

Victorian Sages
and
Cultural Discourse

RENEGOTIATING GENDER
AND POWER

E D I T E D B Y

Thais E. Morgan



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS
New Brunswick and London



Contents

Illustrations	vii
THAÏS E. MORGAN	
Victorian Sage Discourse and the Feminine: <i>An Introduction</i>	i
CAROL T. CHRIST	
"The Hero as Man of Letters": <i>Masculinity and Victorian Nonfiction Prose</i>	19
GEORGE P. LANDOW	
Aggressive (Re)interpretations of the Female Sage: <i>Florence Nightingale's Cassandra</i>	32
LINDA M. SHIRES	
Rereading Tennyson's Gender Politics	46
JANET L. LARSON	
"Who Is Speaking?": <i>Charlotte Brontë's Voices of Prophecy</i>	66
ANTONY H. HARRISON	
Christina Rossetti and the Sage Discourse of Feminist High Anglicanism	87
MARY WILSON CARPENTER	
The Trouble with Romola	105
PAUL SAWYER	
Ruskin and the Matriarchal Logos	129

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Victorian sages and cultural discourse : renegotiating gender and power / edited by Thaïs E. Morgan.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-8135-1600-5 (cloth) ISBN 0-8135-1601-3 (pbk.)

1. English literature—19th century—History and criticism.
2. Literature and society—Great Britain—History—19th century.
3. Women and literature—Great Britain—History—19th century.
4. Power (Social sciences) in literature. 5. Sex role in literature. I. Morgan, Thaïs E.

PR484.V53 1990

820.9'32042'09034—dc20

90-30977

CIP

British Cataloging-in-Publication information available

Salamander ornament on title page and chapter openings adapted from Frederick Sandys's *Medea* (1868).

Copyright © 1990 by Rutgers, the State University

All rights reserved

Manufactured in the United States of America

rhetoric. (Why else follow a perfectly well-reasoned essay on "Literary Lionism" with page after page of narrative anecdote?) Martineau's resort to gossip, perhaps even despite herself, turns the masculine/feminine dichotomy on its head: it shows the irrational that underlies the masculine, the reasonable truth that emerges from the feminine.



An (Almost) Egalitarian Sage
*William Morris and Nineteenth-Century
 Socialist-Feminism*

FLORENCE S. BOOS

In the last decade of his life, William Morris developed a sage voice of "fellowship" in works whose most memorable protagonists are outsiders: a working-class revolutionary; a soon-to-be-martyred visionary priest; two "guests" who are displaced from their physical and temporal origins; and two young women who seek to realize new forms of wisdom, independence, and social justice. Throughout his life, Morris had included in his works striking portrayals of women, and a high valuation of characteristics he considered "womanly" remained central to the conceptions of beauty and justice in his late poetry and prose romances. For his period, he was remarkably unpuritanical; his poetic embodiments of sexual relationships are attractively uninhibited, and he was unusual among Victorian poets in his preoccupation with *male* sexual responsibility toward *female* partners, rather than the reverse. In the last years of his life, however, Morris's identification with the socialist movement also led him to create female political heroes who differ markedly from the intensely passionate but dependent heroines of his early works. After his conversion to socialism, moreover, his writings addressed, with characteristic sensitivity and insight, some of the issues raised by nineteenth-century socialist feminists.

Morris's presentations of women have formed the subject of several

articles, and the relation of his writings to conceptions of women, gender, sexuality, and feminism are complex and interwoven.¹ I will discuss only three aspects of Morris's writing here: the ways in which his essays on art and socialism foster a prose style which conveys an ethic of egalitarian fellowship, but avoids explicit concern with women's creative work; the extent to which contemporary debates among socialists prompted him to develop a considered defense of women's right to sexual autonomy; and, finally, the confluence of these two achievements in a partial elision of gender stereotypes, which may be found in his more political prose romances.

Morris's essays on art and socialism, written between 1877 and his death in 1896, advocate a radical transformation of art and economy, and are among the most original achievements of his political and literary maturity. Their understated but fervent appeals for the autonomy and the beauty of creative labor are both lyric and conversational. At their best, they achieve a rare convergence of poetic sensibility and political exhortation, and create an unpretentious fellowship of speaker and audience which is seldom present in the work of Carlyle, Arnold, and Ruskin. Morris's appeals for communal ownership of nature and history thus contrast sharply with what George P. Landow has called the "elegant jeremia[d]s" of Victorian exhortatory prose.² Like the writings of his predecessors, Morris's secular sermons move from analysis to prophecy; but they exhort to revolution in direct and personal ways, and require no apocalyptic declamations: "When our opponents say, as they sometimes do, How should we be able to procure the luxuries of life in a Socialist society? answer boldly, We could not do so, and we don't care, for we don't want them and won't have them; and indeed, I feel sure that we cannot if we are all free men together. . . . Alas! my friends, these are the fools who are our masters now. The masters of fools then, you say? Yes, so it is; let us cease to be fools then, and they will be our masters no longer."³ Morris was not considered a charismatic speaker, but the written versions of his speeches to working- and middle-class audiences are remarkably effective. He readily forwent the more erudite critical allusions for which Pater and Ruskin are now remembered, and replaced them with direct references to political controversies and contemporary events, praise of "lesser" art(s) and social action, and direct appeals to personal experience: "A man who notices the external forms of things much nowadays

must suffer in South Lancashire or London, must live in a state of perpetual combat and anger; and he really must try to blunt his sensibility, or he will go mad, or kill some obnoxious person and be hanged for it."⁴

One ironic consequence of Morris's impassioned but straightforward tone, fondness for simple words of Saxon origin, and desire to establish a direct tie with his audience is that he uses the word "man" and its derivatives more often than any other major Victorian essayist:

Art is man's expression of his joy in labour.

. . . works of art, the beauty which man creates when he is most a man, most aspiring and thoughtful. . . .

. . . a man must have time for serious individual thought, for imagination—for dreaming even—or the race of men will inevitably worsen.⁵

There are depressingly few direct references to women in these essays, and many of his eloquent pleas for action sound all too much like Wordsworth's "man speaking to men." The same applies to the essays' allusions to virtually all forms of "useful work":

during all this period the unit of labour was an intelligent man. Time was when . . . imagination and fancy mingled with all things made by man, and in those days all handicraftsmen were *artists*, as we should now call them. But the thought of man became more intricate, more difficult to express; art grew a heavier thing to deal with, and its labour was more divided among great men, lesser men, and little men, till that art, which was once scarce more than a rest of body and soul, as the hand cast the shuttle or swung the hammer, became to some men so serious a labour, that their working lives have been one long tragedy of hope and fear, joy and trouble.⁶

Despite all this, Morris was the only nineteenth-century "sage" who passionately espoused "the lesser" or decorative arts, usually considered "feminine." Moreover, his view of the relations of labor and art radically undermined many of the factitious divisions between sensual and abstract, natural and "mental," emotional and "rational," which feminists, ecologists, and others have since identified as sources of oppression. In a shift

which paralleled a growing focus on female autonomy in his socialist literary writings, Morris's later essays on socialism become slightly more inclusive in their language. Allusions to "men" give way more often to alternative abstractions: "the family of blood-relationship would melt into that of the community and of humanity."⁷ More importantly, explicit allusions to "women" become somewhat more frequent: "[T]here is an enormous mass of labour which is just merely wasted; many thousands of men and women making *nothing* with terrible and inhuman toil. . . . [Y]ou who are housekeepers know full well (as I myself do, since I have learned the useful art of cooking a dinner) how it would simplify the day's work, if the chief meals could be eaten in common."⁸

It should be kept in mind that most members of the audiences for Morris's earlier speeches were workingmen—male artisans and intellectuals, for the most part. Later Socialist League audiences may well have included several women, among them his two grown daughters. More significantly, the development of Morris's own insights on art and communism in the essays may gradually have deepened his own appreciation of the range of "useful work," and sharpened his perception of the social oppression of women. It is not coincidental, I believe, that the utopian feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman admired Morris's writings, and that some of the pastoral and artistically pleasing features of *Herland* resembled the environment described in *News From Nowhere*. She visited him in Hammersmith in 1896, shortly before his death, and remarked in her autobiography: "Gray and glorious he was, and most kind." Of his death, she wrote: "That was a great loss to the progress of England, of the world. Fortunately he left large work, long years of giving." Among the better-known nineteenth-century male "sages," only Mill did better by women. Among late-century male novelists only Meredith, Gissing, Moore, and Hardy made comparable efforts to appreciate the demands of feminist "new women," but they often undercut their portraits with anxiety, ambivalence, and suppressed hostility. In the world of Morris's later romances, women are sometimes "heroic," men sometimes practice peaceful and domestic arts, and both value the "feminine" traits of a sense of beauty and kinship with the earth.

The evolution of Morris's responses to "the Woman Question" is sufficiently complex to merit a review of his public and private statements on

the issue, a review which must pose several vexed, even painful questions. For example, why were Morris's initial critiques of the oppression of the worker, the corruption of imperialism, and the debasement of the arts of everyday life under capitalism so much bolder than his responses to gender hierarchy? How did a man who understood more than most members of his class the need of workers and artists for self-direction and creativity in labor fail for so long to recognize women's equal drives for creative autonomy in *non-sexual* realms? Why did he collaborate with Ernest Belfort Bax, a rigorous Marxist who was also a notorious antifeminist and anti-suffragist? Why, above all, in 1886 did he politely decline to publish criticisms of Bax's public opposition in *Commonweal* to legal redress for battered spouses and children? Finally, can one discern partial resolutions of these apparent contradictions in Morris's later statements on marriage, and the language and plots of the later prose romances? Did Morris ultimately appropriate aspects of positions he had earlier, for tactical and other reasons, slighted or ignored?

As feminist students of the period are well aware, few of Morris's predecessors and contemporaries among Victorian critics—Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy*, Newman in *The Idea of the University*, Carlyle in *Past and Present*, even Pater in *The Renaissance*—had anything searching, or even anything at all, to say on the nature or role of women, or on the structure of the Victorian family. Ruskin, for example, dealt harshly with the aspirations of actual contemporary women ("Of Queen's Garden's," 1865), despite his nostalgic admiration for mythic goddesses and female medieval saints. The only exceptions to this patriarchal front were John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, whose essay *On The Subjection of Women* (1869) was unique for its advocacy of egalitarian marriage and women's intellectual autonomy. Morris would thus have found no feminist precedents in the two "sages"—Carlyle and Ruskin—whose work otherwise influenced him most, and his evolving views of family structure and women's rights to sexual choice drew on two other sources. The troubles of his own marriage, first, prompted in him a surprising measure of self-awareness and empathy with his wife's dissatisfaction, and by the 1870s inspired reflections on the need to regulate sexual unions entirely by mutual consent. When he later "became a Socialist" in the 1880s, Morris also encountered debates within the movement about the nature of ideal family life under

socialism which confirmed this initial response. Which features of the contemporary Victorian family were the regressive results of capitalist oppression, socialists asked, and which would survive as natural reflections of liberated human behavior?

In 1884, Friedrich Engels published *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats* (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*), the first Marxist-feminist treatise by a member of the Social Democratic Federation.¹⁰ In April of the following year, *Commonweal* carried Eleanor Marx's review of August Bebel's treatise on *Woman Under Socialism*, and in April 1886, it published Bax's virulent counterattack on the campaign for women's suffrage, "woman-lovers," and feminists. Four years later, after Bax's resignation from the Socialist League, Morris printed in *Commonweal* (April 1890) his best-known and most eloquent statements on marriage, which later became chapter 9 of *News From Nowhere*.

During his time as a founder and sustainer of the Socialist League, Morris also worked with contemporary activists such as Helen Taylor (daughter of Harriet Taylor), Annie Besant, Charlotte Wilson, Eleanor Marx, and other, now-lesser-known figures such as Lena Wardle, and his own daughter May Morris; he also met the valiant French anarchist Louise Michel, and entertained the American anarchist Emma Lazarus.¹¹ From time to time he was inevitably called on to mediate disputes as editor of *Commonweal*, state his views on the "woman question," and serve as a buffer between Bax and other members of the League. Morris also coauthored public manifestos which expounded his own and Socialist League views on the bourgeois and socialist family.

Throughout this period, Morris's most conspicuous socialist-feminist conviction was his firm, even impassioned support for women's right of sexual choice. The model of the ideal family remained for him that of a man, a woman, and their offspring—a heterosexual nuclear family—and he did not foresee any extensive changes in the conventional divisions of everyday labor, or assume that married women would want or need to work at most nondomestic tasks, other than weaving (which he held in high respect and practiced extensively himself). Nor, as an essentially anti- or nonparliamentary socialist, was he much interested in which sex had the right to elect members to a "bourgeois" parliament. Personally a very affectionate father, he largely ignored in his writings issues of childcare

and parental responsibility which might arise when marriages dissolved, and seems to have assumed that most women naturally wished to care for their own and others' children. He apparently believed that the different circumstances of the sexes—above all, the supposed female "dependence" resulting from pregnancy—would persist, and that many existing economic and social distinctions would inevitably persist along with them.

Most damagingly, as I have remarked, he also seems to have muted League debates in the mid-1880's to accommodate the sensibilities of his overwrought collaborator—in part, perhaps, in a misguided appreciation of Bax's usefulness as a rare early "theorist" of English-language Marxism, and in part from a sense that Bax's views were simply exaggerated expressions of opinions still dominant among *Commonweal's* male socialist readers. Finally, as editor of the League's newspaper and its chief financial supporter, he clearly wished to avoid factional quarrels that would distract members from more bitter and inclusive problems of poverty (not least of women), and class oppression. None of these motives, however, fully exonerates him.

Despite his apparent condonation of Bax's behavior, and despite his relative detachment from an emerging struggle which later engaged the wholehearted efforts of Keir Hardie and Richard Pethick Lawrence, among others, Morris remained notable among the better-known nineteenth-century male "sages" (again, save only Mill) for the complete absence of casual sexism from his speeches, essays, and private writings. Something stoically irenic and basically equable in him, something related to his refusal to blame or stereotype entire classes of people, helped ensure that none of his published statements ever ascribed inferiority to female nature, or relegated women to any of the social roles he condemned.

In view of Morris and Bax's markedly divergent views on sexual and women's issues, as well as the controversies over this issue within the Socialist League, it is not surprising that the assertions about bourgeois marriage and the family in their jointly authored editions of the League's "Manifesto" were carefully qualified. The first edition of the "Manifesto," for example, which appeared in January 1885, simply followed Engels's *Origin of the Family* in blaming capitalism for "venal prostitution" and the property relations of bourgeois marriage. "Our modern bourgeois property-marriage, maintained as it is by its necessary complement, universal venal prostitution, would give place to kindly and human relations

between the sexes."¹² The phrase "kindly and human relations" is distinctly Morrisian, but the statement as a whole obviously avoids serious questions of equality and social justice. Should women *not* have equal access to jobs and remuneration? Should *not* new forms of mutual sexual contract or promises of fidelity be advocated in the new society, and if so, how should they be enforced? Should socialists endorse reforms—inevitably partial and piecemeal—of existing marriage laws, and support demands for women's suffrage for elections to the "bourgeois" parliament? Most potentially controversial in its implications then and now: How should childcare duties be apportioned? Most socialists would have agreed with the "Manifesto's" truistic statement as it was first worded, including advocates of "free love"; antifeminists such as Bax, who actively opposed women's suffrage and thought "bourgeois marriage" oppressed *males*; feminists eager to end child prostitution and domestic abuse; communalists who advocated cooperative domestic and childcare arrangements; and even "moderate" social-democrats who chiefly wished for continuation of the nuclear family structure under somewhat liberalized divorce laws.

One critical respondent to this minimal statement seems to have been the twenty-nine year old recent convert to Fabianism, G. B. Shaw, whose essay "The Future of Marriage" Morris politely declined to publish in the April 1885 *Commonweal*.¹³ The contents of Shaw's essay are not known, but if consistent with his statements on marriage shortly thereafter, they likely included an attack on female wage slavery, as well as an ironic defense of *both* marriage and prostitution as equally venal forms of socially imposed, female self-barter.¹⁴ Morris's reason for rejecting "the very clever paper which you have kindly sent us" is ambiguously worded: "I should like things altered in your article which I am afraid would take the spirit out of it, and it is too good to spoil."¹⁵ Interpreting Shaw's views as opposed to the basic claims of the "Manifesto," he also notes dryly that "We can hardly attack our own manifesto for instance: also we could not agree that Socialists ought to leave the marriage question alone."¹⁶

In the rest of his scrupulous response to Shaw (who many years later wrote one of Morris's better-known memorials), Morris also suggested that some vestiges of current marriage law would be needed to protect widows and orphans—a matter on which he felt strongly, as the devoted father of a daughter subject to uncontrolled seizures. That his essentially protectionist views persist can be inferred from the lack of any direct criti-

cism of sex-segregation by occupation, and his tacit acceptance of conventional family structures:

there are points about the bearing of the present marriage laws, or inheritance laws which to my mind rather damage your point of view. Of course I agree that abolishing wedlock while the present economical slavery lasts would be futile: nor do I consider a man a socialist at all who is not prepared to admit the equality of women *as far as condition goes*. Also that as long as women are compelled to marry for a livelihood real marriage is a rare exception and prostitution or a kind of legalized rape the rule. . . . I think we of the S. L. must before long state our views on wedlock quite plainly and take the consequences, which I admit are likely to be serious: but I think we had better leave the subject alone till we can pluck up heart to explain the ambiguities of our sentence in the manifesto.¹⁷

Morris's notion of "condition" went "farther" before his death, but its limitations here are obvious.¹⁸

Others associated with the League may also have found the marriage plank of the "Manifesto" superficial and truistic. For the same issue of *Commonweal* in which Shaw's article did not appear, Morris accepted Eleanor Marx's praiseful review of August Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism*, as an expanded version of which, coauthored with Edward Aveling and retitled *The Woman Question*, became the first Marxist-feminist treatise originally written in English.¹⁹

The League also published a second, annotated edition of Morris and Bax's "Manifesto" in October of that year, and it included this time a slightly expanded statement about marriage: "Under a Socialistic system contracts between individuals would be voluntary and unenforced 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."²⁰ Future socialists would thus not be bound by marriage laws, and women and children would "share in the certainty of livelihood"; whether

this might ever mean *equality* of livelihood, or of access to desirable occupations, remained once again in suspension. Fulfillment of the desire to work and create is one of the deepest human desires, of course, as Morris—one of his century's chief proponents of creativity in labor—knew full well. The statement in the second edition of the "Manifesto" still avoided explicit commitment on most of the deepest issues of the woman question.

Six months later, Bax's vitriolic assault "Some Bourgeois Idols; or, Ideals, Reals and Shams," appeared as the lead article in *Commonweal* for April 1886. Bax's attacks on such "idols" as "Liberty" (defined as laissez-faire market conditions) and the "rights of property" were commonplace enough, at least in *Commonweal*.²¹ But his long invective against the "idol" of "equality between the sexes" exhibited a gratuitous truculence (almost) all his own. Most offensively, he expressed his "socialist" dissatisfaction with recent legislative efforts to proscribe marital nonsupport, and wife- and childbattering:²²

[T]he cry for "equality between the sexes" has in the course of its realisation become a sham, masking a *de facto* inequality. The inequality in question presses, as usual, heaviest upon the working-man, whose wife to all intents and purposes has him completely in her power. . . . let him but raise a finger in a moment of exasperation, against this precious representative of the sacred principle of "womanhood," and straightway he is consigned to the treadmill for his six months amid the jubilation of the *D[aily] T[imes]*. . . .

Again, we have the same principle illustrated in the truly bestial howl raised every now and again by certain persons for the infliction of the punishment of flogging on men for particular offenses, notably "assaults on women and children." As a matter of fact in the worst cases of cruelty to children, women are the criminals.²³

Bax, in his own "bestial howl," may have had in mind several changes in British marriage law during the previous two decades; for example, mothers of young children had recently gained the right to marital separation in cases of repeated child assault by fathers.²⁴ Against a background of widespread proletarian alcoholism and family violence, and then-recent revelations about the existence of child brothels, Bax's opposition to "bourgeois" restraints on domestic violence remains essentially incom-

prehensible.²⁵ He concluded his screed with a characterization of women's suffrage as "the handing over of the complete control of the state to *one* sex," and the exaltation of "the female sex into a quasi-privileged class."²⁶

Weary historians who have also glanced at Bax's later compilation of his views in *The Fraud of Feminism* (1913) will realize that these outbursts are in fact relatively moderate for him. Absent from the *Commonweal* article are several charges he later made about women's alleged genetic inferiority, mental imbalance, and unfitness for professional or skilled occupations.²⁷ It is a bitter fact that the most well-read advocate of German Marxism in the English socialist movement of the late 1880s (other than Engels himself) was a vituperative antifeminist bigot. Even Bax's more moderate tone on other issues in most of his articles is so much at variance with that of the coauthored *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome* as to suggest that Morris may have been even more responsible for the latter's content than has generally been acknowledged.²⁸

In any case, what remains most disturbing is Bax's fear that men who committed the ostensibly venial offense of "lifting a finger" "in a moment of exasperation" against wives or children might suffer punishment for their actions. Suffrage for either sex was often dismissed as a reformist goal by the more antiparliamentarian members of the Socialist League. But no one in the League other than Bax ever publicly attempted to vindicate domestic assault or brutality on any grounds. Morris's anxiety to maintain an uneasy peace must be understood in the context of internal Socialist League politics: Bax's loyal support of Morris's departure from the Social Democratic Federation (S.D.F.) in reaction to Henry Hyndman's secretive and authoritarian policies; Engels's personal coolness to Morris; the role of Engels, Marx-Aveling, and Aveling as leaders of the opposition parliamentary faction of the Socialist League; Morris's distaste for the dishonest and philandering Aveling; and the generally acknowledged usefulness of Bax's other contributions to *Commonweal*.

At least two readers of *Commonweal*, however, wrote to protest Bax's views; both apparently criticized his attacks on parents' right to educate their own children, and his bizarre assertions of women's supposed dominance in marriage under British law. One of these respondents was the Reverend William Sharman, who apparently solicited in his letter Morris's personal views on education and the family. In his reply, Morris writes that children "have as much need for the revolution as the proletarians

have," but then continues, in an attempt to palliate Bax's outburst: "As to the woman matter, I do not think Bax puts it unreasonably in his article, though I have heard him exaggerate that in talk and have often fallen foul of him."²⁹ Bruce Glasier, who later married his Glaswegian fellow-lecturer, Katharine Conroy, sent the other, apparently more urgent rebuttal of Bax's views, and Morris deflected Glasier's criticisms of Bax on partly "tactical" grounds:³⁰

I am not quite sure that it would be wise to put it in as it would be cutting the dam of the waters of controversy: since of course Bax must be allowed reply: I will consult with him next Wednesday and do you please consider the matter yourself. . . . Again as to the woman-matter, it seems to me that there is more to be said on Bax's side than you suppose. For my part being a male-man I naturally think more of the female-man than I do of my own sex: but you must not forget that child-bearing makes women inferior to men, since a certain time of their lives they must be dependent on them. Of course we must claim absolute equality of condition between women and men, as between other groups, but it would be poor economy setting women to do men's work (as unluckily they often do now) or vice versa.³¹

Taken together, these letters represent the nadir of Morris's protectionism, and of his desire to patch together the obvious divisions within the Socialist League. Even as he argues his own more benign views on marriage with Sharman, he tries unsuccessfully to palliate the painful implications of his splenetic friend's opinions on patriarchal dominance. Exactly because he had "often fallen foul" on these matters with Bax, Morris also realized all too well, as Sharman and Glasier probably did not, that the latter's bigoted public views were an expurgated, toned-down version of his private ones, and not amenable to reasoned discussion.

Characteristically, Morris's remark to Glasier about the effects of (multiple) pregnancies also reverses without comment Bax's assertion that women already benefit from *too much* protection. It is undeniable that many Victorian women, middle- and upper- as well as lower-class, bore child after child until they were exhausted, but William Morris and his wife Jane (for example) had only two children, as did his closest friends

Georgiana and Edward Burne-Jones. Bax's remarks had not even addressed the issue of women's appropriate roles and needs; but Morris's attempt to consider them here were misleading and inadequate.

The only other recorded private statement by Morris that bears indirectly on the issue of women's roles may be a casual attempt at conventional role reversal and wry humor. In a September 1888 letter to James Mavor of Glasgow, Morris mentions his correspondence with a bookbinder, Cedric Chivers: "I will see if I can hear of anyone to help in his work; a boy would be easier to find than a girl; women as a rule are very feeble on the artistic side; their line is business and mathematics."³² Morris's idealized representations of women, of course, often showed them weaving, and several women had already become rather successful as bookbinders and bookcover embroiderers by this period. Some, moreover—such as Catherine Holiday and Kate Faulkner (the sister of the mathematician Charles Faulkner, Morris's lifelong friend)—had executed commissions for Morris and Company for many years.³³ Morris's apparent tongue-in-cheek inversion of gender-stereotypes is his only recorded effort along these lines.³⁴

In the summer of 1888, at any rate, Bax rejoined the S.D.F., and ceased thereafter to exert any influence on *Commonweal*.³⁵ Morris may well have been dissatisfied with the evasive ambiguity of their carefully calculated joint statements on familial and sexual relations, however, and less than proud as well of his uneasy defense of Bax's polemic. When he returned to the task of projecting an ideal society in *News From Nowhere* (1890), in any case, Morris made equity of sexual behavior and flexibility of family ties one of the principal subjects of two of the book's chapters (9 and 24).³⁶ Significant parts of the river-journey plot turn on two instances of female freedom: Clara's return to her former partner Dick, and Ellen's exploration of new regions with the visiting Guest. Morris also depicts *Nowhereian* women in a variety of exemplary roles, most traditional, but a few mildly innovative. In his earlier writings, Morris had already presented women of compelling psychological depth—Guenevere, Jehane, Psyche, Gudrun, Philonoë—but *News from Nowhere* is the first major English utopian work by a man which confers the role of wisdom figure or "sage" on a woman. Ellen expresses the book's deepest insights on the meaning and use of history, the distinctive qualities of the new society, and the means by which members of Guest's society will have to strive toward it.

Advocacy of female sexual autonomy as a socialist ideal had already appeared, in fact, in Morris's narrative poem "The Pilgrims of Hope," a tribute to the Paris Commune serialized in *Commonweal* from April 1885 to June 1886 (a series of issues which included the articles of both Eleanor Marx and Bax). The principal narrator of "Pilgrims" accepts his wife's preference for their mutual comrade, Arthur, and all three struggle together on the barricades of the Commune, where the wife dies in an unsuccessful effort to save the stricken Arthur. Recovered from his own wounds, the husband then manages to escape Paris and return to England, where he honors his wife's memory, raises their son, and continues to work for the cause. The wife's estrangement is not condemned, and the husband's communist beliefs are tested not only on the barricades, but also by the more difficult task of accepting his wife's rejection as he preserves their shared ideals. The poem's strength and originality also derive from a long passage in which the wife addresses the infant son who will never know her, as well as the poignancy of the husband's introspective attempts to understand and accept his wife's decision.³⁷ The socialist marriage plot in "The Pilgrims of Hope" has often been criticized as irrelevant to its political themes; it is not irrelevant, but it is virtually unique in the annals of British socialist literature, and remarkable for a male socialist of Morris's period.

In *News from Nowhere*, by contrast, Dick and Clara's marital estrangement eventuates in a mutually gratifying reconciliation, and the entire episode is a subplot of Guest's central journey downstream and his encounters with Dick, Old Hammond, and Ellen. The reunion of Dick and Clara gives Morris a chance to elaborate more fully his views of sexual equity and autonomy, and to contrast pointedly the behavior of Nowhereians with the inequities in the divorce laws of his own time—principally, their heavy penalties for female adultery, dictated by what Eleanor Marx had called "one code of morals for man and one for woman."³⁸

In chapter 9 of *News from Nowhere*, "Concerning Love," Guest learns from Old Hammond that his guide Dick hopes to be reunited with his former wife Clara, who had deserted him for another man, and now seeks reconciliation. Guest is somewhat surprised that she has suffered no legal or social penalties, and learns that the couple's children have remained with one of Hammond's daughters, "where, indeed, Clara has mostly been."³⁹ Patiently, Hammond explains to Guest the need to distinguish

"natural passion" and "friendship," and both from possessiveness: "We know that we must face the unhappiness that comes of man and woman confusing the relations between natural passion, and sentiment, and the friendship which, when things go well, softens the awakening from passing illusions: but we are not so mad as to pile up degradation on that unhappiness by engaging in sordid squabbles about livelihood and position, and the power of tyrannising over the children who have been the result of love or lust" (57). It still remains conspicuous in *Nowhere* that (most) women "naturally" gather round to offer hospitality and care for children (as when Clara and her daughter move in with old Hammond's daughter), and that women still tend to raise their own offspring. However, Morris's descriptions of Nowhereian children's education also embody his assumption that childrearing will become an activity of natural interest to all adults, and he makes it clear that male egotism and impulses toward revenge, not parental irresponsibility, are the principal social evils to be feared when marriages dissolve: "So it is a point of honour with us not to be self-centred; not to suppose that the world must cease because one man is sorry; therefore we should think it foolish, or if you will, criminal, to exaggerate these matters of sentiment and sensibility: we are no more inclined to eke out our sentimental sorrows than to cherish our bodily pains; and we recognise that there are other pleasures besides love-making" (58). In chapter 24, Dick and Walter also recount the story of a man who has attacked his more successful rival in love and been killed himself in the ensuing struggle. Both the slayer and the woman involved are deeply depressed after the event, but no legal punishment is imposed on them; Nowhereians have no prisons, and in any case the man had not sought the quarrel.

It is characteristic of Morris, by the way, that both of these stories involve a woman who is sought by two men; his writings contain relatively few instances in which men desert women, or in which two women love the same man.⁴⁰ More generally, the social structure of *Nowhere* also exemplifies once again the essentially traditional nature of Morris's assumptions about (hetero)sexual ties. *Nowhere* offers no instances of homosexual unions, adoptive families, group marriages, or even casually promiscuous men and women. Morris clearly assumes an ethic of male attachment, and hopes an extended social family will cooperate in

childrearing when disintegration of a family unit becomes inevitable. It remains unclear how he would have interpreted or accommodated widespread paternal desertion of wives and infant children, much less abandonment of the latter by the former, but in fairness to Morris it should be observed that he was hardly alone in this. All contemporary socialists advocated dissolution of ties by mutual consent, but virtually no one—including most of the heroic figures of British and American feminism—envisioned a world in which men shared equally in child care, or in which deserted fathers patiently raised infant children. Eleanor Marx, for example, quoted with approval Bebel's inadvertently revealing description of the independent woman, whose "household and children, if she has any, cannot restrict her freedom, but only increase her pleasure in life. Educators, friends, *young girls*, are all at hand for all cases in which she needs help."⁴¹ Only death seems to confer the responsibility (or privilege) of child-rearing on men, as it does on the hero of "Pilgrims of Hope."

Nowhere's reunion of Dick and Clara also recalls the painful emotions of Morris's own marriage; like Clara, Jane Morris had often absented herself from him and their children. Clara is the only figure in the book who responds nostalgically to a Pre-Raphaelite view of women as proper objects of romance. She is described sympathetically, but she clearly has restless impulses which may recall the egocentric pleasures of the hated nineteenth century. When Ellen's grandfather, for example, conjectures that, after all, the society of the nineteenth century may have been preferable to their own, Dick looks uncomfortable and Ellen bursts out in impatient disagreement, but Guest notes that "Clara listened to him with restless eyes, as if she were excited and pleased" (150). When other Nowhereians suggest that art should reflect the strangeness of past history, Clara protests forthrightly, "Well, for my part . . . I wish we were interesting enough to be written or painted about" (103). (Ironically, of course, her wish is granted: they are.)

Other critics have already noted the degree to which Nowhereians continue the role segregation of Morris's own century (and to a depressing extent, ours): the men serve as guides and row the women downstream; at guesthouses women wait on men who sit at tables; sundry novelists and historians, encountered along the way, are all male; men mow hay in the fields during harvest, while the women gather to watch.⁴² Among the justifications given for this division of labor is the ambiguous assertion that:

"The women do what they can do best, and what they like best, and the men are neither jealous of it or injured by it" (59). There is one lone but striking exception to these stereotyped roles, however: Philippa, chief carver (sculptor) among "the obstinate refusers" who prefer housebuilding to haymaking, is quite possibly an allusion to Philippa Fawcett, who earlier in the year of *Nowhere's* publication had placed above the Senior Wrangler in the Cambridge mathematics tripos.⁴³ The Nowhereian Philippa is a forty-year-old mother of a sixteen-year-old apprentice-carver, and the only female single parent and working mother in the entire book. Since decoration of public buildings would be a primary concern of the new society (according, for example, to "Socialism Triumphant"), Philippa's occupation is highly honorific in Nowhereian terms.⁴⁴ In his writings, moreover, Morris often imagines women at work at solitary artistic tasks, and at what he called "administration": "there are many, like the housekeepers I was speaking of, whose delight is in administration and organisation, to use long-tailed words; I mean people who like keeping things together, avoiding waste, seeing that nothing sticks fast uselessly" (84). *Nowhere* is devoid of political rulers and warriors, of course, so an absence of female "political leaders" is tautological. But it should also be observed that the women of the later prose romances, though assertive and geographically mobile, never fill whatever positions of military and political leadership are to be had.

In short, the essential traditionalism of Morris's (widely shared) assumptions about the "natural" division of sexual roles, even in *Nowhere*, undercuts somewhat the appealing implications of his own espousal of "women's" work, but he remained strikingly distinctive among end-of-century socialists in the straightforwardness and sincerity of his insistence that *no* legal or social coercion should constrain a woman's choices of sexual partner and parental role.

There is, moreover, one sturdy token counterexample in *Nowhere* to the prevailing pattern of Morris's portrayals of women, and her contribution is highly valued. Two of the utopia's more astute inhabitants mediate for Guest the nature of the utopian future with special care: one of these "wisdom figures," predictably, is an old man; but the other is Ellen, a young woman. Halfway through the book, the historian Old Hammond recounts to Guest the changes which led to the greater "Change," and sketches the beginnings of the new order which followed. Later, Ellen

travels downriver with Guest, and in the course of their conversations comes to represent to him the transformed life in its most self-consciously reflective form. Learned old sages and handsome young women are stock Victorian figures, of course, but it is Ellen's "sagacity"—her ability to re-live and interpret history—which becomes most valuable to Guest as he struggles to find a way to express the new society's wisdom to the members of his own.

Other inhabitants of Nowhere have already presented their historical opinions earlier in the book: not only the history-buff Old Hammond, but also Dick, Boffin, Clara, and Ellen's grandfather have all tried in their ways to sort out with Guest the respective merits of the past and the new society. The commonplace criticism that Nowhereians are ahistorical, which takes literally Dick's claim of facile antiintellectualism, is a mistake. Even Dick respects what Morris considered authentic popular history—the commemoration of folk ways and lore, and love of the beautiful artifacts and skills of the past. But it is Ellen (the Helen of the new world) who anticipates Santayana, as she states the narrative's most eloquent endorsement of the power of history: "I think sometimes people are too careless of the history of the past—too apt to leave it in the hands of old learned men like Hammond. Who knows? Happy as we are, times may alter; we may be bitten with some impulse towards change, and many things may seem too wonderful for us to resist, too exciting not to catch at, if we do not know that they are but phases of what has been before; and withal ruinous, deceitful, and sordid" (194).

The most perceptive Nowhereians are also distinguished by their awareness of the miseries that past societies inflicted on their citizens. Ellen, for example, expresses Morris's own view of the narrow class bias of most Victorian fiction.⁴⁵ "Some . . . [nineteenth-century books], 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" (151). Ellen also understands very well what her daily life might have been like under capitalism, at its "best" as well as its worst, and her indictment is a set piece of Morris's socialist-feminism: "my beauty and cleverness and brightness . . . would have been sold to rich men, and my

life would have been wasted indeed; . . . I should have had no choice, no power of will over my life . . . I should never have bought pleasure from the rich men, and even opportunity of action, whereby I might have won some true excitement. I should have been wrecked and wasted in one way or another, either by penury or by luxury" (204). Here also, for the first time in his writings, Morris identifies explicitly "opportunity of action" as a natural female goal.

Inevitably, of course, Ellen also bears witness to some of the conventional limitations of Morris's ideal. She has little impulse to travel, unlike Guest, and the youthful Morris himself ("I must say that I don't like moving about from one home to another; one gets so pleasantly used to all the detail of the life about one" [190]), and she wants an indefinite number of children ("I shall have children; perhaps before the end a good many—I hope so" [194]).⁴⁶ Her desire for children is reflective as well as straightforward, however: she *thinks* through her hopes for these potential children, as does the wife in "Pilgrims of Hope," and yearns to transmit to them her own efforts at empathy and understanding, and those of the people who have gone before them: "[T]hough of course I cannot force any special kind of knowledge upon them, yet, my friend, I cannot help thinking that just as they might be like me in body, so I might impress upon them some part of my ways of thinking; that is, indeed, some of the essential part of myself; that part which was not mere moods, created by the matters and events round about me. What do you think?" (194).

Not since his creation of the Guenevere of *The Defence*, moreover, had Morris taken such care to imagine a woman's consciousness *from within*; by comparison, even Oenone and Gudrun of his middle period are embodiments of passionate intensity externally observed. Above all, none of Morris's female heroes before Ellen can credibly be described as a "sage." She is *News from Nowhere's* truest wisdom figure, not a distant erotic ideal, but the embodiment of Morris's self-conscious hope for future generations. Not all of Morris's later women are "new women," but his imagination is capable of dwelling with sympathy on a few exemplars, of which Ellen is the most convincing. As the work's most perceptive interpretant of the new society, and an active, unrepressed woman who desires to transmit her physical and cultural identity to future generations, Ellen embodies the limitations as well as the strengths of Morris's socialist-feminism, but

she alone in *Nowhere* fully practices Morris's deepest ideal of popular, living history; and she alone is the spokeswoman of the book's finest insights into the spirit of the new society.

At the end of *News from Nowhere*, a journey to the church at the upper waters of the Thames becomes a kind of secular passage to the new Jerusalem. Ellen is the Christ-figure who leads Guest to the book's final meal, and leaves him tenderly with a final consolation—another great set piece, and one of Morris's most heartfelt declarations of the beauty of earth, "feminine" and universal: "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!" (201). Ellen's brief epiphany has often been quoted for the beauty of its invocation of a socialist ideal. It is that. But it is also Morris's best and most sustained effort to imagine how an egalitarian society might alter the thoughts and inner consciousness of its women.



Victorian Women, Wisdom, and Southeast Asia

SUSAN MORGAN

I am content to sympathize with common mortals, no matter where they live; in houses or in tents, in the streets under a fog, or in the forests behind the dark line of distant mangroves that fringe the vast solitude of the sea.

—Joseph Conrad, "Preface" to *Almayer's Folly*

Then he asked me in a solemn voice: "You know Stambul, Monsieur?"

"Yes."

"I lived in Stambul a year, and I tell you, Monsieur, it is a hell from which there is no way out."

—Robert Byron, *The Road to Oxiana*

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century a wealth of travel books written by women were published in England. Many of these travel books share distinctive features. They were focussed on countries geographically far removed from England which were non-Western and non-white: in Africa, in the Middle East, in India, in Southeast Asia, and in the Far East. They were often the products of long stays in and substantial familiarity with the countries that were their subjects. The authors did not present themselves, and may not even have thought of themselves, as

discussion Spacks paraphrases and quotes from late seventeenth and eighteenth century treatises.

25. Martineau, "On Female Education," *Monthly Repository* 18 (1823): 77-81.

Morris and Socialist-Feminism

1. Several other authors have discussed Morris's views of women, among them Norman Talbot, "Women and Goddesses in the Romances of William Morris," *Southern Review* (Adelaide), 3 (1969):339-357; Carole Silver, "Myth and Ritual in the Last Romances of William Morris," in *Studies in the Late Romances of William Morris: Papers Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 1975*, ed. Carole Silver and Joseph R. Dunlap (New York: William Morris Society, 1976) 117-139; Carole Silver, "Socialism Internalized: The Last Romances of William Morris," in *Socialism and the Literary Artistry of William Morris*, ed. Florence S. Boos and Carole Silver (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1990) 117-126; John Moore "The Vision of the Feminine in William Morris's *Water of the Wondrous Isles*," *Pre-Raphaelite Review* 3 (1980): 58-85; Norman Kelvin, "The Erotic in *News from Nowhere* and *The Well at the World's End*," in *Studies in the Late Romances*, 97-114; Florence S. Boos, "Sexual Polarization in William Morris' *The Defence of Guenevere*," *Browning Institute Studies* 13 (1985): 181-200; and Florence S. Boos, "Justice and Vindication in 'The Defence of Guenevere,'" in *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred L. Day, vol. 2 (Garland: New York and London, 1990), 83-104. See also Charlotte Oberg, "The Female Principle," ch. 3 of *William Morris: The Pagan Prophet* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1978), 53-70.

2. George P. Landow, *Elegant Jeremiahs: The Sage from Carlyle to Mailer* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 28-29. Of the major Victorian essayists, however, only Carlyle and, to a lesser degree, Ruskin, arguably satisfy most of Landow's seven-part characterization of the Victorian sage. Morris, for example, never attacks his audience (the second of Landow's characteristics); or dilates on "grotesque contemporary phenomena, such as the murder of children" (the fifth). Morris's essays do alternate between evocations of present evils and the suggestion of possible alternatives, but their patterns of description, invocation, and personal response are basically congruent with the conversational manner of the essays. They do not concentrate on "apparently trivial phenomena as the subject of interpretation" (characteristic three); and they are not noticeably "episodic or discontinuous" (characteristic four).

3. Morris, "The Society of the Future," in *Artist, Writer, Socialist*, ed. May Morris, 2 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), 2:459,468. Henceforth abbreviated as AWS in citations.

4. Morris, "The Society of the Future" 2: 469.

5. "Art Under Plutocracy," "Useful Work Versus Useful Toil," "Art and Socialism" in *Collected Works of William Morris*, ed. May Morris, 24 vols. (London: Longmans, 1910-1915), 23: 173, 103, 210. Subsequent citations from the *Collected Works* will be abbreviated as CW, followed by volume and page number.

6. Morris, "Art Under Plutocracy," "The Lesser Arts," CW 23: 176; 22: 9.

7. Morris, "The Society of the Future," AWS 2: 466.

8. Morris, "Art and Socialism," CW 23: 195, 199. References to "Ladies" occur in "The Aims of Art" and "Art, Wealth, and Riches," CW 23: 93, 154; to "women" in "The Aims of Art," "The Hopes of Civilization," "Art, Wealth, and Riches," "Art and Socialism," and "What Socialists Want," CW 23: 92,72,154, 204,218, and in "The Society of the Future," "Thoughts on Education Under Capitalism" and "Under an Elm Tree," AWS 2: 466,497,510; and to "female" in "Dawn of a New Epoch," CW 23:135 and "Under an Elm Tree," AWS 2:509.

9. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1935), 209,212. Of May Morris she notes, "she became a dear and lasting friend" (209).

10. Friedrich Engels, *Der Ursprung* (Hottingen-Zurich: Druck der Schweissenreischen Genossenschaftsbuchdruckerei, 1884); translated into English in 1902, and reprinted as *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State in the Light of the Researches of Lewis S. Morgan* (New York: International Publishers, 1942). Uncompromising in his way, Engels identified the basic class oppression as that of "the female sex by the male," found monogamy essentially corrupt, denounced social condemnation of prostitutes, and, most strikingly, asserts that "to emancipate woman and make her the equal of the man is and remains an impossibility so long as the woman is shut out from social productive labor and restricted to private domestic labor" (58,59,148).

11. Morris to Glasier, 21 Dec. 1887, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, ed. Norman Kelvin, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, 1987), 2: 728. Emma Lazarus visited Morris in 1883; her 1886 article, "A Day in Surrey," is reprinted in "Leonardo of Retailing," *Gazette of the John Lewis Partnership* 44 (17 March 1962): 158-160.

An excellent examination of Morris's relations with contemporary women appears in Linda Richardson's recent essay, "Daintily Fashioned Engines of War: William Morris and Women of the Socialist Movement: A Lecture Delivered to the William Morris Society, 26th March, 1987." Richardson studies personal influences of socialist women on Morris, and concludes for slightly different reasons that Morris's views evolved during the late 1880s. In "Engines of War" and in "Louise Michel and William Morris," *The Journal of the William Morris Society* 8 (1989): 26-29, Richardson also discusses the military role of Michel and other

Communard women during the siege of 1871, a role not mentioned in *A Short Account of the Commune of Paris*, coauthored by Morris with Bax and Victor Dave (Socialist League, London: 1886). In "The Pilgrims of Hope" (CW 24: 369-408), Morris's heroine appears on the barricades as one who bears "the *brancard* of the ambulance-women" (section 12).

12. Appendix A, "The Manifesto of the Socialist League," *Letters* 2:852.

13. Norman MacKenzie and Jeanne MacKenzie, *The Fabians* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1977); 42. Shaw enrolled as a Fabian in September 1884.

14. See George Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (London: Walter Scott, 1891), and the "Preface" to *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (London: Grant Richards, 1902).

15. Morris to Shaw, 18 March 1885, *Letters of Morris* 2: 404.

16. In substance, Shaw's views on marriage during the mid-to-late eighties and early nineties embodied his own idiosyncratic brand of anti-"social purity" arguments, but they also called for wage equality (dismissed by some socialists as a reformist demand of the middle-class "new woman") and a complete abolition of laws governing cohabitation. In an ironic echo of Bax's position, Shaw considered contemporary marriage laws crucial in binding *men* to *women*: as he later wrote to Ellen Terry on 2 July 1897, "Marriage is not the man's hold on the woman, but the woman's on the man" (*The Collected Letters of George Bernard Shaw*, ed. Dan H. Laurence, 2 vols. [London: Reinhardt, 1985-]) 2: 777.

17. Morris to Shaw, *Letters of Morris* 2: 404.

18. A more serious egalitarian may also have observed that Shaw's alternately draconian and reformist position attacked the Socialist League's platform simultaneously from both right and left. He failed to address real legal grievances in the laws governing marriage, sexual violence, and child abuse, for example, and archly ignored the simple fact that distinctions between marriage and "prostitution," however conventional, were crucial to the security and happiness of most English women and their families. He was right, however, that in the absence of the longed-for socialist revolution, crass forms of discrimination in wages, education, and occupation did matter enormously to women. Subsequent Fabian calls for their elimination pointed the way for what grudging progress has since been made.

19. The review of Bebel's *Woman under Socialism* appeared in the *Westminster Review* in 1886, and was reprinted as Eleanor Marx-Aveling and Edward Aveling, *The Woman Question* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1887), and in *Thoughts on Women and Society*, ed. Joachim Muller and Edith Schotte (New York: International Publishers, 1987). Marx and Aveling's treatise, unlike many other socialist writings of the period, at least acknowledges contemporary movements on behalf of women, though it condemns them for failing to touch the deeper roots of women's oppression. Another distinction of Marx and Aveling's treatise is its de-

mand for honesty in sexual relations and its recognition—like Morris's, remarkable for its period—of women's needs for sexual expression: "[W]e—and with us . . . most Socialists—contend that chastity is unhealthy and unholy . . . we call to mind the accumulated medical testimony to the fact that women suffer more than men under these restraints." Marx and Aveling here entered virtually uncharted terrain.

20. Appendix A, "The Manifesto of the Socialist League," *Letters* 2: 857.

21. More controversial might have been his attack on "liberty of conscience," that is, on the right to promulgate religious beliefs.

22. Ray Strachey, "*The Cause*": *A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (1928; rpt. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1969), 222-223. In 1878 a wife was able to secure separation, with custody of her children under ten years of age, if her husband was convicted of "aggravated assault." In 1884 the Matrimonial Causes Act also abolished the penalty of imprisonment for denial of conjugal rights: a wife could no longer be imprisoned for leaving her husband, but she could still be forced to return.

23. Ernest Belfort Bax, "Some Bourgeois Idols; or Ideals, Reals, and Shams," *Commonweal*, April 1886, 25-26.

24. Bax, "Bourgeois Idols," 25-26. Bax may also be referring to debates of the preceding year over the Criminal Amendment Bill of 1885, discussed in April and May before its passage in August of 1885. Aimed at forced prostitution, the bill raised the age of consent for women from 12 to 13 (not 16, as many reformers wished), forbade the renting of premises for prostitution, and punished various forms of procurement and sexual compliance induced by the use of drugs. Women also had made some genuine gains in the previous decade. The Married Women's Property Act of 1882 permitted women to hold property as well as to keep their own earnings, and the Guardianship of Infants' Act of 1886 permitted widows for the first time to be appointed joint-guardians of their own children. Bax probably objected most strenuously to provisions of the sort embodied in the Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion) Act of 1886, which enabled women to sue for maintenance before they went to the workhouse (Parliamentary Act of 25 June 1886); Bax's article appeared in April, and the law was passed later in the year.

25. See Strachey, "The Cause" ch. 10, "The C. D. Acts, 1870, 1871," 187-224; Glen Petrie, *A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 209-259.

26. Bax, "Bourgeois Idols," *Commonweal*, April 1886, 26.

27. Ernest Belfort Bax, *The Fraud of Feminism* (London: Grant Richards, 1913). In ch. 2, "The Main Dogma of Modern Feminism," for example, Bax asserts that "[W]hile man *has* a sex, woman *is* a sex. Let us hear [Otto] Weininger on this

point. 'Woman is *only* sexual, man is *also* sexual' . . . the whole female organism is subservient to the functions of child-bearing and lactation, which explains the inferior development of those organs and faculties which are not specially connected with this supreme end of Woman" (27,32).

28. Rare exceptions are Bax's unexpectedly idealistic essay on "Socialism and Religion," reprinted in *The Religion of Socialism* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1886), and some passages from *Reminiscences*, for example, his recollections of Morris's antipuritanism, personal generosity, and solicitude for his friends (*Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and Late Victorian*, London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1918, 117-122).

29. Morris to Sharman, 24-30 (?) April 1886, *Letters of Morris* 2: 547.

30. See Laurence Thompson, *The Enthusiasts: A Biography of John and Katharine Bruce Glasier*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1971.

31. Morris to Bruce Glasier, 24 April 1886, *Letters of Morris* 2: 545.

32. Morris to Mavor, Sept. 1888, *Letters of Morris* 2: 824.

33. See Anthea Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Astragal Books, 1979).

34. Morris's next public statement on the issue of marriage, still coauthored with Bax, was a brief one-paragraph discussion of voluntary "socialist" marriage in the final installment of "Socialism from the Root Up," a *Commonweal* series of articles on socialist history and economic concepts which appeared concurrently with *A Dream of John Ball* from October 1886 to January 1888. Five years later, these essays reappeared in book form, slightly revised, as *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1893).

35. Bax, *Reminiscences*, 82.

36. Morris, *News from Nowhere* in *CW* 16: 52-63, 159-67.

37. See my "Narrative Design in *The Pilgrims of Hope*," in *Socialism and the Literary Artistry of William Morris*, 147-166.

38. Eleanor Marx, "Supplement," *Commonweal*, April 1885, 63. Not until 1923 did the Matrimonial Causes Act permit divorce to both sexes on the same grounds.

39. Morris, *CW* 16:57. References to this volume will henceforth be cited in page numbers following the quotation.

40. In the 1889 *Roots of the Mountains*, the Bride and Bow-may, two women-warriors, both love the male protagonist, Gold-mane, but he chooses for his wife Sun-Beam, a woman from another tribe. The plot may represent an attempt by Morris to balance earlier portrayals.

41. Eleanor Marx, "Supplement," 64; italics added.

42. Morris, *News from Nowhere*, *CW* 16: 47. Also, see Sylvia Strauss, "Women in Utopia," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 75 (1976): 115-131.

43. Strachey, "The Cause," 260. In 1890 Phillipa Fawcett's scores at Cambridge

placed her above the Senior Wrangler for that year. This result was announced in June, and Morris's episode appeared in the *Commonweal* for September.

44. Ernest Belfort Bax and William Morris, *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1893), ch. 21, "Socialism Triumphant," 307-308: "Architecture, which is above all an art of association, we believe must necessarily be the art of a society of co-operation. . . . Sculpture, as in past times, will be considered almost entirely a part of fine building, the highest expression of the beauty which turns a utilitarian building into a great artistic production."

45. Cf. Morris, "The Society of the Future," *AWS* 2: 465: "You see you will no longer be able to have novels relating the troubles of a middle-class couple in their struggle towards social uselessness, because the material for such literary treasures will have passed away."

46. Socialists were generally cool to calls for birth control prompted by Malthusian fears, believing that population growth would naturally regulate itself in a prosperous and egalitarian society. H.M. Hyndman and Morris's *Summary of the Principles of Socialism* (London: Modern Press, 1884) asserts that: "This foolish Malthusian craze is itself bred of our anarchical competitive system" (43). In chapter 10 of *News from Nowhere*, Old Hammond assures Guest that Nowhereian women have more desire for children than their nineteenth-century foremothers (62), but that "the population is pretty much the same as it was at the end of the nineteenth century" (74). Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling's *The Woman Question*, by contrast, is conspicuous for a complete absence of favorable references to childbearing, childrearing, and parental roles.

Women, Wisdom, and Southeast Asia

1. See my "An Introduction to Victorian Women's Travel Writings About Southeast Asia," *Genre* 20 (Summer 1987):189-208.

2. See also my "Victorian Women's Travel Writings About Southeast Asia,"

3. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 5.

4. See Wallace Cable Brown, "Byron and English Interest in the Near East," *Studies in Philology* 34 (1937):56-64, and Daniel P. Watkins, *Social Relations in Byron's Eastern Tales* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1987).

5. Said, *Orientalism*, 5-6

6. For a discussion of another romantic poet's indebtedness to travel literature, see Charles Norton Coe, *Wordsworth and the Literature of Travel* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1953).

7. Samuel Rogers, *The Voyage of Columbus* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1810); Charles Darwin, *Journal of Researches into the Geology and Natural His-*