12

Flesh and stone: William Morris's *News from Nowhere* and Chaucer's dream visions

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Towards the end of William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, the narrator, a visitor to a future socialist society, takes a detour with Ellen, a charismatic and beautiful woman in this new society. In the midst of a dialogue about the importance of beauty in everyday life, they come upon a lovingly preserved old house dating from before the revolution (see plate 10):

> She led me up close to the house, and laid her shapely sun-browned hand and arm on the lichened wall as if to embrace it, and cried out, 'O me! O me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all things that deal with it, and all that grows out of it, – as this has done!'
>
> I could not answer her, or say a word. Her exultation and pleasure were so keen and exquisite, and her beauty, so delicate, yet so interfused with energy, expressed it so fully, that any added word would have been commonplace and futile. I dreaded lest the others should come in suddenly and break the spell she had cast about me; but we stood there a while by the corner of the big gable of the house, and no one came.[1]

This extraordinary scene more nearly resembles a passage from D. H. Lawrence than one we would identify as typical of Morris. The scene seems at first an exception or even a contradiction in a socialist utopia. But such a reaction unfairly limits what we can expect from Morris as a writer. One of the striking aspects of *News from Nowhere* is how prescient Morris is in his insistence that the personal is the political, a conviction that informed the key bohemian and countercultural movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

My choice of this passage is meant as a homage to Stephanie Trigg's recent work, especially her investment in the history of emotions on the one hand, and her arresting survey of bluestone cityscapes, monuments and relics in Melbourne and Victoria on

the other.[2] Here, right before Morris's narrator must leave the perfect world, stones and emotions meet in an ecstatic union. This union, observed rather than experienced by the narrator, functions as a modernist/symbolist epiphany of Morris's many concerns: the relation between the past and the future, the healing and rejuvenating power of a lovingly built environment, the point at which nature and culture are one and the same. To disaggregate these connections, I am aided by Richard Sennett's book, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*.[3] Sennett nowhere mentions Morris in this book, but his attention to the relation of the human body and its senses to an apparently inert landscape, opens an avenue to understanding a passage in *News from Nowhere* that at first glance seems a distraction from the novel's primary concerns.

Sennett rewrites the relation between cities and their inhabitants by emphasising the bodily, the sensory and the frankly sensual. He charts the tactile, aural, somatic and olfactory dimensions of cities and the costs of ignoring them in design. At times he describes a hostile, even violent relation between human bodies and needs and the way in which cities have been built. At other times, Sennett offers something close to an organic utopia as a solution to our urban failure, one which would recover the lost possibilities of what he takes to be classical Greece's frankness or medieval France's therapeutic ideals of urbanism. Of medieval Paris, although it was packed with strangers and 'its streets were rampant with gratuitous violence, its economy shuffled human beings from town to town as well as goods, the city could nonetheless be shaped into a moral geography'.[4] Its gardens were planned as places of respite and privacy for those that had neither. In the end, Sennett allows that a perfect city is not possible because of our own divided and conflicted desires, between what Freud called the reality and pleasure principles. Sennett concludes that an urbanism that served all of its people would acknowledge its own limits and its own implication in perpetuating injustice and inequality. He argues for an aesthetic directly opposed to the sleek, interchangeable modules of our present-day global centres: 'This desire to free the body from resistance', he writes, 'is coupled with a fear of touching'.[5]

Whereas Sennett imagines a city dialectically engaged between conflicting forces, between, as it were, purity and danger, Morris produces a utopian solution that places such conflict in the past.[6] In contrast to more recent urbanists such as Jane Jacobs, who argued against suburbanisation and urban renewal,[7] the landscape

and townscape of Morris's future have been forged by revolutionary violence and counter-revolutionary reaction, which, after the revolution, results in the 'rest' of Morris's little-noticed subtitle, 'An epoch of rest'.[8] Interestingly, the one exception is the place of sensuality and sexuality in a perfect future, both from the point of view of the visiting narrator, stifled by the mores of his own world – even though he is a radical reformer in the nineteenth century, as was Morris – and by the comrades of this imagined future.

Even Ellen, the ecstatic guide in the above scene, is aware of the danger of her own power. It has already had its effect on the narrator: 'Ellen's laugh, even amongst the others, was one of the pleasantest sounds I had ever heard'.[9] She was not only beautiful, but 'was in all ways strangely interesting'.[10] Ellen tells him that she has invited herself along for the pleasure of his company, but warns him that 'even amongst us, where there are so many beautiful women, I have often troubled men's minds disastrously'.[11] Even her courtesy has a double edge to it: 'This evening … I shall make a proposal to you to do something which would please me very much, and I think would not hurt you'.[12] When she smiles, she smiles 'with pleasure' and her body, despite her obvious fitness and healthy suntanned complexion, is languorous in repose. We would suppose that her aura was the result of the narrator's male gaze, if she herself did not contribute to its explanation. And indeed her frankness, which causes embarrassment or uncertainty only to the narrator himself, is part and parcel of the sexual mores of Nowhere. We learn somewhat earlier that almost the only crimes that plague the utopian future are crimes of passion. A man, 'bitten with love-madness', pursues a woman who does not love him back, and attacks her successful lover with an axe, but in the ensuing struggle, the love-mad man is killed. His friends are now worried about the despair of the survivor after the manslaughter, concerned that he might take his own life, and plunge his beloved into a similar despair.[13] Part of the point of the story is the attempt by the community to regulate itself and care for the survivors, but also the awareness of all of the disruptive potential of passion. The narrator has earlier been told this story immediately after he has praised a woman who is guiding a horse: 'What a beautiful creature!' he exclaims to his guide, Dick, who asks him teasingly if he is referring to the horse.[14] We move from an adolescent remark by the narrator, to an indication that desire remains socially problematic in the new world, as it was in the nineteenth century, and in Morris's own troubled and complicated private life, which utopia cannot entirely exorcise.

At the same time, Ellen is her own woman, and her near-union with her beloved stones has echoes that run through the mid-nineteenth century. John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* tells a rather different story about gender and stones. It is possible to think of the scene as an implicit response to Ruskin, much as his 'Defence of Guenevere' is in dialogue with Tennyson's portrayals of Arthurian women. By now, it seems almost self-evident that Ruskin's narrative of a virtuous medieval Venice changed into a fallen Renaissance courtesan is based on autobiographical experience. Ruskin supposedly delayed the consummation of his marriage in order to complete the writing of his book. Richard Ellmann's elegant essays in *Golden Codgers* suppose that at the same time that Ruskin was defending his wife Effie's chastity in the face of her flirtatiousness and love of pleasure, he was projecting his anger on to the city of Venice itself. Renaissance Venice bears the brunt of Ruskin's internal rage, as he rails against the corruption of the purity and honesty of her former medieval form.[15] Morris's Ellen, however, embraces the authenticity of the stones of the old house, integrating them into an experience that is sensual, historical and ethical all at once. Unlike Ruskin, the narrator suspends judgment, and even enjoys Ellen's pleasure voyeuristically. Yet his paralysed response reveals that he is in some way a secret sharer of Ruskin's discomfort. The narrator's voyeuristic distance is a culmination of his puzzlement with the sexual and romantic arrangements of this future society as they are revealed to him up to this point, as well as his enthusiasm for the healthy attractiveness of the many female figures who appear with regularity in the landscape.

The passage has not gone unremarked in recent Morris studies, and some brilliant interpretations have been proposed. Béatrice Laurent reads the passage in terms of the dichotomy between Morris's Romanticism and his Marxism:

> Her semi-pantheistic, semi-orgasmic outcry makes Ellen more than a character of fiction, an allegory of Life. Through renunciation both of established politics and of religious dogma, the Nowherians seem to have regressed, in an historical perspective, to a pre-capitalist, even a pre-Christian era, indeed to the legendary period when the Western world was inhabited by humans and fairies living in harmony.[16]

Laurent suggests that Morris engages in a kind of word-painting of landscapes in the novel, akin to how the visual arts successfully merge the moral and the political qualities of buildings and

landscapes. Nathaniel Gilbert interprets the scene as emphasising the relationship between humans, the built landscape and the natural world, following on the theory of landscape developed by W. J. T. Mitchell, Anne Bermingham and others.[17] As Florence Boos notes, 'Soon afterwards, however, the impossibly beautiful dream dissolves. Guest becomes aware that he has become a kind of spectral presence: his new friends at the harvest-festival no longer recognize him'.[18] For Boos, Ellen actually voices some of the positions of twentieth century neo-Marxism, from Ernst Bloch to Henri Lefebvre, rather than those of industrial-age Marxism. Boos points out that it is Guest who becomes a 'spectral presence' so that, I may add, the utopian future is more real than the nineteenth-century present.

A case could be made that the alienated narrator of *News from Nowhere* is a reflection of Morris's familiarity with the role of the narrator in the dream visions of Geoffrey Chaucer. Most readers familiar with Morris nowadays think of the Kelmscott Chaucer as the epitome of Morris's identification with Chaucer. However, despite the enormous iconic importance of the Kelmscott edition, Morris kept a surprising distance in his comments about Chaucer. Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, the illustrator of the Kelmscott Chaucer, were supposedly lifelong admirers of Chaucer, though J. W. Mackail, in the official biography, concludes that Morris read Chaucer only later in his education.[19] Morris seems to have gone out of his way to deny any obvious imitation of Chaucer. In 1895, for instance, he writes to a German student, Hans Ey, who told Morris of a thesis reporting minimal impact of Chaucer on Morris's style:

> I quite agree with your friend as to the resemblance of my work to Chaucer; it only comes of our both using the narrative method: and even then my turn is decidedly more to Romance than was Chaucer's. I admit that I have been a great admirer of Chaucer, and that his work has had, especially in early years much influence on me; but I think not much on my style.[20]

Indeed, despite Morris's admiration, Chaucer's influence remains an inspiration rather than an obvious model, and more evident in the visual arts than in prose or poetry. Nevertheless, Chaucer operates as something of a talisman for Morris throughout his life, helping him to negotiate the many contradictions and confusions that his personal life created for him.

I have described in a previously published article how, in the Kelmscott portrait of Chaucer, Burne-Jones melds traditional

images of Chaucer with a portrait of Morris himself. Some of Morris's friends thought they resembled each other, and this resemblance is recorded in Mackail's biography, which notes that the 'resemblance even extended to physical features: the corpulent person, the demure smile, the "close, silent eye"'.[21] Burne-Jones's portraits of Chaucer in the Kelmscott edition are strangely solitary and detached, and even seem to age as the volume progresses.

Morris was extremely guarded about his inner life, in contrast to his exuberance about business, art or politics. His daughter, May Morris, wrote in her recollections that 'no glimpse of his inner life … was ever vouchsafed even to his closest friends'.[22] At the same time, some of his poems have been read as obliquely autobiographical. *The Earthly Paradise*, inspired by Chaucer's framed story collections, may express a sense of longing, loss and regret for Jane: 'Can we regain what we have lost meanwhile?'[23] *The Defence of Guinevere,* written before Morris even met Jane, expressed a strangely sympathetic and prophetic understanding of the romantic triangle and its compromises: Guinevere seems to speak as much for the betrayed as for the betrayer. Morris and Jane Burden were married in 1861, but Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Jane carried on an affair for many years, and it was not to be Jane's last affair. The strange combination of sympathy, voyeurism and distraction that one can sense in Morris's private life is also evident in the mechanics of narration in *News from Nowhere*, and it is mediated by similar devices such as the narration of Chaucer's dream visions.[24]

The early twentieth century canonised a particular Chaucer: ironic, comic and realistic, most himself in the *Canterbury Tales*. In G. K. Kittredge's *Chaucer and his Poetry*, Chaucer becomes a sophisticated cosmopolitan, only pretending to be naive.[25] In *Congenial Souls*, Stephanie Trigg has demonstrated the gender and class bias behind such an identification.[26] Morris, however, was attracted to Chaucer's dream visions, as well as the rich tradition of medieval dream poetry they depended on. The reaction of most readers is that the dream visions are more 'medieval', and so alert us to another Chaucer than the one who has been canonised in our recent literary history. Indeed, early-twentieth-century criticism read the dream visions as a phase that Chaucer matured from. We may continue to delight in the comic realism of the *Canterbury Tales*, but the dream visions and lyrics offer us very different sorts of effects, such as an interest in moral states, an openness to the vagaries and validity of psychological experience

and fantasy. They require a previous knowledge of highly conventional medieval forms or a willingness to engage the premises of those forms. Morris was sensitive and open to the effects of the dream vision, even if he viewed the form through the lens of Romanticism and neo-Romanticism.

What did Morris borrow from Chaucer's dream visions? Primarily, he employs the narrative stance that has been so debated in subsequent criticism. This is the 'Chaucer' found in the dream visions of the *Book of the Duchess*, the *House of Fame* and the *Parliament of Fowls*. Typically, the narrator is in the throes of insomnia and then finds himself in an enchanted landscape, filled with both manufactured and natural beauties. He begins a courteous dialogue with an interlocutor, who becomes a guide to this dream world. Sometimes, as in the case of the gigantic talkative eagle in the *House of Fame*, the effect is comic, as the eagle answers the predictable questions of the narrator at great length, while the narrator holds on for dear life as they ascend. In the *Book of the Duchess*, the narrator encounters a man dressed in black. A series of questions, answered metaphorically and indirectly until the end, results in the awareness that the man is in mourning for his beloved. As with the narrator of the *General Prologue*, the impression we have is of an inquisitive, if obtuse, and sometimes embarrassing observer of personal and social crises that he does not totally understand. As scholars have pointed out, Chaucer himself had considerable diplomatic and official experience, and could not have been as naive as his self-portrait.

Chaucer was writing in the tradition of late medieval dream visions. His French contemporary, Guillaume de Machaut, portrayed himself in an unflattering light, and dramatised his personal failures and incompetence. Dante, in the *Inferno*, has to be corrected constantly by his guide, Virgil. Critics such as Alfred David surmised that Chaucer may have fashioned this convention to suit his own situation as a poet and courtier of non-aristocratic origins writing for his social superiors, who may have been both charmed and flattered by an opening that alludes to their greater sophistication.[27] Chaucer may also have been distancing himself from potentially controversial content in his work. In the 'prologue' to the *Legend of Good Women*, he allows himself to be defended as ignorant of proper social niceties. That is, from a modern critical perspective, Chaucer is operating like one of Conrad's narrators, shaping the story with his own sometimes confused misunderstandings. We have had to learn to read his narrative persona as if

he were a distinct fictional character, which criticism has come to call 'Chaucer-the-narrator' or 'Chaucer-the-pilgrim', especially in *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Canterbury Tales*. But that persona is forged and perfected in the dream visions.

At the same time, *News from Nowhere*, and especially the scene I opened with, is more deeply personal than any of Chaucer's indirect and largely comical comments about his own life or marriage. The narrator stares in distant wonder at Ellen's ecstatic, almost polymorphously perverse, embrace of the wall of the ancient building. But that is not just any building: it is Kelmscott Manor, Morris's own home for a good part of his life. Her embrace includes Morris, and perhaps his narratorial stand-in 'William', in the form of the building. He is a spectator and her exclamation and action is a form of theatre, but it also symbolically enacts his own desires, both towards Ellen and towards the building itself. Ellen's sexualised response is in contrast with, but also consistent with, her natural confidence leading up to this point. Rather than being a contradiction, however, the moment encapsulates the peculiar place of sexuality in Morris's view of the future. Throughout *News from Nowhere*, and elsewhere in his work, he offers a defence of a Free Love that he is uncomfortable with.

Ellen is in a long line of attractive females, and males, that the narrator has noticed, and in whom temporality and sexuality are linked:

> I fairly felt as if I were alive in the fourteenth century; a sensation helped out by the costume of the people that we met or passed, in whose dress there was nothing 'modern'. Almost everybody was gaily dressed, but especially the women, who were so well-looking, or even so handsome, that I could scarcely refrain my tongue from calling my companion's attention to the fact.[28]

Many other such comments pepper the novel. On his first day, he notices the young women serving the meal: 'I naturally looked at them very attentively, and found them at least as good as the gardens, the architecture, and the male men'; they are frank and open, 'thoroughly healthy-looking and strong'.[29] Later, Dick, Guest's guide, encounters his ex-wife, and they are invited by an old man who is explaining the future to Guest, to disappear into the upstairs room, indicating the casual naturalness with which sex is treated in the future:

> 'Dick, my lad, and you, my dear Clara, I rather think that we two oldsters are in your way; for I think you will have plenty to say to

> each other. You had better go into Nelson's room up above; I know he has gone out; **a**nd he has just been covering the walls all over with mediæval books, so it will be pretty enough even for you two and your renewed pleasure.'[30]

Guest, the narrator and stand in for Morris, is cut off from this ease, but at this point begins to develop the relationship with Ellen, who takes over from Dick and the old man in revealing human possibility to Guest. They talk rather than act, or, I should say, act out what they feel without actually acting upon it.

Significantly, the new Middle Ages of the future is pleasant and clean. Morris is countering a Victorian, and even Enlightenment, portrayal of the Middle Ages as dirty and diseased, one which persists to the present day. For instance, the International Health Exhibition was mounted in 1884 to celebrate devices, plans and structures to improve public and personal health, including clean and modern water facilities. But you entered through an 'Old London Street'. 'Old London' was meant to represent the crowded, unsafe and unhealthy past, and was even decorated with artificial dirt.[31] As opposed to the sounds and smells that animate the medieval cities that Sennett describes, Morris's future is an ecological as well as a social utopia, shaped by suburbanised, decentralised and local planning. The result is not noise and dirt but quite the opposite. What Morris is doing, as he is in responding to contemporary utopias, is emphasising the ugliness and dirtiness of modern London and equating the Middle Ages with a healthy, organic, holistic way of life. Behind this celebration of tidiness and cleanliness as almost sensual luxuries is a response to a much more common Victorian assumption about medieval life, one that associates the medieval with dirt, disgust and abjectness. But he is also doing something else: he is disassociating the connection made by puritanism and Victorianism between dirtiness and sexuality. Women are described, and even rendered desirable, by the same standards as buildings and ground, and men. Their frankness and ease (despite the fact that Morris assigns domestic tasks to the women of the future) attracts the narrator, although he appreciates them as he does the built environment, voyeuristically. Their health and heartiness, in reproach to the decadent past, or even the pre-Raphaelite past, is rendered attractive, and, as the novel proceeds, rendered erotically.

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, bohemian circles espouse various extremes of the value

of sexual experience. In America, certain directions in psychology and medicine seek to purge sexual desire as unhealthy. But new ideas from Germany and Scandinavia espouse an acceptance of the body and its desires as healthy and natural, eventually developing into a discourse of vitalism. Morris would have been aware of these ideas from circles in London, and it is possible, though not necessary to my argument, that they inform *News from Nowhere*. The most well-known of these circles is the Fellowship of the New Life, whose members advocated or explored free love, vegetarianism, animal rights, simple clothing and wholesome recreation, and an openness to exotic ideas from other cultures, as well as inspiration from Thoreau, Emerson and the American Transcendentalists. A stereotyping of the Fellowship of the New Life as having a largely ethical and personal agenda, akin to present-day New Age movements, has been questioned, and its socialist, materialist and political goals have been emphasised.[32] A surprising number of members or sympathisers would become famous figures in British culture, but the Fellowship is best remembered for the migration of many of its members into the Fabian Society, whose gradualist politics Morris rejected. Edward Carpenter, one of the founders of the group, and a socialist comrade of Morris, was one of the earliest champions of homosexual rights. Havelock Ellis became one of the leading figures in the emerging field of sexology. One member, Patrick Geddes, would become one of the founders of British town and regional planning.

In *News from Nowhere*, Morris imagines a rather limited and diluted version of these countercultural ideals. The men of the future are attractive and beautiful, but Morris's portrayal of them seems borrowed from Walt Whitman (also one of the heroes of The Fellowship of the New Life). The narrator describes innovative marriage and sexual arrangements, but is almost apologetic in describing them and voyeuristically distant in observing them. While women in the future are described as possessing agency and equal rights, they choose to continue to work in the same gender-specific fields that they do in patriarchal societies, such as food preparation, house care, domestic arrangements and so forth. Indeed, the perspectives of Morris-the-author and William-the-narrator are reversed here, since the narrator also finds this self-imposed limitation surprising. At the least, it has to be explained to him.

Returning to Ellen's ecstatic embrace of the old stones, we can now read the passage not so much as an exception, but as a

doubly refracted image. Ellen's experience predicts what Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio defines as ecosexuality, a polymorphously perverse erasure of the bounds of the human and the natural world.[33] For Morris, the old stones of Kelmscott are as close to natural creation as humans can attain. The scene thus encapsulates on a sexual and bodily level the paradoxes of Utopia, and perhaps of Morris's politics generally, in which, like Chaucer's dream narrators, he observes from a distance the passion and grief he has imagined as an author. The erotics of *News from Nowhere* constitute an allegorical emblem of its politics.

Notes

1 William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, in *Three Works by William Morris*, ed. A. L. Morton (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p. 391.
2 Stephanie Trigg, 'Bluestone and the city: writing an emotional history', *Melbourne Historical Journal*, 44:1 (2017), 41–53.
3 Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996).
4 Sennett, *Flesh and Stone*, p. 159.
5 Sennett, *Flesh and Stone*, p. 18.
6 Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005).
7 See, especially, her seminal work in Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).
8 Morris's goal of a frictionless future is the basis for Lionel Trilling's critique in 'Aggression and utopia: a note on William Morris's *News from Nowhere*', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 42 (1972), 214–33.
9 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 370.
10 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 371.
11 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 377.
12 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 377.
13 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 215.
14 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 216.
15 Richard Ellmann, *Golden Codgers: Biographical Speculations* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
16 Béatrice Laurent, 'The landscapes of Nowhere', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 18:2 (2009), 52–64 (p. 57).
17 Nathaniel Gilbert, 'The landscape of resistance in Morris's *News from Nowhere*', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 16:1 (2004), 22–37 (p. 23).
18 Florence Boos, 'The ideal of everyday life in William Morris' *News from Nowhere*', in Marguérite Corporaal and Evert Jan van Leeuwen

(eds), foreword by Peter Liebregts, *The Literary Utopias of Cultural Communities, 1790–1910* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), pp. 141–70 (p. 143). See also Jan Marsh 'Concerning love: *News from Nowhere* and gender', in Stephen Coleman and Paddy O'Sullivan (eds), *William Morris and 'News from Nowhere': A Vision for Our Time* (Bideford, Devon: Green Books, 1990), pp. 107–25. Boos and Marsh have written extensively and persuasively on gender in Morris.

19 J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, vol. I (London: Longmans, 1901), p. 61.

20 William Morris, 'Letter 2427: "To Hans Ey"', in Norman Kelvin (ed.), *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, vol. IV: 1893–1896 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 338.

21 Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, p. 214.

22 May Morris, *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*, vol. I (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), p. 441.

23 William Morris, *The Earthly Paradise*, in May Morris (ed.), *The Collected Works of William Morris*, vols III–VI (London: Longmans Green, 1910–15), 2.143. On the interplay between Morris's fiction and poetry, medieval romance and romance as a genre, with particular attention to *News from Nowhere*, see Amanda Hodgson, *The Romances of William Morris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 127–33; Carole G. Silver, *The Romance of William Morris* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1982), pp. 141–56; and Frederick Kirchhoff, *William Morris: The Construction of a Male Self, 1856–1872* (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 1990), pp. 230–1.

24 David Matthews cites Ellen's ecstatic embrace of the wall as a possibly elegiac reference to his troubled marriage; see his important *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 63.

25 George Lyman Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1915).

26 Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 33, *passim*.

27 Alfred David, *The Strumpet Muse: Art and Morals in Chaucer's Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976). On the history of scholarship of the dream visions, see John M. Ganim, 'The interpretation of dreams: Chaucer's early poems, literary criticism and literary theory', in William Quinn (ed.), *Chaucer's Dream Visions: A Casebook* (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 463–76.

28 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 203.

29 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 193.

30 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 234–5.

31 See the excellent account of the exhibition by Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women,*

1870–1900, McGill-Queen's/Hannah Institute Studies in the History of Medicine, Health, and Society (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), pp. 9–35.

32 See Kevin Manton, 'The fellowship of the new life: English ethical socialism reconsidered', *History of Political Thought*, 24:2 (2003), pp. 282–304.

33 Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio, *Gaia and the New Politics of Love: Notes for a Poly Planet* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010). See also Martin Delveaux, '"O me! O me! How I love the earth": William Morris's *News from Nowhere* and the birth of sustainable society', *Contemporary Justice Review*, 8:2 (2005), 131–46.