1895, p. 6

‘New York Press on War’, *New York Times*, 3 August 1914, p. 6

‘Poetry and Plays’, *Scotsman*, 22 March 1923, p. 2

‘Recent Fiction’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 1909, p. 4

‘Review of Books’, *Victoria Magazine* (London: Faithful, 1870), February 1870, XIV, 376-83

‘The “Elaine” Pictures at the Convention’, in *Wilson’s Photographic Magazine*, ed. by Edward L. Wilson, 3 October 1891 (New York: Edward L. Wilson, 1891), XXVIII, 577-80

‘The Christmas Pantomimes and Burlesques’, *Era*, 3 January 1864, Gratis Supplement, n. pag.

‘The Comyns and Goin’s of Arthur’, *Punch*, January 26 1895, in *Punch or the London Charivari*, CVIII, 37

‘The Last Burlesque at the New Strand’, *Examiner*, 15 September 1839, p. 586

The Gentleman's Magazine: And Historical Chronicle. For the Year MDCCXCII. (London: Nichols, 1792)

‘The Literary Examiner’, *The Examiner*, 4 March 1848, no pag.

The Liverpool Mercury, and Lancaster General Advertiser, Friday, March 3, 1843

‘The Music of “King Arthur”’, *Graphic*, 12 January 1895, p. 34

‘The President Sees Henry Irving’, *Washington Post*, 18 January 1896, p. 4

‘The Production of “King Arthur”’, *Sketch*, 16 January 1895, in *The Sketch: October 31 1894 to January 23 1895* (London: Ingram, [n.d]), VIII, 548

‘The Theatrical Week’, *New York Times*, 10 November 1895, p. 12

‘The Tournament’, *The Times*, 29 August 1839, p. 3

‘Theatrical and Musical Intelligence’, *Morning Post*, 7 January 1895, p. 3

‘Wormsley Tournament’, *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 15 August 1840

Tournament at Eglinton Castle, Aug. 30, 1839 (London: Day, 1840)

Ahern, Stephen, ‘Listening to Guinevere: Female Agency and the Politics of Chivalry in Tennyson’s *Idylls*’, *Studies in Philology*, 101 (Winter, 2004), 88-112

Babil, ‘King Arthur at the Lyceum’, *Western Mail*, 2 February 1895, p. 2

E.C.H., ‘Warriors’, *Manchester Guardian*, 9 July 1937, p. 7

Christensen, Peter G.,‘Clemence Housman’s Attack on King Arthur in *The Life of Sir Aglovale de Galis*’, *Housman Society Journal*, 31 (2005), 63-88

Crowder, Richard, ‘“Here are the men...”; E.A. Robinson’s Male Character Types’, *New England Quarterly*, 18 (September 1945), 346-67

Donaldson, Scott, ‘The Alien Pity: A Study of Character in E.A. Robinson’s Poetry’, *American Literature*, 38 (May, 1966), 219-229

Fisher, Benjamin Franklin IV, ‘King Arthur Plays from the 1890s’, *Victorian Poetry*, 28 (1990), 153-176

Fitzgerald, Percy, ‘The True Principles of Stage Scenery’, *Journal of the Society of Arts*, (May 3 1901), in *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 49 (London: Bell, 1901), 445-53

Gilbert, Elliot L., ‘The Female King: Tennyson’s Arthurian Apocalypse’, *PMLA*, 98 (Oct., 1983), 863-878

Goodman, Jennifer R., ‘The Last of Avalon: Henry Irving’s *King Arthur* of 1895’, *Harvard Library Bulletin*, ed. by Kenneth E. Carpenter, 32 (Summer 1984), 239-55

Harty, Kevin J., 'King Arthur Goes to War (Singing, Dancing, and Cracking Jokes): Marcel Varnel's 1942 Film *King Arthur was a Gentleman*', *Arthuriana*, 14 (Winter 2004), 17-25

H.G., '"Arthur" By Laurence Binyon', *Observer*, 18 March 1923, p. 11

Housman, Laurence, 'A Story of Truth Without Honour', *The Housman Society Journal*, 33 (2007), 40-45

Huff Cline, Ruth, *The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages*, *Speculum*, 20 (April 1945), 204-11

Hutton, Clare, '"The Promise of Literature in the Coming Days:" The Best Hundred Irish Books Controversy of 1886', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 39 (September 2011), 581-92

[Knowles, J. T.], 'The Meaning of Mr Tennyson's "King Arthur"', *Contemporary Review*, 21 (December 1872), 939-48

Kozicki, Henry, 'Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* as Tragic Drama', *Victorian Poetry*, 4 (Winter, 1966), 15-20

Lupack, Alan, 'Popular Images Derived from Tennyson's Arthurian Poems', *Arthuriana*, 21 (Summer 2011), 90-118

——, 'The Once and Future King: The Book That Grows Up', *Arthuriana*, 11.3 (Fall 2001), 103-114

Mallen, Richard D., 'The "Crowned Republic" of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*', *Victorian Poetry*, 37. 3 (Fall, 1999), 275-290

Malone, Kemp, 'Artorius', *Modern Philology*, 22 (1925), pp. 367-74

Marcel, Joyce, 'Profiles in Business: Steven Voigt: King Arthur Flour', in *Vermont Business Magazine*, 1 December, 2002 <

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3675/is_200212/ai_n9160698/pg_3/?tag=content;col1> [accessed 29 September 2011]

McNary, Sarah F., 'Beowulf and Arthur as English Ideals', *Poet-Lore: A Quarterly of World Literature,* 6.2 (1894), 528-36

Monroe, Harriet, 'Comment: Edwin Arlington Robinson', *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, 25 (January 1925), 206-17

——, 'Comment: Robinson as Man and Poet', *Poetry*, 46 (June 1935), 150-7

Perrine, Laurence, 'Contemporary Reference of Robinson's Arthurian Poems', *Twentieth Century Literature,* 8 (April 1962), 74-82

Pipkin, Edith, 'The Arthur of Edwin Arlington Robinson', *English Journal*, 19 (March 1930), 183-95

Poulson, Christine, 'Costume Designs by Burne-Jones for Irving's Production of "King Arthur,"' *Burlington Magazine*, 128 (1986), 18-25

Priestley, F.E.L., 'Tennyson's Idylls', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 19 (October 1950), 35-49

Reed, Edward Bliss, '*Merlin*', *Yale Review*, 6 (July 1917), 863-4

Reid, William, '"Such Sights as Youthful Poets Dream": The Earl of Eglinton's Tournament and Society", *Livrustkammaren: Journal of the Royal Armoury* (1991-2), 104-28

Scheerer, Constance, 'Looking Past Romanticism: Clemence Housman's Presentation of the Romantic Hero', *Housman Society Journal*, 5 (1979), 20-26

Simpson, Roger, 'King Arthur in World War Two Poetry: His Finest Hour?', *Arthuriana,* 13. 1 (Spring 2003), 66-91

White, Melvin R., 'Thomas Wood Stevens: Creative Pioneer', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 3. 4 (December 1951), 280-293

ii. Books

Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: A Dictionary of the Welsh Language, 4 vols (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1950-2002)

Alldritt, Keith, *David Jones: Writer and Artist* (London: Constable, 2003)

Ammer, Christine, *The American Dictionary of Idioms* (Boston, MA: Mifflin, 1997)

Anderson, David A., *Images of America: King Arthur Flour Company* (Charleston SC: Arcadia, 2002)

Anderson, Douglas A., introduction, Clemence Housman, *The Life of Sir Aglovale de Galis* (Oakland: Green Knight, 2000), pp. 5-10

Anstruther, Ian, *The Knight and the Umbrella: An Account of the Eglinton Tournament 1839* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1986)

Baden-Powell, R.S.S., *Yarns for Boy Scouts: Told Round the Camp Fire* (London: Pearson, 1909)

Barber, Richard, *King Arthur: Hero and Legend*, 3rd edn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986)

Barnard, Julian, *Victorian Ceramic Tiles* (London: Cassell, 1972), repr. 1979

Bartram, Michael, *The Pre-Raphaelite Camera: Aspects of Victorian Photography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985)

Beckson, Karl, *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1992)

[Bentham, Jeremy], preface, *A Fragment on Government: Being an Examination of What is Delivered, on the Subject of Government in General, in the Introduction to Sir William Blackstone's Commentaries: With a Preface, in which is Given a Critique on the Work at Large* (London: Payne, Emily, and Brooks, 1776)

Bontekoe, Ron, *The Nature of Dignity* (Plymouth: Lexington, 2008)

Booth, Michael R., 'Melodrama and Pantomime', in *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850-1910* (Boston: Paul, 1981), pp. 60-92

Brands, H.W., *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002)

Braudy, Leo, *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity* (New York: Knopf, 2003)

Brewer, Derek, 'The Compulsions of Honour', in *From Arabye to Engelond: Medieval Studies in Honour of Mahmoud Manzalaoui on his 75th Birthday* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999), pp. 75-92

Brewer, Elisabeth, *T.H. White's The Once and Future King* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993)

Brooks, David, *The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics, 1899-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)

Bryden, Inga, *Reinventing King Arthur: The Arthurian Legends in Victorian Culture* (London: Aldershot, 2005)

Buckley, Jerome Hamilton, *Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 172.

Bulwer Lytton, Edward, 'The Faults of Recent Poets', *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, January 1833, pp. 69-74

Carey, John, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880—1939* (London: Faber, 1992)

[Carr, Alice], *Mrs J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences*, ed. by Eve Adam (London: Hutchinson, [n.d.])

Chapman, Susan Elizabeth, 'A Study of the Genre of T.H. White's Arthurian Books' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, 1988)

Cobley, Evelyn, *Representing War: Form and Ideology in First World War Narratives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993)

Cochran, Rebecca, 'Edwin Arlington Robinson's Arthurian Poems: Studies in Medievalisms?', *Arthurian Interpretations*, 3 (Fall 1988), 49-60

Collingwood, R.G., and J. N. L Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936)

[Courthope, William John], *The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon and of the Lifting of Lyonnesse: A Chronicle of the Round Table Communicated by Geoffrey of Monmouth* (London: Murray,1904)

Craik, George L., *A Compendious History of English Literature, and of the English Language, from the Norman Conquest*, 2 vols (New York: Scribner, 1863)

Davis, Charles T., 'Image Patterns in the Poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson', *College English*, 22 (March 1961), 380-86

Dilworth, Thomas, *Reading David Jones* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008)

Donaldson, Scott, *Edwin Arlington Robinson: A Poet's Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

Doren, Mark Van, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York: Literary Guild of America, 1927)

Eggers, J. Philip, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'* (New York: New York University Press, 1971)

Findlater, Richard, *Six Great Actors* (London: Hamilton, 1957) Finkel, Alicia, *Romantic Stages: Set and Costume Design in Victorian England* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1996)

Fitzgerald, Penelope, *Edward Burne-Jones* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2003)

Foucault, Michel, 'What is an Author?' , trans. Josué v. Harari, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984)

Fox-Friedman, Jeanne, 'The Chivalric Order for Children: Arthur's Return in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-century America', in *King Arthur's Modern Return*, ed. by Debra N. Mancoff (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 137-57

Frantzen, Allen J., *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004)

Fussell, Paul, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975)

Gallix, François, *T.H. White: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986)

Garrett, Greg, *Holy Superheroes!: Exploring the Sacred in Comics, Graphic Novels, and Film* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008)

Girouard, Mark, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981)

Gresswell, Albert, 'Mental Health of the Psychic', *Light: A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research*, 32, (10 February 1912), 65

Hardy, Thomas and Florence, *The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2007)

Harrison, Martin, and Bill Waters, *Burne-Jones*, 2nd edn (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1989)

Hart, Captain B.H. Liddell, 'Medieval Cavalry and Modern Tanks', in *The English Review* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1925), XLI, 83-96

Hart, James D., *The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, [1950])

Henry, Alexander, 'Type', *A Glossary of Scientific Terms for General Use* (London: Walton, 1861), p. 194

Hodgson, Amanda, *The Romances of William Morris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

Hollander, Robert, 'Typology and Secular Literature: Some Medieval Problems and Examples', in *Literary Uses of Typology: From the Late Middle Ages to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977)

Holmes, Richard, 'The Last Hurrah: Cavalry on the Western Front, August-September 1914', in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, ed. by Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (London: Cooper, 1996)

Horne, Thomas Hartwell, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, (London: Davies, 1814)

Houghton, Walter E., *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1890* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1957)

Houston, Gail Turley, *Royalties: The Queen and Victorian Writers* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999)

Hoyle, Brian, *The Cinema of John Boorman* (London: Scarecrow, 2012)

Hughes, Alan, 'Henry Irving's Artistic Use of Stage Lighting', *Theatre Notebook*, 33 (1979), 100-9

Hughes, Thomas, *The Manliness of Christ* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1880)

Hunter, Jerry, *Sons of Arthur, Children of Lincoln: Welsh Writing from the American Civil War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007)

Hynes, Samuel, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992)

Irving, Laurence, *Henry Irving: The Actor and His World* (London: Faber, 1951)

Isola, Zia, 'Defending the Domestic: Arthurian Tropes and the American Dream', in *King Arthur in Popular Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth S. Sklar and Donald L. Hoffman (Jefferson: McFarland, 2002), pp. 24-35

James, Merlin, *David Jones 1895-1974: A Map of the Artist's Mind* (London: Humphries, 1995)

Kantorowicz, Ernst H., *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Originally published 1957

Kirshen, Doug, 'Embodiment of the King: Henry Irving's *King Arthur*', in *Henry Irving: A Re-Evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager*, ed. by Richard Foulkes (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 65-85

Lacy, Norris J., 'King Arthur Goes to War', in *King Arthur's Modern Return*, ed. by Debra N. Mancoff (New York and London: Garland,1998), pp. 159-69

Lacy, Norris J., 'Mythopoeia in Excalibur', in *Cinema Arthuriana: Twenty Essays*, rev. edn, ed. by Kevin J. Harty (Jefferson: McFarland, 2002), pp. 34-43

Landow, George P., *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought* (Boston, London and Henley: Paul, 1980)

Larrington, Carolyne, *King Arthur's Enchantresses: Morgan and Her Sisters in Arthurian Tradition* (London and New York: Tauris, 2006)

Lears, T. J. Jackson, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1983)

Lemieux, Gloria A., 'The King Arthur Flour Company', *International Directory of Company Histories* (Farrington Hills: St Jame's Press, 2000) XXXI, 292-5

Lewis, C.S., *A Preface to Paradise Lost: Being the Ballard Matthews Lectures Delivered at University College, North Wales, 1941, Revised and Enlarged* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2005)

Lupack, Alan and Barbara, *King Arthur in America* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999)

Machann, Clinton, *Masculinity in Four Victorian Epics: A Darwinist Reading* (Farnham UK and Burlington USA: Ashgate, 2010)

McFarlane, James, 'The Mind of Modernism', *Modernism: 1890-1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (London: Penguin, 1976)

McLoughlin, Kate, *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from 'the Iliad' to Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Mayer, David, 'Encountering Melodrama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. by Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 145-63

Miles, Jonathan, *Backgrounds to David Jones: A Study in Sources and Drafts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990)

Miles, Jonathan, and Derek Shiel, *David Jones: The Maker Unmade* (Bridgend: Seren, 1995)

Miller, Thomas, *History of the Anglo-Saxons: From the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest. Compiled from the Best Authorities, Including Sharon Turner*, 3rd edn (London: Bohn, 1861)

Mitchell, Leslie, *Bulwer Lytton: The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Man of Letters* (Hambledon and London: Macmillan, 2003)

Moore, Jerrold Northrop, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)

Morris, Rosemary, *The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1982)

Nastali, Daniel P. and Phillip C. Boardman, *The Arthurian Annals: The Tradition in English from 1250 to 2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Neff, Emery, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (London: Methuen, 1948)

Nicolson, Harold, *Tennyson: Aspects of his Life, Character and Poetry* (New York: Books for Libraries, 1972)

Oakley, Elizabeth, *Inseparable Siblings: A Portrait of Clemence and Laurence Housman* (Studley: Brewin, 2009)

OED Online, Oxford University Press

Osterweis, Rollin G., *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949)

Pollard, A.W., 'Bibliographical Note', in Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and of his Noble Knights of the Round Table*, ed. by A.W. Pollard, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1900)

Pollock, Sir Frederick, and Frederick William Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Boston: Little, Brown, 1895)

Radulescu, Raluca, *The Gentry Context for Malory's Morte Darthur* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003)

Redman, Ben Ray, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York: McBride, 1926)

Reed, John R., *Victorian Conventions* ([Athens]: Ohio University Press, 1975)

Ricks, Christopher, *Tennyson* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989)

Riede, David G., *Allegories of One's Own Mind: Melancholy in Victorian Poetry* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005)

Roberts, Adam, *Silk and Potatoes: Contemporary Arthurian Fantasy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998)

Robinson, H.P., 'Impossible Photography,' *The Photographic Quarterly*, 3 (1892), 96-105

Schmolke-Hasselmann, Beate, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*, trans. by Margaret and Roger Middleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Shaw, George Bernard, *Our Theatre in the Nineties: Criticism Contributed Week by Week to the Saturday Review from January 1895 to May 1898* (London: Constable, [1932])

Simcox, Kenneth, 'Hospital Barge', 2001, *Wilfred Owen Association* < http://www.wilfredowen.org.uk/poetry/hospital-barge> [accessed 28 January 2014]

Simpson, Roger, *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-1849* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990)

——, *Radio Camelot: Arthurian Legends on the BBC, 1922-2005* (Cambridge: D.S,. Brewer, 2005)

Simson, Lady [Leena Ashwell], 'Irving as King Arthur', in *We Saw Him Act: A Symposium of the Art of Sir Henry Irving*, ed. by H.A. Saintsbury and Cecil Palmer (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 325-31

Smith, Chard Powers, *Where the Light Falls: A Portrait of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1965)

Smith, Goldwin, 'War as a Moral Medicine', *The Atlantic Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics*, vol. 86 (December 1900), 735-37

Sprague, Kurth, *T.H. White's Troubled Heart: Women in the Once and Future King* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007)

Starr, Nathan Comfort, *King Arthur Today: The Arthurian Legend in English and American Literature 1901-53* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1954)

Stevens, Thomas Wood, 'King Arthur in Michigan', in *The Reader: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine,* vol. 8, July 1906—November 1906 (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill), vol 8, 612-20

Stevenson, Sara, and Helen Bennett, *Van Dyck in Check Trousers: Fancy Dress in Art and Life 1700-1900* ([n.p.]: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1978)

Stick, Philip, 'John Boorman's Merlin', *Sight and Sound,* 49.3 (Summer 1980), 168-71

Stoker, Bram, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1906)

Strachey, Sir Edward, introduction, *The Globe Edition. Morte Darthur: Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and his Noble Knights of the Round Table* (London: Macmillan, 1868), pp. vii-xxxvii

Stuhmiller, Jacqueline, '*Iudicium Dei, iudicium fortunae*: Trial by Combat in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*', *Speculum* 81.2 (April 2006), 427-462

[Swinburne, Algernon Charles], 'Under the Microscope', in *Swinburne Replies*, ed. by Clyde Kenneth Hyder (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966), pp. 35-88

Thomas, W. Moy, *King Arthur*, *Graphic*, 19 January 1895, p. 70

Trotter, David, *The English Novel in History 1895-1920* (London: Routledge, 1993)

Tucker, Herbert F., 'Epic', in *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman, and Antony H. Harrison (N.P.: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), *Blackwell Reference Online* <http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631222071_chunk_g97806312220715> [accessed 14 April 2013]

Tucker, Herbert F., *Epic: Britain's Heroic Muse 1790-1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Turner, Sharon, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1807)

Vinaver, Eugène, *Malory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929)

——, *Malory's* Morte Darthur *in the Light of a Recent Discovery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1935)

Walsh, Walter, 'Tennyson's Great Allegory', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1893, CCLXXIV, 500-7

Ward, Elizabeth, *David Jones: Mythmaker* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983)

Warner, Sylvia Townsend, *T.H. White: A Biography* (London: Cape, 1967)

Watkins, Harold, *The Art of Gerald Moira* (London: Dickens, [1922])

Watts, Karen, 'The Eglinton Tournament and the Revival of Chivalry', in *The Eglinton Tournament of 1839* (Leeds: Royal Armouries, 2009), p. 21

Wearing, J.P., *The London Stage 1890-1899: A Calendar of Plays and Players,* 2 vols (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976)

Wilkinson, Marguerite, 'Mr. Robinson's New Arthurian Poem', *New York Times*, 11 April 1920, p. 170

Wills, Freeman, *W.G. Wills: Dramatist and Painter* (New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1898)

Winters, Yvor, *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, rev. ed. (New York: New Directions, 1971)

Wolfe, Humbert, 'The Soul in Dark Places', *Observer*, 27 June 1937, p. 10

Womack, Anne, 'Chivalric Values as an Educative Force in *The Once and Future King*', in *Critical Essays on T.H. White, English Writer, 1906-1964*, ed. by Gill Davies, David Malcolm, and John Simons (Lewiston; Lampeter: Mellen, 2008), pp. 55-70

Woolf, Virginia, 'Julia Margaret Cameron', in *Literature & Photography Interactions, 1840-1990: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Jane M Rabb (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 86-92

Yeats, W.B., 'The Freedom of the Drama', *United Irishman*, 1 November 1902, p. 5

Young, Stark, 'Translations', *The Theater* (New York: Doran, 1927)