

رواية وليم موريس أخبار ليس في أي مكان : تمثيل لفردوس المستقبل العتيق
المؤمن بالمساواة

**William Morris's News from Nowhere : A Presentation of an
Egalitarian Ancient Future Paradise**

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to present the picture that Morris draws for a better world , different from the hideous world he lives in , a world in which there is no existence for machines that enslaved man during the nineteenth century and where all men are equal , having the same rights , regardless of their colour , race , and class , and free from all kinds of oppression .

William Morris's News from Nowhere : A Presentation of an Egalitarian Ancient Future Paradise

The research deals with William Morris's News from Nowhere (1890) , which is written as a response to English Victorian life and as a reaction against industrial capitalism during the nineteenth century , the century that witnesses the growth of individualism , division of labour and class struggle which in turn brings about competition , ending cooperation among workers .The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century does not only influence the nature of the relationship among workers , but also that of masters and workers . Instead of being familiar , it becomes more financial and the bond that has bound them together is broken .With the erection of new factories , cash - nexus replaces the healthy nexus of the medieval past, the ideal past that Morris (1834 - 1896) nostalgically often goes back to and " where people were still tied to each through the feudal system of dependencies and the craft guilds . "(1)

Morris , " horrified by the ugliness , squalour and shoddiness of victorian industrialism , " (2) seeks to find a " superior alternative " (3) world , showing the wrongs of the his world and measuring it against an ideal perfect future world . In most of his writings , he shows this interest in the Middle Ages which he recognizes as the age of peace , tranquility , harmony and never ending happiness .

In News , Morris raises some questions that the society of his foreseeable future may be faced with and tries to find some answers . These questions are : " how can we create the society we would most like to live in? is efficient mass - production really what we value more than anything ? do we in fact want the product of our industry ? do we spend our lives working to satisfy real needs and desires ? or do we sacrifice ourselves to maintain a social system where human wants are subordinated to the demands for ever - increasing commerce ? "(4) Morris , thus , appears to be prophetic and nostalgic in the sense that he , not only looks forward to an ideal future world , but also " to a world that reflects

the imagined ideals of the medieval past . "(5)

As an artist and utopian at the same time , Morris " felt the need to concentrate more on the positive effects of freedom from the old alienating forces . "(6) To achieve his goal , he , much like the romantics , talks about the idea of escape " in terms of a return to an ancient era of peace ."(7) Thus , he , because of his rejection of modern industrial civilization , dreams of " an epoch of rest , " the very subtitle that he gives to his novel News . This idea runs through his writings and is dominant in the prologue of his " The Earthly Paradise " (1868 - 1870) in which he asks readers to :

Forget six counties overhung with smoke ,
Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
Forget the spreading of the hideous town ;
Think rather of the pack horse on the down ,
And dream of London , small , and white and clean,
The clear Thames bordered by its garden green. ⁸

Morris detests the " fruits of the industrial revolution , "(9) and his hatred of modern civilization is " part cause and part result of " ⁽¹⁰⁾ his longing for the Middle Ages .He , as a social reformer , can not tolerate the sight of London with its ever " smoke - vomiting chimney , " (News , Ch . II, P . 4) ⁽¹¹⁾ its building of " new factories and the devastation of green spaces by urban sprawl , " ⁽¹²⁾

Morris confirms his opposition to modern civilization in his essay entitled " How I Became a Socialist " in which he confesses :

Apart from the desire to produce beautiful things , the leading passion of my life has

been and is hatred of modern civilization What shall I say concerning its mastery of and its waste of mechanical power ; its commonwealth so poor , its enemies of the commonwealth so rich , its stupendous organization - for the misery of life ! Its contempt of simple pleasures , which every one could enjoy but for its folly ? Its eyeless vulgarity which has destroyed art , the one certain solace of labour ? ... The struggle of mankind for many ages had produced nothing but this sordid aimless ugly confusion ; the immediate future seemed to me likely to intensify all the present evils by sweeping away the last survivals of the days before the dull squalor of civilization had settled down on the world .⁽¹³⁾

News is written as a response to Edward Bellamy's utopia *Looking Backward* (1888) , that Morris scornfully dismisses as " a cockney paradise . " ⁽¹⁴⁾ A. L . Norton, in an attempt to explain what Morris means by the word " cockney , " says , in his introduction to *Three Works by William Morris* , " Morris always used the word cockney in the sense of pretentiously vulgar . " ⁽¹⁵⁾ Morris satirizes Bellamy's state socialism . He , in more than one position , makes his opposition to it very clear . In his *Manifesto of the Socialist League* , he proclaims this disposition to oppose it as being a " no better solution . " ⁽¹⁶⁾ His disagreement with Bellamy's idea of having an authoritarian government is , furthermore , summarized in his review of Bellamy's novel in which he states that Bellamy

conceives of the change to socialism as taking place without any breakdown of

(modern) life , or indeed disturbance of it , by means of the final development of the great private monopolies which are such a feature of the present day . He supposes that these must necessarily be transformed into one great monopoly which will include the whole people and be worked for the benefit of the people
... .⁽¹⁷⁾

In his review of Bellamy's novel that appears in The Commonwealth on the twenty first of June 1889 , Morris , not only objects to his view of government , but also to his view of the machine and its impact upon society :

In short a machine life is the best which Mr. Bellamy can imagine for us on all sides , it is not to be wondered at then that this , his only idea of making labour tolerable is to decrease the amount of it by means of fresh and ever fresh development of machinery I believe that this will always be so , and the multiplication of machinery will just to multiply machinery ; I believe that the ideal of the future does not point to the lessening of men's energy by the reduction of labour to a minimum , but rather the reduction of pain in labour to a minimum so small that it will cease to be pain .⁽¹⁸⁾

Morris's " counter - blast " ⁽¹⁹⁾ vision , News " takes the form of a journey through an imagined social utopia . " ⁽²⁰⁾ It is a personal work based on the idea of the present day dreamer , discussing " and bringing to a triumphant resolution all Morris's deepest inner conflicts . " ⁽²¹⁾ Set in 2102 , some 150 years after a

utopia creating revolution has taken place in 1950 , the novel recounts William Guest's (taken as William Morris himself) journey up the Thames . Thus , the novel , using Susan Trouve Finding's words , " can be read as an account of his own personal journey of discovery , a parable of his own life rooted in Morris's personal and political lieux de me'moire . "(22) Setting his novel in the far future , Morris presents a picture of a world , different and free from " the sectarian strife of the present , " (23) that Morris makes clear in the opening paragraphs . News , as Patrick Parrinder says " is a dream taking place within a frame of mundane political life – the meeting at which ; "(24)

...there were six persons present and consequently six sections of the party were represented , four of which had strong but divergent Anarchist opinion .

(News , Ch . I , P . 1)

Going back to his house , after the end of this public meeting and political discussion , the novel's hero and its narrator at the same time , falls deeply asleep . Once he awakes , he , fantastically enough , finds himself transported to the twenty – first century , a world where all the seeds of industrialism are gone by now and life becomes like heaven . To his surprise , Guest says :

I was going to say , ' But is this the Thames?' but held my peace in my wonder , and turned my bewildered eyes eastward to look at the bridge again , and thence to the shores of the London river , and surely there was enough to astonish me . For though there was a bridge across the stream and houses on its banks , how all was changed from last night ! The soap-works with their smoke-vomiting chimneys were gone ; the

engineer's works gone , the lead works gone
; and no sound of riveting and hammering
came down the west wind from Thorney
croft's .

(News , Ch . II , PP . 5-6)

Among the things that strike Guest is the bridge over the Thames . The disgusting bridge of iron construction is replaced by now with a bridge built of stone , showing " no marks of the grimy sootiness which I was used to on every London building more than a year old . " (News , Ch . II , p . 6)

Upon meeting Dick , a boatman whose dress " was like any modern work – a – day clothes ...but would have served very well as a costume for a picture of fourteenth – century life , " (News , Ch . II , p . 5) Guest starts to ask him some questions to resolve the confusion he now feels . Amazed once Guest offers him some money , Dick , whom Guest chooses a guide to take him ashore , says :

I think I know what you mean . You think that I have done you a service ; so you feel yourself bound to give me something which I am not to give to a neighbour, unless he has done something special for me . I have heard of this kind of thing ; but pardon me for saying , that it seems to us troublesome and roundabout custom ; and we don't know how to manage it .

(News , Ch . II , p . 7)

Guest , as a stranger , can hardly believe what he has heard from Dick . In this new utopian world , people are never expected to be paid . In fact , this idea is directly tied to the idea of labour which will be discussed later on and the concept of buying and selling that runs throughout the novel . For example in chapter VI " A Little Shopping , " Guest , forgetting Dick's caution , repeats the question that he has earlier asked to Dick , " But however am I to pay for such a thing as this ? " (News , Ch . VI , P . 31) when he decides to take a pipe he admires at a market place – a question that both Dick and the maiden can not comprehend .

In the early scenes of the novel , one can feel Guest's sense of estrangement . In his journey around London he can not easily adapt himself to the life of this new world for "not only has the city become a garden suburb , " ⁽²⁵⁾ but also the people whom he encounters " are instinctively friendly responding immediately to a stranger's glance . " ⁽²⁶⁾

As for the question of labour , people presented in Nowhere are free to choose the kind of work they desire . In Morris's utopia , there is no form of coercion and Nowhereans are free from the evils of bureaucratic centralization or system enforced upon the working class during the nineteenth century . Furthermore , lack of work is wryly presented by Morris " as a form of illness that has long been cured , " ⁽²⁷⁾ as Dick makes it clear in the following quotation :

It is said that in the early days of our epoch there were a good many people who were hereditarily afflicted with a disease called idleness , because they were the direct descendents of those who in the bad times used to force other people to work for them – the people , you know , who are called slave – holders or employers of labour in the

history books However , I am happy to say that all that is gone by now ; the disease is either extinct , or exists in such a mild form that a short course of aperient medicine carries it off .

(News , Ch . VI , PP . 32 – 33)

workers or Nowhereans , in doing their work , seek no reward other than " its own inherent pleasure , " ⁽²⁸⁾ the same idea which old Hammond , Dick's grandfather and the historian who proceeds to answer Guest's questions on the new life and how it was attained , later on explains to Guest that the " reward of labour is life , ... [and is] the reward of creation ." (News , Ch . XV , P . 77) To clarify and assert this idea , Hammond tells Guest :

This , that all work is now pleasurable ; either because of the hope of gain in honour and wealth with which the work is done , which causes pleasurable excitement , even when the actual work is not pleasant ; or else because it has grown into a pleasurable habit , as in the case with what you may call mechanical work ; and lastly (and most of our work is of this kind) because there is conscious sensuous pleasure in the work itself ; it is done ; that is , by artists ' .

(News , Ch . XV , P . 78)

Morris thinks that " work gives the zest of life , " ⁽²⁹⁾ and that " all labour has its own touch of art . " ⁽³⁰⁾ In fact , there are many reasons that make Morris come face to face with the great question of labour . Being an artist , an employer of labour and having an " intensely practical knowledge of certain handicrafts , " ⁽³¹⁾ Morris comes to consider this question and find " at least theoretically " ⁽³²⁾ a solution . He believes that art is an integral part of society and that this integrity can be achieved through " the beautification of ordinary things and the inspiration of art by common people , " ⁽³³⁾ i.e. , the sense of pleasure that any worker may feel while doing his work is derived " from the production of beauty , " ⁽³⁴⁾ as Hammond proclaims :

The art or work – pleasure , as one ought to call it , of which I am now speaking , sprung up almost spontaneously , it seems , from a kind of instinct amongst people , no longer driven desperately to painful and terrible overwork to do the best they could with the work in hand – to make it excellent of its kind ; and when that had gone on for a little , a craving for beauty seemed to awaken in men's minds , and they began rudely and awkwardly to ornament the wares which they made ; and when they had once set to work at that , it soon began to grow .

(News , Ch . XVIII , PP. 114- 115)

Morris , much like John Ruskin(1819-1900) , emphasizes the value of art , whose aim, he thinks , is " to destroy the curse of labour by making work the pleasurable satisfaction of our impulse towards energy , and giving to that energy hope of producing

something worth the exercise . " ⁽³⁵⁾ Thus , he , as a craftsman , regards " manual work as foil to machine production . " ⁽³⁶⁾ He , in more than one lecture , " Useful Work Vs. Useless Toil " (1884) , " The Hopes of Civilization " (1885) , and " The Aims of Art " (1886) , shows the falseness of the labour – saving machinery , " ⁽³⁷⁾ that alienates man " from the joys of production and from his fellow men . " ⁽³⁸⁾

Morris's picture of how and why the work is done is the direct antithesis of " the Victorian capitalist system , where workers produce shoddy goods for a shoddy wage with which they buy more shoddy goods . " ⁽³⁹⁾ Morris elaborates Ruskin's approach to social and economic problems through art and goes much further than him in " moving from a theory of art as ' the expression of joy in labour ' to active propaganda for socialism , " ⁽⁴⁰⁾ which he adopts as the only possible hope for the future . He , in his 1894 essay " How I Became a Socialist , " defines socialism as :

[A] condition of society in which there would be neither rich nor poor , neither master nor master's man, neither idle nor over – worked , neither brain – sick brain workers , nor heart – sick hand workers , in a word , in which all men would be living in equality of condition and would manage their affairs unwastefully , and with the full consciousness that harm to one would mean harm to all – the realization at last of the meaning of the word COMMONWEALTH . ⁽⁴¹⁾

One may ask what the relation between art and socialism is – the very question that troubles many critics and that Morris

proceeds to answer in the same essay :

So there I was in for a fine pessimistic end of life , if it had not somehow dawned on me that amidst all this filth of civilization the seeds of a great change , what we others call social Revolution , were beginning to germinate Surely any one who professes to think that the question of art and cultivation must go before that of the knife and fork (and there are some who do propose that) does not understand what art means , or how that its roots must have a soil of a thriving and unanxious life . Yet it must be remembered that civilization has reduced the workman to such a skinny and pitiful existence , that he scarcely knows how to frame a desire for any life much better than that which he now endures perforce . It is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life before him . ⁽⁴²⁾

News is a book that directly talks about socialism and the way of achieving it . In fact , Morris is of the opinion that socialism will not be " allowed to develop peacefully " ⁽⁴³⁾ - the fact that Guest acknowledges as he speaks with old Hammond , the only survivor of the old order . Hammond informs Guest that such changes have involved much suffering and bloodshed , a " bitter war , till hope and pleasure put an end to it . " (News , Ch . XVII , P . 88) He relates the history of how this change comes , summarizing it in the following as such :

As a matter of fact , the history of the terrible period of transition from commercial slavery to freedom may thus be summarized . When the hope of realising a communal condition of life for all men arose , quite late in the nineteenth century , the power of the middle classes , the then tyrants of society , was so enormous and crushing , that to almost all men , even those who had , you may say despite themselves , despite their reason and judgment conceived such hopes , it seemed a dream . So much was this the case that some of those more enlightened men who were then called Socialists , although they well knew , and even stated in public , that the only reasonable condition of society was that of pure communism

(News , Ch . XVII , P . 89)

After a long period of class struggle , the working class has come to the realization that " they were oppressed by their masters . " (News , Ch . XVII , P . 90) This realization makes them stand to capitalists , their oppressors through political strife that Guest / Morris considers as " a necessary result of human nature . " (News , Ch . XIV , P . 73) Determined to gain freedom and equality and to ameliorate their condition , a number of unemployed workers " summoned by the workmen leaders to meet in Trafalgar Square , " (News , Ch . XVII , PP . 94 – 95) frequently engage in public riots , the riots that Hammond comes to believe have become the " first stage in the revolution which finally put an end to the long class struggle . " ⁽⁴⁴⁾ In chapter XVII , the novel's longest chapter ,

Morris emphasizes that the Nowhereans have approached this change and arrived at socialism not through parliament which is now non – existent but through a very difficult " process of unemployment , demonstrations , ruling class reaction , general strike and civil war . " ⁽⁴⁵⁾ With the destruction of capitalism and class monopoly , England undergoes a change ; " It is now a garden , where nothing is wasted and nothing is spoilt , with the necessary dwellings , sheds , and workshops scattered up and down the country , all trim and neat and pretty . " (News , Ch . X , P . 61) In this new socialist utopia , nothing is left of the dirty sordid slums of the nineteenth century which have been the " places of torture for innocent men and women ; or worse stews for rearing and breeding men and women in such degradation that that torture should seem to them mere ordinary and natural life . " (News , Ch . X , P . 55) They are cleared and replaced by new buildings and open green space . In fact , this need to be closely in contact with nature is part cause of " what drove the revolution in Nowhere . " ⁽⁴⁶⁾ People in Nowhere are free from the heavy burden of industrialism , living harmoniously in nature . Morris , just like Engels and Karl Marx , values nature and is aware of the destructive effects " that a society of commodity – production was liable to inflict " ⁽⁴⁷⁾ on . As it is stated before , Morris fears the idea of " flooding the markets with cheap and useless items made by unskilled people , " ⁽⁴⁸⁾ and the idea of producing and selling goods of bad quality , the idea that old Hammond , Morris's mouthpiece , reflects :

To this " cheapening of production " , as it was called , everything was sacrificed : the happiness of the workman at his work , nay , his most elementary comfort and bare health , his food , his clothes , his dwelling , his leisure , his amusement , his education – his life , in short – did not weigh a grain of sand in the balance against this dire

necessity of " cheap production " of things , a great part of which were not worth producing at all .

(News , Ch . XV , PP . 79- 80)

However , after the revolution , the case is different . People are no longer obliged to buy poor mass – produced goods as Hammond says :

The wares which we make are made because they are needed : men make for their neighbours' use as if they were making for themselves , not for a vague market of which they know nothing , and over which they have no control : as there is no buying and selling , it would be merely insanity to make goods on the chance of their being wanted ; for there is no longer any one who can be compelled to buy them . So that whatever is made is good , and thoroughly fit for its purpose . Nothing can be made except for genuine use ; therefore no inferior goods are made .

(News , Ch . XV , P . 82)

Just as Morris witnesses the destruction of creative art , so too does he realize the influence of industry upon nature ; how it spoils , tramples , and pollutes it . In fact , the sense that Morris comes to feel of " the living relations of man and nature , of nature and art " ⁽⁴⁹⁾ not only from Ruskin's teachings but also

from Marx's understandings set out in 1844:

The human essence of nature exists only for social man ; for only here does nature exist as the foundation of his own human existence . Only here has what is for him his natural existence become his human existence and nature become man for him . Thus society is the unity of being of man with nature – the true resurrection of nature – the naturalism of man and the humanism of nature both fulfillment.⁽⁵⁰⁾ to brought

As it has been stated , things have undergone a change after the revolution . As for the best old buildings , they are preserved and restored except for the Houses of the Parliament which " have been usefully redeployed as a manure store . " ⁽⁵¹⁾ Thus , in Nowhere , there is no place for government and all that it imposes . This fact astonishes Guest as he speaks with Hammond who proceeds to tell him that their parliament is " the whole people . " (News , Ch . XI , P . 63)

Morris as a devoted socialist , repeatedly shows his distrust and scorn of government and parliament as an institution . For him , it is a mess of " cowardice , irresolution , chicanery , and downright lies in action , " ⁽⁵²⁾ whose aim is " the upholding of privilege ; the society of the rich and poor . " ⁽⁵³⁾ His outlook of English government and its system is summarized in one of his private letter written in 1888 in which he says :

Our present representative system is the reflection of our class society . The fact of the antagonism of classes underlies

all our government , causes political parties The business of a state man is to balance the greed and the fears of the proprietary class against the necessities and demands of the working class⁽⁵⁴⁾ .

However , this is not the case in News . With the abolishment of central government along with private property , law courts , police , military and prisons – which are now no longer necessary – man's relationship with his fellow men becomes , as Morris believes , more personal and wealth which has been man's only reason for living is now looked upon just " as an instrument of life . " ⁽⁵⁵⁾ Morris's attack and scorn of government is generalized to include all governmental institutions . As for the institution of marriage , it does not exist in Nowhere . Having no contractual marriage , people are free to pursue their passion as they like . This idea is clearly manifested in Dick's relationship with Clara . Feeling that she is " in love with somebody else , " (News , Ch . IX , P . 47) Clara leaves Dick only to go back again to him . Morris's comment on this issue is made clear in the second edition of the Manifesto of the Socialist

League

:

Under a socialist system contracts between individuals would be voluntary and enforced by the community . This would apply to the marriage contract as well as others , and it would become a matter of simple inclination . Women also would share in the certainty of livelihood which would be the lot of all ; and children would be treated from their birth as members of the community

entitled to share in all its advantages ; so that economical compulsion could be no more brought to bear on the contract than legal compulsion could be . Nor would a truly enlightened public opinion , freed from mere theological views as to chastity , insist on its permanently binding nature in the face of any discomfort or suffering that might come of it .⁽⁵⁶⁾

This is really what Guest learns from old Hammond who informs him that in this libertarian society

... there is no code of public opinion which takes the place such courts , and which might be as tyrannical and unreasonable as they were . I do not say that people don't judge their neighbours' conduct, sometimes doubtless , unfairly . But I do say that there is no unvarying conventional set of rules by which people are judged ; ... no hypocritical excommunication which people are forced to pronounce , either by unconsidered habit , or by the unexpressed threat of the lesser interdict if they are lax in their hypocrisy .

(News , Ch . IX , PP . 49 – 50)

Since there are no contractual marriages , there are no divorce courts – the idea that Hammond explains to Guest in

the following words :

I know that there used to be such lunatic affairs as divorce courts . But just consider ; all the cases that came into them were matters of property quarrels : and I think , dear guest , ... , that though you do come from another planet , you can see from the mere outside look of our world that quarrels about private property could not go on amongst us in our days.

(News , Ch . IX , P . 47)

From the quotation above , it is very clear that private property , too , is abolished in Nowhere . Nevertheless , in this commonwealth , among the most serious societal problems that people may be faced with are those which are related to jealousy and which Morris , not surprisingly , is conscious of . Dick puts this idea like this :

'Tis a good job there are so many of them that every Jack may have his Jill : else I fear that we should get , fighting for them . Indeed , ... ' I don't say that it does not happen every now , sometimes . For you know love is not a very reasonable thing , and perversity and self – will are commoner than some of our moralists think . '

(News , Ch . VI , P . 29)

As a man , Morris is aware of Jane's (his wife) relationship with his close friend , Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his " tolerance of his wife's love for Rossetti also makes this issue one of the areas in which Morris can be seen as living his own ideals . " ⁽⁵⁷⁾

As they proceed in their speech , Guest asks old Hammond about the position of women in Nowhere . Laughingly , Hammond answers this question saying :

It is not without reason that I have got a reputation as a careful student of history . I believe I really do understand " the Emancipation of women – movement " of the nineteenth century ... of course you will see that all that is a dead controversy now . The men have no longer an opportunity of tyrannizing over the women , or the women over men ; both of which things took place in those old times . The women do what they can do best , and what they like best , and the men are neither jealous of it nor injured by it . This is such a commonplace that I am almost ashamed to state it .

(News , Ch . IX , P . 50)

Thus , women are free from men's oppression and treated respectfully as women , child bearers and companions . Accordingly , the notion of " sexual division of labour " ⁽⁵⁸⁾ which has been very common in the nineteenth century is ended and the " necessity for either men or women to sell themselves

" (59) to gain their living is now not needed .

As for education , Nowhereans , too , are free to follow their interest or inclination in pursuing their education . To his surprise , Guest learns that education is now no longer systematic and that children do not necessarily rely on " book – learning , " (News , Ch . V , P . 24) and can be " wise through natural growth . " ⁽⁶⁰⁾ This fact is clearly stated by Dick in the following lines :

They (children) often make up parties ,
and come to play in the woods for
weeks together in summer – time ,
living in tents , as you see . We rather
encourage them to it ; they learn to do
things for themselves , and get to notice
the wild creatures ; and you see , the less
day stew inside houses the better for
them .

(News , Ch . V , P . 23)

Breaking away from the traditional institutions of the nineteenth century England , Morris , as a revolutionary socialist , comes to believe that " learning through nature is the best suited lifestyle for this agrarian society , " ⁽⁶¹⁾ and this is really what he , after the death of capitalism , advocates for the workers :

What I claim is liberal education ;
opportunity , that is , to have my share
of whatever knowledge there is in the
world according to my capacity or bent

of mind , historical or scientific ; and
also to have my share of skill of hand
which is about in the world . ⁽⁶²⁾

Brought up in a completely rural environment , Morris
"developed an enduring love of country life that was to
influence his tastes in artistic design , his attitude to
and his analysis of the faults in Victorian society . craftsmanship
" ⁽⁶³⁾ Both Morris's idealization of his past life when he was a
child and his idealization of the Middle Ages help him to write
his novel . As a lover of nature , he describes the area as it "
seemed to him as a child , " ⁽⁶⁴⁾ speaking with excitement
about haymakers who are engaged in " making hay busily
by now , in the simple fashion of the days when I was a
boy . " (News , Ch . XXIII , P . 132) There at Runnymede ,
Guest encounters an old man named Henry Morsom , Ellen's
grandfather , whose praise of past times makes Guest angrily
outburst with the following :

What you mean is that you
decockneyized the place , and sent the
damned flunkies packing and that
everybody can live comfortably and
happily , and not a few damned thieves
only , who were centres of vulgarity and
corruption wherever they were , and
who , as to this lovely river , destroyed
its beauty morally , and had almost
destroyed it physically , when they were
thrown out of it .

(News , Ch . XXIII , PP . 134 - 135)

In Nowhere , nature is glorified and seen as a source of sensuous pleasure . Ellen , as a lover of nature , objects to her grandfather's view regarding history and the past , showing the difference between her world and that of her grandfather , emphatically saying :

In the past times , when those big houses of which grandfather speaks were so plenty , we must have lived in a cottage whether we had liked it or not ; and the said cottage instead of having in it everything we want , would have been bare and empty You , grandfather , have done no hard work for years now , but wander about and read your books and have nothing to worry ; and as for me , I work hard when I like it , because I like it , and think it does me good , ... , and makes me prettier to look at and healthier and happier . But in those past days you , grandfather, would have been always afraid of having to be shut up in a kind of prison along with other old men , half starved and without amusement .

(News , Ch . XXIII , PP . 135 - 136)

For her , " there is something loathsome about " (News , Ch . XXII , P . 130) nineteenth century novelists for

Some of them , indeed , do here and there show some feeling for those whom the history – books call " poor " , and of the misery of whose lives we

have some inkling ; but presently they give it up , and towards the end of the story we must be contented to see the hero and heroine living happily in an island of bliss on other people's troubles ; and that after a long series of sham troubles (or mostly sham) of their own making illustrated by dreary introspective nonsense about their feelings and aspirations , and all the rest of it ; while the world must even then have gone on its way , and dug and sewed and baked and built and carpentered round about these useless animals.

(News , Ch . XXII , P . 130)

Guest is very happy to be with Ellen , who accompanied him , along with Clara and Dick in his journey up the Thames . But this happiness , at the end of the novel , proves to be just an illusion . To his disappointment , Guest is excluded from the feast that celebrates their arrival and everybody seems to be unaware of his own presence :

I turned to Dick , expecting him to lead me forward , and he turned his face to me ; but strange to say , though it was as smiling and cheerful as ever , it made no response to my glance – nay , he seemed to take no heed at all of my presence , and I noticed that none of the company looked at me . A pang shot through me as of some disaster long expected and suddenly realised I was not three

yards from the two women who , though they had been my companions for such a short time , had really , as I thought , become my friends . Clara's face was turned full upon me now , but she also did not seem to see me ,I turned to Ellen , ... ; but her bright face turned sad directly , and she shook her head with a mournful look and the next moment all consciousness of my presence had faded from her face .

(News , Ch . XXXII , P . 181)

The novel ends with the black clouds preparing themselves to take Guest back to the ugly nineteenth century . At this critical moment, Guest's pessimistic feeling is expressed in the following :

... but suddenly I saw as it were a black cloud rolling along to meet me , like a nightmare of my childish days ; and nothing of conscious was I for a while else than being in the dark , and whether I was walking or sitting or lying down , I could not tell .

(News , Ch . XXXII , PP . 181 - 182)

Thus Ellen's last words to Guest " No , it will not do ; you can not be of us ; you belong so entirely to the unhappiness of the past that our happiness even would weary you , " (News , Ch . XXXII , P . 182)and her plea for him to go " back and be the happier for having seen us , for added a little hope to you struggle , " (Ibid .)

are interpreted not only as a political programme - to take hold of his political responsibility as a member of the nineteenth century society – " but also as a personal reminder , a closure which writing the novel may have allowed him to make on his past life , a private absolution and preparation for the end . " ⁽⁶⁵⁾

Conclusion

Reading William Morris's *News from Nowhere* , one can arrive at a conclusion that Morris writes this novel to realize his hope of having an alternative world where " wholeness might be regained . " ⁽⁶⁶⁾ He , like Ruskin , Marx and many others , is conscious of the dangers of the division of labour and its effects upon society . What he seeks is a world free from all troubles that inflict his society , whether social , economic , or political .

It is worth mentioning that the success of the novel is perhaps attributed to Morris's ability to merge his " spheres of interest " ⁽⁶⁷⁾ - the moral , political , economic and aesthetic – which are central to his concept of utopia , and this is really what he advocates in his life. He tries to revolutionize the Victorian taste and restore the beauty of art and nature by establishing the society for the protection of Ancient Building , nicknamed by Morris himself the " Anti – Scrape . " ⁽⁶⁸⁾ Politically speaking , he calls for political changes of system that guarantee the end of capitalism which he regards as the source of oppression.

Notes

¹ Rebecca Helton , " Singing on the Golden Bough Unity of Culture in News from Nowhere and the Poetry of W. B. Yeats , " 7 February 2004 . np. 25 / 2 / 2009 . << [www.ice – and stars . com / portfolio / Yeatsmorris. Pdf](http://www.ice-and-stars.com/portfolio/Yeatsmorris.Pdf) . >> .

² Terry Liddle , " William Morris (1834 – 1896) : Critic of State Socialism , " 1996 . London , Libertarian Alliance . 6/ 3/ 2009 . << [http: // www. Libertarian . Co/ uk](http://www.Libertarian.Co.uk) >> .

³ Eric S . Rabkin , The Fantastic in Literature , (Princeton , Princeton University Press , 1976) , p . 145 .

⁴ James Redmond , ed . " Introduction " in William Morris's News from Nowhere , (London , Routledge & Kegan Paul , 1970) , p . xviii .

⁵ Susan Trouve' – Finding , " Real and imaginary topography in News from Nowhere , " 8 January 2005 , np . 25/2/2009 . << [www. Univ- paris 13 . Fr / ANGLICISTES / POIRIER / Morris / STrTopography 2 . pdf](http://www.Univ-paris13.fr/ANGLICISTES/POIRIER/Morris/STrTopography2.pdf) >> .

⁶ Peter Faulkner , ed . " Some Conclusions " in William Morris : The Critical Heritage , (London , Routledge & Kegan Paul , 1973) , p . 382 .

⁷ Redmond , p.xxxii .

⁸ Cited in Redmond , p . xxxii .

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¹⁰ Mrs. Townshend (Emily Caroline Gibson) , William Morris & The Communist Ideal , (London , the Fabian Society , 1974) , p . 8 .

¹¹ William Morris , News from Nowhere , ed. James Redmond , (London , Routledge & Kegan Paul , 1970) . All subsequent references to the novel appear in the text .

¹² Helton .

¹³ Cited in Raymond Williams, Culture and Society : 1780 – 1950 , (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd . , 1963) , p . 154 .

¹⁴ Cited in Royce Clifton Garner , " A Comparison of Morris' News from Nowhere and Life in the Twin Oaks Community , " Unpublished M. A. Thesis , University of North Texas , December 2007 . np . 25/2/2009 . << <http://digital.library.unt.edu/permalink/meta-dc-5179:1> >> .

¹⁵ Ibid .

¹⁶ Cited in Liddle .

¹⁷ Cited in Garner .

¹⁸ Cited in Anonymous , " News from Nowhere (or An Epoch of Rest) , " nd. np . 22/6/2008 . << [http :// en . Wikipedia . org / wiki/ News- from- Nowhere](http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/News-from-Nowhere) >> .

¹⁹ Walter Crane , " William Morris : Poet , Artist and Craftsman , and Social Reconstructor , " (November 1896) in William Morris : The Critical Heritage , ed . Peter Faulkner , p . 406 .

²⁰ Helton .

²¹ Faulkner , " Last Years " in William Morris : The Critical Heritage , p . 348 .

²² Trouve'-Finding.

²³ Paul O'Flinn , " From the Kingdom of Necessity to the Kingdom of Freedom : Morris's News from Nowhere , " September 1996 . np . International Socialism Journal . 25 / 2 / 2009 . << [http : // Pubs. Socialistreviewindex . org . uk / isj 72 / Flinn . htm](http://Pubs.Socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj72/Flinn.htm) . >> .

²⁴ Patric Parrinder , " News from Nowhere , The Time Machine and the Break Up of Classical Realism , " November 1976 , np . , 10 / 7 / 2008 . << [http : // www. depauw . edu / sfs / backissues / 10 / Parrinder 10 art . htm](http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/10/Parrinder10art.htm) . >> .

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid .

²⁷ Garner .

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Crane , p . 406 .

³⁰ Ibid .

³¹ Ibid . , p . 405 .

³² Ibid .

³³ Helton .

³⁴ Garner .

³⁵ Cited in Williams , p . 158 .

³⁶ Anna Vaninskaya , " Theory or Myth ? Labour and the Working Class in William Morris and George Orwell , " nd . np . 25 / 2 / 2009 . << [www.arts.ualberta. Ca/ cms / banin . pdf](http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/cms/banin.pdf) .>> .

³⁷ Ibid .

³⁸ Nivedita Bagchi , " Marx , Bellamy and Morris : Assessing the ontological Bases of Socialism , " nd . np . 25 / 2 / 2009 . << [http:// faculty . Virginia . edu / poltheoryprogram / Bachi % 20 Looking % 20 Backward % 20 at % 20 Marx . pdf](http://faculty.Virginia.edu/poltheoryprogram/Bachi%20Looking%20Backward%20at%20Marx.pdf) .>> .

³⁹ Helton .

⁴⁰ David Daiches , A Critical History of English Literature , (London , Secker & Warburg Limited , 1969) , p . 982 .

⁴¹ Cited in Daiches , p . 986 .

⁴² Cited in Williams , pp . 154 – 155 .

⁴³ Redmond , " Notes " in William Morris's News from Nowhere, p.187.

⁴⁴ Ibid .

⁴⁵ O'Flinn .

⁴⁶ Garner .

⁴⁷ Faulkner , " Some Conclusions , " p . 382 .

⁴⁸ Marilyn Pemberton , " Mary de Morgan : Out of the Morrisian Shadow , " nd . np . 25/ 2 / 2009 . << [http : // www . dur . ac . uk / postgraduate- English / Marilyn Pemberton Article Issue 14 . pdf](http://www.dur.ac.uk/postgraduate-English/Marilyn_Pemberton/Article_Issue_14.pdf)>> .

⁴⁹ Faulkner , " Some Conclusions , " p . 380 .

⁵⁰ Cited in Faulkner , " Some Conclusions , " p . 380 .

⁵¹ Liddle .

⁵² Cited in Faulkner , " Last Years , " p . 358.

⁵³ O'Flinn.

⁵⁴ Cited in Mrs. Townshed , p . 19 .

⁵⁵ Ibid .

⁵⁶ Cited in Redmond , " Notes , " p . 188.

⁵⁷ Garner .

⁵⁸ Anonymous , " News from Nowhere (or An Epoch of Rest) , " from Wikipedia , the free encyclopedia .

⁵⁹ Crane , p . 407 .

⁶⁰ Redmond , " Introduction , " p . xxxi .

⁶¹ Anonymous , " News from Nowhere (or An Epoch of Rest) , " from Wikipedia , the free encyclopedia .

⁶² Cited in Bachi .

⁶³ Redmond , " Introduction , " p . xii .

⁶⁴ Ibid .

⁶⁵ Trouve'-Finding .

⁶⁶ Faulkner , " Some Conclusions , " p . 381 .

⁶⁷ Redmond , " Introduction , " p . xvii .

⁶⁸ Mrs. Townshed , p . 9 .

الخلاصة

ان الهدف من هذا البحث هو تقديم الصورة التي رسمها مورش لعالم أفضل ، عالم مختلف عن العالم القبيح الذي يعيش فيه ، العالم الذي لا وجود للمكائن فيه ، المكائن التي استعبدت الإنسان خلال القرن التاسع عشر ، العالم الذي فيه جميع البشر متساوون وتمتعون بنفس الحقوق ، بغض النظر عن لونهم ، جنسهم ، صنفهم ، ومتحررون من جميع أنواع الظلم والاضطهاد .

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