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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Framing Guinevere:
Gender, Nation, and Myth-Making in Jessie M. King's Illustrations
of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Shannon Lee Dailey

June 2019

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Johannes Endres, Chairperson

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The Thesis of Shannon Lee Dailey is approved:

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Framing Guinevere:
Gender, Nation, and Myth-Making in Jessie M. King's Illustrations
of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*

by

Shannon Lee Dailey

Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Art History
University of California, Riverside, June 2019
Dr. Johannes Endres, Chairperson

This thesis examines the representation of the character Guinevere in Jessie Marion King's illustrations of the 1904 edition of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, by William Morris, and the ways in which King's illustrations can be read within intersecting frameworks of nationalism and gender in fin-de-siècle Scotland. The purpose of this analysis is to facilitate a better understanding of changing concepts of nineteenth-century and fin-de-siècle Scottish national identity, in dialogue with gendered conventions of femininity, and how gender operates within discourses of nationalism. King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations can be interpreted according to concepts of multi-nationalism, pan-Britishness, and consanguinity that were promulgated in Great Britain at the turn of the century, as well as within the heteronormative gender binary system and its effect on typologies of femininity and conventions of sexuality. The illustrations can be read within such frameworks through the application of theories of nationhood, gender, semiotics, and post-structuralist inquiry, as well as comparative

analyses with the works of contemporaneous artists and book illustrators. King's Guinevere denies existing conceptualizations of femininity and the illustrations' visual aesthetic evokes an image of a modern Scotto-British national identity. King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations explore a revision of myths of femininity and myths of nationality and offer new modern myths of "Scottishness."

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Introduction

“*Ever in a Fairyland*”¹

In 1942, the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists Club organized a Diamond Jubilee Exhibition, held at their headquarters at 5 Blythswood Square. At the exhibition, club President Agnes Raeburn read aloud “an amusing and vivid description of the early struggles for recognition of the young women artists of 1882,” written by one of the society’s founding members, Mrs. Jane Steven.² Eight years after the Diamond Jubilee Exhibition, Steven’s account was published within the *History of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists Club*, by De Courcy Lewthwaite Dewar, which included an *in memoriam* for notable deceased members. Jessie Marion King – designer and illustrator – was among the influential female Glaswegian artists celebrated. King “lived in a world of fantasy of her own making [...] through life, she wove whimsies of exquisite delicacy in her book illustrations, gossamers that might have dissolved in a breath.”³

This thesis will explore the representation and figuration of the character Guinevere in Jessie M. King’s illustrations of the 1904 edition of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, by William Morris, and how the illustrations can be situated – and *read* – within intersecting discourses of nationalism and gender in fin-de-siècle Scotland.⁴ The objective of this analysis is to better understand shifting notions of

¹ “The Scottish Section,” *The Studio* 26 (1902): 99.

² De Courcy Lewthwaite Dewar, *History of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists Club* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1950), 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32. I utilize the concept of *reading* images and the “linguistic nature of the image,” within the context of semiotic analysis, as discussed in Barthes.

Scottishness in dialogue with gendered conventions of femininity and how gender operates within concepts of nationalism, in terms of the visual arts. King's illustrations offer a reworking of myths of femininity and myths of nationality and explore the making of new modern myths.

King's illustrations operate on many levels – visually (iconographic), textually (use of text captions), and intertextually within the canon of the mythic narrative (Arthurian legend) and Morris' poems. Meaning is not innately contained within the illustrations themselves, but rather, attributed to the illustrations externally, predicated on the subjective intelligibility of a reader/viewer.⁵ This approach is unconcerned with intentionality (of the artist), for which evidence is often arbitrary, if not absent. The polysemous nature of the illustrations facilitates how they can be situated within contexts of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century visual culture as well as within intersecting discourses and social histories, how they could have been understood by contemporary audiences, and how they may potentially – perhaps unintentionally – reflect issues regarding nationalism and gender.

Issues of nationalism and gender can be externally filtered on to the illustrations by way of *frames* of viewing, which facilitate multivalent readings of the illustrations founded on social and cultural histories.⁶ King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations can

⁵ Ibid., 15-16, 32, 42.

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). My methodological approach of conceptual “framing” is derived from Derrida's writings on framing and his deconstruction of Kant. For discussion on frames of viewing in art historical analysis, and of the limits of such frames, see: Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850-1900* (London: Routledge, 2000).

be analyzed and interpreted according to such *frameworks* through the application of theories of nationhood, gender, semiotics, and post-structuralist inquiry.

In his deconstructive writings on the frame and of *framing*, Jacques Derrida describes the frame as a *parergon* – that which supplemental or extraneous – and as a border or a boundary, but also as a margin, an in-between space.⁷ The frame possesses a tangibility that differentiates it from the internal work (the *ergon*) but also from the exterior or its *milieu* (its environment, such as the wall on which the painting hangs or the institution in which it exists). It is neither inside nor outside. Derrida’s analysis of the “conceptual operation” of the frame “threatens the clean separation of ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ to its foundations, since the concept of the frame is the undoing of the relation of ‘inside’ to ‘outside’ on which all else is predicated;” Derrida exposes the “persistent logic of enclosure.”⁸ Derrida’s treatise on *framing* can be adapted theoretically in an analysis of a work’s cultural and contextual framework, and structure a discussion of frames of nationalism and gender around King’s illustrations. These non-literal frames are not intrinsic to King’s work, meaning they are not implicitly suggested in the images or captions of the illustrations, but neither are they restricted to the exterior with no bearing on the work. Instead, the frames mediate between the work and the *milieu*, constructed out of sociohistorical information.

A fundamental catch in employing *frames of viewing* as a method of art historical analysis is the problem of placing boundaries on a work, and creating limitations,

⁷ Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* 17.

⁸ Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (1991): 193.

according to what is determined as intrinsic and extrinsic to a work of art by art historical institutions and the discipline itself.⁹ However, through *reading* images – or “art-as-text” – “the boundaries which enclose the ‘work’ are dissolved; the text opens continually into other texts, the space of *intertextuality*.”¹⁰ My implementation of frames of viewing does not seek to restrain or regulate King’s illustrations within prescriptive and impenetrable boundaries. Rather, I seek to open them up to a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations – in this case, to Scottish national identity and conceptions of femininity in Great Britain – and to contextualize the illustrations within the “tensile web” of referents in which works “were woven and within which they were interpreted.”¹¹

Though King explored a variety of mediums through the course of her artistic career, her rich *oeuvre* primarily consists of pen and ink drawings, book illustration, and book design.¹² King’s illustrative work is characterized by a pervasive idiosyncratic visual style rooted in detailed ornamentation, flowing forms, and heavily deals with mythic and fantasy subjects. King’s pictorial “world of fantasy” is wholly manifested in the meticulous vivification of the 1904 publication of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, by William Morris.¹³

⁹ For critique of using Derrida’s *framing*, see: Cherry, *Beyond the Frame*, 5-7. Cherry argues that “Derrida’s reflections on framing as a field of force draw attention to a violent closure which subjects the work of art and its meaning to the pressures of restraint and regulation.”

¹⁰ Lisa Tickner, “Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference,” *Genders*, no. 3 (1988): 97.

¹¹ Cherry, *Beyond the Frame*, 7.

¹² King was additionally known for her work in watercolor, batik, pottery decoration, jewelry making and metalworking, and costume design for national pageants. Her jewelry, textiles, and pottery were sold at Liberty and Co. in London.

¹³ Dewar, *Lady Artists Club*, 31.

The 1904 edition of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* was published by John Lane at the Bodley Head, London, and advertised as “one of the most original and striking volumes of poems issued in the past century” with a cohesive visual vocabulary articulated throughout the object and consistency among its minor decorations and full-page illustrations.¹⁴ The casebound book is covered in red canvas cloth with a gold-stamped cover, spine, and typographical embellishments as well as a gilded top edge (Fig.1). The volume contains thirty poems by Morris – originally published in 1858 – six of which are explicitly Arthurian subjects, while the remainder are fairytales and romanticized medieval narratives featuring knights and ladies.¹⁵

Jessie M. King completed the front and back cover designs, spine decoration, twenty-three full-page illustrations, a half-title page, a full-title page, a frontispiece, a dedication page, individual title pages for the first seven poems, and sixty-three headings and tailpieces – in total, one hundred illustrated elements, as well as the typography (with the interior elements all printed in black ink). King’s illustrative program for *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* utilizes an armamentarium of whimsical imagery and stylized decoration. The full-page illustrations construct an intangible, compressed world devoid of spatial depth – veiled with agglomerated cobwebs of delicate stars, dots, and flowers – entirely inhabited by ethereal figures in diaphanous robes and scale-like plate armor.

¹⁴ *London Daily News*, “A List of Mr. John Lane’s New Books” (November 16, 1903), 5.

¹⁵ The Arthurian poems include “The Defence of Guenvere,” “King Arthur’s Tomb,” “Sir Galahad, a Christmas Mystery,” “The Chapel in Lyonesse,” “A Good Knight in Prison,” and “Near Avalon.”

The scope of this investigation will center the frontispiece, “But stood turn’d sideways; listening” (Fig. 2), and the full-page illustrations from the Arthurian poems “The Defence of Guenevere” and “King Arthur’s Tomb” (Figs. 3-10). Out of the twenty-three full-page illustrations, these were selected for discussion because they belong to the Arthurian narrative (as the legend is used in a discussion of national identity in Chapter 1) and prominently feature Guinevere (which will be discussed in terms of gender in Chapter 2). Reoccurring themes throughout this investigation are interconnected relationships, juxtaposed oppositionalities, and difference, including intersections of meaning across discourses and social histories; sexual difference and national difference; identity within Scotland as Scottish-British, Highlander versus Lowlander, and Edinburgh versus Glasgow; femininity to masculinity; morality to sexual deviancy; Guinevere (and Launcelot) to Arthur; and text to image. Though, these binaries become blurred, are questioned, are not always clear, and are woven together into a larger narrative of interaction.

Chapter 1 discusses concepts of multi-nationalism, pan-Britishness, and discourses of consanguinity that were promulgated at the turn of the century in Great Britain, how the use of the Arthurian legend connected Scotland to a perceived ethnically integrated Great Britain, and how King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations can be read as evoking an inclusive and modern Scotto-British national identity. Chapter 2 examines King’s portrayal of Guinevere in relation to the nineteenth and early-twentieth-century’s heteronormative gender binary system, typologies of femininity, and conventions of sexuality, in conjunction with theories of narrative, and how King’s *Defence of*

Guenevere illustrations revise the “woman as sign” concept (where woman is a sign of masculine sexuality).¹⁶

¹⁶ Elizabeth Cowie, “Woman as Sign,” in *The Woman in Question: M/F*, ed. Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 117-133.

Chapter 1

Mythic Memory and Modern Self

Enclosed in a garden, the prominent figure of Guinevere stands paused, and waiting, “turn’d sideways” in a gesture of listening. From a distance over her right shoulder, Launcelot approaches on his horse amid a swirling mass of windblown clouds, as if brought in with the gust. The lovers are kept from one another by the stone wall, which confines Guinevere within the garden among a sprinkling of amorphous and abstracted flora, while a knotted rose bush grows efflorescent over the wall and acts as a further layer of separation between Guinevere and the object of her attention. All the while, two towers loom in the background beyond the garden wall and watch over the unfolding scene, mimicked in the arrangement of Sir Gawain and a fellow knight positioned behind Guinevere who observe the couple’s exchange.

Jessie M. King’s frontispiece, “But stood turn’d sideways; listening” (see Fig. 2), corresponds to a line in the third-to-last stanza of the poem on page forty-three – the scene is of Guinevere, who faces accusations of adultery, as she attempts to filibuster her prosecutors in anticipation of Launcelot’s arrival, whose timely appearance saves her from execution. Though the illustration, when considered in conjunction with the poem, serves to elucidate a specific moment in the narrative visually, the image alone (separate from the text) lacks specificity. The knights in plate armor and Guinevere’s attire, a medieval-style gown comprised of a light-toned kirtle or surcoat with billowing gathered sleeves worn over a dark chemise, suggests a medieval setting. Yet, Guinevere’s accoutrement simultaneously exemplifies romanticized and “genrefied” medievalisms of

the Victorian period and closely resembles medieval costumes designed by King, such as those worn in the 1905 pageant “Masque of Science and Art” (see Fig. 12) as well as the 1908 Scottish National Pageant of Allegory, Myth, and History. Similarly, the physical setting is empty of explicit references to a particular geographic location. The landscape is restricted by way of the stone wall and the tight cropping of the pictorial frame around the figures, only allowing a delimited view of the non-descript garden, and the architecture of the towers is simplistic and generalized. In addition, the image lacks a sense of depth. The absence of linear and atmospheric perspective, combined with the irregular scale between the figures and surrounding objects, produces a sense of flattened unreal space with poorly differentiated fore, middle, and background – the space is collapsed.

These features of King’s frontispiece – temporal, geographic, and spatial non-specificity – are generally consistent throughout her illustrations within the book, including the selection of full-page illustrations under consideration in this project. Nearly all of the illustrations are devoid of receding depth or a sense of three-dimensional space; the space is folded in on itself, which serves to bring the reader/viewer more immediately into the drama of the scenes. Furthermore, King’s level of pictorial detail fluctuates and is inconsistent, with the exception of the figure of Guinevere herself, who is always the focal point of the compositions and meticulously rendered. The emphasis of certain elements over others, through the use of detail and ornamentation across the various illustrations, alters Guinevere’s place in the spaces she inhabits. For example, in “She threw her wet hair backward from her brow” (see Fig. 3), there is a striking lack of

detail in the foreground, yet in “That wall of stone [...]” (see Fig. 5), a very similar composition, the foreground is filled with a multitude of detailed flora. Moreover, the illustrations on page thirty-seven and sixty-seven (see Figs. 6 and 10) depict Guinevere in hyper-decorative and ornate interiors, adrift in a sea of ornamentation. In “All her robes were black with a long white veil only” (see Fig. 8), Guinevere dominates the image as a flat black mass situated in an ill-defined amorphous space comprised of architectural forms and flora; it is unclear whether it is outside or inside. This difference between, and conflation of, interior and exterior space as well as the varying degrees of reality and corporeality versus ethereality – effected via the levels of pictorial detail and ornamentation – result in images that operate beyond time and place.

When removed from the context of the poems, the images are strikingly blank and empty of identifying attributes. It is not even definitive within the iconography of the images that the illustrations are of an Arthurian subject, if not for occasional keywords within the text captions, such as references to Launcelot, as in “For Launcelot’s red-golden hair [...]” (see Fig. 10). Rather, the figures in the images are suspended in a medieval-esque ornamental fantasy world bereft of temporal and situational allusions. Yet, despite – or perhaps due to – this lack of specificity, the illustrations become *tabula rasas*, or blank slates, and engender a broad referentiality and flexibility to take on subjective meaning inscribed in them by a reader/viewer. The sociohistorical contexts in which the illustrations were produced and circulated inform the visual aesthetics of the work and facilitate a nationalist *framing*.

National Identity and Fashioning Scottishness

With the ratification of the 1707 Acts of Union, the Kingdom of Scotland joined to the Kingdom of England under one parliament, located in Westminster (London), and resultantly formed the Kingdom of Great Britain. The two centuries that followed the unification were characterized by a continuous project of definition and redefinition of contending identities, and what it meant to be Scottish – and more specifically, to be a Highlander or a Lowlander, and to be British as opposed to English. These seemingly differentiated categories were highly ephemeral – evolving, overlapping, and bleeding into one another – forged from intricacies and nuances predicated on cultural, as well as political, religious, and geographic factors. Jessie M. King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations demonstrate the changing conceptions of a new and modern Scottish identity that emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century, which had evolved from a legacy of stereotypes and identities forged in the previous centuries.

The eighteenth century was a period of contention with fluctuating and variable attitudes within Scotland in regard to the political, economic, and cultural ramifications of Union with England, which was both supported and opposed in Scotland, and which effected the formation of self-determined national identities of Scots, by Scots. The Union was largely supported in the Scottish Lowlands, which closely bordered England and contained the influential metropolises of Edinburgh and Glasgow, because it was perceived as economically beneficial by granting Scotland access to England's commercial market. The Union was frequently promoted by pro-Union Scots as an “egalitarian partnership” through the use of sentimental language that emphasized a

commiserative relationship between the nations, such as by the Duke of Queensberry – a central figure in negotiating the terms of the 1707 Union and was among the sixty-one Scottish members of the new post-Union British Parliament – who advised his countrymen “to become one in Hearts and Affections, as we are inseparably joyn’d in Interest with our Neighbour Nation [*sic*].”¹⁷ However, the maudlin sentiment belied the fact that the Duke of Queensberry and his fellow Scottish peers in Parliament were offered financial incentives by the English treasury on the condition of their support of the Union.¹⁸

Scotland’s administrative capital, Edinburgh, became the site of the Scottish Enlightenment. Edinburgh’s lowland location and interaction with English Whig Enlightenment philosophies, which were internalized by some Scottish intellectuals, resulted in strong associations between Lowland Scots of the quasi-borderlands and English Whiggishness, juxtaposed against Highlander, Tory, and Jacobite identities (later characterized by a marked conflation of “Highlander” and “Jacobite” as interchangeable and not mutually exclusive concepts in the Lowlands as well as England).¹⁹ The Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745 can be construed as pseudo-nationalist but were

¹⁷ *Minutes of the Proceedings in Parliament*, no. 89 (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1707). Cited in Juliet Shields, *Sentimental Literature and Anglo-Scottish Identity, 1745-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1. Shields discusses the use of sentimental literature in identity formation in Scotland and of the Union as an “egalitarian partnership.”

¹⁸ Shields, *Sentimental Literature*, 1.

¹⁹ John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 4. Morrison discusses the historian William Robertson and the tendency of Scottish intellectuals to “denigrate” pre-1707 Scotland and view the Union as a turning point for bettering Scottish society.

predominantly politically motivated.²⁰ The emergence of the contrived polarities of Highlander/Jacobite/Tory versus Anglicized Lowlander spoke to the variety of ways in which Scots themselves navigated and conceived Scottish identity post-Union, which carried over into the nineteenth century. The Union was embraced as advantageous to Scotland and beneficial to its shared interests with England but also critiqued as a threat to Scottish individuality – fueled by perceptions of Englishness and Whiggery as encroaching on post-Union Scottish culture. For example, in a speech delivered in Scottish parliament in 1706, Lord Belhaven cautioned:

But above all, My lord, I think I see our Ancient Mother Caledonia, like Caesar sitting in the midst of our Senate, Ruefully looking round about her, Covering her self with her Royal Garment, attending the Fatal Blow, and breathing out her last with a *Et tu quoque mi fili* [*sic*].²¹

By the mid-eighteenth century, the Union was largely accepted as a fixed reality and Scots were beginning to formulate a new identity that was at once pro-Scottish but did not espouse blatantly antagonistic anti-English connotations. This identity was a reorienting and refocusing of how to be Scottish and also British within the newly formed structure of Great Britain – one that extolled Scottishness through *difference* and individuality, not opposition, to England – which was embraced and further explored in the nineteenth century and gave way to a dual Scotto-British identity. Scottish art historian John Morrison explains that the need to reconceive a new national identity post-

²⁰ The Jacobites were supporters of the deposed Stuart monarch, James II, following the 1688 Revolution and in the eighteenth century sought to restore Charles Edward Stuart, “Bonnie Prince Charlie,” to the throne and overthrow the Hanoverian monarchs.

²¹ Lord Belhaven, speech in Scottish parliament (1706). Cited in Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 230.

Union was a strictly Scottish phenomenon not experienced by the English – who saw themselves as victors in no danger of losing self-hood – and that in the aftermath of England’s suppression of the Jacobites, English patriotism was “vituperative,” “aggressively xenophobic, particularly towards Scots” and was permeated with anti-Scottish rhetoric, such as that of politician and journalist John Wilkes in his radical newspaper, *The North Briton*.²²

Current literature on post-Union Scottish nationalism is divided between two main theories: sub-nationalism and unionist-nationalism.²³ Sub-nationalism contends that after the 1707 Union, “true” Scottish identity was lost and replaced by trivialized and inauthentic representations of Scottishness – commonly referred to as “tartanry,” or in Tom Nairn’s words, the “tartan monster” – in trends like Highlandism that promoted romanticized images of the highland landscape, the wearing of tartan and kilts, as well as a glorification of Scottish loyalty and kinship, thought to be exemplified by the highland clan system.²⁴ Nairn argues that Scotland’s absorption into union with England and the subsequent Anglo-Scottish imperial expansion was a “political castration” that robbed Scotland of statehood and replaced it with a “junior partnership.”²⁵ Accordingly, Scottish culture and national identity are seen as suppressed during the eighteenth and nineteenth

²² Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 19. “North British” is a satirical title referring to Scotland.

²³ Sub-nationalism as discussed by Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: New Left Books, 1977) and unionist-nationalism coined in Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland 1830-1860* (East Linton, UK: Tuckwell Press, 1999).

²⁴ Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*, 104. “Tartanry” largely promoted by Sir Walter Scott and in the sentimental and romanticized literary works of the Kailyard school writers of the late nineteenth century, like Ian Maclaren and J.M. Barrie.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

centuries, with Scotland becoming a veritable sub-culture within the larger machine of Great Britain, only to be retroactively rediscovered and pursued in twentieth-century liberal movements, largely after World War I.

Unionist-nationalism, in opposition to sub-nationalism, proposes that post-Union Scotland maintained a strong sense of Scottish national identity and acknowledges the validity of a dual-identity – Scots were Scottish and British (but not English). Scottish people strove to assert a reconceptualized pro-Scottish identity predicated on an understanding of the Union as a partnership, rather than as an acquisition by England. Graeme Morton explains that by keeping control of the “holy trinity” of kirk (church), law, and education within Scotland, rather than being managed by the unitary state of Great Britain and by Parliament in Westminster, Scotland was able to maintain a separate and distinct “civil society.”²⁶ This dualistic, unionist-nationalist Scottish identity was one that was expressed *through* difference from England; it was indeed pro-Scottish and pro-British, but not necessarily anti-English. Despite instances of radicalism, a majority of nineteenth-century nationalist discourse in Scotland was not independence-oriented – it did not advocate for home-rule or to undo the Union because Scottish people did not consider themselves conquered by England and awaiting liberation – rather, it was concerned with locating and asserting Scotland’s valuable place within the new relationship.²⁷

²⁶ Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 6.

²⁷ Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 8.

The problem with sub-nationalism is that it inherently victimizes Scotland and strips away agency of nineteenth-century Scots as if the nation as a whole was completely powerless and uninvolved in the process of joining the Union. Contradictorily, though for largely economically lucrative reasons, many Scottish lairds and officials, such as the Duke of Queensberry, pushed for Union with England, which was seen as a way to improve Scotland's economy and infrastructure. Furthermore, a sub-nationalist critique implies that Scottish culture of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – and the visual and material expression of that culture – was inauthentic due to England's interference, which therefore invalidates Scottish cultural production of the period and renders it a pollution of an enigmatic and imperceptible "true" Scottishness. However, in a unionist-nationalist approach, "tartanry" becomes the way in which Scottish difference was articulated. Nairn's "tartan monster" (which was predominantly created and promoted by Scottish artists and writers themselves, including Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns, and Horatio McCulloch) was a means of asserting a positivist pro-Scottish image by accentuating all that distinguished Scotland from England. It was a celebration and articulation of Scottish difference, rather than merely a banal commoditization of Scottishness.

Nineteenth-century tartanry and Highlandism employed Scotland's unique features and traditions – ones which set it apart from England – and sought to highlight what Scotland contributed to the Union.²⁸ Highlandism was increasingly popularized

²⁸ For discussion of Highlandism, see: Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 47-76. Also, John Morrison, "Highlandism and Scottish Identity," in *A Shared Legacy: Essays on Irish and Scottish Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Fintan Cullen and John Morrison (London: Routledge, 2016), 97-111.

following George IV's royal visit to Edinburgh in 1822, orchestrated and oversaw by Sir Walter Scott, where clichés of Highland life were deployed as part of a nationalist spectacle of "Celtified pageantry."²⁹ Common motifs of Highlandism in the visual and literary arts include tartan and wearing kilts, hunting in highland landscapes, and a glorification of medievalized romantic sentiments of loyalty and community epitomized by the Scottish clan system. The positive reception of Highlandism within Scotland embraced the trend as a matter of asserting Scottish pride, and that "Scottish painters, in common with great swathes of the population, endorsed and promoted [Sir Walter] Scott's image of the country as a brilliant fiction built on self-evident truth."³⁰

In England during the early nineteenth century, Highland culture – and by extension, Scotland – was frequently lampooned in the popular press, such as in the 1822 caricature *Geordie and Willie 'keeping it up' – Johnny Bull Pays the Piper!!* by George Cruikshank (Fig. 11), which mockingly depicts George IV and his travel companion, Sir William Curtis, in Highland garb during their visit to Edinburgh. By mid-nineteenth century, however, Highlandism and all things "Scottish" were made fashionable in England by Queen Victoria – for whom Prince Albert purchased Balmoral Castle in 1848 – and her fascination with the Scottish Highlands. Highland culture was now alluring to English audiences due to its perceived wildness and pseudo-exotic character, in contrast to English culture.

²⁹ J.G. Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896), 484.

³⁰ Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 12.

Through its popularity, Highlandism was established as a cultural default for all of Scotland. A point of contention with Highlandism is that it exalts an essentially invented and embellished Highland culture as representative of, and applicable to, the whole of Scotland, leaving Lowlanders (as well as the Islands) unrepresented. Morrison argues that Sir Walter Scott's conception of Highlandism ultimately denigrated the Jacobites, campaigns for Scottish independence, and Celtic Highland Scotland as non-modern, versus the English-influenced non-Celtic Lowlanders as modern Scotland's future who critiqued the pervasiveness of Highlandism and the "impression that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains."³¹ Sentiments of Scottish resentment toward Highlandism and Scott's role in its pervasiveness are present in J.G. Lockhart's 1839 biography of Scott, in which Lockhart reminisced about the Highland spectacle during the 1822 royal visit:

With all respect and admiration for the noble and generous qualities which our countrymen of Highland clans have so often exhibited, it was difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small, and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population.³²

Consequently, Sir Walter Scott's brilliant concoction problematically envisioned an Anglicized Scotland dressed in the guise of an appropriated and artificial Highland costume.

Despite positive and negative reception, Highlandism was internalized and explored along with other facets of Scottish individualism, such as national history and religion, to produce distinctive expressions of Scotland and Scottish identity in the visual

³¹ Lockhart, *Sir Walter Scott*, 484-5.

³² *Ibid.*, 481.

arts. “Scottish Art” that aroused nationalist sentiments largely utilized themes and subject matter that united the Scottish people through shared experiences, spaces, histories, and beliefs while also emphasizing Scotland’s singularity. For example, the land was romanticized in sublime interpretations of the Scottish landscape, such as in the work of Horatio McCulloch, John Knox, Hugh William Williams, and James Docharty; popular sites included Glencoe, Loch Katrine, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, the Falls of Clyde, Ben Nevis, and many of Scotland’s medieval castles and ruins.³³ The Scottish people themselves served as subjects, as in Thomas Faed’s *The Last of the Clan* and James Hamilton’s *Massacre of Glen Coe*. History painters, such as Sir William Allan, extolled the eminence of Scottish icons like William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, and Mary Queen of Scots, along with pivotal events like the Battle of Bannockburn.³⁴ Images of the Presbyterian or Catholic Scottish Kirk (as opposed to English Protestantism and Anglicanism) asserted religious difference, as in John Henry Lorimer’s *The Ordination of Elders in a Scottish Kirk*. National folklore, such as the tale of Ossian, and Celtic myths were likewise pivotal in communicating a deeply-rooted national spirit.³⁵ When juxtaposed against the preceding examples, the claim that Jessie M. King’s *Defence of*

³³ The Highlands were also prevalently featured in Gothic Romanticism, which frequently presented Scotland as an untouched, sublime, and haunted landscape, as discussed in: Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà, “Borderlands of Identity and the Aesthetics of Disjuncture: An Introduction to Scottish Gothic,” in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 1-13.

³⁴ The Battle of Bannockburn (1314) was a victory for Robert the Bruce, King of Scots, against King Edward II of England in the First War of Scottish Independence.

³⁵ *The Works of Ossian* (1763) were a collection of epic poems discovered and “translated” by James Macpherson from Gaelic about the mythic character Fingal (derivative of the Irish hero, Fionn) allegedly originally written by the historic bardic figure, Ossian. Though, the poems have been determined to be a creation of Macpherson’s.

Guenevere illustrations can be interpreted within a frame of Scottish nationalism requires deeper analysis. It is not the illustrations' subject matter – Arthurian legend – that arouses Scottish comradeship through shared experiences, but rather, the style in which the illustrations are drawn and the inclusion of culturally specific iconographic signs (the Glasgow rose motif and the font of the text captions, as discussed in the following sections).

The discrepancy of Highlander versus Lowlander in regard to issues of inclusive and accurate representations of Scottish identity in visual and material culture – problems inherent in Highlandism – were addressed in the late nineteenth-century through the promulgation of ideas of pan-Britishness and pan-Celticism, accompanied by a renewed interest in pagan Celtic cultural history.³⁶ Scottish artists looked back to pagan times in search of an authentic national heritage, but also borrowed and explored subject matter from other Celtic traditions (Irish, Welsh, Manx, as well as pagan England). This renewed fondness for indigenous culture offered an alternative to the persistent yet problematic Highland identity. Just as many eighteenth and nineteenth-century Scots navigated how to articulate a post-Union Scotto-British identity – where one was both Scottish and British – while remaining distinct from England (though not vehemently anti-English), Scottish participation in the resurgent taste for Celtic British culture frequently highlighted Scotland's presence in an overarching ancient British cultural history, not dominated by English hegemony.

³⁶ For more information on Pan-Celticism and the Celtic Revival, see: T.J. Edelstein, ed., *Imagining an Irish Past: The Celtic Revival 1840-1940* (Chicago: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 1992).

Pagan Celtic British cultural was seen as a modern expression of a historically authentic Scottish and British identity, compared to the exclusivity and arguable inauthenticity of Highlandism. The result was an exploration and formation of cultural ties and consanguinity across the Celtic British Isles that was not restricted by contemporary national borders. As Colin Kidd claims, “mid-nineteenth-century Scotland rested securely within Britain’s union of multiple identities. Renewed pride in Scotland’s culture and history was variously channeled into sentimental particularisms, assertively Scottish brands of liberalism and strict constructs of Union as a partnership of equals.”³⁷ In the arts, subjects from Celtic pagan mythology became prevalent, as well as the Arthurian legend, which had already been rekindled in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century Medieval Revival.³⁸

Jessie M. King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations can be read and interpreted in terms of the conceptual foundations of pan-Britishness and discourses of consanguinity. They deny banal highland motifs and hackneyed depictions of Scottishness and can be interpreted according to a multi-nationalist and pan-British perspective that was promulgated in fin-de-siècle Great Britain, where “Britishness was superimposed over an array of internal differences.”³⁹ The particularities, aesthetics, and *modus operandi* of

³⁷ Colin Kidd, “Sentiment, Race, and Revival: Scottish Identities in the Aftermath of Enlightenment,” in *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-1850*, ed. Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 123.

³⁸ For more on the Medieval Revival, see: Michael Alexander, *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival* (London: Phaidon, 1999); Michael McCarthy, *The Origins of the Gothic Revival* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

³⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 7.

various artistic styles and movements (chiefly the Medieval Revival, Arts and Crafts Movement, and Glasgow Style), and how these genres apply to interpreting King's illustrations according to a nationalist framework, will be discussed in detail in the following section. King's illustrations are an aggregation of, and mediate between, all of these coterminous artistic influences that operate within nineteenth-century and fin-de-siècle art-world discourse (as a system of signification) in which identity was articulated, validated, and recirculated.

Much of recent scholarship dealing with intersections of national identity in Scottish art history, literature, and visual culture embraces a unionist-nationalist approach à la Graeme Morton – as I do in my reading of King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations – in an attempt to better understand how nineteenth-century representations of Scottishness negotiated the complex web of national identity, and the problematic rhetoric of authenticity versus inauthenticity. Whereas, the denial of the efficacy of selective forms of cultural expression and deeming them as invalid as opposed to others – such as Highlandism being “synthetically manufactured and externally nourished” according to the exclusionary perspectives of sub-nationalism – serves to offer a fractured picture of Scottishness in terms of visual culture and also discounts the role that Scots themselves played in shaping popular images of Scotland.⁴⁰

Following a sub-nationalist critique as per Tom Nairn, nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Scottish culture (art, literature, as well as nationalist movements) is perceived as inauthentic, inaccurate, regressive, and ultimately symptomatic of a

⁴⁰ Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 3.

distorted self-image. By extension, Scotland's lack of pursuit of political sovereignty as an independent nation-state troubles the existence of a Scottish nationalism at all, and perpetuates an image of a society "culturally infirm through political acquiescence."⁴¹ Scotland maintained an "anomalous status as a nation with distinctive institutions [...] which nonetheless lacked its own apparatus as a state."⁴² Although by the late-nineteenth century, Scots were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the management of the Union and of Scottish issues by Parliament in Westminster, Scotland's hitherto acceptance of the Union should not be interpreted as a political defeat or as a period of suppression or loss of true Scottish national and ethnic identity. As Graeme Morton argues, nineteenth-century Scottish nationalism is frequently misinterpreted according to reductive parameters of a "parliamentary political approach," meaning that because Scotland was largely not advocating for political independence, the type of nationalism in nineteenth-century Scotland is critiqued as invalid and not truly nationalism at all.⁴³ By extension, nineteenth-century representations of Scottish identity and nationalism in art likewise lacked overt political sentiments, as the "concept of nationalism and the meaning of nationhood were different in Scotland," and visual art at the turn of the century continued to operate within the unionist-nationalist identity.⁴⁴ Expressions of Scottish national identity were heavily predicated on cultural difference, rather than political agenda.

⁴¹ Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 9.

⁴² John Mackenzie and T. M. Devine, *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

⁴³ Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 9.

⁴⁴ Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 185.

This thesis embraces the existence and validity of Scottish nationalism of the nineteenth century as one of cultural pride and of fashioning a positivist national persona, which was uniquely Scottish but also reconciled Scotland's place in the Union and what it meant to be both Scottish and British while in close dialogue with neighboring England. The identity that I argue is put forward in King's illustrations replaces outdated or problematic representations of Scottishness (such as Highlandism, which is albeit valid in its own right). In King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, kilts, bagpipes, and highland landscapes are substituted by the modern Scottish visual aesthetic of Glasgow Style along with culturally relevant signs that can be read as representing a modern Scottishness. The illustrations also express a multi-nationalist sentiment, pan-Britishness, and cross-national links via the topic of its subject matter – the Arthurian legend. Together, these aspects communicate an inclusive Scotto-British identity.

Arthurian Legend in Scotland and the Use of Myth in Nationalism

A discussion of how the Arthurian legend existed in Scotland and its use in Scottish and British, versus English, visual and literary culture is central to understanding the legend's nationalist connotations in terms of how it was employed to impart a Scotto-British national identity, and how such a meaning can be located in King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations. The Arthurian legend is a living chimera, composed of parts from multiple sources, which results in a variable and ever-changing quality that make the legend adaptable and exceedingly useful for conveying different allegorical or symbolic messages. Over time, in different incarnations, details of the legend were altered or

emphasized to best serve the agendas of each cultural and temporal situation in which it existed. King Arthur is typically characterized as a Celtic chieftain who glorifies the ancient Britons, with heavily anti-Saxon undertones. The legend's roots lie in Celtic folklore and Welsh bardic tradition, traceable to the ninth-century Welsh text the *Historia Brittonum*, as well as the twelfth-century collection of Middle Welsh stories, the *Mabinogion*. The legend evolved in the twelfth-century historical writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace's *Roman de Brut* and was further explored by twelfth-century French romantic poets, such as Chrétien de Troyes. Eventually, the legend was glossed with Christian lore to compliment the ideals and concerns of Early modern Europe. In 1470, Sir Thomas Malory completed his narrative retelling of the assorted legends, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, which remains one of the most referenced sources of Arthuriana.⁴⁵

By the nineteenth century, Arthurian legend had become heavily incorporated in the British subconscious – and in literature, art, and design – as a testament to Britain's, and England's, glorious national heritage. England was the site in which Arthur lived and died, made real through references to places such as Glastonbury and Tintagel Castle, and relics like the Winchester Round Table. However, the role of Arthuriana as evoking a historically sustained pro-British identity, founded in England and as the ideal of English chivalry, was not always the case. Further evidencing the legend's mutable nature, the associations and uses of the stories fluctuated heavily in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during which they were employed strategically as political propaganda not only

⁴⁵ For more about the history and evolution of the legend, see: Elizabeth Archibald and Ad Putter, *The Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

by English Tudor monarchs but also by King James I – made King of Scotland and England in 1603 – and the Scottish House of Stuart, who themselves earned a mythic-like status for Scots. For instance, Welsh-born King Henry VII of England likened himself to King Arthur and as fulfilling one of Merlin’s prophecies that a Welshman would rule.⁴⁶ James I subsequently employed similar tactics of the Tudors but claimed that he *was* Arthur returned, who also fulfilled one of Merlin’s prophecies by uniting Scotland and England.⁴⁷ British historian Murray Pittock explains how the Stuarts associated themselves in the visual arts with King Arthur as well as with the Gaelic warrior Fionn, whose legend shares many parallels with that of King Arthur and was later glorified in James Macpherson’s seventeenth-century Ossian poems. For the Stuarts, “Arthur remained a figure central to Stuart propaganda. Stuart iconography celebrated the habits and beliefs of the ancient Britons” and they “present[ed] themselves as Gaelic and British monarchs.”⁴⁸

The use of the Arthurian legend is interesting within the context of Scotland and King James I’s strategy to legitimize his right to the throne of Scotland and of England, while simultaneously promoting a strong Scottish identity by tracing a continuous ancestral lineage through the Stuarts to the mythic ancient monarchs of Scotland as well as to Arthur. The association of the Scottish Stuarts with the Arthurian legend was persistent and enduring, and the implications of that connection remained even after the

⁴⁶ Murray Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland: The Stuart Myth and the Scottish identity, 1638 to the present* (London: Routledge, 1991), 3.

⁴⁷ James Douglas Merriman, *The Flower of Kings: A Study of the Arthurian Legend in England between 1485 and 1835* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1973), 50.

⁴⁸ Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland*, 4.

eighteenth-century Jacobite uprisings and Battle of Culloden in 1746.⁴⁹ Arthur, and by extension, the Stuarts, represented the ancient Celtic Britons, which was opposed by the reigning Hanoverian dynasty with Saxon connections. After the defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden and the failure of the Stuart restoration, the Arthurian legend was “unlikely to be recruited to bolster a sense of British nationalism” due to their link to the exiled Stuarts.⁵⁰ Christine Poulson argues that this negative connection between Arthuriana and the rebellious Scottish Stuarts explains the lack of Arthurian subject matter in art in Great Britain during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Scenes of ancient Celtic Britons were less popular, whereas early Anglo-Saxon kings, such as Alfred, became more common. Moreover, the Enlightenment’s emphasis on classical antiquity relegated the medievalized Arthur to the shadows.⁵¹ However, at the dawning of the nineteenth century, the growing scholarly interest in archaeology, antiquarianism, and Britain’s medieval and ancient indigenous past greatly contributed to the Medieval Revival in Britain, but also to a hitherto unparalleled resurgence of Arthuriana in visual and literary culture, particularly during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Perhaps symptomatic of reactions to industrialization, colonization, globalization, and expanding fields of scientific inquiry, the Victorians’ place in the world grew more tenuous and unsure. The Arthurian legend was once again re-envisioned as idealized

⁴⁹ The Battle of Culloden was fought 16 April, 1746, between the Jacobite supporters of Charles Edward Stuart, “Bonnie Prince Charlie,” and the British military forces under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, during the reign of George II. The Jacobites, fighting to restore a Stuart monarch to the throne, suffered a devastating loss (approx. 2,000 Jacobite soldiers died), which greatly impacted the Scottish clan system.

⁵⁰ Christine Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art 1840-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 9-10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10-12.

embodiments, as the pinnacle, of Britain's exalted medieval and ancient Celtic history, which was mined to lend credibility to the present and dispel the uncertainty of Britain's role in the modern age. By the 1820s, medievalisms and notions of chivalry had infiltrated the popular imagination and playful performances of chivalry became common, such as the infamous 1839 Eglinton Tournament, and general interest in medieval culture increased.⁵² For instance, armor collecting became a stylish hobby; Scottish painter Sir Joseph Noël Paton and English scholar Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick amassed notable armor collections.⁵³ Fancy-dress costume balls were fashionable social events, and costumed national, civic, or celebratory pageants likewise became venues for using the performativity of history to for nationalist or patriotic agendas. Jessie M. King explored costumed design and was frequently involved in medievaesque costume pageants. King helped to organize the 1903 pageant "Masque of City Arms" that celebrated Glasgow being granted city arms by Royal Charter, she played the character "The Angel of the Spirit" in the 1905 pageant "Masque of Science and Art" (while her husband, E. A. Taylor, played the Arthurian character Sir Perceval) (Fig. 12), and she designed costumes to roleplay as St. Margaret of Scotland (Fig. 13) as well as the costumes worn in the 1908 Scottish National Pageant of Allegory, Myth, and History.⁵⁴

⁵² Alexander, *Medievalism*, 107-9. The Eglinton Tournament was a medieval joust re-enactment organized by Archibald, Earl of Eglinton at Eglinton Castle in Ayrshire, Scotland. The tournament received mixed reviews and suffered many complications due to stormy weather, and was lampooned as a disaster in the popular press.

⁵³ Malcolm Baker, "A Victorian Collector of Armour: Sir Joseph Noël Paton," *Country Life* 153 (1973): 232-235.

⁵⁴ Colin White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), 53.

Through the use of myth, “a modern society found eloquent expression in a medieval form” and “interpreted its own identity and informed its present view by remaking the cultural legacy of its past.”⁵⁵ As early as the late eighteenth century, mythic locations from the legend were being explored in landscape painting, such as in Samuel Howitt’s watercolor, *King Arthur’s Castle, Tintagel, Cornwall* (1785-1790), and the popularity of the legend was bolstered in large part by the writings of Sir Walter Scott – which took up Arthurian as well as generalized medieval themes – and gained further momentum with the 1817 reprint of Caxton’s Malory and Tennyson’s immensely influential cycle of Arthurian poems, *Idylls of the King*, first published in 1859.

The earliest example in the nineteenth century of referencing Arthuriana in the visual arts is Ronald McIan’s lengthily-titled *Mark, King of Cornwall, and his Retinue, Conducted by the Dwarf, Finds Queen Ysoulde and Sir Tristrem in a Cave, Being Fatigued with the Chase: vide Thomas of Ercildonne*, taken from Scott’s 1802 edition of *Sir Tristrem* and exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists in 1839. The first oil painting exhibited at the Royal Academy to specifically depict an Arthurian scene, from Malory, was William Bell Scott’s *King Arthur Carried to the Land of Enchantment* in 1847, and the Arthurian legend was the subject of William Dyce’s winning fresco designs in the competition to decorate the Queen’s Robing Room in the new Palace of Westminster, from 1849 to 1854.⁵⁶ Coincidentally – or perhaps not so coincidentally – Ronald McIan, William Bell Scott, and William Dyce were all Scottish, as is Sir Walter

⁵⁵ Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 8.

⁵⁶ Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 16.

Scott. It is interesting to consider the role of Scottish writers and artists in the rehabilitation of the Arthurian legend, not only in Scotland but in England and for English audiences within such culturally legitimated spaces as the Royal Academy and Palace of Westminster.

The cultural, political, and nationalist connotations of the Arthurian legend had changed in the nineteenth century. For example, within England the legend's tumultuous association with the Stuarts lessened, who were no longer a literal threat to the British crown and relegated safely within the realm of history. Instead, the myths were re-contextualized as nationalist nostalgia in terms of a cohesive Great Britain with a shared medieval past, with both Celtic and Saxon ancestry. In the nineteenth century, there was a move toward altering the definition of "British" as a more inclusive term, seemingly indicating a unified political and cultural entity, by embracing "Celts as well as Saxons, Catholics as well as Protestants. The Irish, the Welsh, and the Scots must be recognised as legitimate members of the United Kingdom."⁵⁷ Britain's search for its self-identity and the need to articulate an image of an integrated community was realized via reliving and re-presenting a period perceived as a cultural golden age – the Middle Ages, but also ancient Celtic society, which was implied by proxy through Arthur's historicity even though the legend itself is presented as a medieval tale. By reasserting the glory of the Middle Ages, and simultaneously invoking the continuity of its lineage, Britain strove to create a distinguishable cultural and national identity that differentiated them from other European nations, at a time when nationalist movements were occurring across Europe,

⁵⁷ Ibid., 21.

that now embraced references to Scotland as part of Britain's diversity and unique heritage.

In *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner observed that “in a hectically mobile society, custom has no time to hallow anything.”⁵⁸ Within the seemingly ever-expanding Victorian social structure – confronted with growing industrial mechanization and notions of modernity – old myths were used, and new myths were created, to lend an aura of history and tradition to a modern society that increasingly questioned its legacy and sought substantiation. The implication of Gellner's claim is that rapidly mobile societies, like that of Victorian Britain, lack the capacity to truly establish and nourish new traditions developmentally over the course of history because of the rate at which that society transforms. This concept is likewise present in Eric Hobsbawm's discussion of “invented traditions” – traditions conceived of largely or solely in the present, with an illusion of historicity, in an “attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past” – which aide in social organization as well as the performance of, and participation in, particular identities.⁵⁹

Articulations of Scottish (and British) national identity in the nineteenth century heavily utilized myth and invented traditions, such as the romanticization of Highlandism, the ceremonial wearing of clan-specific tartan patterns, and the Highlands

⁵⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 24.

⁵⁹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 2. For more information on nationalism and identity formation, see: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

“eulogized as a land of heroes” rich with a retinue of indigenous traditions unaffected by the Union.⁶⁰ The ways in which the Arthurian legend was used in nineteenth-century Britain, with contextual relevance to the Medieval Revival and tangential interests in ancient Celtic culture, presented a shared fictive history between the constituent countries of Great Britain, legitimated through historicity. Identifying and promoting connections of the Arthurian legend to Scotland – whether by Scotch artists or English artists and regardless of the intended audience – linked Scotland, through myth, to the cultural superstructure of an ethnically united Britain and as part of a pan-British identity. John Morrison explains that a myth is “a highly selective ‘memory’ of the past used to stimulate collective purpose in the present. With no collective purpose, there can be no national identity and therefore no nationalism. Myths are central to the very existence of nationalism.”⁶¹

In a passage from his journal, *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal*, the Scottish intellectual Patrick Geddes references the Arthurian legend’s connection to Scotland, where the Eildon Hills (south of Melrose in Roxburghshire) are known as a potential burial site of King Arthur:

One day, noble traditions long forgot will rouse a mightier literature, noble localities still unvisited bring forth more enduring labours... The wizard’s magic book still waits unmouldering in the tombs... the prophetic Rhymer listens from Elfland, Arthur sits in the Eildon Hills, Merlin sleeps in the thorn.⁶²

⁶⁰ Mackenzie and Devine, *Scotland and the British Empire*, 86.

⁶¹ Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 9.

⁶² Patrick Geddes, from *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal* (1895). Cited in Edelstein, *Imagining an Irish Past*, 44. The Eildon Hills are described as “hollow hills” by Thomas the Rhymer, a 13th c. Scottish laird and prophet who was mythologized in literature, with connections to the Arthurian legend. He was the subject of the folk ballad “Thomas Rhymer,” as well as a popular medieval romance in which he was whisked away by the Queen of Elfland, that was later expanded by Sir Walter Scott. Scott identified Eildon as the resting place of King Arthur.

Arthurian subject matter was repeatedly addressed by Scottish artists, such as Jessie M. King, Sir Joseph Noël Paton, John Duncan, Irish-born Phoebe Anna Traquair, as well as McIan, Bell Scott, and Dyce. Nineteenth-century Scottish artists' and writers' explorations of Arthurian legend can be understood according to the story's prevalence in popular culture via the Medieval Revival, the Pre-Raphaelites, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and revived interest in pagan Celtic visual and material culture, myths, and folklore, and were not necessarily always purposefully intimating nationalist agendas. However, in the spirit of pan-Celticism and pan-Britishness circulating in late-century, an analysis of references to the Arthurian legend forged among the Celtic-fringe nations, including Scotland, very much speaks to the concept of a shared cultural legacy. Locating and retelling Arthurian legend in relation to Scotland reoriented the legend – which had shed its contentious association to the Stuarts, whom themselves became myth-like nationalist icons of Scottish sovereignty and rebellion – and subsequently belonged to a larger community.

Arthurian legend is a sign that has been coded and recoded with nuanced meaning by different audiences at different times through British history, though frequently the legend reads as a sign of Englishness – of the chivalrous English gentleman, English supremacy, and the sanctity and authority of the English crown – perpetuated by the modern misconception that “British” is exclusively synonymous with “English.” A framing of King's illustrations in terms of Scottish nationalist sentiments is demonstrable through a semiotic reading of the signs at work in the illustrations. The project of a semiotic approach to locating a pan-Scotto-British national identity in King's illustrations

is concerned with a re-signing of the Arthurian legend as well as changes in popular conceptions of Scotland and how Scottishness was communicated in the visual arts. The Arthurian legend in the context of King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations is able to be considered in discussions of Scottish nationalism (as opposed to English or Welsh) due to the visual style in which the images are drawn and the ornamentation of the illustrations, consisting of the choice of font for the accompanying text captions and the presence of certain iconographic symbols within the compositions. Ultimately, King's illustrations interweave a myth, which possesses strong associations with England and Wales, with mutable coded signs that are able to be understood as evocative of Scottishness, and Scotto-Britishness, to Scottish audiences, which solidifies the legend's connection to Scotland and as representative of a pan-Scotto-British national identity.

Making Glasgow: The Nationalism of "Glasgow Style"

Amid the tempest of the Industrial Revolution, nineteenth-century Scotland experienced unprecedented industrialization, drastic urban development, economic growth, and social change. Throughout this period of transformation, questions of identity – ethnic, religious, political, nationalist, sexual, and gender-based – were continually problematized, reasserted, and renegotiated. The 1707 Acts of Union and the subsequent opening of Scotland's markets to England established Scotland as a pivotal producer for the British Empire, which irrevocably altered the northern country's infrastructure and way of life as it experienced massive economic prosperity (both commercial and industrial). This prosperity was largely generated within and recycled

back into the Lowland metropolises of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee – though primarily Edinburgh and Glasgow, who both possessed lucrative shipping ports and closely bordered England.⁶³

The capital city of Edinburgh was the seat of Scotland’s church, the nucleus of the Scottish Enlightenment, was home to the legal, education, and banking systems as well as the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA). Edinburgh boasted not only a population of bankers, lawyers, educated elites, and aristocrats, but also a thriving community of craftsmen, including cabinet makers, tailors, glass and leather workers, papermakers, and printers. Though, despite Edinburgh’s trades market, the grand city lacked heavy industry and manufacturing jobs, in which Glasgow took the lead.⁶⁴

By 1900, Glasgow had become known as the “Second City” of the British Empire – second only to London – and was an internationally recognized industrial giant. Cotton, iron, and coal were crucial to Glasgow’s economy, which was dominated by the textile and heavy engineering industries, specifically locomotive building, and shipbuilding. This increase in industrialization facilitated the rise of a prevailing capitalist bourgeoisie, in contrast to Edinburgh’s aristocracy, and resulted in more jobs, economic stability, and improved living conditions.⁶⁵ Though Glasgow emerged as a formidable economic power, until the late nineteenth century Glasgow remained in the shadow of Edinburgh in

⁶³ The firths of Forth in Edinburgh and Clyde in Glasgow.

⁶⁴ For a concise survey of Scotland’s urbanization and industry in the nineteenth century, see: Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832-1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 35-42.

⁶⁵ For study of 19th c. Scottish art collectors and the impact on taste and identity see, Frances Fowle, “Patterns of Taste: Scottish Collectors and the Making of Cultural Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *A Shared Legacy: Essays on Irish and Scottish Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Fintan Cullen and John Morrison (London: Routledge, 2016), 173-190.

regard to the arts. With the establishment of RSA exhibitions in 1819, immense public interest was localized on Edinburgh and “a desire was felt in Glasgow to possess something of the same kind,” as evidenced by the formation of such initiatives as the “Institution for Promoting and Encouraging the Fine Arts in the West of Scotland” in 1821.⁶⁶ There was a persistent sense of contempt expressed toward Glaswegian artists by academicians in Edinburgh. In November of 1880, the Glaswegian weekly serial *The Bailie* commented that “against Glasgow and Glasgow painters the animus is particularly strong... the authorities of the RSA [Royal Scottish Academy] have all along done their best to ignore or discourage Glasgow art.”⁶⁷

In the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a marked recirculation of Glasgow’s wealth into urban building projects and the founding of art institutions, such as the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts in 1861, followed by the Glasgow Art Club in 1867, construction of new university buildings in 1870, and a new modern building for the Glasgow School of Art (originally established in 1845) designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and completed between 1896 and 1909. In addition, Glasgow hosted the 1888 International Exhibition in Kelvingrove Park, as well as the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901, for which the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery was built. By the end of the century, Glasgow had risen as an artistic nerve center, acknowledged not only

⁶⁶ Robert Brydall, *History of Art in Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Blackwell and Sons, 1889), 359.

⁶⁷ *The Bailie* (November 1880). Cited in Roger Billcliffe, *The Glasgow Boys: The Glasgow School of Painting 1875-1895* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 12-13.

in Scotland but within Great Britain and abroad, yet the attitude of contention between the two cities persisted. A writer for the *Pall Mall Gazette* observed in 1901 that:

The jealousy between Glasgow and Edinburgh manifests itself in all sorts of ways. At one time complaints were rife [*sic*] as to Glasgow artists being unfairly treated by their Edinburgh brethren, who are in the majority in the Scottish Academy. Now the Edinburgh men complain of the Glaswegians.⁶⁸

Glasgow's freshly established yet undeniable presence in the fin-de-siècle art world was due in large part to the innovative developments that occurred at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) in the 1890s. The GSA became a locus for experimentation and fostered a diverse community of artists, designers, and architects (including Jessie M. King), who formulated and popularized a new visual style – Glasgow Style – that became iconic of Glasgow, and of Scotland.

Glasgow Style, also known as Scotto-Continental Art Nouveau or Glasgow Art Nouveau, is most notably associated with the work of “the Four,” Margaret and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Frances and Herbert MacNair. Though it is frequently described as an offshoot of avant-garde Art Nouveau movements in France, Belgium, Germany, and especially Austria, Glasgow Style remained strongly rooted within the design traditions of William Morris and the English Arts and Crafts Movement, as well as accumulated aspects from other British artistic influences, such as Pre-Raphaelitism, Medieval Revival, and Celtic Revival (which are prominent in Jessie M. King's work). The beginnings of Glasgow Style shared much in common with Morris' socialism of the English Arts and Crafts Movement and originated as a conceptual movement based on

⁶⁸ *Pall Mall Gazette*, “Glasgow versus Edinburgh Art” (April 24, 1901), 8.

socialist ideologies, particularly regarding education.⁶⁹ Though Glasgow Style became more visually idiosyncratic and less about shared political philosophies, GSA artists embraced Arts and Crafts ideas as part of their “conscious aesthetic foundation.”⁷⁰

Glasgow Style is distinct from the florid and ornate organic Art Nouveau that was popular in France and Belgium, and rather shared similarities with the less sumptuous rectilinearity of Viennese Secessionism, and there is an observed interaction between the Glaswegian artists and European trends, especially in Vienna, where the Scottish artists cultivated a following earlier than they would back home in Britain. Numerous diverse artistic influences – which bled into one another, overlapped, and were connected by tangential threads – contributed to the formation and articulation of Glasgow Style as a uniquely Scottish, and British, visual aesthetic. Despite much contemporary literature situating Glasgow Style as an international phenomenon, with ties to Viennese Secessionism, Symbolist painting, and artists like Jan Toorop and Aubrey Beardsley, Duncan Macmillan contends that the work of the GSA artists “remains wholly individual and recognisably Glasgow.”⁷¹

Glasgow Style is characterized by stylized organic motifs that are often geometricized, rectilinear, or elongated. Popular motifs include the human form, birds in flight, and an abundance of flora; also common were the attributes of Glasgow’s patron

⁶⁹ For more discussion on Glasgow Style, see: Jude Burkhauser, ed., *Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design, 1880-1920* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), 81.

⁷⁰ Murdo Macdonald, *Scottish Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 144.

⁷¹ Duncan Macmillan, *Scottish Art 1460-2000* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Co., 2000), 294.

saint, St. Mungo, consisting of an oak tree, a bell, a salmon, and a robin (Fig. 14). Yet, the most pervasive motif was the enigmatic Glasgow rose. The Glasgow rose – a stylized geometric cabbage rose – is heavily associated with Charles Rennie Mackintosh, one of the GSA’s most well-known figures, who used the motif abundantly (Fig. 15). However, Jude Burkhauser argues that the origins of the rose motif can be traced to Jessie Newbery’s embroidery and appliqué work (Fig. 16), and drafts of rose designs are found in Newbery’s early sketchbooks.⁷² The Glasgow rose motif appeared widely in other GSA artists’ work, including the Macdonald sisters, Marion Henderson Wilson, Margaret Gilmour, and Jessie M. King. Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s use of the rose has been interpreted symbolically as representing sensual and spiritual beauty, while the Macdonald sisters’ use of the motif has been read as expressing feminine significance, love and Venus, and as vaginal imagery.⁷³ The exact symbolic meaning of the rose motif in each artist’s work is subjective and contestable, yet its visual form echoes the popularity of lush floral patterns in William Morris’ Arts and Crafts textile and wallpaper designs. Regardless of individual subjectivity, the Glasgow rose has become an indicative attribute of Glasgow Style.

Following compelling exhibits at the eighth Viennese Secession Exhibition in 1900 and the Turin International Exhibition in 1902, Glasgow Style generated immense international interest. Though it did receive mixed reception within Britain, support of

⁷² Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 102.

⁷³ For information on rose symbolism in Mackintosh’s work, see: Timothy Neat, *Part Seen, Part Imagined: Meaning and Symbolism in the Work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), 32, 41. The rose in the Macdonald sisters’ work, see: Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 105.

Glasgow Style employed rhetoric that increasingly typified it as emblematic of modern Glaswegian art, and of “Scottish” art in general, as well as notions of Glasgow eclipsing Edinburgh as a national artistic epicenter. For example, in regard to the Scottish contribution at the 1902 Turin International Exhibition, *The Studio* remarked that “Scotland, however, is a small country, and art life asserts itself only in the large cities; and as one of these, the capital [Edinburgh], is conspicuous by its absence, the burden falls upon the shoulders of the art workers of Glasgow.”⁷⁴ Regardless of what degree it was a “burden,” the Scottish section was entirely stocked by Glaswegian artists, including “the Four,” Jessie Newbery, Ann Macbeth, E.A. Taylor, as well as Jessie M. King.

Whether or not popular reception was positive or negative, Glasgow Style was nevertheless becoming identifiably Glaswegian and Scottish, while Glasgow was increasingly branded as a center of modern art. In a 1906 article on modern decorative art, J. Taylor concluded, “nowhere has the modern movement of art been entered upon more seriously than at Glasgow; the church, the school, the house, the restaurant, the shop, the poster, the book, with its printing, illustrating and binding, have all come under the spell of the new influence.”⁷⁵ Though the descriptive term “Glasgow Style” is applied to the menagerie of artists, designers, and architects linked by the GSA, who regularly worked collaboratively and shared studios, each had a distinctive approach and manifested the style differently, drawing on unique influences and referents but

⁷⁴ “The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art at Turin – The Scottish Section,” *The Studio* 26 (1902): 95.

⁷⁵ J. Taylor, “Modern Decorative Art at Glasgow,” *The Studio* 39 (1906): 31. Cited in: Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 81.

connected by a “shared design vocabulary.”⁷⁶ While King did participate in Glasgow Style, her work cannot be aesthetically likened to other GSA artists, with perhaps the exception of Annie French (Fig. 17). Based solely on visual similarities, Jessie M. King’s illustrations, “delicate, refined, imaginative, and brimming over with playful detail,” are strikingly dissimilar to the gaunt “spook” work of Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, for example (Fig. 18).⁷⁷

Jessie M. King attended the GSA from 1892 to 1899, after which she worked as a GSA instructor in book design (bookbinding and decoration), as well as ceramic decoration, until 1907. Though some of King’s earlier works exhibit traces of the spindly abstract patterning of the Macdonald sisters, King quickly developed her own pictorial language that was an amalgamation of the past and present. While many of her Glasgow contemporaries were actively engaged with modernism in a form of Art Nouveau more comparable to that on the continent, King’s illustrative work instead maintained a close dialogue with the Victorian Medieval Revival and carried on Arts and Crafts traditions in book design and illustration, largely established by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones at the Kelmscott Press.

The Arts and Crafts Movement dramatically altered art practice and discourse within Great Britain. It embraced the Medieval Revival’s ideals of chivalry and religious or moral sincerity, along with a romanticization of feudal society, a return to craftsmanship, truth to materials, and a glorification of the medieval guild system. It

⁷⁶ Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 81.

⁷⁷ “The Scottish Section,” *The Studio* 26 (1902): 99.

extolled “non-art” disciplines, such as furniture design and metalworking, and raised them up to the level of the fine arts (painting, sculpture, and architecture). Medieval themes and subject matter continued to be extremely popular, and the Arthurian legend was a frequent resource. Arts and Crafts principles made their way into the curriculum at the GSA – which offered courses in stained-glass production, book design, embroidery, and more – and medieval and mythic subjects likewise promulgated GSA artists’ works. King’s practice as an applied artist – a designer, craftsperson, and book illustrator – coupled with her affinity for folktales, fairies, magic, and the Arthurian legend (which reappears throughout her career) binds her to the Medieval Revival and Arts and Crafts trends already established earlier in the nineteenth century.

At the same time, the Celtic Revival – celebrating ideas of unity and a shared ancestral heritage among the “Celtic fringe” (Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Wales) – was taken up by many GSA artists, such as Dorothy Carlton Smyth, Margaret Gilmour, and De Courcy Lewthwaite Dewar. The Celtic Revival in Scotland was prominently centered in Glasgow and was an exploration of generalized Celtic aesthetics based on knowledge from observed artifacts, such as metalwork and Pictish standing stones, as well as from illustrated publications like the 1892 *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*.⁷⁸ Although King’s illustrations are not a study of Celtic visual forms, I believe that her Arthurian images in *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* can be understood conceptually within the ideas of consanguinity so

⁷⁸ Morrison, *Painting the Nation*, 194. It should be noted that the contemporary distinction between Celts and Picts as separate indigenous groups was not observed, and the general term “Celtic” was used to describe Pictish artifacts.

prevalent in the Celtic Revival as they explore Anglo-Scottish ties and a pan-Scottish-British identity.

King's work deals in fantasy and her imaginative illustrations "give the impression of one that lives ever in a fairyland, where princesses and knights are her daily companions, and lines to express thoughts are as light and airy as those of a spider's web."⁷⁹ Her style is distinguished by her use of minuscule stippled dots, flowers, and stars that pepper her scenes, often in the form of wispy gusts, as decorative auras surrounding her characters, or as halos, while her ethereal figures (predominantly in profile) are attenuated and delicate. A motif that repeatedly appears in King's work, including heavily in her *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, is the ubiquitous Glasgow rose. Though, King's variation of the rose motif is more organic and not geometricized (Fig. 19).

Jessie M. King's work is traditionally categorized as Glasgow Style, although frequently described interchangeably as Glasgow Style, Art Nouveau, Medieval Revival, a product of the Arts and Crafts movement, and her line-work and flowing forms are critiqued as derivative of Aubrey Beardsley, whose decadent illustrations adorned the pages of the popular illustrated quarterly, *The Yellow Book*. King is all of these, and also none of them; her work is something else that cannot, nor should, be neatly nestled under a singular designation. King embraced the fluidity and lavishness of Art Nouveau, the ideas of the Celtic Revival, the Arts and Crafts principles of truth-to-form and that the functional can be beautiful, and the historicity and ornamental visual vocabulary of the

⁷⁹ "The Scottish Section," *The Studio* 26 (1902): 99.

Medieval Revival. The synergetic yet individualized nature of Jessie M. King's work is conceptually consistent with much of what was accomplished at the GSA and by GSA trained artists, and King "is a pure product of what may be called the Glasgow School of Decorative Art."⁸⁰

In current literature dealing with Art Nouveau and art of fin-de-siècle Britain and Europe – with the exception of texts dealing explicitly with Glasgow Style or Scottish art – it is common practice to situate Glasgow Style under the categorical umbrella of continental Art Nouveau, as a subgenre or byproduct. This neglects to take into consideration the significance of localized and regional influences on the developments of the style as well as on work produced at the GSA, and also the importance of Glasgow Style within Scottish and British art.⁸¹ Glasgow Style became a new and modern face for not only Scotland and Scottish art, but British art, at an internationally recognized level. Glasgow Style offered an alternative aesthetic identity for Scotland, building off of and adapting established conventions to produce something new, that potentially counteracted the contentious inauthenticity of pervasive tartantry, like Highlandism. Movements like Scottish Arts and Crafts, Celtic Revival, as well as Glasgow Style make it clear that fin-de-siècle Scots "were actively questioning their cultural identity and seeking new means of visual expression."⁸²

⁸⁰ Walter R. Watson, "Miss Jessie M. King and Her Work," *The Studio* 26 (1902): 177.

⁸¹ See: William Eadie, *Movements of Modernity: The Case of Glasgow and Art Nouveau* (London: Routledge, 1990).

⁸² Nicola Gordon Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Dublin and Edinburgh* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), 17.

It is according to these terms that I argue that Glasgow Style can be understood as a conveyor of nationalist sentiments, which are further amplified by its use in King's illustrations to visually depict a narrative that belongs to a mythic canon which likewise possesses nationalist connotations. King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, as demonstrations of Glasgow Style, do not make use of cliché motifs or symbols of tartanry; Glasgow Style becomes a new and more relevant visual rhetoric of modern Scottishness. Though, the filtering of the Arthurian legend in Glasgow Style in King's illustrations is not satirical nor critiquing; it is not political, derogatorily anti-English, anti-Union, or a disassociation of the legend with England or Wales. Rather, it is akin to a translation – to make something understandable, relevant, and meaningful to wider audiences who hold stock in the narrative.

“Where Bright Beings Walk Dreamily About:” Ornament, Signs of Scottishness, and Mediating Modernity⁸³

In *The Truth in Painting*, Jacques Derrida deconstructs a selection of passages from Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, including the concept of *parerga*. Kant discusses *parerga* – that which is supplemental, subordinate, or extraneous to a work of art – and defines *parerga* as types of ornaments that

[Do] not belong to the whole presentation of the object as an intrinsic constituent, but [are] only an extrinsic addition, [do] indeed increase our taste's liking, and yet it too does so only by its form, as in the case of picture frames, or drapery on statues, or colonnades around magnificent buildings.⁸⁴

⁸³ Watson, “Miss Jessie M. King and Her Work,” 178.

⁸⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), 515.

For Kant, ornaments – superfluous extras or additions – are not art in their own right and are capable of both improving upon or hindering beauty. Derrida complicates and extrapolates Kant’s definition of *parerga*, by redefining a *parergon* as that which “comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation [...] Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border.”⁸⁵

Though, the *parergon* is differentiated from the *ergon* and intervenes in the interior (in the work) only when that interior is perceived as “lacking *in* something” and is in need of the supplement.⁸⁶ Derrida explains that the *parergon* is inextricably linked to the *ergon* by this quality of “lacking” via its function of filling a void within the *ergon*, of supplementing it. In other words, in a cycle of cause and effect, the *ergon*’s (the primary work’s) “lack” manifests the *parergon*, because there would be no need for a *parergon* if this “lack” did not exist. If nothing is missing, nothing is needed. The *parergon* is “neither work (*ergon*) nor outside the work [*hors d’oeuvre*], neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it *gives rise* to the work.”⁸⁷

This principle – that the *parergon* gives rise to the *ergon* – is pivotal in analyzing the impact of ornament in King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations and the importance of the ornamentation in *giving rise* to an interpretive meaning of the work

⁸⁵ Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 54. Derrida’s French is indicated in brackets. Derrida principally uses the concept of the frame and “framing” in his deconstruction of Kant, but his writings can be applied more widely.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

within specific systems of signification. The ornament – executed in Glasgow Style – is not supplemental accoutrement stacked on top of the illustrations, but in fact is crucial for establishing a Scottish nationalist reading. Dissecting the ornament semiotically and pulling apart the fibers of the Glasgow Style implemented in the illustrations shows how individual aspects of the ornamentation are signs of Scottish-British identity – chiefly, the medievalizing nature and material quality of the images, the Glasgow rose motif, and the font of the text captions. The Scottish ornamentation expands the coding of the illustrations by allowing the content (Arthurian legend) to be adapted into a new system of signification (Scotland’s cultural repertoire, in addition to British and English). Different deciding groups – in this case, Scottish artists, art-consumers, the art-conscious public, and reader/viewers of King’s book who recognize Glasgow Style as a Scottish aesthetic – participate in signifying systems and the way signs are interpreted, understood, and function within those systems.⁸⁸ For example, to Scottish audiences aware of the growing reputation of Glasgow Style as a “new” Scottish art and cultural achievement, the Glasgow Style illustrations may arouse a sense of national pride, whereas audiences unconcerned with matters of Scottish culture and identity could possibly not locate the nationalist subtext.

Architectural theorist Jörg Gleiter claims that periods where ornament is theoretically called into question usually denote a “fundamental structural change” in that culture. This is true of the twentieth century, marked by the transition from hand-

⁸⁸ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 31. Barthes discusses “deciding groups” in signifying systems in terms of linguistics, but such notions are arguably applicable to all conceptions of signifying systems.

production to predominantly machine manufacturing. This “crisis of ornament” is a crisis of modernism, and “modernism hones its conceptual orientation on ornament.”⁸⁹ The late-nineteenth-century return to traditional craft production, as a reaction against the industrial revolution, and continued use of ornate ornament was eventually replaced by the pursuit of the “modern” and ornament itself was critiqued as un-modern. What Gleiter calls the “double ontological polarity” of ornament explains that ornament is the product of a two-fold process, of both the technical processing of the physical materials and the creative process of the craftsman, which makes ornament not only a constructional process but a psychological one.⁹⁰ Ornament becomes an expression of cultural subconscious. Critical analysis of ornament in the early twentieth century rejected fin-de-siècle ornamentation in favor of more reductive principles of modern design aesthetics. For example, Adolf Loos’s well-known abhorrence of ornament derived from his belief that an elimination of ornament signified cultural advancement and “the evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from utilitarian objects.”⁹¹

King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations are interesting because they complicate this opposition drawn between ornament and modernism as incongruous concepts. They do not abide by this dichotomy because they simultaneously speak to a modern Scotto-British identity – a new visual image of modern Scottishness – but use ornament and historicity to do so. King’s illustrations present numerous references to the Medieval

⁸⁹ Jörg Gleiter, “Ornament: The Battleground of Theory,” *Zona*, no. 4 (2009): 1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹¹ Adolf Loos, “Ornament and Crime,” *Programs and Manifestoes on Twentieth-Century Architecture*, ed. Ulrich Conrads (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), 20.

Revival and continue in the tradition of Arts and Crafts manuscripts produced by Morris and Burne-Jones at the Kelmscott Press a decade earlier. By doing so, King's illustrations are able to conjure a sense of national pride by tapping into the nation's mythic history and venerable achievements of medieval culture. The medievalizing ornamentations act as "rhetorical elements" of the past.⁹² They give the illusion of traditional manuscript production and design in the form of a machine-produced book.

Many of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*' sixty-three headings and tailpieces, as well as title pages, feature human figures in romanticized medieval costume ensconced within ornamental frames. For instance, the heading for the "The Defence of Guenevere" (Fig. 20) shows a female figure (possibly Guinevere, identified by her hairstyle as it is shown in the full-page illustrations) in a long white gown, surrounded by flowers, standing within a framework delineated by abstract rose bushes. The heading for the poem "The Gilliflower of Gold" (Fig. 21) similarly features a portrait bust of a male figure dressed in armor contained inside a decorative frame. These types of headings placed preceding the text visually allude to historiated and inhabited initials in medieval manuscripts (Fig. 22). The title page for "Concerning Geffray Teste Noire" (Fig. 23) is adorned with a vignette-esque profile of a female figure with flowing hair brandishing a sword. The woman is framed within a structure reminiscent of Gothic architecture, with a pointed arch constructed out of stars, which plays with both the depiction of Gothic architecture (Fig. 24) and the format of portrait miniatures in medieval manuscript illumination.

⁹² Gleiter, "Ornament: The Battleground of Theory," 3.

GSA artists working in Glasgow Style frequently incorporated the human form as ornament in their work, an aspect shared with Art Nouveau, which was often highly geometricized, reductive, and abstracted into pure stylized design, as in Charles Rennie Mackintosh's *Meister Der Innen-Kunst* (see Fig. 15). Frances Macdonald MacNair's design for a GSA Club program (Fig. 25) employs less abstracted female figures as a foundation of the creeping vine-like ornament, which are also resonant of medieval manuscript inhabited initials, and is similar to King's integration of female figures as part of the literal architectural frame of a bookplate designed for Fred J.M. Christie (Fig. 26). In King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, Guinevere is cloaked under an array of extraneous ornaments – billowing robes and textiles, long rope-like hair, and stylized rose accessories – and the only indications of her humanness are her two diminutive hands and a glimpse of a slivered profile. Though Guinevere's bodily form is nearly completely concealed underneath ornament, she is not lost. Her form is adapted as a feature of the Glasgow Style ornamental program, but she continues to dominate the compositions and she functions as an embodiment of Glasgow Style, of Scottishness.

King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, though highly ornamented, do not feature florid organic ornamental borders like those in medieval illuminated manuscripts, which Walter Crane and Aubrey Beardsley chose to include in their illustrations of Arthurian subjects and which were also a common feature of Kelmscott Press publications (Fig. 27). The pictorial space in Beardsley's medieval-esque illustrations of J.M. Dent's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (Fig. 28) are meticulously drawn with copious amounts of detail and nearly every area is filled, yet they lack ornamentation and differ from the way

King's images utilize ornament. Beardsley's depicted world features naturalistic landscapes with more realistic representations of trees and flowers that give the impression of nature, while the ornament is restricted to the exterior by way of the border. King's illustrations use organic and floral forms, but they are abstracted and interpreted. They are not meant to replicate nature, but instead, their stylization calls attention to the fact that they are not nature – they are ornament. King brings the ornamentation into the inner workings of her compositions, contained within the simplistic linear frame of the images, and reiterated throughout the whole object via the headings, tailpieces, and title pages.

Walter Crane's wood engraving of Prince Arthur for Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (Fig. 29) similarly features an ornamented peripheral border, while the primary image shows Arthur sitting in a naturalistic Gothic interior replete with depictions of ornament, such as furniture with carved dragons and Gothic tracery, which make implicit reference to the medieval and reinforces the theme of Spenser's text. King's illustration "For Launcelot's red-golden hair [...]" (see Fig. 10) strikingly echoes Crane's. Both images present a tightly cropped view of an interior with low ceilings or overhanging structures and filled with religious imagery (crosses), as the figures dominated the lower portion of the composition, off-set toward the side. The pointed arch windows in King's illustration mimic the sculptural niches in Crane's. Most interestingly, King's interior includes the same checkerboard floor as in Crane's, which does not appear in any other of King's full-page illustrations (see Appendix). Although King's illustration does portray a recognizable interior with a sense of illusionistic space, as

Crane's does, its medieval reference is more subtle and instead presents a realm constructed out of King's identifiable version of Glasgow Style, expressed as ornament.

Crane and Beardsley's ostentatiously bordered images emphasize the materiality of the book as a physical object by recalling medieval illuminated manuscripts and serve to remind the reader/viewer that they are seeing a representation of a world, and not experiencing the world itself. The absence of ornamented borders in King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, in favor of thin and unassuming outlines, denies the traditional manuscript format and the redistribution of ornament from the outside to the inside of the composition builds a lucid decorative realm. This creates a more seamless experience of the pictorial world that brings the reader/viewer into the action of the scene.⁹³

The shift from handcrafting traditional materials to machine production in the nineteenth century makes evident the connections between ornament and materiality, and modernity and technology. Gottfried Semper's ethnological conception of ornament stressed the "relation between the form and the history of its creation," which linked ornament to the materiality of the object, such as decoratively embroidered seams on indigenous clothing – the ornament is conditional to that material.⁹⁴ Crane and Beardsley's conventionally medieval-esque images, with profuse ornate bordering, imitate traditional handcrafting and historicism, which belies the truth of their modern mechanical production – they give the impression of history. Though Crane and Beardsley's images are exceedingly dark, dense, and florid in comparison to King's airy

⁹³ For more reading on frames and framing, see: Paul Duro, *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁹⁴ Gottfried Semper quoted in Gleiter, "Ornament: The Battleground of Theory," 2.

and ethereal scenes, the degree of careful detailing in each of them serves to emulate vigilantly hand-illuminated medieval manuscripts. King's delicate line drawing imparts an element of handcrafting in the illustrations in contrast, for example, to the thick lines of Charles Gere's *Le Morte d'Arthur* wood engraving (Fig. 30) that, unlike Crane's engraving, lack decorative ornament.

Though King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations reference the medieval via the quality of their ornament, they simultaneously contradict historicity by way of the nature of their ornament. King's fragile segmented forms, line work, and use of stippled dots recreate her cloisonné enamel jewelry (Fig. 31). The oddly elongated rose bush configurations (such as in Figs. 2 and 3), as well as the ornate and intricately ornamented architecture (see Figs. 4, 6, 8, and 10) can also be understood as suggestive of cloisonné jewelry. Furthermore, the stylized floral patterns of Guinevere's gown (see Fig. 10) and amorphous rose vegetation (see Fig. 8) remarkably emulate examples of King's fabric designs (Fig. 32). King's jewelry and fabric were sold in the fashionable department store, Liberty and Co., in London.⁹⁵ While the intricate fragility and hand-drawn appearance of King's illustrations can be read as citations of the medieval and traditional manufacturing processes, the style of the ornament incorporates anachronistic modern commercial fashions and technologies of craft production. There is a trans-material dialogue between the different mediums of King's artistic *oeuvre* and a mediation between historic allusion and signifying the modern.

⁹⁵ For more on King's jewelry and fabric designs, see: White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King*; Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*; and Anne C. Bromer, "Three British Book Designers and Their Arts and Crafts Jewelry," *Antiquarian Book Monthly* 24, no. 5 (1997).

Beardsley's illustrations of J.M. Dent's *Le Morte d'Arthur* are inconsistent in style, level of ornamentation, and fluctuate between a medieval influence (prevalent in Victorian manuscript illustration) or a fin-de-siècle Art Nouveau aesthetic (Fig. 33); there is a vacillation between historicity and modernity. However, in King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations there is a consistency of style and blending of the historical with the modern. Although the illustrations do not adhere to a conventional medieval-esque manuscript format, they make references to the medieval that are made modern by their translation into Glasgow Style. Florence Harrison's illustration for *Tennyson's "Guinevere" and Other Poems* (Fig. 34) is stylistically evocative of both Beardsley and King; it is limited in its decorative ornament, utilization flat planes of surface area like Beardsley's more Art Nouveau examples, and also experiments with stippled dots and hearts that are iconic to King's work. King, Beardsley, and Harrison's illustrations reveal, again, a period of mediation between historicity and modernity, seemingly linked to critiques of ornament as un-modern and questions of technology. In contrast to Walter Crane's medieval romanticizations and traditional manuscript design – and others' push into modernism with increasing abstraction, linearity, and minimalism, such as André Derain's unornamented illustrations for *L'Enchanteur pourrisant* (Fig. 35) – Jessie M. King rests in a transitional middle ground.

An attribute of Glasgow Style that plays with an amalgamation of the historic and the modern, present in King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, is the font chosen for the text captions. Developed by Jessie Newbery in her embroidery designs (see Fig. 16), the font was inspired by the lettering on seventeenth-century Scottish tombstones and

plaques (Fig. 36) and is typically identifiable by high set cross-bars on letters like “H,” “E,” and “A” as well as the use of word separators like dots or squares, as in Mackintosh’s *Meister Der Innen-Kunst* (see Fig. 15). The font was popular among the students at the GSA and became characteristic of Glasgow Style, though different artists personalized the font with subtle alterations, such as with less stretched characters (Fig. 37). For example, King’s variation of the font for the *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations is more compact and less “leggy.”⁹⁶ The Glasgow Style font functions as a sign of Scottishness. In the Peircean sense, the font is a “symbol” – as opposed to an “icon” or an “index” – because its signification as Scottish is arbitrary and derived from the sign’s characteristic material quality. As Peirce aptly explains, for example, a “printed word is black, has a certain number of letters and those letters have certain shapes.”⁹⁷ The font does not visually represent a gravestone or have a physical connection to one, rather it signifies the idea of a historic cultural reference whose characteristic form – the look of the font – is not conditional to its meaning.

Within the context of King’s illustrations, the text captions act as ornament, along with the images, whose stylistic form signifies more than what the linguistic messages of the words are. For example, the meaning of the caption “But stood turn’d sideways; listening” (see Fig. 2) is more than a linguistic description of a particular action; the text

⁹⁶ White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King*, 22.

⁹⁷ James Hoopes, ed., *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic by Charles Sanders Peirce* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 141, 239-240. Peirce categorizes all signs as either *icons*, *indexes*, or *symbols*. An icon is “a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object had no existence;” an index is “a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant;” and a symbol is “a sign which would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant.”

is a visual component of the image comprised of textual symbols rendered in Glasgow Style, that signify Scottishness. King's illustrations, comprised of a pictorial image and text, use the text as ornament due to its decorative stylization. The text as ornament is not *parergonal*, in the Kantian sense, to the primary image because the text, in fact, acts as a pictorial aspect of the image, the *ergon*. The text is layered with meaning, signifying both Glasgow Style, a modern Scottish aesthetic, as well as derivative of historic Scottish cultural forms. In terms of linguistic function, the inclusion of the text captions on the images, and the descriptive information that they claim to communicate to a reader/viewer, is superfluous as it directly duplicates text pulled from the poetic narrative. Instead, the text is an ornamental facet of the pictorial image whose primary function is not to communicate a linguistic message, but rather is a visual sign of Scottishness and reinforces the illustration's nationalist connotations.

A key feature that contributes to a nationalist reading of King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations is the Glasgow rose motif. Throughout the images, Guinevere is adorned with leafy cabbage rose blossoms in her hair and as decorative elements on her gown, such as cloak clasps and diminutive patterning on textiles. King's use of the Glasgow rose as ornament is more specific and deliberately placed, as opposed to more generic floral designs and patterns, such as in Annie French's *The Bower Maidens* (see Fig. 17). In exterior scenes, verdant rosebushes pepper the landscape, while in interior scenes roses are heavily incorporated into the structural ornamentation, including window casements, posts and beams, and tilework. King's use of organic ornament in interiors and exteriors results in a conflation of architecture and nature – both are ornament and “a

rose-bush is not a plant bearing flowers, but a bower whose green columns bearing coloured lights make a palace where bright beings walk dreamily about.”⁹⁸ In different signifying systems in which the illustrations were produced and circulated, the meaning and signification of the rose motif can be interpreted differently. For instance, outside of Glasgow (and by extension, Scotland) the rose may be merely that – a rose – and understood as exuding conventional symbolic meanings, such as beauty. However, within art discourse and the art community of Glasgow, of Scotland, and among regional or international followers of Glasgow Style, the rose operates differently – it is the Glasgow rose and points the way toward Scotland’s modern artistic and cultural achievement. King’s illustrations construct a mystical and imaginative space embedded with the Glasgow rose, a sign of Scottishness, that can be read with a coded meaning to a Scottish reader/viewer and appeal to nationalist sentiments. The ornament in King’s illustrations is not *parergonal* or extraneous in Kantian terms, neither are the captions *parergonal* to the images, but rather the ornament is where the coded nationalist messages reside, it constitutes a bulk of the illustrated material (the images are dominated by ornament), and contributes to deciphering meaning in King’s illustrations.⁹⁹

The practice of maintaining historicized traditions and pre-industrial forms of production (medieval references and illuminated manuscripts) in a city that was newly and highly industrialized (Glasgow) emphasized the city’s connection to a romanticized and glorious history, which substantiated Glasgow’s, and by extension Scotland’s,

⁹⁸ Watson, “Miss Jessie M. King and Her Work,” 178.

⁹⁹ See Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 515.

cultural sovereignty and historic presence in terms of the Union with England. Hans Belting argued, in regard to modernity, that “social and aesthetic intentions were closely linked. Both movements felt the need for liberation from the historicism of the nineteenth century, where their roots lay, and proclaimed the advent of a ‘new history’ or a ‘new art.’”¹⁰⁰ However, in King’s illustrations, it is the mediation between history and modernity, not a break from history, that constructed a new visual rhetoric of Scottishness. King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations adapted the Arthurian legend for a changing culture. They are not solely modern in the sense that they do not disavow their historicity, but instead reference the past within the context of a shared mythic national narrative, articulated in a modern Scottish aesthetic, to speak to a modern Scotto-British identity.

Within nationalist discourse in Britain, and specifically England, the Arthurian legend was largely used as indicative of British national history, such as by the monarchy to validate its claim to power. The Arthurian legend, as a whole, functioned as a sign of Britishness (centralized in England). However, a changing of the visual form of that sign into Glasgow Style reformulated how the legend, as a sign, circulated and generated meaning by becoming relevant to diverse deciding groups. Rendering the legend in a recognizably Scottish visual vocabulary and including pictorial signs of Scottishness (the font and the Glasgow rose) is not subversively anti-English or anti-British, but does allow for the possibility of the illustrations to be interpreted and read differently by different

¹⁰⁰ Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 27-28.

reader/viewers (i.e. a Scottish person versus an English person). When considered within the sociohistorical contexts and the art world of fin-de-siècle Britain (made up of numerous viewing communities with their own values, tastes, and prerogatives, and each as their own system of signification), King's illustrations can be understood as exploring Anglo-Scottish ties and new degrees of Scottishness and Britishness, as part of the pan-British rhetoric of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is a re-signing of the Arthurian legend that signifies an inclusive Scotto-British identity by articulating Scotland's place in that identity.

Chapter 2 “Re-Signing” Guinevere¹⁰¹

Gender and Sexuality in Fin-de-Siècle Great Britain

In the mid-nineteenth century, strictly codified gender-normative roles were firmly established and greatly contributed to the hegemonic ordering of Victorian society. Though gender norms were articulated differently between social classes, were informed by issues regarding nationality, religion, politics, and sexuality, and evolved throughout the course of the century, they operated via relatively consistent principle values. Victorians believed that men and women exclusively belonged to diametrically opposed gender categories, or separate spheres.¹⁰² The ideology of separate spheres was predicated not only on men and women’s perceived innate abilities but also in the space they physically occupied and navigated in the world. Men were public and active creatures who were physically, politically, and legally dominant, while women were private, passive, responsive, and morally and spiritually dominant. This schema was often presented as one of complementary dual opposites. As art critic John Ruskin asserted in his notorious 1865 essay “Of Queen’s Gardens,” “each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other

¹⁰¹ “Re-signing woman” from Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London: Routledge, 1993), 197.

¹⁰² For a general overview of Victorian separate spheres ideology, see: Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2012), 132-146.

what the other only can give.”¹⁰³ However deceptively sentimental, this separate-but-equal philosophy ultimately was contradictorily weighted in favor of heteronormative masculinity, and manipulated woman’s supposed feminine passivity which rendered her the mere “helpmate of man.”¹⁰⁴ Feminist theorist Hélène Cixous argues that:

Organization by hierarchy makes all conceptual organization subject to man. Male privilege, shown in the opposition between *activity* and *passivity*, which he uses to sustain himself. Traditionally, the question of sexual difference is treated by coupling it with the opposition: activity/passivity [...] Either woman is passive or she does not exist.¹⁰⁵

Gendered concepts of “manliness” and “womanliness” were irrevocably tied to, and informed by, socially accepted expressions of heterosexuality. Though contemporary discourses understand gender, sex, and sexuality as not confined to a binary structure, for Victorians gender and sexuality were intimately tethered by a dissoluble thread. In analyzing the “sex/gender distinction” – as biological fact as opposed to cultural construction – Judith Butler contends that the “presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it.”¹⁰⁶ Victorian society operated along such gender/sex exclusivity. This systematized gender binary insisted that the ideal woman was essentially sexless or sexually innocuous, and appropriate feminine sexual desire was motivated by childbearing and motherhood within marriage and was not self-gratifying.

¹⁰³ John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (Toronto: W.J. Gage & Co., 1897), 84.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁰⁵ Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 64.

¹⁰⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 9.

As a result, archetypes of transgressive femininity took the form of sexually liberated women, dangerous femme fatales, prostitutes, and adulteresses – all of which threatened or disavowed the institution of marriage. As the middle-class became increasingly stable, workers retreated from hectic city centers into bourgeois suburbs, which facilitated an idealization of home, family, and marriage – a “domestic ideology” – where women were responsible for constructing a leisurely familial refuge, in which husbands could escape the drudges of the urban workplace, as depicted in George Elgar Hicks’ *The Sinews of Old England* (Fig. 38).¹⁰⁷ This romanticization of domesticity reinforced the concept of separate spheres and situated the home as the locus of feminine existence while marriage became a foundation upon which the structure of Victorian life and society was organized. The ideal woman was conceived of as fundamentally domestic in nature, selfless, and responsible for the moral and spiritual well-being of her children, husband, and of society as a whole. It is because of domestic ideology and the idolization of marriage that one of the most popularly addressed expressions of deviant feminine sexuality was one that undermined both the power structure of marriage and female gender norms – the adulteress.

Lynda Nead argues that studies of Victorian gender roles and sexuality frequently present nineteenth-century attitudes toward sex as overwhelmingly prude, which is consequently interpreted as indicating a *repression* of sexuality. However, Nead explains that sex was in fact discussed often, with great interest, and that sexually-determined

¹⁰⁷ “Domestic ideology” discussed in Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 32 and Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, 4th ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 181.

gender identities were regulated, institutionalized, and reinforced in the complex fabric of nineteenth-century culture by an abundance of legal and medical discourses.¹⁰⁸ These identities were ultimately reiterated, *re-presented*, as well as reexplored in the visual and literary arts. A majority of upper and middle-class audiences – men and women – would have been confronted with the topic of sexuality in multiple areas of life, such as religious, political, legal, and legislative contexts, academics, art exhibitions, literature, theater, and the press. Even the working class could have encountered issues of sexuality via the press, pamphlets, sermons, moral tracts, and public debates.

The clearly demarcated, yet tenuous, delineation between feminine respectability and deviancy can be characterized by the “virgin/whore dichotomy.”¹⁰⁹ Victorian culture was highly taxonomic. With developments in science, industrialization, and imperialism, the Victorians’ global awareness continued to expand, and cultural eclecticism and social heterogeneity informed their desire to observe and codify the world – to render the influx of information comprehensible, orderly, and manageable. The observation-based pseudosciences of phrenology and physiognomy, as well as classificatory hermeneutic methods such as typology, became exceedingly ubiquitous in the nineteenth century. This propensity for categorization extended to issues of gender and sexuality via the establishment of feminine “types.” Stereotypes of femininity were doubly normalized in the popular imagination by being validated in scientific and legal discourses and simultaneously re-presented iconographically in the visual arts, in what Lisa Tickner

¹⁰⁸ Nead’s approach uses Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* (1976).

¹⁰⁹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 6.

refers to as “visual symptomatology.”¹¹⁰ These types, which follow the generalized dichotomous virgin/whore (moral/immoral) scheme, take on an archetypal status – the adulteress, the prostitute, the chaste maiden, the mother, the dutiful wife, the invalid. Audiences would have been exposed to discourses of sexuality and were directly familiar with sexually-informed gender roles, which underscores the ability for fin-de-siècle reader/viewers to be able to perceive such meanings in Jessie M. King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, and for contemporary inquiry to situate King’s images within such a framework.

Gender identities and degrees of respectability were ephemeral, continually articulated and redefined. Conceptions of ideal femininity and morality in the early nineteenth century had changed by the latter half of the century as women’s suffrage movements, the rights of women, and the “Woman Question” confronted sexual difference.¹¹¹ The nature of feminist movements in nineteenth-century Britain was multivalent and not fixed, nor was it gender-specific (men and women were both active participants). There was no single feminism, and objectives ranged from obtaining the vote, securing legal representation, economic independence, worker’s rights, and education reform.¹¹² Deborah Cherry explains that socialist feminism and the radical

¹¹⁰ Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 169. “Types” are also discussed in Tickner, *Suffrage*, 151-226; Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*; Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Adrienne Auslander Munich, *Andromeda’s Chains: Gender and Interpretation in Victorian Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

¹¹¹ Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, 176. Chadwick explains that the term “The Woman Question” was a catch-all term to refer to the “debate that raged at mid-century” concerning women’s rights.

¹¹² The term “feminism” was not used in Great Britain until the late nineteenth century 1890s.

suffragists of the 1880s were a product of social and economic restructuring, which produced a working class concerned with labor alliances and trade unions. Whereas, “egalitarian feminism,” going back to the 1850s, continued to lobby for occupational training for women, equal wages, access to education, and legal rights. Egalitarian feminism presented a platform heavily predicated on equality without institutionalized sexual differences, a sentiment evidenced in John Stuart Mill’s 1869 treatise, *The Subjection of Women*. Mill proposed that it was due to masculine dominance that women were continually conceived as possessing different behavioral traits, but that these traits were not actually inherent to their nature:

the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hinderances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.¹¹³

Conversely, purity feminists and the social purity movement venerated feminine moral superiority by distinguishing women *through* sexual difference and embracing the ideology of women as a separate category.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, support of the rights of women and participation in suffrage campaigns were not mutually exclusive; numerous anti-suffrage groups objected to the militantism of the movement but did not oppose feminist missions in general, and many women expressed their advocacy for women’s rights by joining clubs or social organizations yet never participated directly in the

¹¹³ John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1869), 1.

¹¹⁴ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 68-69.

suffrage campaign nor signed suffrage petitions.¹¹⁵ Jessie M. King is an example of the latter. Political and reform-oriented clubs and organizations active in Scotland included the Women's Protection and Providence League (1874), Scottish Cooperative Women's Guild (1892), Scottish Council for Women's Trades (1894), Women's Social and Political Union (1903; active in Glasgow in 1908), National Federation of Women Workers (1906), Women's Freedom League (1907), the Society for the Promotion of Employment of Women, as well as the Scottish women's trade union movement of the 1890s championed by Mary Reid MacArthur. Suffrage-specific groups were also active in Scotland, such as the Edinburgh Women's Suffrage Society (1867) under the leadership of Priscilla McLaren, the National Society for Women's Suffrage (1867), and the Glasgow Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

In nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Britain, there were direct links between feminist activity and female artists. Since they were denied admittance into existing all-male art clubs and schools, female artists organized themselves into their own artistic societies, which became spaces for women to network, forge professional connections, receive training, and gain exhibition opportunities, but doubly functioned as sites to exercise social and political involvement. Prominent organizations included the Society of Female Artists (1856; changed to "Women Artists" in 1899), Ladies Club Manchester (1883), University Women's Club London (1887), Edinburgh Lady Artists Club (1889), Society of Scottish Artists (1891; co-ed admittance), Scottish Modern Artists Association (1906; endorsed women artists), and the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists Club (1882).

¹¹⁵ For more on women's suffrage movements in Britain, see: Tickner, *Suffrage*.

Jessie M. King was an eminent member of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists Club (GSLAC) and also joined the Society of Scottish Artists in 1902. The GSLAC was heavily influential within the Glaswegian art scene, and within Scotland and Britain in general, as many key innovators of the new and internationally recognized Glasgow Style were female artists working and studying at the GSA who were also associated with the GSLAC, including King, Agnes Raeburn, Jessie Keppie, Janet Aitken, and Ann Macbeth.¹¹⁶ Cherry explains that groups such as the GSLAC *utilized* sexual difference in distinguishing themselves as an exclusively separate category and to evoke a collective cultural identity.¹¹⁷ This problematically reinforced the hegemonic binary gender system and existing patriarchal hierarchies – with masculinity as the norm and femininity as that which must be codified – but also resulted in a strong nexus of women artists in which the clubs actively promoted the professionalization of women as well as facilitated reform and suffrage-related activity.

Notions of femininity, attitudes toward sexuality, gender identities, and the motivations of feminist social movements were variable and not always cohesive. Butler articulates that gender, as a cultural construction, “is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts,” and the tendency to speak of *women* as a unified and collective identity proves problematic when the “unity of the subject is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple

¹¹⁶ Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 45-48. Burkhauser discusses the GSLAC and suffrage, political, and reform involvement by the women artists in Glasgow.

¹¹⁷ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 71, 77.

interpretation of sex.”¹¹⁸ Not all Victorian and Edwardian women experienced femininity in the same way and, as Cherry states, it was not a “universal condition inhabited by all women.”¹¹⁹ Inevitable factors of alterity (evoked by imperialism) and class contributed to the complexity of nineteenth-century feminine identity, as well as fluctuating definitions of sexual morality, which did not always correspond to “separate spheres” middle-class hegemony and domestic ideology. Bourgeois gender polarities were further problematized at the end of the century as the social and economic structure of Britain became increasingly egalitarian, with blurring in the distinction between manual labor and skilled worked, and more women entering the workforce and institutions of higher education. Between 1861 and 1911, there was a three-hundred and seven percent increase in women employed as teachers, nurses, shop workers, and lower-level civil servants, such as postal clerks.¹²⁰ With this influx of women in new spaces and social spheres, new “types” of women emerged in popular culture, such as the working woman, the militant woman, and most pervasive, the fin-de-siècle “New Woman.”

The trope of the New Woman became intensely prevalent in the 1890s and served as a figurehead, a site of contention, that embodied debates regarding the liberation of women, the challenging of existing Victorian social conventions, the critiquing of marriage, divorce, and of restrictions on feminine sexuality.¹²¹ The New Woman became an archetype of femininity that confronted and belied the structure of Victorian types; it

¹¹⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 4, 8.

¹¹⁹ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 10.

¹²⁰ Tickner, *Suffrage*, 176.

¹²¹ The “New Woman” is discussed in Tickner, *Suffrage*, 183-184; Cherry, *Painting Women*, 75, 90; and Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 45-47.

was a reconstruction of the feminine. Lucy Bland defined the New Woman as “a young woman from the upper or middle class concerned to reject many of the conventions of femininity and live and work on free and equal terms with the opposite sex.”¹²²

Characteristics of the New Woman included heightened personal integrity and moral fortitude, independence, demands for equal rights and access to education, and a disavowal of societal and gendered conventions. New Women commuted to work, were economically self-reliant, lived in urban flats, wore practical dress (typically consisting of skirt, shirt, jacket, and bow tie), and traversed new public spaces unchaperoned, such as restaurants, clubs, shopping centers, and public transportation. However, this autonomy and self-awareness were antithetically and derogatorily caricatured as both viraginous neurotic womanhood and unregulated explicit sexuality, and the term “New Woman” was often applied as an insult to women who were “pressing too far the existing gender boundaries.”¹²³

Originating as a visual and literary type, the New Woman was emblematic of a “perverse and degenerate form of femininity, an index of social decline and a threat not only to the family but to the security of the Empire and the future of the race.”¹²⁴ By so directly challenging the prevailing sexually-informed gender system – with critiques of marriage, family, and domesticity – the New Woman inevitably called issues of sexuality into question and was inextricably linked to woman’s sexual liberation from the existing

¹²² Lucy Bland, “Marriage Laid Bare,” in *Labour and Love: Women’s Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940*, ed. Jane Lewis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 121-146.

¹²³ Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 45.

¹²⁴ Tickner, *Suffrage*, 183.

patriarchal hierarchy. While the identity of the New Woman was progressively mobilized as a reconstitution and reassertion of a new “modern” femininity, she simultaneously was seen transgressively as an embodiment of heteronormative masculine desire, delectation, and uninhibited sexual abandon. The hypersexualized New Woman “type” functions as a sign, an encryption, of masculine sexuality. This conception follows Elizabeth Cowie’s semiotic theory of “woman as sign,” where the signifier *woman* – conceived of and defined within existing androcentric linguistic and iconographic systems – does not actually signify woman, but rather signifies man.

The New Woman was both a social phenomenon and allegorical archetype. In a study of women artists working in Glasgow at the turn of the century, including Jessie M. King, Jude Burkhauser explores how these artists invoked the New Woman in articulations of complex images of femininity in a hitherto male-dominated art world. Glaswegian women artists built off of, and tore down, pre-existing feminine types and canons of beauty by stretching “the prevailing visual iconography beyond the existing polarities of *femme fatale* or ‘Pre-Raphaelite virgin,’” and thereby established a New Woman in Glasgow.¹²⁵ Although King’s anachronistically medievalized and otherworldly characters are visually dissimilar to the Macdonald sisters’ attenuated “spook” figures, for example, each artist confronted feminine typologies and gender conventions in their own way (see Figs. 18 and 25). The portrayal of Guinevere offered in King’s illustrations of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* – as well as how she was characterized textually in the poems by William Morris – is an assertive, self-

¹²⁵ Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 45.

aware, and unapologetic image of womanhood. It is not to say that King's Guinevere is depicted as a New Woman according to superficial iconographic attributes (dress, hairstyle, etc.), but rather that this Guinevere rejects prevailing conceptualizations of femininity, which frequently oscillate between either moralizing virgin/mother figures or alluring yet depraved sexual beings.

Lisa Tickner, Lynda Nead, Griselda Pollock, and Deborah Cherry contend that “visual representation is a social practice” that extends beyond the individualistic concept of art production as an exclusively personal experience or as reflecting uncontested social realities by considering the broader “discursive intersections” of society (politics, religion, law, etc.) through which meaning is produced and invested in art objects according to a menagerie of perspectives.¹²⁶ When interpreted within a framework of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century concepts of the New Woman, pre-existing typologies of femininity, and shifting designations of appropriate sexuality, King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations speak to an intricate web of refracting identities, definitions, and redefinitions. An understanding of Victorians' and Edwardians' zealous exploration of sex and gender in visual culture is essential for reading King's book illustrations in terms of gender normativity, rhetorics of femininity, and notions of propriety. King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations operate multivalently inside of constructs of sex and gender, regardless of King's personal stance on feminist issues or idiosyncratic intentions as a creator and can be interpreted according to social histories.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 12.

¹²⁷ Poststructuralist feminism, like that of Griselda Pollock and Lisa Tickner, troubles art objects as expressive of personal ideologies and, rather, explores representation in society.

The goal of this chapter is not to present an in-depth analysis of the formation of gender-normative roles sociologically, nor to conduct a study of Victorian and Edwardian sexuality. Furthermore, I do not intend to perpetuate the problematics of the “separate spheres” gender binary system by continuing to work within the paradigm of essentialist feminism’s differentiation of women artists against *everyone else*, which only serves to reinforce gender polarities and the alterity of women within the patriarchal hegemony of institutional art history and its disciplinary discourses.¹²⁸ “Feminist interventions” into art history must move beyond the pre-existing structure and boundaries of the field; otherwise, they operate within an art history conceived of, predicated on, and organized around institutionalized sexual difference.¹²⁹ Instead, contemporary theories of intersectionality work to destabilize the counterintuitive gender binary, class, and racial divisions inherent in much of nineteenth-century feminist criticism by studying the “interconnectedness and interrelatedness of identity (and identities) and the various systems of oppression that inform, control, and determine much, if not all, of how individuals and communities are described, treated, and interact.”¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Laura Meyer, “Power and Pleasure: Feminist Art Practice and Theory in the United States and Britain,” in *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 318-319.

¹²⁹ “Feminist interventions” as discussed in Cherry, *Painting Women*, 2; Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity, and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 2003), 12; and Lisa Tickner, “Art History Differently: Griselda Pollock,” *New Formations*, no. 7 (1989): 111-117. For discussion of diverse approaches of feminism in art history see: Fiona Carson, “Feminist Debate and Fine Art Practices,” in *Feminist Visual Culture*, ed. Fiona Carson and Claire Pajaczkowska (New York: Routledge, 2001), 25-35.

¹³⁰ Ron Scapp, “Ethnic Studies: Reading Otherwise,” in *A Companion to Literary Theory*, ed. David H. Richter (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 303.

Intersectionality, as a point of critical inquiry from which to approach the discipline of art history as a whole, examines the complexity of social and cultural identities, “modalities of otherness,” and how such identities “are connected, formed, and sustained specifically with regard to oppression and domination.”¹³¹ However, this thesis examines the ways in which King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations can be situated and interpreted according to sociocultural and historical information and therefore must acknowledge the heteronormative gender binary system as it operated in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Britain and its effect on typologies of femininity, conventions of sexuality, as well as women’s access to art training and art production. These factors served as a backdrop against which critique was directed, which was validated in popular imagination via institutional discourses (medical, legal, political, etc.) and disseminated through visual culture, and in which King’s illustrations were produced and circulated.

Typologies of Femininity and Material Bodies

In discussing the “supradisciplinary” nature and versatility of semiotics, Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson advocate for a “semiotic turn for art history” but also discuss the applicability of semiotics in the theorizing of gender.¹³² Semiotics – which is concerned with signs, systems of signification, and the use, circulation, and interpretability of signs – shares common ground with contemporary studies of gender that prioritize an analysis

¹³¹ Scapp, “Reading Otherwise,” 304.

¹³² Bal and Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” 175-6. Bal and Bryson discuss the application of feminist theory within semiotics and art history, or the “feminist turn in semiotic theory.” For feminist theory and semiotics, also see: Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Art and Literature*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

of visual and written representations of femininity and women (as signs) and the sociohistorical factors – discourses, conventions, and women’s roles and opportunities within society and in the field of art history – that generate, sustain, and circulate these representations and become frames of viewing.

Frames of viewing filter meaning onto images subjectively from the outside. Meaning can be generated externally by situating and interpreting art objects according to intersecting discourses of society (politics, religion, law, medicine, art institutions) – or “frameworks of intelligibility” – in which, for example, definitions of femininity, gender, and sexuality were constructed and validated.¹³³ Such meaning is dependent on the variability of a reader/viewer and their capacity to recognize signs and make interpretations beyond what is literally represented, based on cultural experiences and understanding.¹³⁴ According to Roland Barthes, reader/viewers simultaneously perceive both perceptual (literal, non-coded) messages and cultural (symbolic, coded) messages in images, and that all images function polysemously with an interconnected “floating chain of signifieds” that the reader/viewer is able to selectively acknowledge or ignore. The variation and subjectivity of coded cultural messages, which maintain specific meanings according to the codes and conventions of a particular culture, “depends on the different kinds of knowledge – practical, national, cultural, aesthetic – invested in the image.”¹³⁵

¹³³ Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 13. Pollock defines “frameworks of intelligibility” as consisting of social practices and discourses. On the social “constructedness” of meaning, see: Laurie E. Hicks, “The Construction of Meaning: Feminist Criticism,” *Art Education* 45, no. 2 (1992): pp. 23-32.

¹³⁴ As discussed in Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, 42.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-46.

Externality of meaning in images shifts focus away from the arcane intentions of an artist-creator and instead emphasizes the reader/viewer (and the sociocultural fabric in which that reader/viewer operates) as the agent for inscribing meaning onto images. However, one potentiality is an inevitable exclusivity in reading and interpreting images, where meaning is conditional to specific audiences or groups, which can problematically enable a disjuncture between the subject (what or who is visually represented) and its referent – between signifier and signified. For example, as Lisa Tickner explains, how “representations of femininity contribute to the production of feminine subjects while having no necessary relation to the referent ‘woman’ or the daily experiences of women’s lives.”¹³⁶ This theorization is central to an analysis of visual representations of women and femininity in fin-de-siècle Great Britain that were in dialogue with prevailing stereotypes of gender and sexuality, how those images were interpreted and ascribed meaning, and the production and circulation of woman as a sign.

Elizabeth Cowie’s 1978 theory of the “woman as sign” critiques and extrapolates structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss’ study of the exchange of women within kinship systems through an application of semiotic theory and systems of signification.¹³⁷ Cowie adapts Lévi-Strauss’ writings on women as signs in exchange societies to an art historical inquiry that addresses questions of the representations of women, as well as the signification and “production of woman as a category” within a signifying system (in

¹³⁶ Lisa Tickner, “Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference,” *Genders*, no. 3 (1988): 97.

¹³⁷ See: Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (London: Eye and Spottiswoode, 1969) and *Structural Anthropology* (London: Penguin, 1972).

Cowie's case, film).¹³⁸ Cowie asserts that "value in the sign is produced *by* the signifying system."¹³⁹ Signs and their meanings are indeed rendered comprehensible only within the specific systems of signification in which they operate, circulate and are exchanged. Though meaning is generated within respective sign systems, in the case of "woman as sign" there must be a preexisting condition of sexual difference in society predicated on perceived objective value – as erotic figures, mothers, wives, or aesthetic beings – that informs the signifying system in order to enable woman to be employed as a sign of exchange, possession, or masculine ownership in the first place. The meaning of "woman as sign" – the signifier woman – does not signify women, but rather signifies man and male desires and agendas. It is not that representations of women present false conceptualizations of femininity or womanhood, but that the sign woman does not signify women at all. "Woman," as a sign, is

a fiction, a confection of meaning and fantasies. Femininity is not the natural condition of female persons. It is a historically variable ideological construction of meanings for a sign W*O*M*A*N which is produced by and for another social group which derives its identity and imagined superiority by manufacturing the spectre of this fantastic Other.¹⁴⁰

This distinction between the signifier *woman* and its signified, man, further presents a dislocation between subject and referent, between women and representations of them. Following the semiotic theory of "woman as sign" in relationship to a discussion of typologies of femininity, sexual difference, and contending discourses of gender and sexuality in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Great Britain, the representation of

¹³⁸ Cowie, "Woman as Sign," 117.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁴⁰ Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 100-01.

Guinevere in King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations reconstituted the "woman as sign" as a signifier for woman, not man.

The "re-signing" of woman is concerned with the ways in which woman is rendered a visual icon.¹⁴¹ During the latter half of the nineteenth century, popular artistic movements drifted away from the moralizing and social aspects of Pre-Raphaelitism and the Arts and Craft movement, in favor of the sexually provocative, exotic, and physical sensuousness of Aestheticism and the Decadent movement. In these types of visual imagery

aesthetic pleasures [were] projected on to the visual spectacle of woman. Images which focused the gaze on to highly stylised facial features, a body swathed or sculptured in rich drapery and adorned with sumptuous accessories, evoked a positionality for masculinity – spectating, coveting, possessing – which was supported by the homosocial relations between artists, critics, and buyers.¹⁴²

This assertion confirms the "exchange" factor of the "woman as sign," and the reduction of woman, and images of her, to a purchasable material commodity for masculine enjoyment. However, the lavish ornament and accessories in King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations function on an additional level. Guinevere's body is heavily concealed under layers of voluminous billowing robes and embellished tendrils of hair, surrounded by delicate filigree designs in the landscape and interiors. Though King's imagery is sumptuous, the trans-material references via the style of ornament to King's jewelry and fabric designs (see Figs. 31 and 32) complicate the interpretation and meaning of the illustrations. Guinevere is encircled by cloisonné-like decorative elements

¹⁴¹ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 197.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

and wears garments with dark patterned sleeves and floral linings that resemble King's fashionable jewelry and scarves for women (Fig. 39) that were available for purchase at Liberty and Co. in London. While likening the depiction of Guinevere to commodity objects like scarves and jewelry still perpetuates a rhetoric of exchange, the question of who the purchaser is, and to whom the illustrations appeal, changes. Guinevere is re-signified as a sign of modern fin-de-siècle culture experienced by women and addresses how to visually represent woman "around the pleasures invoked by and invested in cultural exchanges between women."¹⁴³ The re-signing of Guinevere in King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations is in dialogue with conventional modes of depicting typologies of femininity and how Guinevere is visually represented by other artists.

Arthuriana in Victorian and fin-de-siècle visual culture largely cited either Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* or Tennyson's nineteenth-century retellings of the legend, especially the *Idylls of the King* cycle of poems.¹⁴⁴ Tennyson's first four *Idylls*, published in 1859, were "Enid," "Elaine," "Vivien," and "Guinevere." In the *Idylls*, Tennyson reworked Malory's text, along with other aspects from the mythic canon, to render the material appropriate according to Victorian ideologies, in which women played a central function. The four women of the *Idylls* are archetypes of virtuous or deviant femininity and mirror Victorian women's fight to "reconcile their individual identities with

¹⁴³ Ibid., 199.

¹⁴⁴ Muriel Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), 238. For more about the Arthurian legend in nineteenth-century and fin-de-siècle Great Britain, see: Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*; Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur*; Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentlemen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); and Merriman, *The Flower of Kings*.

contemporary ethics.”¹⁴⁵ Elaine’s allegiance and pinning over Lancelot and Enid’s unquestioning obedience to Geraint embody the Victorians’ domestic, dutiful, moralizing, and self-sacrificing conception of ideal femininity, where “the moral health of society depends to a great extent on the purity of its women and on their devotion to their husbands.”¹⁴⁶ Whereas, the power-hungry temptress Vivien (Tennyson’s version of the character Nimue) and the adulterous Guinevere represent transgressive feminine evil.

Guinevere’s place in the chaste/deviant dichotomy and depiction according to various typologies of femininity is mutable and complicated. Due to the nineteenth-century idealization of marriage and fidelity – and disjuncture between sexual behavior, romantic love, and morality – Guinevere’s tumultuous infidelity with Lancelot corrupted her – she became a threat to society. Malory and Tennyson approached topics of sex and love oppositely. Malory used sex and courtly love more openly, romantic love and marriage were not mutually exclusive, and love is central in much of the story’s chivalric deeds. As a result, dramatic, passionate, and ill-fated stories of courtly love glorify adultery, such as with Tristan and Iseult and Guinevere and Launcelot. Tennyson, in reworking Malory, essentially censored the undesirable aspects for his Victorian audience, which took a different attitude toward illicit courtly love.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, Tennyson’s characterization of Guinevere is transgressive, and ultimately, she is self-effacing and consumed by her guilt. Contingent on nineteenth and early-twentieth-

¹⁴⁵ Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur*, 74.

¹⁴⁶ Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 55.

¹⁴⁷ For more on courtly love and sex, see: Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 34, 55. For themes of adultery in the Arthurian legend, see: Archibald, *The Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend*, 188.

century British artists' tendency to cite from either Malory or Tennyson, depictions of Guinevere in the visual arts were variable, however, scenes of her adultery and subsequent withdrawal to a convent in repentance for her infidelity were exceedingly popular. In general, Victorian audiences were captivated with her remorse for her misguided actions and the psychology of her character, which they attributed to the "tragic flaw" that she "could not distinguish between attention and devotion," and that the "indulged girl became the hurt and prideful woman."¹⁴⁸

A common trope in visual arts of the nineteenth century and fin-de-siècle is rescue scenarios, which typically feature young beautiful women chained or otherwise restrained, often in danger of assault, rescued by brave and daring men; popular subjects include Perseus and Andromeda, St. George and the Dragon, and generalized medieval knights saving ladies. King's *Defence of Guenevere* frontispiece, "But stood turn'd sideways; listening" (see Fig. 2), shares a compositional formula with Frank Dicksee's *Chivalry* (Fig. 40) and John Everett Millais' *The Knight Errant* (Fig. 41). Dicksee and Millais's paintings both feature an exposed or nude woman bound to a tree awaiting rescue, slouched over in a position of defeat and turned in profile, as her armored savior neutralizes the threat of an attacker. King's frontispiece plays with this imagery. Guinevere is similarly situated off the side of the composition and turns around in a curving gesture evocative of the slouching women of Dicksee and Millais. Just as in Dicksee's painting, Guinevere looks over her right shoulder at the approaching knight whose sword is drawn and ready.

¹⁴⁸ Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur*, 89.

In Millais' *The Knight Errant*, the rescue is complete as the knight purposefully cuts through the tenuous ropes that nearly disappear against the woman's flesh and the briefest glimpse of the slain attacker is visible in the upper right corner. While in Dicksee's *Chivalry*, the rescue is imminent as the knight is still preoccupied with defeating his enemy, who grasps at the knight's foot that crushes his throat. The partial exposure and nudity of the women in Dicksee and Millais' paintings emphasize the women's vulnerability and suggest the potential of sexual assault (indicated by Dicksee's figure's torn shoulder and the shreds of tattered fabric at the feet of Millais' figure), as well as satiate the delectations of the works' viewers. Adrienne Auslander Munich explains how "rescue fantasies" are the "counter-plot to the fantasies of woman's liberation" because they reinforce a traditional sexual hierarchy that eroticizes the submission of one sex to another.¹⁴⁹ Rescue fantasies, such as those depicted by Dicksee and Millais, disguise "aggressive and possessive themes within a veneer of charity," which valorizes a "passivity allied with martyrdom to suggest pornographic victimization."¹⁵⁰

King's portrayal of Guinevere utilizes similar compositional elements that allude to conventions of rescue fantasies, but Guinevere is not dependent on a heroic rescuer. In Morris's poem "The Defence of Guenevere," Guinevere cunningly filibusters her accusers during her trial, buying time and effectively securing her own safety, while she waits for Launcelot to arrive. King's frontispiece illustrating this moment shows

¹⁴⁹ Munich, *Andromeda's Chains*, 37.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17, 25.

Guinevere emphatically turning around in acknowledgment of Launcelot's approach. Launcelot stoically brandishes his weapon, though it seems to be a futile exercise – there is no other threat depicted in the scene, and the two knights on the right side of the composition are weaponless. Instead, Guinevere contributed to her own rescue, and she is not made vulnerable through restriction or exposure, nor is she submissive via victimization.¹⁵¹

Another popular trope in nineteenth-century and fin-de-siècle literary and visual arts was the “bird in the cage,” which depicted women kept in interiors that were typically gaudy and claustrophobic.¹⁵² The “bird in the cage” trope was euphemistic – derived from seventeenth-century Dutch and eighteenth-century French genre paintings – which reduced women to sexual playthings and decorative possessions kept in their “gilded cages,” it reinforced the gendered Victorian sexual hierarchy and was often used in portrayals of prostitutes and fallen women.¹⁵³ William Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (Fig. 42) and John Roddam Spencer Stanhope's *Thoughts of the Past* (Fig. 43) are examples of common motifs within the “bird in the cage” trope that address the moralizing theme of the “guilt-ridden prostitute.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ For themes of masochism in art, see: Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 101.

¹⁵² Elaine Shefer, “The ‘Bird in the Cage’ in the History of Sexuality: Sir John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no.3 (1991): 446-480.

¹⁵³ Prostitutes and “fallen women” were different categories of sexually deviant women; “prostitute” carried associations of public activity and exchange of sex for money. Whereas, “fallen women” implied a class distinction, a fall from respectable society or fall from virtue, and frequently communicated an element of victimization, such as an adulteress who was naïvely seduced.

¹⁵⁴ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 130.

Hunt and Stanhope's paintings both feature a casually dressed young woman with loose flowing hair in dark oppressive interior locations, contrasted against windows that look out into the world beyond (in Hunt's case, a mirror reflecting a window), which visually separates the illicit from the uncorrupted. Hunt's inclusion of a cat pawing at a bird on floor in the lower-left corner directly references the "bird in the cage" and echoes the predatory relationship between the male figure and the penitent woman, who turns away from the sumptuous distractions of her immoral lifestyle toward a spiritually awakening beam of sunlight radiating from the garden beyond. Though Stanhope's painting does not include a male figure, the presence of a male visitor and the woman's dubious profession are alluded to by the man's glove and walking stick in the lower-left corner and money scattered across her dressing table. Stanhope's figure differs from Hunt's in that she is not depicted in a moment of moral enlightenment, but rather remorsefully and dejectedly gazes at the viewer; her lack of virtue is implied by the dying plant that struggles to reach the light of the window.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's pen and ink drawing, *Sir Launcelot in the Queen's Chamber* (Fig. 44), employs many mutual motifs of the "bird in the cage" trope seen in Hunt and Stanhope's paintings, such as a dark and claustrophobic setting tightly cropped around the figures, Guinevere shown in private dressing robes (which heightens the intimacy of the scene), and the use of a window to literally and metaphorically divide the compositional space. The drawing illustrates the moment when knights come to arrest Guinevere on charges of adultery and Launcelot defends her. Unlike Hunt and Stanhope's moralizing images of the dangers of deviant sexual behavior, Rossetti's

drawing encourages a sympathetic perspective of the adulterous couple by positioning the viewer inside the room and focusing on the couple's emotional experience, hinted at by the small orange tree that is used to symbolize love and fertility, juxtaposed against the angry and chaotic crowd glimpsed through the window.¹⁵⁵ Walter Crane's illustration, "The Fight in the Queen's Ante-Chamber" (Fig. 45), depicts a similar moment where Launcelot visits an imprisoned Guinevere and is set upon by Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred. Crane's interpretation of the scene is focused on the action of the men fighting and completely disregards the emotionality and romance of the couple, in contrast to the compassion felt for the adulterous lovers in Rossetti's drawing.

Rossetti's work maintains an intertextual dialogue with that of his Pre-Raphaelite comrade and author of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, William Morris. Rossetti and Morris shared a romanticized and fictional conception of the Middle Ages where ideas of chivalry and courtly love made up a "fantasy world of emotional and sexual difficulties" that paralleled the artists' own personal romantic debacles, and Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* provided an escape from "mid-Victorian reticence and prudery," as opposed to Tennyson's interpretation of the legend that reflected the ethics of the era.¹⁵⁶ According to Victorian ideals of marriage and fidelity, Guinevere's love for Launcelot is selfish because she places her own desires above her duty to her husband. Whereas, Rossetti and Morris' work explore the romanticism and veracity of erotic love, epitomized by such stories as Tristan and Iseult and Launcelot and Guinevere. Morris'

¹⁵⁵ Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 94.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 93, 81.

“passionate medieval world – heroic, sensuous, mystical, and dominated by women more powerful and interesting than the noble knights – was evoked in a volume of poems” – *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*.¹⁵⁷ Although Rossetti’s *Sir Launcelot in the Queen’s Chamber* dates to 1857 and Morris’ *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* was published in 1858, the production periods of the two works may potentially overlap, and art historian Christine Poulson argues that Rossetti’s drawing and Morris’ poem, “The Defence of Guenevere,” share intertextual analogies.¹⁵⁸

Both Rossetti and Morris’ pictorial and poetic treatment of Guinevere is highly sexualized. In Rossetti’s drawing, the setting of the scene in the bedchamber and the closeness of the space creates a voyeuristic sense of intimacy for the viewer, while Guinevere’s private dressing-robe type garment, the rumpled bedsheets, and her loose unstyled hair (as if going to or coming from bed) signal the potential sexual encounter between the couple. Morris similarly fetishizes Guinevere’s hair in the poems “The Defence of Guinevere” and “King Arthur’s Tomb,” for instance, “the ripe corn gathered dew; yea, long ago, / in the old garden life, my Guenevere / loved to sit still among the flowers, till night / had quite come on, hair loosen’d [...]”¹⁵⁹ The fetishizing of women’s hair grew out of the mid-nineteenth century’s “cult of the ‘superfeminine female’” and long hair’s association with femininity (and the subsequent cliché of long hair being indicative of “women’s intellectual weakness and her regressive materiality”) was

¹⁵⁷ Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art*, 242.

¹⁵⁸ Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 92.

¹⁵⁹ Line 32-35 in William Morris, “King Arthur’s Tomb,” in *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904), 48.

adapted into often sexualized imagery of “clinging vines” motifs and deviant femme fatales ensnaring their victims.¹⁶⁰

Unlike Hunt and Stanhope’s transgressive “kept” women, and Rossetti and Morris’ sexualized Guinevere – all depicted with long loose hair – the portrayal of Guinevere in King’s illustrations revises this imagery. With the exception of “My maids were all about me” (see Fig. 7), in which Guinevere’s hair is loose but more akin to an amorphous cloud finished with strands of beads woven throughout, her hair is strikingly long but is styled and contained in bunched locks and bulbous chignons with roses, headbands, and beaded strands. Even in “She threw her wet hair backward from her brow” (see Fig. 3), which illustrates the opening stanza of “The Defence of Guenevere” that describes Guinevere’s wet hair, King’s depiction of Guinevere’s hair is a complicated and rope-like coiffure decorated with a dark Glasgow rose, not the loose free-flowing style of Rossetti. Guinevere’s hair in King’s illustrations can still be read as a sign of femininity but it does not allude to sexuality or intimacy in the same way as in Hunt, Stanhope, Rossetti, and Morris’ works. This lessens the stereotypical sexual connotations of the character.

Morris’ idealization of eroticism and sexuality as expressive of true emotional love, versus contractual fidelity, can be felt in his painting, *La Belle Iseult* (Fig. 46). The painting, often mutually identified as Guinevere, shows a distraught Iseult grieving over the expulsion of Tristan from King Mark’s court. Iseult’s haggard expression of sadness reveals the depth of her loss and genuine love for Tristan. However, the sexual nature of

¹⁶⁰ Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 229-230.

the couple's relationship is still implied via the unkempt bed as if the lovers recently vacated it, just as in Rossetti's *Sir Launcelot in the Queen's Chamber* (though the untidiness doubly conveys Iseult's emotional disarray), and the claustrophobic yet lavish interior echoes imagery of the "bird in cage" trope and the "guilt-ridden prostitute" type, as in Hunt and Stanhope's paintings.

Florence Harrison's illustrations for the 1912 publication of *Tennyson's "Guinevere" and Other Poems* compared to Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale's illustrations of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, published in 1911 by Hodder and Stoughton, exemplify difference in approaches to treating the adulterous couple. In Harrison's "We Needs Must Love the Highest" (Fig. 47), Guinevere radiates in gold and white robes emblazoned against the fiery red cloth on which she kneels, in an almost pleading gesture, and her expression of ecstasy evokes a sense of eroticism that is heightened by her placement in a dark convent surrounded by ascetic nuns. The passion in "We Needs Must Love the Highest" is repeated in Harrison's "It Was Their Last Hour" (Fig. 48), which shows Launcelot and Guinevere in an amatory embrace. Again, the intimate imagery of loose flowing hair and a dressing robe-like garment, in conjunction with the sumptuous curve of Guinevere's body, which dominates the closely-cropped composition, infuse the image with a quality of sensuality.

Harrison's "It Was Their Last Hour" mimics the composition and figural pose of Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale's version of Launcelot and Guinevere in a romantic embrace, "The Sombre Close of that Voluptuous Day" (Fig. 49). However, Guinevere's wide-eyed expression in Brickdale's illustration is questioning, troubled, and

apprehensive as she asserts a small hand against Launcelot's chest; there is a suggestion of a stringent moral awareness. In "As in the Golden Days" (Fig. 50), Brickdale's characterization of Guinevere further takes on a didactic message by illustrating Guinevere and her ladies dressed in rich and sumptuous clothing, gathered in a Gothic cloister garden, as birds fly all about the women, while Guinevere longingly looks toward a white dove that has landed on her outstretched hand. Brickdale's imagery recalls the trope of the "bird in the cage" and the kept woman in a "gilded cage," which may represent Guinevere's sense of being trapped and desiring Launcelot's attention, but also intimates a potential moral awakening, indicated by Guinevere staring at the dove (a holy association akin to Hunt's holy light in *The Awakening Conscience*).

Harrison's illustrations of Guinevere use eroticism and sexuality to communicate the emotionality of Guinevere and Launcelot's relationship, similar to Rossetti and Morris. Whereas, Brickdale's illustrations are more moralizing images that focus on Guinevere's guilt as an adulterous. King's *Defence of Guinevere* illustrations, on the other hand, confound both of these conventions; there is a lack of implicit eroticism and also a lack of a moralistic condemnation of Guinevere. For example, Harrison's "We Needs Must Love the Highest" is reminiscent of King's "For Launcelot's red-golden hair [...]" (see Fig. 10) in both figural arrangement and the narrative being visualized. Harrison's Guinevere beseeches the nuns of Almesbury to shelter and protect her from her pursuers after she fled from charges of adultery. King's Guinevere has already joined the convent and is praying, just before Launcelot's arrival at Arthur's tomb. Both Harrison and King's Guinevere are shown kneeling with their hands clasped as the fabric

of their gowns pool around them in a visually dynamic “S” curve. However, the raw emotion and pseudo-eroticism displayed by Harrison’s pleading Guinevere is absent from King’s Guinevere, whose stoic, composed, and almost blank expression belies the emotional drama of Morris’ poem that it is supposed to illustrate. Brickdale’s “As in the Golden Days” utilizes similar imagery as King’s “That wall of stone [...]” (see Fig. 5). Both Brickdale’s and King’s extravagantly dressed Guinevere strolls through a constricted garden setting, rich with beautiful flowers, with one hand raised. While Brickdale’s Guinevere wistfully ponders the dove on her hand, King’s Guinevere contemplates the climbing roses that grow over, and take the place of, the restricting garden wall. Though both illustrations play with the notion of confinement, the moralizing dimension of Brickdale’s illustration is lacking in King’s. King’s Guinevere’s expression is vacant and stoic, which foregrounds her emotional isolation, but does not convey the same self-reflective criticality as Brickdale’s.

In King’s *Defence of Guinevere* illustrations, there is no implicit eroticization of Guinevere or idealization of Launcelot and Guinevere’s sexual relationship, as in Rossetti, Morris, and Harrison’s work. For Rossetti, Morris, and Harrison, even when emotional depth is conveyed there is still an implied sexuality being communicated that is not separated from Guinevere’s persona – her sexuality is made an inherent feature of her character. However, like Rossetti, Morris, and Harrison, King’s illustrations are not a condemnation of Guinevere nor scrutinizing of her morality in the same way that Brickdale’s illustrations do. Denying a visualization of Guinevere’s sexuality resultantly makes questions of her morality a moot point. Instead of focusing on the dichotomous

sexuality and immorality of the character, King's pensive, contemplative, and stoic Guinevere emphasizes the queen's individual perspective (separate from Launcelot) and emotional experience.

Guinevere's sexualization is complicated by the trajectory of her character arc, in which she begins as a morally promiscuous and transgressive adulteress and ends as a penitent and spiritually reformed nun. Therefore, Guinevere offers a "combination of the passionate, sexually experienced woman and the chaste nun, object of sexual taboo, and hence of sexual curiosity and fantasy."¹⁶¹ Nineteenth-century gender norms conceived of ideal femininity with an inherent virtuosity, in which women were naturally predisposed to function as spiritual and moral guides for their families and society, unconcerned with a physical sexual identity – hence, transgressive and deviant types of femininity were sexually motivated. This "woman worship" informed the typologies of the "angel in the house" and the "household nun," which frequently idolized women's self-sacrifice and suffering for others.¹⁶² Images portraying Guinevere's episode as the sequestered nun were prevalent and typically emotive of interminable guilt.

Rossetti's *Arthur's Tomb* (Fig. 51) (an 1860 copy of an 1855 original) depicts a scene where a penitent Guinevere, after having joined the convent, is met by a grieving Launcelot at Arthur's resting place. The details of the scene were concocted by Rossetti, with inspiration from Malory, and Morris' poem, "King Arthur's Tomb," was based on

¹⁶¹ Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 220.

¹⁶² Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 9-24; Girouard, *The Return to Camelot*, 144; Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur*, 74; and Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 134.

Rossetti's watercolor.¹⁶³ In Rossetti's *Arthur's Tomb*, Guinevere raises a hand in front of her face to halt Launcelot's amorous advance. Her face is worn, scrutinizing, and disinterested. Arthur's tomb literally comes between the ex-lovers and creates a disjuncture; Arthur is the obstacle to their union. The low-hanging and shadowed apple trees run parallel to the cropping of the composition, which is tight and constricting around the figures and mirrors the psychological and moral weight of their actions. *Arthur's Tomb* came before *Sir Launcelot in the Queen's Chamber* and is more concerned with themes of sexual guilt, evident in Guinevere's anguished expression, than in his later drawing. In King's illustration of the same moment, "He did not hear her coming as he lay" (see Fig. 9), from Morris' poem, "King Arthur's Tomb," Guinevere looms over Launcelot as he dejectedly embraces Arthur's effigy. King's Guinevere appears elevated and calm with a sense of pity for Launcelot's suffering as she gazes down at the knight, and her composed facial features are not evocative of the resentment exhibited on Rossetti's Guinevere. Guilt is also the theme of Brickdale's "Guinevere as a Nun" (Fig. 52) and stands in stark contrast to King's "All her robes were black with a long white veil only" (see Fig. 8), which shares a nearly identical rendition of Guinevere that King's used in "He did not hear her coming as he lay." King's visualizations of Guinevere as a nun challenge the conventions of the character type, exemplified by Rossetti and Brickdale, by not focusing on sexual guilt and atonement.

The nineteenth and early-twentieth century's conflation of gender, sex, and sexuality and the understanding of a binary gender system, where gender was contingent

¹⁶³ Poulson, *The Quest for the Grail*, 81, 92.

on sexuality and sexed bodies (heterosexual males or females), created a discontinuity between the physical body and gender identity.¹⁶⁴ King's depiction of Guinevere in her *Defence of Guinevere* illustrations denies the presence of a physical sexed body.

Guinevere's body is hidden under unnaturally undulating white robes, as in "That wall of stone [...]" (see Fig. 5) and "Nor any brings me the sweet flowers [...]" (see Fig. 6), or her nebulous black nun's habit, as in "All her robes were black with a long white veil only" (see Fig. 8). The only glimpse of a corporeal body that the viewer is allowed to observe is of Guinevere's face and delicate hands, which appear to attach to amorphous ornamental forms rather than to a human body; even Guinevere's hair, globular and exaggerated, functions as an additional layer of ornament that conceals the figure.

Florence Harrison's "Guinevere" title page for *Tennyson's "Guinevere" and Other Poems* (Fig. 53) similarly obscures Guinevere's body, which is draped in a stylized pattern and disappears into the mountain behind her.

If King's *Defence of Guinevere* illustrations present a general de-sexualization of Guinevere's typically eroticized character as well as deny Guinevere a physical sexed body, it troubles the question (in terms of nineteenth-century and fin-de-siècle gender conventions) of how King's Guinevere is a "re-signing of woman" that signifies changing notions of modern femininity, and how King's images communicate that new femininity.

¹⁶⁴ For more on the body and the body in art, see: Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel, *Themes of Contemporary Art: Visual Art after 1980*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 77 and Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

In the nineteenth-century, increased access to education for women in Scotland and the subsequent rise of women in the workforce was changing definitions of what was feminine. Scotland had developed its own national system of education with close ties to the Scottish Presbyterian Church, in which literacy was stressed as a crucial skill for both boys and girls, and “domestic science” classes were incorporated into the education of working-class girls following the 1872 Education Act in Scotland, though women were not allowed to pursue university education until the 1890s.¹⁶⁵ Controversial debates concerning the education of women at universities argued that “the best type [of education] suited for women was in the arts rather than the sciences ‘as a consequence of their imitative and rhetorical powers.’”¹⁶⁶ However, nineteenth-century art discourse maintained its own internal debates regarding the artistic training of women. The hierarchical division of the fine arts (painting, sculpture, and architecture) from applied and decorative arts – predicated on the idea that applied arts required less intellectual effort – mirrored the gendered and sexual divisions of the separate spheres ideology regarding men and women’s innate abilities and informed the Victorians’ conception of the applied arts, such as embroidery and ceramics, as more appropriate for women.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Jane Hedger McDermid, “The Schooling of Working-Class Girls in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: The Interaction of Nationality, Class, and Gender,” Ph.D. diss. (London: University of London Institute of Education, 2000), 17-18, 21.

¹⁶⁶ T. Case, “Against Oxford degrees for women,” *Fortnightly Review*, (1895): 99. Cited in Enid Zimmerman, “Art Education for Women in England from 1890-1910 as Reflected in the Victorian Periodical Press and Current Feminist Histories of Art Education,” *Studies in Art Education* 32, no. 2 (1991): 108.

¹⁶⁷ For the “art/craft dichotomy,” the gendering of applied arts, and women artists see: Carson, “Feminist Debate and Fine Art Practices,” 25; Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, “Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts,” in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (New York: I. B. Tauris and Co., 2013), 50; Howard Risatti, *A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

Bookbinding, book design, and book illustration were recognized as acceptable mediums for women to practice.¹⁶⁸ Though many women working vocationally in wood engraving and chromolithography earned wages completing “reproductive work rather than themselves producing originals,” with the increase in mass-produced books more women were employed as illustrators and produced original designs.¹⁶⁹

Though, by the turn of the century, the gendered and sexual divisions in the arts were beginning to be blurred. At the Glasgow School of Art, classes were made co-ed in 1848, the first female staff member was hired in 1855, and women were allowed access to nude models in 1900. Enrollment of female students at the GSA increased from twenty-eight percent in the 1881-1882 school year to forty-seven percent by 1911.¹⁷⁰ In 1885, Francis “Fra” Newbery took over as director of the GSA. Newbery was a strong advocate for women in the arts and initiated a multitude of opportunities for women to study at the GSA and work as professional instructors. A majority of artists at the GSA, men and women, worked in numerous craft mediums as well as painting, drawing, and sculpting. Glasgow Style, developed by the co-ed students working at the GSA, was described simultaneously as a modern Scottish aesthetic but also as a “predominantly ‘feminine’ design style.”¹⁷¹ Previously, institutionalized gendered and sexual difference, such as women’s access to education and art training, effected the way women practiced

¹⁶⁸ See: Marianne Tidcombe, *Women Bookbinders, 1880-1920* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1996) and Rosemary Catherine Addison, “Women Artists and Book Illustration in Edinburgh 1886-1945,” Ph.D. diss. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh College of Art, 2004).

¹⁶⁹ Anthea Callen, *Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914* (New York: Pantheon, 1979), 200.

¹⁷⁰ Alice Strang, *Modern Scottish Women: Scottish Women Painters and Sculptors 1885-1965* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2016), 10-12.

¹⁷¹ Burkhauser, *Glasgow Girls*, 105.

in the arts and the degree to which women participated in the shaping of modern art. Modernity itself is “a matter of representation and major myths,” and “what modernist art history celebrates is a selective tradition which normalizes, as the *only* modernism, a particular and gendered set of practices.”¹⁷² In terms of Glasgow Style, the association of modernity and modern art to perceived femininity troubles not only the “masculinist myths of modernism,” but also the larger myth of gender (of what was feminine) and how it was being reconstituted.¹⁷³

Just as King’s *Defence of Guinevere* illustrations mediate between modernity and historicity in regard to a Scotto-British national identity, there is a mediation between conventional and shifting conceptions of femininity. King’s presentation of the character Guinevere is a “re-signing of woman,” where “woman” is no longer a sign of male sexuality but is a sign of modern fin-de-siècle femininity – of woman’s experience and interaction with a changing sociocultural structure and definitions of what constituted “feminine.” King’s Guinevere is de-sexualized (not sexually eroticized and also without a sexed body) and troubles the hitherto assumed exclusivity between gendered femininity and woman’s reduction to sexual icon, as if the two concepts were inseparable, which poses the questions of how, then, is femininity communicated when detached from representations of implicit sexuality.

King’s illustrations are able to be read in terms of being “feminine” in the way that they play with established imagery of feminine typologies and are produced in a

¹⁷² Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 71-72.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 72.

medium and a visual style that were understood as possessing feminine associations, and therefore could be deciphered and interpreted by contemporaneous reader/viewers within existing discourses of femininity. In King's illustrations, femininity is not indicated through the materiality of a sexed body but is evoked through the materiality of the art object, which complicates the relation of the material body to the performativity of gender.¹⁷⁴ The art object functions as the location of femininity and explores "the masquerade of femininity and the making of appearance"¹⁷⁵ Though King's characterization of Guinevere is not self-consciously modern in the same way that, for example, the Macdonald sisters portray women and the female body (see Figs. 18 and 25), King's illustrations still problematize the nineteenth-century conflation between gender, sex, and sexuality by questioning hegemonic notions of femininity according to the boundaries of normativity of the female body and the regulation of female sexuality.

Alternating Voices: Counter-Narrative and Oppositional Perspective

In terms of book illustration, and the relationship between the illustration and the primary body of text (in this instance, Morris' poems), illustrations often fall victim to being seen as serving a primarily functional role. The illustrations come second, after the text, like an accessory that vivifies the literary action for the benefit of a reader/viewer. Following this scheme, the illustrations become *parergonal* to the literary material, and are given meaning consequently dependent on and in relation to the primary text. Studies

¹⁷⁴ See Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, XII.

¹⁷⁵ Cherry, *Painting Women*, 197.

of narrative in terms of the visual arts frequently concern the functionality of the visual as a narrative device, for narrating stories. This operates under the implied assumption that “images are a priori handicapped in this competition; narrating is primarily a matter of discourse, not of visuality.”¹⁷⁶

However, book illustrations are capable of offering more than merely a *reverse-ekphrasis* of the text.¹⁷⁷ This relegation of illustration into a place of extraneous functionality fails to acknowledge the reciprocal relationship between the text and illustrations, with both as receptacles of meaning, as well as how theories of narrative, and what Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson call “narrative semiotics,” can operate within the visual.¹⁷⁸ When this hierarchical arrangement between text and image is broken, and book illustration is considered both independently of and equally to the primary text (rather than subordinately), the illustrations assume new roles as both containers (to be filled) and as conduits of meaning. An analysis of narrative in King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations contributes to how the illustrations can be *read* and interpreted according to culturally intelligible frameworks of gender and femininity.

Roland Barthes claimed that *reading* images is not about the emission (origin) or reception (destination) of the work, but rather its transmission (how the work communicates its message) and understanding the process of signification (how meaning gets into the image).¹⁷⁹ Barthes offers the example of an advertising image, comprised of

¹⁷⁶ Bal and Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” 202.

¹⁷⁷ Ekphrasis being a textual/verbal description of a visual work of art; reverse-ekphrasis then becomes the pictorial/visual elaboration of a text.

¹⁷⁸ Bal and Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” 202.

a photograph and text, to explain the different types of messages that can be contained in a single image – these messages are linguistic (referring to the text) and iconic (the photograph).¹⁸⁰ King's illustrations for *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* similarly contain both linguistic (text captions) and iconic (visual) messages, in addition to mediating Morris' poetic text, which constructs intertextuality and chains of signification between the visual and the textual.¹⁸¹ According to Barthes, meaning is not produced within images themselves but is constructed subjectively through the ability of a reader/viewer to recognize, interpret, and infer more than what is explicitly represented (based on that reader/viewer's cultural knowledge and understanding).¹⁸² Meaning is invested and located in images from the outside, brought by the reader/viewer. Like a pseudo-heteroglossia, the "cacophony of incongruous strands of cultural discourses" intermingle, as if a chorus of different voices, and affects how meaning is determined and communicated, which is problematized by questions of who the narrator of the story/image is and from whose perspective are we being shown it.¹⁸³

Within King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, there are multiple narrators that intertextually intersect between the images and the poetic text. For instance, in Morris' "The Defence of Guinevere," the poem has three levels of narration: the poem opens with an unidentified third-person omniscient extradiegetic narrator who describes the

¹⁷⁹ Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, 15-16, 32.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 43. Barthes does distinguish between photography and drawing; a photograph reproduces and cannot "intervene *within* the object," whereas a drawing is always "coded" by being filtered through the discretion of the artist.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 39. Barthes discusses chains of "signifieds."

¹⁸² Ibid., 42.

¹⁸³ Bal and Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History," 203. "Heteroglossia" meaning two or more speaking voices or viewpoints in a text.

unfolding scene in which Guinevere is an active agent; then, Guinevere takes over the narration of the scene with her speech act; and within Guinevere's diatribe there are sub-narratives as she recounts memories of Launcelot. Guinevere's speech act, the second level of narration, is intradiegetic, while the insertion of frame narratives within that narrative, the third level of narration, is metadiegetic, or an "embedded" narrative.¹⁸⁴ In King's illustrations of the poem, there are two components of storytelling: the visual image and the text caption. The captions are extracted from Morris's text, chosen from sections of Guinevere's intradiegetic and metadiegetic narration, although the frontispiece illustrates a scene told by the extradiegetic narrator. Questions of narrative in King's illustrations are complicated by the visual aspect of the images, how the text captions interact with the images, and who narrates the visual?

Narrators, not to be confused with the author/artist, possess "discursive power" and can "embed the vision of somebody else into [a] text," or an image.¹⁸⁵ In discussing the three layers of narrative agents (the narrator; the focalizer; and the actor), Bal explains that the focalizer is the source of vision or point of view and that "focalization is, then, the relation between the vision and what is seen, perceived."¹⁸⁶ In terms of narrative in visual images, the concept of the focalizer becomes paramount, as it belongs to the realm of vision, seeing, and perceiving. The focalizer is a point within the visual

¹⁸⁴ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 212.

¹⁸⁵ Bal and Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History," 204.

¹⁸⁶ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1985), 12, 133. Also see: Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, *Looking In: The Art of Viewing* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001).

image for the reader/viewer to connect with and see from their perspective; it informs the reader/viewer how they should “look.”

In King’s *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations, Guinevere is not offered to the reader/viewer in a voyeuristic way; she is not an object of aesthetic or erotic delectation posed for an implied spectator, nor viewed through a focalizer within the images, such as in Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* (see Fig. 42), Millais’ *The Knight Errant* (see Fig. 41), as well as in Brickdale’s “The Sombre Close of that Voluptuous Day” (see Fig. 49) and Rossetti’s *Arthur’s Tomb* (see Fig. 51). In these works, the male figures act as focalizers for the spectator as they gaze at the women – it is through their eyes that we interpret the scene unfolding – and by not directly confronting the spectator by meeting their gaze the women do not challenge or critique the voyeuristic implications of the images, in which they are the passive receivers of the spectator’s gaze. In such images, where “woman” and the female body is a sign for masculine sexuality, women are “given to the looker” and confirm the dominant fetishizing gaze.¹⁸⁷

During 1866 and 1867, Alsatian artist Gustave Doré was commissioned to complete thirty-six illustrations for Moxon’s publication of Tennyson’s *Idylls* “Enid,” “Elaine,” “Vivien,” and “Guinevere.” For the poem “Guinevere,” Doré’s illustrations “The Parting,” “The Dawn of Love,” and “The King’s Farewell” all depict emotionally charged moments for Guinevere, yet in all of the illustrations, Guinevere is shown only from the back.¹⁸⁸ For example, in “The King’s Farewell” (Fig. 54) Guinevere is shown

¹⁸⁷ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 64-65.

¹⁸⁸ Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art*, 223-225.

from behind, as a dejected heap on the stone floor at Arthur's feet, while the King gazes down at the collapsed queen. The couple occupies a Gothic cloister; a shadowed walkway extends back into the composition on the right-hand side, which contrasts the light pouring in from the open-air courtyard on the left. The light illuminates the pointed-arch bays, columns, and Guinevere's limp body. Arthur's sturdy form is mimicked by the solid columns, as Guinevere's is alluded to via the shrubbery that clings to the columns. Guinevere's sadness and distress are evoked through the deeply shadowed and desolate space. Though Doré's illustration reiterates and heightens Guinevere's emotional state via the landscape, the scene is not conceived from Guinevere's point of view. Arthur is the focalizer. The spectator views Arthur as Arthur views Guinevere – Arthur is the source of vision in the illustration – while Guinevere's reversed form, with her face completely hidden from sight and her fleshy foot protruding from underneath her gown, is literally denied a point of view.

In King's illustrations for the poem "The Defence of Guinevere," Guinevere is the focalizer. For example, in "That wall of stone [...]" (see Fig. 5) and "Nor any brings me the sweet flowers [...]" (see Fig. 6), Guinevere is shown alone. In "She threw her wet hair backward from her brow" (see Fig. 3) and the frontispiece (see Fig. 2) Guinevere is accompanied by a small group of knights in the background who do not look at her, but rather appear bored and disinterested as they stare into the distance – Guinevere is the source of vision. Though in the frontispiece, Launcelot is also present and meets Guinevere's gaze, and the couple proceeds to stare at one another. Yet, the poetic moment that is illustrated is told by an extradiegetic narrator of Guinevere's experience,

and even though the couple stares at each other, it is from Guinevere's point of view that we see Launcelot, not the reverse. However, "My maids were all about me" (see Fig. 7) is an exception in which Guinevere is not the focalizer (rather, her maids are the focalizers from whom we see Guinevere, as Launcelot stares blankly at no one). Although Guinevere is not the focalizer here, the view of Guinevere offered to the spectator via the maids is still de-sexualized and does not present an opportunity for "erotic contemplation."¹⁸⁹ King's illustrations of Guinevere, desexualized and non-conventional, allow for an "oppositional gaze" in which contemporaneous women spectators would have been placed in a situation to look at an alternant form of femininity, and where the woman is the source of vision.¹⁹⁰ This destabilizes the fetishistic gaze and the "woman as sign" (of masculine sexuality) by deconstructing the binary "woman as image, man as bearer of the look."¹⁹¹

King's imagined world in the *Defence of Guenvere* illustrations is populated with a nearly all-female cast of characters. Not all of the poems included in *The Defence of Guenvere and Other Poems* feature female protagonists, such as "Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery," yet out of the twenty-four full-page illustrations, twelve feature men as supporting characters or otherwise accompanied by a female character, and only two

¹⁸⁹ Jones, *Seeing Differently*, 64.

¹⁹⁰ Bell Hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 115. "Looking at films with an oppositional gaze, black women were able to critically assess the cinema's construction of white womanhood as objects of phallogocentric gaze and choose not to identify with either the victim or the perpetrator," 122. Though Hooks discusses the oppositional gaze in terms of race, the notion can also be applied to reader/viewers being confronted with an alternate form of femininity, which challenges pre-existing gender normativity, in King's illustrations.

¹⁹¹ Hooks, *Black Looks*, 123, quoting Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1973).

illustrate men by themselves (see Appendix).¹⁹² Even in instances when the main text of the poem is not about a female protagonist, King illustrates passages that specifically incorporate a female character, rather than illustrating any given number of scenes that feature only male characters. The prominent representation of women in the illustrations not only literally provides reader/viewers the opportunity to be repetitively confronted with revised reiterations of femininity but also reinforces the narrative communicated from women's points of view (as focalizers). This mimetically refers to women's growing social, political, and economic power, as well as increased visibility in, and experience of, fin-de-siècle culture.¹⁹³

King's *Defence of Guenvere* illustrations are frame narratives, or embedded narratives, with two working parts – caption and image. The captions are the intradiegetic and embedded metadiegetic narratives, told by Guinevere (with the exception of the frontispiece). The images are extradiegetic; the visual image itself takes the place of the extradiegetic narrator and offers an omniscient view of the unfolding narrative, like a window into Guinevere's world, where Guinevere is the focalizer and source of vision for the reader/viewer. King's illustrations remove Guinevere's narrative from being framed within a masculine perspective (Morris, as author/creator of the poetic extradiegetic narrator) by fabricating a new extradiegetic narrator (from a woman's perspective).

¹⁹² Figs. 2, 3, 7, 9, and Appendix images A, C, D, F, G, H, I, and N show men in the company of women; and Appendix images B and E feature men alone.

¹⁹³ For more writings on visibility see: Michele Foucault's writings on the Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977). For the fascination with "looking" in the Victorian period, see: Susan P. Casteras, *John Ruskin and the Victorian Eye* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993).

Though Morris's text is repurposed in the captions, his voice is removed via being recontextualized in relation to King's images, within which Guinevere's character is poignant and psychological, rather than a celebration of courtly love, implicit eroticism, and contrived medieval romanticizations. King's Guinevere's stoic facial expressions communicate a consistent sense of gravitas, contemplation, and self-awareness felt throughout the illustrations. This reorients the illustrations as an emotional and psychological appeal to the reader/viewer, not predicated on eroticism, adoration, or Guinevere's sexual association with Lancelot. The illustrations, intertextual and multi-layered, mediate alternating masculine and feminine voices and operate defiantly. The interfacing and symbiotic relationship of the illustrations with the poems is exploited as King's illustrations present a counter-narrative, essentially retconning Morris' narrative as it is unfolding during the act of being read.

Conclusion

Making Modern Myths: The Intersection of Gender and Nation

Jessie M. King's illustrations of the 1904 edition of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, by William Morris, can be read within the frameworks of nationalism and gender in fin-de-siècle Scotland. The illustrations utilized a new and modern Scottish aesthetic (Glasgow Style) that supplanted, and essentially replaced, earlier forms of cliché and national romanticization, which affirmed Scotland's modernity and place within a British nationalist superstructure. Through the use of the Arthurian legend, translated into a Scottish visual vocabulary, the illustrations partook in a cross-national mythology and communicated Scotland's continued navigation of the Union, role within Great Britain, and an interconnected Scotto-British national identity. Furthermore, the representation of Guinevere in the illustrations reflect evolving gendered conventions of femininity at the turn of the century via Guinevere's de-sexualization and the re-orientation of the narrative according to Guinevere's individual experience. The illustrations re-sign "woman," no longer as a sign of masculine sexuality, but as a sign of a shifting and modern femininity, which comments on women's changing roles in society and the workforce.

In terms of how gender operates within concepts of nationalism in the visual (and literary) arts, there is an overlap between the two discourses in which nations, national spirit, and national identity are personified allegorically in the form of a gendered body, such as Columbia and Uncle Sam (America), Britannia (Fig. 55) and John Bull

(England), and Caledonia (Fig. 56) (Scotland).¹⁹⁴ The precedent of gendered concepts of Scotland and of England was known at the turn of the century and would have been familiar to fin-de-siècle audiences. A common gendered allegory of the relationship between Scotland and England was “marriage analogies,” in which Scotland was the feminized bride of a masculine England, such as in the chapbook *The Comical History of the Marriage Betwixt Fergusia and Heptarchus*, printed in 1717.¹⁹⁵ Scotland was frequently personified as feminine, which critically mirrored the conception of Scotland being legally absorbed into Union, or “marriage,” with England. Lindsay Paterson explains that

Britain was male, Scotland female. As throughout the UK, foreign affairs and the Empire were for men, domestic matters for women. What distinguished Scotland from England, however, was the coincidence of the gender dichotomy with the national one, and in this respect Scotland resembled other similarly placed nations in central Europe, where the essence of the nation was believed to lie in the family.¹⁹⁶

Paterson equates Scotland’s domestic sovereignty (such as its national autonomy in terms of Church, education, and law as separate from England) with the gendered convention of femininity as domestic; therefore, in the Union, matters of Scotland’s domestic policies were feminine, while England’s efforts of empire were masculine. Although, this association does not wholly take into consideration that Scotland also possessed a masculinized national identity as the noble and loyal Highlander, mostly employed in

¹⁹⁴ See Tricia Cusack and Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, ed., *Art, Nation, and Gender: Ethnic Landscapes, Myths, and Mother-Figures* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2000).

¹⁹⁵ *The Comical History of the Marriage Betwixt Fergusia and Heptarchus* (Edinburgh: Robert Brown, 1717).

¹⁹⁶ Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 65-66.

relation to the military and Scottish Highland soldiers.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the existence of a masculine national myth does not discount the efficacy or impact of the feminine national myth.

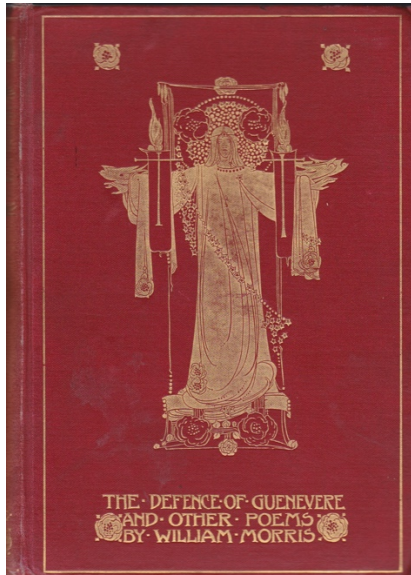
When read within the frameworks of gender and nationalism, King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations speak to this tradition of gendered feminine national imagery and marriage analogies, but where Guinevere stands in for Scotland and Arthur for England. This interpretation is reinforced and fed by the mythic canon of the Arthurian legend itself. If Guinevere is Scotland, she refuses Arthur (England), although Guinevere's familial care and affection for Arthur is depicted as continuous, even after his death. When King's illustrations are taken in allegorical terms, there is an implicit rejection of Arthur (England) in favor of individual agency and personal choice (for Scotland), but not out of hate or spite for Arthur (similar to Scottish nationalism of the nineteenth century and fin-de-siècle not necessarily being anti-English so much as they were pro-Scottish). Consequently, there is an implicit assertion of separation, of distinctiveness, and of a troubled union, but a union nonetheless. This analogy resonates with Scotland's navigation of national and cultural sovereignty and "dual-identity," which evolved in the succeeding decades into more liberal and independence-oriented national movements.

Such a reading of King's *Defence of Guenevere* illustrations has the ability to restructure its reader/viewers subjectivity by creating an opportunity for an alternate reading of Scotland's national identity and of femininity. The illustrations problematize not only conventional visual conceptions of Scottishness, but also of gendered femininity,

¹⁹⁷ McDermid, "The Schooling of Working-Class Girls," 16.

by placing both in positions of reciprocity and centrality throughout the work. Jessie M. King's illustrations of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* offer a revision of myths of femininity and myths of national identity and participate in the making of new myths – a modern image of femininity in a modern Scotland.

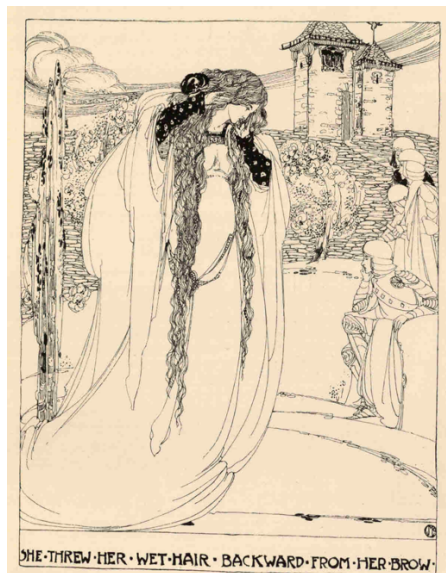
Figures



1. Jessie M. King, Cover design for William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



2. Jessie M. King, “But stood turn'd sideways; listening,” in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



3. Jessie M. King, “She threw her wet hair backward from her brow,” in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



4. Jessie M. King, “A great God's angel standing,” in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



5. Jessie M. King, "That wall of stone that shut the flowers and trees up with the sky and trebled all the beauty," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



6. Jessie M. King, "Nor any brings me the sweet flowers that lie so thick in the gardens," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



7. Jessie M. King, "My maids were all about me," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



8. Jessie M. King, "All her robes were black with a long white veil only," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



9. Jessie M. King, "He did not hear her coming as he lay," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



10. Jessie M. King, "For Launcelot's red-golden hair would play instead of sunlight on the painted wall," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



11. George Cruikshank, *Geordie and Willie 'keeping it up' – Johnny Bull Pays the Piper!!*, 1822. Engraving, 11.6 x 19.3 cm. British Museum, <http://www.britishmuseum.org> (museum no. 1868,0808.8561).



12. Jessie M. King as “The Angel of the Spirit” in “The Masque of Science and Art,” 1905. Scan from Colin White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), fig. 60.



13. Jessie M. King as St Margaret of Scotland, 1906. Scan from Colin White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), fig. 59.



14. De Courcy Lewthaitte Dewar, *The Woman's Cause is Man's*, 1908. 20.5 x 15.3 cm. Collection: H.L. Hamilton. Photo: Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries. Scan from Jude Burkhauser, ed., *Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design, 1880-1920* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), fig. 1.



15. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Meister Der Innen-Kunst* - Title Page from Portfolio of Prints, 1901. Lithograph, 56.5 x 42 cm. Glasgow School of Art, <http://www.gsaarchives.net> (reference code: MC/G/22A).



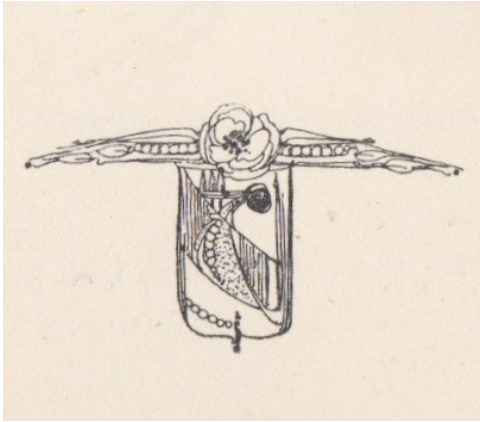
16. Jessie Newbery, Rose Tea Cosy, early 1900s. Linen, floss silk thread, and satin stitch, 40.8 x 29.4 cm. Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries. Scan from Jude Burkhauser, ed., *Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design, 1880-1920* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), fig. 126.



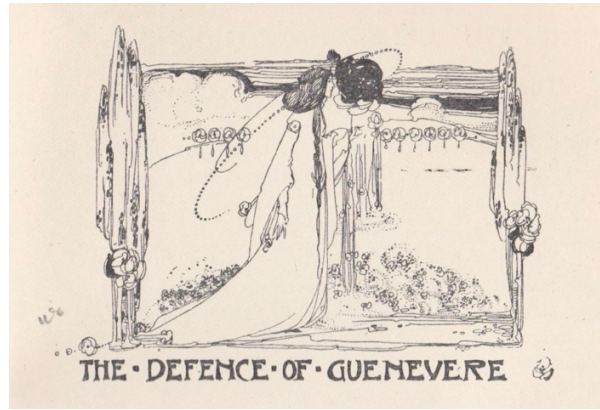
17. Annie French, *The Bower Maidens*, 1906-14. Watercolor, pen, and ink, 24 x 25.8 cm. Private Collection. Photo: Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries. Scan from Jude Burkhauser, ed., *Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design, 1880-1920* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), fig. 185.



18. Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, *The Fifth of November*, 1894. Pencil and watercolor on paper, 31.5 x 19 cm. Glasgow School of Art, <http://www.gsaarchives.net> (reference code: MC/A/4).



19. Jessie M. King, "Illustrations" tailpiece, in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



20. Jessie M. King, "The Defence of Guenevere" heading, in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



21. Jessie M. King, "The Gilliflower of Gold" heading, in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



22. Gratian, *Decretum*, Inhabited Initial H, France, c. 1170-80. 44.2 x 29 cm. J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XIV 2 (83.MQ.163), fol. 8v (detail). Scan from Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1994), pp. 72.



23. Jessie M. King, "Concerning Geffray Teste Noire" title page, in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



24. *Sobriety; Gluttony; A Frugal Meal; Dives and Lazarus*. Frère Laurent, *La Somme le roi*. France, before 1294. 26 x 18 cm. British Library, Add. Ms. 28162, fol. 10v. Scan from Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1994), pp 61.



25. Frances Macdonald MacNair, Design for a Glasgow School of Art Club "Programme," 1893. Lithograph, green ink on paper, 35.2 x 22.5 cm. Glasgow School of Art, <http://www.gsaarchives.net> (reference code: MC/A/18).



26. Jessie M. King, Bookplate for Fred J.M. Christie, c. 1912. Color lithograph, 11.9 x 10.6 cm. Glasgow School of Art, <http://www.gsaarchives.net> (reference code: NMC/0613).



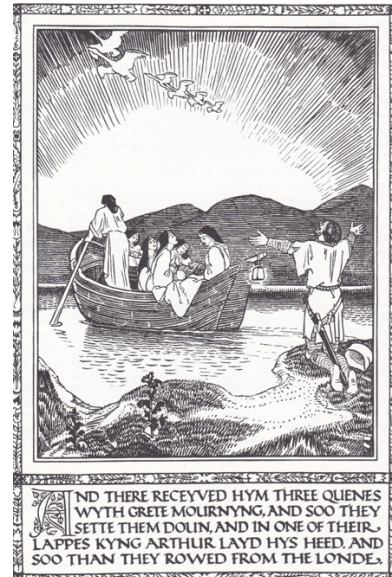
27. William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1896). Vellum folio, 42.2 x 28.1 cm. Koopman Specimen Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University. Scan from Alice Beckwith, *Victorian Bibliomania: The Illuminated Book in 19th Century Britain* (Providence: Rhode Island School of Design, Museum of Art, 1987), fig. 35.



28. Aubrey Beardsley, "The Lady of Lake Telleth Arthur of the Sword Excalibur," *Le Morte d'Arthur* (London: J. M. Dent, 1893-94). The Newberry Library, Chicago. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 50.



29. Walter Crane, "Prince Arthur," in Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (London: George Allen, 1894-97). Wood engraving. Scan from Muriel Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), fig. 53.



30. Charles Gere, "Arthur's Departure for Avalon," *The Noble and Joyous Book Entytled Le Morte d'Arthur* (London: Ashendene Press, 1913). Wood engraving. Scan from Muriel Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), fig. 54.



31. Jessie M. King, Pendant for Liberty and Co., c. 1907. Enamel on silver, 5.1 x 6.3 cm. Private Collection. Scan from Colin White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), fig. 65.



32. Jessie M. King, Printed silk dress fabric, c. 1904. The Whitworth Gallery, Manchester. Scan from Colin White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), fig. 69.



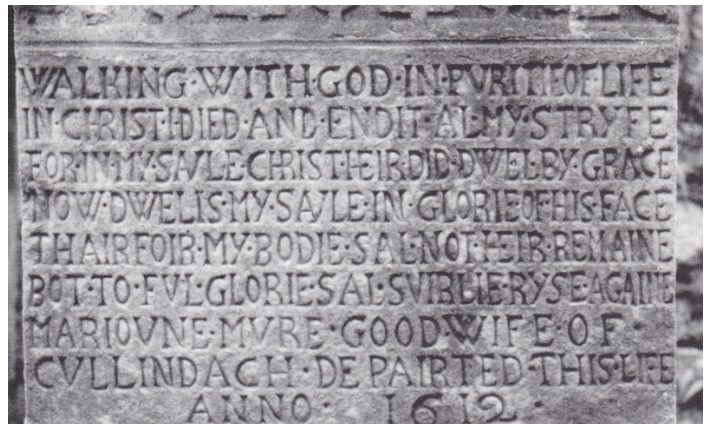
33. Aubrey Beardsley, "How Queen Guenevere Made Herself a Nun," *Le Morte d'Arthur* (London: J. M. Dent, 1893-94). The Newberry Library, Chicago. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 140.



34. Florence Harrison, "How I Row'd Across and Took It," *Tennyson's "Guinevere" and Other Poems* (London: Blackie and Son, 1912). The Newberry Library, Chicago. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 18.



35. André Derain, "Viviane Dances on Merlin's Grave," in Guillaume Apollinaire, *L'Enchanteur pourrisant* (Paris: Kahnweiler, 1909). Woodcut illustration. Scan from Muriel Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), fig. 57.



36. Seventeenth century gravestone, Kirkcudbright. Scan from Colin White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), fig. 19.



37. Ann Macbeth, Glasgow School of Art Banner, c. 1900-1905. Linen, wool, and applique, 65 x 235 cm. Glasgow School of Art, <http://www.gsaarchives.net> (reference code: NMC/0417).



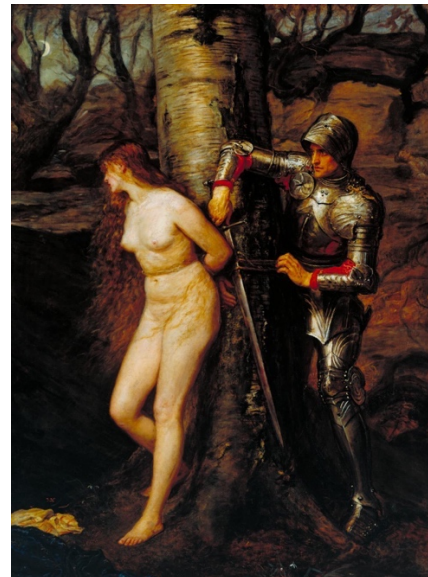
38. George Elgar Hicks, *The Sinews of old England*, 1857. Watercolor, graphite, and gouache on paper, 74.9 x 53 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Friends of British Art Fund, <http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3659731>.



39. Jessie M. King wearing a silk Liberty & Co. scarf designed by herself, c. 1920. Scan from Colin White, *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), fig. 128.



40. Frank Dicksee, *Chivalry*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 72 x 53 1/2 cm. Courtesy of the Forbes Magazine Collection, New York. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 73.



41. John Everett Millais, *The Knight Errant*, 1870. Oil on canvas, 184.1 x 135.3 cm. Tate, London, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-the-knight-errant-n01508>.



42. William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853. Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 55.9 cm. Tate, London, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hunt-the-awakening-conscience-t02075>.



43. John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, *Thoughts of the Past*, 1859. Oil on canvas, 86.4 x 50.8 cm. Tate, London, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/stanhope-thoughts-of-the-past-n03338>.



44. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Sir Lan in the Queen's Chamber*, 1857. Pen and black and brown ink, 10 ¼ x 13 ¾ cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 70.



45. Walter Crane, "The Fight in the Queen's Antechamber," in Henry Gilbert, *King Arthur's Knights: The Tales Retold for Boys and Girls* (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1911). The Camelot Project: A Robbins Library Digital Project, University of Rochester, <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/image/crane-fight-in-queens-antechamber>.



46. William Morris, *La Belle Iseult*, 1858. Oil on canvas, 71.8 x 50.2 cm. Tate, London, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/morris-la-belle-iseult-n04999>.



47. Florence Harrison, "We Needs Must Love the Highest," in *Tennyson's "Guinevere" and Other Poems* (London: Blackie and Son, 1912). Courtesy of the Newberry Library, Chicago. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 92.



48. Florence Harrison, "It was Their Last Hour," in *Tennyson's "Guinevere" and Other Poems* (London: Blackie and Son, 1912). Courtesy of the Newberry Library, Chicago. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 90.



49. Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale, "The Sombre Close of that Voluptuous Day," in *Idylls of the King* by Alfred Lord Tennyson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911.) Private Collection. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 58.



50. Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale, "As in the Golden Days," in "*Idylls of the King*" by Alfred Lord Tennyson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911). Private Collection. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 58.



51. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Arthur's Tomb*, 1860. Watercolor on paper, 23.5 x 36.8 cm. Tate, London, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rossetti-arthurs-tomb-n03283>.



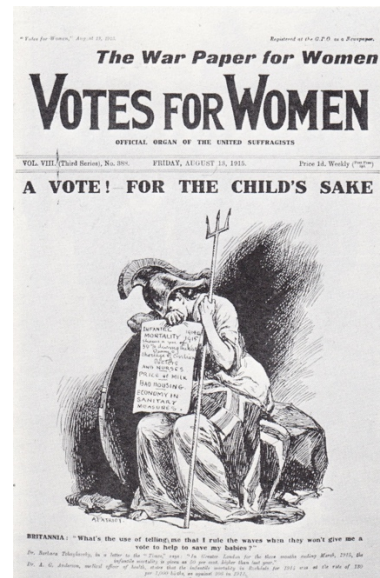
52. Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale, "Guinevere as a Nun," in "*Idylls of the King*" by Alfred Lord Tennyson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911). Private Collection. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 92.



53. Florence Harrison, "Guinevere" title page, in Tennyson's "*Guinevere*" and *Other Poems* (London: Blackie and Son, 1912). Courtesy of the Newberry Library, Chicago. Scan from Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 144.



54. Gustave Doré, "The King's Farewell," in Tennyson's *Guinevere* (London: Moxon, 1866). Scan from Muriel Whitaker, *The Legends of King Arthur in Art* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), fig. 43.



55. *Votes for Women*, 13 August 1915: Britannia: "A Vote! For the Child's Sake." Scan from Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), fig. 106.



56. William Brassey Hole, "Caledonia," in the first-floor balustrade processional frieze in the Great Hall of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, 1897. Photo: Shannon Dailey.

Appendix

Remaining Full-Page Illustrations from *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*



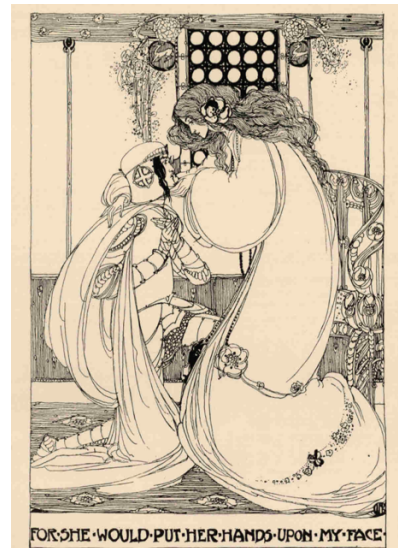
A. Jessie M. King, “Galahad! Rise and be arm’d,” for “Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery,” in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



B. Jessie M. King, “The stream that runs apace by the churchyard wall,” for “The Chapel in Lyonesse,” in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



C. Jessie M. King, “Thy wasted fingers twine within the tresses of her hair that shineth gloriously,” for “The Chapel in Lyonesse,” in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



D. Jessie M. King, “For she would put her hands upon my face,” for “Sir Peter Harpdon’s End,” in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



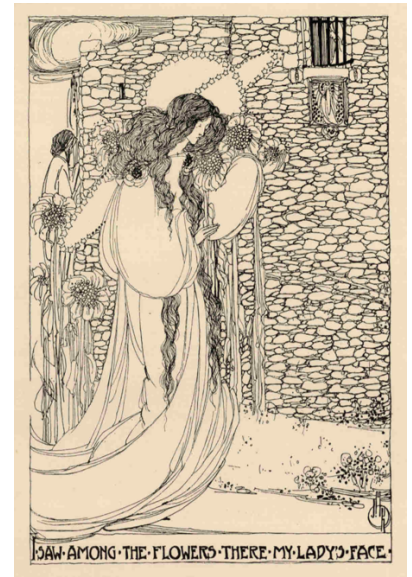
E. Jessie M. King, "And then to make you kneel, O knight Guesclin," for "Sir Peter Harpdon's End," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



F. Jessie M. King, "He rides to dream, they said," for "Rapunzel," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



G. Jessie M. King, "And over it they lay, with stone-white hands," for "Concerning Geffray Teste Noire," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



H. Jessie M. King, "I saw among the flowers there my lady's face," for "A Good Knight in Prison," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



I. Jessie M. King, "I kiss the lady Mary's head," for "A Good Knight in Prison," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



J. Jessie M. King, "You dear head, bow'd to the gilliflower bed," for "The Gilliflower of Gold," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



K. Jessie M. King, "Of Margaret sitting glorious there," for "The Eve of Crecy," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



L. Jessie M. King, "My sisters' heads bowed each beside a tree," for "The Sailing of the Sword," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



M. Jessie M. King, "The wedding samite strewn with pearls," for "Spell-Bound," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



N. Jessie M. King, "And her hair went over my robe, like a gold flag over a sail," for "The Wind," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.



O. Jessie M. King, "Through the floor shot up a lily red," for "The Blue Closet," in William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: John Lane – The Bodley Head, 1904). Private Collection: Shannon Dailey.

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