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Young Knights of the Empire: The Impact of Chivalry on Literature and Propaganda of the First World War

Ashley Somogyi

Submitted in Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of English Studies
Durham University
2018

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List of Abbreviations

BHW – *The Book of the Happy Warrior* by Sir Henry Newbolt

BOC – *Book of Chivalry* by Geoffroi de Charny

BOOC – *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* by Ramon Llull

BST – *Mr. Britling Sees it Through* by H. G. Wells

EGW – 'The Evil and the Good of War' by Gilbert Murray

EW – *Echoes of War* by J. M. Barrie

FHT – *The First Hundred Thousand* by Ian Hay

GM – *Greenmantle* by John Buchan

HWBR – 'How Can War Ever Be Right' by Gilbert Murray

KS – *Khaki Soldiers and Other Poems for Children* by Muriel Kenny

LD – *Le Morte Darthur* by Sir Thomas Malory

NW – 'The New Word' by J. M. Barrie

OLM – 'Old Lady Shows Her Medals' by J. M. Barrie

PE – *Parade's End* by Ford Maddox Ford

RC – *The Roll Call* by Arnold Bennett

SC – *Stalky & CO.* by Rudyard Kipling

SFB – *Scouting for Boys* by Lord Robert Baden-Powell

TBS – *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes

TE – *Tell England* by Ernest Raymond

TOW – 'The Turmoil of War' by Gilbert Murray

WPB – War Propaganda Bureau

WRV – 'A Well-Remembered Voice' by J. M. Barrie

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Beyond my studies, the constant support of my family and friends throughout my academic career has given me the strength to persevere and the determination to undertake and complete my thesis.

Dedication

In loving memory of my father and the continued love of my family.

Abstract

The re-emergence of chivalry in the mid-eighteenth century fundamentally altered Britain's perception of etiquette, duty, masculinity and the ideology surrounding war. This thesis demonstrates the importance and influence of chivalry's persistence before, during and after World War One. By examining the formative role of chivalry in education and literature in the nineteenth century, we see how it becomes encoded in British culture, contributing not simply to a romanticised idea of war, but becoming an inextricable part of British identity. While many scholars would argue against the continued use or popularity of chivalry during WWI, condemning its role in glamourising conflict, this work demonstrates how organisations such as the War Propaganda Bureau, the Boy Scouts and the public school system strove to encourage the citizens of war-time Britain to adopt the central tenets of chivalry (honour, bravery and self-sacrifice), declaring them crucial to morale and victory. This work evidences how chivalry did not simply survive WWI but by altering the vocabulary and images associated with it, adapted to the demands of Britain's wartime and post-war environment. Through critical analysis of literature ranging from poetry and plays to pamphlets and meeting minutes, this thesis demonstrates how the central tenets of chivalry are not only ingrained in the British response to war, but helped to provide moral justification of violence, created brotherhood between soldiers, engendered solidarity on the Home Front, and provided an ethical framework through which combatants and non-combatants could understand the need for war. World War One did not destroy chivalry; rather it was refashioned to make a historicizing connection to a legacy of heroism which continues in modern British nationalism, duty and morality.

Introduction

World War One created a twentieth-century, cultural template that established the images, rituals, and social and political functions of war commemoration. The First World War touched all aspects of life, not the least of which was the literary world. For a war that has been recognized as producing more poetry than any other modern conflict, a relatively small contingent of authors has become synonymous with the First World War experience. These poets are household names in Britain; their works are taught in schools, their poetry or prose recited at memorial services and their lives extensively researched and scrutinised. The experience of war as rendered by men such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen has in many ways been taken as the authoritative and definitive interpretation of conflict experience in public commemoration and remembrance. As Santanu Das points out, 'War poetry, as represented by a small group of "anti-war" soldier-poets, has come to dominate First World War memory.'[1] These authors espouse a disillusioned view of war, one that lambasts notions of honour and bravery and instead offers harrowingly raw and violent insight into the trauma of life at the Front. Yet why, after roughly a century of remembrance, research and discussion does this relatively small group of writers continue to dominate the public perception of the war? For several decades academics have worked to broaden scholarly perceptions of the diversity of literary responses to war but, as of yet, have not had a substantial impact on the public. In response to this, Aaron J. Cohen notes that '[m]odern memory is not what people remember; it consists of the public icons and symbols of the past that focus today's collective identity: the people and events […] concepts or books

[1] Santanu Das, 'Reframing First World War Poetry: An Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to: The Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014) 3-34, at p. 4.

and works of art that represent the past in everyday social, cultural, and political life.'[2] These 'icons' are such powerful figures of memory in part because of their position and capacity to garner attention and influence among their own contemporaries. They have been linked with making transparent the destructive nature of war, transforming war's role in contemporary understanding and engendering a new treatment and engagement with conflict. They offered a perspective of war that was not in all instances appreciated in terms of literary merit. In fact, poetry and literature espousing the disillusioned view of war was frequently rejected, found to be contrary to patriotic aims or against decorum, it presented a viewpoint that was contrary to popular notions of nationalism and masculinity. As Catriona Pennell notes, once war was declared, 'ordinary people immediately and voluntarily dealt with anti-war opinion'.[3] Overtly anti-war in his *Autobiography* Bertrand Russell further notes the outrage of his friend who vows to 'cut' those who sway from the 'jingo' cause.[4] While admittedly an extreme reaction, Russell's friend does demonstrate the passion some individuals felt towards Britain's decision to enter the war. Yet the resonance that such works found among soldiers could not be ignored. Most famous of these rejections in the post-war environment is perhaps William Butler Yeats's refusal to include Owen in his 1936 *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* declaring:

> I have a distaste for certain poems written in the midst of the great war […]. The writers of these poems were invariably officers of exceptional courage and capacity, one a man constantly selected for dangerous work, all, I think, had the Military Cross; their letters are vivid and humorous, they were not without joy— for all skill is joyful — but felt bound, in the words of the best known, to plead the suffering of their men. In poems that had for a time considerable fame, written in the first person, they made that suffering their own. I have rejected these poems for the same reason that made Arnold withdraw his *Empedocles on Etna* from circulation; passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies; in Greece the tragic chorus danced.[5]

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[2] Aaron Cohen, *Imagining the Unimaginable: World War, Modern Art, & the Politics of Public Culture in Russia, 1914-1917* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), p. 2.
[3] Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 45.
[4] Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 10.
[5] W. B. Yeats ed., *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), xxxiv.

Among disillusioned veterans after the war, these individuals stood out from the voluminous stacks of poems that came across the desks of editors because they, more often than not, were deemed to be of *literary* merit though not always beneficial to war aims. While an unprecedented number of individuals took to penning lines of verse to describe their wartime experiences, only a very small number, both contemporarily and today, are considered to be 'good poets'. Certainly the emotions which engendered this incredible influx of poetry were genuine, but only a minute selection were deemed of 'merit'. As Catherine Reilly's bibliographical *English Poetry of the First World War* indicates, of the roughly 2,225 from Britain and Ireland writing war poetry, only handful are remembered today.[6] When asked by Santanu Das 'What […] is "war poetry"? When does a poem become a "war poem"?', Michael Longley replied, 'First of all, it has to be a *good* poem.'[7] Yet, even this qualification may not be satisfactory. Paul Fussell, author of the seminal text, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, declared, 'Sassoon, Graves, and Blunden are clearly writers of the second rank.'[8] This assumes, however, that poetry was always written for the purpose of public consumption, when in fact much of it was a private and personal expression and thus its merit is ephemeral. In the same conversation with Das and Longley, Andrew Motion added that 'war poetry' is 'about trench fighting, it's the reversal of the pastoral tradition in which the old comforts of beautiful landscape, birdsong, poppies, flowers are found to have lost their consoling power.' He more importantly asserts, 'it's about being, frightened, displaced, or bored.'[9] Yet I would challenge this requirement as overly limiting in that, by implication, this reduces the genre down to the

[6] Catherine Reilly, *English Poetry of the First World War: A Bibliography* (London: George Prior, 1978), p. xix.
[7] Santanu Das, ed., 'War Poetry: A Conversation', *Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 257-67, at p. 258
[8] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 313-14.
[9] Das, 'Conversation', p. 259

disillusioned school of war poetry. As Das points out, the volume of war poetry, and in fact, the use of the term itself is 'partly the result of a conjunction of particular historical factors: a late Victorian culture of heroism and patriotism, a dominant public school ethos among the officer classes as well as the more general spread of education.'[10] The cultural environment made this surplus of literary expression not just the domain of the embittered soldier but as John Stallworthy notes, 'as we continue to broaden and engage with a greater range of material "war poetry" comes to include poetry about and written on the Home Front, written by women, dissenters and non-English.'[11] Critics such as Vivien Noakes, Tim Kendall, Simon Featherstone, and Catherine Reilly was contributed greatly to the broadening of the canon, a process that continues with renewed vigor as we mark the centenary of the war.[12]

This thesis examines how the literature and ethos taught by Britain's most elite schools and espoused by much of the middle and upper classes were disseminated into wider aspects of British culture and were a key component in encouraging enlistment and maintaining morale both at home and at the Front. This is not to say that chivalry successfully inundated all aspects of life in wartime Britain — there was a considerable effort to move away from the trappings of chivalry and romanticized war — but the central tenets of chivalry continued to be valued and as such found expression in poetry, literature and propaganda through an amended vocabulary and means of description. By exploring the rediscovery, development and dissemination of these ideas in the years preceding the war, this thesis will demonstrate their continued relevance and significance throughout and after the conclusion of the First World War.

[10] Santanu Das, 'Reframing First World War Poetry: An Introduction', *Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014) 3- 35, at p. 5.
[11] Das, 'Conversation', p. 260.
[12] Ibid; Das, 'Reframing', p. 6.

It is of course impossible to say that any one interpretation of the war can stand as representative of the vast number of experiences and perspectives recorded. Consequently, this thesis will begin by limiting its analysis chiefly to those who have produced works that have enjoyed significant critical and popular success and are considered to have attended elite educational institutions in Britain. The purpose of this is threefold: firstly, chivalry was, by its very nature, elitist. It was constructed by the elite (either the warrior class or clergy) for the elite.[13] As Chapters One and Two will demonstrate, when chivalry was rediscovered in the eighteenth century, it was immediately subsumed into the culture of Britain's upper and middle classes and used as a means to define social etiquette and propriety. Secondly, tenets of chivalry became synonymous with notions of what a gentleman was (something that will be defined and closely examined in later chapters) and masculinity. Gentlemanly conduct was something either taught in schools or acquired through social context. The primary objective of schools in the years preceding the war was the education of a gentleman, meaning training him to *be* a gentleman rather than ensuring his academic development. Thirdly, chivalric ideas relating to war shaped many men's perception of what war would be like and also contributed significantly to disillusionment. However, it was also of paramount importance to maintaining wartime morale, justifying violence, and finding merit in death which will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four. Those receiving education in gentlemanly chivalric conduct and able to financially, socially and ethically pursue a lifestyle that could reflect it had the closest interaction with

[13] Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy,1066-1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 22; Brown, 'Status of the Norman Knight', *Anglo-Norman Warfare: Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Military Organization and Warfare* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 128-42, at pp.134-40.

romanticized notions of war. Such cultural stimulation was a luxury most individuals of the working classes could not easily afford.

This thesis aims to demonstrate the enduring influence of chivalry on British culture as it relates to the First World War. Britain's warrior identity and connection to foundational legends of chivalric figures such as King Arthur, Saint George, and others were a source of inspiration and helped promote the image of British soldiers as chivalric heroes. War did not remove chivalry but rather refashioned it in such a manner as to modernise it and create new relevance in order that it continue within patriotism, duty, morality and politeness for men were

> fired by the same shining ideals, the same hatred of cruelty and scorn of wrong, the same selfless love of country, and [they] have died for these things with a chivalry and courage that are of no school but all of the schools, that are of no class, no limited section of the community, but are in the very blood and bones of our people, in the large tradition of the race.[14]

In order to have a full understanding of the significance of chivalry to the historical and literary context of British society during the First World War and its surrounding years, it is necessary to understand the central tenets and representations of chivalry in its medieval form. Since its emergence as both an ideal and practice in the twelfth century, chivalry has occupied a particular place in British identity, at times derided but inevitably returned to as a source of historicity and pride. It evokes romantic images and allows individuals to lay claim, however tenuously, to a tradition of describing conflict and viewing war in heroic and gallant terms that is in many ways particularly British. As Barbara Tuchman aptly comments on this tradition,

> No nation has ever produced a military history of such verbal nobility as the British. Retreat or advance, win or lose, blunder or bravery, murderous folly or unyielding resolution, all emerge alike clothed in dignity and touched with glory. Every engagement is gallant, every battle a decisive action. […] Everyone is splendid: soldiers are staunch, commanders cool, the fighting magnificent. Whatever the fiasco, aplomb is unbroken. Mistakes, failures, stupidities, or other causes of disaster mysteriously vanish. Disasters are recorded with care and pride and become transmuted into things of beauty […] other nations attempt but never quite achieve the same self-esteem.[15]

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[14] Arthur St. John Adcock, *For Remembrance: Soldier Poets Who Have Fallen in the War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), p. 171.
[15] Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1971), p. 557.

Chivalry, as it was practiced or described in the Middle Ages, is necessarily different from the form which Victorians and Edwardians imagined and touted. Their understanding was derived from medieval poems, literature and a fragmented understanding of history; and as such chivalry as it was reinvented in the mid-seventeen hundreds tended to gloss over the brutality and chaos of medieval times, focusing instead on the gallantry and romance that appealed to a more modern civilized audience. Despite this romanticism, Victorian medievalism still adhered to some of the most central tenets of chivalry: honour, brotherhood and sacrifice. Within these ideals fell many other key principles that dictated morality and conduct, thus helping to define correct behaviour with aspiring members of the middle and upper classes. With this in mind, I turn briefly to the Middle Ages in order to explain and explore the key facets of chivalry which will reemerge in the mid-eighteenth century to have a fundamental impact on the education, perception, and mentality of men going to war in 1914.

Central Tenets of Chivalry

This thesis is primarily concerned with the chivalric themes of honour (including loyalty and brotherhood), bravery, sacrifice, and courtesy (including mercy and the treatment of women). The oaths and ethics surrounding these tenets were among the most central to governing knightly conduct and were the most prominently featured characteristics of the modern adaptation of chivalry and its transmission into gentlemanly conduct. Each of these themes will be discussed here in brief so as to provide a framework on which further chapters will be built for more in-depth exploration.

Knights, in literature and historically, were embodiments of chivalry and symbols of bravery, honour, loyalty, courtliness (*cortoisie*), generosity (*largesse*), and mercy. They were men emblazoned with coats of arms who took to the lists or battlefields to perform deeds of valour in the pursuit of fame and fortune in defence of love, king, God and their code of honour. While the precise origins of historical chivalry are obscure, Stephen Jaeger argues it arose from a need to civilise a barbaric time, acting as a restraint on violent actions and improving treatment of women and weaker individuals.[16] Chivalric ideals were shaped in response to the heady times of political and cultural transition that were the eleventh and twelfth centuries. During and after this period numerous works were written detailing the duties and required conduct of knighthood. Many drew inspiration from older, Roman, military sources such as Vegetius's *De Re Militari* and didactic or scholarly, classical sources as well as medieval handbooks like the *Book of Chivalry* (*BOC*) written by the fourteenth-century French knight, Geoffroi de Charny, and *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* (*BOOC*), by the Majorcan, Ramon Llull, the contents and impact of which will be discussed in Chapters Two and Four.[17] As Richard Barber explains, the chivalry of real life and the chivalry of literature were closely linked, but not identical:

> One of the great problems for the historian of chivalry is the extent to which our knowledge of the subject relies on literary evidence, which is often very difficult to translate convincingly into reality. Literature continued to inspire real chivalric events, such as tournaments where knights adopted Arthurian names and guises. But there was also a distinct literary tradition of chivalry, an idealization of knightly life, which was to some extent dependent on historical chivalry. We can distinguish three strands: military chivalry, courtly love, and spiritual chivalry. [18]

[16] C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).
[17] Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, ed. by William Adams, Robert, Caxton (Huntsville, TX: Sam Houston State University Press, 1991); Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry de Geoffroi de Charny: Text, Body and Translation*, ed. by Richard and Elspeth Kennedy Kauper, trans. by Elspeth Kennedy (Philidephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Christopher Allmand, 'The "De Re Militari" of Vegetius in the Middle Ages and Renaissance', in *Writing War: Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare*, ed. by Corinne J. Saunders, Françoise H. M. Le Saux, and Thomas Neil (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004); Lisa Robeson, 'Noble Knights and "Mischievous War": The Rhetoric of War in Malory 's "Le Morte Darthur"', *Arthuriana*, 13.3 (2003), 10-35.
[18] Richard Barber, 'Chivalry and the Morte Darthur', in *A Companion to Malory*, ed. by Elizabeth Archibald and A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 19-35, at pp. 25-26.

There is no doubt that knights were influenced by the extensive body of romance literature that circulated during the twelfth century. Many owned copies of these texts and they were read both for entertainment at court and privately. Elspeth Kennedy has shown that there was a 'two-way traffic' between Arthurian romance as well as *chansons de geste* and the etiquette, politics and martial practices of the men that read them.[19] Kaeuper points out that Geoffroi de Charny (1300-1356), in citing Queen Guinevere in his explanation of how knights should declare their love for ladies, indicates that he knew romances such as the Prose *Lancelot*.[20] Maurice Keen offers a substantial list of romance-inspired events including a tournament in Cyprus in 1223 where the sister of Lord Aubert de Longeval dressed as Guinevere and Count Robert of Artois as Yvain.[21] Ulrich von Lichtenstein famously rode through Europe dressed as King Arthur, challenging all who approached him in order to declare his lover the most beautiful woman in the world. In 1255 he also attempted to dazzle spectators at a tournament at Freisach by coming each day in different coloured armour, mimicking the events of *Cligès*.[22] Numerous similar occurrences indicate that knights were engaging with and incorporating aspects of chivalric romances into their lives.

Particular aspects of knightly life such as the rules of combat, courtesy, politics and mercy are reinforced by both literary and historical chivalry. Other qualities like the more dramatic forms of courtly love and the extent to which knightly life allegedly revolved around devotion to women, may have been part of knightly life, but seem unlikely to be accurate representations of real life and are more the product of idealisation and entertainment. As

[19] Richard Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 31.
[20] Richard Kaeuper, 'The Societal Role of Chivalry in Romance: Northwestern Europe', in *The Cambridge Companion ot Medieval Romance*, ed. by Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 97-114, at pp. 97-98.
[21] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 90-94.
[22] Chrétien de Troyes, 'Clingès', in *Arthurian Romances*, tr. by William W. Kibler and Carleton W. Carroll (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 123-205.

Kaeuper noted, 'no medieval writer went from one castle, tourney field, court, siege camp, battle line, or raiding party to another, observing and interviewing knights of all particular social claims to record their commonplace attitudes and beliefs,' which would help us differentiate between idealisation and reality. Consequently, medieval romance must be assessed by what it offered its audience: an idealised form of chivalry and knighthood that created aspirations, models of perfection, as well as warnings of the consequences of failing to honour the chivalric code.

Honour

Honour, the pursuit of it and its importance to social standing, reputation and self-worth, was among the most essential qualities a knight was judged by. It was the coveted reward for valorous action and essentially a form of currency. All of a knight's behaviour was meant to be conducted in a manner that would win him honour and any action that defied the chivalric code resulted in the loss of honour, much to the detriment of the knight. Charny wrote 'above all else, safeguard your own [honour]', and in doing so a knight was expected to die rather than act dishonourably (*BOC*, 71). All other requirements of chivalry were subordinate to honour and according to Llull, failure to behave honourably and defiance of the rules of chivalry were no less than the unmaking of all knighthood (*BOOC*, 47-48).

The word honour, whether to an individual, monarch or ideal, held a similar level of during WWI as it did in the medieval period. Propaganda constantly reminded individuals that *honour* compelled Britain to come to the defense of Belgium, that failing to protect the rights of smaller nations would be a *dishonour*, and that the sacrifice of soldiers must be *honoured*.[23] It would become a word intrinsically tied up, ironically, with both enlistment and remembrance

[23] David Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda and Ideas of Home and Community in First World War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8.3 (2011) 331-54, at pp. 333-34.; Pennell, *Kingdom United*, pp. 62-66.

Honour will be a topic that is broached in every chapter of this thesis because it touched so many aspects of life and could be of a deeply personal nature. As Catriona Pennell has demonstrated early responses to the war were of mixed origin. A sense of national emergency contributed to an intensification of recruitment with some 113,000 volunteering between 2 and 24 August, as well as to Kitchener's plea for recruits.[24] Shock was one of the most prominent initial responses to the outbreak of war; the *Cambridge Daily News* reported: 'It would be quite untrue to say that there was any war fever in London. The crowds in the streets are great — as great as they were at the time of the declaration of the Boer War. But the temper is really quite different…the people were not excited or demonstrative, but they were intensely interested.'[25] Schoolboy Robert Roberts wrote in his diary, 'The fourth of August 1914 caused no great burst of patriotic fervour among us. Little groups, men and women together…stood talking earnestly in the shop or at the street corner, stunned a little by the enormity of events.' [26] However, the language of fervour, romance and spirit which has come to exemplify, however mistaken, the initial enthusiasm for enlistment was not wholly absent. This pro-war rhetoric was not simply the product of a successful propaganda campaign but was also reflected in numerous diaries and letters indicating that average people were expressing their ideas and opinions in similar language to official reports and pamphlets.[27] As Pennell states, 'Ordinary people used 'big words' like honour, justice, defence, righteousness, and therefore the high diction of 1914 was speaking to a mood, not dictating it.'[28] As the war went on, the motivations for enlistment grew more – some men

[24] Pennell, *Kingdom United,* p. 52.
[25] *Cambridge Daily News*, 5 August 1914.
[26] Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), p. 186.
[27] See: Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain and Public Discourse* (Houdmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[28] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 64.

enlisted because of romanticised notions of combat, some due to ideas of masculine responsibility, others due to a sense of moral obligation or to preserve their personal honour and out of dread of the label 'coward', and others still out of necessity to earn a living during a time of economic uncertainty. Pennell's study of Britain's response to war, *A Kingdom United*, dispels myths about the immediacy of war fervor, demonstrating the more varied and contemplative motivations for enlistment beyond what has become the common cultural memory of blind naivety and manipulated perception of war.[29] Similarly, Adrian Gregory investigation of historical understanding and popular memory focuses more on the reactions and factors influencing the home front (propaganda, volunteering, ideas of sacrifice and senses of crisis) adds further nuance to our understanding of the initial response to war and the creation of modern memory.[30] Further seminal works such as Dan Todman's, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* and Jessica Meyer's *Men of War* have helped broaden both the scope of the canon of First World literature as well as our understanding of soldier's responses and civilian engagement with the war.[31]

As Chapter Three will show, exploiting the notion of honour was one of the War Propaganda Bureau's most effective campaigns. Knowing that a great number of British men felt that honour was not simply a personal matter but a familial concern, propaganda often targeted men, implying that failure to enlist was a stain on themselves, their loved ones and showed a willingness (if not a direct intention) to let British civilisation fall. For men who did not view enlistment as an honourable act, a sense of pride often developed due to the shared trials of warfare which often resulted in the creation of a collective identity within a regiment or military

[29] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, pp. 22-56.
[30] Gregory, *Last Great War*.
[31] Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2014); Meyer, *Men of War.*

unit. Membership in the brotherhood of arms became an honour of its own. The reputation of particular regiments was carried over into the civilian world and at times eclipsed the importance of pre-war civilian bonds, an event that will be explored in Chapter Four. After the conclusion of the war, many men would discover that their participation had bequeathed them a certain sense of honour and responsibility in the public eye. When civil unrest resulted in riots in the inter-war years, former soldiers were looked upon to help police forces curtail violence and restore order. This and the continued use of chivalric tenets despite the publication of disillusioned accounts of the war will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Loyalty

> I am a knight of the Table Round, and rather than I should shame mine oath and my blood I will hold my way whatsoever fall thereof.[32]

Loyalty was a quality firmly attached to the order of knighthood and provided a form of internal cohesion.[33] While knights often chose to spend years on individual quests in pursuit of fame and fortune, chivalry created a brotherhood through its ideology and ethos which helped establish a set of ethics and conduct that were collectively expected and adhered to by those who held the title of knight. As this quotation illustrates, chivalry was very much an order where individuals were judged by the company they kept. Charny continues:

> For if you are wise, you will only do good and ought not to excuse yourself from being a man of worth and loyal, as it is the greatest and most supreme good there is, for a man may want to be wise and fail, and want to be valiant and fail, and want to be rich and powerful and fail, but no one should or can excuse himself from being a man of worth and loyal, if he has the will. (*BOC*, 73)

[32] Malory and Flint, *History of Arthur*, p. 99.
[33] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence,* p. 185.

Such an environment would have helped to encourage greater feats of arms, stronger adherence to the ethics of chivalry and to alienate those who did not follow its teachings. In the world of King Arthur this was certainly the case. The Pentecostal Oath in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (*LD)* demonstrates that loyalty to the tenets of chivalry naturally resulted in a set of expected behaviours which lords and other knights acknowledged as the proper means of interaction.[34] Mercy when asked for was expected, the succour of women was expected, willingness to engage in battle was expected – but only when the cause of battle was just. Loyalty to the code of chivalry led to loyalty in other aspects of life, yet only as far as they too adhered to the underpinning morals and ethics.

Chivalry's numerous requirements, however, did not always render it an easy code to follow. When the Young King Henry chose to rebel against his father, King Henry II, in 1173 William Marshal, a man both in his own time and today considered to be the epitome of chivalry, was forced to decide which lord, from an ethical and honour-bound point of view, he was required to support. The wrong choice would have likely resulted in the loss of royal favour and the lands, wealth and reputation he had earned for himself. Similarly, when Marshal covered the retreat of Henry II, he unseated Richard Coeur de Lion, another of Henry's rebellious sons and the future king of Britain, and in doing so risked incurring royal wrath. Fortunately for Marshal, his reputation for sound reasoning, loyalty and the honour attached to it saved him from the dire consequences other men would have suffered.

Loyalty took on a different role in WWI-era Britain. It was less transient and more centered than it had been in the Middle Ages due largely to the political instability of the period and prevalence of both small and large-scale conflict. Instead, loyalty in modern Britain was

[34] Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: The Winchester Manuscript*, ed. by Helen Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 58.

demonstrated through patriotic and moral ideals that many individuals felt formed a vital part of British identity. Loyalty to king and country was of paramount importance but so was loyalty to Christian-based ideas of morality and family, something that a significant portion of the British population felt Germany had violated in its attack on Belgium and the alleged atrocities committed against civilians, particularly women and children. As former Marlborough student, Ulric Nisbet described, 'Our country was 100 per cent right and Germany 100 per cent wrong. We were fighting for King and Country and Empire, and 'gallant little Belgium'. We were fighting to uphold the principles of justice and freedom, and international morality and to smash Kaiserism and German militarism.'[35] The reason for participating in the war was to uphold national honour and destroy a vicious enemy that peace was no longer possible with. According to D. P. Blades, editor of the University of Edinburgh's student publication, *The Student,* the war was not one of self-preservation or material gain. It was 'for the vindication of abstract principles, for the preservation of national traditions, national honour and national ideals … Honour and justice and truth are to be vindicated.'[36] Loyalty was also collectively expressed, bearing a similarity to knightly orders, in the trenches and extended past the years of conflict to create life-long collective loyalties based on participation in the war. J. van der Dennen asserts that 'combat motivation in contemporary wars consists of four general motivations: survival, obedience/discipline, loyalty to the combat group, and masculine honor, enabling band-of-brothers-camaraderie, mutual bonding, acts of genuine courage and even self-sacrificial fervor.'[37] The presence of these different types of loyalty will be explored in Chapters Four and Five.

[35] IWM, Docs: Nisbet, Captain H.U.S: 78/3/3.
[36] University of Edinburgh, Special Collections: D. P. Blades, 'Editorial,' *The Student* XII (1914), 3-4.
[37] J. van der Dennen, 'Combat Motivation', *Peace Review*, 17.1 (2005), 81-89, at p. 87.

Brotherhood

Knighthood, in an idealised form, created a brotherhood of men who subscribed to the system of etiquette and beliefs that made up chivalry. Scholars such as Christiane Marchello-Nizia and Georges Duby have made compelling arguments that the bonds between knights were in many ways more powerful and profound than the heavily romanticised relationship between a knight and his lady.[38] Certainly there were both good knights and bad knights in history and fiction, and a significant portion of a knight's career was spent on solitary quests to gain honour, however, chivalry, as a recognisable though abstract concept, helped to create cohesion between members of the martial upper classes. In addition to the values of chivalry, knightly brotherhoods centred around particular leaders, religions, practices and nationalities, adding further homogeneity. Historically, orders such as the Templars and Knights Hospitaller were the embodiment of these knightly brotherhoods, unified by religious, military and chivalrous purpose, acting together and limited in membership. Similarly, Edward III's order of the Knights of the Garter, which was inspired by the Round Table, endeavoured to draw together a collection of knights who upheld the values of chivalry.[39] The elitism of knighthood, which limited it to a profession of the upper classes, also created a sense of camaraderie. This contributed not simply to an identification with a certain affluent lifestyle but also the cultural and social norms of court, religious homogeneity, national sentiment, and political allegiances (though these were apt to shift). Significant prestige and honour were attached to membership in an elite knightly order

[38] Christiane, Marchello-Nizia, 'Amour Courtois, Société Masculine et Figures Du Pouvoir', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 36 (1981), 969-82; Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977).
[39] Ruth Huff Cline, 'The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 20 (1945), 204-211, at p. 207.

and members held one another accountable to the chivalric and order-specific rules of the martial fraternity. A shared understanding of battle, the mentality needed to enter and survive war, created admiration between men. Chivalry's importance to the development of these bonds in WWI, will be further explored in Chapter Four.

Promoting unity through chivalric tenets, combat knowledge and shared allegiances (religious, sovereign, or national), knighthood's bonds of fellowship were, in the middle ages, contingent on a membership in a largely homogenous social class; the development of the brotherhood of arms in WWI grew from more diverse roots. The bonds forged on the Eastern and Western Fronts became tremendously important to the men who fought in the First World War because of their ability to transcend class, racial and religious barriers. War was, for most who enlisted, an unfamiliar experience prior to 1914. Men often found difficulty in sharing their experiences and the physical and emotional consequences of total war with non-combatants, and thus fellowship between combatants began to develop, providing comfort in mutual understanding. In both medieval chivalric orders and modern military organisations, the fellowship created by the brotherhood of arms was crucial to battlefield success, often acting as a source of motivation, pride, and courage. Intimate knowledge of the hardships of war, the mentality and physicality required for survival, and the ethics that bonded men within regiments or battalions helped to form bands of brothers unified not by social status but rather by an ethos as well shared national ethics and morals. Sarah Cole explores the complexity and tension between male comradeship, loyalty and the nature of war in 'Modernism, Male Intimacy and the Great War', demonstrating how valuable both 'friendship' and 'comradeship' were held by fighting men as well as the capacity of war to abruptly end such relationships.[40] What James

[40] Sarah Cole, 'Modernism, Male Intimacy and the Great War', *ELH*, 68.2 (2001), 469-500.

Campbell calls 'combat Gnosticism (the Owenesque idea that soldiers have a secret knowledge denied to non-combatant)' is frequently identified with the intense form of bonding that occurred at the Front and is perhaps best summarised in Frederick Manning's war novel, *Her Privates We*:

> 'No,' he said finally. 'I don't suppose I have anyone, whom I can call a friend. I like the men, on the whole, and I think they like me…I have one or two particular chums, of course, and in some ways, you know, good comradeship takes the place of friendship. It is different: it has its own loyalties and affections; and I am not so sure that it does not rise on occasion to an intensity of feeling which friendship never touches. It may be less in itself, I don't know, but its opportunity is greater. Friendship implies rather more stable conditions, don't you think? You have time to choose. Here you can't choose…At one moment a particular man may be nothing at all to you, and the next minute you will go through hell for him. No, it is not friendship. The man doesn't matter so much, it's a kind of impersonal emotion, a kind of enthusiasm, in the old sense of the word.'

Manning portrays how the bonds created through battle experience transcend those created or experienced in the civilian world and through the traumatic and dire circumstances of their creation they in some ways pass the expressions or interactions typical of friendship to become something more significant though less stable.[41] The platoon sergeant writing to the parents of ill-fated Private John Heap who desired to return to his old section noted that, 'it was plain to me that he wanted to be with his old school friends and share the dangers of the battle with them. It was the gallant action of a very brave man.'[42] Heap would be killed under heavy machine gun fire at Loos with fellow members of St. Dunstan's College. Chapter Four will further explore the significance of friendship and comradery as depicted in poetry, indicating its substantial value to morale and survival on the Front.

[41] Cole, 'Male Intimacy', p. 474; James Campbell, 'Combat Gnosticism: The Ideology of First World War Poetry Criticism', *New Literary History*, 30.1 (Winter 1999), 203-215, at 204.; Frederic Manning, *Her Privates We* (London: Davies, 1930), 143-44.
[42] Anthony Seldon and Walsh, David, *Public Schools and the Great War: The Generation Lost*, (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2013), p. 62.

Bravery, Sacrifice and Mercy

One of the essential precursors and continuing requirements of knighthood was the ability to fight bravely and victoriously (prowess) and willingness to be self-sacrificial. Writing in the fourteenth century, the chronicler Jean Froissart stated that 'as firewood cannot burn without flame, neither can a gentleman achieve perfect honour nor worldly renown without prowess'.[43] Prowess shown through skill and bravery in battle was closely linked with honour and was a by-product of personal courage. Llull declares that a knight

> should be valiant and not falter before his enemies, and if he does hesitate upon attacking he must forsake weakness of courage. And if the knight does the opposite of this, his horse, which is a beast and does not have reason, follows the rule and the office of knighthood better than the knight. (*BOOC*, 69)

Historical and literary accounts hail the strength of men's blows, the thrusts of their lances, and the body count left in their wake. Llull declares:

> O what great strength of courage resides in the knight who vanquishes and overcomes many malfeasant knights! Such a knight is a prince or high baron who loves the Order of Chivalry so much that no matter how many malefactors who are called knights […] counsel him daily to commit acts of evil, misdeeds and deceit to destroy Chivalry itself, this fortunate prince, with nothing but the nobility of his courage and the aid that Chivalry and its Order lend him, destroys and vanquishes all the enemies of Chivalry. (*BOOC*, 48)

Despite all of the 'civilising' features of chivalry, it must not be forgotten that the occupation of knights was battle. A knight's bravery and prowess were measured by his physical ability to fight, frequently termed 'feats of chivalry' or 'deeds of chivalry'. Demonstrations of prowess were the scenes of action that gave the other aspects of chivalry their meaning. Honour was gained through prowess; bravery, courage and valour were all exercised while performing 'feats of chivalry', and when prowess was attached to a knight's name he could earn fame and fortune.

Bravery in battle demanded a willingness to sacrifice one's life should it mean the difference between honour and dishonour or victory and defeat, as Llull tells knights:

[43] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 130.

> if you sacrifice your life upholding Chivalry then you are professing Chivalry in such a way that you can love, serve and profess it the most, for Chivalry resides in no other place as agreeably as in nobility of courage, and no man can love, honour or profess Chivalry more than he who gives his life for the honour and the Order of Chivalry (*BOOC*, 49).

The Christian crusader would grow to become the ultimate symbol of sacrificial bravery and the red cross on a white shield his symbol. Motivated by the desire to save the Holy Land from a barbarous foreign enemy and the promise of glory in the afterlife in the event of death on the battlefield, men from across Europe donned the mantle of the Crusader, abandoning the comforts of home for years on end in defence of religious ideals and the fulfillment of masculine duty. Contemporarily, the Crusader epitomised chivalry in his pursuit of honour, charity and valorous defence of Christianity and would remain a powerful and iconic image long after his time in the Middle East ended. Future prime minister, Anthony Eden makes the connect plain when arguing with his mother that he should enlist because he had to die one day anyway so 'why not now by the most honourable way possible, the way that opens the gate's [sic] of Paradise — the soldier's death?'.[44] Eden directly links the impetus of the crusaders' actions: death in battle means rewards in Heaven, rewards that he believes certainly will also be received by those who die in the current conflict.

Mercy was a hallmark of chivalry as much as bravery, and understanding when an opponent deserved to live or deserved to die was an important distinction. Knights were compelled to grant mercy to the defeated upon request, though this rule could be bent in the case of an enemy who himself had defied the laws of chivalry. Should a knight act in defiance of the oaths of chivalry, whether it be disloyalty, cruelty towards women, cowardliness or barbarity, he was no longer viewed as worthy of chivalric treatment and granting mercy could be bypassed. In fact, men who had forsaken their vows could be actively sought out. Killing such an enemy in

[44] University of Birmingham, Special Collections: Avon Family Letters: AP 22/1/143, 23 October 1914.

combat was a form of public service in that it added to the security of all and prevented the order of knighthood from perversion. Malory's Sir Breunis sans Pite, known as the 'falsest knight in the world' because of his cowardly and unchivalrous attacks on other knights, is repeatedly defeated, while Maliagaunt, Queen Guinevere's abductor (and the initial exposer of the queen and Lancelot's sexual relationship), is killed for his defiance of chivalry (Winchester Manuscript, 229, 445-60). The distinction between an enemy to be granted mercy and an enemy that needs to be destroyed will reassert its importance in justifying violence in literature of WWI as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Courtesy and Women

Stephen Jaeger asserts that '[…] courtesy is in origin an instrument of the urge to civiliz[e], of the forces in which that process originates and not an outgrowth of the process itself.'[45] Courtesy (*cortoisie*) in the early and mid-thirteenth century is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'courtly elegance and politeness of manners; graceful politeness or considerateness in intercourse with others' and as 'having the bearing of a courtly gentleman in intercourse with others; graciously polite and respectful of the position and feelings of others; kind and complaisant in conduct to others'.[46] Courtesy was used at court and more broadly in life to help dictate the terms of appropriate conduct when dealing with women, other knights, superiors, hospitality, mercy and reducing the acceptability of rash unchecked aggression.

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[45] Stephen C. Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p. 9.
[46] 'Courtesy, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/Entry/43220?rskey=iULuB1&result=1#eid>; 'Courteous, Adj.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/Entry/43213>.

Courtesy was not necessarily akin to nonviolence, but limited the conditions of its use, promoting more than restraint but a slow progression towards polite models of behaviour.[47] As J. D. Burnley observes, in the earlier medieval period courtesy was connected with an esteem for heroic military qualities but as time progressed courtesy became more concerned with 'courtliness of demeanour, […] the product of education, of nurture.'[48] Standing in the upper tier of lay society, knights needed to be able to understand and navigate the social hierarchy which included knowing when and how to speak. Courtesy books from the later Middle Ages in England indicate how closely courtesy was associated with etiquette, providing guidelines for appropriate behaviour and interaction. Burnley further demonstrates that '[t]he conception of courtly society and its formality and refinement […] [was] one closely dependent upon the hierarchies of feudal allegiance: those qualities which promote the secure and equable running of a major household in which the lord's vassals are gathered to form a court.'[49] Observance of the ceremonious formality of courtly events helped to prevent disruption or violence by requiring individuals to adhere to certain rules of conduct. Norbert Elias and Johan Huizinga saw the warrior-knight as an early version of the modern gentleman.[50] Manners and politeness became indicators of social class, connecting the elitist brotherhood of knights with formal behaviour and further distancing knights from the less refined strata of society as well as those who did not follow the rules of chivalry. The subsequent significance of etiquette and social interaction to the concept of the Victorian gentleman will be explored in Chapters One and Two, demonstrating its links to chivalric origins and impact on perceptions of gender roles and necessity of enlistment.

[47] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 205.
[48] J. D. Burnley, *Courtliness and Literature in Medieval England* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 54.
[49] Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 59.
[50] Johan Huizinga and Roger D. Spotswood, *Autumn of the Middle Ages* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (New York, NY: Urizen Books, 1978).

Love unquestionably plays an important role in medieval romance, often being the impetus for action and the prize knights put themselves in danger to receive.[51] Scholars such as Jennifer Wollock and Jaeger have dedicated a tremendous amount of time and effort to the exploration of 'courtly love', a label that is somewhat controversial as the term itself is hardly ever used in medieval writing and scholars do not agree on its precise meaning.[52] While love was certainly part of real life, it is difficult to ascertain just what degree of importance it had in the actual decisions of knights. Though the subject of love could be discussed at great length, it holds little relevance for this thesis as its impact on men's decision to enlist in World War One was far smaller than medieval romance suggests it was on knights. Factors such as ideas of masculinity, societal expectations and pressure, moral blackmail, patriotism, and fear of being labelled a coward played a much greater role in the motivation to enlist. While it could be argued that some of these are certainly rooted in love, the desire to head to battle and perform honourably was less motivated by romantic ideas than by notions surrounding the development of masculinity on the battlefield and Victorian concepts of courage. I will consequently not dwell on romantic love but rather focus more on the role of women in encouraging men to enlist as a form of patriotic and chivalric duty.

Charny expresses the need for a knight to have the support of a lady:

> And they (knights) are so fortunate that their ladies themselves, from the great honor and superb qualities that reside in them, do not want to let them tarry nor delay in any way the winning of that honor to be achieved by deeds of arms, and advise them on this and then command them to set out and put all their efforts into winning renown and great honor where it is to be sought by valiant men; these ladies urge them on to reach beyond any of their earlier aspirations. […] And they (knights) should be praised and honored, and so also should the noble ladies who have inspired them […] and it is thanks to such ladies that men become good knights and men-at-arms. (*BOC*, 52)

[51] Chrétien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart (Lancelot),* p. 261.
[52] Jennifer G. Wollcock, *Rethinking Chivalry and Courtly Love* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011); Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*.

Knights' affection for women further compels them to prove themselves through combat in order to not only increase their own honour and reputation, but that of their lover as well. Charny is not the first to mention the influence of women on men's desire for battle or the ennobling power of love; centuries earlier Geoffrey of Monmouth noted (or perhaps, more accurately, invented) the importance of women to knights' motivation:

> All its [Arthur's court and those attending the tournament] doughty knights wore clothes and armour of a single colour. Its elegant ladies, similarly dressed, spurned love of any man who had not proved himself three times in battle. So the ladies were chaste and better women, whilst the knights conducted themselves more virtuously for the sake of their love.[53]

Love features as a sound impetus for bravery and bravery in men encourages women to be virtuous, thus there is a cyclical impact and importance for both genders to act in accordance with chivalric ideals. Chrétien's Erec, perhaps too happily married, begins to forsake his duty as a knight to seek out adventure and battle in favour of staying home with Enide which distresses her. It is only much later when Erec feigns death (after many violent enemy encounters and much abuse of his wife) and listens as Enide refuses the advances of a former suitor that Erec realises his error and again loves Enide. Such stories act as warnings to knights not to overly embrace the comforts of marriage and forget their roles as warriors. It is also a lesson to women (and perhaps criticism of their potentially negative influence) that they have a responsibility to keep their husbands from forsaking their duties as knights and to not allow matrimonial bliss to cloud their greater purpose as men.

Women were not merely the prize to be won or the damsel in distress; they often acted, as Enide did, as partners and guides for men and were seen as bastions of innocence and morality. Though romances tend to be tales of manly action and women sometimes only feature on the periphery or as catalysts to events, their role as motivators should not be overlooked. The task of

[53] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Kings of Britain*, p. 212.

spurring men to action would not be forgotten when war came to Europe in 1914. The image of victimised women would be used on propaganda posters to arouse sentiments of anger, apprehension and masculine responsibility. Britannia, the feminine personification of Britain, bearing a British flag and shield and holding a trident or sword aloft, inspired patriotic nationalism and courage, and threats to her well-being demanded retribution. As will be shown in Chapter Three, the women who appeared in the literature of WWI did not always remain passive subjects of the events around them. Rather, they became driving forces that pushed men towards enlistment in fulfilment of both their feminine duty to the men around them as well as their duty as citizens in wartime.

'Chivalry was not simply a code integrating generic individuals and society, not simply an ideal for relations between sexes or a means of knocking off the rough warrior edge in preparation for the European gentleman to come.'[54] In the Middle Ages chivalry carried a sense of honour that was conveyed and secured through arms; it conveyed a status to the elite, an ethos of heroic violence and moral superiority that attempted to alter medieval society by incorporating spirituality, gentleness, and discipline with the lofty ambition of bettering a world characterised by brutality. It is evocative, bringing to mind a myriad of images and emotions — great armoured knights on solitary quests, crusaders bound for the Holy Land, grand tournaments, beautiful ladies, and adventures with strange happenings in strange lands. All are synonymous with one of most enduring and captivating phenomena of the Middle Ages. Chivalry developed and changed in the Early Modern period; it fell out of favour and use, became a ridiculed relic of an idealised past and then once again captured the imagination. It was brought forth from the

[54] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p.8.

annals of literature and history to influence and shape the conduct of modern individuals and society. Chivalry exerted a significant influence on British culture and literature from the mid-1700s onwards and would help shape gendered notions of responsibility, etiquette, and education, contributing to a national pro-war campaign that saw nearly two and a half million men voluntarily join military service between September 1914 and December 1915.[55]

The figuration of the valiant battle-proven knight whose violence was justified by chivalry, who showed mercy to his enemies and who defended the weak would reemerge in the eighteenth century as a popular exemplar. The romanticism of battle, knights and chivalry would have a tremendous impact on perceptions of war and men's duty to be part of it. This would also impact the interpretation and legacy of WWI when disillusionment set in in the 1920s and 1930s. As will be shown in Chapter Two, public schools began to teach sport as an analogy for battle; the draconian environment of these elite institutions was where boys learned the hardiness and endurance of a squire, where the enemy was the bully or the schoolmaster, the proving ground the rugby pitch, and the reward the title of gentleman. While the knight trained in the lists and practiced on the tournament ground, the school boy waged war in the dormitories and fought in the scrum. It is little wonder that boys raised in such an atmosphere felt excitement at the announcement of war in 1914, and that so many young men longed to test themselves on what they saw as the ultimate playing field. Just as medieval knights perceived combat as a venue for demonstrating their strength and honour, so many of the young men of Britain viewed the fields of France as the proving ground of masculinity. The knight would remain a popular symbol throughout the war in the medium of visual propaganda, as well as in church sermons, school speeches, and memorialisation of the war dead. When the men of Europe took up arms against

[55] Peter Simkins, 'Voluntary Recruiting in Britain, 1914-1915', *World War One: The War Machine* <http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/voluntary-recruiting>.

Germany in 1914, leaving their homes to risk their life in battle, the crusader and knight of the red cross, St George, almost naturally came to symbolise their valorous sacrifice. Though the rhetoric of chivalry fell out of favour as the war progressed, the tenets behind it remained at work in numerous other forms of propaganda and ethics which will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Five will then conclude with a discussion of the re-emergence of overt chivalric images and language in the interwar period in order to confirm the continued importance of chivalry to British cultural identity and its ability to survive the war.

Chapter One: The Rediscovery of Chivalry

Transmission of Chivalry

Chivalry, as embodied by the Arthurian legend, and chivalric, medieval romances, had a considerable impact on life in the courts of England and Wales for many centuries following the rapid growth of chivalric romance in the twelfth century. Edward I (1239-1307), after defeating the last of the Welsh princes who might claim descent from Arthur, stylised himself *Arthurus redivivus*, as did several other monarchs.[56] He surrounded his claim with great pageantry when he gathered the chivalry of Europe together for a Round Table in 1284 at Nefy in Carnarvonshire and was presented with the Crown of King Arthur.[57] In 1344 Edward III endeavoured to use the codes of honour followed by King Arthur and his knights to found the Order of the Garter, a brotherhood of knights meant to emulate the Round Table.[58] The events of the Hundred Years War that ravaged the French and English peoples from 1337 to 1453 created disillusionment with royal wars and the romantic associations surrounding them, causing chivalry to suffer a period of prolonged unpopularity. Authors such as Chaucer, Sir Philip Sidney, Shakespeare and Cervantes derided chivalry, mocking its romantic sentiments and idealisation of prowess in arms, and advancement in military technology dispensed the practicality of knighthood. Chivalry, however, survived. Caxton's 1485 publication of Malory's *LD* did much to help popularise chivalric romance. This edition would be reprinted five times with De Worde's 1498 reprint becoming the

[56] Karl Heinz Göller, 'Reality versus Romance: A Reassessment of the Alliterative Morte Arthure', in *The Alliteratice Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. by Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1981), pp. 15-29, at p. 17.
[57] Rishanger, Loomis, and Powicke cited in William Matthews, 'The Egyptians in Scotland: The Political History of a Myth', in *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 1, (1970), 307-26, at p. 294.
[58] Göller, 'Reality versus Romance', p. 17.

first illustrated volume. Edwards suggests that the lack of extant early printings of *LD* potentially indicates that the work was so popular that it was literally 'read to destruction'.[59] In 1522, Henry VIII ordered the paintwork on the Winchester Round Table, constructed during the reign of Edward I, to be restored and an image of himself sitting in Arthur's seat added, reaffirming the royal claim to Arthurian descent. Under the reign of his daughter, Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603), chivalry experienced a resurgence. Edmund Spenser's *Fairie Queene* (1590) immortalised the monarch's court as a paragon of chivalric expression.[60] During Elizabeth's reign, yearly coronation day feasts, such as the one described in the quote below, were celebrated with displays of chivalry that closely resembled the anticipation of adventure that often preceded feasts in Arthur's court:

> In the mean time, whilest hir grace sat at dinner, sir Edward Dimmocke knight, hir champion by office, came riding into the hall in faire complet armor, mounted upon a beautiful courser, richlie trapped in cloth of gold, entred the hall, and in the midst thereof cast downe his gantlet: with offer to fight with him in hir quarrel, that should denie hie to the righterous and lawfull queene of the realme. The queene taking a cup of gold full of wine, drank to him thereof, and sent it to him for his fee together with the cover.[61]

The twelve-day tournament held at Kenilworth Castle in 1575 was plainly modeled after the Arthurian legend and exhibited the influences of Malory where a minstrel read from De Worde's editions of *LD* and 'the LADY OF THE LAKE was introduced to make part of [Q]ueen Elizabeth's entertainment'.[62] Though jousting had ceased to be part of professional martial training, the pageantry at Kenilworth demonstrates the continued prominent influence and popularity of medieval romance in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Elizabethan chivalry centred around extravagant devotion to Elizabeth herself and took on more qualities of

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[59] A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Reception of Malory's Morte Darthur', in *A Companion to Malory*, ed. by Elizabeth Archibald and A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 241-52, at p 243.
[60] Edmund Spenser, *Fairie Queen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909); Girouard, *Camelot*, p. 17.
[61] Quoting Dyce in Ivan L. Schulze, 'Elizabethan Chivalry and the Faerie Queen's Annual Feast', *Modern Language Notes*, 50.3 (1935), 158-61.
[62] A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Reception of Malory's *Morte Darthur*', in *A Companion to Malory*, ed. by Elizabeth Archibald and A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 241-252, at p. 244; Alex Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), p. 206.

fantasy and the exotic than had previously been used. Her reign saw numerous mock battles and tournaments, and even embraced a medieval-gothic style of architecture which constructed castles and castle-like homes. The importance of ballistic technology grew during the English Civil War (1642-1651), hastening the process of obsolescence of more primitive combat that relied on individual brute strength and gallantry. This had an obvious effect on the use and perception of chivalry. With the waning importance of lances and bows in favour of cannons and guns, knights in armour became redundant and the romance that surrounded such combat lessened. Thus chivalry in the Elizabethan court was valued more for its pageantry than its military applications. The last tournament was held in 1624. [63]

The beginning of the English Enlightenment in the mid-seventeenth century saw the rise of rationalism, the physical sciences, and epistemology; interest in reason eclipsed interest in romance, and though individuals may have been proud of their noble heritage the impulse to mimic the chivalric figures of the past had largely gone. Certain elements of the chivalric tradition such as the language used to address a woman, the practice of duels (albeit with pistols), and codes of behaviour were absorbed into seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century life, but by and large chivalry had fallen from its once lofty position.[64] Warring had been entrusted to small private armies, literature and art moved towards favouring classical and Renaissance works, and the age of chivalry came to be viewed as a romanticised idea of a barbarous past. This occurred in combination with a widespread distaste for anything that savoured of 'enthusiasm' following the belief that people and society should be modeled on tempered reason. [65] Chivalry was considered an absurdity that culminated with the Crusades, an event that, as Hume put it, was

[63] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981) p. 17.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Girouard, *Camelot*, p. 19.

'the most signal and the most durable monument of human folly that has yet appeared in any age or nation.' [66] Yet despite this and Edmund Burke's 1790 remark that chivalry was dead (in society as well as politics and war), its tenets would persist within the conduct of gentlemen and would once again reemerge in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

* * *

The ruins of Kenilworth, which once displayed the robust Elizabethan interest in chivalry and romance, became the site of one of the most important dialogues on the cultural, moral and literary influence of chivalry on eighteenth century governance and society. In his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), Richard Hurd argued the superiority of chivalric manners and Gothic superstition to Greek heroic poetry, and modern poetry's indebtedness to it, justifying the growing interest in the medieval.[67] The *Letters* would rationalise the already developing fascination with the medieval that was coming into vogue, providing 'justification for literature of the Middle Ages and the use of romantic material in modern poetry.'[68] The discussion between Hurd, Digby, Addison, and Arbuthnot addresses concerns over the comparative barbarity of the medieval period and the incompatibility of chivalry with the more modern and civilized society of the late seventeenth century. While Addison both mourns the loss of the environment of chivalry and condemns the brutality and baseness of the society that so honoured it, he ultimately views chivalry as essential to the refinement of society:

> No policy, even of an ancient legislator, could have contrived a better expedient to cultivate the manners and tame the spirits of a rude and ignorant people […] the generous sentiments, it inspired, perhaps contributed very much to awaken an emulation of a different kind; and to bring on those days of light and

[66] David Hume, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to The Revolution in 1688* (New York, NY: Liberty Fund, 1983), p. 243.
[67] Audley L. Smith, 'Richard Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance', *ELH*, 6 (1939), 58–81, at p. 58.
[68] Ibid.

> knowledge which have disposed us, somewhat unthankfully, to vilify and defame it…the first essays of wit and poetry, those harbingers of returning day to every species of letters, were made in the bosom of chivalry, and amidst the assemblies of noble dames, and courteous knights. And we may even observe, that the best of our modern princes, such as have been most admired for their personal virtues, and have been most concerned in restoring all the arts of civility and politeness, have been passionately addicted to the feats of ancient prowess.[69]

The brave deeds and generous behaviour that colour the stories and actions of medieval courts are cited as without real merit because they can only exist in an environment of social inequality and injustice, making the present age, even without chivalry, superior to the former. *Don Quixote* is referenced as a prime example of the growing disenchantment with chivalry and the romance surrounding the medieval.[70] While Addison sees *Don Quixote* as bringing 'eternal dishonor on the profession of knight-errantry', Arbuthnot sees the work merely as a condemnation of 'the *abuses* of chivalry, and the madness of continuing the old romantic spirit in times when, from a change of manners and policy, it was no longer in season.'[71]

Just two years after Hurd's *Letters* were published, Horace Walpole would produce *The Castle of Otranto*, a novel which would be the impetus for a new literary genre that blended medieval romance and gothic, further encouraging the growth of medieval interest that was making its way into British antiquarian and literary circles. This novel would also inspire one of Britain's most influential writers who would refashion chivalry to the tastes of a modern audience: Sir Walter Scott. Scott's modernisation of this medieval construct and his development of the historical fiction genre were instrumental in the growth of a literary, cultural, and social environment that not only looked fondly on chivalry but subsumed it into its national identity. The following chapter will explore how Scott helped transform modern Britain's understanding of chivalry, demonstrating how the nation's culture and society shifted in response, as well as the

[69] Richard Hurd, *The Works of Richard Hurd, D. D.* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davis, 1811), pp. 194-95.
[70] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Adventure of Don Quixote* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000).
[71] Hurd, *Works of Richard Hurd*, p. 199

larger impact chivalry had on gender roles, education, literature, and ultimately, perceptions of masculine responsibility and war.

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Understanding the prominence of medievalism in British culture from the mid-eighteenth century onward is vital to understanding its impact on the culture and ethics influencing enlistment and the pro-war mentality that predominated the early months of the First World War. The disillusioned texts produced in response to the war illustrate one of the many complex reactions to the conflict, one that was engendered by an interest in chivalric ideals fostered through literature and education. The ideals and romanticism which disillusioned writers reviled were formed over the course of a century and a half of fascination with the medieval. What began in the mid-seventeen hundreds as a burgeoning interest in historical and literary heritage took on an active and formative role in modern Britain and still exerts a significant influence on the legacy of WWI. The identity of the English gentleman formed slowly, at first adopting many of the characteristics detailed in Medieval Romance, and then adjusting to the interests, practicalities, and social climate of modern Britain. This section examines the rediscovery of chivalry in the mid-seventeen hundreds and traces its growth and impact through the start of the nineteenth century, elucidating the way changing social and cultural norms within the middle and upper classes effected expectations and reaction to WWI.

This examination will be largely limited to the consideration of the middle and upper classes of Britain. The intention of this is to highlight the more direct nature with which these classes came in contact with chivalry later on in the nineteenth century and how its values were

encoded in British culture and education. By examining how popular literature was recuperating chivalry and its spread through the public school system, we are better able to understand chivalry's formative role in the production of a mentality predisposed to embracing the romance of war and the similarly inspired notions of masculinity that were operative in the early stages of WWI.

This chapter will focus on the literary beginnings of chivalry in modern Britain, highlighting key authors such as Sir Walter Scott and Alfred Lord Tennyson who were instrumental in the popularisation of romanticised notions of chivalry. It will look closely at the ideas surrounding and development of the label 'gentleman', exploring how this title became operative and its precise meaning at different points in time. Finally, this chapter will explain how public schools came to reinforce the social requirement of being a gentleman and their reliance on certain chivalric ethics. By following the growth and impact of chivalry in the century leading up to the First World War, this chapter will demonstrate how crucial the concept of chivalry was to British culture and how Britain's national response to the call to arms in many ways hinged on the ethics of chivalry.

It could be said that chivalry's most direct impact on the legacy of WWI was in terms of social etiquette, ethics and morals transmitted through the formative education in public schools. Boys were taught the value of honour, strength, hardiness and brotherhood. Sport became synonymous with war, the sports field a battlefield and teammates comrades in arms. As scholars such as Michael Paris have shown, this allegory helped to glamourise war as well as to make light of, or disregard its brutality, a fact that authors such as Sassoon would later condemn. Though schools' curricula were heavily weighted towards classics, pupils still had significant engagement with works containing medieval or chivalric themes as will be shown in Chapter

Two. The image of the valiant knight was heavily romanticised and the honour of combat portrayed as the ultimate masculine, transformative experience, a combination which had a profound impact on many men's perception of war.

Sir Walter Scott and the Revival of Chivalry

Sir Walter Scott is often credited with the rise of Victorian medievalism.[72] John Henry Raleigh goes so far as to say that never before in Western society had a writer been so powerful in his own time.[73] His depictions of emblematic figures like King Richard Coeur de Lion helped to revive interest in the old concept of chivalry which had been steadily regaining ground.[74] While Scott's significance to the popularity of medievalism cannot be ignored, medievalism was, in many ways, 'a response to the social, political, economic and cultural strains associated with industrialisation […], the erosion of aesthetic standards, the creation of squalid cities, and perhaps above all, the condition of the working class'.[75] Much of the ethos surrounding medievalism developed from a combination of dislike of urbanisation and industrialisation and a yearning for the restoration of an earlier way of life. Understanding the cultural shift engendered by Scott's writing is pivotal to understanding how intrinsic chivalric qualities would become over the course of the next century and their prevalence in numerous aspects of life before and during the war.

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[72] Scott Chandler, 'Sir Walter Scott and the Medieval Revival,' *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 19 (1965), 314-332, at pp. 315-16.
[73] John Henry Raleigh, 'What Scott Meant to the Victorians,' *Victorian Studies*, 7 (1963), 7-34, at p. 7.
[74] Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (New York, NY: American Library, 1983).
[75] Charles Dellheim, 'Interpreting Victorian Medievalism', in *History and Community: Essays in Victorian Medievalism*, ed. by Florence Saunders Boos (New York, NY: Garland Pub., 1992), pp. 39-54, at pp. 44.

A surge in antiquarianism and historical studies prompted the re-discovery of medieval documents as academic study, and the translation of medieval ballads became a topic of serious discourse. The restoration or creation of castles and follies took place just as numerous publications on chivalric history and ethics were made available to the public market. King George III, himself a great medieval enthusiast, commissioned numerous paintings depicting notable events from medieval ballads, poems, and history.

Jerome Mitchell's study of Scott's indebtedness to the literature of the Middle Ages provides helpful insight into the texts and sources Scott had access to, made reference to, and used in his own work. We learn from Mitchell's study that in addition to Malory, Scott had access to and read numerous books on medieval history, politics, ethics, and language, not least of which being the Auchinleck Manuscript which includes:

> a number of other well-known romances, in this order: *The King of Tars; Amis and Amiloun; Sir Degare; Floris and Blancheflur;* three romances dealing with Guy of Warwick which Scott has entitled *Gy of Warwick* (Guy before marriage), and *Rembrun's [sic] Gy's Sone of Warwick* (Guy's son Reinburn); *Bevis of Hamption; Arthur and Merlin;* the *Lai of Freine; Roland and Ferragus* (i.e., *Roland and Vernagu*); *Otuel a Knight; King Orfeo* (Sir Orfeo)*;* and *Horn Child*. There are also fragments of romances dealing with Alexander the Great and Richard the Lion-Hearted.[76]

While there has been much scholarly argument over Scott's historical inaccuracy, his work was endeavouring to create a literary environment in which an idealised form of chivalry could function. Regardless of historical accuracy, he created a version of the medieval world that many readers took as real, and caused an entire century of thinkers to philosophise about it.[77]

British national identity was moving towards defining itself in terms of martial accomplishment, valuing masculinity and strength over politeness, and as Stephani Barczweski observed, the Middle Ages 'served as a battleground for the clash between competing visions of

[76] Mitchell, 'Scott, Chaucer', p. 2.
[77] Chandler, 'Sir Walter Scott and the Medieval Revival', p. 315.

what the nation had been and what it should be'.[78] The critical characteristics of a gentleman in the eighteenth and nineteenth century continued to be associated with chivalry due in part to the growing impulse to identify a hereditary link with historic origins of England, but as the nineteenth century progressed began to place increased value on its imperialistic power, which in turn found growing value in a more martial masculinity. The vocabulary of chivalry enabled the characteristic qualities of a gentleman to be refashioned as a more militaristic, laconic, and 'unpolished integrity'.[79] During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries men were defined not only by social class but also by their ability to act as gentlemen. The qualities and experiences that boys were taught to practise and recognise as indicative of a gentleman were increasingly based on sports (such as shooting, hunting, and riding) and codes of honour derived from military prowess. Sports replaced medieval forms of martial expression and became indispensable tools in public schools for the formation of character, as we will see later on.

Scott's awareness of the gradual move towards the idealisation of more chivalric behaviour enabled him to tailor his characters to represent a more contemporary masculinity as well as concerns over issues of origin and national identity (which had also come into vogue). His most significant contribution, however, was the role he played in reshaping the legacy of medieval chivalry. As Richter states, 'in 1820, readers of *Ivanhoe* were not in a position to question Scott's social assumptions that "Norman" and "Saxon" in the 1190s represented castes like whites and blacks in the antebellum South'.[80] Scott did not write under the illusion that chivalry as it was in the medieval period could be revived in full. He viewed it as a thing of the

[78] Stephani Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 35.
[79] Richard Hurd, *Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel Considered as a Part of an English Gentleman's Education: Between Lord Shaftesbury and Mr Locke* (London, 1764).
[80] David H. Richter, "From Medievalism to Historicism: Representations of History in the Gothic Novel and Historical Romance," in *Medievalism in England*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), pp. 79-104, at p. 98.

past, preserved in some way through the manners of gentlemen, but by and large a wonderful relic: 'We can only now look back on it [chivalry] as a beautiful and fantastic piece of frostwork, which has dissolved in the beams of the sun. [...] From the wild and overstrained courtesies of Chivalry has been derived our present system of manners.' [81] For some time the eighteenth-century perception of chivalry maintained it was an 'absurd and overstrained system'.[82] Despite this environment, Scott was able to do a remarkable thing: he modernised chivalry, recreating the character of knighthood in such a way as to make the knight an acceptable model for both himself and his contemporaries. Through his vivid writing he harnessed the differences in modern and medieval life while creating emotional and moral similarities. Unlike Anglo-Irish author, Kenelm Henry Digby, whose extremely popular 1822 work *The Broad Stone of Honour* or *Rules for the Gentlemen of England* adamantly defended all aspects of or actions performed under the banner of chivalry, Scott was not blind to the brutality and injustices of the Middle Ages. Divided into four parts (*Godefridus*, named after Godfrey de Bouillon, first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem; *Tancredus*, after Tancred of Hauteville, an Italo-Norman leader of the First Crusade; *Morus*, after Sir Thomas More, and *Orlandus*, relating to Orlando, the hero of the Italian epic *Orlando Furioso*, and connected to the Old French *Chanson de Roland*), *The Broad Stone* extensively assesses medieval chivalric customs, translating them into a format readily accessible to his contemporary audience. In his voluminous work, Digby champions the chivalric man with little pause. In these works, the terms 'knight' and 'gentleman' are virtually interchangeable. Intended to function as a modern chivalric handbook, Digby's work was widely read and highly praised. In contrast, Scott did not see chivalry as a tool for creating a utopian society, but rather he preferred 'to have men guided by what had proved workable in the past

[81] Sir Walter Scott, *The Miscellaneous Prose Works* (Paris: Baudry, 1838), pp. 220, 261.
[82] Girouard, *Camelot*, pp. 34-35.

rather than what might seem desirable for the future'.[83] Perhaps one of the most compelling explanations for the resonance Scott's contemporaries found with his characters was that in creating his novels Scott was simultaneously creating a model for himself to follow.

Very conscious of his lineage and of the role of the gentleman in society, Scott perpetuated his beliefs through his writings and hoped to inspire those who read his novels with a nostalgic and romantic longing for such times. It is this nostalgia that engendered so much new fascination with the medieval and perhaps had the most profound effect on his readers. Scott's readers found within his characters an emotive connection, an ethical and ideological link that bridged the gap created by hundreds of years. The identification of related views supported the more passionate qualities of chivalry that would have otherwise been discounted; this served not only to rationalise what might appear to be zealous chivalric actions and thoughts, but also to romanticise and render them a necessary inclusion and new aspiration of the upper classes.

Perhaps the greatest display of the enthusiasm for the medieval and chivalry was the famous Eglinton Tournament of 1839. The event saw the nobility of Europe and an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 spectators turn out for what had been designed to be the most spectacular display of medieval pageantry and chivalry in the modern world, had it not been for the rain which brought a muddy end to the proceedings.[84] While the skills of the mounted knight had long passed from common use, the connection between chivalry and war was not forgotten even in its romanticised form as John Ruskin noted in his 1866 lecture to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich:

> With Gothic chivalry, there comes back into the mind of Europe a passionate delight in war itself for the sake of war. And then, with the romantic knighthood which can imagine no other employment...art

[83] Chandler, 'Scott and the Medieval Revival', p 329.
[84] Helenè E. Roberts, 'Victorian Medievalism: Revival or Masquerade?', *Browning Institute Studies*, 8 (1980), 11-44, at p. 25.

> is born again. […] You have vowed your life to England, give it her wholly; - a bright, stainless, perfect life - a knightly life [85]

However, it was Tennyson's version of chivalry, retold through the tales of King Arthur most famously in *The Idylls of the King*, that might be more aptly labeled as the contemporary establishment of the chivalric ethic.[86] To live purely, speak truly, right wrong and follow the king was the mantra of Tennyson's knights, and this ideal was embraced p. by the British ruling elite within public schools and was even approved by Queen Victoria. Nowhere is this presented more clearly than through his treatment of King Arthur's character and Tennyson's profound respect and admiration for Albert, the Prince Consort. Tennyson's dedication in the *Idylls* to the prince after his death on 14 December 1861 immortalises Albert not simply as a follower or admirer of chivalry, but as its very embodiment:

> Who reverenced his conscience as his king;
> Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
> Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it;
> Who loved one only and who clave to her
> […] how should England dreaming of his sons
> Hope more for these than some inheritance
> Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
> Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
> Laborious for her people and her poor – [87]

During his lifetime Albert was indeed thought of as the British chivalric ideal because of his dedication to serving his country, his high moral standards and unimpeachable conduct. He was influenced from a young age by stories of knights and Saxons; his grandmother, the Duchess Dowager of Coburg, had told him tales written by Sir Walter Scott.[88] His tremendous work with the arts, endeavours to make them popular and accessible to those outside the wealthy class, and

[85] John Ruskin, "War," *The Crown of Wild Olive. Four Lecture on Industry and War* (London: George Allen, 1895), pp. 121, 164.
[86] Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King, ed. by J. Gray (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1996).
[87] Tennyson, *Idylls*, 301-02.
[88] Debra N Mancoff, '"Albert the Good ": Public Image and Private Iconography', *Biography*, 15 (1992), 140-164, at p. 142.

efforts to abolish slavery on an international level all contributed to his image as the valorous knight labouring to help his people. As Debra Mancoff points out:

> For the mid-Victorian advocate of chivalry, the medieval knight was neither an historical entity nor a fictional character; he was a sign, functioning as a personification of an honorable and ancient code, kept alive in modern society and cultivated to signify the aspirations of contemporary British manhood.[89]

With King Arthur, Tennyson was constructing a model of the Victorian gentleman for others to emulate. *The Holy Grail and Other Poems*, written by Tennyson in 1869, begins with an introduction which declares that his King Arthur was:

> meant to be a man who spent himself in the cause of honour, duty and self-sacrifice, who felt and aspired with his nobler knights, though with a stronger and clearer conscience…God had not made since Adam was, the man more perfect than Arthur

In 1891 Tennyson further explained that Prince Albert was the 'Ideal manhood closed in real man.'[90] The writer was criticised for allegedly portraying Arthur as weak and feminine.[91] However, in his subversion of Arthur's traditionally overtly masculine and aggressive behaviour he created a model personality that exhibited the qualities of self-restraint. Further, Arthur identifies his equal (different though equally valuable in many respects) in Guinevere; he is straightforward, loves passionately, but can also judge and forgive (he is able to recognise Guinevere's role in the destruction of Camelot but can also forgive it).[92] Herbert Warren, a contemporary of Sir Henry Newbolt and a staunch advocate of chivalry, commented on Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*:

> Whatever may be felt about them now, these 'Idylls' had an immense influence upon us boys at the time. The contrasted knightly types, Galahad, Percivale, Lancelot, Bors, the sage Merlin, above all King Arthur himself, were very much to us side by side with Homer and Greek history, they gave us our standard. We saw them in our Head, in our Masters, and in our comrades.[93]

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[89] Mancoff, 'Albert the Good', p. 144.
[90] Linda K Hughes, '"All That Makes a Man": Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" (1859) as a Primer for Modern Gentleman', *Arthurian Interpretations*, 1.1 (1986), 54-63, at p. 54.
[91] Elliot L. Gilbert, 'The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse', *PMLA*, 98.5 (1983), 863-78, at p. 163.
[92] Linda K Hughes, '"All That Makes a Man": Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" (1859) as a Primer for Modern Gentleman', *Arthurian Interpretations*, 1.1 (1986), 54-63 at pp. 54, 60.
[93] Clifton College, *Endowed Scholarships and Prizes*, ed. by G. H. Wollstan (Oxford: H. Hart, 1914), pp. 18-19.

This response was precisely Tennyson's aim when he constructed his Arthurian heroes, regardless of negative reviews.[94] Among the important ideals that Tennyson related was that masculinity was defined in terms of martial experience and that the traditional means of acquiring honour was a warrior's willingness not only to kill but to sacrifice himself, for as Ruskin said: 'The soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain.'[95] Perhaps the most fitting example of this comes at the end of the tale of Geraint and Enid: 'and in their halls arose / The cry of children, Enid's and Geraint's / Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more, / But rested in her fealty, till he crowned / A happy life with a fair death, and fell / Against the heathen of the Northern Sea / In battle.'[96] Though Geraint has fought many battles and regained his trust and love for Enid, it is not a valorous knight's fate or desire to live to old age; his aim is to die bravely in battle, a concept also used in epic.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, most famous for Sherlock Holmes, was also heavily influenced by the works of Sir Walter Scott. Though often eclipsed by the literary stature of his famous detective, Conan Doyle authored chivalric works such as *The White Company* and *Sir Nigel*.[97] These novels were an expression of Doyle's own interest in the medieval and illustrate the questing, love, and adventure motifs typical of medieval romance. More importantly, Doyle felt that his detective novels were 'a lower stratum of literary achievement,' that writing historical romances was more 'serious' work and in doing so he was following in the footsteps of Scott.[98] By reconstructing the medieval past Doyle combines Victorian conceptions of manliness ('physical courage, chivalric ideals, virtuous fortitude with additional connotations of military

[94] Girouard, p. 184; Old Cliftonian Society, *The Cliftonian* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1888).
[95] *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1909), XVII, p. 3.
[96] Lord Alfred Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J. M. Gray (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1996), p. 124.
[97] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The White Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), VI; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Complete Works: Sir Nigel* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), V.
[98] Jacqueline A. Jaffe, *Arthur Conan Doyle* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1987), p. 50.

and patriotic virtue') with myths of Britain's heroic past, further alluding to 'England's future imperial destiny from within their medieval setting.'[99]

The White Company follows the journey of Alleyne Edricson, a young man whose father had placed him in an abbey away from his malicious brother to be raised there until the age of twenty, at which point he is to spend one year experiencing what the secular world holds before determining which path of life he will pursue. Alleyne is the model of a Victorian gentleman: he is an intelligent, skilled and well-spoken individual but as of yet lacks experience and knowledge of the world around him. This insufficiency comes to demonstrate one of the novel's most important concepts: the idea of maturing through the experience of war. The trope of war-as-a-sport is consistently used throughout the novel, indicating both its popular use at the time and its correlation to the manhood-through-battle approach to masculinity mentioned before. In Doyle's other medieval novel, *Sir Nigel*, battle is a joyful experience that helps Malone overcome his softer nature and become a man.[100] Knights always face battle happily, Sir Nigel promises his troops 'some sport', tournaments and jousts are where they 'play' at war, a battle is only a 'sporting' one if the opponent is of equal skill or strength, and rules are defined by whether a battle or encounter between men is 'fair'.[101] Poet Julian Grenfell echoed these sentiments with vigor in his game book where he recorded the number of Germans he killed and in his letters where he expressed that while machine gun fire was not 'sport[ing]', shooting an individual was.[102] He admits that killing is initially disturbing 'but very soon it gets like shooting a

[99] J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 1.
[100] Conan Doyle, *Sir Nigel*,v.
[101] Conan Doyle, *Sir Nigel*, pp. 92-103, 109.
[102] Elizabeth Vandiver, 'Early Poets of the First World War', *Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) 69-80, at p. 75; Kate Thompson, ed., *Julian Grenfell, Soldier and Poet: Letters and Diaries, 1910-1915* (Hertfordshire Record Society, 2004), pp. 225, 243.

crocodile, only more amusing, because he shoots back at you.'[103] The association of games with battle was one taught and encouraged in Victorian and Edwardian public schools, holding a natural appeal for Doyle's audience. Masculinity, athleticism, chivalry and Englishness were all tied together as Meynell notes: 'Sport and battle have each a share in the aspiration, gravity, and happiness of a worthy fight, as an Englishman understands it.'[104] The significance of the depiction of sport as war will be further explored in Chapters Two.

Victorian medievalism endeavoured to recapture and express a world of chivalry where gentlemen 'turned to [the past], not to lose himself in it, but to find what is best worth having and doing now'.[105] As the powerful characters created by Scott were widely read in Britain, numerous writers began establishing a genre of works epitomising British pride, imperialism, and masculinity, as well as valour in conflict. This newly rediscovered mode of expressing masculine behaviour soon became synonymous with sport making its way into the English public school system. The ethos and character-building education of these institutions endeavoured to produce young men who epitomised the idea of the English gentleman who were paragons of both chivalry and masculinity. Young men came to define themselves through their ability to achieve victory on the playing fields, so much so that Sir Henry Newbolt commented '[...] there were very few members of the school [Clifton College] that would not have bartered away all chance of intellectual distinction for a place on the Cricket Eleven or Football Fifteen'.[106] This glamourised perception of fictionalised combat in the form of sport had a

[103] Ibid.
[104] John O. Springhall, 'Building Character in the British Boy: The Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-Class Adolescents, 1880-1914', in *Manliness and Morality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 67.
[105] Florence S. Boos, "Alternative Victorian Futures: 'Historicism,' Past and Present and A Dream of John Ball," in *History and Community: Essays in Victorian Medievalism*, ed. by Florence Saunders Boos (New York, NY: Garland Pub., 1992), pp. 3-38, at p. 23.
[106] Sir Henry Newbolt, *My World as in My Time: Memoires of Sir Henry Newbolt, 1862-1932* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), p. 32.

significant impact on many men's willingness and eagerness to enlist, particularly those who had attended public school, deeming doing so no less than their gentlemanly duty. While this is of course only one of many justifications for volunteering, it is perhaps one of the most salient points when considering the denunciation of the 'old lie' and the romanticisation of war taught in such institutions is among the central foci of attacks from disillusioned writers. The subject of enlistment, motivation to do so and cultural and economic factors which influenced this decision will be addressed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Two: Chivalry on the Eve of War

The presentation of chivalry in literature did not merely take the form of new stories populated by knights and tournaments, rather it began to be related through its moral principles, somewhat disconnected from its traditional imagery, instead becoming an inherent quality that defined a gentleman. This transformation is a critical alteration to the contemporary perception of chivalry, one that will continue through WWI as the images and rhetoric typically associated with chivalry become the objects of scorn. The concept of the English gentleman was adapted from a reconstruction of the knight as depicted in medieval romances in combination with contemporary conventions deemed most appealing and transmitted in modern literary interpretations. Knights' bravery, honour, religiosity and etiquette appealed to Victorian and Edwardian England, particularly the upper and aspirational middle classes, and became influential ideas on moral behaviour. According to Thomas Carlyle, 'manliness', and politeness became increasingly interrelated, and a gentleman was not only a man with 'toughness of muscle' and 'toughness of heart' but who was also loyal and chivalrous towards women.[107] The glamourisation of knighthood extended into professional realms as well. Hunter Willy Grenfell was described as 'a man [that] should for ever be performing heroic deeds such as slaying dragons or killing giants', while other big game hunters were seen as 'knights in shining solar topees!' and adventuring in Africa as a place where 'some all-powerful evil genius held sway over the land and kept some lovely damsel or great treasure deep hidden in the interior, surrounded by a land teeming with horrors and guarded by the foul monsters of disease, of

[107] Thomas Carlyle and Edwin Mims, *Past and Present* (New York, NY: C. Scribner's Sons, 1918), 144; John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England', *Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), 455-472, at p. 460.

darkness and savagery.'[108] The literary manifestations of these qualities, sentiments, and the experiences that tested them generated a burgeoning interest that would ultimately alter much of the rhetoric of martial conflict and sport, reverting from the use of terms such as 'soldier' and 'gun' to more medieval and romanticised descriptions such as 'knight' and 'sword'. This transition in imagery and description helped to further romanticise trails of adversity, linking adventure and bravery with martial qualities, physical power, and the desire to test masculinity in combat, which ultimately had a significant impact on the mentality towards enlistment and the effectiveness of war propaganda. This chapter examines with documentary detail, two formative educative influences of chivalry: the Boy Scouts Movement and public school literature and records. These areas of focus have been chosen because they illustrate the active role of the chivalric values encoded in literature, education, and culture over the century preceding the First World War. The importance and prevalence of chivalric ideas in the public school environment becomes particularly important when we consider the educational backgrounds of some of the authors most synonymous with World War One poetry and disillusionment:

Rupert Brooke – Rugby School; King's College, Cambridge University

Julian Grenfell – Eton; Balliol College, Oxford University

Robert Graves – Charterhouse; St. John's College, Oxford University (though did not commence studies until after the war)

Charles Sorely – Marlborough College; University College, Oxford University and University of Jena

Siegfried Sassoon – Marlborough College; Clare College, Oxford University

Ivor Gurney – Gloucester Cathedral; Royal College of Music

[108] Adams, *The Great Adventure*, p. 63.

Edward Thomas – St. Paul's School, London; Lincoln College, Oxford University

Robert Nichols – Winchester College; Trinity College, Oxford University

Edmund Blunden – Christ's Hospital; The Queen's College, Oxford University

Though somewhat reductive, a connection can be drawn between the social and educational background of these prominent writers, their upbringing likely having a significant impact on their pre-war perception of combat and their personal experiences of the conflict. Their placement in such privileged environments also afforded opportunities to make valuable social connections which helped with obtaining publication. Owen would benefit from such connections after meeting Sassoon at Craiglockhart Hospital, a friendship that had a direct impact on Owen's poetry coming into the public eye.[109] Obtaining an education of this quality and developing intellectually in an environment that consisted, more or less, of individuals that formed a homogenous group of men who were similarly wealthy or similarly positioned within the class hierarchy, was certainly a contributing factor to their development as poets. This is not to say that all individuals who attended elite schools were thus necessarily talented enough to become accomplished poets, but rather that they were given an advantage over others and that their education contributed to the sense of shared experience and disillusionment that is expressed in many of their poems. These poets attended some of the finest academic institutions in Britain, receiving educations that were out of reach to the majority of the population either due so social class or monetary means. The schools, particularly Eton, Marlborough, Winchester, Rugby and Charterhouse, would have espoused a similar ethos and students would have grown up in an environment that encouraged participation in school Officer Training Corps (OTC), study of Classical literature, and imbued young men with notions of masculinity that were

[109] Todman, *Myth and Memory*, p. 161-63.

grounded in class position and in chivalric ideals. The very notable exceptions to this list are Wilfred Owen and Isaac Rosenberg. Owen attended the Birkenhead Institute and though he desired to go to university, was unsuccessful, while Rosenberg supplemented a board school education with self-directed reading and evening classes. This list is by no means exhaustive but it is composed of some of WWI's most iconic and influential poets. Excluding both Brookes and Grenfell, the poets listed above would all ultimately become firm proponents of the disillusioned view of war.

One generalised view of disillusioned poetry is that its impetus was to be found in the misleadingly glamourised descriptions of war that were learned at such schools. Sassoon in particular springs to mind. His poem 'The Poet as a Hero' directly references chivalric tropes and decries their existence and use in manipulating men into going to battle.[110] Poets like Sassoon would have readers believe that chivalric notions were the death knell of many of Britain's young men and were the foundations upon which Owen's 'old lie' stood.[111] They are certainly not incorrect in asserting that some men went to war donning the rose coloured glasses of heroism and chivalric masculinity, but just as the very privileged backgrounds of these poets are not shared by all of the roughly six million men mobilised in WWI, nor were chivalry and the value of bravery and sacrifice discounted by all. While many of the writers on the aforementioned list were instrumental in the promotion of a disillusioned treatment of the war in literature, the educated elite of Britain were also in many ways responsible for the continued promotion of chivalric ideals throughout the war. Organisations such as the War Propaganda Bureau worked tirelessly to encourage both civilians and combatants to adhere to morals and

[110] Siegfried Sassoon, 'Poet as a Hero', *Poetry of the First World War*, ed. by Tim Kendall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94-95.
[111] Wilfred Owen, 'Dulce et Decorum Est', *Poetry of the First World War*, pp. 154-55.

actions rooted in chivalric tradition but couched in modern rhetoric. Chivalric ideals were deemed of paramount importance to the war effort but as the conflict progressed it also became clear that 'knights in armour', 'valiant sacrifice' and 'honour in death' as a means to glamourise war were losing their resonance, a matter which will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Educating a Gentleman

During the *Pax Britannica*, a period of relative peace from 1815 to 1914, the British Empire extended over roughly ten million square miles and was occupied by some 400 million people. Britain enjoyed the acquisition of new territories on every continent, numerous foreign military victories (an irony not lost on historians), and an international reputation as one of the most powerful countries in the world. British identity had become inextricably linked with its martial prowess and imperialistic endeavours. As Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska and Sonya Rose have shown, there was a significant connection between British physical culture (the 'aspiration of a physically fit, muscular male body correspond[ing] with "tempered British masculinity" of the "good citizen" which combined the virtues of strength, endurance, restraint and chivalry') and imperialism.[112] This preoccupation arose in the nineteenth century Boer Wars when citizens responded to the call to arms and were found to be in woefully bad health. The physical strength of citizens was seen as connected to the international health of the Empire with discipline, hardiness, and endurance as markers of manliness. This emphasis on physicality, moral soundness, and martial superiority in conjunction with the growing appeal of the medieval also

[112] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41 (2006), 595-610, at 598; Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 153-57, 163-68.

helped create an environment in which the qualities of the gentleman often coincided with those of chivalric masculinity. Further, the perception of superiority (specifically among middle and upper classes and pertaining to race, religion and intelligence) helped to create an environment of leisure, extravagance, and the belief that those of the ruling class had a natural right to rule.[113] Military commissions could be purchased (until 1871), and a strong family name was currency in its own right.[114] Having a seat in the House of Lords placed an individual in one of the most important positions in the Empire and in society. For families who held such an office it was seen as the duty of a son to take up this role of leadership. Education was of the utmost importance in training a young man to become a gentleman. This did not necessarily mean he was to leave school with academic distinctions; rather he was intended to learn what it meant to be a gentleman and acquire the skills, manners and demeanour appropriate for a member of England's ruling class. As such, he would attend public school, an institution charged with the task of producing leaders for Britain. 'Gentlemen' would come to replace knights as the bastions of civility, leadership, and as symbols of the confluence of wealth, masculinity, and etiquette. They would govern Britain whilst ascribing to a particular set of values that centered on ideas of courtesy, sportsmanship, and ethics. This mindset would play a significant role in the response to the outbreak of war and how many British men perceived their role within the conflict as shall be explored in Chapter Three.

This chapter will focus on the formative educative influences of chivalry on public school education that were operative at the outbreak of WWI. The first half of this section will be dedicated to exploring Lord Robert Baden-Powell's handbook, *Scouting for Boys*, which not

[113] Barbara Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War 1890-1914* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1966), p. 15.
[114] C. B. Otley, 'The Educational Background of British Army Officers', *Sociology*, 7.2 (1973), 191-209, at pp. 192-93.

only relied on chivalry but evoked knights and famous chivalric literary figures to reinforce its ideals, overtly required its members to adhere to chivalry's central tenets. The second half will focus on the library records of a selected group of public schools: Winchester College, Eton College and Charterhouse School, chosen for their prominence among pre-secondary academic institutions at the time, as well as their significant contribution to the war effort in terms of enlistment. These records and publications demonstrate the presence and importance of medieval literature, history, and modern medieval fiction in a particular cross section of public school life. These sources do have their limitations both in terms of representative power, being from exclusive, privileged schools as well as by the availability of extant archival material. They represent a particular demographic and as such cannot be taken as a universal example of the curricula, reaction and interests of British schools of all calibers. However, the data gathered is significant as it indicates a consistent interest in not only the medieval and medievalist texts independent of school curricula, but also confirms the impact of chivalry on the mindset of the pupils. It should also be remembered the significant engagement public school boys had with military-related programs such as the Junior OTC and former soldiers. As C. B. Otley notes:

> In 1900, of the 57 public schools listing governors, 40 per cent had military governors and 3 per cent had military Presidents or Chairmen; 4 per cent of all governors listed were military. In 1936, of the 103 public schools then listing governors, 60 per cent had military governors and 8 per cent had military Presidents of Chairman; 10 per cent of all governors listed were military.[115]

The positive sentiments towards the idea of battle are further demonstrated by students' encouragement of one another to enlist, act chivalrously, and admiration of individuals who possessed chivalric and gentlemanly qualities.

[115] C. B. Otley, 'Militarism and Militarization in the Public Schools, 1900-1972', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 29.3 (1978) 321-39, at p. 326.

Together these two sources help to create a picture of the British pre-war environment young men were learning in and influenced by, exploring the prominence of the cultural predilection towards a pro-war mentality and the glamourisation of chivalric combat. Though this should certainly not be viewed as an exhaustive study of pre-war Britain, it does provide compelling proof of the importance of chivalry. This study is indicative of chivalry's continued use, not simply to one specific stratum of society, i.e. the public school system and upper classes, but through the Boy Scouts, an organisation composed of members from all economic backgrounds, surveys a much wider field. This study will help to further detail the extent to which chivalry was part of the educative process, its didactic presence in literature, as well as its positive reception and adoption by school boys, which ultimately contributed in many cases, to the belief of men's requirement to act as chivalric protectors and engage in war.

It is perhaps at this point that the definition of 'gentleman' necessitates some discussion. The term has had a variety of definitions and has been frequently refashioned in order to reflect aspects of the social environment it functioned in. The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides three primary definitions of 'gentleman:'

> 1. A man of gentle birth, or having the same heraldic status as those of gentle birth; properly, one who is entitled to bear arms, though not ranking among the nobility but also applied to a person of distinction without precise definition of rank. (Now chiefly a historical term)
>
> 2. A man of gentle birth attached to the household of the sovereign or other person of high rank; frequently with defining term added, as *gentleman in waiting*, *gentleman of the (King's) Chamber*, *gentleman of the Chapel Royal*, etc.
>
> 3. A man in whom gentle birth is accompanied by appropriate qualities and behaviour; hence, in general, a man of chivalrous instincts and fine feelings.[116]

The first definition is oldest in origin, cited from 1275 and continuing in use through the end of nineteenth century. The second emerges slightly later in the Chaucer's *Melibius* in 1386, again

[116] 'Gentleman, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2016) <http://www.oed.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/Entry/77673?redirectedFrom=gentleman#eid>.

continuing to be used through to the end of the nineteenth century. The final adaptation is a much later product of the sixteenth century, first used in 1583, and is perhaps the definition most commonly operative. Reading the three definitions consecutively, the subtle shift in meaning becomes more obvious and is aptly reflective of the historical contexts in which they functioned. In the first definition a gentleman is identified in relation to his ability to bear arms and whose 'gentle' birth is associated with an identifiable heraldic device. 'Gentle' itself requires definition as while the OED states that nobility is not a requirement of a gentleman, his hereditary position did have to be one of status:

> Well-born, belonging to a family of position; originally used synonymously with *noble*, but afterwards distinguished from it, either as a wider term, or as designating a lower degree of rank. Also, in heraldic use: Having the rank or status of 'gentleman', the distinguishing mark of which is the right to bear arms.[117]

The terms 'gentleman', 'chivalrous', and 'gentle' have a certain degree of interchangeability, capable of being indicative of aspects of one another and used as points of reference. What should be noted within the definitions is the gradual move away from an emphasis on martial ability to an emphasis on behaviour and 'chivalric instincts.' This is an important development as it indicates a significant transition in the socio-historical environment, from a culture that valued martial behaviour to one that valued courtesy. Just as the medieval ideal of courtly behaviour had slowly moved away from militaristic associations, the idea of a gentleman, for a time, was largely disassociated from military prowess. However, this would fundamentally change in the mid-eighteenth century when medievalism became a point of widespread interest. 'Gentlemen' began to search for ties to medieval figures of prominence, war heroes and nobility, the romance of battle once again garnered great interest and a true gentleman was both infallibly courteous and a great sportsman, capable of riding, hunting, shooting, and later, of great hardiness and

[117] 'Gentle, Adj. and N.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2016) <http://www.oed.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/Entry/77666?rskey=s4H7AM&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

patriotism. He would treat ladies with deference, place significant value on his personal honour, and display a willingness to put himself in danger in defence of his ideals, loved ones, or the nation. Gentlemen, once defined by their martial ability, then by attachment to court, returned again in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to 'chivalric instincts' edifying the romantic qualities of knighthood and endeavouring to recapture a measure of the etiquette, morality, and ethos of an increasingly idealised part of medieval history. This shift in ideals surrounding the title of gentleman, helped by the burgeoning interest in the medieval, the ethos of the public school, the romanticism of chivalry and war rediscovered in literature, and reinvented standards of masculinity, contributed to the creation of a socio-cultural environment that was more susceptible to the glamourisation of combat and the jingoistic bravado that immediately preceded the outbreak of World War One, significantly influencing the reception and response to Britain's declaration of war on 4 August, 1914.

* * *

Early development of the idea of brotherhood and reliance would become an important facet of life when many found themselves in the trenches at the Western and Eastern Fronts. Brotherhood produced through a mutual understanding based on experience would become one of defining relationships produced during WWI and in many ways would come to characterise remembrance of the conflict as will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Tomas Seccombe wrote in a preface to *The Loom of Youth* (1917) that the public school system 'has fairly helped, you may say, to get us out of the mess of August 1914. Yes but it contributed heavily to get us

into it!'[118] The remainder of this chapter will explore how the ideas surrounding the title of gentleman were derived from chivalry as well as how this, in conjunction with the education and ethos of public schools, helped to produce young men who viewed war as an opportunity to prove their masculinity.

Remarking on corporeal punishment in a lecture, W.G. Forrest, Wykeham Professor of Ancient History at Oxford University, said that he knew of no other cultures besides the English and Spartans that subjected their youths to such a brutal form of education.[119] When he said this he no doubt had in mind the fagging system employed in public schools. Public schools were not meant to produce weak men. Mothers at times preferred to homeschool their children if they believed them too frail to endure this grueling 'education.' Fathers, conversely, saw these difficult years as formative, a period of life where boys would develop the character and sternness of men.

The ethos and reputation that today surrounds the British public school system is remarkably different from the sentiments that coloured the names of the early incarnations of these institutions. Before the reforms of Thomas Arnold during his time at Rugby from 1828 to 1842, the curriculum changes set in motion by the Clarendon Commission in 1864, and the Public School Act of 1868, many of the great schools such as Eton, Harrow, and Rugby valued the titles and physical abilities of their pupils more than intellectual prowess.[120] During the nineteenth century the purpose of public schools was to mould the children of the nobility, gentry, and to a certain extent professional classes, into the future leaders of Britain. However,

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[118] Preface to Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth* (London: Frank Richards, 1917).
[119] Glenn R Storey, 'Heroism and Reform in English Public Schools', *The Journal of General Education*, 36 (1985), 257-269, at p. 257.
[120] Anthony Sheldon and David Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War: The Generation Lost* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2013), pp. 13, 18-21; Rupert Wilkinson, 'Political Leadership and the Late Victorian Public School', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 13 (1962), 320-30, at p. 321.

by the 1880s public schools had undergone their greatest change; 'Good Learning' was giving way to 'manliness.'

The historical legacy of discipline was not lost on school boys as one sentimentally recalled: 'From the moment the accolade had been laid — not across your shoulder — you are a member of a sort of strange order of Chivalry [...] to have been flogged, in accordance with traditions laid down from our antiquity [...] was to receive an indelible hallmark [...].'[121] This student draws an important connection between modern and medieval education. The practice of sending a son away to be educated by someone outside of the immediate family had been a common practice for the children of aristocratic or wealthy families in the Middle Ages and seen as a valuable opportunity to expose the child to a broader understanding of the world and the skills he would need to be successful. In fact, some schools quite literally had their foundation in the Middle Ages where they functioned as grammar schools.[122] While the emphasis on martial training that made up much of a medieval boy's education had fallen out of relevance and use in modern Britain, a link between the practice of sending children to boarding schools and medieval education can be seen.

To understand the perceived purpose of public schools we need only turn to a short passage of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) (*TBS*). Tom's father explains why he must attend school at Rugby:

> Shall I tell him […] to make himself a good scholar? Well, but he isn't sent to school for that — at any rate not for that mainly. I don't care a straw for Greek particles, or the digamma, no more does his mother […] If he'll turn out a brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman, and a gentleman, and a Christian, that's all I want.[123]

[121] Soames, *Essential Englishmen*, p. 16.
[122] Peter Parker, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public-school Ethos* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), p. 18.
[123] Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (London: Dutton, 1949), pp. 82-83.

TBS, written in 1857 by Thomas Hughes, is often said to be the first novel to capture the British public school ethos as well as the cultural context of formative education in Britain's elite schools. Though Tom begins the story as a troublemaker and does not seem to fit in with the pre-defined social constructs of public school life, he quickly acclimatises and excels, becoming an example of Christian devotion, fairness, kindness, and strength. He is good-hearted by nature and though capable of anger and violence he is neither cruel nor malicious. Tom stands as the emblem of public schools' character-building regime, a figure that embodies Victorian ideals of gentlemanly conduct, duty, and integrity. The novel is full of incidents of Tom rescuing George Arthur, a younger, physically and emotionally weak boy, from his would-be assailants, culminating in Tom taking Arthur's place in a fight against the biggest boy in the class. It is made plain and stated several times throughout the story that Arthur's survival is contingent on Tom's help. Frequent 'raids' occur in which older fifth-form boys force the younger boys to do manual labour or give up their possessions. In a defiant scene Tom refuses to sell his betting ticket to Flashman, a notorious bully against whom Tom has incited form-wide rebellion. As a consequence of this defiance of the social order Tom is literally roasted in a fire by Flashman and his cohorts, resulting in severe burns and loss of consciousness (*TBS*, 179-83).

The often brutal enforcement of the school's hierarchal system enacted by Flashman on Tom, as well as by Kipling's Stalky on Campbell and Sefton, was not unusual at the time.[124] Protection of weaker or younger fags by older boys, as frail Arthur is protected by Tom, illustrates the more chivalric qualities of school life. In *Vanity Fair* (1847-48), William Makepeace Thackeray, himself educated at Charterhouse, depicts the tyranny and brutality of the public schools as well as the humiliating effect of class-consciousness upon sensitive boys like

[124] Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky & Co* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1899).

William Dobbin.[125] The opening of Chapter Five immediately creates an atmosphere of hostility and excitement, 'Cuff's fight with Dobbin, and the unexpected issue of that contest, will long be remembered by every man who was educated at Dr. Swishtail's famous school'.[126] The description proceeds by juxtaposing the humble origins, clumsiness, and somewhat dull nature of Dobbin against Cuff who possesses every admirable quality a schoolboy could have to such a degree that the narrator relates the rumor that 'even the Doctor himself [Doctor Swishtail] was afraid of him.'[127] The situation had not altered much in the following century according to Soames:

> Public-school life during the ninetieth century was a matter of barbaric splendor, replete with cruel tyranny and abject slavery, tribal loyalties, arcane and savage rituals, high chivalry, rebellion, battle and drunken carousing. At an English public school the slavery and the tyranny were real: there was no one to say: 'It doesn't matter, It's only a game.'[128]

Thomas Arnold, having experienced the fagging system at Lord Weymouth's Grammar School (now Warminster School), dedicated himself to the idea of a system that would produce a new, ideal type of young man — the 'Christian Gentleman'. By choosing a select group of boys who were under his constant influence, yet were able to exercise authority as prefects, Arnold was able to mould young men into examples for their juniors. He brought into Rugby a new set of views and a perception of boys that had not previously been applied.

> Arnold was the champion of the "manly piety [that] had begun to leaven the school." It was Arnold who fostered the notion that boyhood is inherently evil and that for their own salvation, the boys had to be hustled through that stage as rapidly as possible. […] he was not interested in games; only Christian knowledge was required for developing one's judgment and character.[129]

[125] Reed, *The Public Schools*, p. 62.
[126] William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, ed. by Peter Shillingsburg (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1994).
[127] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, p. 39.
[128] Soames, Nicolas and Steen, *Essential*, p. 17.
[129] Glenn R Storey, "Heroism and Reform in English Public Schools," *The Journal of General Education*, 36 (1985), 257–269, at p. 266.

The priestly sense of vocation Arnold possessed, in conjunction with his fairness and sense of humour, resonated with the boys, and little by little they were influenced by it.[130]

'Christian Gentlemen' were the result of an 'education in character' administered under the influence of Dr. Arnold.[131] The Rugby headmaster's ideal Christian Gentleman can be defined broadly through a collection of Christian, aristocratic, and chivalric qualities. Arnold in particular believed he should possess the virtues of 'honesty, modesty, honour, and a foundation of true religion'.[132] For Arnold, the Christian aspect was the most important but his emphasis on aristocratic duty was also firm. Though Arnold was actively opposed to chivalry, saying 'If I were called upon to name what spirit of evil predominantly deserved the name Antichrist, I should name the spirit chivalry', he recognised the power it held in the imagination of the boys and its important place in contemporary society.[133] His primary problem with chivalry was not its values or teachings, but rather that he believed it set honour above justice and personal allegiances before God, both of which violated his staunchly Christian sensibilities. Arnold and men such as Samuel Smiles desired to divorce the notion of the gentleman from the image of the knight that had become so popular. They viewed chivalry's connection with endless dueling, rank, privilege, and wealth as degenerative, favouring instead the concept of the gentleman founded on Christian morality and ethics.[134]

The cult of athleticism, as the devotion to sports came to be known, grew after 1860 and was directly tied to Arnold's Christian Gentleman. The two ideas were strongly contingent on honour and morality. While Arnold emphasises the 'Christian' aspect, being very concerned with

[130] Storey, 'Heroism,' p. 267.
[131] Briggs, *Thomas Hughes*, pp. 143-44.
[132] J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 135.
[133] Girouard, *Camelot*, p. 164.A. P. Stanley, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold*, 8th edn, 1858, II, p. 7.
[134] D. C. Coleman, 'Gentlemen and Players', *The Economic History Review*, 26 (1973), 92–116, at p. 99.

morality, the 'Gentleman' was incomplete without his competitive abilities and ability to perform bravely and honourably on the sports field. Charles Kingsley and Hughes both strongly advocated the idea that by strengthening the body a man could not only overcome physical maladies, but also improve his spirit and be of better service to God. In Hughes's memory Arnold had been a 'fighting man' in the sense that it was a part of a man's Christian duty to wage not only spiritual war but also physical war against wrongdoers when necessary.[135]

The development of the fagging system, while deeply problematic for a number of reasons, did help to foster qualities such as leadership, camaraderie and responsibility, as sports enabled students to learn the importance of strength, brotherhood, bravery, and solidarity. The idea of 'the honour of the house' (which Kipling, admittedly, mocks) and adulation of certain prefects engendered a sort of patriotism and loyalty which could easily be transferred to nationalism and patriotism and indeed helped to add potency to the brotherhood of arms in the trenches in WWI, creating bonds of intense friendship based on shared experience that transcended issues of differing social class and upbringing. The use of martial rhetoric in *TBS* and *SC*, which will be further explored in Chapter Two, demonstrates the predilection toward jingoist sentiments, one that grew in conjunction with Britain's imperialistic ideals and involvement in wars on foreign soil.

The revival of chivalry, by romanticising sacrificial death, encouraged the justification of war by making it a noble pursuit and glamourising armed combat. Two studies that conjointly provide rigorous details on the literary manifestations of these ideas in children's books before and during the war are Velma Bourgeois Richmond's *Chivalric Stories as Children's Literature*, which meticulously documents the presence of chivalric motifs, characters and ideals in

[135] William E. Winn, '*Tom Brown's Schooldays* and the Development of "Muscular Christianity"', *Church History*, 29 (1960), 64–73, at p. 69.

Edwardian and Victorian children's literature and pedagogy; and Michael Paris's *Over the Top* which traces the impact of underlying moral crusade and unofficial propaganda present in juvenile fiction from before WWI through the 1930s.[136] The works of Richmond and Paris not only help to shed light on the reading habits of children and adolescence during the period but to elucidate the prevalent nature of chivalric notions of bravery, self-sacrifice, honour and loyalty. The idealisation of the soldier as knight developed into a widely employed device not only in literature and poetry but also in the media and propaganda. The image of the knight and the invocation of his codes helped to establish a pro-war rhetoric that not only appealed to a sense of duty (both to country and as a gentleman), but placed those who did not necessarily subscribe to these beliefs in a position vulnerable to accusations of cowardice. Honour and masculine responsibility were among the primary foci of propaganda, attacking men's sense of duty and using the threatening label of 'coward' as motivation for enlistment. Emotional blackmail would become one of the most powerful tools in Britain's War Propaganda Bureau's (WPB) arsenal. The WPB would not only use standards of masculinity to encourage enlistment but also guilt, women, children, fear and destruction, in an effort to make remaining in Britain not only unappealing but wholly socially unacceptable, facts that will be explored in Chapter Three.

As the nineteenth century progressed representations of masculinity began to exhibit more militaristic qualities. Hippolyte Taine, incorporating growing interest in these more martial qualities, defined an English gentleman as 'a truly noble man, a man worthy to command, a disinterested man of integrity, capable of exposing, even sacrificing himself for those he leads; not only a man of honour, but a conscientious man, in whom generous instincts have been

[136] Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *Chivalric Stories as Children's Literature: Edwardian Retellings in Words and Pictures* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014); Michael Paris, *Over the Top: The Great War and Juvenile Literature in Britain* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2004).

confirmed by right thinking'.[137] The rhetoric used to describe war in popular literature grew to describe not only sports matches but interactions between competing students. The association between war, sport and games became increasingly common both in school and in the adult world of experience, and often still retained its veneration of the chivalric. In 1919, Sir Douglas Haig notably said that, 'the inspiration of games has brought up through the war, as it carried us through the battles of the past'.[138] Sir Dighton Digby was described by Field Marshal Lord Birdwood as 'entirely *sans peur et sans reproche* and a model of all manly and knightly virtues.'[139] Sir William Butler was similarly depicted by General Wolsely as the 'most chivalrous of hearts, had he lived in medieval times, he would have been the knight errant of everyone in distress,' while Sir Arthur Conan Doyle believed that when Colonel Crabbe stood against the Boers he had the 'bearing of a medieval knight-errant.'[140] In addition to the character-building regime of public schools, boys found that their favourite heroes were paragons of the same masculine, chivalric, or heroic ethic that they were encouraged to emulate by their schoolmasters. Tennyson's heroes adhered dutifully to the tenets of chivalry, Sir Henry Newbolt, William Wordsworth, and John Buchan illustrated the value of chivalric qualities in adversity, while Rudyard Kipling and Rider Haggard's characters demonstrated the importance of bravery and physicality. Chivalry's profound influence on literature did not remain confined to bookshelves but proliferated through life. This brief exploration of the development on chivalry from the mid-eighteenth century onwards serves to highlight its importance and demonstrate how it came to occupy such an important place in British culture. Building from this, Chapter Two

[137] Hippolyte Taine, *Notes on England*, ed. and trans. by E Hyams (Fair Lawn, N. J.: Essential Books, 1958), p. 105.
[138] Sir Douglas Haig, *The Rhetorical Address Delivered to the Students of Saint Andrews*, 14 May 1919.
[139] W. R. Birdwood, *Khaki and Gown: An Autobiography* (New York, NY: R. Speller, 1957), p. 134.
[140] Michael C. C. Adams, *The Great Adventure: Male Desire and the Coming of World War I* (Bloomington, I. N.: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 63.

will look more closely at the impact of chivalry on education and character in the years more immediately preceding the outbreak of World War One.

Chivalry and the Boy Scouts Movement

> The Scouts seek to impress upon youth chivalrous, unselfish, honourable sentiments, encourage pluck, a strong sense of duty, good order and discipline ... they will help patriotism and high minded sentiment.[141]

Founded on the cornerstone of chivalry, the Boy Scouts encouraged loyalty, bravery, honour and self-sacrifice, in addition to Christian morality. The organisation rapidly grew from a small collection of boys in Africa to its present membership which totals over 31 million.[142] Though created less than a decade before the start of WWI, the ethics taught and learned by scouts had a significant impact on both enlistment and the British Home Front during wartime. By 1910 over 108,000 individuals were participating in what was to be called the 'Scouting Movement', each having read, heard or been influenced by followers of the six fortnightly published issues of *Scouting for Boys* (*SFB*). *SFB* would remain a bestseller throughout the twentieth century and would help to indoctrinate a generation of boys with a set of values which were perceived as definitively British.[143] Today, 216 countries and an estimated 31 million young boys and girls comprise the organisation, espousing many of the same tenets upon which it was founded. The Scouting Movement and the book that held its creeds rapidly gained

[141] Sam Pryke, 'The Popularity of Nationalism in the Early British Boy Scout Movement', *Social History*, 23.3 (1998), 309–24, at p. 313.
[142] 'World Scouting', *The Scouts Association*, 2016 <https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/2194/world-scouting-fs260010>.
[143] Andrew Frayn, *Writing Disenchantment: British First World War Prose, 1914-1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 2.

immense popularity, becoming an extensive network of young men and women who ascribed to the philosophies and examples Robert Baden-Powell laid out for them.

Robert Baden-Powell was educated at Charterhouse and survived the wars in Africa to enjoy the fame of an illustrious military career. Whilst at school, Baden-Powell was not known to be a particularly studious boy; his exceptional personality, seemingly very much in the vein of Tom Brown, made him equally popular and unpopular among peers and teachers. During his youth he read Digby's *Broad Stone of Honour* which seems to have been especially influential on him; he would later continually recommend it to Scouts to read.[144] Also influential on the ideas Baden-Powell would use to model the Scouts were two American organisations, The Red Indians, who encouraged outdoorsmanship and woodcraft, and The Knights of King Arthur, who at their meetings (called Round Tables) took on the names of contemporary 'knights' and heroes, with their goal being to revive 'the spirit of chivalry, courtesy, deference to womanhood, recognition of *noblesse oblige*, and Christian daring.'[145] After leaving school in 1876 he joined the army, traveling to several different countries including Afghanistan, Malta, India, and numerous regions of Africa. Baden-Powell's courageous actions at the 217-day long Siege of Mafeking saw his promotion to Major-General at the age of forty-two and secured his role as a national hero. The Cadets Corps at Mafeking, the inspiration for the Boy Scouts, impressed him sufficiently that he used their conduct for examples in *SFB*. Baden-Powell would spend the next few years forming the Scouts and traveling across Europe to lecture and oversee events. When World War One broke out he placed himself at the disposal of the War Office, to which Lord Kitchener replied that he 'could lay his hands on several competent divisional generals but he

[144] Girouard, *Return to Camelot*, p. 254
[145] William Byron Forbush, *The Boy Problem*, 6th edn (Boston, MA: Pilgrim Press, 1907), pp. 100-104.

could find no one who could carry on the invaluable work of the Boy Scouts.'[146] Baden-Powell was given the Barony of Gilwell in 1921 and continued to be a major part of the Scouts until shortly before his death in 1941.

Though Victorian medievalism had helped to advance the academic study of medieval literature and history, there was still comparatively little known about the reality of medieval life. This allowed people the freedom to imagine the Middle Ages within the framework of the literature they read. The noble knight was able to stand as an emblem of honour and to be taken up as a symbol of contemporary gentlemanly conduct without the influence of factuality. Baden-Powell demonstrates his understanding of the knight's code and lays out a list of the most important tenets:

> Their honour was sacred
> They were loyal to God, their king, and their country
> They were particularly courteous and polite to all women and their children, and weak people
> They were helpful to everybody
> They gave money and food where it was needed, and saved up their money to do so.
> They taught themselves the use of arms in order to protect their religion and their country against enemies
> They kept themselves strong and healthy and active to be able to do these things well.
> You Scouts cannot do better than follow the example of the Knights. (*SFB*, 24)

These rules of knighthood are reiterated later in the text, further emphasising their importance to scouting (*SFB*, 242). Baden-Powell was not shy in taking advantage of this popular trend when he declared that 'In the old days the knights were the scouts of Britain, and their rules were very much the same as the scout law we have now' (*SFB*, 23). *SFB* makes direct use of the figuration of knighthood in order to make its emphasis on social etiquette, responsibility and courage more appealing. Baden-Powell's intentions are clear:

> One aim of the Boy Scouts scheme is to revive amongst us, if possible, some of the rules of the knights of old, which did so much for the moral tone of our race. Unfortunately, chivalry with us has, to a large extent, been allowed to die out, whereas in Japan, for instance, it is taught to children, so that it becomes with them

[146] Hilary Saint George Saunders, 'Enterprise', in *The Left Handshake*, (London: Collins, 1949), p. 17.

> a practice of their life, and it is also taught to children in other countries with the best results. Our effort is not so much to discipline the boys as to teach them to discipline themselves. (*SFB*, 239)

By laying claim to this long lineage of prestige and valour Baden-Powell is imbuing his work with a historicity that appeals to young men of all classes. Those of the middle and upper classes would have viewed this statement as the confirmation of their class status, something that was likely either taught to them or that they absorbed from their surroundings. Those of the lower classes would have recognised the figure of the knight as something to aspire to, a chance that Baden-Powell allows for within the clever framing of his guidebook. While it was Baden-Powell's intention to create an organisation that was open to boys of all social strata, the reality of the situation was somewhat different. The Boy Scouts remained a fixture with in the upper classes while similar organisations such as the Boys' Brigade tended to attract individuals from lower stations. Though the Boys' Brigade was structured with a military hierarchal system (boys earning titles such as NCO, lance-corporal, corporal and sergeant), a stark contrast to the Scouts, Baden-Powell's *SFB* was deferred to for guidance: 'Scouting, on the lines laid down in General Sir Robert Baden-Powell's Handbook, "Scouting for Boys", is now taken up within the Brigade as a definite branch of Brigade work'.[147] Officers in the Brigade were encouraged to refer to Baden-Powell's lectures, games, competitions and practice exercises as written in *SFB*, yet are specifically ordered that 'The work undertaken should be confined to Scouting, and should not include any special code of ethics differing from what is taught to the rest of the Company.'[148] Despite this, the Boys' Brigade did share values with the Boy Scouts. Among the honours awarded by the Brigade was The Boys' Brigade Cross for Heroism which 'may be awarded to any Boy who […] has preformed a signal act of self-sacrifice for others, shown heroism in

[147] The Boys' Brigade, *The Boys' Brigade Manual: For the Use of Officers* (Glasgow: Published by authority of the Brigade Executive, 1913), p. 41.
[148] The Boys' Brigade, *Brigade Manual*, p. 42.

saving life or attempting to save life, or displayed marked courage in the face of danger.'[149] The importance of self-sacrifice, courage and heroism to the ideology of the Boys Scouts with be discussed further in this chapter. Similarly, organisations such as the National Service League and Primrose League were funded and founded by the middle classes through which 'The working classes were to be make aware of the benefits of empire' in order to counter, as Baden-Powell put it, '[the] moral virus that [was] already spreading amongst the young'.[150]

In his efforts to inspire chivalric values within the youth of Britain, Baden-Powell employs the figure of the knight without dwelling of this historically elitist nature of knighthood. He allows his new knights to come from all walks of life, relying more on their inner values than genealogy.

> Remember, whether rich or poor, from castle or from slum, you are all Britons in the first place, and you've got to keep England up against outside enemies. You have to stand shoulder to shoulder to do it. […] You must sink your differences. If you despise other boys because they belong to a poorer home than yourself you are a snob; if you hate other boys because they happen to be born richer […] than yourself, you are a fool. (*SFB*, 319)

Baden-Powell appeal to readers not necessarily to disregard the class system, an institution still strong in both periods, but to refrain from belittling those in lower stations simply because of their social position. The reasons for this could be many. In the early twentieth century the staunch lines dividing classes were beginning to blur. With the rise of industry and commerce, individuals without titles or impressive ancestors were able to obtain positions of great power and influence, as were educated or artistically talented individuals. Though it is perhaps too generous to say that Baden-Powell had politics in mind, there is a certain foresighted wisdom to instilling the idea of equality within young men. This could be motivated by Baden-Powell's

[149] The Boys' Brigade, *Brigade Manual*, p. 46.
[150] Jane Potter, *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p.37; Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* (London, 2000), p. 105.

military experiences. Having been a major participant in the Boer War, Baden-Powell would have understood the need for camaraderie among soldiers and the difficulties the class-divide could create. By design, the Scouts were not intended as an elitist organisation (regardless of the ultimate reality) and in many cases boys of varying social status were interacting within troops or at larger rallies and jamborees. In fact, we know Baden-Powell specifically formed some troops with a mixture of lower-middle-class and working-class boys so as to prevent accusations of elitism, as well as to promote inclusiveness.[151] One boy from the Brownsea troop, Terence Bonfield, the son of a carpenter, reported that 'Baden-Powell told us that it [the purpose of these diversified groups] was to get the working-class boys and the higher class boys, the college boys and that to mix, to see if it would work, to see if the two lots could go together all right.'[152]

It is important to acknowledge at this point that while Baden-Powell's character-building regime relied heavily on notions of chivalry, military service, and examples of the national character these produced, he was not trying to create an organisation which trained boys for future military service. Baden-Powell was not a jingoist and was opposed to overt displays of martial prowess. However, the looming threat of WWI was especially disconcerting to him and he adamantly defended himself and the Scouts against accusations of being a militaristic training group.[153] Baden-Powell was an adamant proponent of preparedness, a preoccupation not unrelated to his military experience, and as such the Scouts were taught numerous skills and encouraged to adopt a mentality that predisposed them towards military service though not overtly coerced to enlist. In fact, regardless of the Scouts' embracement of the knightly figure and the class-related connotations this held, displays of militarism within the Scouts were swiftly

[151] Pryke ,'Nationalism in the Boy Scout Movement', p. 321.
[152] Quoted in 'The Brownsea Island Story', Radio Four, 17 September I975.
[153] Pryke referencing Baden-Powell's reaction to aggressive imperialism and communism in *Rovering to Success* (London, 1922), p. 137, in 'The Popularity of Nationalism in the Early British Boy Scout Movement'.

condemned, as Scout Ted Neat recalled when another Scout who came to an event carrying a sword was quickly 'got rid of'.[154] Rather, what Baden-Powell envisioned was the creation of a new generation of young men and women that spanned the globe who were bonded by a mutual understanding and ideology.

The subject of honour is emphasised throughout Baden-Powell's writing as a moral imperative that defines boys' character: 'there is another kind of law which binds people just as much as their written laws, though this one is neither written nor published. This unwritten law is Honour.'[155] Baden-Powell is correct in his statement that 'The Knights consider their honour their most sacred possession' (*SFB*, 23). This was true as much for historical knights as it was for those of fiction. Honour was indeed the unwritten law that governed much of knights' actions and was valued more highly than any tangible object.

Related to this honour was an abhorrence of cowardice and the requirement of sacrifice. One of the more provocative rules of the Scouts' and knights' orders was the command to think of the needs of others first even at the cost of their own lives. This did not mean that either should dive headlong into any conflict and sacrifice life and limb for any cause. What it did mean, though, was that should a just cause such as a war in defence of lord, country, lady, or faith arise, a man should not hesitate to risk his life for the furtherance of that cause. Such an idea would have perhaps seemed very noble to boys but also quite alien since they were unlikely to find themselves in a situation that would necessitate such a sacrifice. In order to make this notion more accessible Baden-Powell relates the story of a young boy he encountered in the

[154] Quoted in 'The Brownsea Island Story'.
[155] Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *Young Knights of the Empire: Their Code and Further Scout Yarns* (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1917), p. 3.

Mafeking Cadet Corps who rode his bicycle along the firing lines to deliver important messages. Baden-Powell warns one boy who rides in under particularly heavy fire:

> 'You will get hit one of these days riding about like that when shells are flying.'
>
> 'I pedal so quick, sir, they'll never catch me!' was his reply. (*SFB*, 11)

Baden-Powell goes on to remark on the boy's bravery and disregard for his own life in the line of duty, declaring his actions both right and honourable. He ends the tale with a question followed by an answer of encouragement and reason: 'Would any of you do that? If an enemy were firing down this street, and you had to take a message across to a house on the other side, would you do it? I am sure you would — although probably wouldn't much like doing it' (*SFB*, 11). Reader involvement is one of the most effective devices Baden-Powell employs to engage his young audience. By challenging their perceptions and abilities he invites them to prove that they have the character to be a scout. The manual does not simply enumerate a list of rules or instructive stories; it forces the reader to investigate his own strength and encourages him to improve but not to questions the ethic of self-sacrifice. Baden-Powell speaks to the boys in a way that allows them to believe in the assumption that all boys have within the courage to be men of action. This assumption implies that anyone not possessing this inherent quality is not worthy of being either a scout or a man. The faith that Baden-Powell places in the reader's nature would serve as encouragement to act in accordance with these guidelines out of a desire to show that he does indeed have such bravery within him, or to force any sentiments to the contrary away and at the very least maintain the outward face of bravery. This tenet of the knight's and Scout's code is one that will be addressed in detail later as it is intimately linked with the desire or compulsion to go to war.

While instilling ethical values within Scouts that would (ideally) lead to boys to be develop into gentlemen was of paramount importance, instilling love of physically hard work and perseverance (physical as well as emotional) was of equal necessity. This ethic ties in with Baden-Powell's appeal to boys' inner qualities and abilities while simultaneously endeavouring to make room for members of the working classes by declaring that it takes more than status to achieve in life. Baden-Powell reaches out to his audience again, developing a bond between author and reader, uniting them for the purpose of supporting their country: 'This vast empire did not grow of itself out of nothing; it was made by your forefathers by dint of hard work and hard fighting, at the sacrifice of their lives — this is, by their whole-hearted patriotism. […] In all you do, remember think of your country first' (*SFB*, 28-30). He is careful not to mention England or any country in particular by name so that individuals of the commonwealth or other nations do not feel alienated or excluded from the patriotic fervor Baden-Powell endeavors to create. Though the manual was initially written for the youth of Britain, the rapid growth and popularity of the Scout Movement made it a fixture in numerous countries around the globe, not least of which were those under British colonial rule.

Courage and self-sacrifice are next encouraged. Sacrifice once again becomes noble; dying in battle for one's country or belief is again an honour. This idea becomes an incredibly

coercive social paradigm, one that not only distinguishes an individual as a man of character but also as a good and genuine member of humanity at large. Baden-Powell disguises this nationalistic idea within the 'Scouting spirit', setting it up as a grandiose achievement:

> 'If you take up Scouting in that spirit, you will be doing something; take it up, not merely because it amuses you, but because by doing so you will be fitting yourself to help your country. Then you will have in you the true spirit of patriotism, which every British boy ought to have if he is worth his salt'. (*SFB*, 30)

He places the scout in a position of elevated potential that results in greater responsibility. Culturally, notions of social responsibility, the desire to preserve class positions and traditions which were prominent in the minds of Victorians continue to be present and thriving among Baden-Powell's contemporaries. The idea of responsibility is one that may have appealed to some boys who had grown up in the fagging system and become prefects, understanding the necessity for leadership and the power a leader possesses to mould those around him. Equally though, there were many boys who were glad to be free of the yoke of responsibility after public school, finding the pressure of leadership too demanding. Yet the abstractness of Baden-Powell's command to be good citizens allows the reader to think of himself as one part of a large machine instead of in a position of solitary responsibility. The word 'if' permits the reader the opportunity to not be part of the 'Scouting spirit', but with his further comments Baden-Powell tries to convince his audience that there is little downside to taking part in the order, saying that it will not only benefit the reader but those around him.

Baden-Powell did not only appeal to the examples of contemporaries and popular historical figures like Nelson, he also looked to British legends as a source of inspiration for his young readers. The recognisable image of St. George and the Dragon features directly under the heading 'Chivalry', but St. George is replaced by a scout with a caption reading 'Just like Saint George of old, the Boy Scouts of today fight against everything evil and unclean' appears in later

editions.[156] Baden-Powell thus allows the reader to imagine himself as the hero slaying the Dragon. His clever invocation of the reader's imagination enables the book to engage the reader, engendering patriotic and self-aggrandising sentiments. An appeal to history is again made when Baden-Powell declares that it was King Arthur who started the order of knights in England 1,500 years ago (*SFB*, 241). This makes a further connection to notions of British identity and cultural awareness. Claiming England as the birthplace of chivalry spoke to Victorian and contemporary imperialistic views, which further singled Britain out among other nations as the bastion of civility: 'Possibly one reason for the ingrained feeling of chivalry in our nation is the fact that the code of the mediaeval knights took hold so long ago as AD 500 when King Arthur made the rules for his knights of the Round Table, which have been the foundation for the rules and conduct of gentlemen ever since.'[157]

Heroes of legend were not the only ones that Baden-Powell used to demonstrate the value of the skills and traits he wished to develop in his readers. The works of several authors are brought into the manual, using their popularity as a means to support his ideas and to relate them once again to figures that appealed to the boys' interest. Kipling's Kimball O'Hara and Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes are the two most commonly invoked characters, their exploits used as examples of admirable traits (Holmes's less admirable habits, such as drinking, drug abuse and smoking, are ignored). Through them Baden-Powell impresses the need for resourcefulness and intelligence. Observation becomes an especially important trait, one that is revisited by Baden-Powell multiple times. Holmes is used as an example of the usefulness and cleverness of a person who is constantly observant of the minute details around him:

[156] For further details, please see: *Scouting for Boys: Handbook for Instructions in Good Citizenship Through Woodcraft*, ed. by 'The Dump: The Repository of Scouting Reference Material', 2013.
[157] Robert Baden-Powell, *The Headquarters Gazette*, May 1914.

> Remember how Sherlock Holmes met a stranger and noticed that he was looking fairly well-to-do, in new clothes with a mourning band on his sleeve, with a soldierly bearing, and a sailor's way of walking, sunburnt, with tattoo marks on his hand. What should you have supposed that man to be? Well, Sherlock Holmes guessed, correctly, that he had lately retired from the Royal Marines as Sergeant, his wife had died, and they had some children at home. (*SFB*, 79)

He calls this ability 'Sherlock-Holmesism' and makes several references to similar scenes in which Holmes is able to deduce an individual's circumstances or problems by merely taking a careful glance (*SFB*, 101). Conan Doyle's Sir Nigel Loring of *The White Company* is revered as a shining example of chivalry, not simply because of his prowess in battle but because his courteous treatment of women and his fighting spirit are unswayed by his shortness and half blindness (*SFB*, 247). Though his wife is very plain, Loring does not hesitate to defend her position as the most beautiful lady in England or to defend any wronged person he happens to meet on his travels. Though there is little mention of women in *SFB* when they do make appearances it is generally as recipients of aid from men, reinforcing the idea of men coming to the assistance of 'damsels in distress.'

Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* helped to promote the ethics and morality of chivalry to an increasingly large audience of young individuals, hoping to unify Britain and its empire under a banner of chivalric courage, honour and duty. He was undoubtedly successful. Not only would over 100,000 Scouts and former Scouts participate in WWI, but an equally significant number would help maintain the Home Front by volunteering to act as couriers, harvesters, and with the Coast Guard.[158] The rapid growth of enlistment in the Scouts demonstrates the power and appeal of the Scouts' ethos which was founded on and driven by the ethics of chivalry. The central tenets of chivalry explained in the introduction of this thesis and in Chapter One are

[158] Tammy M. Proctor, *On My Honour : Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 2002), XCII, p. 87.

readily recognisable and actively employed in the Scouts Movement and were operative in the minds of soldiers throughout WWI. Though Baden-Powell struggled to disassociate the Scouts with the image of a para-military organisation, the character building program he created was widely celebrated, copied, and emulated, indicating just how powerful chivalric ideas were on the eve of war.

Chivalry in Popular Literature

By the end of the nineteenth century a public school was now 'a place where the young may learn to put honour before gain, duty before pleasure, the public good before private advantages.'[159] Newbolt described how the public school,

> has derived the housemaster from the knight, to whose castle boys were sent as pages; […] prefects, from the senior squires; […] and the love of games, the "sporting" or "amateur" view of them, from tournaments and the chivalric rules of war.[160]

Though the historical accuracy of this statement should certainly be questioned, the sentiment it implies would have been received favourably by many individuals both inside and outside the public school system in Britain during this period. Public schoolboys acquired many of their fundamental ideas and beliefs through the combined prejudices of family and society, to be further reinforced or implanted by the formative experiences of school life. The revival of medievalism in the mid-eighteenth century and its further flowering following the popularity of Sir Walter Scott's historically-based novels and similarly themed works triggered a renewed interest in medieval life and culture that was considerably influenced by chivalric romance.[161]

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[159] David Ward, 'Public School and Industry in Britain after 1870', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2.3, 37-52, at p. 49.
[160] Sir Henry Newbolt, *The Book of the Happy Warrior* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1917), p. vii.
[161] Scott, *Ivanhoe*; John R. Reed, 'The Victorians and War', in *Cambridge Companion to Writing War*, ed. by Kate Mcloughlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 135-47.

The presentation of chivalry in literature did not merely take the form of new stories populated by knights and tournaments, rather it began to be related through its moral principles, somewhat disconnected from its traditional imagery, instead becoming an inherent quality that defined a gentleman. This transformation is a critical alteration to the contemporary perception of chivalry, one that will continue through WWI as the images and rhetoric typically associated with chivalry become the objects of scorn. By looking at a combination of popular school literature and records, the underlying chivalric ethics and interest in chivalry of this age group asserts itself. This discussion will turn again to *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (*TBS*) and *Stalky & Co.* (*SC*) to reaffirm the importance of the allegory of war and sport, a trope active throughout the war, in order to provide a framework for later discussions of these themes as they appear in poetry, literature and propaganda.

Among the social conventions and sentiments acquired at school was a familiarisation, if not glamourisation and romanticisation, of war. In *TBS*, Tom tells East that 'We've always been enemies with the masters. We found a state of war when we came, and went into it of course' (*TBS*, 308). The 'Of course' is indicative of the necessity of participation in 'war' and its establishment as an unquestionable event, further demonstrating that its position as a social expectation was previously fixed. Similarly, in Kipling's *SC*, Stalky's exploits are often explained using martial rhetoric: 'Their wars had ever been waged without malice', 'away in the tumult, a knot of warriors reeled', 'at last Stalky and Co. had fallen' (*SC*, 22, 85, 22). 'The College' or 'the Coll.', as the boys in *SC* refer to it, was based on The United Services College, a public school for the sons of military officers that Kipling attended. Sports acted as an avenue through which boys could use martial rhetoric and enjoy the 'brotherhood in arms' depicted in medieval romances, assimilating martial rhetoric into their vocabulary and transforming the

playing field into the battlefield. Whilst discussing a fearsome football match the narrator of *TBS* addresses the audience:

> You say you don't see much in it all — nothing but a struggling mass of boys, and a leather ball which seems to excite them all to great fury, as a red rag does a bull. My dear sir, a battle would look much the same to you, except that the boys would be men, and the balls iron; but a battle would be worth your looking at for all that, and so is a football match. (*TBS,* 114)

In similar martial language Robert Graves, writing for *The Green Chartreuse* at Charterhouse School, said of the Final House Match in 1913:

> This was concluded on Teusday [sic] last by the victory of Penny's house over Russelites. The issue of the game was rendered especially uncertain by the uneven nature of the roof on which it was decided.
>
> The Casualties were only four killed and three seriously injured.
>
> A Russelite backstop fell from the roof upon a buttery boy below. Both were killed instantaneously. Swipe-round succumbed to severe injuries from a bat which slipped from the hands of a member of Penny's house.
>
> A numpire [sic] stood on the unsafe portion of the tiling and was precipitated downwards into writing school. The remaining injuries were inflicted by the commander of the losing side who resented being dismissed by a tyce before notching a single run.[162]

Sport is transformed into war and later, war into sport; the school grounds and facilities become the battle ground and the participating students, led by commanding officers, are both killed and become casualties. This type of description was a common element in novels set in public schools. The conflicts the boys engage in are frequently described as wars, and the events in them as sieges or battles with defined adversaries and outcomes that affect the future of the characters involved. Stalky calls a battle 'a bit of a scrimmage'. 'Floreat Etona! we must be in the first rank' became the battle cry used by Etonians on the Western Front, and British espionage is referred to as 'the Great Game' in *Kim*. War and the idea of war become descriptive of life at school, the relationships built there, just as the experiences beyond are framed by the understanding of life gained at school.[163] As Reinman observed, sports became the modern equivalent of a chivalrous duel or tournament: 'Games like football, rugby and cricket signified a

[162] Robert Graves, 'One Hundred Years Ago', *The Green Chartreuse*, July 1913, p. 2.
[163] J. A. Mangan, 'Play up and Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Public School Vocabularies of Motive', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 23.3 (1975), 324-35.

collective — British (or British-Imperial) — code of sportsmanlike behaviour.'[164] This notion of sportsmanship enabled the evocation of sentiments regarding the respect and honourable treatment of opponents, something that will become critical to literature produced during the war as we shall see in Chapter Three. The knight-errant-cum-sportsman image becomes an accepted, if not expected, manner of expression, and the lessons learned through it contribute to the development of character.

Kipling's encouragement of chivalric virtues was embodied less through medieval rhetoric or figures, and so he was capable of speaking more directly to boys in more familiar terms whilst simultaneously inculcating them with ideals that had come to be seen as necessary qualities in all men of good breeding. His characters often find themselves in dangerous situations, their masculine qualities providing them with the tools necessary to survive. His poem 'School Song' preceding the main text of *Stalky & Co.,* a book that helped to create the public school ethos in the same way as *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, emphasises the unforeseen importance of activities engaged in while at school:

> Western wind and open surge
> Took us from our mothers--
> Flung us on a naked shore
> (Twelve bleak houses by the shore.
> Seven summers by the shore!)
> 'Mid two hundred brothers.
>
> There we met with famous men
> Set in office o'er us;
> And they beat on us with rods--
> Faithfully with many rods--
> Daily beat us on with rods,
> For the love they bore us!
>
> […]
>
> And we all praise famous men--
> Ancients of the College;

[164] Modris Ekstein, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (London: Bantam, 1989), pp. 120-126; Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 221.

For they taught us common sense---
Tried to teach us common sense--
Truth and God's Own Common Sense
Which is more than knowledge!

[…]

This we learned from famous men
Knowing not its uses
When they showed in daily work
Man must finish off his work--
Right or wrong, his daily work-
And without excuses.

[…]

Some beneath the further stars
Bear the greater burden.
Set to serve the lands they rule,
(Save he serve no man may rule)
Serve and love the lands they rule;
Seeking praise nor guerdon.

This we learned from famous men
Knowing not we learned it.
Only, as the years went by--
Lonely, as the years went by--
Far from help as years went by
Plainer we discerned it.

[…]

Kipling's verse does not attempt to hide the rigors or more violent incidents (being taken from their mothers, flogging, labour, war) that boys will encounter in school and afterwards. Rather, by juxtaposing these trying times against the benefit of the knowledge imparted by their schoolmasters, the boys learn the value of their experiences and understand the importance of the words and actions of the school's leaders. This demonstrates the acquisition of 'manliness,' the quality of a gentleman which can only be acquired through the crucible of life. Though *SC* is not a novel that overtly praises either chivalry or the ideals of gentlemanly behaviour associated with etiquette, Stalky does embody the masculine qualities of hardiness, frankness, and trustworthiness (among those he counts as friends or leads) more associated with the imperialistic gentleman adventurer, qualities of great benefit in time of war. The poem

encourages boys to endure and take heart from the fact that any present difficulties are formative and the wisdom gained in those unpleasant times will be of great benefit later in life. This sentiment resonates with the parental reasoning for sending boys to school, a place well known for its cruelty. The effect of Stalky's experiences at school on his ability to perform in the military demonstrate the importance of adversity and the necessity of allowing those experiences to be instructional, translating experience into tools for the future.

Sir Henry Newbolt's famous 'Clifton Chapel' possesses the same spirit and message but is more grandiose and romantic:

> This is the Chapel: here, my son,
> Your father thought the thoughts of youth,
> And heard the words that one by one
> The touch of Life has turn'd to truth.
> Here in a day that is not far,
> You too may speak with noble ghosts
> Of manhood and the vows of war
> You made before the Lord of Hosts.
>
> To set the cause above renown,
> To love the game beyond the prize,
> To honour, while you strike him down,
> The foe that comes with fearless eyes;
> To count the life of battle good,
> And dear the land that gave you birth,
> And dearer yet the brotherhood
> That binds the brave of all the earth.--
>
> My son, the oath is yours: the end
> Is His, Who built the world of strife,
> Who gave His children Pain for friend,
> And Death for surest hope of life.
> To-day and here the fight's begun,
> Of the great fellowship you're free;
> Henceforth the School and you are one,
> And what You are, the race shall be.
>
> God send you fortune: yet be sure,
> Among the lights that gleam and pass,
> You'll live to follow none more pure
> Than that which glows on yonder brass:
> *'Qui procul hinc,'* the legend's writ,--
> The frontier-grave is far away--
> *'Qui ante diem periit:*

Sed miles, sed pro patria.[165]

The stirring, nationalistic sentiments are more overt here, something not at all unexpected from a work of Newbolt's. Newbolt, an avid admirer of both medieval and modern martial life, frequently addresses the themes of courage under fire, patriotic loyalty and gentlemanly pride. Many of the old Cliftonian's poems were destined to reach the dormitories of public schools and were written with this intention. Before the outbreak of war in 1914 Newbolt had already gained renown for his patriotic and often jingoistic poetry, particularly 'Vitaï Lampada' which would make the phrase 'Play up! play up! and play the game!' synonymous with World War One.[166] While 'playing the game' was certainly encouraged at public schools, individuals outside this elite realm also felt its influence. John William Streets, a Derbyshire coalminer, who attended a memorial event during World War One eloquently explained:

> Some of us used to say, perhaps too complacently, that Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton. Be that as it may, it is clear to all eyes that the greater, more terrible battles of this war were won on the playing-fields and in the classrooms of the Council Schools, as well as the Colleges, and in the homes of the whole nation — in cottages and workmen's dwellings no less than in town and country mansions. The Public School spirit is a splendid and a potent tradition, but it does not account for such men as Streets and, in our days, there are not a few of them. I honour their memories too profoundly to think for a moment that it was just their Public School training which made such dear and heroic souls as [The Hon. Julian] Grenfell, [The Hon. Colwyn E. A.] Philipps, [The Hon. Herbert] Palmer, or [The Hon E.] Wyndham Tennant the fearless and perfect gentle knights that they were; for without the training at least as many have risen, like [Francis] Ledwidge from his scavengering, like [Clifford] Flower from his clerking, like Streets from toiling in the mine, fired by the same shining ideals, the same hatred of cruelty and scorn of wrong, the same selfless love of country, and have died for these things with a chivalry and courage that are no school but all of the schools, that are of no class, no limited section of the community, but are in the very blood and bones of our people, in the large tradition of the race.[167]

It is important also to take into account the poets who influenced many public school boys in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war. Rudyard Kipling, Julian Grenfell and of course Rupert Brooke garnered a great deal of attention and were diligent in their promotion of service in arms and patriotic spirit. These writers were central in the dissemination

[165] Sir Henry Newbolt, *Clifton Chapel and Other School Poems* (London: John Murray, 1908).
[166] Parker, *Old Lie*, pp. 58-59.
[167] Goebel, *Medieval Memory*, p. 221.

of what Bogacz called poetry of 'high diction'. He characterises this style as one of 'inflamed language' that portrays a burning vigour for battle: an artistic figuration of the idealised and patriotic soldier; and language as a cultural weapon, though not necessarily complex in terms of style or diction.[168] Brooke's '1914' poems in particular, are rich with patriotic fervor and a similar eagerness as was exhibited by many of the young men who joined that year:

> Now, God be thanked Who matched us with His hour,
> And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
> With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
> To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
> Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
> Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
> And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
> And all the little emptiness of love![169]

Brooke describes the coming of war as a gift from God, an opportunity for men of honour to demonstrate their strengths as well as an event that will separate the bold from the weak- hearted. He endeavors to rouse the sleeping spirits of the people, a sentiment likely derived from a growing belief that war was '[…] the ultimate manifestation of the follies of the past, (and that) […] it was the disinfectant that would cleanse the present […]'.[170] War, which had previously been seen as an essential and unavoidable part of human interaction, was now viewed by some as a means to correct and realign a troubled society. John Mueller suggests that this alteration of the traditional attitude towards war stems from two things: (1) that the war followed a period of unprecedented peace in Europe, and (2) it was the first major war to be 'preceded by substantial, organised, anti-war agitation'.[171] Edmund Gosse and Selwyn Image also spoke of the newly

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[168] Ted Bogacz, '"A Tyranny of Words": Language, Poetry, and Antimodernism in England in the First World War', *The Journal of Modern History*, 58.3 (1986), 643-68, at p. 657.
[169] Rupert Brooke, '1914: I. Peace', in *Poetry of the First World War*, p. 104.
[170] Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), p. 12.
[171] John Mueller, 'Changing Attitudes Towards War: The Impact of the First World War', *British Journal of Political Science*, 21.1 (2009), 1–28, at pp. 3-4.

launched war as a 'sovereign disinfectant' or a 'cleansing purge', believing that the perceived sloth and decadence of the preceding century could only be altered by the demands of war.[172]

Kipling likewise engenders nationalist sentiments, appealing for men to demonstrate their courage, strength and love of country in order to repulse their German foe:

> For all we have and are,
> For all our children's fate,
> Stand up and take the war.
> The Hun is at the gate!
> Our world has passed away,
> In wantonness o'erthrown.
> There is nothing left to-day
> But steel and fire and stone!
> Though all we knew depart,
> The old Commandments stand: --
> "In courage keep your heart,
> In strength lift up your hand."
>
> […]
>
> No easy hope or lies
> Shall bring us to our goal,
> But iron sacrifice
> Of body, will, and soul.
> There is but one task for all --
> One life for each to give.
> What stands if Freedom fall?
> Who dies if England live?

Poetry was not the only means of indoctrinating patriotism and chivalric ideals in school boys. Novels, school papers, and pamphlets also played a part in the shaping of ideals. Scott, Tennyson and others sparked a new interest in the medieval that manifested in the realm of literature in a variety of manners. Poems like those of Kipling and Newbolt just mentioned took central tenets such as loyalty, bravery and honour, and imbued their work with them, attempting to inspire readers to subsume these worthy characteristics into their own personalities. They often chose to do this without evoking famous chivalric figures like King Arthur or King Richard, but rather appealed to what could perhaps be described as the belief in innate and perhaps yet unrealised

[172] Janis P. Stout, *Coming Out of War: Poetry, Grieving, and the Culture of the World Wars* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005), p. 15.

traits extant in all of the British by virtue of being British. Other authors displayed their avid interest in chivalry by recreating verse and prose that followed in the vein of genuine medieval literature or used familiar medieval archetypes to express particular values or ideals.

Public School Records

To see the proliferation of these ideas and their potential for influence we now look back at the boys themselves. Empirical data regarding book sales of particular texts or authors addresses their popularity with the public at large, but determining their circulation or popularity within a precise age demographic represents a more difficult task. Boys, many financially limited whilst at school, would more often save their pennies to buy sausages as in *Tom Brown* than to buy novels. By consulting the records of some of Britain's most prominent public schools, Eton, Winchester, and Charterhouse, the importance some boys placed on particular works of literature and the ideals espoused by them will be illustrated. This research has been confined the years considered to primarily 1910 to 1918 in order to shed light on important transitions in mentality, circumstance, and trends in popularity before and during the War.

At Eton, one of many schools that saw a significant loss of students in World War One, the desire for authors like Tennyson, Kipling, Shelley, and Keats is marked out very well. The *Assistant Master's Prize Book* records the texts chosen by students as awards for winning Eton's essay competition.[173] The subjects the students wrote on varied widely, from mathematics and Latin prose to geography, and prizes were given two to three times per academic year to a varying number of students in each subject. The records show, however, that there was an

[173] Eton College, *Assistant Master's Prize Book* (Spottiswoode: Eton College).

immense interest in English literature, a topic rarely if at all addressed under the classics-based curriculum at most public schools. As Peter Howarth points out, Homeric valour and ideas of Empire were the framework upon which many of the cultural ideas relating to war developed on.[174] Elizabeth Vandiver asserts that the public school ethos is derived from a romancitised form of chivalry which in tern has its rooms in a 'carefully tendentious reading of Greek and Roman literature suitably refracted through a Christian lens'.[175] While I would disagree with Vandiver's view that Victorian chivalry is a byproduct of carefully selected classical texts aimed at inculcating the notion of self-sacrifice, however, I would agree with her emphasis on classical literature's importance in shaping ideas of manliness. Classical epic shares many similarities with romance in its valorisation of combat, notions of bravery, and masculinity but often lacks the elements of loyalty and compassion typical of chivalric romances.

The list gives incomplete details of the books requested by the winning pupils, either simply providing the author's name with no specific work or vice versa. The following is a list of the books requested by winning Eton boys from 1912 to 1914, and while not exhaustive (texts relating to maths, sciences and language have been removed due to their lack of relevance), it acts as a fair representation of the sources of literary interest at the school outside of the school's curriculum.

[174] Peter Howarth, 'Poetic Form and the First World War', *Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), 51-65, at p. 54.
[175] Vandiver, 'Early Poets', p. 69.

1912
Carlyle: *French Revolution*
Dickens: *Tale of Two Cities*, *Christmas Books*, *Barnaby Rudge*
Kipling: *Wee Willie Winkie*, *Stalky & Co*., *Seven Seas*
Oxford Book of English Verse (2)
Tennyson
Shakespeare (2)
Wordsworth
Keats
Gilbert: *Bab Ballads*
Creasy: Battles
Asymon: Pocius
A Child's Garden of Verse
Stevenson: *Master of Ballantrae*
Boldsky Legends
Lay Ballads
Gordon

Churchill: *Malakand Field Force*
Carlyle: *French Revolution*
Greus: *History of England*

Routledge: *Discoveries and Inventions*
Prescott: *Peru*
Philip:*Romance of Chemistry*
Wayner's Stories
Ball: Story of the Sun
Southey: *Pocius* (2)
Mighty Hercules
Rickman: *Gothic Architecture*
Virgil: *Opera*
Bradley: *Wolfe*

1913
Oxford Book of English Verse
Kipling: *Kim*, *Rewards and Fairies*, *Plain Tales, Wee Willie Winkie*, *Day's Work*, *Life's Handicap*, *Naulakha*
Spenser
Dante
Byron
Arnold
Ingoldsby Legends
Mair: *English Literature*
Russell
Coleridge
Wordsworth
Moore
H. Melville: *Songs and Verses*
Dickens: *Christmas Books*, *A Tale of Two Cities*
Shakespeare (4)
Ruskin: *Rimes and Verses*
Bridge: Poems
The Luck of Barry Lyndon

Carlyle: *The French Revolution*
Nelson's Life
Goldman: *French Cavalry*
Hichens: *The Spell of Egypt*
Prescott: *Mexico*
Chances of Sport
Romance of Modern Inventions
Philip: *Romance of Chemistry*
William: How is it Made in (?)
Depths of the Ocean

Stepheus Lapeue Calami
Catriona
Class Dulunary

1914
Oxford Book of English Verse
Newbolt's Poems
Aesope's Fables
Abbott of the Sun
Wordsworth
Kipling: *Second Jungle Book*, *Departmental Ditties*, (one unspecified book), *Naulakha*, *Songs from Books*, *Life's Handicap*
Pilgrim's Progress
Shakespeare (2)
Longfellow
Dickens: *Pickwick Papers*, *Christmas Books*
Gilbert: *Bab Ballads*
Boldsky Legends
Bitoni: Stories Eton
Plato
Bonliole: Birds
Life of Napoleon
Ravell's *Republican Rome*
Macaulay: Life?
Romance of Chemistry
Romance of Photography
Romance of Physics
Couers d'Astronomie

As the chart makes evident, there is a significant amount of interest in works of poetry and literature with historical subjects, particularly those military-oriented. It also shows a significant reduction in the number of awards being given as the war approaches. Looking back as far as 1900 it is evident that there were a core group of writers and books that remained most popular among the boys. *The Oxford Book of Verse* and various works of Shakespeare were the

consistent favorites from 1900 to 1914 (Shakespeare was one of the few non-classical authors to be a regular part of school curriculum but also was popular independently), with Tennyson by and large the most requested author, followed by Browning, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Longfellow. After 1909 Kipling makes his appearance on the request list, receiving as many requests from 1909 to 1914 as Longfellow, Shelley and Keats did during the entirety of 1900 to 1914. The historical works of Prescott also remain popular through the early 1900s and topics such as the French Revolution, Admiral Nelson, and Napoleon continued to be consistently desirable. This list is telling as it demonstrates what the boys would choose to have in their personal collections were they free of academic or monetary restrictions. The selected works are evidence of personal interests rather than purchases determined by their curriculum though in some cases the two coincide. While self-censorship must be taken into account as boys would have likely avoided choosing certain texts their masters would have disapproved of, it does confirm that students were coming into contact with and were attracted to works with character-building qualities as well nationalistic and patriotic ones that would encourage pro-martial sentiments learned at school. Further examination of the *The Eton College Chronicle*, the official school paper, as well as several other 'unofficial' student- written publications demonstrates the influence and popularity of medievalism and military rhetoric. In 1910, *The Eton College Chronicle* reported that 'The craving for fiction was met by Scott's novels, by *Ten Thousand a Year* and by one of Mrs. Gaskell's works,' while one student, K. S. Powell, delivered 'a very beautiful piece of the *Idylls of the King*' as well as K. S. Clauson on Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* on speech day.[176] Records of student examinations of the Fifth Form, Upper Division of March 1912 show that students were tested on a section of *Eric and Enide*, being asked to translate it

[176] Eton College, 'The School Library', *Eton College Chronicle* (Spottiswoode, February 1910), pp. 621-24, at p. 621.

into French.[177] This suggests that while English literature did not predominate in the school curriculum — in fact it hardly featured at all unless it concerned classics or history — students were still required to read and be suitably familiar with selected works though perhaps not asked to perform rigorous literary analysis.

While Eton was not explicitly a military-minded institution in the manner of Wellington College, by 1910 it was demonstrating a considerable interest in developing its OTC and nationalist sentiments. As Barbara Tuchman points out:

> In every boy's room at Eton hung the famous picture by Lady Butler of the disaster at Majuba Hill showing an officer with uplifted sword charging deathward to the cry of "*Floreat Etona!"* The spirit instilled may have accounted for, as has been suggested, the preponderance of bravery over strategy in British officers. Yet to be an Etonian was "to imbibe a sense of effortless superiority and be lulled in a consciousness of unassailable primacy".[178]

One section in *The Eton College Chronicle* entitled 'Compulsory Service at Eton' expresses students' concern:

> Not long ago we published a plea for Compulsory Service at Eton. The writer was evidently in earnest and certainly had some good points to make in favour of his scheme. There was no doubt that the number of Corps did not worthily represent the School; the same might be said of its smartness and its efficiency; a large portion of the Corps joined for no useful or patriotic purpose but simply and solely to get as much amusement as possible with the minimum of trouble and time […] [The article then engages in an argument against compulsory service, the effects this will have on students and how mandatory service will become a national requirement soon

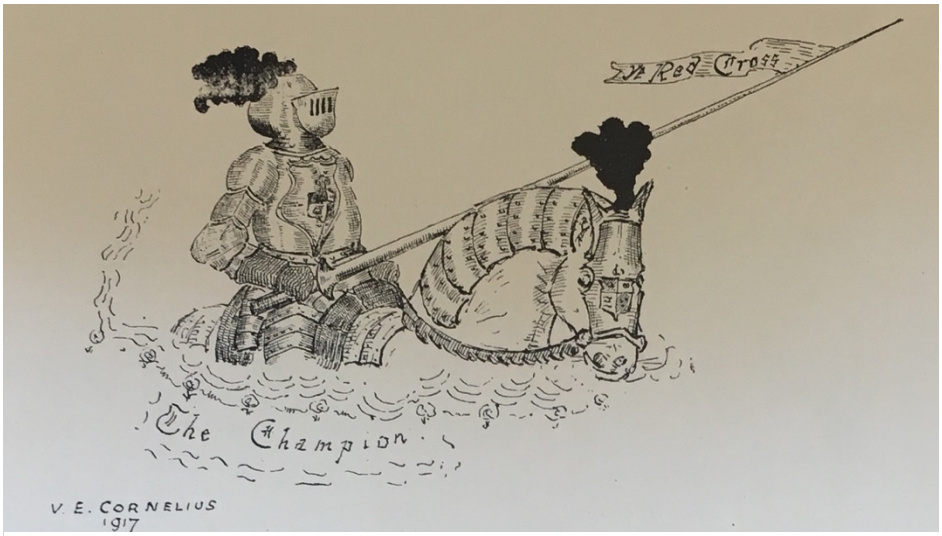

Figure 1: Knight on Horseback in unofficial Eton student publication 'The Red Cross' no. 4, 1917

[177] Eton College, *Trials Fifth Form, Upper Division* (Spottiswoode: Eton College, 1912).
[178] Tuchman, *Proud Tower*, p. 21.

> enough.] No, compulsion at Eton is not necessary. But let the Corps take up its duties manfully and make itself worthy of Eton: let each man remember that he is doing his duty to himself, to Eton and to his country. Thus we can point out to all that Eton needs no compulsion to serve her country.[179]

The column indicates that the link between masculinity, nationalism, character and the willingness to engage in battle or war is already firmly established. The boys already feel they have a duty to their country, and in receive military training is yet another part of masculine character that needed to be nurtured for a boy to successfully develop into a man. The OTC at Eton regularly received its own column in the *Eton Chronicle* before, during, and after the war, naturally taking a more prominent position during the conflict. Prominent individuals from political, military, literary and academic backgrounds frequently came to public schools to give, speeches meant to inspire and encourage the boys either scholastically or morally. On 19 March 1914 the hero of the Boer War and founder of the Boy Scouts, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, 'Gave […] a most interesting address on the four C's necessary for a soldier: Common sense, Courage, Cunning, Confidence.'[180] The importance of such a visit will be demonstrated later in this chapter. Throughout the war students would continue to deliver speeches with the works of Tennyson, Newbolt, and Kipling being the most popular subjects.[181] On 30 March 1916 an article entitled 'Chivalry' dominated the front page of the *Chronicle*, not only providing compelling insight into the importance of chivalry to the boys and its prominence as part of their upbringing, but also its perceived importance to post-war Britain:

> One of the most characteristic features of the period which followed the Napoleonic wars was the revival of Romanticism. We may hope that some equivalent manifestation will occur after this war, provided it does not die away in the somewhat effeminate unrealities of the Burne-Jones school. For the essence of the Romantic school was a renewed belief in the virtues of the age of chivalry, and this renewed belief was conspicuously needed in England in the days which preceded this war.

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[179] Eton College, 'Compulsory Service at Eton', *Eton College Chronicle* (Spottiswoode, February 1910), pp. 645-48, at p. 646.
[180] Eton College, 'Lecture', *Eton College Chronicle* (Spottiswoode, March 1914), p. 531.
[181] For examples see: *Eton College Chronicle*, No. 1473, February 19, 1914; No. 1518, February 18, 1915; No. 1556, February 17, 1916; No. 1600, February 15, 1917.

> The essence of chivalry was respect for and practice of the virtues of the soldier knight. According to the ancient practice, the assumption of the role of knight was no mere formality. Its prelude was a night spent in prayer, and its consummation was the taking of a set of solemn vows. By these vows the knight bound himself to spend his life in righting the wrong and in protecting the weak. He bound himself also to respect women, and to perform no act unworthy of the courage, honour, and courtesy which were the idealised virtues of the age of chivalry. The only thing which the true knight feared was lest he should be betrayed into conduct unworthy of his order.
>
> […]
>
> The ideal of the knight of chivalry is clearly the right one, for it is based on the positive ideal of upholding the right and helping all those who are in need of help. It sets up for admiration the real virtue of the soldier-citizen — the subordination of self to the cause which one has chosen as one's own. It is therefore the spirit which is most needed to set this country on its legs again. Just *tut* a school only thrives if the individual makes himself a loyal and patriotic upholder of its honour and traditions, so a country is only healthy and contented if every citizen acts like the knight of old as if he were dedicated, not to the pursuit of his own selfish ends, but to the service of the cause for which his country stands. This is the spirit which has built up the empire in the past. It is the spirit which inspired Chatham, Wilberforce, Burke, John Nicholson, Nelson, Gordon and countless other men, known and unknown, to give their lives to the service of justice and liberty. It is the spirit which is being born anew in Flanders and Gallipoli. It is this spirit, which, if we are worthy of it, will inspire this old land to do even greater work for the world in the future than it has achieved in the past.[182]

As the passage makes evident, chivalry is still exerting a significant influence in the midst of the war and is viewed not as a negative quality contributing to mass-deception, but a necessary component of so the stabilisation of society, morale, and British identity. Though it could be argued that this continued pursuit of chivalry only persists because of the naivety of a school boy's inexperience, it still serves as a demonstration of the continued relevance of chivalry in the midst of the war as well as its impact on patriotism.

The lines books of Winchester College further indicate that students were directly and routinely engaging with chivalric, heroic, and jingoistic poetry. These mandatory course books were collections of poetry from a wide range of authors that the boys were required to memorise. Junior, Middle, and Senior sections of the school each had their own particular lines book; however, there were frequent overlaps in authors and occasionally poems. Sir Walter Scott, Tennyson, Byron, Newbolt, Kipling and Wordsworth appear alongside Shakespeare, Milton,

[182] Eton College, 'Chivalry', *Eton College Chronicle* (Spottiswoode, March 1916), pp. 989–92, at p. 989.

Shelley, and Keats as academic staples. Looking at the books dated to 1913 and 1917, barring Shakespeare and Milton, Scott and Tennyson are among the most frequently included authors. Below is a table organised by school section of the poems that espouse chivalric, medieval, pro-war, or heroic themes.

Senior Part - 1913	Senior Part - 1917
Tennyson – To Virgil	Sir Walter Raleigh – His Pilgrimage
Henry Vaughan – The Retreat	Richard Lovelace – Going to the Wars
Michael Drayton – The Parting	Francis Beaumont – On the Tombs of Westminster Abbey
Tennyson – From 'Maud'	Wordsworth – Ode to Duty
Wordsworth – The Solitary Reaper	Newbolt – Drake's Drum
Tennyson – from 'In Memoriam'	Tennyson – Ring out, wild bells!
George Chapman – The Master Spirit	Stevenson – Requiem
Rupert Brooke - The Dead	Sir Henry Wotton – The Character of a Happy Life
Geoffrey Chaucer	Byron – Waterloo
Robert Browning - Epilogue	Shakespeare - Troilus and Cressida
	Tennyson – Passing of Arthur
	William Collins – How Sleep the Brave
	Sir Walter Scott - Innominatus
	Jane Elliot – A Lament for Flodden
	Tennyson - Guinevere

Middle Part - 1913	Junior Part – 1913 & 1917
Tennyson – Sir Galahad	Michael Drayton – Agincourt
Anon – The Twa Corbies	Shakespeare – King Henry's Speech before Agincourt
Tennyson – Cenotaph on Franklin	Charles Kingsley – A Welcome
Edmund Morshead – In Memoriam C. G. Gordon	Sir Walter Scott – The Red Harlow
T. Campbell – Hohenliden	Sir Walter Scott – Flodden
James Shirley – Death the Leveller	Tennyson – The Lady of Shalott
Francis Hastings Doyle – The British Soldier in China	Oliver Goldsmith – A Village Parson
Sir Walter Scott – The Combat	Joanna Baillie – The Outlaw's Song
Shakespeare – Wolsey Disgraced, Henry VIII	Sir Walter Scott – Bonny Dundee
Tennyson – Excalibur	T. Campbell – Ye Marines
Milton – When the Assault was Intended to the City	
Tennyson – Crossing the Bar, A Dream of Fair Women	
Kipling – Sussex	
Sir Walter Scott – Coronach	
T. Campbell – Battle of the Baltic	
Tennyson – Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington	
Wordsworth – The Happy Warrior	

The list is telling.[183] It shows a spectrum of chivalric, pro-war, and nationalist poems that range from medieval subjects to contemporary conflicts. There can be little doubt that pupils at Winchester were receiving a healthy dose of martial rhetoric and that the idea of war as well as the requirements of masculinity were being heavily romanticised. The poems address Arthurian knights, heroes from some of Britain's most famous wars, they praise death in combat, the virtues of chivalry, of manliness, and of nationalism. This collection of poems had been specifically chosen by the school's instructors both for their educative value but also for their meaning, indicating an intention to transfer or at the very least expose children to a pro-war rhetoric or romantic association with war.

The *Winchester College Calendar*, which details core course texts and requirements continuously from 1911 through 1929, regularly lists Tennyson as one of the few non-classical authors for mandatory coursework.[184] Other authors outside classical studies who are frequently found on the list are Wordsworth, Chaucer, and Samuel Johnson, along with historical texts regarding medieval history, the Crusades, and Charlemagne. As will be demonstrated in the final chapter, these line books help indicate the long-standing and significant influence of these texts and in turn the importance of their meaning to schoolboys in the Interwar period, where we will see that not only did chivalric, romantic, and jingoistic poets remain part of the curriculum but their numbers increased when the works of war poets such as Brooke, Grenfell and Hodgson were added.

This trend is further evidenced by the library meeting minutes of both Eton and Charterhouse. These meetings were comprised of a mixture of boys, masters and librarians who

[183] Winchester College, *Middle Part Lines Book* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1913); Winchester College, *Junior Part Lines Book* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1917).
[184] Winchester College, *Winchester College Calendar* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1929).

discussed and voted on which publications would be acquired for the library. Decisions would be based on the quality of the proposed work as well as its potential popularity and usefulness and the suitability of subject matter. Debates could include quite passionate expositions: one Charterhouse minute taker informs us that 'L. R. Burrows rose, in a glow of patriotic fervor, to urge that the Library should take in "The Nation in Arms" — the journal of the National Service League. Dr. Rendall objected to it as a "Propaganda" magazine, but thought it would do no harm — for a short time.'[185]

Inclusion in the library was a serious matter and discussion of whether a particular work would be acquired could extend over several meetings. In a meeting on 17 December 1908 of the Charterhouse Library a proposition was made for the inclusion of Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* The text was rejected. However, this was not the end of the discussion. The topic of Kipling was carefully avoided at the following meeting, though the matter was revisited by R. C. H. Kingdon on 27 March 1909. The author of the minutes tells us that 'He also proposed that the collection of works of Rudyard Kipling with the exception of *Stalky & Co.* should be made complete. It was decided to defer this motion till the committee were better informed of the quality and nature of the books he had written.'[186] This motion would be passed unanimously at the following meeting. The issue of *Stalky & Co.* was not to be abandoned, however: 'R. W. R. Granshaw then proposed *Stalky & Co.* by Rudyard Kipling which was passed after some discussion by seven votes to none.'[187] Though the notes make the 'discussion' sound brief the debate over this single text began in December 1908 and was not concluded until March the following year. The fact the motion was proposed by a different individual each time suggests either a collective tactic to

[185] Charterhouse School, *Charterhouse Library Minutes 1899-1914* (Godalming, 1907), p. 496.
[186] Charterhouse School, *Charterhouse Library Minutes 1899-1914* (Godalming, 1909), p. 41.
[187] Ibid.

bring other members round or that the book was considered so highly that members independently felt they must vie for its inclusion. The book is perhaps so hotly contested because of its depiction of disorderly conduct and apparent unpatriotic or anti-military comments. Teachers and other members of staff would likely have weighed in on the matter and may have viewed such themes as contrary to the ethos which schools endeavoured to cultivate as well as the harmful to the development of the gentlemanly ideal which hinged so heavily on notions of honesty and fair play, things Stalky is not always amenable to.

Medievalism, chivalry, honour, bravery and sacrifice were certainly topics and ideas that school boys were familiar with and in many cases embraced. These records, though assessing a particular strata of school life before the war, help to demonstrate the prevalence of chivalric ideas and imagery. They show that despite the classics-dominated curriculum, students were seeking out and enjoying works with pro-war and pro-chivalric messages, going as far as to emulate their characters and encourage such behaviour in their schoolmates. It is at this point that some scholars may argue that such education and interest is precisely what disillusioned authors would later condemn. This is perhaps true, but it should be remembered that the disillusioned, much like those who attended public schools, were but a cross section of British life, and just as these records do not speak for the youth of all Britain, nor should the accounts of a few, (largely) public school educated post-war authors. This by no means invalidates the argument that chivalry had a profound effect on the mentality of men going into war, if anything it reaffirms it. Yet what this argument should also do is remind readers of the breadth of the influence of chivalry. This chapter has shown how chivalry helped to found an organisation that

grew to have millions of members, and how it became a part of public school life. As Peter Parker notes,

> Whilst few people can have been prepared for the nature of the War, there is no doubt that one section of the community was ready to meet the challenge: the English Public Schools. […] Educated in a gentlemanly tradition of loyalty, honour, chivalry, Christianity, patriotism, sportsmanship and leadership, public-school boys could be regarded as suitable officer material in any war.[188]

Education helped to raise a generation of young men inspired and willing to enter the greatest of crucible of their time: World War One. '[E]ducated in a gentlemanly tradition of loyalty, honour, chivalry, Christianity, patriotism, sportsmanship and leadership, public-school boys could be regarded as suitable officer material in any war.'[189] The power of the call to arms would not be missed by the young men at public schools nor would they need cajoling to heed it, and as one article in the October 1915 *Eton Chronicle* declares:

> The opposition felt by a large proportion of the lower classes to compulsory service must be overcome. England is a Democracy; her people must therefore be led and not driven, and the lead must be taken by her upper classes. In this matter of military service the upper classes need no compulsion; they have given the flower of their manhood to the service of their country and they have done it voluntarily. But for the sake of their weaker brethren they must declare themselves ready to do so, under compulsion, that which they formerly did voluntarily, and what better place could there be in which to begin this further sacrifice than the greatest of England's great Public Schools?... we maintain that the nation should be plainly shown of what vital importance Compulsory Service is and that is might prove extremely helpful to such an education if the lower classes where to see the sons of the so-called 'idle rich' compelled to undergo a course of military training at the Public Schools.[190]

While it should not be assumed that all pupils of the public school system were adamantly pro-war, the combined influence of Victorian chivalry and medievalism on social interaction, etiquette, and morality, as well as the evaluation of knights and chivalric figures to heroic status certainly nurtured patriotic sentiments and without a doubt contributed to the social expectation of men to participate in war.

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[188] Parker, *Old Lie*, p. 17.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Eton, *Eton College Chronicle*.

Chapter Three: Literature of the War Propaganda Bureau

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping…[191]

This chapter will now extend its discussion to include and examine the role of plays, posters, pamphlets and public speeches in the transmission of chivalric values through WWI. The purpose of addressing such varied and different sources is to evidence how important and how prolific chivalric themes were throughout wartime Britain. As this chapter will demonstrate, Britain's War Propaganda Bureau harnessed the influence of the country's most famous writers to promote a very specific set of values and ideals derived from chivalry that were deemed imperative to supporting Britain's campaign against the Germans. This was accomplished by carefully constructing characters that demonstrated and believed in the central themes of chivalry (self-sacrifice, honour, bravery and defence) but did so without romanticising conflict or death. Instead, topical events, whether on the Home Front or Western Front, were used to subtly emulate men and women who acted in accordance with chivalric principles while supporting the war effort. To gain a true appreciation of the scope of impact propaganda had, and thus understand the importance placed on the public accepting and adhering to chivalric values, we must see how it was operative in a wide range of sources aimed at a broad audience.

[191] Brooke, '1914: I. Peace'.

The Cultural Environment of Britain in 1914

FOR LORD KITCHENER'S NEW ARMY OF A HUNDRED THOUSAND: CROWDS OF YOUNG MEN BESIEGING THE RECRUITING OFFICES IN WHITEHALL IN HOPES OF BEING ABLE TO SERVE.

Masefield, reflecting on Britain's response to the war, said:

> I know what England was, before the war. She was a nation which had outgrown her machine, a nation which had forgotten her soul [...]. And then, at a day's notice, at the blowing of a horn, at the cry from a little people in distress, all that was changed, and she re-made her soul, which was the soul of St. George who fought the dragon.[192]

One contemporary image of Britain's 1914 declaration of war is of feverishly patriotic young men crowding the streets before London's recruitment offices, eager for their opportunity to head to the Front. However, the work of recent historians like Catriona Pennell and Adrian Gregory demonstrate, this view is not entirely consistent with what recruitment statistics indicate and forces us to reassess our understanding of the initial enthusiasm and desire to enlist.[193] The response to war was nuanced and complex. Shock, anxiety and excitement were mixed together amid notions of Britain's justness of cause as well as remorse at the impossibility of avoiding

[192] John Masefield, *St. George and the Dragon* (London: William Heinemann, 1919), p. 43.
[193] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, 1-21; Gregory, *Last Great War*, pp. 1-39

war.[194] As Pennell's figures suggest, the immediate excitement and rush for enlistment which is the commonly held perception of the announcement of war is not the whole picture:

> The monthly enlistment rates for the regular army and Territorial Forces in Britain for August to December 1914 show that September, not August, emerges as the month with the strongest recruitment (462,901) not just in 1914 but for the whole war, representing 9 per cent of the overall enlistment in the army. This is not to deny that an intensification of volunteering took place at the outset of war. Despite logistical and promotional issues surrounding voluntary recruitment at the outbreak of war, around 113,000 men volunteered between 4 and 24 August, which was symptomatic of the mood of national emergency. Men were also responding, in part, to the appeals made by Lord Kitchener which appeared in *The Times* on 7 and 28 August. But mass recruitment came later, in the first week of September — when 188,327 men volunteered in just seven days.[195]

Pennell further suggests that contemplative and reserved reactions were more prevalent than an overt rush to colours.[196] This stoicism is demonstrated by Ivor Gurney in *Severn and Somme*:

> […] though I am ready if necessary to die for England, I do not see the necessity; it being only a hard and fast system which has sent so much of the flower of England's artists to risk death, and a wrong materialistic system; rightly or wrongly I consider myself able to do work which will do honour to England. Such is my patriotism, and I believe it to be the right kind.[197]

There is a commonly held perception that there was little need or desire to succinctly determine a motivation to join the war effort. The notion that men ran to the recruitment offices with little forethought is not the whole truth. Figures do indicate that some 15% of total enlistment took place during the first two months of the war, with the most significant rush occurring between 30 August and 5 September 1914 when almost 175,000 men enlisted, the largest number of any week in the war.[198] However, this suggests that men were not in all cases immediately setting out to enlist but rather they were taking time to consider how their family would contribute to the war effort as well as to get their affairs in order, as Wilfred Owen did before making the choice

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[194] Catriona Pennell, 'Rethinking British Volunteerism in 1914: A Rush to the Colours?', *First World War: New Perspectives* (Oxford University, 2012) <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/rethinking-british-volunteerism-1914-rush-colours>.
[195] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 52.
[196] Pennell, 'British Volunteerism'.
[197] Nicholas Murray, *The Red Sweet Wine of Youth: The Brave and Brief Lives of the War Poets* (London: Little, Brown, 2010), pp. 222-23.
[198] Pennell, 'British Volunteerism'.

to return to England from France.[199] As Gregory notes, up until the declaration of war, opinion had been clearly divided.[200] There are also indications that due to the lack of information being shared with the general public, many did not initially understand the seriousness of the outbreak of war. This appeared to change on 25 August when the British government issued the 'Belgian Official Report' detailing the atrocities occurring in the small nation-state, as well as the *Times* coverage of the retreat at Mons issued on the same day. Over the next four days 10,000 men enlisted daily. By 31 August daily enlistment topped 20,000 and on 3 September 33,000 men joined the army, the highest enlistment of any day in the war.[201] As news became more available individuals began to gain a deeper sense of necessity and individual purpose. An attack on British allies, more importantly on civilians, would have prevailed upon many men's sense of honour and justice. As Elizabeth Wordsworth exclaimed:

> The war which at present occupies all our minds is one, as has often been observed, of thrilling interest, because the situations in it are almost as primitive and simple as those of an old-fashioned fairy tale. We have St. George, with the bloody cross upon his shield, engaged in deadly combat with the dragon; we have the maiden Sabra, who may not unaptly stand for Belgium and other oppressed lands, bound to a tree and looking to him for deliverance; we watch every stroke of the good knight's sword, every thrust of his spear, and we feel that — however bloody the combat — it can only end in the ultimate triumph of righteousness. Viewed in this light every young fellow in khaki whom we see marching through our streets has something of the glory of knight-errantry shed on his common-place figure, and it would be hardly too much to say that in many cases the cause seems to make the hero; and when we read of 'the magnificent conduct of our troops at the front' we thank God with tears in our eyes.[202]

When Lord Kitchener requested 100,000 men for his New Army in order to combat the German aggressor he prevailed upon individuals' notions of duty and morality. This in many ways drew unconsciously from chivalric and heroic sentiments regarding masculine roles. Volunteerism enforced traditional definitions of masculinity that both the Church and governmental agencies evoked through the image of the knight, connecting his bravery and sacrifice to British identity,

[199] Murray, *Wine of Youth*, p. 142.
[200] Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 25.
[201] Pennell, 'British Volunteerism'.
[202] Elizabeth Wordsworth, 'Women and the War', *Church Quarterly Review*, 1915, pp. 33-34.

history and nationalism.[203] Men enlisted to support their country as well as to aid what was viewed as a weaker, innocent ally.

The perception of war as a theatre for acts of masculinity as well as an opportunity for self-discovery and maturation was not new in 1914. However, it did prove particularly important in the years preceding the Great War as we can see by in the memoir of novelist Christopher Isherwood:

> Like most of my generation, I was obsessed by a complex of terrors and longings connected with the idea "War." "War," in this purely neurotic sense, meant The Test. The test of your courage, your maturity, of your sexual prowess. "Are you really a Man?" Subconsciously, I believe, I longed to be subjected to this test; but I also dreaded failure, I dreaded failure so much-indeed, I was so certain that I *should* fail-that, consciously, I deemed my longing to be tested altogether. I denied my all-consuming morbid interests in the idea of "war".[204]

This popular notion has origins in both the medieval and classical representations of boys' coming of age as delineated by battlefield success. Such ideas were disseminated in modern Britain by way of the growing prominence of medievalist literature and art as well as an educative system largely entrenched in classical studies.

Patriotic defence of British values became one of the more dominant forms of motivation for volunteers, outside of the working class who in a substantial number of instances were driven by lack of employment and the promise of a living wage.[205] Contrary to the current public memory of WWI which claims that many men went into war wholly ignorant, Gregory points out that 'while the possible of effects of war were not romanticised […] duty and sacrifice were accepted'.[206] Certainly the true nature of war was a mystery to many but to say that all men enter the conflict like lambs to the slaughter is both egregiously incorrect. Brian Bond's *The Unquiet*

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[203] Ilana R. Bet-El, 'Men and Soldiers: British Conscripts, Concepts of Masculinity, and the Great War', in *Borderlines: Gender and Identities in War and Peace, 1870-1930*, ed. by Billie Melman (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 73-94, at p. 73.
[204] Christopher Isherwood, *Lions and Shadows: An Education in the Twenties* (London: Woolf, 1938).
[205] Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 112-22.
[206] Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 24.

Western Front refutes the notion that men went into the conflict blindly ignorant and argues that the relatively recent dominance of disillusioned writers' interpretation of WWI has been given far too much a stake in dictating memory of the war.[207] Young subaltern Harold Macmillan, who served in the Grenadier Guards and was injured at Loos in September 1915, for one, recognised both the violent, brutal nature of the battlefield and the intrinsic value of sacrifice.[208] Though the physical and mental consequences of battle were egregious, death in battle was still a noble and glorious end just as the epitaph of a young Welsh soldier read: 'A thousand times better to die as a brave boy than to live as a cowardly boy.'[209] As the war intensified individuals began to view continued service as a personal test of moral and physical stalwartness. While the volume and variety of soldiers' letters defies attempts to categorise responses to war there was undoubtedly a demonstration that some individuals, though skeptical of war's capacity to redeem society, felt a strong allegiance to the ideas and sentiments that had spurred them to action.

The Great War occurred during a unique historical moment when two 'liberal' forces were powerfully coinciding in England.[210] There was a significant belief in the educative powers of classical literature as well a thriving interest in self-improvement. Literature presented an opportunity to unite these cultural adjustments and present them in a form that suggested attainability and that most men had an inherent natural adeptness. Victorian and Edwardian Britain, as Fussell has argued, exuded 'an atmosphere of public respect for literature unique in modern times'.[211] The influence of the Pre-Raphaelites, medievalist authors, and others inspired by recent discoveries of medieval texts and artifacts, and opposed to the perceived excessive

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[207] Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 26-31.
[208] Patrick Porter, 'War and the Religious Will to Sacrifice', *Peace Review*, 17.1 (2005), 17-24, at p. 20.
[209] NIWM, 6977, Aberystwth, Cardigan; Stefan Goebel, *Medieval Memory*, pp. 197-98.
[210] Fussell, *Modern Memory*, p. 157.
[211] D. G. Wright, 'The Great War, Government Propaganda and English "Men of Letters" 1914-1916', *Literature and History*, 7 (1978), 70-100, at p. 70.

pragmatism of the sciences experienced during the Great Enlightenment, increased the ever-growing preoccupation with romances of the Middle Ages.[212] Even Wilfred Owen, in the early days of the war, felt a sense of 'new crusades and modern knightliness.'[213] The absorption of literary models of ethics is not isolated to the modern period however. As was discussed in the Introduction, Richard Kaeuper asserts that medieval knights were similarly influenced by Medieval Romance as he evidences through their personal writings and actions.[214] As thoroughly as the glamour and moral aura surrounding 'the gentleman' would be engrained in public schools, it suffered from short sightedness. An over-reliance on literary examples of chivalry and romance developed, resulting in some men being so thoroughly entrenched in an idealised preconception of battle that when confronted with the ugliness of the Western Front, they discovered themselves ill-prepared to make the transition. As Correlli Barnett points out, in some respects the working class soldier was better off than the more 'sensitive and imaginative' ex-public school officer as life had already made him hardier.[215] Though the positive aspects of adopting the chivalric ethos are obvious, Girouard warns that one of the greatest dangers of chivalry was its potential to cause individuals to lose touch with reality.[216] Historian Yuval Noah Harari further suggests that many young soldiers:

> consequently entered war not just with rather shallow fantasies of honour and glory, but also with a much deeper expectation that war would provide them with extreme and extraordinary experiences, which would build and develop their selves to a far greater degree than could be accomplished through "ordinary" peacetime experiences.[217]

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[212] 'Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood'', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2013 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/474248/Pre-Raphaelite-Brotherhood>.
[213] Murray, *Red Wine*, p. xxii.
[214] Richard Kaeuper, 'The Societal Role of Chivalry in Romance: Northwestern Europe', in *The Cambridge Companion Ot Medieval Romance*, ed. by Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 97–114, at p. 98.
[215] Correlli Barnett, 'A Military Historian's View of the Literature of the Great War', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, 36 (1970), 1-18. See also Barnett's *The Collapse of British Power* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972) pp. 424-35.; Bond, *Unquiet Western Front*, p. 27.
[216] Girouard, *Return to Camelot*, p. 270.
[217] Yuval Noah Harari, 'Martial Illusions: War and Disillusionment in Twentieth-Century and Renaissance Military Memoirs', *The Journal of Military History*, 69.1 (2005), 43–73, at p. 67.

Employing the idea of manhood acquired through combat and linking it to knighthood, John Masefield used poetry to cast the events of Gallipoli, not as a horror-filled campaign, but rather as a piece of heroic propaganda. He recalls images of combat through rhetoric more common to Medieval Romance than modern warfare:

> They were, however, the finest body of young men ever brought together in modern times, for physical beauty and nobility of bearing they surpassed any men I have ever seen; they walked and looked like kings of old poems […] All they felt was a gladness of exaltation that their young courage was to be used. They went like kings in a pageant to the imminent death […] their feeling that they had done with life […] All was beautiful in that gladness of men about to die.[218]

This aggrandisement of the ordinary soldiers heightened the mystique surrounding their role and deepened the significance of their deaths. As Stephen Goebel points out, the elevation of the common soldier through the evocation of chivalry narrowed the divide between classes, allowing all soldiers to be viewed and memorialised as brave, honourable, and heroic knights.[219] Masefield was certainly not the only author to fabricate honour out of horror, or to ennoble combat. The War Propaganda Bureau would spend the next four years producing nationalistic works aimed at encouraging enlistment, morale, glorifying war and demonising the enemy. This campaign would, in part, use the rhetoric of chivalry to capitalise on early war fervor, but would transition away from its characteristic vocabulary to promote the ethics, morality, courage and sacrifice of chivalry through a language more reflective of the environment of modern, total warfare.

[218] Masefield quoted in Murray, *Wine of Youth*, pp. 60-61.
[219] Goebel, *Medieval Memory*, p. 200.

The War Propaganda Bureau

At the end of August 1914, a matter was raised in the cabinet. The effectiveness and efficiency of Germany's dissemination of false news abroad was becoming increasingly apparent. Britain needed to take immediate measures to counter its growing influence. Before the start of World War One Britain had no official peace-time organisation in place to either address foreign propaganda or issue its own, in response: 'Mr. Lloyd George urged the importance of setting on foot an organisation to inform and influence public opinion abroad and to confute German mis-statements and sophistries.'[220] On 5 September the Cabinet declared that it would without delay take action to counteract the spread of German propaganda. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Head of the National Insurance Commission, C. F. G. Masterman, was chosen by Prime Minister Asquith to organise two committees, one composed of the most influential literary luminaries of the day, the second of publicists and representatives of the press. His purpose was to establish what would be called the War Propaganda Bureau or Wellington House, which was tasked with determining and disseminating the principles and aims of wartime Britain to the British public and foreign allies. For two years the WPB would operate with such secrecy that its existence would be almost entirely unknown, even to Parliament.

Masterman initially collected twenty-five of Britain's most widely recognised and respected literary minds to promote Britain's interests, including Ford Madox Ford (known as Ford Hermann Hueffer until 1919), Rider Haggard, Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennett and Rudyard Kipling. What contributed to the success of the WPB was its ability to publish pro-British literature by major authors without having the appearance of being propaganda. Documents

[220] M. L. Sanders, 'Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, 18.1 (2015), 119-46, p. 119.

commissioned under the WPB were printed by civilian commercial presses such as Oxford University Press, Macmillan, Hodder & Stoughton and Methuen.[221] Its tactics ranged from sending personalised copies of texts to prominent public figures abroad, to disseminating pamphlets, news articles, poetry, and novels at home and at the Front. Many of the most popular works of literature published during the war used the popularity of leading authors to mask propagandist themes subtly strewn through their texts.

FAMOUS BRITISH AUTHORS DEFEND ENGLAND'S WAR

Fifty-three of the Best-Known Writers of the Empire Sign a Vigorous Document Saying That Great Britain Could Not Have Refused to Join the War Without Dishonor.

WHO'S WHO AMONG THE SIGNERS

Messinger credits the success of Wellington House to the fact that 'most of the principles and many of the techniques of modern propaganda were worked out [by the WPB] in such detail that subsequent practitioners would do little more than elaborate on them.'[222] Atrocity propaganda (focusing on violent acts), emotional appeals (targeting the heart rather than mind), demonisation (psychological refiguring of the enemy as inhuman), bandwagon (persuading individuals to join a group mentality) and testimonial (the use of first-hand accounts) were among the many tools the WPB developed during its campaign in WWI. In order to counter German disinformation, the WPB initially adopted a policy of restraint which sought to avoid extreme or exaggerated rhetoric emphasising a measured response of factual news and encouraging patriotic

[221] Arthur Ward, *A Guide to War Publications of the First and Second World War: From Training Guides to Propaganda Posters* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2015), pp. 8-9.
[222] Gary S. Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 2.

sentiments.[223] While pamphlets employed a realistic and concise depiction of events at the Front and of the government's operations, fiction offered a venue for the encouragement of more idealistic and emotionally provocative rhetoric. Messinger further notes that although 'the church, the press, business, political parties, and philanthropy were the [initial] major producers' of Home Front propaganda, the national government was becoming increasingly involved in 'a major psychological offensive against its own citizens.'[224] While Bond challenges the effectiveness of propaganda during the war, he maintains that 'British morale was continuously fuelled by moral outrage at enemy atrocities', which was undoubtedly relayed both through propaganda and mass media.[225] What rapidly grew to be the focus of the WPB was the propagation of one of WWI's dominant myths, that English civilisation was fighting a war against German barbarism.[226] This implied a superiority that applied not just to the contemporary socio-cultural context but sought to inculcate the notion of a historical precedence of continual ethical and moral preeminence. In order to encourage the growth of this notion, the WPB promoted a mentality that not only understood but adamantly believed in the supremacy of a British ethical system, one whose virtues would be confirmed by the examples of famous war heroes, literary tradition, and the commonality of honourable conduct or self-sacrifice among her citizens. This not only meant the promotion of jingoistic rhetoric but the projection of idealistic conduct without obviating such intentions. While the reception of chivalric ideals, themes of honour, and glorified death were initially easy for many to stomach, as awareness of the conditions of war on the Western Front during WWI became more understood, writers

[223] Jessica Meyer, 'The Tuition of Manhood: Sapper's War Stories and the Literature of the War', in *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History*, ed. by Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed (London: Macmillan, 2007), p. 125.
[224] Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 2, 6.
[225] Bond, *Unquiet Western Front*, p. 10.
[226] Mark A. Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Proppaganda: British Narrative from 1900 to 1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 22.

recognised that subtle means of eliciting patriotic or nationalistic sentiment were needed. Chivalry in its neo-medieval, romanticised form was losing its resonance with much of Britain. To soldiers in particular, it was increasingly becoming a point of contention, disillusionment and ridicule. Raymond Asquith wrote in a letter to his wife in July 1916 that 'I agree with you about the utter senselessness of war […] the suggestion that it [chivalry] elevates the character is hideous.'[227] Yet the ideals and position it held in contemporary British culture did not altogether vanish; rather, the means of its expression changed in order to reflect the demands of the time. In fact, Asquith also noted that Britain had been forced into war in order to protect nations such as Belgium and remain loyal to allies such as France. Were Britain to maintain neutrality, the government would be stained 'with dishonour … and [would have] betrayed…the interests of this country.' Britain's fight was 'to fulfil a solemn international obligation…not only of law but of honour', an obligation that 'no self-respecting man could possibly have repudiated'. Britain must also fight in order to 'vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed, in defiance of international good faith, by the arbitrary will of a strong an overmastering Power.' Not only was Britain's entry into war required but also morally justified and he concluded that Britain entered war with a clear conscience and to defend civilization in the face of unbridled aggression.[228]

This chapter aims to demonstrate what David Monger and others have observed, that 'pre-war ideals, far from being abandoned during the war, seem to have derived new strength, confirming the need for historians to think more extensively about the relation between the war

[227] Raymond Asquith, *Raymond Asquith: Life and Letters*, ed. by J. Joliffe (London: Collins, 1980), p. 274.
[228] *The Times*, 7 August 1914, p. 7.

and surrounding years.'[229] This is further supported by scholars such as Jessica Meyer, Andrew Frayn and Dan Todman whose arguments evidence that non-disillusioned literature provides as valid a response to the war as the works of the disillusioned writers that form so much of First World War literature.[230] Additionally, scholars such as Brian Bond have refuted the work of disillusioned writers as overly cynical and reductive to Britain's legacy as a victor in the First World War, and Rosa M. Bracco's *Merchants of Hope* illustrates how best-selling authors gave the public a sense of pride in participating in the war that helped console the loss felt by many.[231] It is with this in mind that the texts addressed here will be assessed, incorporating the continued presence and influence of Victorian chivalric ideals rather than confining it to the, while not unjustified, pall of disillusionment and the rejection of such notions. Chivalric tenets such as honour, duty and sacrifice, the ideals that had spurred many men into battle, did not quickly disappear, rather the manner in which they were addressed and treated changed as with many aspects of life.

This chapter looks at the works of several authors from the War Propaganda Bureau in order to illustrate the persistence of chivalric themes in popular literature and their implementation as a means to encourage patriotic and nationalistic.[232] The themes addressed with particular attention are those of responsibility (as shaped by social class, gender or military rank), sacrifice, as well as honour and the glamorisation of war, demonstrating their correlation to chivalric values, and their ability to support the British wartime agenda. Special attention will

[229] David Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda and Ideas of Home and Community in First World War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8.3 (2011), 331-54, at p. 345.
[230] Jessica Meyer, 'The Tuition of Manhood: Sapper's War Stories and the Literature of the War', in *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History*, ed. by Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed., (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 113-28, at p. 125; Frayn, *Disenchantment*; Todman, *Myth and Memory*.
[231] See: Bond, *Unquiet Western Front*; Rosa M. Bracco, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War* (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993).
[232] Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda', pp. 333-45.

be devoted to the following: H. G. Wells's *Mr. Britling Sees It Though*, John Buchan's *Greenmantle*, J. M. Barrie's *Echoes of the War*, Sir Henry Newbolt's *Tales of the Great War*, in addition to works by A.C. Benson, Muriel Kenny's *Khaki Soldiers and Other Poems for Children*, and Lawrence Binyon's *The Four Years: War Poems Collected and Newly Augmented*.[233] These works have been selected from the extensive body of literature produced by the WPB in order to represent a spectrum of popular treatments of key chivalric themes during WWI. These authors represent some of the most popular, successful, and most importantly, widely read, writers alive and producing work during the period. Each author was a household name capable of attracting large audiences to their work, a fact which the WPB not only relied on but capitalised on. While the authors differed quite markedly in subject matter, writing style, and opinion in many cases, as members of the WPB they augmented their writing in order to reflect the pro-war, chivalric aims of war-time propaganda.

Masculine Duty and Enlistment: From Boy Scout to Soldier

> A thing which has struck me, and I have spoken of it elsewhere, is the way in which the language of romance and melodrama has now become true. It is becoming the language of normal life. The old phrase about "dying for freedom," about "Death being better than dishonor," — phrases that we thought were fitted for the stage or for children's stories — are now the ordinary truths on which we live [234]

The popularity of war literature at the outbreak of war should not be underestimated. As

[233] H. G. Wells, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (Herts: Morley-Baker Book, 1969); John Buchan, *Greenmantle*, ed. by Kate Macdonald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); J. M. Barrie, *Echoes of the War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918); Sir Henry Newbolt, *Tales of the Great War* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1916); A. C. Benson, *Father Payne*, (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1916); Muriel Kenny, *Khaki Soldiers and Other Poems for Children* (Cambridge, England: W. Heffer & Sons, 1915); Laurence Binyon, *The Four Years: War Poems Collected and Newly Augmented* (London: E. Mathews, 1919).
[234] Gilbert Murray, 'The Evil and the Good of the War', in *Faith, War, and Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 77-92, at p. 91.

Jane Potter demonstrates, while many industries suffered because of the war, the book trade, after a period of uncertainty, was able to operate at nearly the same levels it had before the August 1914.[235] Literature became an important reprieve from reality as well as a way to try to connect or understand the experiences of those at the front. *The Times Literary Supplement* declared, 'A great national service is performed by writers who set forth in clear popular language the reasons why we have gone to war and the vital character of the struggle'.[236] Director of Hodder & Stoughton (one of the civilian publishing houses used by the WPB), Ernest Hodder Williams, and editor, Sir William Robertson Nicoll believed that 'their task was to preserve unity and boost moral on the home front: it was a prerequisite of victory. From the day the War was declared, they dedicated their minds and energy wholly to the common task with the high spirit of crusaders.'[237] While propaganda worked diligently to inundate Britain with the rhetoric of sacrifice, bravery and responsibility, as Pennell observes:

> Britons were not brainwashed into believing that they were fighting a just cause, in defence of international law and national honour. The content of contemporary dairies and letters demonstrate that ordinary people expressed the same ideas and used the same language employed in official speeches and pamphlets. This holds true across all regions and most levels of society. Ordinary people used 'big words' like honour, justice, defence, righteousness, an therefore the high diction of 1914 was speaking to a mood, not dictating it.[238]

Gilbert Murray was one of Britain's most effective pamphlet propagandists, encouraging a reasoned case for entering into and remaining at war. In his October 1915 speech, 'The Evil and the Good of the War' (*EGW*), he attempts to make an unbiased assessment of the actions and mentality with which both the British and Germans had entered the conflict:

> A thing which has struck me, and I have spoken of it elsewhere, is the way in which the language of romance and melodrama has now become true. It is becoming the language of normal life. The old phrase about "dying for freedom," about "Death being better than dishonor," — phrases that we thought were

[235] Jane Potter, *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[236] *The Times Literary Supplament*, 15 October 1914.
[237] John Attenborough, *A Living Memory: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers 1868-1975* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975).
[238] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 64.

> fitted for the stage or for children's stories — are now the ordinary truths on which we live [239]

While this and many other of his speeches and pamphlets possess little of the neo-medieval rhetoric that he claims is now part of the language of everyday life, it is replete with examples and explanations of the necessity of the chivalric themes of duty, honour, brotherhood and sacrifice. He does not aim to romanticise but instead provides analytical, social, and historical reasons why these characteristics are intensely important to the war effort. Before examining this, it is necessary to explore the use of overt chivalry by the WPB in order to demonstrate the transmission and influence of the Boy Scouts movement and its conception of chivalry to the mentality of individuals entering First World War. After reaffirming the central tenets of chivalry discussed in previous chapters, as well as illustrating their continued significance in early twentieth-century Britain, themes of masculine duty and sacrifice will be explored.

* * *

> You will not get the best out of these stories of great men unless you keep in mind, while you read, the rules and feelings that were in their minds while they fought. Chivalry was a plan of life, a conscious ideal, an ardent attempt to save Europe from barbarism, even when nations were at war with one another. It was at first dressed up in a distinctive set of forms and ceremonies — very fine forms and ceremonies, but not absolutely necessary; when they died out the ideal, the plan of life, was great enough to survive without them. It still survives, and still gives the answer to both barbarians and pacifists.[240]

Sir Henry Newbolt, most famous for his poems 'Drake's Drum', 'Vitai Lampada', and 'Clifton Chapel', wrote the above lines in *The Book of the Happy Warrior* in 1917 under the commission of the WPB. His works glorify chivalric idealism and jingoistic rhetoric, a trait that made his poetry both popular and controversial. 'War', Newbolt firmly declared, 'is beastly

[239] Gilbert Murray, 'The Evil and the Good of the War', in *Faith, War, and Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 77–92, at p. 91.
[240] Newbolt, *The Book of the Happy Warrior*, p. vi.

unless it is conducted under the rules of Chivalry.'[241] His poems in praise of the British Navy earned Newbolt the opportunity to sail as a civilian aboard active military vessels to document military engagements. He was recruited as one of several poets in the WPB that were too old for combat but who still possessed an influential literary voice. Like Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys,* Newbolt attempted to create a blueprint for character and conduct based on neo-medieval literature's description of knights with the ambition of cultivating the idealised qualities of a gentleman within his readership. The effect of the Boy Scouts Movement certainly did not pass unobserved. H. G. Wells's eponymous character in *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (1916) attends a Boy Scouts rally of some three thousand participants and commends the physical and moral fitness it promotes.[242] M'Snape of Hay's *The First Hundred Thousand* (1915) is a former Boy Scout, which contributes to his reputation as a trusted and courteous member of A Company.[243] Indeed, the Scouts' contribution was considerable; some 84,000 former Scouts would fight in the war, receiving sixteen Victoria Crosses, nearly 300 Military Crosses and 600 Military Medals.[244]

After the war, Newbolt notably excluded Wilfred Owen from his anthology *New Paths on Helicon* (1927) because '[he did not] believe these self-pitying, shell-shocked poems will move our grandchildren greatly.'[245] Though his own son suffered shell-shock and memory loss he firmly believed in men's obligation to serve and the honour it conveyed, going as far as to say, 'I'm sorry he's not doing more for his country' when his son's leave was extended by two months as a result of his injuries.[246] Newbolt's zealous advocacy of chivalry was put to use by

[241] Susan Chitty, *Playing the Game: Biography of Sir Henry Newbolt* (London: Quartet Books, 1997), p. 143.
[242] Wells, *Mr. Britling*, pp. 73-74.
[243] Ian Hay, *The First Hundred Thousand* (Glasgow: Richard Drew Publishing, 1985), pp. 87-88.
[244] 'The History of Scouting During the First World War', *Tynesmouth Scouts* <http://www.tynemouthscouts.org.uk/latest_event/ww1/The History of Scouting during the First World War.pdf>.
[245] Sir Henry Newbolt, *New Path on Helicon* (London: Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1927), p. 399.
[246] Quote in: Susan Chitty, *Playing the Game: Biography of Sir Henry Newbolt* (London: Quarlet Books, 1997), p. 225.

the WPB when he was asked to write a series of boy's adventure stories known as *Longman's Venture Library* with one volume to be published at Christmas for eight consecutive years. Each of the books printed during the war — *The Book of the Blue Sea* (1914), *The Book of the Thin Red Line* (1915), *Tales of the Great War* (1916), *The Book of the Happy Warrior* (1917) — overtly expresses chivalric ideas and encourages their reader to adopt them, addressing either a particular branch of the military or a set of historical figures.[247] Of the collection, *The Book of the Happy Warrior* (*BHW*) is most prolific in its declaration of chivalry's importance to British character and military success. Newbolt frequently contrasts British and German culture in order to demonstrate the intellectual, historical, and moral superiority of the British way of life. The author cleverly allows what the modern reader can comfortably assume is a fictional German to incriminate his own way of life:

> One of our enemies in the present war is said to have summed up the differences between his countrymen and ours in these words: 'I suppose it will be to the end as it has been from the beginning: you will always be fools, and we shall never be gentlemen.' […] Our enemies have adopted a theory which is the opposite of ours: they proclaim that victory is an end in itself, and justifies any method used to attain it. We cannot understand this; to us it seems clear that human welfare is the end in view for all communities of men, and that if victory for any one nation can only be achieved by ruining and corrupting human life, then we must do without victory. (*BHW*, 257)

Newbolt does not dwell on being labelled a 'fool' but rather quickly descends into a lengthy pseudo-socio-historical discourse on the origins of Britain's system of ethics and conduct. After demonstrating how English public schools and the ethics espoused by them are the descendants of the education style used by knights, Newbolt declares that 'This tradition is of great importance: an Englishman's kindliness and fair-mindedness may be his by nature, but courtesy and self-restraint are acquired qualities and have come to him from the order of chivalry […]' (*BHW*, 257). Newbolt references Baden-Powell's juxtaposition of Scout Law and chivalry,

[247] Sir Henry Newbolt and Norman Wilkinson, *The Book of the Blue Sea* (London: Lognman, Green and Co., 1914); Sir Henry Newbolt, *The Book of the Thin Red Line* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1915); Newbolt, *Tales of the Great War*; Newbolt, *The Book of the Happy Warrior*.

providing a brief summary of the instructional handbook and indicating how the skills described in it are directly transferable to soldiering. Like Baden-Powell, Newbolt's argument stresses several points as key to order, morale and gentlemanly conduct, each being paralleled with knightly conduct. He also employs the use of contemporary figures active in the war, such as Lord Haldane, in order to demonstrate how the possession of these qualities has contributed greatly to the war effort (*BHW*, 275). Where Baden-Powell and Newbolt differ markedly is, while both men encouraged boys to refrain from discriminating against individuals of lower social standing, Newbolt's approach to promoting the adoption of chivalric tenets is accusatory, drawing attention to class discrimination. His initial statement, that it would be a matter of 'national misfortune if any feeling were engendered which could increase the sense of class difference among us' seems to be countermanded roughly a page later: 'Yet that class [the 'wealthier class'] has not only made possible the winning of this war, it has proved to be almost the only trustworthy source of leadership' (*BHW*, 275-76). However, Newbolt challenges this 'wealthier class', declaring it their responsibility to acknowledge and 'ennoble' individuals who demonstrate the 'tradition' of chivalry, calling for the elimination of the status of 'temporary gentleman' (in this case associated with those who were given the temporary status of officers), and ensuring that men of chivalric character be given precedence, regardless of social position, ahead of 'the great-grandsons of those who faced Napoleon a hundred years ago' who may be devoid of such character (*BHW*, 275-77). The

conclusion that Newbolt ultimately draws regarding discrimination in the Army is that there are only two classes of people — 'those who have been in the trenches, and those who have not' (*BHW*, 276-77). The division between civilian and soldier would gain increasing traction as the war progressed, a matter which will be addressed in Chapter Four.

Nationalism and patriotism at home did not always resonate with those returning from the Front and were particularly offensive to some. While J. G. Fuller notes soldiers' frustration at civilian incomprehension, he makes the important distinction that many soldiers did not sever ties with the civilian world and in fact relied on the connection in order to stay grounded while in the alien world of the Front.[248] Soldiers certainly returned from the trenches weary and many would experience a sense of isolation or estrangement from their former life, but it would be an over-generalisation to refer to all such men as disillusioned.[249] Newbolt was aware of the need to promote the exclusivity of the community of fighting men whilst providing an explanation for the growth of anti-war and anti-chivalric sentiments. He declares that his book

> offers to the whole world what the old chivalry offered to a single class, a fighting ideal and a scientific training. The militarist will hate and fear it, for it forbids his existence: the pacifist will reject it, for it teaches clear instead of confused thinking, and service rather than personal salvation. But the great majority of our people will accept it readily, for it is in accordance with the tradition of one class and the instinct of all. (*BHW* 283)

By identifying sources of contention, Newbolt is able to discredit naysayers without engaging in argument, rather he draws the reader into a collective of like-minded individuals who inherently possess the qualities needed in the moral fight against German barbarism, the modern approximation of fallen knights and rejected chivalry. Newbolt declares the open availability of joining the brotherhood of arms, stating that it 'recognises no distinction of rank, creed, color or nationality' and outlining four principal rules that must be adhered to:

> (1) Members are bound to one another in all circumstances by the obligation of brotherhood.

[248] Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda', p. 332.
[249] Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda', p. 331.

> (2) Every member shall be bound to forbear all men courteously, to deal honourably, to fight in a just quarrel and in no other.
> (3) Every member shall bear himself in war without hatred, in pain or death without flinching, in defeat without complaining – in victory without insolence.
> (4) Every member shall hold himself under a special obligation to help and serve those who are weak, poor, or suffering, and particularly women and conquered enemies.
> (*BHW* 280-81)

The similarities between Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* and Newbolt's *Book of the Happy Warrior* and thus the handbooks of Ramon Llull and Geoffroi de Charny are readily recognisable. Baden-Powell declares:

> The laws of the knights were these:
>
> > "Be Always Ready, with your armour on, except when you are taking your rest at night.
> > At whatever you are working try to win honour and a name for honesty.
> > **Defend the poor and weak.**
> > **Help them that cannot defend themselves.**
> > Do nothing to hurt or offend anyone else.
> > **Be prepared to fight in the defence of their country.**
> > Work for honour rather than profit.
> > Never break your promise.
> > **Maintain the honour of your country with your life.**
> > **Rather die honest than live shamelessly.**
> > Chivalry requireth that youth should be trained to perform the most laborious and humble offices with cheerfulness and gravel and to do good unto others."
> > (*SFB*, 242)

The rules that have been altered to be put in bold bear the strongest correlation to Newbolt's principles. Baden-Powell also references Oates, a member of Scott's Arctic expedition, as an example of acting admirably by enduring great pain (frostbite and starvation) without complaint. Oates' decision to leave the tent so as to give his comrades a greater chance of survival is hailed as a marvel of self-sacrifice and Scouts are told they should 'show just the same spirit'. Baden-Powell further links the Scouts to the ultimate knightly brotherhood: the crusaders:

> This Brotherhood of Scouting is in many respects similar to a Crusade. Scouts from all parts of the world are ambassadors of good will, making friends, breaking down barriers of colour, of creed, and of class. That surely is a great Crusade. I advise you to do your best in that work, for soon you will be a man, and if quarrels should arise between any nations it is upon you that the burden of responsibility will fall.
>
> There are the first rules with which the old knights started, and from which the Scout Law of today comes. (*SFB*, 242; *Dump*, 215, 222)

While the Crusaders of medieval history were not nearly so open minded in regards to colour,

creed or class, they are an evocative image in the modern context, closely linked with valour, Christianity and war. Though written nearly a decade apart and under markedly different circumstances, the idealist chivalric rhetoric of both writers is plainly intended to encourage a moral and ethical value system based on chivalry. Baden-Powell and Newbolt's efforts were directed at inculcating patriotic values. Newbolt certainly takes a more jingoistic stance, directly referencing war, an association Baden-Powell goes to great effort to disassociate the Scouts from. Baden-Powell envisions the Scouts' battle as a combat of ethics and morals, though he is not shy about informing boys of their duty to serve should their country call. Though Newbolt's manner of expression differs from Baden-Powell's they both relay their concerns regarding class ethics, morality and duty.

It is important to remember that *BHW* was published in 1917, and while many critics have asserted that the Battle of the Somme marked the dissolution of heroic and chivalric notions, the WPB still saw a great deal of value in their dissemination. Where Newbolt may have come up short is in his rendering of these ideals. Unlike many of the other writers in the WPB, Newbolt little altered his authorial voice, firmly believing in the importance of chivalry and failing to recognise the more cynical environment of the later war years. He retained his overtly chivalric idealism whereas other writers, while pursuing the same agenda, chose to alter their rhetoric, still encouraging chivalric themes but in a more didactic manner. Writers began to mask chivalric themes within the actions of characters and situations, enabling stories to provide notional models of behaviour without direct instruction or direct appeal to chivalry.

The importance of encouraging children to be patriotic and to adhere to chivalric ethics was not over looked. Elizabeth O'Neil's *The War, 1914: A History and an Explanation for Boys and Girls*, published in the autumn of 1914 explains war to children as a chivalric struggle

against evil:

> The war of 1914 was different from other wars in this, that no one but the Germans can say that Germany was in the right. The Allies, as all the world knows, were fighting for justice and right against a country and an emperor who seemed almost mad with pride. The soldiers of the Allies went out to battle not as soldiers have often gone to war, because it is the business to be done, but rather like knights of old, full of anger against an enemy who was fighting unjustly, and full, too, of a determination to fights their best for justice and right. This is one more reason which has made the Great War of 1914 so wonderful a thing. [250]

Pamphlets such as *Why Britain is at War* were adapted for children from adult versions distilling messages about Britain's involvement in war down into simplified, accessible language: 'although Britain loves peace, she declared war on Germany because Germany had broken her word…Boys and girls, you have been brought up to keep your promises, and if we want one of you to do a thing we put you on your word of honour'. [251] Muriel Kenny's *Khaki Soldiers and other Poems for Children* (*KS*) (1915) presents the ideas of sacrifice and valour to her young audience through a short collection of poems that combine simple rhyme patterns with complex ideas. Composed of only fifteen poems in the narrative voice of a child, each expresses a pro-war sentiment related to contributing to the war, whether by being a soldier, knitting, or even the importance of livestock. The first poem, 'Khaki Soldiers', unifies British people of all socio-economic classification, removing class-related boundaries and drawing individuals together through patriotic and valorous ideals:

> The King's son from the palace,
> The squire's son from the hall,
> The plough-boy from the cottage,
> Are khaki soldiers all.
> […]
> The King's son from the palace,
> The squire's son from the hall,
> The plough-boy from the cottage,
> Are khaki soldiers all.
> (*KS*, 3)

[250] Elizabeth O'Neil, *The War, 1914: A History and an Explanation for Boys and Girls* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1914), pp. 14-15.
[251] George Eyre Evans, 'Why Are We Fighting', in *Aberystwyth War Book*: XD 523 E90, 1914.

From the outset, Kenny links together the notion of the soldier with nobility, drawing on a cultural, historical identity that links bravery in battle to romantic medieval associations. From king to plough–boy all are drawn by a sense of duty towards battle, insinuating a natural predilection and the inherent qualities of a warrior. 'The Knitting Game' furthers this notion by encouraging martial action, linking retreat with lack of honour and enforcing the idea that action on the Home Front is worthy of respect:

> Forward ever, no retreat,
> Trench by trench the field is won,
> Inches slowly grow to feet,
> Feet to yards before we've done.
> Soldier, who my scarf will wear,
> Treat it, please, with honour due:
> Gallant men who guard you there
> Won their battles — so must you.
> (*KS*, 8)

The lines contain an element of moral blackmail, as well as the rejection of self-preservation which in turn demands sacrifice. Retreat is not an option; the scarf acts as a banner, a symbol of the British Home Front and its ideals, thus anything less than valiant action is dishonourable. Sacrifice and the willingness to die are prominent themes in several of the poems. 'Wounded Soldiers' describes injured men returned home from the Front and praises their willingness to expose themselves to such danger:

> On those far fields they played their part,
> Bore stern in fight a gentle heart,
> Met death and danger eye to eye,
> And smiling heard the call to die.
> […]
> These were our sword and these our shield,
> By wounds they bear was England healed;
> Prisoners of pain their lot to be,
> But by their bondage we go free.
> (*KS*, 15)

The idea of death does not disconcert the soldier, he willingly offers himself up in defence of the nation and its people. He is again combined with the image of a knight crusader, both a figure of martial prowess and Christian piety, defending Britain with sword and shield. He further takes on

the mantle of saviour in the final line above, recalling the crucifixion and sacrifice of Christ. As will be shown later in this chapter and in Chapter Four, the image of the soldier-saviour would be employed by both propagandists and by war poets themselves as an allegory for the magnitude of suffering and sacrifice soldiers endured in defence of Britain and her ideals.

In 'A Visit to the Hospital' one convalescing soldier recalls:

> I fell beside my gun;
> How long I lay I hardly know,
> I knew the fight was won.
> I came by ship, I came by train;
> Find England looks the same;
> And if I never fight again,
> At least I played the game.
> (*KS*, 10)

The child narrator encounters returning soldiers with curiosity, all of whom indicate their willingness to fight and die. The poem draws upon the public school rhetoric of 'playing the game' implying the masculine responsibility to join the war effort as well as the the figuration of the battlefield as a proving ground. The soldier has gone to the Front, he has 'played the game', he has asserted his masculinity, fulfilled his societal duty to fight for the country and is glad for the opportunity. The child recognises the significance of the soldier's actions and the physical price he has paid:

> I thought him very brave and kind
> To fight for England thus;
> "For if," I said, "you'd stayed behind,
> You'd still be strong like us."
> He told me things worth fighting for
> Are worth the cost. "You see,"
> He said, "If I'd not gone to war,
> War might have come to me."
> (*KS*, 10)

The poem ends on an ominous note, hinting at the potential for invasion should men fail to go to war. Only through action can Britain be saved. The poem 'Surprises' portrays war as a desirable fortuitous experience that arises unexpectedly. A child girds himself in his father's sword, sees

older boys leave school to enlist and watches as all the other men and boys around him leave for the Front. He is surprised that all of these individuals, who until their departure had been quite ordinary features in his life, are now exhibiting extraordinary qualities. His father's sword comes to symbolise the implicit qualities of bravery, honour and strength that the child imagines soldiers all have and he hopes that the war will last long enough for him to display them as well:

> O dare I think the war will bide
> Until I too have grown
> To carry, clanking as I stride,
> A sword like Father's own?
> (*KS*, 12)

Kenny's collection of poems follows in the more direct vein of pro-war propaganda, its use of medieval persons and items adds a degree of romance, conflating the soldier and knight and drawing upon historical and cultural links to chivalry. Her emphasis on the willingness to engage and die in battle, with only minor suggestions of the consequences, glamourises soldiering and death, creating in the mind of her young readers the image of the heroic soldier and patriotic duty to one's country.

The Anglican Church, through the pulpit and in print, combined the image of the valiant, self-sacrificial soldier with the Christian knight. *The Quiver*, an Anglican journal which supported the war effort (though not under the direct influence of the WPB) encouraged chivalric character, Britain's religious and moral responsibility to fight against Germany, and endeavoured to link British culture and society with traditional virtues exemplified by the legends of King Arthur and St. George.[252] By serving in the military men were answering 'The modern call to knighthood — to play our part with Christ in winning the world, righting its wrongs, healing its woes, destroying the works of the devil, building up the Kingdom which is righteousness and

[252] Shannon Ty Bontrager, 'The Imagined Crusade: The Church of England and the Mythology of Nationalism and Christianity during the Great War', *Church History*, 71.4 (2002), 774–98, at p. 791.

peace and joy. That call comes to us all.'[253] In its attempt to define 'Englishness' in terms chivalric tradition and the conflated image of the masculine soldier hero cum virtuous, sacrificial crusader *The Quiver* employs Sir Galahad's purity and success in the quest for the Holy Grail as an allegory for the moral superiority of British combatants. In this rhetoric, the 'unchivalric German foe' is representative of the worldliness and depravity that threatened to confound those who sought the Grail. Galahad acts as a model for the chivalric Christian soldier, emphasising the power of courage and spirituality with defeat of the Germans being akin to achieving the Grail quest.

The Quiver even tailored its commercial advertisements to reflect the notion of the modern soldier–knight. One advertisement in particular, selling Monkey Brand polish, links the support of the war, chivalry, and consumerism with the image of a medieval suit of armour, lance, and shield. The image is captioned with: 'Chivalry Revived with Monkey Brand,' followed by a short poem:

> On head-piece worn in ancient days,
> See, quickly such a shine I raise
> That soon it looked like new;
> As new as head-piece worn to-day
> By Allies in the great affray,
> To whom all honour is due.[254]

As Bontrager argues, 'This type of advertising campaign claimed the answer to ending the war was chivalry, a peculiarly English anti-modern moral code. Reconciliation was completed. The answer to German modernistic militarism and Britons' improprieties was English anti-modern chivalry.'[255] Just as chivalry condoned violence when the perpetrator breached the morals and ethics of its codes, so the soldier was free to wage war against an enemy who defied Britain's

[253] Charles Brown, 'The Modern Call to Knighthood', *The Quiver*, 51, 653-54.
[254] 'Advertisement: "Monkey Brand"', *The Quiver*, 51 (1916), xxii.
[255] Ty Bontrager, 'Imagined Crusade', pp. 794-95.

sense of morality and justice. The importance of this belief in British moral superiority as a justification of violence against German aggression will be discussed in detail towards the end of this chapter.

A. C. Benson wrote both for *The Quiver* and for the WPB. He helped the Anglican publication promote 'An ideal Christian Chivalry' using St. George as an example and arguing the nobility of combat when undertaken for the sake of Christian principles. He also trumpets Britain's moral authority, the righteousness of their cause, and depicts the soldier as a modern knight explaining that the young soldier is a latter day knight:

> The young Christian soldier, high-hearted and courageous, who regards a great fight not as the carrying out of a brutal and aggressive programme, but as a great and noble adventure, may still be a worthy example of knightliness and stainless valour, who is willing, if need be, to make the last sacrifice of love, and to lay down his life for his friends.[256]

While books such as his *Escape, and other Essays* and *Meanwhile: A Packet of War Letters* in many instances speak less fondly of war, wishing that people would focus on fixing the ills of the world rather than killing one another, Benson nonetheless hails the virtues of sacrifice and the pride of seeing men defend their country.[257] He recalls watching an old soldier seeing off his son who is departing for the front, saying 'I was glad to belong to the nation which had bred them, and half forgot the grim business on which they were bent.'[258] Though Benson abhors the loss of life and the violence of war, he is quick to indicate that all have a duty to sacrifice. Best known for his novel *Father Payne*, Benson's view on war is most accurately summarised by the eponymous Father Payne:

> It's a great, heart-breaking evil, and it puts everything back a stage. Of course it brings out fine qualities — I know that — and so does a plague of cholera. It's the evil in both that brings out the fine things to oppose it. But we ought to have more faith, and believe that the fine qualities are there — war doesn't create them, it only shows you that they are present — and we believe in war because it reassures us about the presence

[256] A. C. Benson, 'St. George', *The Quiver*, 51 (1916), pp. 611-12.
[257] A. C. Benson, *Escape and Other Essays* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1915); A. C. Benson, *Meanwhile: A Packet of War Letters* (London, 1915).
[258] Benson, *Escape*, pp. x-xi.

> of the great qualities.[259]

While he almost entirely avoids neo-medieval chivalric rhetoric in his commentaries on the war outside of those published by *The Quiver*, Benson is unable to avoid it in his discussion of the value of honour:

> A high conception of private honour seems to me a very fine thing indeed. I mean by it a profound hatred of anything false or cowardly or perfidious, and a loathing of anything insincere or treacherous. That sort of proud and stainless chivalry seems to me to be about the brightest thing we can discern, and the furthest beauty we can recognise […] I believe that the man who has so sensitive a conscience about what is honourable or not, that he is called a Quixotic fool by his contemporaries, is far more likely to be right than the coarser majority who only see that a certain course is expedient. I should believe that he saw some truth of morality clearly which the rougher sort of minds did not see.[260]

Honour is a facet of moral character, less contingent on physical action than on morality and mentality. He refutes the growing disenchantment with the chivalric notion of honour and its other moralising qualities and instead supports them, contesting that men who are in possession of such admirable traits are more to be counted on and trusted than those who sneer at them. Father Payne denounces the fame seeking of chivalry, but not the 'High thought, and amiable words, / And courtliness, […] / And love of truth, and all that makes a man,' which his companion quotes from Tennyson.[261] Benson had his own views of chivalry's relevance and place in the modern context as well as its values to the war effort. He, by and large, avoids words that smack of Victorian medievalism and instead encourages thoughtful discussion of its tenets, skillfully analysing its major themes of sacrifice, honour, and bravery within the frame of the First World War, encouraging them while simultaneously dislodging increasingly archaic elements.

In perhaps his best known pamphlet, 'How Can War Ever Be Right?' (*HWBR*), Murray claims that war with Germany would have been necessary even without the atrocities and

[259] Benson, *Father Payne*, p. 129.
[260] Benson, *Father Payne*, pp. 262-63.
[261] Benson, *Father Payne*, p. 312.

invasion of Belgium if hegemony in Europe was to be maintained.[262] While acknowledging his own advocacy of peace in previous military engagements, he condemns pacifist arguments for non-aggression citing them as contributory to the growing scale of the war (*HWBR*, 20). In his diatribe of non-aggression he emphasises pacifists' misinterpretation of traditional values, providing examples of the disastrous consequences of such renderings. He calls upon five standards by which individuals should judge themselves and others: honour, duty, everyday heroism, sacrifice, and outlook. Murray conflates the condition of Britain and its citizens, refuting pacifist arguments that the individual's honour and well-being are independent from that of the nation. He further denounces the notion that to engage in war with Germany means the deaths of countless 'innocent' civilians who simply stand in between the British and those who have committed Germany to war. Murray is emphatic in demonstrating that irrespective of Britain's treaty to defend Belgium, it had a duty and responsibility as the self-perceived world's most militarily and morally powerful nation to fight in defence of weaker nations. Speaking of Britain's decision to enter the war he states: to 'have remained neutral in that crisis would have been a failure in public duty. A heavy responsibility — there is no doubt of it — lies upon Great Britain. […] The one thing which we could not have done, in my opinion, was to repudiate our responsibility' (*HWBR*, 20-21).

Among the principles which Murray finds most disingenuous and self-deluding is the notion that pacifists suffering persecution are in effect martyrs for a cause as just as the one men at the Front are dying for. He evokes the pacifism of Tolstoy, demonstrating how while the refusal to engage in violence may at times have its merits, the refusal to do so when others are in danger and one has the means to provide aid is cowardice. To die rather than save an innocent

[262] Gilbert Murray, 'How Can War Ever Be Right?', in *Faith, War, and Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 20-45.

life and yourself is not sacrifice, it is a waste (*HWBR*, 26-30). An injury or death of this nature, which pacifists have labeled martyrdom, is condemned with vehemence and declared a worse crime than engaging in violence. Murray asserts, 'Let no man imagine that he can escape blood-guiltiness by standing still while murder is committed before his eyes' (*HWBR*, 38). He places the burden of responsibility on pacifists and summarily repudiates the crux of their anti-violence creed. Murray next challenges individuals to assess their sense of personal honour:

> Yet honour and dishonour are real things. I will not try to define them; but will only notice that, like Religion, their characteristic is that they admit of no bargaining. Indeed, we can almost think of honour as being simply that which a free man values more than life, and dishonour as that which he avoids more than suffering or death. And the important point for us is that there are such things. (*HWBR*, 24-25).

We hear the echo of Charny's words, 'above all else, safeguard your own (honour)' and 'be sure you care less about death than shame.'[263] Murray cleverly inserts the phrase 'free man' alluding to the notion that Britain has willingly entered the war and is thus performing an honourable duty and that all who serve are acting honourably, which by meeting the requirement of valuing honour before life, means the individual is brave and willing to be self-sacrificial. Murray draws on what he refers to as 'the spirit of old', offering no direct explanation of what this 'spirit' is but instead conveying both a personal admiration and demand for British citizens to adhere to the characteristics of individuals whose actions are the product of a longstanding value system, a system which pacifists' both misinterpret and are degrading (*HWBR*, 43). He believes that in rejecting the war, pacifists reject the moral underpinnings of the necessity to engage in war and thereby denounce not only the actions of soldiers but the very ethical fabric of British society. Murray provides accounts of soldiers' bravery, self-sacrifice, and sense of duty in order to demonstrate the qualifiers for honour. The first story he relates is that of two Argyll and

[263] Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry de Geoffroi de Charny: Text, Body and Translation*, ed. by Richard and Elspeth Kennedy Kauper, trans. by Elspeth Kennedy (Philidephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 71.

Sutherland Highlanders cut off from their regiment after the Battle of Mons. Between them they have only six biscuits, one man is badly wounded, and both are under constant threat of discovery by the Germans. Rather than risk endangering local inhabitants who could offer them shelter they endure the elements, subsisting on their six biscuits until they are rescued. When the rescuing officer presses the unwounded man for details of how they were able to survive several days with such meager supplies the soldier responds with anger and tells him to 'shut up' (*HWBR*, 43). This leaves the officer to the assumption that the unwounded man had given all the biscuits to his wounded companion demonstrating his willingness to sacrifice himself for his comrade's survival. Murray calls this a demonstration of the 'common necessary heroism of the average man', rather than the rare achievements that earns him a V.C. (*HWBR*, 43). For Murray, self-sacrifice is the 'normal rule', he explains that actions that may preserve an individual's comfort in the immediate future, could have long standing consequence and weigh heavily on a man's conscience for a lifetime (*HWBR*, 43). 'All men may be forgiven except the man who saves himself at the expense of his comrade', he asserts (*HWBR*, 43). The willingness to endure physical discomfort is emblematic of an individual's honour. The audience is provided with the most extreme form of this honour when told the tale of a man who dashes across a field in the presence of a party of Germans in order to warn his comrades of the advancing enemy. The soldier dies, riddled with bullets but his sacrifice saves the lives of his fellows in the Royal Irish Regiment. What Murray endeavors to make his audience aware of is the power of individuated honourable actions. The actions or inactions of an individual have the potential to dramatically affect the course of lives and events. One man my save another or an entire regiment, that regiment may be the decisive component of a battle, and that battle may help win the war. A man's responsibility to act honourably, which in turn necessitates he dutifully serve his country,

inextricably ties him to the honour of the nation. As Murray states, 'The ordinary citizen would feel instantly and without question that his country's honour is involved with his own' (*HWBR*, 30).

Murray's sense of honour, while easily recognised as derived from its medieval chivalric conception (in its expectation of self-sacrifice, valuing of honour over life, as well as power to indicate moral fibre, martial worth, and national or group pride), does not instantly come across as an intended inculcation of chivalry. Murray's language avoids the popular diction and imagery of chivalric romance employed by Newbolt, Kenny, or Baden-Powell. It does not overtly demand adherence to what was becoming increasingly identified as an outmoded system of social etiquette, nor does it appeal to romanticised versions of battle, or glamorise death. Murray is measured and close with his words in descriptions of battlefield heroics, the situations mentioned are neither extraordinary nor unimaginable, they feel very much within the realm of average human ability. Honour is not the only chivalric ideal Murray discusses at great length, his powerful exposition on duty, both civilian and martial, aims to demonstrate the several ways individuals can contribute to the war effort and the impact failing to do so can have. Though Murray briefly alludes to the chivalric system he is careful to avoid rhetoric commonly associated with it but he is nonetheless capable of advancing the same system of moral and ethical conduct.

Women's Duty and Responsibility on the Home Front

Many scholars of the First World War would agree that the revival of chivalry in the mid-nineteenth century certainly influenced ideas of conduct, literature, and notions of heroism. However, they would also argue that chivalry's reliance on gallantry towards women and specific class distinctions contributed in many ways to and were symptomatic of chivalry's absence or outmodedness in World War One. This is not wholly the case. We have already seen how men like Baden-Powell and Newbolt went to great lengths to remove class limiting factors and refashion chivalry as a system of ideals and conduct open to all, viewing it much more as their predecessor Kenelm Digby did: 'chivalry is only a name for that general spirit or state of mind which disposes men to heroic and generous actions.'[264] The contemporary and continued success of the Boy Scouts (as well as the Girl Guides who were also part of Baden-Powell's movement from its inception) is a testament to the power of chivalrous ideals and their wide-scale appeal. While chivalry is often perceived as a code prescribing rules for men with women as passive participants or objectives of men's adventures, women were not always such static, secondary figures. It cannot be denied that the 'damsel in distress' theme played a significant role in Medieval Romance, but to believe that this is the only role or the contemporarily desired role of women in medieval literature or society fails fundamentally in the extremity of its parochialism. This holds true of women in the years surrounding and during World War One. This section interrogates the portrayal of women in WWI visual and literary propaganda. Numerous studies have been conducted on the significance, involvement and reaction of women

[264] Kenelm Digby, *The Broad Stone of Honour: The First Book, Godefridus* (London: R. Gilbert, 1829), p. 89.

to the war, not limited to Claire Tylee, Jane Potter and Sharon Ouditt.[265] Not of least concern being politics of the suffragette movement during WWI, however, this chapter focuses on the correlation between the character and actions of women on the Home Front and the idealised relationship between knights and ladies as a fundamental component of chivalry. This evaluation will highlight women's influence both on enlistment and morale, demonstrating the impact they were perceived to have as described in literature of the war. Women living during WWI were not simply expected to be keepers of the domestic environment but had a duty to ensure the men around them engaged in martial combat.

With this in mind, let us consider first one of the primary sources of motivation for entering into and remaining at war: defence. Individuals sought to defend themselves, their country, their ideals, way of life and community. Women were among the most evocatively used figures in propaganda, employed as a means to influence men to enter battle through guilt or love, inspiring bravery as valiant warrior figures, or as the victims of abuse, rape or murder. The latter figure, the female as a victim, serves the same primary function as the notion of the "damsel in distress" of Medieval Romance and medievalism. A woman wrongly oppressed by an outside aggressor was intended to engender protective instincts or as an affront to perceived societal and gender responsibilities of protecting the weaker sex. In such a scenario, the implication is that only by men enlisting and fighting can innocence be rescued or kept from harm. Propaganda of victimisation capitalised both on fear and guilt. Women were perceived as

[265] Claire M. Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914-64* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Potter, *Boys in Khaki*; Sharon Ouditt, 'Debatable Ground: Freedom and Constraint in British First World War Prose Fiction' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century British and American War Literature*, ed. by Adam Piette and Mark Rawlinson, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016) 31-39.

the keepers of domesticity, representing not only the feminine innocence of a non-combatant, community, and family, but as moral and maternal figures, an attack against them was summarily an attack on children, the most innocent of war victims. Standing opposite to this sort of helpless victimisation is that of the feminine warrior who has played an active role in combat but has nonetheless been subdued. She is often the anthropomorphism of Britain and as such an attack on her or her subjugation engenders fear of Britain's defeat, but not only the defeat in a political sense but also the erasure of British culture, Christian beliefs, and the 'rights' of herself and the smaller nations she protects. After the 16 December attack on Scarborough, Whitby, and Hartlepool which claimed the lives of over 100 civilians, many women and children, 'Remember Scarborough' became a prominent feature on propaganda posters. In this instance, the image of women as victims and as Britannia were both used to great effect. Even if the overt medieval rhetoric of chivalry is removed from such propaganda the sentiment inspired by the victimisation of a female figure remains: men must fight to save her — Britain. As Elizabeth Wordsworth exclaimed:

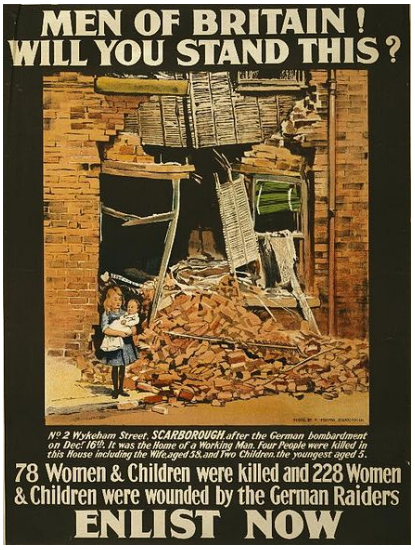
> In the same way the traditions of personal bravery, the comparative refinement of manners, the chivalrous attitude towards the weaker sex (though we cannot forget the tragedy of Joan of Arc) are characteristics of the English gentleman of all classes for which we may, partly at least, thank our Norman inheritance. That the Teutonic blood, much less mixed than our own, is lacking in some of these elements, seems to be shewn by some cases of hideous maltreatment of women in the present war.[266]

[266] Elizabeth Wordsworth, 'The English Church and the English Character', *Church Quarterly Review*, 1915, pp. 157-59.

Contrary to this image, the women in J. M. Barrie's and H. G. Wells's works addressed here are scarcely portrayed as helpless or victimised, rather they are active and intuitive sources of support and courage. This type of woman, while seeming perhaps incompatible with chivalry in so far as it is related to the previous example of women's roles, are not left out of chivalry, in fact, they are commended and described as a necessary component of a successful knight:

> And they [knights] are so fortunate that their ladies themselves, from the great honor and superb qualities that reside in them, do not want to let them tarry nor delay in any way the winning of that honor to be achieved by deeds of arms, and advise them on this and then command them to set out and put all their efforts into winning renown and great honor where it is to be sought by valiant men; these ladies urge them on to reach beyond any of their earlier aspirations. […] And they [knights] should be praised and honored, and so also should the noble ladies who have inspired them […] and it is thanks to such ladies that men become good knights and men-at-arms. (*BOC*, 26)

'Ladies' (in this instance meaning women of aristocratic birth) were expected to act as a driving force behind their knight's actions, pushing them towards advancement rather than allowing them to remain at home. Charny is careful to state that even if a knight wishes to remain with his lady and abstain from combat, it is the lady's obligation to force him to resume his duty to himself and to her and engage in battle. Much as the reputation of a wife or sweetheart in WWI was bound to whether her partner had gone to war or not; a knight and lady were likewise bound together:



> That means that by your manners, your behavior, and your personal bearing you should so present yourself that your renown may be so good, so noble, and so honorable that you and your great deeds are held in high esteem in your quarters and on the field, especially in feats of arms in peace and in feats of arms in war where great honor wins recognition. Thus your ladies will and should be more greatly honored when they have made a good knight or man-at-arms of you. And when one could say that a good knight or a good man-at-arms loves a certain lady, where it might be possible for this to be known, greater honor would indeed come to the lady who might have such a love. (*BOC*, 65)

It is of pivotal importance to remember that chivalry was a system that relied on the dichotomy of male and female interaction. As it was conceived as a civilising force, the role of women was

in many instances to represent the more generous and kind aspects of human nature that were lacking or in short supply in their male counterparts. These responsibilities, though without martial requirements, formed a sort of feminised version of chivalric conduct, one that required certain behaviours and actions from women in order for men to serve chivalry faithfully, illustrating once again the complex system of opposites and balances that composed the warrior ethic. Female figures gave men purpose, whether they were the aim of a quest, to be defended, to be loved, or even as an evil temptress to be destroyed. Chivalry, at least in its literary form, would have scarcely existed without the presence of women, just as in literature of the First World War, women were not always passive victims of greater events around them but actively encouraging or seeking out men to become engaged in combat.

> All women can do in war-time they do daily and cheerfully, as their men-folk are doing it at the Front; and now, with the mops and pails laid aside, they sprawl gracefully at ease. There is no intention on their part to consider peace terms until a decisive victory has been gained in the field […] until the Kaiser is put to the right-about. (*EGW*, 8)

Jane Potter's *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print* offers numerous examples of women and girls being encouraged and depicted as having just as powerful sentiments towards the necessity of military action and in some cases, their personal bravery or vocal determination that Britain's cause be fought for.[267] Publications such as *The Girl's Realm*, *The Girl's Own Paper* and *The Lady's Realm* provide further evidence of the actions and behavior women were meant to emulate.[268] Women were to be eager to help sew clothes for fighting men, steadfast on the home front, as well as persuasive or assertive enough to shame men into enlisting.[269] While duty and responsibility as depicted in 'How Can War Ever Be Right?' is aimed largely at altering the opinion of a male audience, a female presence is by no means neglected. Murray would no doubt

[267] See: Potter, *Boys in Khaki*, pp. 57-91.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid, pp. 29-33.

have objected to pacifism in women as well as men, but the pressing need was for bodies in the ranks, and if persuasive, these men would leave the Home Front and become the recipients of a different type of propaganda. Among the aims of the WPB was the development of a genre of propaganda that generated an expectation of homogeneity that would ultimately produce a single-minded crowd conforming to a pro-war mentality.[270] 'Remember that on the shoulders of every man and woman at home there rested a certain weight of responsibility […] [to] make sacrifices to help those men who were making so many sacrifices for us' was the sentiment echoed across Britain.[271] The 'business as usual' mentality prevented disillusionment of values and social constructs, important cultural components to men's motivation to fight. A new moral order quickly came into being as Britain unified behind the necessity of going to war. Behaving appropriately now meant: 'maintaining normality, helping the needy, and banding together in community relief and solidarity efforts. Civilians were expected to demonstrate stoicism, selflessness, and endurance, and to go without luxuries, comforts, and frivolity'.[272]

Many men fought to preserve the British way of life (as they perceived it) and as such it became the obligation of civilians to do everything possible to maintain it, by 'working harder and complaining less'.[273] The war ushered in rapid changes including mobilisation of the female workforce, labour laws, and social welfare, but would also re-affirm female domesticity as a necessary component of the war effort. Emphasis was placed both on the stabilising influence of pre-war civilian culture on soldiers returning on leave, as well as women's pivotal role in encouraging men to enlist. However, as Acton explains, 'representations of male and female roles here clearly returns us to and reinforced gender binaries that had been challenged by the

[270] Norman Steinhart, 'Group Psychology, Sacrifice, and War', *Peace Review*, 17.1 (2005), 9-16, at p. 9.
[271] 'War Aims: Mass Meeting of Farmers at Barnstaple', *North Devon Herald*, p. 7.
[272] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, pp. 77-78.
[273] Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda', p. 334.

suffrage movement. The parameters of sacrifice are clearly delineated: the woman's sacrifice take place in the home and the man's in the action of combat.'[274] Women's influence was considered so pivotal that in an interview on 2 December with General Campbell, the Head of the Recruiting Department at the War Office, the Archbishop of Canterbury voiced concerns about the interference of women in the volunteering process who were holding back potential recruits. His belief was that women had the potential to keep men from enlisting and as such a plan needed to be devised to help utilise the influence of women to positively impact recruitment.[275] As Catriona Pennell and Jay Winter discuss:

> The appropriate moral behaviour of women was a key issue in 1914 because they had to ensure that the "home" the men were fighting — and dying — for was maintained.[276] The sacrifice the men were making in battle had to be respected via the appropriate behaviour for their women. Women were expected to behave with deference, sobriety, and devotion whilst their men were away. As Violet Clutton recorded in her diary on 3 November women and girls could "serve their country best by leading quiet lives, this setting an example of self-restraint and uprightness at home." [277]

Barrie's collection of plays, *Echoes of the War* (*EW*), demonstrates the importance of the roles of those on the Home Front by drawing attention to specific, potentially marginalised experiences. He describes no battle scenes or graphic encounters on the Front, war is an entity on the periphery of civilian experience crossing into the domestic world only as it is imagined or the occasional encounter with or news from a soldier. The plays are constructed to reflect a civilian experience of war, that while not necessarily unique, was not appealed to by mass propaganda. Barrie's work is aimed largely at the women and men too old to go to war, rather than addressing the wife or lover waiting patiently at home, or the young brother or classmate held back from war only by age or lack of courage. He speaks to unconventional or rather, less than perfect

[274] Acton, *Grief in Wartime*, p. 20.
[275] *Lambeth Palace: Davidson Papers: Recruiting Campaigns*: Volume 341 [Great War], ff. 257, 2 December 1914.
[276] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 80.
[277] DRO: Violet Clutton: 6258M/Box 1, Vol II, 3 November 1914.

individuals and households in an effort to demonstrate how they are still important participants in Britain's war machine.

In *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* (*OLM*), the audience observes a group of women conversing over tea in the London home of a charwomen named Mrs. Dowey. The group begrudgingly consents that Mrs. Dowey's son, a member of the Black Watch, is in the greatest regiment in the world and as such she is slightly better in their estimation, despite being a charwoman and of extremely limited means.

They dwell more on the subject of women 'to be pitied' (those who have no sons, brothers, or men in their lives at the Front) than they do on pacifists, a group that was considerably more recognised as contrary to Britain's domestic morale and therefore undesirable category of citizens. Shortly after, Mrs. Dowey receives news that her son has returned home and waits just outside the door. Mrs. Dowey, in fact, has no son. After being the subject of ridicule at the outbreak of the war for having neither sons nor family fighting, she moves to a different part of London. There she creates an elaborate story based on a news article about a soldier in the Black Watch. She meekly goes outside to meet her 'son' (whom she has named 'Kenneth'). Kenneth greets her with anger and insults at her audacity to use his name (and that of his proud mother and father) for what he imagines are nefarious purposes. He begrudgingly stays and much to Mrs. Dowey's joy Kenneth is very similar to how she had imagined him. The soldier softens when he learns the reason for Mrs. Dowey's deception and sympathising, divulges his own secret: he has never known his mother or father and has no extended family; he is very much alone. The lonely woman, in pouring affection over Kenneth's every move and inviting him into her modest home has offered more than he had expected to find on leave in London:

> Kenneth: 'I've never been here before. If you knew'— a shadow coming over him — 'what it is to be in such a place without a friend. I was crazy with glee, when I got my leave, at the thought of seeing London at last, but after wandering its streets for four hours, I would almost have been glad to be back in the

trenches.'

'If you knew,' he has said, but indeed the old lady knows.

Mrs. Dowey: 'That's my quandorum too, Kenneth.'
He nods sympathetically.

Kenneth: 'I'm sorry for you, you poor old body,' shouldering his kit. 'But I see no way out for either of us.' (*OLM*, 37-38)

Both Kenneth and Mrs. Dowey, despite belonging to specific social groups, find themselves outsiders because they do not fulfill the necessary criteria to understand and contribute meaningfully to the environment of the collective. Throughout the rest of the play Mrs. Dowey endures Kenneth's jibes and belittlement, actions which increasingly appear to come from a place of sadness and internal resentment rather than an actual dislike of Mrs. Dowey. The two grow closer as Kenneth allows Mrs. Dowey to act as his mother on 'probation' ultimately mutually enjoying the comfort of a mother-son relationship. On Kenneth's final day of leave he decides that Mrs. Dowey will from that day forward be in all ways his mother, going as far to have her listed as his next of kin and receive an allowance from the Army. However, Kenneth does not return home as he is killed in battle shortly thereafter. The play ends with Mrs. Dowey dressed in mourning lovingly looking at Kenneth's medals, letters, and a few of his personal effects, now a proud member of those women who have lost someone to war.

How does this episode relate to chivalry? We must remember the feminine brand of chivalry envisions women as the bastions of maternal affection, domesticity, and spousal support. Depending on her particular position in life she should encourage her partner to engage in honourable combat, behave in a manner that reflects well on both parties, and see to the management of the household which includes the emotional and physical well-being of its members. In the context of WWI, these characteristics and actions are considered crucial to the successful outcome of the war in that they maintain morale at home and led men to enlist.

Though Mrs. Dowey's actions begin as a deception, their significance to the war effort can be seen as a meaningful contribution to the morale and well-being of a soldier and establishes her connection to the Front. As Carol Acton demonstrates, 'Women were both presented with and asked to participate in this sacrificial discourse on a secular and Christian level: to advertise and glamorise their connection with a man at the front by wearing a heart shaped coat pin entitled "The Badge of Sacrifice"'.[278] Mrs. Dowey comes to embody a combination of medieval and modern idealisations of feminine war-time roles. She acts as the keeper of domesticity and maternal affection as well as the perpetuator of pre-war customs and after losing Kenneth becomes a figure of mourning, completing the popularised image of women's sacrifice in war. Her initially self-serving lies bring a suffering soldier to her and she is thus able to provide comfort to a man alienated from others at the Front by his own involuntarily isolated position. What Barrie attempts to demonstrate is the individuated power to contribute to the war effort and what the fulfilment of feminine duty can signify. He addresses a population at home isolated from the collective mentality of the family at war. The alienation experienced by Kenneth was one caused less by the dramatic transition from the environment of the Front and home, but more by the social conditions and expectations they represented. As Eric Leed suggests, soldiers often desired to retain as much of their connection to civilian culture as possible, so time on leave often represented a welcomed opportunity to reengage with pre-war culture.[279] Kenneth, however, has little of this connection but Mrs. Dowey, by enduring Kenneth's initial insults, sacrifices any sense of personal honour in order to help Kenneth find a connection with home. This longsuffering behaviour, though occurring under fundamentally different circumstances is similarly demonstrated by the faithful and enduring character Enide in Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec*

[278] Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 22.
[279] Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda', p. 332.

and Enide (1170) and Tennyson's modern adaptation of the Medieval Romance in *Idylls of the King* (1859).[280] Enide endures countless insults from her husband though her actions are only meant as a demonstration of her loyalty as well as for his benefit. Her personal debasement is ultimately rewarded when Erec realises the motivations behind her actions and once again accepts her love and returns to his duties as a knight. Both women offer sacrifices of personal respect and honour for the love of another, demonstrating the necessity of sacrifice on an individual level as well as its significance to promoting martial action. Claire Tylee contends that, 'Propaganda had constructed not only women's conception of war, but women's conception of themselves in relation to it.'[281]

Bellicose and jingoistic propaganda did not appeal to all audiences, so stressing a form of national identity that linked the support of the war with the preservation of home and community provided a powerful alternative link for some soldiers. Focusing loyalty on something that was more intimately understood, such as preserving a way of life or members of one's village, acted as a locus of devotion. Of like importance, was a soldier's ability to identify a future for himself. The preservation of home was intimately connected with this mindset and as such those at home were encouraged to maintain pre-war traditions, habits, and characteristics so that soldiers could easily identify that which they were fighting for. As Pennell asserts, 'The morality of the home front had to be exemplary in order to make the soldiers' sacrifice abroad worthwhile.'[282] Murray also employs fear as a method of motivating individuals to unify, he demonstrates that while a lack of unity may not always affect an individual at home, its consequences on the

[280] Chrétien de Troyes, *Eric and Enide*, trans. by Dorthy Gilbert (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).
[281] Claire M. Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914-64* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 64.
[282] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 83.

morale and outlook of soldiers could be tremendous. He offers examples of such consequences in his pamphlet 'The Turmoil of War' (*TOW*), which stresses the need for unity, sacrifice, and duty.[283] In attempting to both produce a feeling of guilt and awareness in his audience, Murray 'recounts' a letter written by a soldier upon returning home, condemning the fractured, pessimistic attitude of individuals in Britain that now denounce the motivation and rhetoric surrounding men's enlistment:

> You speak lightly [he says] you assume that we shall speak; lightly of things […] which to us are solemn or terrible. You seem ashamed, as if they were a kind of weakness, of the ideas which sent us to France, and for which thousands of sons and lovers have died. You calculate the profits to be derived from War after the War, as though the unspeakable agonies of the Somme were an item in a commercial proposition. You make us feel that the country to which we have returned is not the country for which we went out to fight […] We used to blaspheme and laugh and say, "Oh, it's only the newspapers. People at home can't really be like that." But after some months in England I have come to the conclusion that your papers don't caricature you so mercilessly as we supposed. No, the fact is you and we have drifted apart. We have slaved for Rachel, but it looks as if we had got to live with Leah. (*TOW*, 244)

Knights in literature went into combat for the honour of a king or woman, soldiers found their internal motivation from idealised versions of that which they fought to defend. When these idealisations failed to meet reality, the fervour that sent them to battle faded, leaving derision in its place. It becomes the sacred duty of those at home to behave in a manner that represents the ideals which men fought for. Success or righteousness of men engaging in war thus becomes tied to the ethics, morality, and actions of the Home Front. Similarly, Charny expounds at length over a knight's worthiness being attached to the lord or cause he choses to engage in battle on behalf of. Should he stand under the banner of an individual acting against the tenets of chivalry he would share in his dishonour. Civilians' failure to maintain the same fervour and support of the war has a heavy impact on Murray's soldier, demonstrating how important maintaining 'business as usual' is to the mental health of combatants. With many individuals having enlisted

[283] Gilbert Murray, 'The Turmoil of War', in *Faith, War, and Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 235-55.

in order to protect Britain, its culture, beliefs, and way of life, the absence of this version of Britain means the removal of motivation. The wellbeing of the individual, whether civilian or soldier is thus tied with the survival of Britain, a point Murray stresses: 'We have realised our unity. We are one. I think most of us feel that our lives are not our own; they belong to England.'[284] This lesson is echoed in the final play in Barrie's collection, *A Well-Remembered Voice*, discussed later in this chapter.

Barrie's next play, *The New Word* (*NW*), presents the audience with a look into what appears to be the home of a dysfunctional family.[285] In a drawing room, Mr. Torrance, father of son Roger and daughter Emma, sits reading the evening post with his wife. Mr. Torrance is of a somewhat severe nature while Mrs. Torrance appears to be a bit vapid and naive, unable to distinguish between sarcasm, jokes, and regular conversation. It becomes evident that Roger and Mr. Torrance do not see eye to eye as Mrs. Torrance implores her husband to speak kindly to their son, something he seems loath to do. However, not immune to his wife's pleas and somewhat aware of his own role in the strained relationship, he acquiesces. Roger emerges dressed in an officer's uniform, his sister rushes to the piano and plays 'See the Conquering Hero Comes' which instigates hostilities. Mrs. Torrance attempts to diffuse the situation by creating well-meaning talk of Roger wearing his sword at the Front and his being careful not to look over the top of the trenches. Her innocently ignorant and perhaps slightly foolish assumptions soften the mood of husband and son as they attempt to explain to her the reality of life at the Front. The hour grows late and both mother and daughter realise they must say goodbye to Roger. He will be leaving early the next morning and they will not see him again until he receives leave. Before she retires, Mrs. Torrance shares a moment with Roger, allowing the audience for the first time

[284] Murray, 'The Evil and the Good of the War,' p. 88.
[285] J. M. Barrie, 'A New Word', in *Echoes of the War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918), pp. 97-126.

to see that she possess more substance than a simple bumbling, though dedicated, housewife:

> Mrs. Torrance: '[…] Do you remember, Rogie, that I hoped they would reject you on account of your eyes?'
>
> Roger: 'I suppose you couldn't help it.'
>
> Mrs. Torrance: beaming on her husband, 'Did you believe I really meant it, John?'
>
> Mr. Torrance: curious, 'Did you, Roger?'
>
> Roger: 'Of course. Didn't you, father?'
>
> Mr. Torrance: 'No! I knew the old lady better.'
>
> He takes her hand.
>
> Mrs. Torrance: sweetly, 'I shouldn't have liked it, Rogie dear. I'll tell you something. You know your brother Harry died when he was seven. To you, I suppose, it is as if he had never been. You were barely five.'
>
> Roger: 'I don't remember him, mater.'
>
> Mrs. Torrance: 'No — no. But I do, Rogie. He would be twenty-one now; but though you and Emma grew up I have always gone on seeing him as just seven. Always till the war broke out. And now I see him a man of twenty-one, dressed in khaki, fighting for his country, same as you. I wouldn't have had one of you stay at home, though I had had a dozen. That is, if it is the noble war they all say it is […]'
>
> (*NW*, 76)

Mrs. Torrance leaves the two men in a state of surprise. Her sudden clarity and resoluteness forces Roger and Mr. Torrance to reconsider her request for them to speak amiably and out of love for her they begin the painful task of small talk. They come to the bewildering conclusion that the reason for their acrimonious relationship is that they are in many ways very much alike. With this realisation the dialogue between father and son suddenly lightens and they are able to divulge their affection for one another under thinly veiled sarcasm and a mask of social propriety. Mr. Torrance imparts fatherly wisdom and advice about war which Roger eagerly takes in. They discuss Roger's closeness with his mother and the many secrets which Mr. Torrance has not been privy to, a fact that injures him. They at last come to agree that they must demonstrate their amicability to Mrs. Torrance. What is meant to be an act turns out to be a true display of affection and mutual respect. Roger retires leaving his father with a smile on his face

for by carrying on their little play father and son now have their own secret, something Mr. Torrance takes pride in.

The chivalry of women, though lacking in martial requirements, necessitated women to assume a subtler means of control over the realm of the household and the inhabitants of it. This meant being able to coerce or influence men to take certain actions or adopt particular behaviours while maintaining a genteel and gracious aura. Mrs. Torrance's character is initially perceived as dimwitted, but this proves to be her method of concealing her shrewdness. She appears at first to follow John Price's characterisation of Victorian women as timid, unassuming, unable to be decisive, and reliant on the direction of men.[286] However, she also acts as the ethical compass of the family and is thus able to be instructive (though incapable of commanding) and the keeper of moral order, roles of definite value yet perceived as subordinate to those of men.[287] This ability to govern the men in her life without assuming an obvious position of authority or belittling the masculine characters around her, demonstrates her adeptness at fulfilling her roles as the keeper of the home and figurehead of feminine domesticity. As Bontrager asserts, 'The English gentleman is what he is, to a great extent because she has ruled over his home, his boyhood and his adolescence.'[288] Thus Mrs. Torrance is very much responsible for the men in her home developing the character necessary to fulfill their duties, in this case, enlistment.

[286] Price, *Evveryday Heroism*, p. 174.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Wordsworth, "The English Church', p. 165.

Mrs. Torrance's patriotism and awareness of the relationships between members of her family facilitates her navigation of her domestic domain without the appearance of meddlesome behaviour. Her mediation of father and son's interactions unites the family as a unit, establishing an important dialogue. This type relationship something would likely develop into a critical outlet for many such young men that went to the Front who felt that the grimmer or more graphic details of war could not be divulged to the female members of their family. Mrs. Torrance has helped to establish an essential support network for her son and in doing so creates an avenue through which Mr. Torrance can relay his personal knowledge of war and life. Women provided a 'moral force' that worked together with male soldiers' 'physical force' in the construction of wartime nationalism.[289] Though Mrs. Torrance's character in some ways seems to act on the periphery of the play's main events, she is crucial to its direction, influencing it with her subtle words and actions. Her character demonstrates the ability of women to indirectly support the war effort. Her willingness to offer up her only son with such passionate resolve illustrates again the necessity of sacrifice. Benson echoes this belief in *Escape and other Essays*:

> A wise and unselfish woman wrote to me the other day in words which will long live in my mind; she had sent out one whom she dearly loved to the front, and she was fighting her fears as gallantly as she could. "Whatever happens we must not give way to dread," she wrote. "It does not do to dread anything for our own treasures."[290]

Women had a duty to willingly sacrifice the men in their lives and to do so bravely. Mrs. Torrance's ability to direct the interactions of the members of her household is a fulfillment of her feminine-chivalric and patriotic duty. She has not only produced a son who will fight but has created a situation through which he is able 'to learn and become a more emotionally mature

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[289] Bontrager, 'Imagined Crusade', p. 778; Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 189. Also see: Angela Woolacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munitions Workers in the Great War* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994).
[290] A. C. Benson, *Escape,* p. xx.

soldier and thus a more valuable contribution. She demonstrates her stalwartness by offering up her already deceased son, willing to place him in a life-threatening scenario for the benefit of her country. The change in his imagined appearance — from child to man — occurs only with the coming of war. This subtlety is reminiscent of the medieval notion that engagement in combat was a pivotal stepping stone in the process of male maturation, and indicates that the significance of participating in war to the figuration of men was still one heavily influenced by willingness to fight. While boys were no longer trained for combat in the same manner as squires, they were, as demonstrated in previous chapters, introduced to the rhetoric of war early on in school, encouraged to view stepping on to the pitch as stepping on to a battlefield. Further, engaging in such activities not only provided them with a character-building experience but ones that could be translated and suitably effective in a combat scenario.

The final play in the series, *A Well-Remembered Voice* (*WRV*), is arguably the most touching and evocative.[291] It warns of the consequences of failing to continue on with 'business as usual' and the effects of mourning overmuch. It also draws the audience's attention towards themes of honourable sacrifice, the insignificance of death, but also the glory of it. Similar to *The New Word*, the play is set inside the home of a family where father and son are estranged. Yet the dominance of the mother figure, Mrs. Don, is clear. She is the embodiment of the ideal woman: gracious, beautiful, sympathetic, 'whose magnetic force and charm are such that we wish to sit at her feet at once. She is intellectual, but with a disarming smile, religious, but so charitable, masterful, and yet loved of all' (*WRV*, 129). Though she is not aggressive, her qualities overwhelm that of her husband who is described as having many 'deficiencies', which she has spent many years trying to 'cover' (*WRV*, 129-30). The play opens with the family

[291] J. M. Barrie, 'A Well-Remembered Voice', in *Echoes of the War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918), pp. 127-68.

engaged in a séance, endeavouring to contact Dick, their son who had been killed in battle five months prior. Mr. Don, however, is a skeptic and his poor relationship with his son results in him being asked to leave the séance.

After a few moments of reminiscing over some of Dick's fishing rods, Mrs. Don retires and leaves her husband to his thoughts. A voice and figure suddenly emerge in the studio. He turns to see the ghost of his son before him, as gay and perhaps a bit taller than he had been in life. While elated to see his son, Mr. Don immediately questions why Dick has appeared to him rather than his mother whom he was so much closer with. Dick explains that he can only appear to one person at a time but more importantly, 'I didn't know it till lately, father; but heaps of things that I didn't know once are clear to me now. I didn't know that you were the one who would miss me most; but I know now' (*WRV*, 140-41). Death offers Dick new clarity and enables him to gain a clear perspective on the concealed emotions between interactions with his family members. He now enjoys the benefits of dying in battle, the most meritorious of sacrifices. Having attained a measure of transcendence, he is able to address his father with authority, rather than the standoffish unsureness of a boy. The representation of the dead soldier in an elevated state emerges frequently in soldier poetry and will be addressed in Chapter Four. It is also an important theme in Medieval Romance, particularly works related to the Crusades where battlefield death was believed to be rewarded with the redemption of the human soul and the promise of paradise. Dick's descriptions of the afterlife as being a place where he can be among his friends and make jokes hints at this theme and gives the audience the impression that death is not really such a terrible thing.

Surprised and a bit uncomfortable over his son's new insight, Mr. Don vainly attempts to demonstrate how he has made efforts to make sure life has carried on in his son's absence: 'Me

miss you most? Dick, I try to paint just as before. I go to the club. Dick, I have been to a dinner-party. I said I wouldn't give in' (*WRV*, 141). Dick is not fooled, his father's disheveled appearance and the occasional lapses into sorrowful expressions are obvious. Throughout the conversation Dick repeatedly reminds Mr. Don to keep a cheerful brave face or else he shall leave. Though his death was most certainly a violent one, Dick is candid and describes it as a seemingly insignificant event:

> My day [day he died]? I don't remember being hit, you know. I don't remember anything till the quietness came. When you have been killed it suddenly becomes very quiet; quieter even than you have ever known it at home. Sunday used to be a pretty quiet day at my tutor's […] but it is quieter than that. I am not boring you, am I? […] When I came to, the veil was so thin that I couldn't see it at all; and my first thought was, Which side of it have I come out on? The living ones lying on the ground were asking that about themselves, too. There we were, all sitting up and asking whether we were alive or dead; and some were one, and some were the other. Sort of fluke, you know.
>
> (*WRV*, 147-48)

Yet while Dick has appeared because of his new understanding of his father's sentiments, the departed soldier also comes with an important message for the living. When discussing how Dick's sweetheart is often depressed he replies,

> Dick: 'It's pretty hard lines on me, you know.'
>
> Mr. Don: 'How is that?'
>
> Dick: 'If you are sad, I have to be sad. That's how we have got to work it off. You can't think how we want to be bright.'
>
> (*WRV*, 153)

Dick has returned to explain that in order for him to be happy in the afterlife, those who knew him must not mourn his passing, but instead carry on with life and find new ways to be happy. His death will only be a terrible thing if it ruins the lives of the living; the best thing his family can do is live full and cheerful lives. Mrs. Don enters the room to find Mr. Don laughing which he tries to explain as something Dick would want, though she is unconvinced and finds it inappropriate. Dick's sweetheart also enters the room, divulging how she feels heartless for being happy for brief moments; though she cannot hear him, Dick replies, 'Not a bit; it's what I

should like' (*WRV*, 163). The time for Dick to leave draws near and he tells his father that he will slip away without warning so as to avoid an uncomfortable goodbye, but before doings so makes a promise:

> Mr. Don: 'What I am afraid of is that you won't come back.'
>
> Dick: 'I will — honest Injun — if you keep bright.'
>
> Mr. Don: 'But, if I do that, Dick, you might think I wasn't missing you so much.'
>
> Dick: 'We know better than that. You see, if you're bright, I'll get a good mark for it.'
>
> (*WRV*, 164)

Fittingly coming last in the collection, *A Well-Remembered Voice*, illuminates the silent suffering of a father. Although Mrs. Don is rarely seen, the strength of her bond with her son is the impetus of Dick's appearance to the suffering Mr. Don, rendering them unable to continue on with 'business as usual'. By maintaining her strength of character despite her loss, something Mr. Don is only able to do in a superficial form, Mrs. Don contributes to the war effort. As Jessica Meyer notes, 'While cultural norms of the time valourised the soldier and his skills as the epitome of masculinity, […] many of the British civilians who eventually served had identities that focussed on other masculine norms, those of the dutiful son and provident husband, norms that, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, were as important to discourses of masculinity.'[292] The play reminds male readers of their roles in wartime, the value of sacrifice and the potential cost of failing to maintain traditionally masculine roles at home. Rather than offering glamourising depictions of battlefield death, Barrie gives purpose to those left behind. By describing the will of the dead as to carry on with business as usual, Barrie conflates mourning with duty. This

[292] Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 15; Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of Battle 1850-1900* (London: Reaktion, 2000), pp. 43-45; Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 1; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2007), p.157; Joanna Bourke: *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), pp. 22-23.

sentiment is echoed in the 1914 issue of *The Family Journal* in which a family grieves a son killed in action, conflating grief with sacrifice: 'but they were very glad they had given their best – yes, the very blood of their hearts – for the cause of Right.'[293] Continuing on with life thus not only follows propagandist aims directed at keeping Britain a functioning war machine, but makes doing just that a meaningful form of mourning and honouring of the dead. The overarching message of Barrie's plays is that people on the Home Front needed to carry on with 'business as usual', since doing so not only helped the war effort but positively affected those who had sacrificed their lives in the conflict.

Wells's extremely popular *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (*BST*) (1916) also emphasises the significance of the female encouragement of men. While the novel was not written explicitly for propaganda purposes, Masterman translated the novel and had it smuggled into Germany.[294] Wells' novels are famous for their criticism of technology and modernity; in keeping with this, *BTS* is sensitive both scientific developments as well as pre-war idealism. I agree with Frayn's rebuttal of Niall Ferguson's argument that *BST* is not a '"disillusioned" novel per se'.[295] It is, however, very conscious of shifting gender dynamics, cultural norms and the reception of the consequences of war, ultimately coming to the conclusion that the war must end. Additionally, Wells also explores the influence of chivalry in the contemporary environment, its interpretations, and how this impacts the duties of both men and women in wartime.

The novel begins in the months before the outbreak of World War One, drawing parallels between American and British perceptions and customs, and those of the English country gentleman. While the novel did not have the same reception in America as it did in the UK,

[293] Quoted in: Acton, *Grief in Wartime*, p. 22.
[294] Frayn, *Disenchantment*, p. 49.
[295] Ibid.; Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 236.

Wells's aim to draw attention to, and ultimately condemn, American neutrality is plain. The majority of the novel is concerned with the day to day events of Matching's Easy and the interpersonal relationships between individuals of the household. The possibility of war is debated though Britling is unconvinced it will arrive, believing as his German guest, Herr Heinrich, does, that the Germans are too reasonable a people to start a war. Though the patriarch of Matching's Easy, his German sympathies and rational mind contribute to his being the last member of the household to join the war effort. Mr. Direck, Britling's American guest, falls in love with Britling's secretary's sister Cissie, whose constant rebuffs of Direck's advances force him to reassess himself in order to divine what insurmountable barrier stands between himself and marrying Cissie. What ultimately emerges is that Cissie cannot love a man who will not go to war, a point that she finally makes abundantly clear,

> This is the rightest war in history, she said. If I was an American I should be sorry to be one now and to have to stand out of it. I wish I was a man now so that I could do something for all the decency and civilisation the Germans have outraged. I can't understand how any man can be content to keep out of this, and watch Belgium being destroyed. It is like looking on at a murder. It is like watching a dog killing a kitten (*BST*, 210)

Though Direck informs Cissie that as a citizen of neutral American there is no way for him to enlist, she refuses to accept him as a civilian. Her stubbornness and Direck's devotion ultimately prompt him to enlist in the Canadian Army. Only at this point does Cissie realise her true feelings for him and begin to regret her behaviour.

Frayn correctly asserts that the 'novel could not have been such a conspicuous popular success in wartime without asserting the value of duty'.[296] Though the courtship between Direck and Cissie seems to be a trivial story in the background of more important events such as Herr Heinrich's unwilling return to Germany, Britling's affair with Lady Homartyn, and Britling's son leaving for the Front, it actually drives home one of Wells's critical messages about the

[296] Frayn, *Disenchantment*, p. 49.

importance of women to the war effort. Cissie becomes the very embodiment of women's duty to act as men's motivators as Direck ultimately does for men when he enlists. Much like Enide in the aforementioned *Eric and Enide*. Cissie refuses to allow a man to shirk his martial duties out of love for her. Her insistence that Direck join the war effort despite his county's neutrality seems almost absurd at points but his enlistment can be interpreted as a demonstration of his devotion and love, as well as his willingness to uphold Cissie's honour at the risk of his own life. Their relationship and actions represents the chivalric ideal of mutual honour between a man and a woman as well as the duties they both have to one another in the maintenance of it.

The results of Cissie's influence produce an obvious reaction in Direck, but the almost invisible character of Mrs. Britling has an even stronger effect. Though we discover that Lady Homartyn is not the first woman Britling has had an affair with, the changing atmosphere in Britain slowly forces Britling to reevaluate his priorities and the effect his liaisons will have on himself, his family and his writing. Lady Homartyn is an attractive deviation from his wholly predictable life with his wife. However, Lady Homartyn's child-like neediness, tantrums and propensity toward manipulative behaviour causes Britling to rediscover the virtues of his wife and regret his infidelity. Wells himself was no stranger to illicit relationships, engaging in several extra-marital affairs and sexual dalliances.[297] While Wells was unapologetic about his sexual vivacity, calling himself the 'Don Juan among the intelligentsia' and did not see it as morally depraved like many of his contemporaries, Britling is remorseful and also recognises that his affair has caused him to neglect his work. He becomes almost mad with the need to write powerful essays promoting the war effort, feeling that he has joined the national mentality too

[297] See: Jane Lewis, 'Intimate Relations between Men and Women: The Case of H. G. Wells and Amber Pember Reeves', 37 (1994) *History Workshop*, 76-98; Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*, vol. 2, p. 390.

late and thus injured Britain. Both Cissie and Mrs. Britling, though near polar opposites in demeanor, have profound effects on the men around them and are the driving forces behind their contribution to the war.

While Barrie's women tend towards a more traditional passive role, Cissie is allowed to be a considerably more vocal and opinionated woman, her character undoubtedly influenced by Wells's own interactions with feminist activists such as Rebecca West.[298] Early in the novel in conversation with Direck, Britling states: 'I don't mind that [women expressing strong opinions], […] Women over here go into politics and into public-houses — I don't see why they shouldn't. If such things are good enough for men they are good enough for women; we haven't your sort of chivalry' (*BST*, 46). Britling is alarmed by Direck's 'Teutonic romanticism' in regards to women's role in society, and views it as an 'American conception of gallantry more than any other people's', drawing attention to pre-war romanticism in Britain and creating a distinction between Britain's brand of jingoistic, chivalric rhetoric and the more archaic and perhaps sexist American interpretation of it (*BST*, 159, 142). Wells appears to be somewhat conflicted over the role of medievalism in Western culture and its contribution to the war. He at once recognises that the civilising characteristics of it are very much a part of British culture and that the degradation of this system is lamentable ('The old world knew that [value of traditions] better than we do.') (*BST*, 189). His comment, 'we haven't *your* sort of chivalry' seems to imply his recognition of chivalry as an evolving system that still very much influences social interaction in Britain. More importantly, Wells is distinguishing the British version of chivalry as the only correct one; the American version is too archaic and demeaning, while the German manipulation of it 'is all that

[298] Patrick Parrinder, 'Wells, Herbert George (1866-1964), Novelist and Social Commentator' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36831>.

is bad in mediævalism allied to all that is bad in modernity' (*BST*, 170). Of further importance is that Britling does not denounce chivalry when discussing women's places nor does he attempt to position them within the liminal gender role they occupy in some Medieval Romance and the literature of medievalism. Instead he appears to include them in his own type of chivalry; they have the mental ability to take on traditionally masculine roles and must serve and sacrifice for the war in their own way, though this may not be in the form of battlefield death.

Women were held to their own set of standards of chivalric moral behaviour, duty, and action. Fulfilling their own sense of nationalistic, familial, and moral duty required an interpretation similar to what Charny outlined in his fourteenth-century chivalric handbook as well as the translated, transliterated, and adapted into modernised medieval romance. Their contribution to the war effort in terms of taking up the positons of men as labourers and keeping British industry moving forward is well documented. Their less obvious role in maintaining morale, Home Front stability, encouraging enlistment, and mental welfare has garnered less attention. As we have seen from these selected writings of the WPB, women were by no means ignored in the realm of literature and their significance to the success of the war is acknowledged as well as encouraged. Though functioning in a non-military capacity, their influence on the men in their lives, on ensuring the British war machine ran, on the rehabilitation of the wounded, and on maintenance of their individual households, all contributed towards the fulfillment of their duty as gentlewomen and supporters of the war effort.

The Enemy

"Tell me! Sincerely — do they hate the Germans in England? Do they hate them, veritably? Tell me. I doubt it. I doubt strongly." I laughed, rather awkwardly, as any Englishman would.[299]

Medieval Romance and chivalry existed in a world frequently characterised by the dichotomy of opposites. We have seen how pivotal the role of women was to chivalry. The presence of the feminine opposite gave meaning and purpose to the actions of knights and the modern proponents of chivalrous conduct. The company and conversation of women was essential to the formation of a polite, gentle knight, encouraging not just a love of arms but the entire enterprise of chivalric masculine behaviour, and was instrumental in motivating men to enlist and maintaining morale and order at home. Yet there was another character whose presence also contributed to the raison d'état of chivalry: the enemy. Created under the auspices of civilising a barbaric world, the ethics of chivalry only held meaning when they were pitted against the antithesis of the very faith, justice, and honour that it strove to uphold. Hurd and Ferguson both represent chivalry as a moment of civilisation in Britain's own past which had introduced manners whose influence on 'taste and sentiments' was still being felt in their own time and were linked to the refinement and progress of the present.[300] As Huizinga notes, 'the harsh realities [of medieval life] made it [chivalry] purposeful and useful to hold up in contrast to

[299] Arnold Bennett, *Over There: War Scenes on the Western Front* (New York, NY: George H. Doran Company, 1915), p. 19.
[300] Cohen, 'Manners', p. 319.

them [violations of chivalry] the ideal that they distorted'.[301] Similarly, the abuse of chivalry by members who had previously ascribed to its warrior ethics further engendered actions towards the reinforcement of chivalric principles. Betraying the values or prescribed behaviors required by chivalry was a betrayal of the oaths of honour, fealty and Christianity sworn in the ceremonial process of becoming a knight, a grievous and often unpardonable offence. More important, however, was that this betrayal was not simply considered punishable but that punishment was demanded, and as a great deal of both Medieval Romance and history demonstrates, the repercussions more often than not came in the form of violent, martial recourse. In its attack on Belgium and declaration of war Germany had broken not simple the legal compacts between nations, but had defied the ethics of defense, honour and Christianity that Britain and Germany shared through their chivalric pasts. The aggression against weaker nations was viewed as a violation of the unofficial yet understood notion of civility and chivalric behavior that protected the weak, fought for just causes and desired the well being of all. The violation of these ethics, as will be discussed, is illustrated in literature as one of the most important factors driving men to war and justifying Britain's actions.

This section demonstrates the importance of the characterisation of the German opponent in the propaganda and literature of World War One, reflecting on how transitions in the manner of description of the enemy were necessary in order to engender feelings of injustice and defensive action. In doing so, the formative role interaction with enemy opposition had in arousing patriotic and chivalrous sentiments is examined in detail. The depiction of the enemy is crucial to understanding the fictional representation of chivalry on the battlefield and the extent to which it was still deemed a necessary set of qualities in soldiers well into the war. The texts

[301] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 237.

addressed here have been selected because they depict war without romance, yet their protagonists exemplify contemporary ideas of chivalry, being willing to bravely sacrifice themselves for their beliefs and country, to adamantly protect the weak, and to abhor behaviour that runs counter to Christian morality.

By exploring propaganda of both literary and visual natures, two dominant interpretations of the German opponent emerge. The first is that of a worthy enemy, one that in several ways can be admired, whether for his intelligence, devotion, ingenuity, or the shared socio-cultural background as former European allies and bastions of academia and the arts. Representations of this nature often originate from authorial personal admiration or experience. This characterisation rejects the notion that Germany is a country gone mad, but rather that its people have been lied to, a lie that they have embraced with tremendous 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness'.[302] This enemy is one who, though he expends every effort to destroy his British adversary, is admired in the attempt and is rarely hated, though inevitably defeated. Such an enemy, as illustrated in medieval and neo-medieval romances, warrants mercy. They are the enemies defeated by Lancelot, Gawain, and the other knights of the Round Table who are spared but commanded to surrender themselves to the rulers of Camelot. He is the enemy fought bitterly against who is spared, given an honourable death, or in some cases redeemed as Edyrn is after becoming a knight of Arthur's court.[303] We find this form of enemy most frequently, though not exclusively, in literature written in the early years of the war or in reflective works that describe the innocence or surprise among British intellectual and political communities at the ferocity and grievousness of German aggression. Authorial personal experience often serves as an important influencing factor in the depictions of this nature. It demonstrates an

[302] Buchan, *Greenmantle*, pp. 48-49.
[303] Tennyson, *Idylls*, p. 120.

unwillingness to believe in the coming war or places the blame of Germany's change in character on external factors or even Britain's prolonged complacency.

The second characterisation is that of the evil and dehumanised enemy who has willfully and mindfully rejected the principles to which the civilised nations of Western Europe have unofficially promised to adhere. His deliberate actions, which flout moral, ethical and political nomenclature, are so shocking in nature that Britain has no alternative other than to view this enemy as the very embodiment of its antithesis. Characters such as Maleogrant who intentionally defy all chivalric dogma, taking pleasure in injustice and cruelty, exemplify this enemy.[304] Characterisations of this kind, while appearing from the early days of the conflict, increase in virulence and explicitness as the war progresses, ultimately becoming the dominant perception of the opposition. Frequently violating chivalric dogma (tenets requiring the defence of women, the innocent and infirm, or perceived notions of battlefield combat, treatment of prisoners, morals or religion), removes empathy, allowing audiences to disassociate themselves with normal emotions regarding the killing of humans. Literary devices such as anthropomorphism, demonisation, brutalisation, and exaggeration not only aid in the removal of the moral and ethical common ground between Britain and its German rivals, but initiates a necessary shift from the honourable enemy, one who had value in life and honour in death, to the vile enemy who can be killed without remorse and whose eradication is the only means of ensuring the continuation of British, Christian, chivalric values.

Before war was officially declared Britain was not united in its view of Germany as an enemy to be destroyed.[305] Conservative, Liberal and Radical members of the government often held widely different perspectives of Germany's actions and the need to engage them in war

[304] Tennyson, *Idylls*, p. 12.
[305] See: Pennell, *Kingdom United*, pp. 93-117; Gregory, *Last Great War*, pp. 40-69.

stemming from party politics and campaign promises.[306] Lloyd George was strongly anti-German, but while anti-war rhetoric was still circulating he tempered his views to be more pacific. Churchill was eager for an opportunity to display the might of the British Navy and Haldane was pro-war should there be even a technical breach of the Belgium Treaty.[307] Conversely, unconditional peace was desired by members such as Harcourt and Beauchamp.[308] Academic circles were divided as well. A group of prominent academics at Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen universities circulated a pamphlet which refuted the idea of war saying: 'We regard Germany as a nation leading the way in the Arts and Sciences, and we have all learnt and are learning form German scholars. War upon her in the interest of Servia and Russia will be a sin against civilisation.'[309] Yet what united all these diverse opinions was the formal declaration of war. Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury expressed at a service on 21 August, that while he regretted that war had come:

> Our conscience as a Nation State and people is, as regards this war, wholly clear. We might, I suppose, *for a time*, have stayed outside it. But it would have been at the loss of England's honour, England's chivalry to weaker peoples, England's faithfulness to plighted word. Could any of us have asked God's blessing upon that?[310]

As Andrew Frayn points out, 'the British love for the underdog to defend "little Belgium"' was used as a sentiment to help stimulate recruitment. 'The war was justified as a defensive war in favour of freedom and civilisation, honourably carrying out Britain's treaty duties in the face of Prussian militarism.'[311]

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[306] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, pp. 27, 57-58.
[307] See: Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 28
[308] Ibid; *Inside Asquith's Cabinet: From the Dairies of Charles Hobhouse*, ed. by David Edward (London: John Murray Publishers, 1977).
[309] *The Times*, 1 August 1914, p. 6.
[310] *Lambeth Palace: Davidson Papers: Sermons (1914-1917)*: Vol. 548 [Sermons], ff. 34-42, 21 August 1914.
[311] Frayn, *Disenchantment*, p. 41.

This transition to acceptance of Germany as an enemy is best depicted in Wells's novel *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (*BST*). The novel initially expresses feelings of doubt concerning whether pacifism or patriotism is the correct course of action or if indeed the Prussianism described by the press and through rumor is believable. The development of a once benign entity into the enemy occurs over the course of the entire work. In fact, title character Mr. Britling struggles to acknowledge the existence of an enemy until the final few pages of the story. As with much of the ordinary populace of Britain, Britling is 'mightily concerned about the conflict in Ireland, and almost deliberately negligent of the possibility of a war with Germany. (*BST*, 260)' He refuses to accept that a nation and people he believes to be at the height of civilisation could descend so far as to desire the barbarous condition of war. Britling holds out his boarder, Herr Heinrich, as a symbol of right and reason. However, his death causes Britling to reassess his views and recognise the Germans as vicious enemies. The shift from good to evil, especially in the case of Germany, which also shares in a rich, chivalric history with Britain, can be viewed as a denunciation of Christian morals and ethics, and as such it must be destroyed. The destruction of forces opposed to chivalry or moral ethics in order to ensure the preservation of the 'just', justifies violence and serves as one of the main means of movement in Medieval Romance as well as in its modern adaptation.

Novels such as Ian Hay's *The First Hundred Thousand* (*FHT*), a novel which portrays war as a 'glorious and amusing adventure', John Buchan's *Greenmantle* (*GM*), Arnold Bennett's *The Roll Call* (*RC*), as well as *Mr. Britling* illustrate the complex position the Germans occupied within Britain's framing of enemy forces.[312] Drawing on the initial assertion that the German's are a highly intelligent, methodical, and on the whole reasonable people, characters are

[312] Hay, *Hundred Thousand*; Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 84; Buchan, *Greenmantle*; Arnold Bennett, *The Roll Call* (New York, NY: George H. Doran Company, 1917); Wells, *Mr. Britling*.

frequently shocked to the point of dismay or disgust at Germany's jingoistic behaviour. Speaking through the voice of American co-conspirator, Mr. Blenkiron, Buchan demonstrates that great consideration is given to analysis of the German mentality and capacity for war:

> I have given some thought to the [peculiar] psychology of the great German nation. As I read them they're as cunning as cats, and if you play the feline game they will outwit you every time. Yes, Sir, they are no slouches at sleuth-work. If I were to buy a pair of false whiskers and dye my hair and dress like a Baptist parson and go into Germany on the peace racket, I guess they'd be on my trail like a knife, and I should be shot as a spy inside of a week or doing solitary in the Moabite prison. But they lack the larger vision. They can be bluffed, Sir. (*GM*, 28-29)

Buchan envisioned his work not merely as entertainment but also as didactic.[313] He espoused using 'well constructed middlebrow writing to continue to process of value implantation that was by no means limited to public schools and their aping institutions.'[314] Similarly, Hay's Captain Wagstaff asserts that 'Whatever we may think of the Bosche as a gentleman […] there is no denying his bravery as a soldier or his skill in co-ordinating an attack. It's positively uncanny […]' (*FHT*, 254). While there may be some doubt over the Germans' capacity to adhere to ethics and conduct within the purview of British polite society, their ability to operate in a martial setting is certain. This trait is initially something admired and adds to the sportsman-like quality of early encounters with German combatants. One such encounter is described by Charles Montague:

> During one of the very few months of open warfare a cavalry private of ours brought in a captive, a gorgeous specimen of the terrific Prussian Ulan of tradition. "But why didn't you put your sword through him?", an officer asked, who belonged to the school of Froissart less obviously than the private. "Well, sir," the captor replied, "the gentleman wasn't looking."[315]

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[313] Simon Gassock, 'Buchan, Sport and Masculinity', in *Reassessing John Buchan*, ed. by Kate Macdonald (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 41-52, at p. 44.
[314] J. Lowerson, 'Sport and British Middle-Class Culture: Some Issues of Representation and Identity before 1940', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 21:1 (January 2004), pp. 34-49, at p. 46.
[315] Goebel, *Medieval Memory*, p. 198; Charles E. Montague, 'Christmas 1914', in *Cenotaph: A Book of Remembrance in Poetry and Praide for November the Elevent*, ed. by Thomas Moult (London: J. Cape, 1923), p. 103; Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999), pp. 169-70.

Just as the knight errant sought out worthy rivals and admired the enemy who could match his skill in combat, so do numerous characters in literary propaganda embrace the notion of Germany as a rival. George Cannon in *RC* asserts with a note of pride that '"We're Germany's only serious rival. It's us she's up against. […] Germany," he reckoned superiorly, in "taking on England" had "bitten off more than she could chew".'[316] *GM's* tenacious Boer, Peter Pienaar, eager to set out on his mission with Hannay to infiltrate the German High Command, declares, 'I am glad we are going among Germans. They are careful people whom it is a pleasure to meet' (GM, 43). The German propensity for order and efficiency is rendered a national trait, one that is perceived as significant to the effectiveness of the German war machine but also a cause of its inability to think creatively or compassionately. Physically, there is very little variation in description: Caucasian, blond-haired, blue-eyed, tall; if a member of the military, strongly built; if female, generally beautiful. This is seemingly fit enough description for the majority of the German populace. This more generous, though at times critical if not British-aggrandising, treatment of the Germans prevails in the early chapters of many of the WPB novels. *BST*, while still adhering to notions of German efficiency and Arian features, offers a more detailed depiction of German character:

> 'But my German, if you notice, — his normal expression is one of grave solicitude. He is like a conscientious ticket-collector among his impressions. And did you notice how beautifully my pianola rolls are all numbered and catalogued? He did that. He set to work and did it as soon as he got here, just as a good cat when you bring it into the house sets to work and catches mice. […]
>
> 'And he looks like a German,' said Mr. Britling.
>
> 'He certainly does that,' said Mr. Direck.
>
> 'He has the fair type of complexion, the rather full habit of body, the temperamental disposition, […] in addition that close-cropped head […] And the way he carries himself. And the way he thinks. His meticulousness. When he arrived he was delightful, he was wearing a student's corps cap and a rucksack, he carried a violin; he seemed to have come out of a book. No one would ever dare to invent so German a German for a book.' (*BST*, 64-65)

[316] Bennett, *The Roll Call,* p. 320.

Herr Heinrich, the young scholar who comes to board in the Britling household under the tutelage of its famous patriarch, is described as the quintessential, if not stereotypical, German. He is physically, philosophically and ethically German, yet he rejects Germany's growing aggression and jingoistic behaviour. This perspective is often symptomatic of pre-war opinion of Germany, especially within more academic circles. Heinrich's role within the novel is critical not only to Britling's perception of impending war, but is instrumental to the audience's understanding of Germany's conduct. Herr Heinrich, as the educated, self-critical, and socio-politically conscious embodiment of German practicality and intelligentsia, acts as a reminder to the reader of pre-war Germany, a nation whose work in the arts, sciences, and social order has been upheld by much of Europe as a flagship of cultivated society. Britling, relying heavily on his own interpretation of political and ethical conflict, attempts to justify his disbelief in the coming war through the character of Heinrich:

> 'And you know, I don't see that war coming,' said Mr. Britling. 'I believe Rendezvous sweats in vain. I can't believe in that war. It has held off for forty years. It may hold off forever.'
>
> He nodded his head towards the German tutor, who had come into view across the lawn, talking profoundly with Mr. Britling's eldest son.
>
> 'Look at that pleasant person. There he is — Echt Deutsch — if anything ever was. Look at my son there! Do you see the two of them engaged in mortal combat? The thing's too ridiculous. The world grows sane. They may fight in the Balkans still; in many ways the Balkan States are in the very rear of civilisation; but to imagine decent countries like this or Germany going back to bloodshed! No.... When I see Rendezvous keeping it up and keeping it up, I begin to see just how poor Germany must be keeping it up. I begin to realise how sick Germany must be getting of the high road and the dust and heat and the everlasting drill and restraint.... My heart goes out to the South Germans.'
> (*BST*, 76)

The belief in this unspoken adherence to a set of Western, Christian morals and conduct and disbelief in Germany's apparent abandonment of reason features heavily in literature and its betrayal acts as the foundational argument for Britain's justification for entering the war. In one sense, it is precisely because the two nations share a rich chivalric history and thus, in Britain's view, share the same set of governing morals, that Germany's actions are so unfathomable and

unforgivable. Britling's outrage at German aggression has already been evidenced and is similarly echoed in the preface to Robert Seymour Bridges's anthology, *The Spirit of Man*:

> We had accounted our cousins [the Germans] as honest and virtuous folk; some of us have well-loved friends among them whom we have heard earnestly and bitterly deplore the evil spirit that was dominating their country: but we now see them all united in a wild enthusiasm for the great scheme of tyranny, as unscrupulous in their means as in their motives, and obedient to military regulations for cruelty, terrorism, and devastation.[317]

The notion of British ethics as superior to the German, and the belief that these qualities are shared by the German people, engendered a seemingly astonished if not injured reaction from Britain. It is because Germany has 'violated' Belgium in its effort to becoming a 'dominating' power that is so egregious.[318] As Grey stresses, Britain would 'sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world, and should not escape the most serious and grave […] consequences' if it did not defend Belgium.[319]

The death of Heinrich symbolises the death of faith in the German people and the destruction of the belief that Germany may redeem itself. As Samuel Hynes observes, *BST* is illustrative of a 'turning point in civilian lives in relation to the war'.[320] This moment further signifies an important shift in the characterisation of Germany in Britling's mind. Britling must now abandon his hopes for peace with Germany and that reason will win out; this marks the end of the 'worthy adversary' and the beginning of the 'enemy to be destroyed'. This is a critical change as it enables the novel's characters to free themselves of their morals regarding the sanctity of human life and engage in violent action against other humans and, in fact, dehumanise conflict generally: 'War is no longer human; the chemist and the metallurgist have changed all that' (*BST*, 404). Mechanisation has aided in the destruction of innocent men and has

[317] Robert Seymour Bridge, *Spirit of Man* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1916).
[318] Pennell, *A United Kingdom*, p. 34.
[319] Royal Archives, Windsor Castle: RA GV/PRIV/GVD/1914: 3 August.
[320] Hynes, *War Imagined*, p. 135.

removed any sense of forgiveness, mercy, or choice in who to kill and why; it is now blind slaughter. The realisation of this new mindset comes to Britling whilst he writes to Heinrich's parents:

> The letters reinforced the photographs in their reminder how kind and pleasant a race mankind can be. Until the wild asses of nationalism came kicking and slaying amidst them, until suspicion and jostling greed and malignity poison their minds, until the fools with the high explosives blow that elemental goodness into shrieks of hate and splashes of blood. How kindly men are — up to the very instant of their cruelties! (*BST*, 399)

He goes further, envisioning a future Germany filled with widows, cripples, elderly and deprived of men. 'No triumph now on land or sea could save Germany from becoming that', Britling declares (*BST*, 402). As Pennell points out, '[i]nstead of being a war against German civilization, it was now a war for the defence of civilization against German "barbarism". Responsibility for the war was clear and Britain could enter the war for just reasons and with clean hands.'[321] He recants his previous beliefs in German civility, succumbing to disillusionment, and begins to re-image Germany as an unchecked and unreasonable aggressor.

While the novel does not continue on much past Britling's letter to Heinrich's parents it can be assumed that while he still holds hope for the future, Britling no longer believes in the goodness of Germany. This shift is not only revealing of the character's own opinion but endeavours to change the minds of readers undergoing similar internal debates. Wells slowly brings his audience away from anti-war and pro-German sympathies and coerces them into believing in the justness of war, a replication in many ways of the historical reality. While an argument for the novel to be broadly characterised as disillusioned, and there are certainly textual elements that corroborate this, the overall message is not one of defeatism and regret but of determination. Frayn observes that while a satisfactory end to the novel is 'impossible', 'from

[321] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 35.

beginning to end the need to carry on' the need to carry on is asserted.[322] Britling's sense of bitterness and loss does not render him impotent in action but rather becomes a renewed impetus for supporting the war. Wells summarised his work thus: 'I think I have contrived in that book [*BST*] to give not only the astonishment and the sense of tragic disillusionment in a civilized mind as the cruel facts of war rose steadily to dominate everything else in life, but also the passionate desire to find some immediate reassurance amidst that whirlwind of disaster.'[323][324] As the characterisation of the Germans moves from sympathetic to hostile, it also increasingly dehumanises the aggressors. The mechanisation of war has aided in the destruction of innocent men and has removed any sense of forgiveness, mercy, or choice in who to kill and why; it is now blind slaughter. This removal of autonomy precipitates an inability to use chivalric conventions of battlefield success which heavily relied on one-on-one combat, thus alienating many individuals from the notions of honour, courage, and valiant action. The German attack on weaker nations, on the innocent, war mongering and refusal to arbitrate are all indicative of a rejection of shared socio-ethics rooted in notions of just combat and protection of the weak and innocent derived from chivalry. In doing so they become the enemy that must be destroyed at all costs, increasing the honour of the Allied nations fighting and removing all honour from the Germans' actions or combat death.

Wells's development of Britling's shifting perception offers a graduated, measured response to Germany's actions by allowing the reader to develop a bond with Heinrich that is independent of Germany at large. Contrary to this presentation, *Greenmantle* and *The Roll Call*

[322] Frayn, *Disenchantment*, p. 53.
[323] H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (since 1866)*, 2 vols (1934; London: Faber and Faber, 1984), vol. 2, p. 671.
[324] Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 35.

represent German identity as inseparable from militarism in almost all instances. Buchan's novels, particularly *Greenmantle* and *Mr. Standfast* (1919) show the relationship between intelligence and propaganda.[325] As Hew Strachan points out, 'For Buchan the pay-off for intelligence was not on the battlefield, but in men's minds – those of the enemy, of neutrals and ultimately of one's own population'.[326] The viciously efficient and determined Colonel Ulrich von Stumm at once represents all the features of a prime German soldier and all that is wrong with Germany:

> That large man was beginning to fascinate me, even though I hated him. [He] was an incarnation of all that makes Germany detested, and yet he wasn't altogether the ordinary German, and I couldn't help admiring him. I noticed he neither smoked nor drank. His grossness was apparently not in the way of fleshly appetites. Cruelty, from all I had heard of him in German South West, was his hobby; but there were other things in him, some of them good, and he had that kind of crazy patriotism which becomes a religion. […] There must be no lack of brains inside that funny pyramidal head. (*GM*, 66-67)

The decision to hate Stumm marks an important shift in the treatment and perception of the enemy. Medieval instructional texts like those written by Llull and Charny, inform readers that hatred of the enemy is in fact the correct course of action under certain conditions: 'the Order of Chivalry should not receive its enemies into its honour, nor those who are contrary to its beginnings. Love and fear are joined as one against enmity and contempt' (*BOC*, 45). An enemy whose actions fly in the face of chivalry is indeed to be hated and must be destroyed in order to 'restore charity and instruction to the world'. However, numerous authors go to great lengths to reinforce the idea that the Germans should not be despised for their actions, at least not on an individual level, and in many cases only if fighting dishonourably. As Newbolt asserts, this view also holds Christian origins: '[it] is demanded by the law of Christianity, which forbids man to hate his brother,' or as Osborn declares, it is 'based on the axiom of Christian morality that it is

[325] John Buchan, *Mr. Standfast* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919).
[326] Hew Strachan, 'John Buchan and the First World War: Fact into Fiction', in *Reassessing John Buchan*, ed. by Kate Macdonald (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 77-90, at p. 78.

our duty to hate the offence, not the offender.'[327] Newbolt, Murray, Buchan and Osborn all present evidence and implore their readers to avoid hatred. In characteristic fashion Newbolt appeals to chivalry to frame his idealised British soldier:

> The soldier was not to hate his enemies; he was bound, by the brotherhood of arms, to honour them even while he did his best to defeat them, and no less when he had defeated them. This rule has not been kept invariably — it is not easy to honour men who have been guilty of barbarous cruelty and cold-blooded murder; but towards clean fighters it has been kept so often and so conspicuously that it has become not only a rule, but a custom among white men. The British soldier seldom feels hatred or ill-humour towards his enemies in the field; he fights hard, but he does not sing Hymns of Hate — he does not even resent the singing of them in the trenches opposite. […] No, hatred does not come of fighting between honourable men and according to the rules; it comes only of aggression and insolence and frightful cruelty, and against these man must defend the weak as he would defend them against wild beasts or maniacs. War, then, will not destroy the soldier's peace, if he is a soldier of chivalry. (*BHW*, 278-79)

Hatred does not arise from chivalry but from barbarous and dishonourable action. Newbolt gives his honourable soldier a way out by affirming that the rule to hate is not 'kept invariably'. Several authors draw attention to the 'Hymn of Hate', decrying it as a sign of an ignominious soldier. The poem, written by German-Jewish writer and devout nationalist Ernst Lissauer, endevoured to unite Germany in hatred of England: 'We will never forego our hate,/ We have all but a single hate,/ We love as one, we hate as one,/ We have one foe and one alone — ENGLAND!'[328] Lissauer received the Order of the Eagle for his poem from Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, who ordered thousands of copies printed and distributed to soldiers in the German army.[329] Newbolt and Osborn both declare that no honourable soldier would give voice to its lyrics, while the soldier of Hay's A Company terms bombing of their position as a 'half hour's Hymn of Hate' and that at 'About nine o'clock the enemy indulges in what is usually described, most disrespectfully, as "a little morning hate" — in other words, a bombardment'

[327] Newbolt, *Happy Warrior*, p. 278; E. B. Osborn, *The Muse in Arms* (London: John Murray, 1917), p. xvi.
[328] Barbara Henderson, trans., 'The Chant of Hate', *The New York Times*, 15 October 1914.
[329] Richard Millington and Roger Smith, '"A Few Bars of the Hymn of Hate": The Reception of Ernst Lissauer"s "Haßgesang Gegen England" in German and English', *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature*, 41.2 (2017), 1-20, at p. 6.

(*FHT*, 159, 191). Wells goes further and allows his readers to see the dark enthusiasm of the 'Hymn of Hate' when his friend reads a published translation of the song in *The Spectator*:

> You will we hate with a lasting hate;
> We will never forgo our hate –
> Hate by water and hate by land,
> Hate of the head and hate of the hand,
> Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,
> Hate of seventy millions, choking down;
> We love as one, we hate as one,
> We have one foe, and one alone – ENGLAND! (*BST*, 262)

A soldier or knight adheres to the rules of honourable combat and the ethics of war. It was not deemed a venue for horror and loathing but an opportunity to demonstrate the finer qualities of man. It is only when cruelty and murder occur that war is perverted. The perpetrator of such atrocities should be hated and thus no longer a recipient of chivalrous treatment.

Murray prefers to appeal to individuated experiences of a more common origin, asking his audience to recall their own interactions with Germans before relegating the entire population of Germany to one detested lot. He furthers this goal by once again employing his notion of the herd mentality, rendering individuals who have had unpleasant interactions the outliers and dividing the actions of the German government from those of her people:

> Yet I have scarcely met a single person who seems to hate the Germans. We abominate their dishonest Government, their unscrupulous and arrogant diplomacy, the whole spirit of "blood-and-iron" ambition which seems to have spread from Prussia through a great part of the nation. But not the people in general. They, too, by whatever criminal folly they were led into war, are fighting now for what they call "the Right." For their lives and homes and their national pride, for that strange "Culture," that idol of blood and clay and true gold, which they have built up with so many tears.[330]

Murray's choice of words cleverly appeals to senses of sympathy, employing phrases that are also common to British propaganda as well as personal emotion. 'The Right', 'national pride', 'culture', the notion of defending home as well as the toil of building a life, are not strange or

[330] Gilbert Murray, 'First Thoughts on War', p. 7.

foreign sentiments, rather they are easily understood. To support his plea, Murray offers an example of a character that in many ways reminds us of Herr Heinrich:

> No: we cannot hate or blame the people in general. And certainly not the individual Germans whom we know. I have just by me a letter from young Fritz Hackmann, who was in Oxford last term and brought me an introduction from a Greek scholar in Berlin: a charming letter, full of gratitude for the very small friendlinesses I had been able to show him. […] He is now fighting us.[331]

The appeal to the intellectual, genteel German who not only exhibits the same emotions as the British, but believes in their way of life to such a degree that he abandons his home country, again tries to defy a growing stereotype and encourages more reasoned and measured responses to war. His next tactic is to appeal to soldiers as an authority and demean those who hate: 'The soldiers fighting do not hate as a rule; and the people who feel greatly do not hate. It is mostly those who are somehow baffled and unable to help, or are brooding over personal wrongs, that give way to hatred.'[332] He again draws on the concepts of honour, duty, and sacrifice, all tenets and hallmarks of chivalrous conduct, imbuing combat and death with nobility. This determines that if a man is motivated and filled by honourable traits there will be no room left within him for hatred or the desire for revenge. Lastly, Murray declares that hatred is born of frustration due to lack of an outlet to express anger in a physical manner and as such it is a prevalent emotion in women and old men:

> The women and old men at home may hate the enemy. Hate is an emotion which grows when you cannot give vent to normal anger. But the soldier has given more vent to his anger than he ever needed. He has often more sympathy than hate for the man in the trenches opposite, labouring miserably in the same mud and snow as himself, caught in the same bewildering net, deafened by the same monstrous noises and torn by the same shreds of iron.[333]

[331] Gilbert Murray, 'First Thoughts on War', p. 8.
[332] Gilbert Murray, 'America and England', in *Faith, War, and Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 171–83, at p. 182.
[333] Gilbert Murray, 'The Turmoil of War', p. 252.

Osborn wrote in the introduction to the *Muse in Arms*: 'No civilised soldier hates his enemy, howsoever hateful, when he has wreaked his righteous anger on him in action; and the last thing an Englishman would think of doing, when he returns to billets, is to write in the style of Lissauer's "Hymn of Hate."'[334] However, when an enemy commits sufficiently atrocious actions the soldier is permitted to view these actions with hatred and desire to punish their perpetrators. As written by Violet Clutton in her diary: 'The more dishonourable the Germans behave the more justification we shall have in thrashing them soundly'.[335] Hannay's decision to hate Stumm signals the unconscious identification of the German enemy as one who can be engaged in a manner outside the rules of honourable combat. While hatred of the enemy in and of itself is against chivalric values, because Germany has defied chivalric tenets forbidding attacks on the weak (Belgium and alleged atrocities against women and children), they are no longer entitled to be engaged under honourable rules of conduct. Christian ethics and morals drive chivalry and thus British action, yet as Stumm plainly states, German priorities lie elsewhere: 'In Germany we put discipline first and last, and therefore we will conquer the world' (*GM*, 46). The removal of chivalry from its position of the highest order debases German actions, and perhaps even alludes to the supplanting of Christian beliefs if considering the phrase 'first and last' and its similarity to Revelations 22:13 where Jesus declares 'I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.'[336] This apparent blasphemy would certainly allow Stumm to be addressed and treated ignominiously. Further, this abandonment of Christian values is emphasised when Stumm explains to Hannay (whom he believes has deserted to the Germans) that 'You are not of the Fatherland, but at least you hate its enemies. Therefore we are allies, and trust each other like

[334] Osborn, *Muse in Arms*, pp. xv-xvi
[335] DRO: Violet Clutton: 625M/Box 1, Vol I, 8 August 1914.
[336] 'Revelations 22:13', in *King James Bible*.

allies' (*GM*, 69). The Germans are united under hate and take joy in the destruction of the British: 'You will also see some of the hated English in our power. That will delight you. They are the forerunners of all their nation' (*GM*, 57). This hatred is among the signifiers of the transition from the admired and worthy adversary to the mortal enemy, who as we shall see, increasingly losses his humanity and is identified in animalistic or demonic terms. The change is somewhat gradual in *GM* as Hannay goes on to describe Stumm as 'the German of caricature, the real German, the fellow we were up against. He was as hideous as a hippopotamus, but effective. Every bristle on his odd head was effective' (GM, 50). There is still a measure of respect for the ability of the German to wage war but his characterisation as an animal implies inferiority and baseness. As Stumm and Hannay interact, the British assessment of this embodiment of Germany is brought lower:

> He was either peremptory and provocative, like a drill-sergeant, or so obviously diplomatic that any fool would have been put on his guard. That is the weakness of the German. He has no gift for laying himself alongside different types of men. He is such a hard-shell being that he cannot put out feelers to his kind. He may have plenty of brains, as Stumm had, but he has the poorest notion of psychology of any of God's creatures. (*GM*, 73)

The German's weakness now lies within his inherent animalistic qualities. He is incapable of acting or cohabitating with man, the description of 'hard-shelled' possessing 'feelers' implies he is an insect, one of the basest creatures. This sort of bestial devolution is frequently used in medieval and medievalist works to describe unchivalric enemies. Lancelot encounters 'a huge man-beast of boundless savagery,' Mordred, in his pursuit of Guinevere is described as a 'subtle

beast' and 'narrow foxy face(d)', Isolde condemns Tristan when it seems his love grows cold saying 'art grown wild beast thyself,' and a dwarf is called a 'freak' after he strikes a lady.[337] Similarly, Hannay's reaction to Hilda von Einem ('I hated her instinctively') indicates a subconscious or inherent revulsion towards individuals who embody the antithesis of British morals (*GM*, 172). However, the most damning description comes when Hannay decides that Stumm is incapable of understanding 'any of God's creatures' further implying he is of inhuman, diabolical origins.

In *FHT* the human and non-human distinction is asserted more boldly with the British explaining that 'Father and sons are all away, restoring the Bosche to his proper place in the animal kingdom' (*FHT*, 146-47). The narrator is certain of this species divide, stating that 'Everybody has been carefully sorted out— human beings on one side, Germans on the other. ("Like the Zoo," observes Captain Wagstaffe.) Nothing could be more suitable' (*FHT*, 173). With the inhumanity of the German foe established, German actions can be made to even further fly in the face of Christian ethics and be represented as an assault on the British way of life as is demonstrated again through Stumm: 'Some Englishman once said that he would call in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. We Germans will summon the whole earth to suppress the infamies of England. Serve us well, and you will not be forgotten' (*GM*, 76). Stumm's final comment rings of a diabolical promise and temptation. This declaration of German superiority, and intention to supplant British culture and life is made more terrifying with the promise of complete destruction:

> If any man stands in my way I trample the life out of him. That is the German fashion. That is what has made us great. We do not make war with lavender gloves and fine phrases, but with hard steel and hard brains. We Germans will cure the green-sickness of the world. The nations rise against us. Pouf! They are

[337] Lord Alfred Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, ed. by J. M. Gray (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1996), pp. 53, 270; Chrétien de Troyes, 'Erec and Enide', in *Arthurian Romances*, ed. by William W. Kibler and Carleton W. Carroll (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 37–122, at p. 39.

> soft flesh, and flesh cannot resist iron. The shining ploughshare will cut its way through acres of mud. (*GM*, 77)

To Laurence Binyon, Germans deem their violent actions justified: 'And with many words and sorrowful-phrased excuse/ Argued their German right / To kill, most legally; hard though the duty be, / The law must assert its might'.[338] This is a particularly offensive affront to chivalry as the lines are spoken by soldiers who are defending their right to kill female British spy, Edith Cavell. The execution of Cavell, while legal in international law, was continuously evoked in propaganda as proof of German barbarism and conversely, of British heroism and sacrifice. While the German government believed they had acted justly towards Cavell, and in fact lamented the fact that a women had been killed, they deemed it a necessary action to prevent other women from engaging in espionage or other acts against Germany.[339] Cavell, in fact, was aware of the potential punishment for her actions but, as reports would have history believe, 'was happy to die for her country'.[340]

While the British would be within their right to visit the same unchivalric cruelties on the German forces that they have allegedly committed against the weaker nations of Europe, WPB authors are careful to depict their leading male protagonists as chivalrous in spite of such actions. When Sandy refuses to join Hilda von Einem in the German plot to create an uprising in the

[338] Binyon, *Four Years*, p. 79.
[339] Alfred Zimmerman, 'A Defense of the Execution', in *Current History: A Monthly Magazine of The New York Times* (New York, NY: The New York Times Company, 1916), pp. 481-82.
[340] Hugh Gibson and G. de Leval, 'Execution of Edith Cavell: Official American Reports and a German Official Defense', in *Current History: A Monthly Magazine of The New York Times* (New York, NY, 1916), pp. 476-80.

Middle East, the temptress leaps over the parapet of their hiding place just as a shell lands. Hannay watches, reporting that

> The next thing I saw was Sandy, already beyond the glacis, leaping with great bounds down the hill. They were shooting at him, but he heeded them not. For the space of a minute he was out of sight, and his whereabouts was shown only by the patter of bullets.
>
> Then he came back— walking quite slowly up the last slope, and he was carrying something in his arms. The enemy fired no more; they realized what had happened.
>
> He laid his burden down gently in a corner of the castrol. The cap had fallen off, and the hair was breaking loose. The face was very white but there was no wound or bruise on it.
>
> "She was killed at once," I heard him saying. "Her back was broken by a shell-fragment. Dick, we must bury her here … You see, she … she liked me. I can make her no return but this. (*GM*, 258)

Despite his role as a spy among the Germans and von Einem's as the architect of Britain's undoing, Sandy is still beholden to his sense of masculine, chivalric duty to protect women. Without a moment's thought or hesitation he risks his own life in the attempt to save her from the bombardment and though she does die (for she must as the antithesis of British ethics and war-aims) he still feels compelled to give her an honourable burial. Hannay puts his own hatred of von Einem aside and helps to dig her grave. Von Einem's death and burial, though brief events, are significant in many ways to the proceeding actions and sentiments of the novel. It indicates a glimmer of redemption for the German attackers: when they too realise the fate of the German beauty they cease fire, allowing Sandy to safely convey her body back to their shelter and bury her. This moment's pause signifies that the German foe still adheres to this particular facet of chivalric actions; they are still beholden to this woman and are capable of setting aside their aggression momentarily for the honourable treatment of the deceased woman.

Von Einem's death is of further importance to the characterisation of Buchan's enemy in that it also enables Hannay to reflect and reassess his relationship with Stumm. When Hannay and his accolades are rescued from almost certain death from the bombardment led by the terrifically efficient German colonel, Hannay turns back: 'Stumm, poor devil. I had no ill-will left for him, though coming down that hill I was rather hoping that the two of us might have a

final scrap. He was a brute and a bully, but, by God! he was a man' having realised 'something of the might of Germany. She produced good and bad, cads and gentlemen, but she could put a bit of the fanatic into them all' (*GM*, 270, 69).

Lastly, the German femme fatale's death illustrates that while the enemy, as a person, should not be hated there must be consequences for their actions. A link can be made to the medieval notion that the results of combat are a form of divine will; the victor is supported by God and thus correct while the loser is clearly in the wrong. Von Einem's end sets the balance of right and wrong back in order and her demise symbolises the injustice of her actions. Despite her gender, as the perpetrator and architect of so much unrest and destruction, she must be called to account. The instantaneous nature of her death, the retention of her beauty, and Sandy's testament to her capacity for emotion imply death as a sort redemption for her actions. This enables her to be refigured more simply as a beautiful woman, perhaps motivated by love of a man, perhaps by love of her nation, in either case she can in some sense be forgiven, retaining her status as a beautiful woman rather than as a diabolical temptress.

The need for justice or atonement appears early on in the war, very often following the attack on Belgium. Bennett outlines his view regarding how the Germans should learn from their grievous transgressions:

> Personally, I am against a policy of reprisals, and yet I do not see how Germany can truly appreciate what she has done unless an object-lesson is created for her out of one of her own cities. And she emphatically ought to appreciate what she has done. One city would suffice. If, at the end of the war, Cologne were left as Arras was when I visited it, a definite process of education would have been accomplished in the Teutonic mind.[341]

In one sentence Bennett condemns the idea of reprisals but by the end of the paragraph it is clear that reprisal is precisely what he believes needs to occur in order for justice to be complete and

[341] Arnold Bennett, *Over There: War Scenes on the Western Front* (New York, NY: George H. Doran Company, 1915), p. 88.

for the Germans to feel the gravity of their actions. Even in such scenarios the desire to mete out punishment is restrained. Bennett and others do not ask for a quid pro quo form of payment, but rather a smaller destructive action which will function as a real, yet symbolic, reminder of the destruction they visited upon others. Hatred in reprisal is little to nonexistent and there is very often a desire to distinguish the perpetrators from the innocent. Hannay, again proves an example of the hopes men such as Newbolt, Osborn, Bennett and Wells have that the people of Britain will not assign hatred and blame to all inhabitants of Germany:

> When I saw the splintered shell of Ypres and heard hideous tales of German doings, I used to want to see the whole land of the Boche given up to fire and sword. I thought we could never end the war properly without giving the Huns some of their own medicine. But that woodcutter's cottage cured me of such nightmares. I was for punishing the guilty but letting the innocent go free. It was our business to thank God and keep our hands clean from the ugly blunders to which Germany's madness had driven her. (*GM*, 99)

Hannay is a character whose views mature and shift as the reader follows him through his trials in Germany. He is taken with a passionate hatred of Germans that is derived from a love of his own country, desire for its protection, and knowledge of German transgressions. However, his interaction with common German people, his personal sense of morality and ethical conduct, as well as the combative relationship he has with Stumm, influence his perception and ultimately leads him to a more measured and reasoned response to the war and the people who are caught up in it.

Chivalry offered a way out of the post-war dilemma of soldiers being both killers and defenders. By characterising their actions as chivalrous and those of the enemy as anti-chivalrous soldiers could be cast within a morally justified frame of action. Those that did not survive the war could be memorialised as individuals who 'Not only were […] gallant in action, they were chivalrous to their enemies.'[342] Lawrence Binyon wrote in 1919, 'Yet what moves most my

[342] 'Pembrokeshire's War Memorial: Unveiling by Milford V. C', *Pembrokeshire Telegraph*, 7 September 1921, p. 5.

heart? Not the dead stare / Of Hate, full-glutted in its hideous will: / It is the thought of Hate's dull impotence, / It is the glory of all it cannot kill.'[343] Even after enduring four years of terrible war, Binyon was still able to pen words defaming hatred and encouraging individuals to find motivation in all that was opposed to hatred or in the very 'impotence' of it. It is often difficult to imagine the death and destruction wrought in war and not feel a measure of anger or hatred towards those who have caused it, yet these were not sentiments with which the writers of the WPB hoped to inspire the people of Britain. Hatred would beget nothing they surmised, rather, men should find motivation to fight though the preservation of their ideals, the virtues, and justice they strove to uphold. They should find strength in the honour and duty they had to defend those weaker than themselves. In essence, and most often without directly saying so, men were to look to chivalry as it had been reinvented over the course of the past century for their justification to fight.

The War Propaganda Bureau waged a secret war against defeatism, pacifism, and barbarism, and strove to imbue their audiences with the characteristics that were believed to represent the best qualities men and women could emulate. As Buchan writes in *A History of the Great War* 'In a contest of whole peoples psychology must be a matter of prime importance; mutations of opinions and the ups and downs of popular moods are themselves weighty historical facts, as much as a battle or a state paper'.[344] Though the days of overt chivalry had passed, the writers in the WPB, with subtle rhetoric, continued to extol the benefits of chivalric tenets. By deviating from vocabulary normally associated with chivalry, the WPB was able to successfully encourage the adoption of chivalric tenets and emulate their features through the actions and

[343] Binyon, *Four Years*, p. 158.
[344] John Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, 4 vols (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1921-2), Volume 1, p. viii.

words of heroic characters, powerful speeches, as well as the decisions of everyday citizens, demonstrating its universality and its necessity to winning the war.

Chapter Four: Defence, Brotherhood and Sacrifice

By the end of the war there was little love for the patriotic, chivalric or jingoistic rhetoric that had ushered Britain into the conflict. Sentiments and social constructs such as masculine duty and honourable combat that had been imbued with so much power in 1914 seemed naïve and ignorant to many after four years of total war. The war was interpreted as a test of personal strength and faith, a struggle between moral and social conventions that declared the greatness of sacrifice and glorified the community of the dead while bemoaning its loss and the cause of it. Yet while the Great War significantly altered the world's perception of multi-national conflict and set the stage for a new mode of warfare in the modern age, it did not wholly remove the fundamental relationships and principles that the British soldier had taken to battle with him for centuries – the compulsion to defend, to unite in the brotherhood of arms, and to sacrifice his life when called upon. The poems mentioned in this chapter composed but a small glimpse of the wealth of emotions and experiences of World War One. They demonstrate that even when deprived of agency men still felt bound to defend the things they held dear, whether that be their homeland, loved ones, or the men they served with.

Chivalry was not simply a construction of the Middle Ages that brought a measure of civility and restraint to a period of violence and social inequality, it became a hereditary set of ideals, represented by the armoured knight that modern Britain used as the personification of masculinity and morality. The knight crusader embodied the conception of dignity and nobility of combat, combining Christian principles and duty in order to justify violence. While this figure was readily identified as a bastion of chivalry, he was in many instances done away with as the romance of battle faded and the horror of war became a reality. However, that which they stood

for remained and was subsumed into British identity and description of the First World War. 'A thousand times better to die as a brave boy than live as a cowardly boy' was not an uncommon sentiment.[345] Bravery and courage, the crux of soldiering and knighthood, was not portrayed in poetry and literature of the war as a rare, unexpected trait but rather an inherent quality within all British men, because, as inheritors of the land that produced men such as King Arthur and his knights, 'The blood of generations of heroes ran' through their veins.[346]

Guilt was able to function as such a powerful form of motivation due to very strong beliefs in personal honour. This honour was maintained or improved by the act of serving one's country which not only reflected positively on the soldier, but on all who associated with him. The courage and bravery he demonstrated by enlisting and fighting had a symbiotic existence with the willingness to die and to act as a blood sacrifice. Remaining at home or acting in self-preservation was akin to cowardice which was the ultimate stain on personal honour. The only exception to this was when a soldier had already served and been gravely injured, then he was afforded the right to abstain from battle. The link between combat, courage, and honour during the First World War is undeniable, and its correlation to chivalry is as prominent as the many statues of St George and knights around Great Britain that memorialise WWI.

Soldiers' deeds are most often described as 'gallant,' 'brave,' 'courageous,' 'selfless,' and 'sacrificial', all words synonymous with knighthood and chivalry. Perhaps the most evocative of these connections is to sacrifice. As has been discussed, soldiers often saw themselves or even desired themselves to die on the battlefield. Stories which extoll the brave deeds of soldiers most frequently end in death, adding both tragedy and romance to the figure. So too were knights meant to die in combat. To live until old age was not romantic, but to die in a valiant rescue or

[345] Goebel, *Medieval Memory*, pp. 197-98.
[346] Donald A. Mackenzie, *Heroes and Heroic Deeds of the Great War* (London: Blackie, 1915), p. 81.

assault, sacrificing personal safety and life was a true honour and the hallmark of courage.

War was the great leveler of men; brotherhoods of soldiers were joined together through understanding of combat. Their experiences marked them out as keepers of a martial history and code. They shared the knowledge of death, suffering, the thrill and terror of assault, the understanding of true bravery and self-sacrifice in the line of duty. In this sense, the soldiers of WWI became the modern equivalent of the elite orders of knighthood. Perhaps they had not all joined with lofty notions of honour and dreams of brave deeds, but through their experiences gained an understanding of them and combat that, no matter how gifted the writer, could never be adequately explained.

Chivalry does not solely exist in the romantic language medieval and modern writers use to describe it and the individuals who practiced it. Chivalry is an ethos, a set of ideals that exists through the actions of men and women independent of flowery language and specific vocabulary. While the rhetoric that obviates chivalry fell from favour as the war progressed the ideals and need of chivalry did not vanish; its importance to British culture and society was still very much present.

* * *

> He expected to die; he was willing to die for the dear England whose beauty and majesty he knew; and he advanced towards the brink in perfect serenity, with absolute conviction of the rightness of his country's cause, and a heart devoid of hate for fellow-men.[347]

With characteristic eloquence Winston Churchill wrote these words for the obituary of Rupert Brooke in *The Times* on 26 April 1915, in the process of mythologising the English poet,

[347] Winston Churchill, 'Obituary of Rupert Brooke', *The Times*, 26 April 1915.

a man who both during his own career and today symbolises much of the early romanticism and bravado of the days preceding the outbreak of World War One. As Bond points out, Brooke was enormously popular through the war years and beyond, whereas Owen, who 'is widely taken to be "the voice" of Western Front disillusionment' was relatively unknown even into the 1930s.[348] The poet's untimely death from sepsis prevented him from gaining his much desired time at the Front but certainly contributed to his portrayal as a sacrificial youth and a figurehead of British patriotic fervour.

This chapter will focus primarily on war poets, in this instance meaning men who spent time in combat, and enhanced by works of non-combatant poets and propaganda. This genre of war literature is particularly important because of its dominant position in current cultural memory and scholarship of the First World War. WWI has been rightly called a literary war, no other conflict has been written about so extensively in its own time. This is perhaps why it is so counterintuitive that a handful of poets have had such a substantial role in dictating the legacy of WWI. With this in mind, this chapter further aims to demonstrate the wider nuances of the experiences and opinions of war poets of both canonical and non-canonical status. By looking at the works of a wide range of poets of diverse backgrounds and influences, this chapter will demonstrate that the central tenets of chivalry held significant value to men in the trenches and were important components of morale, fortitude, and collective understanding.

One of the arenas of conflict most often associated with chivalry was that waged on the aerial battlefield by the the Royal Flying Corp (RFC). The RFC provided a spirit of adventure very different from the mud and chaos of the front. Novels such as Cecil Lewis's *Sagittarius Rising* describe airborne combat in terms appealing to enthusiastic young recruits: 'It's a

[348] Bond, *Unquiet Western Front*, p. 28.

marvelous life! A sport! A game!', depicting airmen as gallant and brave warriors.[349] In Newbolt's *Book of the Happy Warrior* pilots are portrayed as 'true knight[s]-errant'. He furthers this saying 'our airmen are singularly like the knights of the old romances. […] They go out day by day, singly or in twos and threes, to hold the field against all comers, and to do battle in defence of those who cannot defend themselves.'[350] The often one-on-one nature of airborne combat led to it frequently being paralleled with jousting:

> It was like the list of the Middle Ages, the only sphere in modern warfare where a man saw his adversary and faced him in mortal combat, the only sphere where there was still chivalry and honour. If you won, it was your own bravery and skill; if you lost, it was because you had met a better man.[351]

The aerial battlefield was one of the few venues where the tenets of chivalry to continued to function without derision, in part because it allowed for autonomy. Among the chivalric conventions between pilots was the custom of providing downed airmen with honourable burials, a practice observed by both sides—the most notable of these following the death of Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron. As Ralph Barker explains

> Hundreds of soldiers and airmen filed past his body next morning as it lay in state, like that of a monarch, on a dais in a hangar at Bertangles […] he was buried with full military honours, mourned, […] by friend and foe alike. […] A special floral tribute came from survivors who had flown against him, with the inscription: "to Captain von Richthofen, our valiant and worthy foe."[352]

Lloyd George asserts that 'pilots are the Knighthood of the Air, without fear and without reproach. Every aeroplane flight is a romance, ever record an epic.'[353] The allegory of areal and knightly combat is a well discussed and explored topic. Barker writes extensively on the matter in his detailed accounts of the RFC throughout the war. John Morrow's comprehensive treatment of the significance of aviation to the war, explores the importance of public school notions of

[349] Cecil Lewis, *Sagittarius Rising* (London: P. Davis, 1936), p. 71.
[350] Newbolt, *Happy Warrior*, pp. 248-49.
[351] Lewis, *Sagittarius*, p. 45.
[352] Ralph Barker, *The Royal Flying Corps in France: From Bloody April 1917 to Final Victory* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1995), 241-42.
[353] Quoted in: Parker, *Old Lie*, p. 236.

bravery and romanticisation of combat as does Paul Robinson's study of honour and conduct in war.[354] As such, this thesis will not endevour to elaborate on this already well-researched topic and instead chooses to elucidate the less explored connection between chivalry and combat at the Front.

Churchill's passionate eulogy did not simply praise a young man admired for his talents, charm, and powerful literary voice, and mourn his loss. He sought to solidify the image of the ideal Englishman and inexorably link it to the call to arms:

> A voice had become audible, a note had been struck, more true, more thrilling, more able to do justice to the nobility of our youth in arms engaged in this present war, than any other more able to express their thoughts of self-surrender […] During the last few months of his life, months of preparation in gallant comradeship and open air, the poet-soldier told with all the simple force of genius the sorrow of youth about to die, and the sure triumphant consolations of a sincere and valiant spirit. […] he was all that one would wish England's noblest sons to be in the days when no sacrifice but the most precious is acceptable, and the most precious is that which is most freely proffered.[355]

'Nobility', 'gallant', 'valiant', 'noblest' and 'sacrifice' were words carefully selected for their evocative power and connection to masculine ideals. They allude to a history rich in chivalric spirit and a contemporary interest in the robust and romantic chivalry of Victorian medievalism. Further, this engendered feelings of nationalism and patriotism, but also more acute sentiments related to courage, brotherhood, honour, and sacrifice. Recalling the image of the brave and altruistic knight, Churchill described Brooke as the voice of a generation at war, of 'the nobility of our youth in arms' depicting the young fallen soldier as a mix of Lancelot and Galahad, strong in arms and pure of soul. He praises the 'gallant comradeship' shared between fighting men as well as the 'sincere and valiant spirit' of those who battled their enemy not out of disdain but for the justness of the cause. In the preface to *The Muse in Arms* (1917), E. B. Osborn's anthology of

[354] John Harrow, *The Great War in the Air: Military Aviation from 1909 to 1921* (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 2009); Paul Robinson, *Military Honour and the Conduct of War: From Ancient Greece to Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2006).
[355] Churchill, 'Obituary'.

war poetry, he claims, 'no civilised soldier hates his enemy'.[356] Such a notion is rooted in the chivalric tradition of mutual respect between combatants, a relationship made attractive and heroic with the aid of modern authors like Scott and Tennyson. Though few examples of this ideology have made their way into popular poetry, Sorley's 'Sonnet to Germany', recognised for its broadminded and charitable attitude towards the German enemy, echoes Osborn's belief.[357] Combining these qualities, Churchill depicts Brooke as the quintessential knight of romance, a man of unmeasured potential who selflessly laid down his life in defence of a worthy cause.

For Rupert Brooke, one of 'England's noblest sons,' there was no more fitting end than the sacrificial warrior's death in defence of the country he so dearly loved. This is certainly reminiscent of literature's great chivalric champions, Arthur and Gawain. While he did not die on the battlefield his passing in transit served as a close enough parallel for his immortalisation as a 'war poet' by many. An unprecedented number of young men would follow Brooke to the grave, compelled by bravery, shame, social pressure, or pride and accepting what increasingly became a mentality of obligatory sacrifice, reflected in the words of Sassoon:

> And, as for dying, I know it's nothing, and there's not much for me to lose except a few years of ease and futility. What I'm doing and enduring now is the last thing anyone could ask for; I'm being pushed along the rocky path, and the world seems all the sweeter for it […] Death seems the only fact to be faced; the rest all twaddle and purposeless energy […] I suppose I'm feeling what Robert Graves felt when he wrote 'Is this Limbo?'. Shut in; no chance of escape. No music; the quest for beauty doomed. But I *must* go[358]

In *Up the Line to Death*, Brian Gardner puts forward his opinion that the influence of Brooke in no small part resulted in the deaths of countless young men:

> It is interesting to recall that after the war some of the surviving poets — Gibson and others — benefited in one way or another from the royalties and estate of Rupert Brooke, the man who had sent so many to death with noble and inspiring emotions in their hearts.[359]

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[356] E. B. Osborn, *The Muse in Arms* (London: John Murray, 1917), pp. xiii-xiv.
[357] L. B. Gillet, 'Poets in the War', *The North American Review*, 209.763 (1919), 822-36, at p. 284.
[358] Charles Sorely, 'Sonnet to Germany', in *Poetry of the First World War*, pp. 188-89.
[359] Brian Gardner and Edmund Charles Blunden, *Up the Line to Death: War Poets 1914-1918* (London: Methuen, 1964), p. xxii.

He also noted an increasingly fatalistic undertone, one that hinted at a desire to meet death.[360] However, as Elizabeth Vandiver reminds us, neither Brooke nor Julian Grenfell (who is also frequently accused of naivety) were wholly ignorant of war nor were they young school boys.[361] Brooke was twenty-seven when war broke out and wrote his famous sonnets, not in his first book of poetry, published in 1911, but after he bore witness to the retreat from Antwerp in October 1914. Grenfell was in fact a professional soldier in the Army and had been in France for more than five months when he wrote 'Into Battle.'[362]

The progression of the ideals within Churchill's eulogy called upon several tenets of medieval chivalry. In the days leading up to the Battle of the Somme the chivalric themes of noble sacrifice and proof through arms were often employed by poets to heighten the appeal and romantic aura surrounding the idea of war. Many men enlisted under a false notion of idealised combat and belief in the war's timely completion by the Christmas of 1914. As the dream of a short war faded, the dramatic allure of the Front grew soberer and the brotherhood of arms strengthened. This recalled the exclusive and deeply intimate, fraternal relationships between knights and engendering the development of a masculine, martial society. These bonds, would in some cases, slowly disassociate soldiers from the peaceful world they had once known, leaving them to find solace and understanding only among their comrades. The poets of 1914 to 1918 who were unable to find nobility in the conflict found it among the men they served with:

> They found a fellowship as exclusive, perhaps, as any there has been in our history: a brotherhood that transcended the barriers of class, strong at the time; of religion, of race, of every facet of society. This was not just to do with regimental pride, although that was part of it. It was the brotherhood of 'Those who were there' — on the Western Front. Those who had not been there were presumed to be incapable of understanding what the experience had been like, and what it had meant. Since 1918 these ties have been among the strongest undercurrents of British life, ranging from British Legion clubs to the corridors of Westminster.[363]

[360] Ibid.
[361] Vandiver, *Early War Poet*s, p. 70.
[362] Ibid.
[363] Gardner, *Up the line to Death*, p. xx.

The trenches, despite their dismal condition, quickly became an environment that produced deep bonds, and for some became preferable to the safety of Britain. Robert Graves experienced an uneasy desire to return to the trenches in order to be among the men with whom he had shared experiences of mortal peril, and away from a civilian world that Graves felt could not comprehend them:

> [Graves]: The funny thing was you went home on leave for six weeks, or six days, but the idea of being and staying at home was awful because you were with people who didn't understand what this was all about.
> [Leslie] Smith: Didn't you want to tell them?
> [Graves]: You couldn't: you can't communicate noise. Noise never stopped for one moment–ever.[364]

His poem 'Two Fusiliers' addresses the bonds between soldiers but does not endeavour to explain this relationship 'because the legend is that those who are already of it, know it, and those who are outside, could never know it. Undoubtedly, this must be right, although it does not diminish one's urge to understand.'[365]

Though World War One has often been retrospectively characterised as a war without chivalry, a cruel and often pointless conflict, within the Great War the remnants of chivalry persisted. The romantic qualities of chivalry, its sentimental expressions of love, individualised combat, and grandiose displays of fealty found no place on the fields of Gallipoli, Loos, or the Somme. However, its motivating and strengthening bonds of loyalty, brotherhood, and sacrifice showed through all the clearer. This chapter will look at these themes, named here as defence, brotherhood, and sacrifice, in the works of World War One poets such as Wilfrid Gibson, Robert Graves, Harold Monro, Wilfred Owen and other lesser known poets in order to demonstrate the continued effect these powerful devices have had on the interpretation of war experiences and their roots within the ideals of medieval chivalry.

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[364] 'No Title', *The Listener*, 15 July 1971, p. 74.
[365] Gardner, *Up the line to Death*, p. xx.

The Call to Arms

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the War Propaganda Bureau had a significant impact on the literature being circulated during the war and the message being delivered. However, theirs was not the only work that endeavoured to rally men to the Front. Civilian and poet-soldiers frequently drew on medieval, romantic images in the depictions of battlefield bravery to inspire the courage needed for enlistment. The rhetoric of chivalry and gallantry was still very operative during the earlier stages of the war, striking a cord with many idealistic individuals. However, as this somewhat naïve and aggrandised treatment of war began to lose favour, poets sought new forms of motivation. This at times manifested through the desire for vengeance, for defence, the compulsion to fill the place a friend or loved one had occupied at the Front, as well as other more realistic and personal reasons. These appealed less to the abstract, romantic ideas of war and more to individual experience and understanding. Just as the nature and comprehension of the war changed within the public mindset, so did responses to it and expressions of the necessity to be involved in it.

'The Volunteer' by Herbert Asquith illustrates the potential influence of depictions of combat as portrayed through medieval and medievalist works on one individual's perception of war.[366] The poem features a clerk who views his life as unfulfilled until he is able to gain the battlefield and meet with a heroic death: 'Thinking that so his days would drift away / With no lance broken in life's tournament' (ln. 2-3). Battle is imagined romantically: 'The gleaming eagles of the legions came, / And horsemen, charging under phantom skies, / Went thundering past beneath the oriflamme,' rings of medieval poetic illustration (ln. 6-8). The oriflamme, the

[366] Herbert Asquith, 'The Volunteer', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, ed. by George Walter (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 154.

red banner used to signify a combat à mort and standard of the kings of France, foreshadows the conclusion of the poem inducing an air of fatalism. The use of medieval rhetoric and symbolism acts as a means to engender feelings of nostalgia and cultural pride. Identification with historic events or individuals of brave character would have resonated with the educated and literate audience that many poets, especially those commissioned by Wellington House, strove to attract. But this 'cult of death', as Patrick Porter terms it, was not simply the forceful propaganda of the elites nor the imposing rhetoric of state and government agencies.[367] Studies of post-war commemorations, local war memorials, patriotic novels, and poetry of the 1920s demonstrate the endurance of medievalist writing and discourse.

Asquith's invocation of Agincourt in the poem's final line contributes to a sense of historicity as well as patriotism, and relies upon the reader's personal knowledge to translate the reference's significance.

> And now those waiting dreams are satisfied
> From twilight to the halls of dawn he went;
> His lance is broken; but he lies content
> With that high hour, in which he lived and died.
> And falling thus, he wants no recompense,
> Who found his battle in the last resort
> Nor needs he any hearse to bear him hence,
> Who goes to join the men of Agincourt.
> (ln. 9-16)

However, it is death's unavoidability, or perhaps better phrased, the lack of desire for self-preservation that adds to the poem's poignancy. According to Leo Braudy, 'the medieval language of Christian redemption and warrior honour' worked to 'gloss the world of blood, filth and futility.'[368] The reader is not permitted to see the clerk's actions in battle, any of his struggles or conflicts: rather the audience is immediately at the clerk's deathbed and shown that this costly

[367] Patrick Porter, 'War and the Religious Will to Sacrifice', *Peace Review*, 17.1 (2005), 17-24, at p. 17.
[368] Braudy quoted by Porter, 'Will to Sacrifice', p. 18.

sacrifice is not simply the only acceptable outcome for entering battle, but the only desired one. Life becomes complete in death. In order to fulfill the role of knight he must perish in battle, dying honourably in the service of some worthy cause without any ulterior desire. The poem leaves no opportunity for the warrior to live on but rather glamourises his death, portraying it as the actualisation of masculinity.

The reception of Arthur Machen's short story 'The Bowmen' demonstrates the effect of such famous historical events.[369] Intended as a work of fiction, Machen's tale of the bowmen of Agincourt coming to the aid of British soldiers after the retreat at the Battle of Mons was so enormously popular that individuals interpreted it as truth with any questions of its authenticity ultimately becoming treasonous.[370] Its narrative style convinced many of its authenticity and many "real-life" accounts by soldiers, officers and nurses alike began to be circulated.[371] As Andrew Maunder points out, Machen capitalised on the controversy and popularity of the story that it was issued in a book selling '3,000 copies in the first day, 50,000 in three months, and 100,000 in a year and was translated into six languages'.[372] This aggrandisement of sacrifice and its links to medieval notions of bravery take on even deeper significances when soldiers are draped in the mantle of sacrifice and refigured as Jesus Christ willingly going to the cross, a topic that will be addressed later in this chapter.

Yet not all references to the chivalrically informed ideals of sacrifice were positively viewed or remembered. Wilfred Owen's poem 'Disabled' about a boy who becomes an amputee as a result of the war is certainly not in support of the conflict, but does offer a bitter glimpse of

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[369] Arthur Machen, *The Angel of Mons: The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1951).
[370] Fussell, *Modern Memory*, p. 116; Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: British, American and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), p. 103.
[371] Andrew Maunder, *The Facts on File Companion to the British Short Story* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2007), pp. 44-45.
[372] Ibid.

another form of motivation:

> It was after football, when he'd run a peg,
> He thought he'd better join. He wonders why…
> Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts.
> […]
> He thought of jeweled hilts
> For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
> And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
> Esprit de corps; and hints of young recruits.
> And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.[373]

Owen, with grim eloquence, captures the mentality of a schoolboy, his innocent delusions about military life, made confident by the trivial compliments of friends and influenced by romantic ideas. The motivation here is much more simplistic; it is not rooted within heavy notions of duty and responsibility but is an uninformed imagined world of 'jeweled hilts' and 'smart salutes', likely recalling Newboltian war fervour and novels peppered with medievalism's romanticised chivalric depictions of masculine figures. He represents the modern image of the First World War soldier: young, idealistic, and ignorant of the real nature of war. However, these attributes did not make him and others of a similar mindset any less adamant about enlisting.

Famously disillusioned war poet, Siegfried Sassoon, acknowledges and condemns his own idealistic beliefs about the nature of war, along with his growing abhorrence for battle, in his 1916 work 'The Poet as Hero':

> […] you've asked me why
> Of my old, silly sweetness I've repented—
> My ecstasies changed to an ugly cry.
>
> You are aware that once I sought the Grail,
> Riding in armour bright, serene and strong;
> And it was told that through my infant wail
> There rose immortal semblances of song.
>
> But now I've said good-bye to Galahad,
> And am no more the knight of dreams and show:
> For lust and senseless hatred make me glad,
> And my killed friends are with me where I go.[374]

[373] Wilfred Owen, 'Disabled', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, pp. 252-53.
[374] Siegfried Sassoon, 'The Poet as Hero', in *Poetry of the First World War*, pp. 94-95.

Sassoon tries to demonstrate the ridiculousness of imagining soldiers as the modern embodiment of knights of Medieval Romance, and he illustrates this by placing them within the context of the legend of the Holy Grail. He skillfully employs 'high rhetoric' similar to that used in his earlier poems in order to demonstrate its incompatibility with realistic scenarios. He juxtaposes the anger of the first two lines, 'You've heard me, scornful, harsh, and discontented, / Mocking and loathing War', against the poetic tropes common to romantic descriptions of the medieval in the second stanza: 'once I sought the Grail, / Riding in armour bright, serene and strong.'The weight of his experiences and the loss of companions has destroyed his 'old, silly sweetness' leaving in its stead a hatred of the war and a disillusionment towards what others perceived as its just cause. Sassoon's depiction of himself as a knight on the Grail quest suggests that he (and others) joined the war in pursuit of a higher moral conquest whether that it be one for personal growth or victory over an oppressive force. He, like most of the knights who set out to find the Grail, fails and the Grail quest, as King Arthur foreshadows, is a precursor to the end of the knightly fellowship for many will never return. Sassoon is embittered by the loss of his companions, turning the passion he felt at the outset into a hateful lust, esteeming the revenge he exacts against his enemies as absolution for his failure and loss of faith in the cause. Likewise, Graves, who had much more caste loyalty, disregarded pre-war, patriotic, medievalist sentimentality: 'It's all very well for you to talk about "good form" and acting like a "gentleman". To me that's' a very estimable form of suicidal stupidity…If you had real courage you wouldn't acquiesce as you do.'[375]

As World War One drew on, however, the war rationale changed, and new factors

[375] Siegfried Sassoon, *Siegfried Sasson Diaries, 1915-1918*, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), p. 192.

emerged as family and friends became casualties. Those who had not yet seen action yearned for the Front, not only to prove their self-worth and find glory, but to avenge loved ones lost, fill the place of those fallen, and strike down, at all costs, the seemingly callous and remorseless foe who had robbed them of so much.

Of the three central chivalric themes mentioned before — defence, sacrifice, and brotherhood — the first to be addressed will be defence. This section will not only be concerned with the physical attributes of defence but the complex knitting of emotions that forms the motivation to act as a defender. There are three broad desires within this element: the desire to defend country, this encompassing the physical landmass as well as the unknown countrymen that compose it; the desire to defend family and loved ones; and the desire to defend beliefs and ideals personal, cultural, or as influenced by values systems (as in the case of defence of women, children, and the weak). In many of the poems that I will explore there is an intricate intermingling of these desires, often occurring simultaneously and invoked for the purpose of arousing powerful emotions and actions. The adeptness of these poets becomes evident as they subtly employ a wide range of cultural symbols, references, and accusations to coerce readers into a state of war fervor.

Defence

Sue Malvern argues that there is an essence of 'Englishness' located within the British landscape.[376] This identification incidentally produces patriotic sentimentality that transcends mere self-preservation but develops into a desire to protect the land itself. The landscape is

[376] Sue Malvern, 'War Tourism: "Englishness", Art, and the First World War', *Oxford Art Journal*, 24.1 (2001), 47–66.

viewed as an 'as epicentre and part of the social fabric of English life which needed to be sustained.'[377] The evocation of the rural landscape and countryside under threat became one of the many poetic tools employed at Wellington House by poets such as Thomas Hardy in order to motivate a sense of defence rooted within self-love and self-sacrifice. The land is often imagined as feminine, a source of nurture and fertility, a notion which deepened as foreign lands became the final resting places of British soldiers. As Bracco asserts,

> Often the memory of a corner of idyllic rural England or the thought that were it not for the defence of the English shores their land would resemble the devastating French countryside makes instant sense of the soldiers' ordeal. England is transfigured by the physical and emotional displacement of war into a tangible ideal; all sacrifice can be justified in the name of the land from which all derive their sense of identity and tradition.[378]

The landscape had the ability to allow for the engendering of a wealth of evocative sentiments as it possessed the flexibility to represent a range of attributes and significances. Ideas of the British landscape were altered as the populace became more conscious of the war dead, imagining the land to be a physical body rather than as a metaphor for one. This changing perception and concern prompted the Directorate of Graves Registration to issue the leaflet *The Care of the Dead* in 1916 reassuring the families of the deceased that 'Everything is done as tenderly and reverently as if the dead men were in an English churchyard among themselves.'[379] Foreign soil did not simply function as a resting place but also as a venue for the formation of identity. The transformation of foreign to domestic soil elicited by the lines of Brooke's 'War Sonnet V: The Soldier', 'If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field / That is for ever England', would give voice to a growing concern as the number of men dying overseas grew dramatically. [380] Rural imagery became geographically unspecific,

[377] Malvern, 'War Tourism', p. 60.
[378] Bracco, *Merchants of Hope*, p. 69.
[379] Malvern, 'War Tourism', p. 46.
[380] Rupert Brooke, 'V. The Soldier', in *Poetry of the First World War*, p. 106.

instead comprising 'a set of features by which rural beauty was defined'.[381] Hence, it fitted neatly with the purposes of the concrescent community. Conversely, Catherine Brace asserts that depictions of England in the early-twentieth-century featured '[m]any different rural landscapes […] their only shared characteristic being that they were lightly populated and cultivated "middle landscapes" […] in which people, work and settlements are seen to be in harmony with their surroundings.'[382]

John Freeman, the aesthetic merit of whose work earned him inclusion in the popular publication *Georgian Poetry*, wrote the poem 'Happy is England Now' which speaks of the stirring joy and passion that battle brings to men who defend their country. [383] His invocation of the pastoral English countryside, as well as England's feminised personification in conjunction with the theme of sacrificial death, draws on both Georgian and Romantic poetic schools of thought producing powerful sentimentality.

> There is not anything more wonderful
> Than a great people moving towards the deep
> Of an unguessed and unfeared future; nor
> Is aught so dear of all held dear before
> As the new passion stirring in their veins
> When the destroying Dragon wakes from sleep.
> […]
> What'er was dear before is dearer now.
> There's not a bird singing upon his bough
> But sings the sweeter in our English ears:
> There's not a nobleness of heart, hand, brain
> But shines the purer; happy is England now
> In those that fight and watch with pride and tears.

'Happy (is England) in those that give, give, and endure / The pain that never the new years may cure; / Happy in all her dark woods, green fields, towns, / Her hills and rivers and her chafing

[381] Alun Howkins, 'Rurality and English Identity', in *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity*, ed. by David Morley and Keith Robbins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 150-51.
[382] Catherine Brace, *Finding England Everywhere: Regional Identity and the Construction of National Identity* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd, 1999).
[383] John Freeman, 'Happy Is England Now', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, p. 12.

sea' (ln. 15-18). The poem draws upon an inherent connection with the land encompassing both emotional and physical attachments. The link is also poignantly illustrated in T. P. Cameron Wilson's poem 'On Leave (2)' where he nostalgically describes the rural beauty of his native Devon. After several lines illustrating the tranquility of his home he shocks the reader by suddenly transitioning to battle: 'The scream of shells came back to me. / It was a green peace that suddenly taught me war' (ln. 23-24).[384] Through memories and the danger of his situation he is able to gain a greater appreciation of England. The poem progresses in waves, like an individual drifting between thought and reality with the transitions from the Front to Britain being quite subtle at times. Though at war, he is not wearied, sustained by recollections of home and the belief that 'It was for this you died: this, through the earth, / Peace and the men peace shall make' (ln. 49-50). The countryside is mobilised to promote jingoistic aggression towards outsiders, the 'destroying Dragon', avoiding dramatic or extreme rhetoric in favour of appealing to readers in a more measured manner. The figuration of the enemy as a dragon inherently evokes medieval associations. The image of St. George fighting the Dragon was synonymous with Britain and tied to notions of chivalric bravery and sacrifice. A. C. Benson, who became part of the WPB early in the war, saw St. George as an ideal representation of Christian chivalry, believing that 'Chivalry is a Christian conception of the dignity and nobility of combat. No amount of pacific argument can persuade us that it is a Christian attitude to stand by and see a wrong done.'[385] Linking the knightly figure of St. George with the present conflict helped to legitamise violence by means of Christian principles, turning the actions of the soldier from brutality to valour and Christian duty. Scholar and priest Hensley Henson believed that 'manly

[384] T. P. Cameron Wilson, 'On Leave (2)', in *Voices of Silence: The Alternative Book of First World War Poetry*, ed. by Vivien Noakes (Stroud: Sutton Publishers, 2006), pp. 258-60.
[385] A. C. Benson, 'St. George', *The Quiver*, 51 (1916), 611–12; Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), p. 26.

and chivalrous qualities [were] developed and displayed by soldiers' and declared,

> We are all of a mind in thinking that if the waging of war be in any circumstances permitted to Christian men, then this war is from a Christian point of view legitimate. If war be in itself evil and demoralizing, it can hardly be sufficient to point to the excellence of the objects for which it is waged as justifying the use of so sinister a method.[386]

Jay Winter asserted that nostalgia did not function solely as a manipulative tool of Britain's elite because 'the sentiments it encodes are too ambiguous and complex to be so easily corralled'.[387] These images depicted the 'return to a prelapsarian past' that Winter associates with the 'restorative nostalgia' of state elites, but also the 'sense of smaller-scale affinities' he identifies with the more ironic 'reflective nostalgia' indulged in by other groups.'[388] Nostalgic appreciation became a powerful means of engendering patriotism whilst drawing attention to the natural beauty of England, eliciting a connection and often unconscious appreciation for the individual's surroundings. Freeman is able to further this connection by personifying England as a feminine, perhaps warrior-like, figure allowing him to evoke the chivalric tenet of defending women. The figuration of women, whether in poetic or visual form, implied that the soldiers' reward for participating in the war was to live out their post-conflict lives in an idyllic rural setting in the company of an attractive women, not dissimilar to how many Medieval Romances reward their heroes with fair maidens.[389] Both maternal and amorous representations of women had the ability function as a means of emotional support for fighting men. Soldiers on leave frequently 'juggle(d) spending time with a sweetheart and time at home'.[390] For one soldier, J.

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[386] Hensley Henson, 'Christianity and War', *Church Quarterly Review*, 79 (October 1914-January 1915), pp. 120-21.
[387] Jay Winter, 'The Practices of Metropolitan Life in Wartime', in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919*, ed. by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Roberts (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 12-15.
[388] David Monger, 'Soldiers, Propaganda and Ideas of Home and Community in First World War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8.3 (2011), 331-354, at p. 338; Winter, *Practices*, pp. 12-15.
[389] Quoted in Monger, *Soldiers, Propaganda*, p. 342.
[390] Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

L. Rapoport, the prospect of engagement filled him with joyful anticipation of the future now that he had a fiancée who 'typified the women of England ... everything for us men', and thus greatly increased his longings to 'come home' to her.[391] Male observers are placed in a position where they are called upon to defend the honour of their country as protectors of family or women, and in doing so prove themselves worthy of honour in death as well as possessing 'nobleness of heart, hand, and brain'. By interspersing recollections of the beauty of England with proud grief and remembrance of the dead, Freeman is able to cast a gentle glow over death and surround it with the comforting air of a mother's love. The dead will be embraced, figuratively, by England, turning bitterness to gladness with each sacrifice adding to the beauty of that which remains: 'What'er was dear before is dearer now.' As Monger notes, 'It was this for which soldiers fought: a comfortable home, a loving partner or family and a nice cup of tea. By reducing the war to a very personal scale – the protection of, and anticipated return to, their own home, the smallest level of community and the most treasured.'[392] As Bourke, Fuller and Roper collectively argue, propaganda emphasising a connection with home provided an alternative to more jingoistic and bellicose expositions on national identity and encouraged men to maintain ties with their pre-war community rather than retreating solely into the fellowship of other soldiers.[393]

W. N. Hodgson, who served as a lieutenant with the 9th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment, similarly engaged the landscape in his prayer-like poem, 'Before Action':

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[391] 2nd Lieutenant J. L. Rapoport, 'Letter by 2nd Lieutenant J.L. Rapoport, 6 May 1918', in *Letters from the Front, 1914-1918*, ed. by John Laffin (London: Dent, 1973), p. 106.
[392] Monger, *Soldiers, Propaganda*, p. 345.
[393] See: Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999); J. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914-1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 48.2 (2005), 343-62;

By all the glories of the day
And the cool evening's benison
By that last sunset touch that lay
Upon the hills when day was done,
By beauty lavishly outpoured
And blessings carelessly received,
By all the days that I have lived
Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all man's hopes and fears
And all the wonders poets sing,
The laughter of unclouded years,
And every sad and lovely thing;
By the romantic ages stored
With high endeavour that was his,
By all his mad catastrophes
Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill
Saw with uncomprehending eyes
A hundred of thy sunsets spill
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
Must say good-bye to all of this; -
By all delights that I shall miss,
Help me to die, O Lord.[394]

Hodgson recalls the beauty of Britain in the first stanza, using its imagery to evoke a desire to defend, similar to Freeman though far more brilliantly described. The poem creates the scene of a waning summer evening though the reader is not left with any impression that the end of day implies fatality, rather the blending of days and that each continued day is a 'blessing carelessly received'. The stanza ends with a prayer: 'Make me a soldier, Lord'. Hodgson asks to be a soldier in defence of the land and of continued life. He does not ask for safety but rather to be an agent to produce safety indicating his desire to preserve the lands that have borne and harbored him.

The second stanza recognises the passionate nature of man. He recalls a lifetime of emotional experiences, some perhaps his own and some imagined, beginning with two of the

[394] W. N. Hodgson, 'Before Action', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, pp. 99-100.

most powerful sentiments: hope and fear. Few experinces produce such extreme variations in perception and emotion as war; the hope of survival and fear of death, the hope of honour and fear of cowardice, the hope of return and the fear of what awaited upon returning. These undulations are 'the wonders poets sing', praising the bravery of men and their ability to endure, decrying the powers that have thrown them into the war, sympathising with their fear, and illuminating a world little understood by those who had not experienced it. In such times of uncertainty men would often have a heightened sense of appreciation for things that may have seemed ordinary in the past. As David Jones wrote in a letter to his friend Réne Hague,

> There was only pleasure in the search light of memory, the recapture of half-forgotten detail, the link with tradition, the re-creation of personality, the analogy with the problems of ordinary social and domestic life - and above all humor. […] We were permitted to cheer. I can't tell you the gnawing thoughts as well up in your bosom at this memory. These reminiscences include a rueful assessment of this soldierly capability.[395]

Memories become valued treasures offering momentary escape and respite within the mind. Hodgson then turns to passionate acts of man recalling them through what may be the medieval depiction of man's deeds: 'By the romantic ages stored / With high endeavour that was his, / by all his mad catastrophes'.[396] The author draws the reader's thoughts towards images of the knight errant. These warriors, as described in medieval literature, were often strongly subject to their convictions and emotions, spurred to action in defence of an ideal, cause or individual and heedless of the potential danger it posed to themselves. Such reckless submission to their passion at times proved catastrophic, leading to an untimely demise as in the case of brothers Sir Balin and Sir Balan who unwittingly kill each other.[397] The rash actions they make in relation to their sense of honour and duty ultimately lead to their own deaths. The desire to enlist was frequently linked to conceptions of personal honour associated with masculinity and duty.

[395] Murray, *Wine of Youth,* p. 270.
[396] Hodgson, 'Before Action', pp. 99-100.
[397] Tennyson, *Idylls*, pp. 139-41.

Hodgson asks, 'Make me a man, O Lord' in order to show that while the soldier defends the land, he needs the ethic of the masculine warrior to act as a defender.

Many newly enlisted soldiers viewed themselves in some way as champions for the cause and even perhaps the knights that decorated recruitment posters, which, as Bet-El claims, became a sort of national policy by 1916:

> According to this myth, the British soldier in the Great War was a man who enlisted in a spirit of intense patriotism: a brave knight who took himself off on a crusade of chivalry and sacrifice; who fought for liberty and the innocent population of women he left behind in Good Old Blighty.[398]

The final stanza of 'Before Action' combines the land and man, illustrating that humanity's sacrifice is nature's sacrifice as well. As the narrator stares from his 'familiar hill', interpreted in this case as life, he looks ahead seeing the bloody sacrifice of himself and others, each one of the hundred spilt sunsets. He is unable to comprehend what lies beyond: death. He realises that he has yet to live half his life, departing before 'the sun swings his noonday sword'. The narrator does not go down with the setting sun of the first stanza but has finished his 'high endeavour' ending in 'mad catastrophe'. The 'sanguine sacrifice' has not been the only thing lost, but also all the memories, loves, passion, and nurturing that made him and the other men that have died: this is forever lost to the land that bore them. He dies, neither weeping nor fearful, but contemplative, coming to what increasing became represented as the expected if not desired outcome of entering battle: death. The soldier willingly makes the greatest of all sacrifices and in doing so joins the ranks of the legions of men who would be memorialised as 'not only glorious, but a glorious part of a long great line of / Chivalry, knighthood, heroism, self-sacrifice from age to age'.[399]

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[398] Ilana R. Bet-El, 'Men and Soldiers', p. 73.
[399] Beatrix Brice, 'If You Seek a Monument', *The Times*, 2 September 1920, p. 13; and Beatrix Brice Pulteney, Sir William, *The Immortal Salient: An Historical Record and Complete Guide for Pilgrims to Ypres* (London: John Murray, 1926), p. 54.

Brotherhood in Arms

> Now, the war, at any rate on the Western Front, was waged by Battalions, not by individuals, by bands of men who, if the spirit were right, lived in such intimacy that they became part of one another. The familiar phrase, "a happy Battallion," has a deep meaning, for it symbolises that fellowship of the trenches which was such a unique and unforgettable experience for all who ever shared in it, redeeming the sordidness and stupidity of war by a quickening of the sense of interdependence and sympathy. [400]

The relationships that developed between men at the Front were for many individuals among the most significant and defining experiences of the war, viewed as a sacred comradeship that transcended the confines of social status, religion, and politics. The shared experience of battle forged an unconscious bond between men, engendering a mutually inexpressible understanding and sympathy as well as a sense of brotherhood that could be acquired by no other means than first-hand combat. As C. S. Lewis aptly put it, the impetus of chivalric literature was not romantic love but 'the deepest of worldly emotions […] is the love of man for man, the mutual love of warriors who die together fighting against all odds, and the affection between vassal and lord.'[401] This remained true in World War One, with vassal and lord being replaced by soldier and officer. For some, realisation of the importance of this brotherhood would only become apparent upon returning home for leave or after suffering the loss of a friend. Sacrifice became an intrinsic part of the war-time experience and the significance of the language used in its expression was often intensified by loss within the regiment or family, rendering dedication to the cause an even greater necessity out of reverence for the dead. As Lieutenant H. F. Bowser wrote, 'We must finish our job, redeem our pledge, vindicate our rights, justify our attitude, avenge our dead.'[402]

The proximity of death lead many to place a greater valuation on the friendships and

[400] Foreword by B. H. Liddell Hart, Sidney Rogerson, *Twelve Days* (London: Arthur Barker, 1933), p. viii.
[401] C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 9.
[402] Porter, 'Sacrifice', p. 22.

camaraderie created at the Front, conscious of the looming sense of crisis and destruction that surrounded them. In many ways the uncertain nature of war rendered establishing bonds between men almost pointless as friends were killed, sent home, or moved between battalions, yet the group identity created through shared life-threatening experiences supplanted this inconstancy often proved a greater point of strength than weakness. Likewise, the shock of reentering a civilian world during leave that, in many ways was visually and socially untouched by war, proved a difficult environment re-assimilate into. Loved ones' desire for detailed accounts of soldiers' experiences often proved difficult and uncomfortable to articulate. Indeed, the lack of shared experiences between civilians and combatants made description of the war an impossibility for some. As a result, an innate understanding developed between men in the trenches and often a feeling of camaraderie that ran deeper than simple friendship.

As men were tested under fire the relationship between an officer and those he commanded quickly took on a more significant value. Men of rank, who before had been wholly unwitting and inactive beneficiaries of the class system, found now that the military hierarchy involved reciprocal obligations.[403] Officers quickly realised that the consequences of their orders and actions had far-reaching effects on the lives of the men around them and as such the development of a communal identity and pride became a point of necessity. While the identification of the individual man was certainly important, cohesion between members of the same battalion or company was also recognised as among the most critical factors in maintaining morale. Robert Graves noted this in *Goodbye to All That*: 'we [officers] all agreed that regimental pride was the greatest moral force that kept the battalion going as an effective fighting unit, contrasting it particularly with patriotism and religion.'[404] At the head of this moral order was the officer

[403] Fussell, *Modern Memory*, p. 178.
[404] Graves, *Goodbye to All That*, p. 229.

himself, charged with the task of preserving the lives of his men as best he could whilst obtaining military objectives. However, as Sarah Cole notes, 'War creates friendship—indeed places it at the center of human existence—only to destroy it.'[405] War helped to form intense bonds that occurred during chance meetings or during short interactions but could be equally quick to destroy them whether by men being transferred to different regiments, being sent home or killed. H. B. Henderson explains this problem in more detail:

> Army life which brings together men of very different types and by forcing them to life in close contact with one another very often causes a feeling of comradeship and friendship to arise, in too many cases breaks up the friendship before it has well begun … To the many men to whom these relationships with their comrades mean much, the feeling comes that it is useless to make friends in the army. They are like travelers coming to an inn for a night, meeting strangers there, spending an evening over the fire in the enjoyment of mutual sympathy and in the discovery of common pleasures and interests, feeling their hearts warming and a kindling desire to know more and to see more of these new found friends. Then the morning comes; each must go his own way; they part.[406]

Herbert Read's 'My Company' ventures to explain this complex relationship, recounting his own difficulties coping with the loss of his men.[407] The work extends over seventy-eight lines and four distinct time frames:

> I cannot tell
> What time your life became mine:
> Perhaps when one summer night
> We halted on the roadside
> In the starlight only,
> And you sang your sad home-songs,
> Dirges which I standing outside you
> Coldly condemned.
>
> […]
>
> And then our fights: we've fought together
> Compact, unanimous;
> And I have felt the pride of leadership.
>
> In many acts and quiet observances
> You absorbed me:
> Until one day I stood eminent
> And I saw you gathered round me,
> Uplooking,

[405] Cole, 'Male Intimacy', p. 476.
[406] *W. B. Henderson, Memoir, IWM.*
[407] Herbert Read, 'My Company', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, pp. 83-87.

And about you a radiance that seemed to beat
With variant glow and to give
Grace to our unity.

But, God! I know that I'll stand
Someday in the loneliest wilderness,
Someday my heart will cry
For the soul that has been, but that now
Is scatter'd with the winds,
Deceased and devoid.

I know that I'll wander with a cry:
"O beautiful men, O men I loved,
O whither are you gone, my company?'

[…]

A man of mine
        lies on the wire.
It is death to fetch his soulless corpse.
[…]

It is not thus I would have him kiss'd,
But with the warm passionate lips
Of his comrade here.

[…]

Urged by some unanimous
Volition or fate,
Clouds clash in opposition;
The sky quivers, the dead descend;
Earth yawns.

They are all of one species.

From my giant attitude,
In a godlike mood,
I laugh till space is filled
With hellish merriment.

Then again I resume
My human docility,
Bow my head
And share their doom.

The poem progresses through the development of the deep bond between an officer and his men. It is neither overtly sentimental nor verbose in relation to emotion, but rather allows the reader to interpret the feelings of the officer as he experiences them. The division of the poem enables the reader to gain a sense of the significant moments that have contributed to the formation of the

officer's relationship with the men under him as well as his identity within a role of authority. His initial interactions indicate his perceived role is to command the men without consideration of them as human individuals. However, a transformation occurs indicative of a fundamental shift in the officer's mentality: 'I cannot tell / What time your life became mine' (ln. 4-5). A two-fold meaning is present in these lines, the first that he has come to the recognition that he holds the men's lives in his hands; the second, the adoption of a collective identity, that his life is now made up of their lives and are no longer mutually exclusive. It is from this moment onward he is no longer able to separate himself from a shared identity and responsibility, thus becoming inexorably attached to his men, experiencing their deaths with a new acuity. The fate of both men and officer thus become linked in such a way as to make a separation by any other means than death undesirable and painful. This can be paralleled with the deep connection and companionship demonstrated between Arthur and his knights. Arthur mourns the death of his men as a father would a son; he experiences profound sorrow. What pains him the most at the final Battle of Camlann is not Lancelot and Guinevere's betrayal, but the death of so many of the men he had brought together and lead, knowing that they had looked to him for guidance and that he had failed them.[408]

The brutality of war and the crippling injuries that occurred within an officer's command led some to view their relationship with their men as one more substantial than traditional locales of social order such as family, church, and school. The sense of community that developed among men was by some seen as a more idealised and pure form of society as it often transcended elements such as race, creed, and economical factors, things which civilian society

[408] Tennyson, *Idylls*, p. 290.

could not hope to overcome.[409] This placement of the martial bond over civilian society envisioned a cross-class harmony as well as led many to believe their roles within the martial world with a significance that eclipsed that of its civilian counterpart.

E. A. Mackintosh, recipient of the Military Cross, wrote the poem 'In Memoriam' after a raid near Arras cost the lives of two of the men under his command. Affectionately called 'Tosh' by his command, the poet did in fact consider himself to be a father to his men and took their loss or injury very much to heart.[410] 'In Memoriam' begins with a comparison of the suffering experienced by a father at the absence of his son with the silent suffering of a young soldier who withholds unpleasant news in his letters home. There is a definite sense of anger and belittlement towards to father, perhaps brought about by his lack of understanding as much as by the officer's own resentment for having to watch the suffering of his men. There is certainly a possessive quality to Mackintosh's words as he seeks to supplant the significance of the father's position, however, the reader comes to understand the emotion behind this when made privy to the horrible experiences of the officer and his men:

> You were only David's father,
> But I had fifty sons
> When we went up in the evening
> Under the arch of the guns,
> And we came back at twilight -
> O God! I heard them call
> To me for help and pity
> That could not help at all.
>
> Oh, never will I forget you,
> My men that trusted me,
> More my sons than your fathers',
> For they could only see
> The little helpless babies
> And the young men in their pride.
> They could not see you dying,

[409] Sarah Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 141.
[410] E. A. Mackintosh, 'In Memoriam Private D, Sutherland Killed in Action in the German Trench, May 16, 1916 and the Others Who Died', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, pp. 95-96.

And hold you while you died.

Happy and young and gallant,
They saw their first-born go,
But not the strong limbs broken
And the beautiful men brought low,
The piteous writhing bodies,
They screamed "Don't leave me, sir",
For they were only your fathers
But I was your officer.

While fathers have had to endure the absence of their sons and the news of their deaths, they do not have to endure the guilt of responsibility for leading men to their deaths and being powerless to help them in their dying hour (just as Arthur is unable to prevent his knights from leaving on the Grail quest, which he knows some will never return from). This experience has distanced the officer greatly from the soldier's fathers and caused feelings of resentment and envy. Prolonged mutual suffering prompts the growth of a bond that the officer views as more intimate than a father-son relationship. Sidney Robinson explains in his memoir, *Twelve Day* (1933): 'In spite of all the differences in rank, we were comrades, brothers dwelling together in unity. We were privileged to see in each other the inner, ennobled self which in the grim, commercial struggle of peacetime is all too often atrophied.'[411]

There is also a supreme element of loss felt by men of all ranks when companions die as exhibited in 'To My Chum', a poem submitted anonymously to the *Wiper Times*, March 1916:

What times we've had, both good and bad,
We've shared what shelter could be had,
[…]
We'd weathered the storm two winters long,
We' managed to grin when all went wrong,
Because together we fought and fed,
Our hearts were light; but now — your dead
And I am Mateless.[412]

Loss was felt acutely. War provided few comforts and what little could be found came in the

[411] Sidney Rogerson, *Twelve Days* (London: A. Baker, 1933), p. 60.
[412] Anonymous, 'To My Chum', in *Voices of Silence*, p. 205.

small pleasure of company and unlooked for reprieves. The loss of friends in combat meant a loss of self in that men began to identify themselves as a body or collective rather than individuals. Even if all members were not equally close or even liked one another, they shared an equal duty to one another in a war that stripped all of autonomy and made all equally susceptible to mortal danger. This collective identity forged through traumatic experiences had, in some cases, the added consequence of disassociation and resentment of outsiders, particularly of civilians. E. B. Osborn purports in the introduction to his poetic anthology *A Muse in Arms* that it is this almost inexpressible intimacy and fellowship that acts as a pivotal tool in the success of the war: 'In the new sense of comradeship, which is the secret of our victorious warfare, and is an underlying motive of many of these poems, and explicit in but a few (being almost too sacred for an Englishman to write about) rest out best hopes for the England that is to be.'[413] This idea of a comradeship limited in membership to those who have experienced battle, joined men together by the shared understanding of it. They were further united in martial defence of a common homeland and ideals. Lieutenant R. G. Dixon of the 14th Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery recounted,

> I know for myself that I have known no such comradeship as those old years gave to us who fought on the old Western Front. As the years go by … there are fewer and fewer of us left who knew the comradeship … [which] implied a faithfulness even unto death to one's fellows, and this is no empty thing[414]

Inexpressibility also became a hallmark of this bond. Silence in some ways was its own description of experience; it implicated the trauma and severity of the conflict on the individual and was also a symptom of the perceived gulf of understanding between civilians and combatants.

Few soldiers wrote the truth about life at the Front partly from a wish to spare loved ones

[413] Osborn, *Muse in Arms*, p. xxii.
[414] R. G. Dixon, *The Wheels of Darkness*, Ts. memoir. Imperial War Museum, London. p. 88.

added grief and more broadly because all outgoing mail was censored. The unprecedented destruction caused by mechanised warfare made the realities of war for some too difficult to relate and thus there was an increasing sense of futility in relation to explaining martial life to civilians. Dixon insisted that war friendship could not be described due to the inadequacy of non-combatant language, contributing particularity to its sanctity, and its compelling memorial persistence.[415] Similarly, the physicality of war rendered it indescribable due to the absence of a common vocabulary of expression as well as a belief that the experiences of war belonged solely to those who had lived and died in them: 'To a foot-soldier, it was almost entirely physical. That is why some men, when they think about war, fall silent. Language seems to falsify physical life and to betray those who have experienced it absolutely—the dead.'[416] Although leave from the Front was often a joyous occasion, for some it highlighted the distance created by the war resulting in a sense of disorientation. As Ernest Parker wrote after his first experience at the Front: 'What effect this experience would have on our lives we could not imagine, but at least it was unlikely that we should survive without some sort of inner change. Towards the transmutation of our personalities we now marched.'[417]

In 'Before Ginchy' E. Armine Wodehouse, the older brother of writer P. G. Wodehouse, explains the emotional and mental turmoil of a soldier as he struggles to comprehend why the site of mutilated dead bodies no longer affects him and the transition to life on leave.[418] He is shocked by his own taciturn reaction, anxious over its implication: 'How can I gaze unmov'd on sights like these? / […] Untroubled, unperturbèd, at mine ease, / And idly, coldly scan / This fearsome relic of what once was man?' (ln. 11-16). He tries to reason with himself that his lack

[415] Cole, *Male Friendship*, p. 144.
[416] Fussell, *Modern Memory*, p. 170.
[417] Fussell, *Modern Memoryr*, p. 123-24.
[418] E. Armine Wodehouse, 'Before Ginchy', in *Voices of Silence*, pp. 231–34.

of emotive response is not the result of his cold heartedness ('I think not I lack pitifulness; – I know / That my affections were not ever so; / My heart is not of stone!'), rather it is realisation that the sights are appropriate to the scene, coming to the conclusion that he is, in fact, in hell: 'It is the place! – */ For, lo, we are in hell. / That is the reason why!* […] fearful, festering things that rot, – They have their place here' (ln. 20-22, 51-52). The poem vividly depicts the gruesome destruction left in the wake of battle as well as highlights the impact of such sights on the mentality of troops.

The second half of the poem addresses the confusion caused by the abrupt change in environment experienced when on leave. He is unpleasantly surprised that his experiences, which have left no outward marks on him, are perceivable to individuals who have not lived though or seen the horrors of the Front:

> How can they know it? – Mother, sister, wife,
> Friends, comrades, whoso else is dear,
> How can they know? – Yet, haply, half in fear,
> Seeing a long-time absent face once more,
> Something they note which was not there before
> (ln. 81-85)

Their interest in his experiences and the root of the subtle changes in demeanor are unwanted and by remaining silent he endeavours to keep those he cares for from sharing in his turmoil 'for even Love dare peep / No further in that troubled deep' (ln. 97-98). The soldier finds himself ill-equipped to handle the perceptive eyes of family and friends, realising that he is painfully incapable of expressing what has changed in him and unwilling to divulge the events behind the alteration of his personality:

> Such little, curious signs they note. Yet each
> Doth in its little, nameless way
> Some portion of the truth betray.
> […]
> The change is there; the change is true!
> (ln. 89-91, 93)

As the poem ends the soldier comes to the realisation that understanding of his experiences and

the non-physical impact of them can come only from those who have shared in them:

> […] things there be too stern and dark
> To live in any outward mark
> The things that they alone can tell,
> Like Dante, who have walk'd in hell.
> (ln. 99-103)

Such emotional and mental disparities deepened the sense and desire for companionship among other combatants, adding to the estrangement from those in England as well as to the prominence of martial communal identity. For some, the civilian world and its comparatively undisturbed appearance and way of life became an object of contempt. Philip Gibbs noted the existence of a deep hatred of civilian England among some soldiers returning from the Front: 'They hated the smiling women in the streets. They loathed the old men […] They desired that profiteers should die by poison-gas. They prayed God to get the Germans to send Zeppelins to England – to make the people know what war meant.'[419] There was a deep desire for life in England to be disrupted, in order that they might have some measure of understanding and suffer as men at the Front had. Owen in particular was known to have carried photos of men mutilated at the Front to thrust before any one who spoke with unjustifiable patriotic fervor.[420] More than forty years ago, Arthur Marwick insisted that 'though by the end the soldier was wearied and skeptical, to call him disillusioned would be to add the sin of exaggeration to the folly of generalization'.[421] Nonetheless, perceptions persist that soldiers were 'estranged' from 'everyone back in England', and 'broadened the rift' by 'embittered silence'. Robert Graves noted that 'England looked strange to us… The civilians spoke a foreign language', and as Monger observes: 'this perception of alienation, [is] derived largely from the post-war memoirs of Graves, Siegfried

[419] Fussell, *Modern Memory*, p. 86.
[420] Gardner, *Up the Line*, p. xviii.
[421] Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1965), p. 219.

Sassoon and C.E. Montague.'[422]

'On Leave, (1)', with little embellishment, shows the desperation to rejoin companions and be among the community of understanding the Front offered:

> I wanter go back to the trenches;
> I wanter go back to the Front
> […]
> I wanter retreat from the chaps in the streets
> 'Oo know 'ow the war should be run
> […]
> I'm too muddled to think, an' I shan't sleep a wink
> Till I'm safe back in Flanders again.[423]

Poet D. Large demonstrates the discomfort and fear that home presented for some soldiers. What had formally been everyday occurrences, hardly noticed, are now objects of a disturbing nature. Creaking pack straps, old blankets, and wooden planks are now preferable to 'clammy sheets that folk thinks is treats' (ln. 7). The cadence of the poem almost gives the reader a sense of shell-shock at the civilian world and certainly relates the tension and uncertainty of the soldier's mental state.

While death put solidarity and community identity at risk, the loss of a companion also had the potential to inspire battle vigour and engender a violent hatred of the enemy. 'To my Chum,' mentioned previously, provides an example of the desire for vengeance, not only singularly but as a collective, and further demonstrates the significance of the brotherhood of arms to the individual soldier. The majority of the poem employs pronoun forms of 'we' or 'our' and in doing so illustrates times of bonding and camaraderie: 'Because together we fought and fed, / Our hearts were light' (ln. 13-14). When the narrator separates himself from this group the poem's tone shifts to one of bitterness signifying the emotional impact of being solitary as well

[422] Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), p. 188; Siegfried Sassoon, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937); Charles E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922).
[423] D. Large, 'On Leave (1)', in *Voices of Silence*, p. 258.

as of identification with the group.

The terror of battle takes on a new role for the embittered soldier and the men he serves with. The difficulties of martial life no longer occupy an adversarial position, rather they serve to heighten a sense of injustice and hatred. Deprived of their companion with whom they have shared a dugout, stories, bully, and rum they discover new motivation: 'For you and the others who lie at rest, / Assured may be that we'll do our best / In vengeance' (ln. 17-19). The poem addresses loss both on a collective as well as an individual level. The individual soldier has become 'mateless' losing part of his identity. Alone his purpose in the war is diminished, 'I may fight through to no end,' however, he is able to regain a sense of identity when imagining himself as a member of the collective: 'All pals can only be pals in name, / But we'll carry on till the end of the game / Because you lie there' (ln. 23, 25-27). The singular soldier's death has provided purpose for those left behind, demonstrating that death does not always compromise solidarity.

'The Barrack Room' by W. Kersley Holmes, who served as a captain in the Royal Field Artillery, illustrates that diversity of background was secondary to the common experience of the war: 'For scarcely two were of one trade whom war's demands unite,/Who left office, study, plough, for one great cause to fight.'[424] Examples of the wide social strata present, even within one barrack of thirty men, serve to illustrate the uniqueness as well as totality of the brotherhood at arms. Seasoned veteran and new recruit are all bunked alike, and though having joined for various motivations all are similarly determined to, 'learn the grimmest game' (ln. 22). The bond does not end with the war, the poet is quick in reminding the reader, for 'surely when, the weary war is done, / He'll be more quick to see a pal in every mother's son!' (ln. 23-24).

[424] W. Kersley Holmes, 'The Barrack Room', in *Voices of Silence*, p. 11.

Many were not so lucky as to enjoy the bonds created during war and instead met sudden ends on the battlefields. Death, an omnipresent companion, was viewed in a variety of lights. It was at once an enemy as well as the force that gave soldier's suffering meaning. Sacrifice became a word routinely associated with the death of a soldier and would be used both to illustrate the valour of men as well as the futility of fighting.

Sacrifice

One of the essential motivational qualities of the soldier, beyond fear, and surpassing hatred of the enemy, was the willingness to offer up one's life in the service of the nation. The directness of the enemies' threat or physical signs of destruction were not always imminently relevant, rather, more importance was placed on the sense of community and the notion of contributing to the larger good. Individuals were compelled to defend the group they identified with at any cost if required. Sacrifice, whether in the form of the destruction or subduing of a foreign foe or the sacrifice of personal comfort was as viewed as the ultimate act of valour, patriotism, and nationalism. As sermon published in *The Times*, 3 April 1915 phrased it, '

> there could be no thought of waste about these lives which had been so freely laid down for the public good. In their less human degree such deaths shared the greatness of the death upon the Cross. The true spirit of self-sacrifice was there and gave a spiritual completeness to the incompletely developed character.[425]

By equating soldiers' deaths with the sacrifice of Christ, death en-mass was able to be elided with deep-rooted Christian morals and the ethos surrounding religious sacrifice, thus imbuing the dead, in the eyes of the living, with a sort of profundity or sanctity that helped justify their deaths. In chivalric literature the knight was frequently immersed in a paradox: he participated in

[425] *The Times*, 3 April 1915.

sacrifice both as the sacrificer and the victim.[426] The image of the crusader would be evoked by both the Church and governments as a visual and historical appeal to the idea of bravery and Christian sacrifice. These knights were protectors of the faith and warriors unafraid to die. As Allen Frantzen discusses 'The Crusades were an exalted precedent for WWI, a series of holy wars that supplied a mythical rather than a historical template for modern soldiers and their causes.'[427] Sermons would begin to refashion Jesus as a knight and warrior, his death being the ultimate sacrifice in a war against sin with one preacher going so far as to call Jesus 'the one perfect chivalrous Gentleman that the world has ever seen,' and 'the most perfect and knightly character in the whole history of chivalry.'[428]

'I have lived truly and wisely since the war began, and have made my sacrifices; now I ask that the price be required of me. I must pay my debt. Hamo went: I must follow him. I will.'[429] These words come from Siegfried Sassoon, one of World War One's most widely admired anti-war poets, and a quintessential example of disillusionment. The loss of his brother, Hamo, on 1 November 1915 from injuries sustained at Gallipoli inspired in Sassoon sacrificial rhetoric that not only accepted death but desired it. The imagery and vocabulary of sacrifice is abundant in poetry of the First World War and is displayed in numerous forms implying varying significances. In these poems soldiers become refigured as Christ-like martyrs, golden haired youths of innocence, as well as long-suffering men willing to atone for the lives they have taken with their own. As Jay Winter noted, 'The war poets took the language of the Bible and turned it

[426] Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 33.
[427] Allen Frantzen, *Bloody Good,* p. 75.
[428] Edward S. Woods, *Knights in Armour* (London: R. Scott, 1916); Albert Marrin, *The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974); see also: Ty Bontrager, *Imagined Crusade*.
[429] Siegfried Sassoon, *Siegfried Sassoon Diaries, 1915-1918*, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), pp. 22-23.

to new uses in their mediation on war.'[430]However, as the war progressed, another more troubling element emerged: a preoccupation and anxious longing for death. Sacrifice transformed from a metaphorical image or ideal used to soften the discussion of death en masse to an eventuality and expectation of such commonality in poetic works that the desire to survive at times seems almost non-existent. This fatalism is an underlying standard in much of medieval literature where knights are not expected to live to old age but rather die gloriously in battle, seeking this end until they achieve it as Yvaine does in Chrétien de Troyes' romance.[431] Lord Moran noted during his time as a medic in the First World War: 'A form of fatalism was common especially in the ranks.'[432] This included Sassoon who said: 'As for me, I had more or less made up my mind to die; the idea made things easier. In the circumstances there didn't seem to be anything else to be done.'[433] The soldier's willingness to be self-sacrificial would eventually become a manifestation of the ultimate form of nationalism — a selfless response to the "call of duty" and an action whose symbolic meaning transcended class and creed.[434] 'Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends!' would be a verse that reverberated through the churches of wartime Britain imbuing the dead with almost religious veneration. Soldiers were praised for giving up their lives, their sacrifice not simply tying them to the welfare of the nation but establishing them as immortal symbols of nationalistic self-sacrifice whose bloodletting sustained and rejuvenated a nation at war. British infantryman Coningsby Dawson wrote poignantly of this notion saying,

> [we] in the noble indignation of a great ideal, face a worse hell than the most ingenious of fanatics ever

[430] Jay Winter, 'Beyond Glory: First World War Poetry and Cultural Memory', *Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) 242-256, at p. 247.
[431] Chrétien Chrétien de Troyes, 'The Knight with the Lion (Yvain)', in *Arthurian Romances*, ed. by William W. Kibler and Carleton W. Carroll (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 295–380.
[432] Lord Charles Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage* (London: Robinson, 2007), p. 51.
[433] Siegfried Sasson, 'Memoires of a Fox-Hunting Man', in *The Complete Memoires of George Sherston* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 280.
[434] Babak Rahimi, 'Sacrifice, Transcendence and the Soldier', *Peace Review*, 17.1 (2005), 1–8, at p. 1.

> planned or plotted. Men die scorched like moths in a furnace, blown to atoms, gassed, tortured. And again other men step forward to take their places well knowing what will be their fate. Bodies may die, but the spirit of England grows greater as each new soul speeds upon its way.[435]

The intended authorial interpretation of 'sacrifice' proves an important factor when analysing poetry of the First World War. While one author may imbue poetry with the connotation of a death willingly met in preservation of a greater cause, another may wish to elicit feelings of grief, anger, and pointlessness. Unsurprisingly, this nuance allows for a plethora of divergent opinions to be expressed through verse. The Christ-soldier allusion is more prevalent in patriotic and sympathetic poetry, while the image of the doomed youth is summoned in condemnation of the war and of those who either promoted or prolonged it. As was discussed in the previous chapter, knights of romance such as Galahad and Percival were used to personify the combination of the Christian warrior ethic and ideas of the nobility of self-sacrifice in an effort to validate violence under the banner of justice and righteousness. The complexity of sacrifice's interpretation and usage thus provides compelling insight into ideological shifts both at the Front and at home. Glamourisation of death was significantly supported through associations with chivalry and knighthood, being the ultimate act of bravery. As Owen wrote to his mother in August 1916: 'To battle with the Super-Zeppelin, when he comes, this would be chivalry more than Arthur dreamed of. Zeppelin, the giant-dragon, the child-slayer, I would happily die in any adventure against him.'[436] The soldiers themselves employed the theme of sacrifice when discussing their own mortality as well as the loss of companions, using this device as a means of expression and in an effort of understand their own experiences.

Previously mentioned, 'On Leave (1)' illustrates the destructive power of war showing a

[435] Coningsby Dawson, *Carry On: Letter in War-Time* (London: John Lane Company, 1917).
[436] Wilfred Owen, *Collected Letters*, ed. by Harold Owen and John Bell (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 408.

soldier's disassociation with civilian life as well as his inability to exist within it.[437] His emphatic desire to return to the 'comfort' of the trenches would become symptomatic in some of the acceptance and desire for death. The soldier no longer identifies with civilian life; what has become familiar are the sights, sounds, and atmosphere of war. The result of this is an unconscious preference for life on the edge of death in anticipation of the end; safety is no longer a concern. After suffering loss many like Sassoon were driven towards sacrificial rhetoric that saw death as a necessary end:

> I'm no good anywhere else: all I can do is go there [the Front] and set an example. I've got something to live up to. But surely they manage to kill me next time! Something in me keeps driving me on: I must go on till I am killed. Is it cussedness (because so many people want me to survive the war) — or is it the old spirit of martyrdom?[438]

Death is removed from an adversarial position becoming a goal and the fulfillment of the soldier's role, while survival becomes less an accomplishment than a failed realisation. Battlefront death initiates a process that sublimates the soldier's sacrifice with the salvation of the nation; his death breathes life into the nation he endeavors to save through his actions. As Babak Rahimi noted, 'The fallen soldier is transformed into a transcendent entity as he […] offers his individuated life for the greater vitality [of the community], hence allowing him to participate in a transcendent entity in the form of his national or religious community.'[439]

The representations of the soldier as a Christ-like sacrifice further alludes to the notion of inevitable death, inevitable yet not pointless, an important distinction. Wilfrid Gibson's 'The Conscript' illustrates the life and death power of the doctors who determined if men were fit or unfit for combat.[440] The soldiers for whom the doctors' 'hasty award means life or death' are given greater significance as the narrator shockingly realises that the men are 'already dead,'

[437] Large, 'On Leave (1)' in *Voices of Silence*, p. 258.
[438] Sassoon, *Siegfried Sassoon Diaries, 1915-1918*, p. 162.
[439] Rahimi, 'Sacrifice, Transcendence', p. 2.
[440] Wilfrid Gibson, 'The Conscript', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, p. 26.

their doom preordained just as Christ's, seeing them 'With arms outstretched and drooping thorn-crowned head, / The nail marks glowing in his feet and hands' (ln. 4-5, 11, 13-15).

G. A. Studdert Kennedy, who acted as chaplain during the war and received the Military Cross at Messines Ridge, also used the soldier-Christ figure in his work 'Solomon in All His Glory'.[441] The poem creates the image of a royal procession yet the reader quickly realises that the significance of their parade is more than a demonstration of aristocratic power or wealth:

> Clothed in majesty divine.
> For the fairest of the lilies
> That God's summer ever sees
> Ne'er was robed in royal beauty
> Such as decks the least of these;
> Tattered, torn and bloody khaki,
> Gleams of white flesh in the sun,
> Robes symbolic of their glory
> And the great deeds they have done:
> Purple robes and snowy linen
> Have for earthly kings sufficed,
> But these bloody, sweaty tatters
> Were the robes of Jesus Christ.

Soldiers are elevated to the role of the conquering hero, their wounds surpassing the grandeur of a king's 'purple robes', their torn uniforms and battered bodies alike in nature to the wounds suffered by Christ. Kennedy glamourises their 'bloody khaki' as 'symbolic of their glory,' turning the horrible consequences of combat into marks signifying an elite group. The author not only links soldiers' suffering to Christ's but renders them one and the same in order to reconcile the brutality of war, refiguring them as the precursor to redemption.

Poems employing this treatment of sacrifice tend to use rhetoric that highlighted its physical and ephemeral nature, illustrating the difficulties of martial life or events endured in order to give the reader a sense of the magnitude of the dead's selfless act. Often pro-war, these poems lend themselves well towards use in recruitment as well as in memoriam. An essential

[441] G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *The Sorrows of God and Other Poems*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), p. 41.

component of the ethos of self-sacrifice was not simply the notion that to die for one's country exemplified nobility, but created a new means of collective identification and solidarity. The ideal of self-sacrifice generated a medium, particularly among combatants, that untited men through the belief that they were fighting for something greater than themselves and thus refiguring them as the collective body of the nation. Death or the idea of death functioned not simply as a force which parted loved ones but unified the dead as an eternal symbol.

'Nameless Men' by Edward Shillito expresses the omnipresence of the dead: 'Around me when I wake or sleep, / Men strange to me their vigils keep'.[442] The speaker acknowledges that the sacrifice of the departed does not end or begin with the recognition of the living, rather it is ever-present and enduring, the result of their sacrificial end being an eternal vigil. The narrator makes a physical gesture of reverence and gratitude: 'In grateful love I bend the knee/For nameless men who die for me' which allows the him to be simultaneously viewed either as a supplicant kneeling before a lord or as a sinner before the cross, in either respect he kneels before an ephemeral alter of the dead (ln. 7-8). This sacrifice, however, is also rendered a burden to the living likened in austerity to the Christian's duty to revere Christ's burden of sin — in essence, a sacrifice to be esteemed and dreadfully received:

> There is in earth or heaven no room
> Where I may flee this dreadful doom.
> Forever it is understood
> I am a man redeemed by blood.
> I must walk softly all my days
> Down my redeemed and solemn ways.
> Christ, take the men I bring to Thee,
> The men who watch and die for me.
> (ln. 9-16)

The author realises the impossibilities of escaping the indebtedness of surviving at the cost of another man's sacrifice. Shillito's message is certainly not without precedent. Writing home to

[442] Edward Shillito, 'Nameless Men', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, p. 92.

her husband in early 1917, Eva Isaacs tells of Cecil Langton, a guest at her dinner party and officer blinded in the war:

> Poor chap, it makes one's heart ache to see him. I feel as if I was his *debtor* for life, for after all it was for me and all of us at home that he lost his sight. I feel much the same to all the wounded I see or for that matter anyone in khaki, they seem to have a tremendous hold on one, nothing one can do is enough & one can never *repay* them for all they have lost or all they have risked.[443]

Wounded soldiers became a palpable and visible reminder of the violence and sacrifice of those on the Front and forced the population at Home to confront the cost of war of their fellow citizens.

Death on the battlefield was not always imbued with positivity or altruistic motivation to defend one's community, nation or ideals of service. 'Telling the Bess' by Reverend G. E. Rees instead expresses death as a regenerative power, removing the individual and replacing him with a force that creates a new order, surpassing mortal symbolism to become or be perpetuated by a supernatural force.[444] Here we find the story of a boy killed in battle who lies unburied and his death unacknowledged either in the field or at home:

> They dug no grave for our soldier lad, who fought and who died out there:
> Bugle and drum for him were dumb, and the padre said no prayer;
> The passing bell gave never a peal to warn that a soul was fled,
> And we laid him not in the quiet spot where cluster his kin that are dead.
> (ln. 1-4)

The lines show the harsh reality of war: the dead are not always mourned nor are their deaths even noticed, let alone remembered as acts of valour. The boy has met his end in the mud and there he shall forever lie. Rees forces the reader to come face to face with the grim image of a slain body left to the elements. The ambiguous use of 'lad' allows the reader to project the image of his or her own son, brother, or friend onto this 'lad'. '[W]e laid him not' places blame on the reader, insinuating that the boy's ignominious final resting place is the fault of the audience. The

[443] Letter, Eva Isaacs to Rufus Isaacs, 7 February 1917. Papers of the Marchioness of Reading, Imperial War Museum.
[444] G. E. Rees, 'Telling the Bees', in *Voices of Silence*, pp. 214–15.

poem then turns, anthropomorphising nature and breathing life into the boy's memory. Nature, which has surrounded the boy since his birth, now carries on his memory whereas man, who is supposed to be his closest kin, has forgotten him:

> Bound by the ties of a happier day, they are one with us now in our worst;
> On the very morn that my boy was born they were told the tidings the first:
> With what pride they will hear of the end he made, and the ordeal that he trod –
> Of the scream of shell, and the venom of hell, and the flame of the sword of God.
>
> Wise little heralds (bees), tell of my boy; in your golden tabard coats
> Tell the bank where he slept, and the stream he leapt, where the spangled lily
> floats:
> The tree he climbed shall lift her head, and the torrent he swam shall thrill,
> And the tempest that bore his shouts before shall cry his message still.
> (ln. 9-17)

The poem employs nature, a force surpassing the endurance and longevity of man, as the herald of the boy's acts and end. Once nature is introduced to the poem it supplants the importance of man, demonstrating that while the conflict is between humans, man will return to nature and his deaths will be immortalised by it. Though a single death may go unnoticed by his human comrades, nature sees all and the sacrifice is remembered eternally in the wind rather than in the bells of men.

'The Graves of Gallipoli' published in *The Anzac Book* under 'L. L.' recalls the sights and sounds of battle on the shores of Turkey.[445] The narrator of the poem stands observing the devastation of the land seeing that none have returned to heal its scars, yet he is quick to think of its regeneration, noting how the flowers will soon bloom again:

> Remembering that wild morning when the hills
> Shook to the roar of guns and those wild ranks
> Surged upward from the sea.
> None tends them. Flowers will come again in spring,
> And the torn hills and those poor mounds be green.
> (ln. 3-7)

While the poem draws attention to the forsaken landscape it focuses more prominently on the

[445] L. L., 'The Graves of Gallipoli', in *Voices of Silence,* pp. 119–20, 398.

idea of future growth and the restorative power of memory and nature. The renewal of the land symbolising the survival of the home front, in this poem's case Australia, as well as offering solace to the dead:

> Some flower that blooms beside the Southern foam
> May blossom where our dead Australians lie,
> And comfort them with whispers of their home;
> And they will dream, beneath the alien sky,
> Of the Pacific Sea.
> (ln. 11-15)

The work then moves forward to address the heroic nature of the soldiers' deaths likening them to the warriors who died at Troy, implying their sacrifice will be similarly immortalised. The author also evokes the idea of foreign soil being turned to domestic soil when occupied by the dead ('Yet where the brave man lies who fell in fight/For his dear country, there his country is.'), recalling Rupert Brooke's '1914 V: The Soldier': 'If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field / That is for ever England' (ln. 1-2).[446] In death the soldiers have sacrificed not only their lives but the most valuable aspects of them: 'youth and strength and pride' (ln. 27). They are thus figured as martyrs, their blood becoming 'seeds of nobler futures' having died 'pro patria' (ln. 29, 25). The penultimate stanza ends with the verse, 'Keep we their memory green' which seems to simultaneously imply an act the narrator is presently performing as well as a warning for the future (ln. 30). It reminds the reader that though nature is indeed restorative, if the fallen are not remembered they will neither rest nor the redemptive qualities of their sacrifice be perpetuated, suggesting a larger more unconscious fear: the fear of pointless sacrifice.

Perhaps one of the most emotionally provocative poems about memory and sacrifice is Canadian poet John McCrae's 1915 'In Flanders Fields'. The poet does not merely ask that the

[446] Brooke, 'The Soldier'.

dead be honoured in an abstract sense, but demands that men go and fight in the stead of the dead. Here we find the deceased soldier being rendered into something akin to a sacred being, an eternal entity deserving if not demanding veneration.[447] The dead become empowered and active as the process of death and remembrance of the sacrificed soldier transfers them to a new mode of existence. Rather than being narrated by the living, a feature common to many poems of sacrifice and memory, it is the dead that speak and point out their own sacrifice.

> We are the Dead. Short days ago
> We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
> Loved and were loved, and now we lie
> In Flanders fields.
> (ln. 6-9)

The warning tone of the final stanza, similar to that of 'The Graves of Gallipoli', evokes the regeneration of nature, declaring its power to be visually restorative as well as representative of the dead, yet meaningless without the significance placed in it by the memory of the living:

> Take up our quarrel with the foe:
> To you from failing hands we throw
> The torch; be yours to hold it high.
> If ye break faith with us who die
> We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
> In Flanders fields.
> (ln. 10-15)

Memory serves as a key feature in the justification or completeness of sacrifice. Continued recollection of the fallen not only adds significance to their martyrdom but also acts as its final component, completing it and allowing the dead to rest. However, this final element of sacrifice is the ficklest as it is the least enduring. McCrae warns the audience that the peace of the dead rests in the minds of the living, meaning also that men must take up arms and fight in place of those who have died in order to not 'break faith'. This motif was employed by Barrie in *A Well-Remembered Voice* as was seen in the preceding chapter. McCrae endeavours to force the

[447] John McCrae, 'In Flanders Fields', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, p. 155.

audience to view the dead not as inert bodies but rather as their fellow men who exist in a well-earned perpetual slumber. Only the living can disrupt their rest, resulting in a sort of silent purgatory for those who died to protect them. The breaking of faith with the dead invalidates their sacrifice ensuring that they will never find rest.

Many poets did not view sacrifice as ennobling but rather the manifestation of poor leadership and an unnecessary consequence of a long and even a pointless war. These poets employed the rhetoric of sacrifice in order to demonstrate the suffering of war, highlighting the treacherous conditions and by virtue of them, imbuing such calamity with either a manner of lost spirituality or patriotism. Death brought little reward and left the living to mourn rather than tell tales of courage or heroic battles. Discussion of the repercussions of combat challenged the idea of bravery in men that survived as well as sought to illuminate the truth hidden from civilians regarding the circumstances of soldiers' deaths. In its mocking depiction of the idea of bravely wounded soldiers, Sassoon's, 'The One-Legged Man,' depicts a former combatant grateful for his crippling injury because it has allowed him to return home: 'Splendid to eat and sleep and choose a wife, / Safe with my wound, a citizen of life. He hobbled blithely through the garden gate, / And thought: "Thank God they had to amputate!"'[448] While 'The Hero' illustrates the lies told to bereaved relatives when receiving news of their dead loved ones:

> Quietly the Brother Officer went out.
> He'd told the poor old dear some gallant lies
> That she would nourish all her days, no doubt.
> For while he coughed and mumbled, her weak eyes
> Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed with joy,
> Because he'd been so brave, her glorious boy.
>
> He thought how 'Jack', cold-footed, useless swine,
> Had panicked down the trench that night the mine
> Went up at Wicked Corner; how he'd tried
> To get sent home, and how, at last, he died,
> Blown to small bits. And no one seemed to care

[448] Siegfried Sassoon, *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), p. 48.

Except that lonely woman with white hair.[449]

The poem exhibits a cruel sense of irony, mocking the romance of the nobility of sacrifice and the blind trusting ignorance of the civilian. It also illustrates the cyclicality of life during war. The boy had left home for the Front, perhaps inspired by jingoistic rhetoric, where he imagined he would valiantly engage in combat. He then dies, the false tales of his courage being brought back to his mother in Britain who would spread the story to others, potentially inspiring another young man to head to war, perpetuating the cycle. The lie that had enlisted the first man helps to enlist the second and so continues on. Edmund Blunden's 'Vlamertinghe: Passing the Chateau, July 1914' likewise attempts to make evident the grim reality behind symbols of sacrifice. The poem belittles the use of poppies in memorialisation of the dead, calling attention to their beauty yet mocking and forcing the visualisation of the slain saying: 'But if you ask me, mate, the choice of colour / Is scarcely right; this red should have been duller.'[450]

Among the greatest fears that some individuals felt was the perception that their sacrifices would be wasted and that the desired end result — the salvation of the nation — would go unrealised. In contrast to his work previously mentioned, Kennedy's 'Dead and Buried' demonstrates, not necessarily the futility of sacrifice, but the underhanded or self-serving causes of it.[451] The poem is told in the first person and follows a soldier as he suffers the same torment as Christ on his way to the cross, turning Biblical landmarks into sites of major conflict in the war: 'I have borne my cross through Flanders,/Through the broken heart of France', 'I was crucified in Cambria', 'I was scourged for miles along the Albert Road' (ln. 1,7, 9). The poem

[449] Sassoon, *War Poems*, p. 49.
[450] Edmund Blunden, 'Vlamertinghe: Passing the Chateau, July 1917', in *Poetry of the First World War*, pp. 211-12.
[451] G. A. Studdert Kennedey, 'Dead and Buried', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, pp. 232–34.

progresses through the crucifixion of Christ to his burial leading the reader to believe that the poem will conclude with the resurrection of the soldier in some renewed form. This, however, is not the case. Instead, the soldier's tomb is forever guarded in order to keep the secret of why and by whom he was sacrificed, ensuring that the reason for the soldier's death is never realised and the good that should come of it is never obtained:

> With a thousand scraps of paper
> They made fast the open door,
> And the wise men of the council saw it sealed.
> With the seal of subtle lying,
> They made certain of my dying,
> Lest the torment of the peoples should be healed.
>
> Then they set a guard of soldiers
> Night and day beside the Tomb,
> Where the body of the Prince of Peace is laid,
> And the captains of the nations
> Keep the sentries to their stations,
> Lest the statesman's trust from Satan be betrayed.
>
> For it isn't steel and iron
> That men use to kill their God,
> But the poison of a smooth and slimy tongue.
> Steel and iron tear the body,
> But it's oily sham and shoddy
> That have trampled down God's spirit in the dung.
> (ln. 37-54)

Kennedy views soldiers' deaths as having failed to redeem the people and being ultimately in vain yet not necessarily due to the war itself but to the statesmen and leadership that have hampered their endeavours. He perceives their martyrdom as incomplete because 'With the seal of subtle lying, / They made certain of my dying, / Lest the torment of the peoples should be healed'. Those in power have successfully convinced men of the need for sacrifice and the merits of it with their 'trust from Satan' and 'smooth and slimy tongue' taking advantage of their willingness to act as sacrifices and using it against them to ensure redemption becomes impossible. The poem bitterly expresses the idea that sacrifice is not necessarily pointless but that it is made pointless when corrupt outside forces inhibit its realisation and completion.

Porter notes that the 'rhetoric of sacrifice did not disguise the war's conditions and heavy losses, but made a virtue of them, representing [them] as the necessary precondition of national moral and spiritual rebirth.'[452] To die for one's country was not simply a display of national pride but a demonstration of personal strength, and devotion to a masculine and social ideal that demanded an offering of the combatant's soul for the preservation of Britain. To endure the chaos and hardship of battle was akin to a religious struggle, the rewards of which were immortalisation in the form of the continuance of the nation and a memorial existence in perpetuity. The willingness to sacrifice one's life supported the community not simply under the notion that blood supplied the spirit of Britain but united the bereaved and harnessed the emotion of a nation, utilising it for the cause.

In another diatribe against meddlesome outside forces, 'Christmas Truce' by W. N. Ewer recalls the temporary cessation of hostilities in 1914 when both German and Allied forces met in No Man's Land in peace to celebrate Christmas.[453] Ewer sees the event as signifying the possibility of peace and a natural end to the war. However, the conflict is perpetuated as

> Old men […] sit and sip their wine,
> And talk about 'the bitter end'.
> And reckon up the tale of dead,
> And hate the foe they never saw,
> And vow to carry on the war
> Till the last drop of blood be shed.
> (ln. 11-16)

These outsiders force the war to continue in spite of the opportunity for peace and the mutual recognition of 'the bloody folly of it all'. The sacrifice of young lives at the direction of the old is perceived not simply as pointless but wholly unnecessary and in complete defiance of 'the truce of Christ' that the holiday has created. This violation is turned to a sin the cost of which is that

[452] Porter, 'Will to Sacrifice', p. 17.
[453] W. N. Ewer, 'Christmas Truce', in *Voices of Silence*, p. 130.

'More young lives shall be sacrificed'.

The male war poets were not the only individuals to pen lines in response war fervor. May Herschel-Clark's 'The Mother' denounces Brooke's famous '1914: The Soldier', altering the perspective to that of a grieving war mother.[454] Rather than endeavouring to offer the reader solace, 'If you should die, think only this of me' is rendered disquieting, calling the reader's attention to the soldier's ignorance in regards to the suffering his rush to prove his valour and patriotism has caused. The author attempts to force the reader to view war and the actions of the soldier not in terms of their significance to the overall aim of the conflict, but instead to the small, yet deeply important world of the mother: 'And think, my son, with eyes grown clear and dry / She lives as though for ever in your sight'. The poem ends in grief and guilt in opposition to the tranquility offered by Brooke:

> Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day's
> And laughter, learnt from friends; and gentleness,
> In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.
> (ln. 13-15)

Herschel Clark counters Brooke's words with her description of the cost of idealism:

> For country, honour, truth, traditions high,
> Proud that you paid their price, (And if some night
> Her heart should break – well, lad, you will not know.)
> (ln. 12-14)

Sacrifice is removed from a position of reverence and is instead portrayed as selfish indulgence. The young men that rush to war all to quickly fail to recognise the consequences and because they have died will never know of the suffering that they have left behind.

In 'The Messages' Wilfrid Gibson disregards the significance of death, turning it into an event of such commonality as to lack any distinguishing features.[455] The lines 'I cannot quite

[454] May Herschel-Clark, 'The Mother', in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, p. 109.
[455] Wilfrid Gibson, 'The Messages', in *Poetry of the First World War*, pp. 64-65.

remember . . . There were five / Dropt dead beside me in the trench – and three / Whispered their dying messages to me . . .' are repeated three times, one for the message of each dead man, constituting more than half the poem. The soldier uttering these words then emerges from the trenches 'more dead than alive, / Stone-deaf and dazed, and with a broken knee'. He vacantly limps away muttering his forgetfulness. The man entrusted with the dying words of his trench-mates is useless in his task as he can neither remember them nor whom the messages are meant to be delivered to. Tasked with such an important responsibility the reader is given the sense that he is meant to be a survivor, but in being fatally wounded himself demonstrate death's indiscriminate nature. Gibson deprives the soldier of any agency subjecting him to the will of death and illustrating that death is simply an end and that the events that occur before it means nothing. By removing any significance from death or dying actions Gibson also disallows them from occupying the position of sacrifice or future ennoblement.

* * *

The war presented soldiers with unprecedented difficulties, many of which were equally as psychological as they were physical. The mechanisation of combat fundamentally altered the way war was waged and quite understandably led towards disillusionment in some cases. However, during the war, Britain was in desperate need of being reassured that those laying down their lives were doing so for a just cause. Such reassurance writers like Sassoon and Owen could not provide. Whist many decried the 'old lie' there was a strong desire to see, as Parker asserts, 'that the old public-school traditions of chivalry, self-sacrifice, fair-play, and selfless patriotism were being maintained on the field of battle'.[456] We know this was not always the

[456] Parker, *Old Lie*, p. 26.

case; the general lack of autonomy in mechanized warfare often prevented this. Further, the shocking reality of the front was a very different image of war to the one some men had envisioned. Despite this, value was indeed found in the bonds created, ideals preserved and principles defended through combat. As this thesis has evidenced, the principles of chivalry, expressed through new means and avoiding traditionally associated images and rhetoric, still exerted powerful influence over literature, propaganda and morale. Biographical as well as literary accounts of events at the front demonstrate the need for comradery and belief in some form of justice. It would not be until the better part of a decade after the war's conclusion during the war books boom of the late 1920s that the disillusioned view of the war gained serious voice. Even then it was not a universally appealing or accepted perspective. As Bond puts forward, 'The same men who cried out at the inhumanity of the war often confessed that they had loved it with a passion and wondered if they would ever be able to free themselves from the front's magic spell.'[457] As the final chapter of this thesis will demonstrate, the chivalric principles which were active forces in the pre-war environment did not vanish. Chivalry and its tenets were evoked, recalled and relied upon in the post-war period and in several instances were just as poignant and important to morale and identity as before the outbreak of war.

[457] Bond, *Unquiet Western Front*, p. 30.

Chapter Five: Chivalry After the War

World War One produced an unprecedented amount of destruction and forever altered men's and women's perception and engagement with battle. Autobiographical writers such as Sassoon, Blunden, Graves, and Aldington offer vivid and poignant descriptions of war. They frequently shared marked hostility towards individuals on the Home Front, perceiving them as the perpetrators or engineers of WWI, as well as condemning middle-class institutions and their socio-cultural predilection towards romanticism or admiration of conflict. However, disillusionment was not the only experience of the war, nor did the importance of chivalry, its ideals, and its influence on various aspects of society wholly vanish. In reality, numerous facets of pre-war culture and expression retained their importance to British culture and identity. Masculinity underwent a re-figuration in order to be more compatible with the anti-militaristic yet pro-preparedness socio-political environment of post-war Britain. A great many accounts of the war demonstrate both an admiration of heroic actions and an acute awareness of the existence of a certain amount of romance and bravery in action, whilst simultaneously depicting the persistently traumatic and violent experience of warfare.

This final chapter will revisit many of the chivalric themes discussed throughout this thesis but examine their presentation and use in the post-war environment. By observing how these same themes and materials were received after four years of total-war, a clear image of chivalry's continued importance is developed. This chapter will demonstrate the persistence of chivalric values in public schools, the Boy Scouts, literature, social interaction, and gendered notions of responsibility. It will also evidence how chivalry did not simply slip under the radar, eking out an existence within a select social group, but was considered a necessary and critical

part of British character, and that in some instances, the waning of overt chivalry was seen as a tragedy.

Recalling his time at the Front, Stuart Cloete did not condemn the romanticised image of war and chivalry that he had learned at school, but regretted their denunciation and absence in post-war Britain,

> It is unbelievable but true that both in the USA and England crowds of people have not protected women they have seen attacked, or even tried to save a drowning child. They were playing it cool. It was none of their business. 'Let George do it. I'm OK, Jack …' Theses are the slogans. Patriotism, honour, courage, truth, honesty, chastity, and politeness are all considered old-fashioned today. Yet only by the acceptance of these standards can a stable society be built. […] I believe that mankind demands heroes. But it is interesting to see the efforts that are being made to destroy them. […] Our culture, from knight errant of chivalry rescuing maidens from ravenous dragons to boy scouts helping old ladies across a street, is based on this unstated code. The code of the strong protecting the weak. Of women and children first in disaster, of heroism and sacrifice.[458]

Not all men blamed their naivety or lofty ideals on the education they had received or the 'old lie' of preceding generations. Many men simply carried on; the war formed part of their lives, an admittedly gruesome and horrendous period, but a necessary one with its own virtues that when concluded, was set aside like one book in a series so that the next volume could begin.

The manner in which Field Marshal Haig was seen by his contemporaries and how he is perceived by both historians and lay individuals today, is demonstrative of the influence historical writing and disillusioned literature has had on the way in which WWI has been remembered. In 1928, significantly more citizens turned out to pay their respects to Haig than would to the funeral processions of either Sir John French, Sir Herbert Plummer, or after WWII, Viscount Montgomery of Alamein. It is estimated that between twenty and twenty-five thousand mourners passed by Haig's coffin each day that he lay in state at St. Columba's in London and in even greater numbers at St. Giles's in Scotland.[459] The huge outpourings of sympathy and grief,

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[458] Stuart Cloete, *A Victorian Son: An Autobiography, 1897-1922* (London: Collins, 1972), p. 193.
[459] Dan Todman, '"Sans Peur et Sans Reproche": The Retirement, Death, and Mourning of Sir Douglas Haig, 1918-1928', *The Journal of Military History*, 67.4 (2003), 1083–1106, at p. 1086.

and the almost unprecedented broadcast of his funerary procession hardly seem compatible with the image of Haig as a despised, ineffectual, and out of touch military commander. One individual wrote to Lady Haig remarking that in the passing of Field Marshal Haig:

> All rank is dropped by those who proudly bear,
> This parfait gentil knight's fair funeral pall.
> All ranks have lost their best and staunchest friend.
> All ranks his friends and bearers-comrades all.[460]

In the period immediately following his death, Haig was remembered as a knight who had valiantly devoted his life to his country. He was described as a 'parfait gentil knight' and 'sans peur et sans reproche,' phrases taken from the pages of Chaucer.[461] The use of Victorian, chivalric imagery of masculine, medieval warriors came to typify remembrance after WWI, relying on tradition to create a comforting and familiar icon that celebrated and honoured the dead.

Many scholars such as Stefan Goebel and Allen Frantzen have dedicated numerous pages to identifying the links between medievalism and memorialisation of the First World War. Goebel's comparative study of remembrance and memorialisation, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, deftly identifies British and German usage of the knight and links to medieval history in honouring the dead. Rather than assert that the war ushered in modernity, as Fussell argues, Goebel asserts that both German and British peoples used the links to the Middle Ages, notions of chivalry and courage as a means to coping with the horrors of war. Through meticulous archival research in both countries, Goebel's identifies how both societies used figures and ideals harkening back to medieval times to immortalise the dead. Similarly, Frantzen's *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* demonstrates the use of Christian chivalric ideas of sacrifice are implemented throughout the war as well as the impact they have on models of

[460] Todman, 'Sans Peur', p, 1088.
[461] Todman, 'Sans Peur', p. 1089.

behavior. He further identifies how medieval images appearing in postcards, posters, films as well as memorials and literature, contribute to the notions of heroic male suffering and sacrifice. These studies demonstrate that across Britain the figure of the knight was used as a representation of honour, bravery, and sacrifice, emphasising their importance to remembrance in the post-war environment. In this commemorative manner chivalry created a physical representation as well as an ideal which all combatants could be identified with, providing a sense of cohesion that transcended social, religious, and ethnic barriers. I will not dwell on the voluminous uses of medieval iconography for that is a study unto its own, rather this final chapter focuses on the continued relevance and importance of chivalry to both civilian life and surviving combatants in literary forms as opposed to physical memorialisation.

While the language of chivalry may have been altered, its central principles and ethos survived the First World War through new definitions of masculinity, patriotism as well as the maintenance of pre-war educational standards, social interaction, and values. This chapter will revisit many of the subjects and themes that dominated previous chapters, paralleling them with interwar counterparts in order to more clearly indicate the persistence of their appeal. In doing so, an analysis of the interwar records from Wellington, Eton, Charterhouse, and Winchester schools will attest to the persistent and even increased use of medieval and medievalist works, as well as those which romanticise war, indicating a distaste for anti-war or disillusioned literature. This will be followed by an exploration of the transformation of the Boy Scouts' post-war role within the community and national identity. This will illustrate how the very lack of change regarding their teachings and ethos represents the importance and enduring influence of chivalric principles. This will be followed by a discussion of the new ideals surrounding masculinity and nationalism, elucidating their connection to Victorian notions of male responsibility as well as

Boer War-era ideas of combat readiness. The chapter will conclude with a literary analysis of *Tell England: A Study in a Generation*, a widely popular novel which follows the lives of three boys through their days at public school to the end of the Gallipoli Campaign, discussing how the novel acts as a representation of both new and old notions of masculine, social responsibility, and their derivation from chivalric principles.

* * *

While organisations and much of society shied away from anything that hinted of militarism, after 1918 the idea that every man had a duty to be physically fit in the event of renewed war became a national preoccupation. The success of the Boy Scouts movement was little hampered by WWI with membership perpetually on the rise. However, they would adopt a new role within the community after the armistice, becoming the keepers of graves and monuments as well as providing an important outlet for former soldiers to maintain bonds of brotherly fellowship. This movement venerated masculine physicality, which despite receiving a new veneer, looked very much like a form of nineteenth-century Muscular Christianity and even employed pre-war chivalric rhetoric in its promotion. Educators continued to support the character building effects of chivalric literature and suggested reading lists remained peppered with medieval romances such as *Sir Bevis of Hampton.* As Roper asserted, it was not for some years after the war that the works of disillusioned writers began to make a significant impact on the perception of the war.[462] There is no denying that WWI was an event that devastated Europe, but the reaction to it was neither as immediate nor as black and white as many later accounts

[462] Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', p. 346.

would have us believe.

School Literature Revisited

Schools across Britain experienced tremendous losses due to the war. Chapels quickly commissioned memorials to honour the dead and academic institutions of all levels mourned the loss of a generation. Chapter Two demonstrated the tremendous impact chivalric literature and teachings had on the ethos of the public school and the proclivity towards patriotic, pro-war sentiments it produced. Romance had surrounded war and the potential honour to be gained on the battlefield captured the imagination, encouraged chacterisations of soldier-knights, damsels in distress, and barbarous enemies. The writers of the War Propaganda Bureau had executed their task with tremendous efficiency, encouraging notions of valour, glory in death, and a set of British ethics and morals that hinged on Christian, chivalric principles. While many boys would not join their classmates at the Front, they would have nonetheless experienced the hardship created by four years of total war, undoubtedly effecting their perception of it. In organisations such as the Boy Scouts the hallmarks of pre-war culture — its love of romance, its idealisation of strength, bravery, and the honourable gentleman — did not vanish after 1916 or even 1918. As this section will indicate, the value of chivalry was not forgotten; it continued to be taught through literature and can be seen both directly and indirectly through the interests and writings of pupils. Fascination with the medieval continued as did the admiration of bravery, self-sacrifice, the nobility of combat death, and the image of the knight as the ultimate symbol of courage.

In July of 1919 a poem entitled ‘A Song of Peace’ was published in the *Carthusian*, Charterhouse School’s official student magazine, demonstrating the continued use of ideas of

heroic death, of glorifying the soldier as a sacrifice and saviour, as well as condemning conscientious objectors:

> The thunder of the guns has ceased,
> The last dread shot has done its worst,
> The thankful world proclaims a feast,
> The bells with merry peals outburst.
>
> The powers of hell no more run wild
> Upon a stricken, groaning earth:
> God's altars are no more defiled
> By brutes who've lost their right to birth.
>
> Once more the Prince of Peace doth reign;
> And Mars withdraws his fiery hosts.
> Yea, it is finished: fiends insane
> No longer ravage Europe's coasts.
>
> Nigh twenty centuries ago,
> Upon a little rounded hill
> A Hero died. Now do we know
> His spirit lingers with us still.
>
> His spirit of self-sacrifice;
> His wondrous love that giveth all,
> That doth not shrink, whate'er the price,
> To serve mankind at Duty's call.
>
> For some have given of their wealth
> To help their country in her plight,
> And some have given of their health,
> And some have even giv'n their sight.
>
> And some went out in manhood's prime,
> And lost their limbs in deadly strife,
> And reached old age before their time,
> And some nave even lost their life.
>
> But some stayed quietly behind
> To tend the sick and ease their pain –
> Thus did the nurses serve mankind,
> Nor was their work performed in vain.
>
> Yet some have not fulfilled their share;
> For they were out for selfish gain;
> For strikes and riots rent the air
> While heroes died in mortal pain.
>
> What man hath greater love than they;
> They who endured to the end,
> Who worked not for reward or pay,
> And gave their lives to Christ, their Friend?

Oh! how can we the debt repay?
With monuments of priceless worth?
Does it not seem a better way
To care for those they've left on earth?[463]

The poem bears a thematic resemblance to Studdert Kennedy's 'Solomon in All His Glory' and Shillito's 'Nameless Men'. Jesus's crucifixion is portrayed not only as the ultimate sacrifice but a sacred duty. This duty, like the forgiveness of sin that his death provided, is inherited and passed on through generations. The shirking of the requirement of sacrifice, whether it be in the form of wealth, care, physical ability, or life, not only flies in the face of contemporaries' that struggled for the cause but shows disregard for Christ's sacrifice. Both men and women have a debt to pay to Christ as well as to soldiers who are here again refigured as Christ-like sacrifices. Though the poem avoids vocabulary that directly evokes the image of war, the correlation between service and sacrifice is evident as is the demand for national support through action. The willingness to be self-sacrifice is indicative of love of nation, beliefs, and fellow man. The avoidance of sacrificial duty separates those who support British sentiments of Christianity and nationalism from those whose selfishness disrupts social order through the rejection of the pre-subscribed requirement of sacrifice.

Similarly, a poem in Wellington College's *Wellingtonian* hails the nobility of sacrifice, illustrating that willingness and ability to face death without reservation is the mark of bravery and masculinity.

Proud he was; no, not conceited, proud.
Proud of the noble cause he died for. Proud
Of his fresh strength and lusty manhood. Proud
In the bright knowledge of his fearlessness.
Proud in the vision of his strength and beauty.
Proud so that he would not bow to any man.
Proud so that he would not ask for help or
kindness.
Proud so that though his heart was ever open

[463] Charterhouse, 'A Song of Peace', *Carthusian*, 12.408 (1919).

He never hankered after love or friendship.
Proud so that he took the knocks of fortune
With light laughing lips–rose after a fall,
Shook himself and still smiling went his way.
Proud that, when his most cherished hope had
perished,
He did not sink to sullen silence and despair,
That, when the work he'd spent his life for was,
At one blow, shattered, he went and gathered
The fragments smiling yet stern-eyed and grim,
Proud in the knowledge of his nobleness.
No idle boaster he did not proclaim
His virtues to all men with empty words.
He lived and died; and they who wished to
knew. [464]

The romantic description of the poem's subject helps form the image of a modern soldier conflated with a chivalric warrior. He is proud, strong, fearless, and beautiful, as having grown, assumedly both in physical strength and maturity, because of the difficulties of life in addition to self-awareness of his own nobility and virtue. He accepts death, finds happiness - fulfilment even - in dying for 'the cause'. The *Wellingtonian* poem, in describing a single masculine figure in possession of the above mentioned qualities (persevering through adversity, pursuing a dream or ideal, superior in ability and virtue, defined by his manliness, fearlessness and strength), creates a man that is very much an idealised image of a knight. The two poems, when considered together, use the tenets of chivalry to express notions of responsibility, masculinity, nationalism, and honour, illustrating the persistent capability of engendering ideas of bravery and worth as contingent on martial service and sacrifice.

Speech Day in 1921 at Wellington College featured many prominent members of the aristocracy, and was described as an event one where 'neither Beauty nor Chivalry were lacking amongst our visitors, nor, we hope, amongst ourselves either'.[465] In addition, a 1921 lecture on

[464] 'Poetry: Pride', *Wellingtonian* (Wellington, England: Wellington College, July 1920), pp. 129-36.
[465] 'Speech Day', *Wellingtonian* (Wellington, England, July 1921), pp. 57-68.

music, largely of medieval origin, featured a song performed in honour of Henry V's 1415 victory at the Battle of Agincourt:

> Our King went forth to Normandy,
> With grace—and might—of chivalry;
> There God for him—wrought marvellously,
> Wherefore Englonde may call and cry:
>
> DEO GRATIAS
>
> He set a siege, sooth for to say,
> To Har—fleur town—with royal array;
> That town he won—and made a fray
> That France shall rue till Do—mes—day;
>
> DEO GRATIAS
>
> Then for sooth that Knight comely,
> In Agincourt field—fast manly;
> Through grace of God—most might-y
> He had both field and victory.
>
> DEO GRATIAS
>
> Now Gracious God he save our King,
> His people and all—his well willing;
> Give him good life—and good ending,
> That we with mirth may safely sing:
>
> DEO GRATIAS.[466]

The work needs little analysis to indicate the overt use of chivalry and knighthood in its emulation of martial courage and national and historic pride. In 1921, Agincourt retained its status as one of the most consistently used events to exemplify British chivalry and bravery. Agincourt linked historical memory and British identity to ideas of chivalry and courage, a connection that similarly elevated 'The Bowmen' from a work of literary fiction to a myth of almost apocryphal standing.

As was shown in Chapter Two, Winchester College's archives provide strong indications of the importance of chivalric and pro-war rhetoric to the education of their pupils. This trend by

[466] 'For the Victory at Agincourt', *Wellingtonian* (Wellington, England, March 1921), pp. 17-24.

no means came to an end after the war. The Senior Part Lines Books of Winchester remain identical to those of 1913 and 1917 while those of the Middle and Junior Parts indicate not disillusionment with romantic or pro-war sentiments, but further encouragement of them due to the edition of authors such as Newbolt, Brooke, and Grenfell.

Middle Lines 1927

Anonymous, **The Twa Corbies**
Canadian Boat Song
Arnold, M., From 'Sohrad and Rustrum'
'The Scholar Gipsy'
Brooke, R., **Sonnet, 'The Dead'**
From 'Grantchester'
Burns, R. 'Ye Banks and Braes'
'Lament for Colluden'
Byrd, W., 'Song'
Collins, W., 'Ode to Evening'
De la Mare, W., 'Arabia'
Fitzgerald, E., From 'Omar Khayyam'
Flecker, J. E., **'War Song of the Saracens'**
From 'The Golden Journey to Samarkand'
Gray, T., From 'the Elegy'
Hawtrey, E., 'English Hexameters'
Henley, W. E., 'Invictus'
Herrick, R., 'To the Virgins'
Kipling, R., **'Sussex'**
Masefield, J., **From 'Reynard the Fox'**
'Tewkesbury Road'
Milton, J., From 'Samson Agnoistes'
'Evening and Night'
From 'L'Allegro'
From Il Penseroso
When the Assault was intended to the City
Satan's Banner
Scott, Sir W., **'The Combat'**
'Coronach
'Flodden'
Shakespeare, W., Dirge
Under the Greenwood Tree
A Morning Star
King and Shepherd
Wolsey Disgraced
A Portrait
A Sea Dirge
Shelley, P. B., Arethusa
Shirley, J., **'Death the Leveller'**
Swinburne, A. C., From 'A Jacobite's Exile'

Junior Lines 1922 & 1928

Black, W., 'The Tiger'
Brooke, R., **'The Soldier'**
Browning, R., 'Home Thoughts from Abroad'
Home Thoughts from the Sea'
Browning, E. B., 'A Musical Instrument'
Campbell, T., **'Ye Mariners of England'**
Cory, William, 'Heraclitus'
Drayton, Michael, **'Agincourt'**
Goldsmith, Oliver, 'The Village Parson'
Grenfell, Julian, **'Into Battle'**
Henley, W. E., **'England, my England'**
Hodgson, W. E., **'Before Action'**
'Back to Rest'
'The Hills'
Kingsley, C., 'A Welcome'
Kipling, R., **'The Glory of the Garden**
'A Song to Mithras'
'Cities and Thrones and Powers'
'Merros Down'
'The Children's Song'
Marlowe, C. 'The Passionate Shepherd to his love'
Milton, J. From ' L'Allegro'
Newbolt, Sir Henry **'Clifton Chapel'**
He fell Among Thieves'
'Hope the Hornblower'
Raleigh, Sir Walter, 'Her Reply' (to Marlowe's Poem)
Shakespeare, W.,
King Henry's Speech before Agincourt
The Hungry Lion
Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind
Mark Antony's Oration
Orpheus
Fairy Land
Stevenson. R. L., 'The Vagabond'
'In the Highlands'
Whitman, Walt., **'O Captain, my Captain'**

** Alterations to 1928 edition

Tennyson, A. Lord,	**'Sir Galahad'**		
	'Come down O Maid'	Added:	
	From 'In Memoriam'	Browning, R.	'Saul'
	From 'Ode on Duke of Wellington'	**Macaulay, Lord,**	**'The Armada'**
		Masefield, J.,	'Reynard the Fox'
	'Excalibur'	'**To-Morrow'**	
	'Crossing the Bar'	'Cavalier'	
	From 'A Dream of Fair Women'	Removed:	
	'Song of the Lotus Eaters'	Browning, R.,	'Home Thoughts from Abroad'
	Specimen of Translation of the Illiad	**Drayton, M.,**	**'Agincourt'**
		Marlowe, C.,	'The Passionate Shepherd to his love'
Webster, J.,	'Land Dirge'		
Wordsworth, W.,	'English 1802'	Raleigh, Sir Walter,	'Her Reply' (to Marlowe's Poem)
	'**Happy Warrior'**		
Wotton, Sir H.,	'Elizabeth of Bohemia'	**Whitman, Walt.,**	**'O Captain, my Captain'**

The poems that have been listed in bold are those that could be interpreted as promoting nationalistic, chivalric, martial, or medieval sentiments.[467] A significant portion of both the Middle and Junior Lines Books incorporate 'war poetry' that continues to glamourise battle and death and does not (with perhaps the exception of an excerpt from Masefield's 'Reynard the Fox') introduce anti-war or anti-romantic sentiments. In addition, the Senior Lines Books of 1924 and 1926 remain completely unaltered from their 1913 and 1917 editions and thus maintain teaching Tennyson, Newbolt, Scott, and Brooke. Similarly, the *Winchester College Calendar* lists the texts and topics students were examined on. Among the many topics of assessment recorded were Newbolt's poetry in 1924, Tennyson, Chaucer, Malory and medieval history of Europe in 1927, as well as the Norman Conquest, Chaucer's *Prologue*, and once again Tennyson and Europe in the Middle Ages in 1929.[468]

[467] Winchester College, *Middle Part Lines Book* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1927); Winchester College, *Junior Part Lines Book* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1922); Winchester College, *Junior Part Lines Book* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1928).
[468] Winchester College, *Winchester College Calendar* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1924); Winchester College, *Winchester College Calendar* (Winchester: P. & G. Booksellers, 1927).

The college and house library records of Charterhouse School show a division in interest between the school at large and the smaller libraries of the individual boarding houses. As was shown in Chapter Two, enthusiasm for war literature began developing prior to 1914 and surged through the conflict with numerous texts written for the War Propaganda Bureau making their way into school collections. After 1918 this interest continues to such an extent that the Charterhouse Library Committee in the Long Quarter of 1919, adds the plays of J. M. Barrie, *Joan & Peter* by H.G. Wells, and *The English Poets, Vol. 5*, which includes writers from Browning to Brooke, and also proposes that:

> in view of the large output of war-literature a sub-committee be appointed to recommend representative books concerned with the war in its various aspects, that such books not so recommended be bought for the library, and that such books when bought be kept together so as to form a definitive section of Library. The Headmaster was in favour of shelves being set apart for 'war literature', & the Librarian pointed out that two shelves were already full, upon which the motion was carried [469]

A significant number of books, historical accounts, literature, and poetry, considering both German and British points of view, would be put forward in the coming years. However, neither novels nor historical works concerning the war appear of primary interest in the general collections and motions for their inclusion were frequently lost. One consistent exception to this were the works of Robert Graves which were proposed and passed in 1922, 1923 and twice in 1927, though this may be due more to Graves being an old boy of the school. Curiously, *Goodbye to All That* does not appear to have caught the boys' or masters' attention, at least not by 1932. Graves's *Country Sentiment* would be reviewed in *The Crescent*, *A Literary Supplement to 'The Carthusian'* in 1920, being described as having,

> advanced a long way beyond the limit of his previous books. Except for a few poems, the themes are everyday subjects […] none of the maudlin sentiment which spoils so much other modern verse […] Mr. Graves' study of Nursery Rhymes has given all his work the directness, which is their characteristic as well as his. He calls a spade a spade, and not like Sassoon, 'a shovel.'[470]

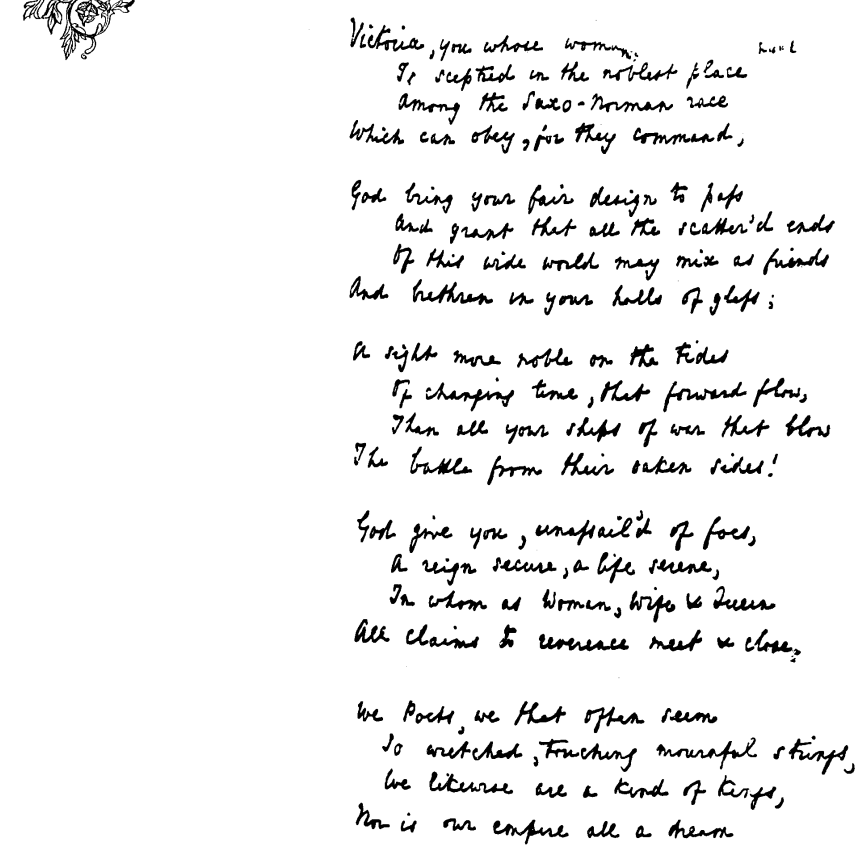
[469] Charterhouse, *Charterhouse Library Minutes* (Godalming, 1919).
[470] Charterhouse, 'The Crescent: A Literary Supplement to "The Carthusian"', 1.2 (1920).

The reviewer, an undisclosed student, appears to indicate a general dislike for the disillusioned vein of poetry that had grown throughout the war which may further explain an overall lack of such literature in either the school or boarding house libraries.

In 1921, Charterhouse received a remarkable donation of a hand-written, unpublished poem by Tennyson, reproduced in the *Greyfriar* alongside an image of the Robinite Memorial which depicts St George killing the dragon. Both items stand as a testament to the school's interest in romance and the medieval, as well as their significant influence.

LORD TENNYSON'S POEM.

LORD TENNYSON has enriched the Museum by presenting to it the autograph of an unpublished poem by his father. The poem was written for the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the building which is now the Crystal Palace:—



Victoria, you whose womanly
  Yet sceptred in the noblest place
  Among the Saxo-Norman race
Which can obey, for they command,

God bring your fair design to pass
  And grant that all the scatter'd ends
  Of this wide world may mix as friends
And brethren in your halls of glass;

A sight more noble on the Tides
  Of changing time, that forward flow,
  Than all your ships of war that blow
The battle from their oaken sides!

God give you, unassail'd of foes,
  A reign secure, a life serene,
  In whom as Women, Wife & Queen
All claims to reverence meet & close,

We Poets, we that often seem
  So wretched, Touching mournful strings,
  We Litterae are a kind of kings,
Nor is our empire all a dream

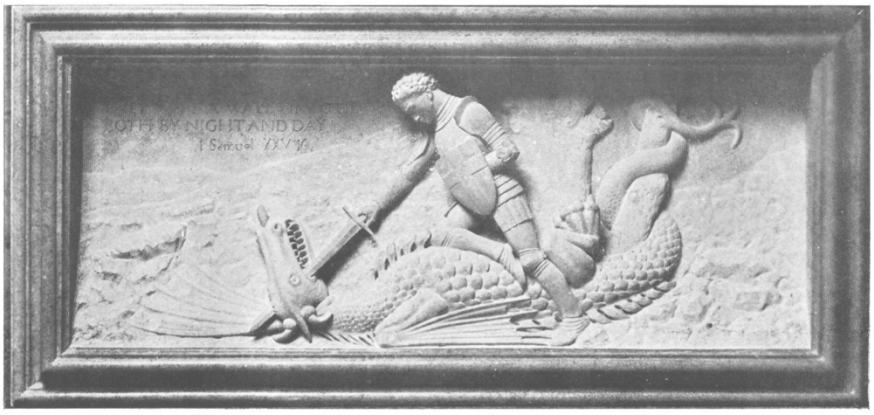
ROBINITE WAR MEMORIAL.

FULL-PAGE FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY J. C. THOMSON (CH. M.).

THE Robinite War Memorial in the new Long Room takes the form of a chimney-piece of Hopton Wood stone, with a Memorial panel of the same stone representing St. George and the Dragon. The inscription, taken from I Samuel xxv., 16, reads, 'They were a wall unto us both by night and day.'

This chimney-piece and panel have been erected by past and present members of Robinites, and the panel is the work of W. B. Fagan, R.B.S.

The bronze panel, on which are inscribed the names of the twenty-one Robinites who fell in the war, is the gift of J. W. Marshall, House Master of Robinites L.Q. 1902—C.Q. 1909; and the design and modelling of the panel are his own work.



ROBINITE WAR MEMORIAL.

The donation was seen as a great contribution to the school's collection and though the poem was written long before WWI, its pairing with the unveiling of the Robinite War Memorial suggests the continued importance of medieval rhetoric and iconography, as well as the persistent connection between Victorian language and ideals and post-WWI memorialisation.

Meanwhile, the Gownboy's House Hassh Library Minutes, belonging to one of Charterhouse's boarding houses, appears to tell a somewhat different story.[471] Boys were able to exert more influence over the material acquired by the house libraries and as such there is less concern over maintaining a suitably well-rounded collection. The minutes from 1925 to 1930 show that the boys were chiefly interested in novels, particularly volumes by Scott, Doyle, Hay, Buchan, Chesterton, Wells, Gibbs, Hardy, and Montague. The influence of the WPB can easily be seen. Many of the novels requested are related to the war; they are pro-war, nationalistic and in several cases carry an air of jingoism or romance. There is almost entirely no interest in the works of disillusioned writers, including Graves. One notable exception occurs on 27 July 1930, when the inclusion of Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, evidently a very touchy subject, is brought forward with a pupil demanding

> That a severe vote to censure be passed on Mr H.L for not procuring; *Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man;* by Siegfried Sassoon in accordance with the motion passed on 15/12/29, and on the L.C. for taking no notice of this motion in refusing to pass the book at the last meeting. Also that notice be taken of the fact that *The Finger of Fate* by Sapper was passed at the last meeting, although it had been unanimously rejected at the meeting before.[472]

Though students' curriculum promoted engagement with classical texts far more than literary works of other periods, the inclusion of non-classical literature in other aspects of academic life provides us with insight into students' interests and the value teachers placed on particular authors, themes, and periods. The appeal of romance and chivalric combat did not vanish, but

[471] Charterhouse, *Gownboy House Library Motion Book 1925-1948* (Godalming: Charterhouse School), MCMXLVIII.
[472] Charterhouse, *Gownsboy*, 27.7.30.

was enhanced by a growing body of literature that praised the actions of the soldier, portrayed him as brave, honourable, and self-sacrificing despite the grim environment of the Front. The modern soldier found himself in the midst of unprecedented destruction and without autonomy. He voiced his fear, frustration, and hatred of war, of mechanisation's severe hampering of opportunities for individual acts of valour, and the destruction of the romance of combat. Still, soldiers composed an elite group of brothers in arms, they fought against an aggressive power that ran counter to British ideology and sensibilities, and were willing to face death bravely, actions worthy of a knight.

Boy Scouts in the Interwar Period

In 1922, Baden-Powell justified the existence of the Scout's marksmanship badge by saying 'We are anti-war, not anti-defence'.[473] Nationally, there was a growing tension between discipline and militarism; organisations such as the Boy Scouts, which were viewed as playing a contributory role in the creation of the pre-war ethos of militarism, were frequently held under a suspicious scrutiny, criticised as preparing boys for military service rather than the more peaceful aims that Baden-Powell professed.

The war had shown Britain the consequences of aggressive nationalism as well as shown the flaws of the class system. Masculine society had been severely fractured by the conflict and Baden-Powell, as he had before the war, saw the need to unite boys, regardless of status and wealth, under an ideology that promoted a healthy mind and body and that was capable of encouraging a sense of community that worked towards a greater good. He was not alone in his

[473] Roland Philipps to Arthur Gaddum, 17 August 1915, TC/248; Robert Baden-Powell marginal notes in letter from Percy Everett to Robert Baden-Powell 4 September 1922

support of the Scouts however: numerous prominent individuals, both political and literary in nature, still saw great value in the organisation. Speaking at the Boy Scouts' Association in Montreal in 1936, John Buchan said: 'The Scout movement stands firm upon certain great moral principle which no sophistry can undermine, for they are the basis of civilization. It teaches the personal duties of courage and self-discipline and patience, and the social duties of sacrifice and sympathy'.[474]

By the end of the war more than 100,000 Scouts, former Scouts and Scout leaders had become soldiers and some 10,000 of them had died in combat.[475] The Scouts had not only served in the trenches but had played an instrumental role in maintaining the Home Front. Boys had taken part in harvesting, coast guard duties, and had registered their bicycles for service.[476] Those who were left to manage the Scouts after 1918 were either too young or too old to have fought, and those who returned as veterans felt an unyielding desire to demonstrate or see that their wartime experiences had meaning. Because of this, the Scouts took on a new post-war role as the keepers of memory, becoming, as Proctor put it, 'banner-bearers in the cult of the dead'.[477] The Scouts now saw it as their duty to care for the monuments to the fallen, assist with commemorative ceremonies, and ensure that those who had died in battle were not forgotten. This role continues to the present day; each year an honour guard of Scouts attends Remembrance Sunday in the company of the Queen and Royal Family.

Perhaps more important to the Scouts' post-war identity was their role in creating an environment for male fellowship. As has already been demonstrated, many men placed a

[474] John Buchan*, Canadian Occasions* (Toronto, 1940), p. 170.
[475] Boy Scout Association, *11th Annural Report* (London, 1919), pp. 15-16.
[476] Tammy M. Proctor, *On My Honour : Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 2002), XCII, P. 87.
[477] Proctor, *On My Honour*, p. 89.

significant value on the comradery and bonds developed at the Front, some finding it difficult to re-assimilate into civilian society due to the perception that there existed a gulf of misunderstanding between combatants and non-combatants. The Scouts were able to offer relief from the abrupt transition back into civilian life by fulfilling men's need for male companionship. Former soldiers frequently took up leadership positions in the Scouts, educating younger members, and imparting the skills learned at the Front. Scout camps, gatherings, and jamborees presented veterans with an environment free of the pressures of readjustment, where they could engage with an all-male community that promoted strong bonds of brotherhood, not just between former combatants, but also young men and boys who had not enlisted. Further, it offered an opportunity for redefinition, to re-discover an identity unattached to the war and, if only temporarily, to be free of the memories of the war. Areas such as Gilwell Park, a large estate north of London donated to the Scouts by W. F. de Bois Maclaren, became a social and physical space for men to engage in comradery and once again enjoy the ethos of an all-male community.[478]

The Scout's handbook, *Scouting for Boys*, remained unchanged after the war and by 1920 the organisation would have an international membership of 1,643,988, a number that would steadily increase each year.[479] One implication of this consistency is that its chivalrous rhetoric and teachings were not deemed dangerous or distasteful enough for parents or Scouts to call for a revision. If the romanticisaiton of chivalry was seen as such a coercive force as many disillusioned writers would have audiences believe, and had contemporary readers so ardently believed such an ethos responsible for the blind patriotism and militarism that preceded the war, then surely an organisation of such national and global influence as the Scouts would have been

[478] Proctor, *On My Honour*, pp. 91-92.
[479] 'History - 1920 to 1929', *History of Scouting*, 2009 <http://historyofscouting.com/history/history-1920.htm>.

forced to alter its rhetoric if it wished to survive. Instead, the sentiments and ideals which Baden-Powell had founded the Scouts on remained as relevant and appealing after the war as they had before.

During the interwar period new editions of *Scouting for Boys* would be published in 1918, 1924, 1926, and 1932 for British audiences, as well translations in numerous languages for Scouts abroad but always by and large retaining its original content. Where Baden-Powell did have to make adjustments was in the methods used to counter bias and the construction of a stronger correlation between the Scouts and an image of preparedness through social comradery, more suitable for to the conservative political and social climate of the interwar period. While the Scouts founder had always adamantly declared that the organisation was neither militaristic, nor beholden to any political party or movement, there was now a need to more firmly declare their creed of diplomacy and goodwill. The Scouts of the 1920s and 1930s advocated peacefulness, preparedness, defence, and acceptance, endeavouring to reduce fear and promote a living 'Junior League of Nations'.[480] This aspiration would be realised at the Jamboree of 1929 when 'On the 15th anniversary of our entry into the war, the boys of Germany and France, Belgium and Austria, and two-score nations as well, gathered together'.[481] As European leaders gathered at the Hague to discuss reparations, former enemies came together in peace, some returning items taken as war trophies, some exchanging mementos of their home country, but all drawn together as a symbol of global youth and unity.

Despite more concerted efforts to disconnect military connotations from the Scouts, their ethos and teachings were still heavily contingent on chivalric tenets and notions of bravery,

[480] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 365-69.
[481] 'Scouts Bond of Brotherhood', *Yorkshire Post*, 5 August 1929, p. 10; 'Last Day of Jamboree', *Times*, 13 August 1929.

responsibility, sacrifice, and honour. Soldiering was still valourised and the idea of offering up oneself in defence of the nation was still esteemed the ultimate sacrifice.[482]

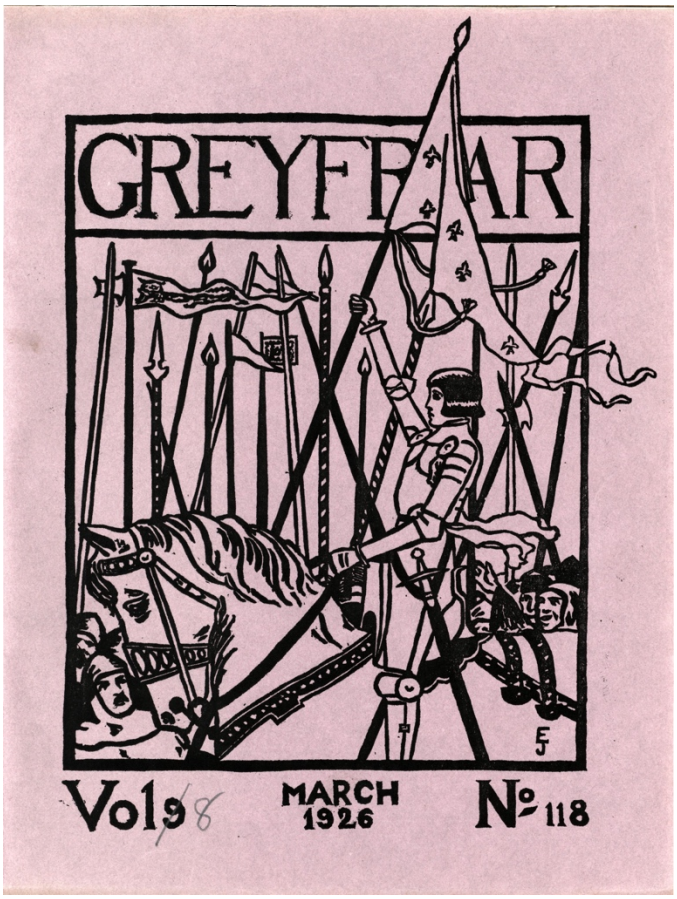
The Scouts' presence in public schools would become no less important than it had been before the war. Institutions such as Wellington, Charterhouse, and Eton all make frequent mention of scouting activities, camps, and their role in OTC programs as well as of like-minded organisations such as the Boys Brigade. Baden-Powell would visit and write to many public schools encouraging the development or continuation of scouting programs, insistent on their positive effect on the morals and manliness of growing boys. Writing to *The Carthusian*, Baden-Powell warns of the importance of preparedness and in his usual coercive style, insinuating that character not in keeping with the Scout's regime is un-British:

> Yes, there's lots of adventure and exploration still open to fellows who like that sort of thing, and I don't know a true Britisher who doesn't.
>
> But the tenderfoot who is not accustomed to looking after himself has a rotten time of it when he starts out to look for adventure. So rotten, that in many cases, as I have said above, he goes under—or in other cases he gets sickened of it before he has had the enjoyment that comes as soon as you know how to avoid or to tackle the ordinary little difficulties of campaigning.
>
> […]
>
> Over 100,000 of young fellows who have been trained as Boy Scouts went to the Front in the war; and they did exceptionally good service. Very many of them have told me how their training in Scouting had saved their lives or enabled them to escape from capture.
>
> Also some 60,000 who were too young to join up did jolly good work at home in guarding the coasts, and acting as orderlies and despatch riders, etc., etc., and I am glad to say that among them were a considerable number of Public School fellows who spent their holidays as Boy Scouts on coast watching and other war service.
>
> Therefore, I can strongly advise others to do the same, that is, to learn Scouting and to pick up backwoodsmanship while they can; it is good fun and it fits you for any line of life or sport that you may take up afterwards—and enables you to enjoy it. [483]

Using rhetoric adapted from *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell implies preparedness learned through scouting is not only a life-saving skill, it is a natural predilection, something that

[482] Proctor, *On My Honour*, p. 101.
[483] Charterhouse, 'Why I Preach Scouting', *Carthusian* (Godalming, February 1920).

every good 'Britisher' should be capable of learning and exercising. Boys are still seen as proverbial knight-errants leaving home after training to seek out adventure, skilled and fit enough to tackle the world beyond and even for war. Training their bodies and minds is the natural first step in war-readiness and the willingness to serve the country (which is inherent) is the socially expected thing to do.



In 1927 Baden-Powell wrote to *Greyfrair*, another Charterhouse publication, encouraging boys to be leaders and spread the character-building and nationalistic teachings of the Boy Scouts:

> If you take up Scouting at School and later on become a Scoutmaster, you will be able to put a new joy into the otherwise dreary slum life of these lads; you can teach them to be honest, straight-dealing, plucky and resourceful; you can teach them to be good sportsmen, to play the game not for their own glory but unselfishly for the good of their side, that is you can make them into loyal useful citizens for their country.
>
> […]
>
> Through Scouting therefore you have a splendid opportunity before you of doing a really valuable service for the Country and Empire.[484]

The ideals of self-sacrifice, service without reward, bravery, manliness, and nationalism continue to be taught. Though Baden-Powell avoids the chivalric rhetoric that coloured so much of *SFB*,

[484] Charterhouse, 'Scouting', *Greyfriars* (Godalming, December 1927).

the ethos and tenets are clearly present. Scouting is touted for its ability to improve both moral and physical strength, to make an individual a valuable member of the Empire, capable of being both a role model and leader to his fellow man and serving his country when called. The desire to cultivate a generation of able bodied young men governed by Christian ethics routed in chivalric tradition remains, now placing the emphasis on preparedness and the dissemination of such character rather than in anticipation of performing brave deeds.

Post-War Manliness

In *Bloody Good*, Frantzen, through an in depth survey of sites of memory, propaganda, commemoration, and art, demonstrates that not only did chivalry survive the First World War, but that it continued to be a central and important means of assessing masculinity and the validity of violence.[485] Roper notes, 'the disillusionment expressed by the war poets did not lead to a rejection of manliness, but to its reconfiguration around themes of pain and sacrifice.'[486] Mosse's *Image of Man* suggests that the successors to the 'war generation' rather than identifying with disillusionment or abhorring romanticised notions of war, experienced a sense of longing and regret for not being able to participate in the conflict, not unlike those who had bemoaned the youth or physical impairments that barred them from service at the start of World War One.[487]

Post-WWI Britain struggled with its longstanding identification with an imperial or warrior mentality while trying to project the image of a 'peaceable kingdom' whose citizens had, without great difficulty, returned from a violent war, and resumed positions of normality and

[485] Frantzen, *Bloody Good*.
[486] Roper, 'Manliness and Masculinity', p. 334;George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 108-12.
[487] Mosse, *Image of Man*, p. 112.

'pursuits of peace'.[488] Traditional notions of manliness and masculine duty underwent alterations during this period and yet retained defining concepts such as courage, character, and sacrifice that had been highly prized in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. While the later 1920s and early 1930s saw a substantial amount of memoirs written by disillusioned authors come onto the market, they were not by any means the only vision of the war available to readers just as the entirety of former combatants could not be categorised as either 'brutalised' or 'peaceable'.[489]

This period celebrated the notion of the 'body beautiful' emphasising a 'movement towards physical efficiency' that was not perceived as a form of militarism, but ushered in a new 'disciplined vigour of body which [was] the first security for the facing of political, moral, and spiritual problems with the sane intelligence required of free people'.[490] The movement has been viewed by scholars both as presenting new methods of developing male physicality and masculinity in the pursuit of military prowess, social cohesion, and economic prosperity, and as creating a culture glorifying the importance of manliness in addition to its link with fitness and patriotism.[491] While some historians view this trend as an antecedent of fascism, this argument will instead show its relationship to Victorian and Edwardian ideas regarding the moralising and character building qualities of physical activity. This in turn bears a strong relationship to chivalry's rules describing the maintenance of physical power and strength. As Roper demonstrates, 'the continued vitality of Edwardian gender scripts into the midcentury' points

[488] C. F. G. Masterman, *England after War: A Study* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1923), pp. 5-6; Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis: The Aftermath* (New York, NY: C. Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 65.
[489] See: Jon Lawrence, 'Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post – First World War Britain', *The Journal of Modern History History*, 75.3 (2003), 557-89.
[490] 'Editorial', *The Times*, 5 July 1937, p. 15.
[491] Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, pp. 138-40, 175-80; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41.4 (2006), 595-610 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022009406067743>.

towards the notion of imperial manliness, an ideal and aspiration that linked physical fitness with being a good citizen and 'combined the virtues of strength, endurance, restraint and chivalry.'[492]

Discipline, self-control, and the pursuit of achieving the greatest possible bodily potential and beauty helped to promote a social environment that encouraged the reconstruction of male identity after the war. Just as public schools had emphasised the correlation between playing sport and the development of masculinity and moral stalwartness so did knighthood establish a direct link between physical stamina, strength, and honour:

> must in no way indulge in too great fondness for pampering your body, […] Too great a desire to cosset the body is against all good. In the first place, if you have this bad tendency for being excessively fond of cosseting this wretched body in your youth, you will want to go to sleep early and wake up late, and if your long hours of sleep are interrupted, you will suffer greatly from this, and the longer you sleep the less time you will have to acquire knowledge and to learn something of value. […] Furthermore those wretched men have to be sustained and pampered so that in winter they are wrapped in furs and warmly clad and live in warm houses, and in summer are lightly clad and live in cool houses or in the coldest vaults, otherwise they cannot survive because of their decadent habits. […] for those who want to win honor, for they adapt to the seasons: when it is cold, they endure the cold, and when it is hot, they put up with the heat. And they are prepared to accept all this for the great pleasure they experience in winning honor and in living honorably. (*BOC*, 68)

Decadence in both the medieval and Victorian/Edwardian periods was condemned and as has been discussed before, ease and comfort were viewed by many as destructive to society, producing men of weak physical and moral character. This idea appeared once again in interwar Britain, creating a national sense of responsibility and need for preparedness that revolved around the symbiotic relationship of physicality and morality. Yet this was problematised in one instance by the very idea that WWI was the 'war to end all wars,' meaning that its conclusion, after subjecting men to years of violent behaviour in the name of justice, had resulted in a form of 'brutalisation' that was part of Western societies' 'civilising process'.[493] On the other hand Britain had a long-standing connection to an identity as a 'warrior nation', something that

[492] Roper, 'Between Manliness', pp. 344-45; Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 153-7, 163-8.
[493] Stephan Jaegar, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p. 9; See also: Elias, *Civilizing Process*.

contributed to idealistic notions surrounding imperialism as well as aspects of popular culture which promoted the image of Britain and her soldiers as heroic and chivalric adventurers.[494] Publications such as *Health and Strength* and *Superman* encouraged regular exercise and sport, professing that 'Now, as never before, Health is a duty, and should be added to our list of duties towards God and our duties towards our "Neighbour".'[495] The National Fitness Campaign launched in the 1930s made national vigour and imperial power through physical fitness aspirational, recalling the post-Boer war need for fit men to stand in defence of Britain and her empire.[496] The ideological motivation and connection between post- and pre-WWI Britain is summed up well in a poem first published in *Health and Strength* in 1907 and reprinted as 'distinctly appropriate to-day' in December 1936:

> Sons of the League! Ye who are pledged to fight
> For Britain's Manhood. Ye are champions all.
> Let us strive to be
> The very flower of Britain's chivalry;
> The valiant knights errant of Health and Strength.
> Let us be heroes in that holy war
> Against the treacherous foes whose venomed shafts,
> A Nation, through that Nation's Manhood strike.
> Strength is the crowning glory of the Man.
> The Nation's crowning glory is her Men.[497]

Chivalry and knighthood once again emerge as images of masculinity, tying the strength of modern man to his medieval predecessor. British identity turns to historical precedents to validate its connection and ancestral right to the ideals of honour, bravery, and justice. As Anne Summers and Lucy Delap have argued, chivalry did not represent a static or unmalleable set of ideals, its role within the British imagination shifted, at times insistent upon traditional gender

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[494] Paris, *Warrior Nation*; Michael Paris, 'Enduring Heroes: British Feature Films and the First World War, 1919-1997', in *The First World War and Popular Cinema: 1914 to the Present*, ed. by Michael Paris (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000), pp. 51-73.
[495] Eustace Miles, *Self-Health as a Habit* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1919), p. 9.
[496] Zweiniger-Bargielowska, , 'Building a British Superman', p. 609.
[497] Yorick Gradeley, 'No Title', *Health and Strength*, March 1907, p. 204; Yorick Gradeley, 'No Title', *Health and Strength*, December 1936, p. 804.

scripts such as 'women and children first' and others an 'assertively patriotic and militaristic version of imperialism'.[498]

Interwar Britain struggled to reconcile post-war denunciation of militarism with a burgeoning emphasis on physicality, continued imperialism, and the Victorian values which still exerted influence on social order, decorum, and morals. Lawrence's analysis of public violence in the interwar period demonstrates that notions of honour related to the brotherhood of arms, the implied nobility and responsibility of soldiers, and the moral authority of ex-servicemen, which helped to perpetuate pre-existing veneration of martial action.[499] Soldiers were believed to be, in many instances, the protectors of order, justice, and the weak. When riots broke out in cities such as London, Liverpool, and Cardiff in the 1920s soldiers were both called up and willingly intervened in order to prevent the destruction of shops, civic building, and to protect police and firefighters.[500] There still existed an assumption that soldiers were honourable protectors and defenders, that as both men and former warriors, they had a duty to render service to those who needed it. Though the language typically associated with chivalry had significantly waned in popularity, ideals persisted. Men and soldiers, just as knights before them, were increasingly encouraged by socio-cultural norms to prepare themselves physically in case of battle. This bodily training was linked with moral fitness, and while women were beginning to achieve a greater degree of autonomy, men were still perceived as their protectors. Men's contribution to the war was remembered in terms of bravery, honour, and most importantly, sacrifice. The soldier, just as knights of romance, earned the ultimate praise when he laid down his life in

[498] Anne Summers, 'Militarism in Britain before the Great War', *History Workshop Journal*, 2 (1976), 104-23; Lucy Delap, '"Thus Does Man Prove His Fitness to Be the Master of Things": Shipwrecks, Chivalry and Masculinities in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History: The Journal of the Social History Society*, 3.1 (2006), 45-74.
[499] Lawrence, 'Peaceable Kingdom', pp. 562-72.
[500] Lawrence, 'Peaceable Kingdom', p. 569.

battle, becoming a sacrifice for the protection of the ideals and individuals which he set out to defend.

The Post-War Boy's Novel: *Tell England*

Tom Brown and Stalky represented two types of schoolboy before the war. One who grew to embody fair-mindedness, gentlemanly conduct, and respect; the other, tenacity, courage, and brotherhood, both learned the importance of honour and self-sacrifice. Stories of the public school boy remained popular after the war and *Tell England: A Study in a Generation* (*TE*), by Ernest Raymond, was among the most popular.[501] The novel, reprinted in forty editions between 1922 and 1969, follows the exploits of Rupert Ray, Edgar Doe, and Archibald Pennybet from their days in school through their time in Gallipoli. Drawing from personal experience, himself having served in Gallipoli, Raymond is able to not only find something positive amidst the destruction of war, but refuses to succumb to disillusionment and 'still insist[s] on the unspoken characteristic of English patriotism.'[502]

The story begins with Rupert's grandfather, the Colonel, telling the young boy the story of his father's bravery through the analogy of a handsome, brave knight fighting and rescuing his companion. The parable poses an interesting challenge for the Colonel who does not want to over expose the danger of his father's actions. Young Rupert's knowledge of contemporary tools of war forces the Colonel to incorporate modern weaponry into his romanticism: '"And then—and then to his aid came the stalwart Sir R, with his sword drawn, and his—er" "Revolver," suggested the listener [Rupert]. "Yes, his revolver fixed to his chain-mail"' (*TE*, 13). Rupert's

[501] Ernest Raymond, *Tell England*, Fortieth e (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1973).
[502] Bracco, *Merchants of War*, p. 68.

life would in many ways be characterised by this mixing of romance and contemporary realism. His closest companion, Edgar Doe, is a quintessential example of a Victorian romantic; he is born in tragic circumstances, his mother, 'the loveliest woman in Western Cornwall', died in childbirth, his father following soon after, implying that his death was due to heartbreak. Doe is the 'most beautiful child,' and everyone of his lineage is described as 'an emotional lot […] As surely as they come fair-haired, they are brilliantly romantic and blindly adoring. And Edgar's every inch a Doe' (*TE*, 20). He tries to emulate the characteristics of a gentleman, he is 'the prettiest' of the three boys (as opposed to Pennybet who is described as handsome, and the rather ordinary features of Rupert). Doe imagines much in life in a picturesque, romantic, or heroic way striving to emulate the brave, self-sacrificing idealism he has read of in novels. Throughout *Tell England* Doe remains faithfully beside Rupert, consistently falling just short of his goals despite ardent work, while Rupert, through unforeseen circumstances, always achieves that which he had never realised he wanted, a pattern which foreshadows the outcome of their experiences in Gallipoli.

The three boys have the same antagonistic relationship with their teachers as can be found in *Tom Brown* and *Stalky & Co.*: 'I declared with all a child's power of make-believe that a state of war existed between Rupert Ray and Carpet Slippers. War, then, war, open or understood!' (*TE*, 49). Rupert experiences 'pride and the relish of the martyr', frequently employing the analogy when he is forced to face the consequences of his actions (*TE*, 47). An Arnold-esque junior house-master, Radley, helps redeem the boys from their mischievous ways, teaching them that '"The bands of friendship mustn't snap at a breath"' and '"there's nothing like suffering together to cement a friendship"' (*TE*, 30). Through their adventures they learn the value of courage, shame, brotherhood, honour, and sacrifice.

The narrative of the novel is broken at one point by the narrator analogising the Kaiser and impending conflict on the European mainland with a distant emperor creating a 'castle in the air' in order to conquer Europe. At the same time, the opposing 'Castle of Free Peoples', where 'Liberty, International Honour, and many other lovely things might find a home', prepares to defend right (*TE*, 159). This image sets the stage for the justification of violence, the predominance of Britain's sense of right, and the necessity of conflict. It also provides the moral impetus for the valorisation of soldiering.

Rupert and Doe enlist as soon as they are able and are shortly thereafter ordered to board a ship to Gallipoli. While in transit they meet an army chaplain, Monty, who befriends the boys and is determined to convert the overtly non-religious young men to Anglo-Catholicism. Through lengthy conversation and some coerciveness Monty eventually succeeds and acts both as a spiritual advisor and close confidant, mentoring the boys through the emotional process of coming to adulthood under fire.

The events of Rupert and Doe's life set them up to act as representative of two distinct notions: inherent nobility and the cost of imperfectly pursuing knightly virtues. Doe can be seen as the knight who fails to achieve the Grail. While he acts nobly and aspires to prove himself heroic he recognises that there is something in his own motivation that renders him not entirely worthy: '"The trouble is," Doe carried on, "that this something in me isn't pure. It's mixed up with the desire for glory. […] And I wish it were a pure force. I'd love to pursue an Ideal for its own sake, and without any thought for my own glory. I wonder if I shall ever do a really perfect thing"' (*TE*, 159). From this point on, Doe is vocally and perpetually concerned with doing a 'perfect thing' by which he means a truly noble and valorous act, free from desires of personal gain, the principal moral behind idealised knightly action. In his efforts to do so, Doe is

repeatedly eclipsed by Rupert. Rupert recognises that Doe is more deserving and feels guilty for his repeated success which results in the usurpation of the opportunities that his friend dreams of.

These episodes are indicative of the notion that inherent nobility surpasses learned or acquired skills, a popular theme in medieval romance. Whereas Doe is attractive, a prodigious sportsman, and endeavours in all ways to act gallantly, Rupert is somewhat common in appearance, only excels in cricket (though still not as much as Doe) and is known for his mischievous, if not bordering on malicious, ways. However, Rupert possesses natural qualities that are observed by school leaders and draw his peers to him, the effect of which is his inadvertent appointment to positions of leadership. This happens in two notable incidents. The first, being when Rupert's miraculous victory in a school swimming match is stolen from him by 'Slippers,' a vindictive teacher, sending the school into revolt. Rupert is chosen as the students' representative to parlay with administration and to prepare to 'go to war' but is stopped outside the headmaster's office by Radley who challenges Rupert's sense of nobility, honour and responsibility (*TE*, 49, 130-41). The exchange alters Rupert's perception and engenders a rapid maturation that prepares him to take on the role of prefect. After his appointment Rupert speaks to the revolting students, bringing a swift end to the coup and saving the school from anarchy.

The second event occurs just after Rupert and Doe arrive in Gallipoli. After killing his first man in a sudden engagement in the trenches, Rupert is promoted to the position of A.D.C. to the general. The description of the general's opinion of Rupert as well as the position of Brigade Bombing Officer which Doe takes on, juxtaposes their moral qualities and ultimate fate. '"Ray, you have found favour in the sight of the General […] He thinks you a pretty and proper child and fairly clean,"' Rupert is in fact ignorant of the role, lending his character further to the notion of pure innocence that 'proper' and 'clean' imply (*TE*, 266). His inherent qualities are again

recognised and without desire or intent he is elevated to a positon of honour and comparative safety. Doe on the other hand is approached with '"Now, is there anybody tired of his life laden with his sin? Anyone want to commit suicide? […] Anyone want to do the bloody hero, and be Brigade Bombing Officer?"' When Doe timidly agrees the officer responds: '"That's the spirit that made England great!"' (*TE*, 267). Doe has every desire to impress the brass, this very desire hinders him and makes his intentions impure, the result being that he must redeem himself through sacrifice in order to achieve that pure 'perfect thing'. As Parker points out, the novel 'never questions "whether the system be right or wrong", but is a straightforward paean to "Kensingtowe" and a lament for the boys killed in the War.'[503] Motivation and the cost of war is never discussed in terms that would hint at disillusionment.

Rupert goes on to lead his men into battle and later to safety when Gallipoli is evacuated, surviving and returning to England. Doe however is not so fortunate. In what is considered a suicidal mission, Doe bravely leads his men through heavy fire, and though shot and wounded, manages to explode a gun and shell dump, enabling his own and Rupert's men to take the enemy trench and retreat to safety. Doe's wounds prove mortal; he faces death valiantly, showing only a modicum of grief, and tells Rupert that '"Well, it can't be helped. If I'd have known when I started that it would end like this — I'd have gone through with it just the same"' (*TE*, 296). Here Raymond expresses a supposition that 'had combatant known what the War would be like, the majority of them would have gone through with it just the same'.[504] The romance of such a response to imminent death is not lost but its reality must be questioned.

Greatly affected by his friend's death, Rupert vows to uphold the ideals and heroism that Doe lived by, and that the only way he would leave Gallipoli would be with honour. By dying in

[503] Parker, *Old Lie*, p. 280.
[504] Parker, *Old Lie*, p. 284.

defence of his comrades Doe upholds the ideals he had striven to emulate his entire life and as Monty says, '"Doe had done a perfect thing at last, and so had grasped the Grail"' (*TE*, 320). Sacrifice redeems Doe of the 'sin' of his desires, enabling him at last to perform a selfless act.

The popular reception of *Tell England* indicates the continued appeal of chivalric action and morals. Parker attributes the novels success both to the romanticized theme of sacrifice as well as a 'sincerity that prevents it from becoming […] [overly] sentimental'.[505] The work relies on strong ties between idealistic notions of battle and the reality of war, neither overtly supporting or condemning them, rather illustrating their existence and role in war. Battle does not disillusion Rupert, a young man who loses his closest comrades, but rather encourages him to embrace the morals and ethos of his most romantically, idealistic friend. He finds religion, bravery, nobility, and beauty in men and their performance. Cloete similarly described his experiences of war, explaining that:

> It is impossible for me to say I hated the war. I did not. I was continually frightened, but the fear was compensated for by comradeship of the men I served with; by a serious sense of brotherhood; by a feeling that I was participating in a great event; by the greatest relief a man can know — the cessation of fear; by the feeling that each day might be the last, which led to an immense appreciation of everything. A lark singing. A rose in flower. A gallop on a good horse. All assumed a new importance. One might never see it so their like again.[506]

Though Rupert is briefly embittered, he conquers this emotion. He refuses to leave the shores of Gallipoli without honour, following Doe's example. When Doe dies doing a 'perfect thing,' it motivates Rupert to pursue a course of action that will perpetuate Doe's values and ensure that the ethos of his friend's life's ambition does not vanish, and in doing so he himself takes up the mantle of knightly virtues.

[505] Parker, *Old Lie*, p. 281.
[506] Cloete, *Victorian Son*, p. 192.

Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*

One of the most important novels addressing the effects of the First World War is Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* (*PE*) (1924-1928).[507] There is little doubt that Ford's tetralogy provides valuable and reflective insight into Britain's complex transition from a nation upholding Victorian values to one of post-war modernity. While there is a widespread argument that the work's hero, Christopher Tietjens, functions as a literary landmark for the death of the Victorian novel and experiments with the modernist novel, this analysis overlooks the reticent Victorian elements which Ford demonstrates are still active in the post-war British environment.[508] What is perhaps equally important, as Sara Haslam puts it, is Ford's ability to 'tell life like it is'.[509] Ford's desire to be a historian and to communicate the realities of the world around him is evident in his realistic and at time uncomfortable view into British life during the war.[510] The transitional position and experience of Ford's characters offers a rigorous and complex commentary on the transformation of societal values as they occurred. As Nora Tomlinson observes, 'Ford's capacity to recognize and endorse new ideas, his openness to new forms of writing is impressive' in that he is not afraid to consider new techniques and cross boundaries. [511] Contrary to a great deal of work written in the post-war era, *Parade's End*, in fact, condemns the apparent abandonment of traditional chivalric ideas, representing those that do so as the embodiments of the degeneration of morality, social order and interaction. Ambrose Gordon's

[507] Madox Ford Ford, *Parade's End* (London: Penguin Group, 2012).
[508] Eric Meyer, 'Ford's War and (Post) Modern Memory: "Parade's End" and National Allegory', *Criticism*, 32.1 (1990), 81-99.
[509] Sara Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the Novel and the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 183.
[510] Frank Kermode, 'Novels: Recognition and Deception', *Critical Inquiry*, 1, (1974–5), 103-121, at p. 106.
[511] Nora Tomlinson, PhD thesis, 'The Achievement of Ford Madox Ford as Editor' (Open University, 1995), p. 8.

study of Ford's pre-war works investigates the novelist's interest in themes of enchantment, fantasy, romance and the bringing of elements of what he terms 'fairy-tale' into modern settings.[512] Ford's *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911) demonstrates the author's interest in the tropes of medieval romance and the chivalric tradition. In the story, Mr. Sorrell wakes from a train accident to find himself in fourteenth-century England. While he is initially disgusted by the filth, poverty, and uncleanliness of the time, he eventually comes to admire chivalry and the 'courtesy of the age'.[513] After some time he is knighted, falls in love and ladies compete for his hand in marriage. In juxtaposition to Gordon's work are Meyer's views on the national and historical typology exerting influence on Ford's actual experience as well as those of the characters in *Parade's End*, which helps to examine the formation of Christopher Tietjens' identity as a 'representative Englishman' upholding gentlemanly 'chivalric' codes of honour.[514] The two ideas work together to create the image of a man caught between times and ideologies. He is driven by his sense of honour, all actions conforming to it, regardless of what negative impact they may have upon him. He unflinchingly believes in his duty to act as a gentleman, the ideals of which we have already seen are derived in many ways from chivalry. He joins the war effort out of a sense of duty, he acts towards Sylvia in a way that he believes will preserve her honour even at the cost of his own, he refuses to abandon his men, still recognises his feudal duty to the families reliant on the Groby estate, and despite his brother Mark's misdeeds, acts as his caregiver. The qualities that at times mark him out as a vestige of a previous time and order that are no longer capable of enduring, are in fact the same qualities that cause others to admire him and survive the war.

[512] Ambrose Gordon, '*Parade's End*: Where War Was Fairy Tale', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 5.1 (1963), 25-41.
[513] Gordon, 'Fairy Tale', p. 28
[514] Meyer, '(Post) Modern Memory', p. 83.

Christopher Tietjens, whose source of inspiration is frequently attribute to Ford's close friend Arthur Marwood, is undoubtedly a man of another time.[515] The novel frequently frames his thoughts and actions within the context of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy states, Tietjens is 'a man displaced in all aspects of life. […] [he] is carefully positioned between the old Britain of his family's feudal estate and the modern Britain of his job at the new Imperial Department of Statistics.'[516] Tietjens holds the belief that 'all that was good in English literature ended in the seventeenth century' (*PE*, 366). He admits, in his typical politely dry manner, when speaking to General Campion that:

> I am really, sir, the English public schoolboy. That's the eighteenth-century product. What with the love of truth — God help me! – they rammed into me at Clifton and the belief Arnold forced upon Rugby that the vilest of sins — the vilest of all sins — is to peach to the headmaster! That's me, sir. Other men get over their schooling. I never have. (*PE*, 490)

Tietjens's, at least at this point in the novel, is completely aware that his actions are a hangover from educational practices more than a century old and 'laments the dissolution of traditional values, and he protests the expanding power of modern ones.'[517] His references to Thomas Arnold, the great school reformer of Rugby, are most certainly intentional, likely in order to provide a precise moment in time to compare Tietjens's mentality to. Further, Tietjens's education at Clifton, the same institution Newbolt was schooled at as well as the setting for his widely popular 'Clifton Chapel', further develops the image of Tietjens as a man whose very modus operandi is rooted in the masculine ideas of another century. General Campion is also a man subscribing to seventeenth- or eighteenth-century conventions. He shares the same opinion of literature as Tietjens: 'I never read anything later than the seventeenth century' (*PE*, 475). This comment instigates an interesting moment between the two men. Tietjens replies: 'I know

[515] Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, p. 12.
[516] Jeffery Mathes McCarthy, '"The Foul System": The Great War and Instrumental Rationality in "Parade's End"', *Studies in the Novel*, 41.2 (2009), 178-200, p. 179.
[517] Ibid.

sir … you made me read Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion* when I was twelve' (*PE*, 475). The general then, quite contrary to his normal character, becomes nervous, seemingly suppressing emotion, struggling to maintain the very formal, authoritative, and somewhat paternal tone of their conversation as he relays the news that Tietjens is being sent up the line to 'certain death' (*PE*, 476). While this comment serves to identify the more contemporary source of Tietjens' character, it also creates an opportunity for juxtaposition. Campion, who shares Tietjens proclivity for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ideas of decorum, social interaction and order, is a figure whose actions become symptomatic of the degradation of those same concepts. The incident much earlier in the novel when Campion, completely incapable of driving a car yet insistent on doing so, collides with Tietjens' horse is a physical embodiment of the sudden and traumatic collision of the Victorian way of life with the unfamiliar, mechanised and violent way of life being rapidly ushered in with the coming of war. The incident foreshadows the many scenes where Tietjens' sense of personal honour is pitted against transforming modern conceptions of behaviour. Ford's intentional confrontation of shifting social dynamics and conventions marks the work out as definitively modern as expressed by Unger:

> modernism puts received conceptions of personality and society to the test, forcing us to purge them of arbitrarily restrictive assumptions about the limits of personal and social experience or about the ways that we may moderate the conflict between the enabling circumstances of self-assertion [...]. We advance in self-understanding and goodness by opening ourselves up to the whole life of personal encounter.[518]

The deliberate depiction of Tietjens as what Ford calls 'Good People' – those from landed, old money and thus old influence – enables Tietjens to inhabit two worlds when he enlists; he becomes a man capable of communicating with high command but also of facing the conflict along side his men.[519]

[518] R. M. Unger, *Passion: An Essay on Personality* (New York, The Free Press, 1984), p. 23.
[519] Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (New York: Ecco, 1984), p. 219; Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, p. 90.

In *Some Do Not…* (1924) a conversation between Mark Tietjens and Valentine Wannop helps to establish some of Christopher Tietjens' more militaristic, chivalric characteristics by drawing a contrast between the thoughts of him and his brother, Mark. Mark, the eldest and more respected son of the Tietjens family, should, if conforming to the station in life he was born into, be even further entrenched in Victorian ideals related to class position and propriety than Christopher. Instead, he has virtually no interest in running the family estate and carries on a long-term relationship with a woman whom he will not marry for religious reasons. When speaking of Christopher with Valentine, Mark comments, 'He probably considers that he *is* …offering his life, you know, for you. And me too, of course! It's a different way of looking at things' (*PE*, 226). Noting Valentine's concern over his brother's safety, Mark goes on to say,

> 'A safe job. Safeish! No beastly glory business about it. No killing beastly Germans either… I beg your pardon, if you like Germans.'
>
> She drew her arm from his hand in order to look him in the face.
>
> 'Oh!' she said, '*you* don't want him to have any beastly military glory!' The colour came back into her face: she looked at him open eyed.
>
> He said:
>
> 'No! Why the devil should he? […] Why in the world should he want to be a beastly soldier? He's the heir to Groby. That ought to be enough for one man.' (*PE*, 227)

Mark's conjecture that Christopher has enlisted due to his brother's protective instincts is partially correct as Christopher identifies his motivation as coming from his sense of '*noblesse oblige,*' and the belief that 'a gentleman had to' rather than from any pre-existing desire to be a soldier (*PE*, 127). Mark's rejection of his birth right and inheritance, along with his denunciation of militaristic ideas are a stronger representation of the abandonment of Victorian ideals and the chivalric rhetoric surrounding war-time recruitment than the misfortunes that are continually heaped on Christopher. Valentine is in agreement with Mark in desiring Christopher be placed in a position of relative safety, away from opportunities to appease his sense of honour through action on the battle field.

Despite Valentine's involvement with the Suffragettes and other activities which mark

her out as a woman of the modern age and opposed to Christopher's notions of chivalric masculinity, she shares a great deal in common with him in terms of thought. The significance of the relationship, and its fictional parallel, is seen later in the novel Tietjens says that 'Her [Valentine] mind so marches with mine that she will understand' (*PE*, 651). This thought only comes after the earlier accidental recognition that his love for Valentine and for his country and duty are tied together: 'He picked a leaf, pressed it to his lips and threw it up into the wind … "That's for Valentine," he said meditatively. "Why did I do that? ... Or perhaps it's for England …" He said: "Damn it all, this is patriotism ... *This* is patriotism …."' (*PE*, 363). At this moment, when love, duty and honour become inextricably linked, Tietjens is transformed into a character of medieval romance. He becomes the knight fighting for a noble purpose who dreams of love, who finds comfort and motivation in it. He is at this moment, possibly for the first time, able to embrace the idea of love and not allow the dark plotting of his wife, Sylvia, to overshadow the ardent feelings he has for Valentine. The fact that he is married is, within the world of medieval romance, not necessarily a violation of the chivalric code.

Sylvia, Gordon points out, is a figure of darkness.[520] As demonstrated in previous chapters, chivalric romances function on the dichotomy of opposites. Sylvia embodies both a feminine, sexually motivated opposite to Tietjens' masculine, restrained chivalry. As Roger Sale claims, 'Ford needs Sylvia just as he needs Valentine, as major alternative sources of energy and complication to set off against Tietjens'.[521] Sylvia's malicious attempts to drive Tietjens to break his personal code of honour make Tietjens' resistance and steadfast behaviour all the more noble. She becomes the enemy which gives Tietjens' actions impetus in many instances. He is

[520] Ambrose, 'Fairy Tale', pp. 33-34.
[521] Sondra Stang, ed., *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 75.

thus a heroic figure, albeit a somewhat tragic one at times, as he strives against not just the physical aggression of the German army during military service, but against Sylvia's attempts to make him break the chivalric or gentlemanly code he lives by. This behaviour also affirms his position as a man caught between times. He adheres to pre-war codes of morality despite at the same time, voicing his contempt for bureaucracy and concern for his men in the current conflict. He curses pre-war militaristic notions, as an 'imbecil[ic] national belief that the game is more than the player' and stocisim: 'if any of his [Tietjens'] men are killed, he is expected to grin and invoke the national belief' (pp. 305–6). Regardless, his gentlemanly behaviour and responses to Sylvia, Valentine and others realigns him with pre-war ideals as he refuses to adjust his thoughts or behavior to accommodate contemporary norms like many other characters.

Tietjens is frequently admired, albeit at times pityingly so, for his adherence to his ideas of honour. When Sylvia arrives at the camp where Tietjens is stationed under the pretence of worry because she had received no letters, she brings their personal life into the public eye, a socially and militarily unacceptable occurrence. Despite the breach in decorum and its poor reflection on Tietjens, Colonel Levin 'conscientiously [sticks] to his thesis that Tiejens [is] the soul of honour' (*PE*, 354). When Levin, who suffers from his own marital issues, learns that they share the same view on letter writing (that under their circumstances to write letters would be 'molesting the lady') he is so enthusiastic he loses balance crying: '"I was sure of it, old fellow. But it enormously cheers me up to hear you say so." He added that he desired as far as possible to model his [Levin's] ideas of life and his behaviour on those of this his friend [Tietjens]' (*PE*, 354-55).

Not long after Sylvia is again frustrated by Tietjens's unflinching character, exclaiming to herself, '"Damn his chivalry! ... Oh God damn his chivalry!" She knew what was going on in

his mind. He had seen her, with Perowne, so he had neither come towards her nor directed the servant to where she sat. For fear of embarrassing her!' (*PE*, 381). Her husband's constancy and her inability to provoke him into violating his sense of honour and decorum are both the impetus of her scheming and the reason she so desperately desires his attention. As Gordon points out, 'Sylvia hates Tietjens because she loves him, because he alone seems to her a man in a world of adolescents.'[522]

As we have seen, the First World War was certainly a period of substantial change in understanding the role and conception of chivalric values. The disquiet and tension characters feel at the shifting away from the familiarities of Victorian convention to modernisation is perhaps captured best in the thoughts of Mark's wife, Marie Léonie:

> And what, then, was this determination to ignore he developments of modern genius? Why would they not purchase for Mark a reading-desk with a brass arm that should indicate to the neighbours and dependants that at least he was a person of condition? Why no revolving hut? There were certain symptoms of that age that were disquieting. She would be the first to acknowledge that. They had only to read in the papers of the deeds of assassins, highway robbers, of the subversive and the ignorant who everywhere seized the reins of power. But what was to be said against such innocent things as the reading-desk […]? (*PE*, 693)

At first, the passage seems to embrace modernity and its technological advancements while expressing some measure of disenchantment with the pre-war way of doing things. However, as Marie's thoughts progress, she exposes her distrust of her contemporary environment. The world she now belongs to is one peopled with assassins and highway robbers. It is one where tyranny and usurpation rather than order prevails, and one where the simple innocence of a writing desk is withheld. The writing desk, itself an object innately non-mechanic, acts as a representation of pre-war conditions. It is a simple but necessary object, one that serves a distinct, uncomplicated function. The inability to acquire the writing desk can be seen as representative of Marie's frustration with being unable to return to a pre-war state of affairs, both in a physical sense and

[522] Gordon, 'Fairy Tale', p. 33.

in an emotional sense as she struggles to help Tietjens through his mental breakdown, a by-product of modern, mechanised war.

While Christopher, much like his brother, decides to 'chuck the country-gentleman business,' his sense of feudal duty does not vanish. 'He didn't see that he was the one to bother with those confounded, hard-headed beggars or with those confounded wind-swept moors and valley bottoms.' However, 'one owed the blighters a duty' (*PE*, 736-37). His distance from the family estate and his disenchantment with the whole idea of being a country gentleman does not negate his innate sense of duty. He continues to understand that he still effectively has a feudal obligation to the families that live and work at Groby, *noblesse oblige* again dictating his actions. Sara Haslam suggests that Tietjens' reticence to maintain the family estate is less due to his direct willingness to abandon his feudal ties to Groby but because he believes the estate will pass into Sylvia's hands ultimately.[523] As David Cannadine explains, 'Until the 1870s […] land was wealth: the most secure, reliable and permanent asset. Land was status. And land was power: over the locality, the county, and the nation.'[524] While chronologically we are well past 1870, we know that Tietjens is behind the curve in many respects and his attachment to feudal notions of responsibility and ownership demonstrate this.

Duty, whether to his country, family, sense of honour, or love continually motivates and directs Tietjens' actions. Mark, suffering from the effects of a stroke, bedridden and not long for the world, is both humbled and saddened (because of his own behaviour) at his brother's resolution to act as his caregiver and fulfil his familial duty. Despite the great offences Mark has made, Christopher is again unwavering.

[523] Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, p. 108.
[524] David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London, Macmillan, 1996), p. 16.

> Yes: after Christopher had been reading Boswell aloud, night after night for three weeks … Was that playing the game? Was it playing the game to get no sleep if you had not forgiven your brother? … Oh, no doubt it was playing the game. You don't forgive your brother if he lets you down in a damned beastly war…And of course it *is* letting a fellow down in a beastly — beastly! —way to let him know you believe he lives on the immoral earnings of his wife…Mark had done that to Christopher. It was unforgiveable all right. And equally, of course, you do not hurt your brother back except on the lines circumscribed by the nature of the offence; you are the best friend he has — except on the lines circumscribed by the offence; and you will nurse him like a blasted soft worm — except in so far as the lines circumscribed by the offence do not preclude your ministrations. (*PE*, 761)

Mark comes to represent the product of failing to adhere to chivalric, Victorian ideas. He lacks any interest in his familial home and perpetuating its legacy; he finds no value in courage, glory or war; he does not understand his brother's sense of honour or the course of action it leads him to take. He, like many other characters, abandons the rules, morals, and ethics of the pre-war culture he has been born into and as such he has suffered. While Mark, a man who is perhaps ahead of his times in terms of modernising the manner of social engagement and norms concerning male-female courtship, acts in some ways as a symbol of the middle ground between Victorian and modern ideas, dies. Mark's way of life, which has kept him from war, has not prevented an untimely death. Characters such as Vincent Macmaster, who ultimately reject the moral code of the gentleman and change their conduct to fit the times, stand in opposition to Christopher. They are aware of Tietjens' motivation and internally acknowledge his worth, yet do nothing to act as intercessors and in some instances take advantage of him. These characters, who act contrary to the code they should share with Tietjens, are vilified by the reader. Further, they come to be associated with dishonesty, treachery and debasement. They are the manifestations of the degeneration of society and embody its future. As Haslam explains,

> Tietjens undergoes a […] discovery, much to Macmaster's discomfort, and advocates honesty instead of hypocrisy: 'it would be better [for a fellow] just to boast about his conquests in a straightforward and exultant way' he exhorts (p. 18). He has no illusions as to the effect this would have on the upper-class 'game', or system, […] it would destroy it, and in the apprehension of this destruction Macmaster is reduced to an inarticulate and spluttering rage.

This is not to say that Tietjens' advocates the destruction of the class system. Rather that the perversion of it as seen through the actions of individuals who behave outside the moral and

ethical principles that the upper-classes (at least in Tietjens' mind) should adhere to should be done away with. Essentially, if the system cannot work properly then it should not be continued.

Tietjens's actions and the consequences of them are at times viewed as indicative of the outmodedness of the chivalric code and its embodiment within the English gentleman. However, it is Tietjens's possession of these qualities that helps preserve him through both military and personal conflict. Though he is significantly reduced in wealth and station, and his connections with Groby are largely rendered moot after the war, these disassociations with vestiges of the class system do not necessarily mark the end of the country gentleman and Tietjens's ideals but rather marks a transformation in his identity and utility. Much as chivalry of the medieval period was transformed in the Victorian era and subsumed into their cultural memory and identity, so the war forced a new transition, one that created a paradigm shift, moving the ideals of chivalry even further away from the confined domain of the upper classes, and instead giving it reign, much as Baden-Powell and Newbolt had hoped, to be embraced across class barriers and function as a more universal standard than as a set of rules for the privileged elite.

Ford's fictional description of post-war culture certainly reflects aspects of post-war Britain. The war, while successful in vilifying most things that smacked of Victorian idealism and medievalism, was not able to destroy the inherent moral and ethical importance of the underlying chivalric tenets of courtesy, sacrifice, bravery, and defence of women or the weak. Prior to the war, the British country estate stood as one of the most prominent physical symbols of an aristocratic gentleman. Tietjens's disinterest in Groby is in some ways equivalent to the loss of the estate in that it marks the end of the physical manifestation of his country-gentleman identity. Many large, costly estates would be sold off partially or completely as families discovered they no longer had the monetary means to run them, changing the recognisable,

physical symbols of many aristocratic and wealthy families. Lifestyles of lavishness and excess were, for many, no longer possible and the need to adapt became paramount to survival. While the physical markers of the feudal hierarchy began to vanish, greater emphasis was placed of the personal characterises of the gentleman. As was shown through the *Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of 'gentleman' ('A man in whom gentle birth is accompanied by appropriate qualities and behaviour; hence, in general, a man of chivalrous instincts and fine feelings') society had evolved to recognise a gentleman by his behavior and chivalry, rather than his wallet and estate.[525]

[525] 'Gentleman, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2016) <http://www.oed.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/Entry/77673?redirectedFrom=gentleman#eid>.

Conclusion

Just over one hundred years have elapsed since the start of the First World War and in that time a tremendous body of scholarly literature, prose, poetry and media has been created, dedicated to exploring the conflict, its dramatic effects of the lives of those who survived it and the years that followed. Scholars such as Dan Todman, Jane Potter and Jessica Meyer have contributed to the increasingly nuanced treatment of First World War studies, elucidating the complex responses to war. While the surge of disillusioned narratives in the 1920s was met with distrust and perceived by some as unpatriotic, the literature of disillusionment has come to contemporarily typify remembrance of WWI outside the academy.[526] Wilfred Owen's 'Disabled' is taught as part of the GCSE school curriculum across Britain and contrasted against Rudyard Kipling's feverishly patriotic 'For All We Have and Are'.[527] Cultural memory of the conflict centers around the interpretation of a relatively small collection of vocal poets, marginalising the numerous varied other recollections of the conflict. As Brian Bond points out:

> In fact the 'real', historical war abruptly ceased to exist in November 1918. 'Thereafter it was swallowed by imagination in the guise of memory.' Only a few historians sought to preserve, order and interpret the events of the war objectively, and in the short term theirs was not the approach which the public needed.[528]

In keeping with this idea, this thesis has striven to draw attention to a supremely important yet frequently sidelined component of the war: chivalry, in order to demonstrate its pivotal role in the conflict.

When asked for his impressions of the Front, Graham Hamilton Greenwell of the 4th Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry replied:

> Well it wasn't one of despondency, anyway, at all; it was just a marvelous sort of new experience [...] I would say it was all rather like a schoolboys' adventure. The impression you get from reading Sassoon and all those sort of people, Robert Graves, and *All Quiet*, and particularly of course Hemingway, and those sort of people, where as if you read Terraine [John Terraine] [...] He pushed his case that you didn't get a

[526] Jailant, 'Sapper, Hodder', p. 137.
[527] Rudyard Kipling, 'For All We Have and Are' in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, p. 13.
[528] Bond, *Unquiet Western Front*, p. 26.

> true picture from the English literature on the first war which was written by very typical, literary men who were brilliant writers and in some cases I would say brilliant poets like Sassoon and extremely brave men like Sassoon, but nevertheless their whole picture they gave of the war was in a sense completely distorted by a sort of personal horror at the war and that if the majority of soldiers in the infantry in those days or say the RAF in second war, if that had been the spirit of the either the men or the officers what would have soon been left?[529]

Greenwell challenges the legacy of the First World War, reminding us that, however poignant and true the horrors of war were for men like Sassoon, it was not the whole truth of the conflict nor the only emotion felt by its participants. He reminds us that beneath the high words of the men that have come to be regarded as the voices of WWI were a milieu of others that were just as valid, and that had anti-war disillusionment really been the uniting sentiment then there would not have been much of an army left to fight with. As Douglas Jerrold wrote in 1930, and as Andrew Frayn reaffirms now, most believed that there was a value in the war; writers who focused on a disenchanted interpretation of the war were 'concentrating on individual experience, rather than valuing that experience as part of military strategy.'[530] Bond further reminds us that

> because these writers were concerned with conveying personal experiences as vividly as possible, and anyway had a limited perspective, they largely evaded the crucial issues of what the war was 'about' – both on the political and strategic levels. This huge omission was understandable, since they were still close to disturbing events, and did not claim to be historians, but later commentators too often ignored these limitations.[531]

This thesis has argued and evidenced that the underlying moral and ethical principles of chivalry remained a staple of British character, helping to frame an understanding of the necessity of combat. The 'gentleman' as a vestige of the medieval aristocracy died away, but the *British gentleman* as an individual who valued his personal honour, fairness and strength of character, and believed in morality, ethics and the need to defend the defenceless indeed survived the war,

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[529] 'Greenwell, Graham Hamilton (IWM Interview)' (London: Imperial War Museum, 1985) <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80008561>.
[530] Frayn, *Disenchantment*, p. 2.
[531] Bond, *Unquiet Western Front*, p. 28.

endured. The knight would continue to stand as a symbol of heroism in commemorative forms but also a historic link to an inherently British ideal; 'The British knight of the Great War was remembered as a man and civilian in uniform who had showed great courage by simply doing his bit.'[532] While we certainly must not, from a historical and practical point of view, take fiction as fact, literature provides unique insight into culture and contemporary perceptions which are not always transmitted through empirical data or historical documentation. Literature offers us an invaluable source of perspective in constructing memory, one that is at times liminalised because of its fiction or its entertainment objectives. By incorporating literary perspectives into our understanding of historical events we become aware of nuances in the cultural environment that facilitate a more complete understanding of historical moments.

During the height of their popularity in the medieval period, chivalric romances had a profound influence on the cultural environment and nuances of social and political engagement. The interplay between historical figures who adopted the characteristics of chivalric heroes, and literature that romanticised the actions and events of history renders the task of prising apart the two dubious if not somewhat fruitless. The legacies of the Middle Ages and chivalric romance are so caught up together that to endeavour to alienate one from another, even to attempt a purely dogmatic historical account of chivalry, would in effect, remove much of the poignancy of the period's position in historical record and popular memory. Chivalry engaged a part of the medieval imagination that was so powerful it was able to transcend the pre-existing social order of the early Middle Ages to establish a new form of cultural refinement and morality that encouraged a move away from the barbarity of dark age warfare to replace it with a (while still violent) system of battlefield etiquette and justice that attempted to provide justifiable boundaries

[532] Goebel, *Medieval Memory*, p. 196.

for violence. Chivalry and the romances it inspired glorified courteous behaviour, bravery, strength, morality, as well as the dichotomy of male-female relationships and the power of loyalty. As a genre it was highly self-aware, frequently altering popular tales and figures to reflect social changes and subtle transitions in opinion that occurred over the course of the Middle Ages. It by no means remained static and it is for this reason that so many of romance's characters and chivalry's principles had survived to be reclaimed with robust enthusiasm several hundred years after the last medieval knight laid down his sword.

As this thesis has shown, the Victorian's embraced the idea of chivalry with tremendous vigour. Fascination with the medieval prompted writers, artists, philosophers and politicians to adopt the ethos of chivalry into their work, contributing to the elevation of the status of modern gentlemen and ladies to the similarly aggrandised and romanticised position of their medieval counterparts. Gender roles, specifically male-centric ideas of courage and duty, became enveloped with chivalric rhetoric and was reinforced through literature, etiquette and education. Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, Albert, already popular for a milieu of reasons both political and social in nature, were the embodiments of courtesy, morality and benevolent rule - the later of whom, Tennyson endeavoured to immortalise as a modern-day King Arthur. The ideal Englishman was a mirror of the medieval knight in so far as the Victorians understood him, an understanding which largely hinged on the Malorian treatment of chivalry and Sir Walter Scott's blending of the contemporary socio-cultural environment with medieval romance and a broad understanding of medieval history.

Scott's novels were an important literary development that led audiences to reimagine how they engaged with both historical memory and imaginative fiction. Yet they also engendered a complicated relationship between the author and fictitious and real worlds. The

relativism inherent in historical fiction and fictionalised biographies contributed to new perceptions of past events, cultural environment and fact. As James Kerr noted 'History enters the novel, but only in re-textualised form, only as ideology. The real is visible in the novel only in its effects, in the transformations worked upon it by the forces of literary production. Despite any overt claims it makes to representing history, the novel is an evasion of [it]'.[533] Scott's transformative fictional interpretation of feudal England and chivalry kindled the imagination of a generation ready to move beyond the pragmatism of the Enlightenment and to rediscover a moment in history, however romanticised, that would once again help to shape the socio-literary context of Britain. Victorians looked back at the Middle Ages through the lens of medievalism, imagining a time of romance, chivalry and gallantry which, after experiences at the Front, in some cases resulted in disillusionment.

Medievalism, however romanticised, reconnected eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain with its martial roots, finding renewed value in physicality, bravery and gallantry. One generation's avid fascination with its rules of refinement, codes of honour and conduct, and definition of masculine qualities was transferred to the next, embraced and taught as part of the character-building curriculum of public schools. These formative institutions for the British middle and upper classes imbued young men with notions of war as the ultimate proving ground of masculinity, the greatest of all trials, and the most profound opportunity to demonstrate not simply physical strength, but also the strength of their courage and character. Literature helped to reinforce these ideas. A century of novelists and poets trumpeted the qualities of a knight and the innate presence of chivalric honour within all of Britain's children. Knights were not figures of fairy tale, but real, identifiable examples of the height of manhood. Writers like Sir Henry

[533] James Kerr, *Fiction Against History: Scott as Story Teller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 2.

Newbolt and Lord Robert Baden-Powell used the language of chivalry to further encourage the adoption of chivalric tenets, creating didactic narrative and poetic and examples that strove to push children towards viewing the rigors of war as a sacred opportunity, and the desire to act in the defence of the nation as an inborn attribute of men of quality.

During the years leading up to World War One some writers shied away from such romantic ideas, instead championing resourcefulness and raw masculinity without the need or desire for rules of refinement and fair play. Rudyard Kipling's fantastically popular novels demonstrated the existence of courage and strength without the florid language of chivalry, yet his staunch nationalism often naturally returned to the evocative image of the sword and his imperialistic rhetoric could not fail to idolise bravery in battle, brotherhood and sacrifice. When Britain found itself on the brink of war the heroic and chivalric qualities that had been so prolific in the literary and cultural upbringing of many of Britain's citizens helped to spur men to enlist. Honour became intricately caught up with masculinity and war.

The War Propaganda Bureau, with its tremendous entourage of writers, publicists and artists, was able to capture and turn the emotional connection between a British nationalism (which frequently hinged on notions of bravery and honour associated with the expectation of men to act as defenders) and the idea of mortal sacrifice into both visual and literary propaganda. So successful was this campaign that those who abstained from fighting were vilified, given white feathers signifying cowardice, ostracised, imprisoned, and in extreme cases, starved and beaten. A true British son or daughter was believed to be descended from the blood of warriors and crusaders who fought for the weak, who upheld Christian values, and as such could not abide the aggression of a nation that committed atrocities that flew in the face of their, and the rest of Christian Europe's, morals and ethics. A man unwilling to fight and lay down his life in defence

of such things was no man at all. While such emotion-driven propaganda was highly effective, as the war progressed its language did not reflect the overt chivalric ideals of war and self-sacrifice that its meaning represented. The image of the gallant knight and the romanticised vocabulary associated with him was quickly rendered outmoded by the new, mechanised form of war. The chivalry of knights in the field relied on the ability to act autonomously, to be capable of distinguishing themselves through personal achievements, but modern warfare made this virtually impossible. Indiscriminate shelling, long-range rifle fire, gas and airborne attack severely hampered soldiers' ability to engage in the sort of close-quarters combat that helped knights to earn their reputations. The Front was no place for such things, and as this realisation became widespread the pre-war idealisation and romanticism of battle faded. However, the tenets of chivalry did not vanish, they simply took on a new guise, adapting to a new environment just as chivalry had done in centuries before. Bravery, honour, brotherhood and self-sacrifice retained their value but were now expressed not through knights, but contemporary men and women who behaved, believed and acted in ways that exemplified the virtues of chivalry without the need for its more obvious linguistic devices. To encourage wartime Britain to carry on with business as usual, the WPB continued to promote chivalric ideals through didactic stories within the contemporary environment rather than relying on medieval or Victorian exemplars. A soldier could be gallant without a sword, a woman could support her husband and family without a castle, and an army could defend a nation on lorries and in trenches rather than on horseback in a melee. Bravery could be demonstrated and honour upheld in circumstances that did not reflect the romantic visions of Victorian chivalry but exemplified its practical application on the field of battle, which relied on the brotherhood of arms and the willingness to risk one's life in combat.

From the moment WWI ended, historians, biographers, novelists and poets have striven to understand the war and have incidentally confined it within the purview of a definable set of characteristics and figureheads. As Fussell explains, the legacy of WWI has had a far reaching impact on contemporary engagement with war remembrance.[534] Memorialisation is perhaps the greatest part of this. The immediate, physical process of remembrance — the creation of monuments, friezes and epitaphs — set the precedence for not simply how WWI would be remembered but how all conflicts to follow would be commemorated. Red poppies, minutes of silence, poetic quotes and solemn gatherings are all vestiges of First World War commemoration and have now become applicable to remembrances ceremonies of numerous other conflicts. The Cenotaph in London, The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington D.C., the imposing arch of Thiepval in France, and the silent rows of headstones across the war graves of Europe are all relics of WWI, yet in many ways they draw our attention to the conflicts that followed them, perhaps because, as Jay Winter explains, while 'it had been possible to give the tremendous loss of life in WWI some meaning by portraying it as a warning to future generations, this was no longer possible after WWII, since the warning had ostensibly failed.'[535] 'The war to end all wars' did nothing of the sort. The tradition of remembering the fallen in a chivalric light continues in the forms in which international conflicts are remembered, the rhetoric declaring the bravery of action, the glorification of sacrifice, and the justice implicit in the action of soldiers who fought for national causes or in defense of the weak. Further, a substantial portion of modern memory concerning the First World War has been formed around themes of disillusionment and futility,

[534] Fussell, *Modern Memory*, p. 348.
[535] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 9.

the rejection of romanticisation and the recognition of the deeply impersonal nature of non-autonomous warfare.

Four years of total war had changed Britain's perception of battle as well as its notions of heroism, death, and its warrior mentality. In order to maintain its imperialistic ambitions but without encouraging militarism, Britain instead cultivated the notion of defence and preparation with the ambition of avoiding another global conflict. A significant number of accounts of the war, as well as fictionalised interpretations, would condemn the role that romanticism of combat by older generations had on influencing young men to go to war. Owen's 'old lie' and the brutal reality of war in the trenches as told through the voices of disillusioned writers became emblematic of the First World War, eclipsing nearly all other treatments. Works such as *Goodbye to All That*, *Testament of Youth* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* became the pillars of the canon of WWI literature, as poems by such authors as Sassoon and Owen came to be taught in schools across Britain as the definitive representation of the conflict and the mindset of those who endured it.[536] One cannot deny the importance and validity of such accounts, but there is most certainly a need for a more rounded and nuanced depiction of the First World War in order to do justice to the legacy of such a global conflict. As Rawlinson points out that 'a perennial problem for students of war poetry is not calling into question what James Campbell called "combat Gnosticism (the Owenesque idea that soldiers have a secret knowledge denied to non-combatant)'.[537] This and many other hallmarks of contemporary ideas surrounding WWI

[536] Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (New York, NY: Cape, 1930); Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (New Jersey: Macmillan and Co., 1933); Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. by A. W. Wheen (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Co., 1929).
[537] Mark Rawlinson, 'Late Poets of the First World War', *Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) 81-93, at p. 88.

have been closely interrogated in order to demonstrate their importance in shaping memory of the conflict as well as the way in which our understanding of them has no always been complete.

This thesis has incorporated literary renderings of the First World War and British society in order to elucidate the significance and influence of the persistent undercurrent of chivalry before, during and after World War One. By exploring texts that are both part of stand apart from the accepted canon of WWI literature we are able to broaden our understanding and become aware of the cultural and social forces at work during the period. Chivalry was an operative force that exerted tremendous influence on British society. Its importance was most obvious, in cultural, physical and intellectual senses, in the years preceding war and perhaps again after the war when disillusioned writers vilified it, bringing its inadequacies to the forefront of retrospective thought on the First World War. However, this division is not an accurate reflection of chivalry's formative role in Britain's 4 August 1914 response to Germany. As this thesis has demonstrated, the re-emergence of chivalry fundamentally altered Britain's perception of duty, masculinity and the ideology surrounding war. It, for better or worse, encouraged men to enter battle and encouraged women to support such action if not for the implicit 'honour' of service, then for the defense of a nation, its beliefs in a Christian idea of justice, and the mutual respect it confirmed upon their partner. The combination of Christian morality and chivalric meting of punishment left Britain honour-bound by its own sensibilities to engage in war. Though the popularity of the image of the Crusader-cum-Tommy did not endure the trials of the Western Front, the ethos of his actions still maintained a chivalric essence. Life in the trenches led to the foundation of the brotherhood in arms, literary propaganda promoted solidarity and the unifying importance of duty and bravery, while the threat of destruction of British culture justified

violence and killing. Chivalry, however condemned in the decades immediately following the Armistice, was active, valued and functioning in British society as a part of a rich cultural heritage and nationalistic belief in the nature and correctness of British civilisation.

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