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## DISLOCATION OF PERSONAL IDENTITY IN NARRATIVES OF WILLIAM MORRIS

Many aspects of William Morris' lifework reflect Victorian responses to the decrement of time, and his sense of countervailing renewal and communion grew more mature politically and poetically as he aged. His early prose romances, juvenile poetry, undergraduate essays, Malorian and Froissartian poems, lectures on medieval art, translation of Icelandic sagas, design of books, tapestries, and stained glass after medieval patterns, agitation for the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, and even some of the motivations of his socialism -- all may usefully be examined through this lens. Especially interesting are the patterns of development in his romance narratives; narratives from several stages of Morris' literary work reveal persistent structural and thematic patterns which evolve in complexity and degree of resolution, and form a clear index of his poetic growth. Examples are the shifts between the prose romances that were his first published work and his most extended mature narrative poem, The Earthly Paradise. I will examine the early narrative, "A Dream," and contrast it with one of the Earthly Paradise's inset medieval tales, "Ogier the Dane," and to a more limited extent with the frame and narrative structure of The Earthly Paradise as a whole.

In these works many of Morris' personae suffer fragmentation and near-extinction of identity, states which give rise in turn to dream visions of redemption and recovery. The myths to which Morris was attracted may terrify as well as comfort, but at least give assurance that individual experience is not utterly idiosyncratic or incomprehensible. Perhaps because Morris tended to identify past and future, he resisted devaluation of past heroism; in contrast, say, to Carlyle, his narrators seldom assert that claims of already-renowned heroes are fraudulent, but often that courageous actions have lacked due recognition.

The early prose romance, "A Dream," which appeared in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine for March, 1856, the month of Morris' twenty-second birthday, is an excellent miniaturization of several characteristic features of Morris' early narratives. Fourteen years later "Ogier the Dane" appeared as the medieval tale for August in volume II of The Earthly Paradise. "Ogier" is one of the more beautiful and less familiar of the Earthly Paradise tales, and the only one placed with some care in historical time (Ogier is born into the France of Charlemagne, and reincarnated one hundred years after his first death). The frames of The Earthly Paradise as a whole and "Ogier the Dane" in particular rework themes and patterns of "A Dream," and anticipate others which appear in the final prose romances of the late 80's and

early 90's. These problematic and ambivalent narratives are important for an understanding of Morris' strategies for containment of rupture and grief. A number of parallels between "A Dream," The Earthly Paradise, and "Ogier" illustrate Morris' poetic development from 1856 to 1870 and merit comment. Among these are the following:

A. Use of multiple narrators.

"A Dream"'s outermost narrator says that "I dreamed once that four men sat by the winter fire talking and telling tales, . . ."<sup>1</sup>, then withdraws; two of these four then narrate while the others listen and respond. Experiences seem shared to varying degrees by all four, and the extent of each narrator's direct participation remains unclear. Rather bizarrely, two seem to die along the way, and a third is temporarily invisible, but all four reappear in the final scene to bear witness to deaths in the inner frame. The outermost 'dreamer' apparently has listened all the while, but only 'awakes' in the last clause of the poem. Protagonists, audiences, narrators, and meta-narrator merge and dissolve throughout, and all but the latter appear in their own narration.

The Earthly Paradise's interlocking apology, prologue, lyrics, introductions, and tales enlarge and refine narrative patterns which they share with "A Dream." The outer "apology" is again spoken by a first-person narrator who quickly withdraws, and twelve Wanderers and twelve City Fathers then narrate The Earthly Paradise. The Wanderers describe their own lives before telling tales of others, and like the inner narrators of "A Dream" are old men with young auditors. Only a few Wanderers are identified by name, and two, Rolf and Lawrence, tell most of the tales. As in "A Dream," interruptions (here part of the narrative frame) mark shifts of emotion and passage of time.

In The Earthly Paradise, indirect transmission of tales is an opportunity for display of the variety of narrators' experiences. Each medieval tale is associated with a wanderer's past travels and friendships, and the cosmopolitan range of Persian, Greek, and Scandinavian tales illustrates wide transmission of tales in medieval Europe. The cycle also celebrates one of Morris' favorite themes, the need to recall work of anonymous artists and story-tellers now dead.

Each story also evokes a fragment of individual and cultural history and reworks it into a pattern of communal experience, seasonal cycles, and contrasting stages of life. The interconnecting narratives and personal lyrics of the months vary responses to the same

tale, and the opening apology, envoi, and inner prologue emphasize the need for active responses from all who hear and read. Morris' contemporaries respond to both tales and transmitters, and the present becomes less "an empty day" through sympathetic perception of kinship between present and past.

B. The use of a pan-national, medieval setting.

"A Dream" occurs in an unspecific feudal past, and the names of the four narrators are eclectic: Hugh, Giles, Osric, and Herman -- English, French, Scandinavian, and German. Morris' dream visions are nearly always cross-cultural, and international merchants, travellers, and wares from all lands appear in his idealized medieval Britain.

The only parts of The Earthly Paradise not set in the middle ages are the opening apology, lyrics of the months, and envoi, which invoke Chaucer and meditate on a need to reenvision the past. The rest of the poem is a fourteenth-century exchange of medieval and medievalized classical tales. The prologue and framing narratives give the tales' geographical and historical origins, but the tales themselves may refer to places or artifacts from several nations and centuries; there are signs of cultural interfusion and bilingualism, and increased differentiation of historical and mythological allusion. Each incident is an imagined response to a real political or social situation: Edward I did sail to fight the French, but probably did not meet a ship with twelve refugees from the Bubonic Plague and give one a ring; medieval ships manned by seamen from several nations sailed from Norway to the Mediterranean, but it is unlikely that twelve members of such a crew exchanged tales over a one-year period.

"Ogier the Dane" is more specifically localized in time and place than other Earthly Paradise tales, but its emphasis on myth is characteristic of much of Morris' poetry. In his first life Ogier is Charlemagne's trusted warrior, and he returns after a century to save France from invasion in his second. There is also one clear sign of the cultural syncretism mentioned above: Ogier is born in Denmark but inexplicably becomes a French hero. (Since Morris' death the legend has been translated into Danish and Italian but never English; Ogier still awaits an English teller of tales.) The use of historical scenery in "Ogier the Dane" recalls some of "A Dream"'s synthesis of amorphous medievalism and sensuous detail, as when Morgan le Fay bids Ogier assume the crown of Charlemagne:

He rose, and in the glittering tunic worn  
By Charlemaine he clad himself. . .

And o'er his shoulders threw the mantle fair,  
 And set the gold crown on his golden hair;  
 Then on the royal chair he sat him down,  
 As though he deemed the elders of the town  
 Should come to audience; and in all he seemed  
 To do these things e'en as a man who dreamed. (IV, 252)

Each half of Morris' characteristic fusion of history and myth has become more elaborate since "A Dream."

C. Stress on the season and time of day.

The four narrators of "A Dream" recount their tale in midwinter night. In Morris' poetry and romances diurnal and seasonal cycles are significant, and many of his most intense narratives are placed within an outer frame of winter weather and darkness: dreams in particular seem to occur best in a hostile environment. In the frame of The Earthly Paradise, the seasons are often described in language patterned on Keats' odes. Apologist and narrators despair in autumn but sense renewal in winter, and the tales change accordingly. Winter is more associated with nights of stories by the fire, spring and summer with daytime pursuits. Ogier's birth occurs in June, his successive rebirths in similar settings and his final apotheosis in May, all in scenes of dawn whose images of hushed surprise and natural beauty are among Morris' best.

D. Strict dichotomization of youth and age.

The aged recount experiences of their youth to young adults in "A Dream"; sometimes it seems that the old do not form new attachments, the young perceive the old only as chroniclers of distant youth, and neither childhood nor middle-age is worth remembering. In the framing Earthly Paradise tale, the Wanderers and City Fathers, "ancient men," recount stories of youth, here not childhood but late adolescence; age is not active middle-age, but senescence filled with reflected emotion. This polarity seems to fit Morris' stereotyped alternation of action and rest, work and leisure; the young act and listen to the old, and the old contemplate the young in complex nostalgic reverie.

Thus it is perhaps not surprising that the first scene of "Ogier the Dane" presents his birth, and the second his approaching death as a hundred-year-old man. He is first reawakened in a thirty-year-old body, and again after a century in Avalon as a young man (this time his struggle is briefer: he returns to Avalon after a year).

E. Extensive use of frame structures.

"A Dream" contains three frames: an outer dream, an inner frame, and an inmost story which is dream-like and visionary in turn. After the first scene it is even unclear whether Lawrence and Ella are alive or dead. Presumably there is a 'real' world in which we encounter both dreamer and dream, but the tale's own typical ambiguity suggests we should not be too sure. The first of the four narrators emphasizes the inherent uncertainty and mystery of all that follows:

. . . yet by some means or another, a certain story has grown up in my heart, which I will tell you something of: a story which no living creature ever told me, though I do not remember the time when I knew it not. Yet, I will tell you some of it, not all perhaps, but as much as I am allowed to tell. (I, 159; underlining mine)

The puzzle of descending frames implicitly involves the reader, and active effort is needed to disentangle successive and recessive story-tellers and their stories. Dreams, tales, or visionary reenactments of history are often interchangeable in Morris' writings, although dreams more often serve as provisional outer frames. Histories, dreams, and frames which mirror other histories, dreams and frames are subsumed into them in turn.

Comparisons with "A Dream" help clarify the purpose of The Earthly Paradise's intricate formal arrangement. The latter embodies Morris' sense of history in one of the longest and most carefully subdivided poems in English, and its interlocking frames reflect different narrative views and degrees of identification with the tales' content. The sheer size of Morris' enormous project of course creates difficulties, and the rationales of some of the tales seem a bit uncertain, a problem no doubt aggravated by serial publication. However, critics who damn its repetition often fail to credit its contrapuntal effect of varying images and motifs. Tales usually do not complement each other directly but vary and reflect common themes: for example, inset tales' statements of hope often contrast with the frame's antiphonal configurations of sorrow and regret. Cumulatively this dialectical succession of frames suggests one of Morris' wallpaper designs: infinitely regressive images, arbitrarily bounded by an outer frame.

"A Dream" and "Ogier the Dane" also show another parallel; in each case the inset tale is in some sense both true and false. The lovers' story of "A Dream" fades within the outer frame, and "Ogier the Dane" is similarly framed by a Keatsian dreamer who awakes from a trance. Is "Ogier" a fantasy of desire, or a glimpse of some secret configura-

tion of human existence? The elementary uncertainty of "A Dream"'s presentation (was it a dream?) has become more elaborately paradoxical in The Earthly Paradise: its dreams are not less true than reality -- their truth is of an altogether different kind.

F. Ability of inhabitants of one frame to enter another.

In "A Dream," storytellers recount problems which resemble Lawrence's, but introduce such parallels suddenly and without explanation. In one passage we learn that Giles (the second story-teller) hopes to be reunited with a lost beloved in another existence, and the story breaks off while the others sympathize with his grief; in another, he enters his inner frame, where he hears others discuss his unreadiness for battle (Lawrence has felt the same problem) and recalls his memories of warfare alongside Lawrence:

. . . a man of noble presence he was, calm, and graceful to look on . . . bareheaded, too; for, in that fierce fight, in the thickest of it, just where he rallied our men, one smote off his helmet, and another, coming from behind, would have slain him, but that my lance bit into his breast. (I, 171)

The first storyteller acknowledges all this when he comments at the opening of his narration:

". . . I have fancied sometimes, that in some ways, how I know not, I am mixed up with the strange story I am going to tell you." (I, 159-60)

The barrier is permeable in the other direction as well. Ella emerges at one point from the story into the outer frame to ask if the narrators have seen her lover, and after an interval Lawrence joins her. No wonder "the four men gazed, quite awestruck." This blending of the three frames seems to prefigure the lovers' final union, but also signals death and the end of the dream. The interaction of narrators and characters is literal, and all frames collapse in the final scene, when Ella walks casually into the narrators' presence.

The Earthly Paradise frame and "Ogier the Dane" offer more realistic models for the reader's experience of history: Ogier inhabits a different narrative level from that of the Wanderer who relates his tale. Two of Morris' best later works of course do rely on the direct interaction of dreamer and dreams: the narrator of A Dream of

John Ball enters the past, and the narrator of News from Nowhere the future. The young Morris who identified teller and tale later re-fashioned this along more plausible lines and finally returned to the original patterns with greater precision and shifted purpose.

G. Need for a witness to 'understand' and validate sexual love.

Each lovers' reunion in "A Dream" is observed by a sympathetic narrator, and such observation is somehow essential to their love: Ella remarks, ". . . as the matter of a witness, some one we must have, and why not this man [Giles]?", and the emotions of the assembled viewers are also a significant part of the final scene of Ella and Lawrence's union. Sexual fulfillment in "A Dream" seems to require a (male) viewer to reflect and interpret its emotional power, and narration seems to render it more diffused and communal. These male witnesses of the lovers' encounters are deeply moved but terrified and distressed at times by what they observe. A narrator-with-lovers configuration occurs throughout Morris' work, but is especially prevalent in the Defense and other early writings (for example, in "Concerning Geoffray Teste Noire" and "The Story of the Unknown Church"). The romantic tale of Ogier requires no "witness," and the Wanderers of the frame are moved by nostalgia, not the slightly frightened awe shown by the narrators of "A Dream."

H. Conflicts are relived in successive stages of identity.

In "A Dream," Ella remarks in her first life:

' . . . Moreover, let us pray God to give us longer life, so that if our natural lives are short for the accomplishment of this quest, we may have more, yea, even many more lives.' 'He will, my Ella,' said Lawrence, 'and I, too, will add a prayer, . . . that He will give me another chance or more to give in His cause, another life to live instead of this failure.' (I, 162-63)

The frustration of "A Dream" has faded in "Ogier." The hero loves and is loved at all stages of his life. Even in infancy, Ogier is granted six blessings by visitant fairies, the last of whom, Morgan le Fay, promises ultimate reunion with her in "that happy country where I dwell." In his first life he deeply loves a loving wife, and in the second enjoys the companionship of Morgan le Fay; in the third the Queen of France seeks his hand, and the final apotheosis is a reunion with Morgan le Fay.

The basic antiphon of the hero's life no longer balances long isolation and brief sexual union, but leisure and struggle, earthly conflict and immortal life. Similar shifts in emphasis occur between other 1856 prose romances and "Ogier the Dane." A minor motif of "A Dream," restrictive paternal hostility, is also significant in earlier Earthly Paradise narratives such as "The Man Born to Be King," but absent from "Ogier the Dane" and most later tales. Preoccupation with the hero's inadequacies has faded: Ogier faces war, isolation, and death with relative equanimity: age and vulnerability of the body, not flaws of character, bring conflict and defeat.

One motif of "Ogier" is new: the hero attains immortal love in part as a reward for his willingness to affirm life. In his valuation of fellowship and the life of future generations, he anticipates the virtuous heroes of Morris' later works. It is also in keeping with "Ogier"'s greater realism that Ogier, unlike Lawrence, feels some confusion at his overlap of identities; translation to Avalon brings regret, reawakening on earth is more painful, and reading chronicles of his first existence brings disquiet, not satisfaction.

### I. Imagery of transience.

Throughout Morris' work appear images of change and evanescence: rivers, bridges, boats, sea-voyages, journeys, winds, bells, and soft fragments of melody. In his early writing, states of transition are often associated with images of churches and religious ceremony -- prayers, incense, candles, church structures, religious processions, stained-glass windows, and decorated tombs. "A Dream" concludes with the bodies of the lovers buried with ornament and effigy in a quiet church, whose stained-glass windows refract the moonlight of their marble tomb. This is a fully Keatsian and pre-Raphaelite image: their final state is both chill and warm, sensuous and restful, loving and passionate.

Morris' imagery in "Ogier" similarly suggests intermediate or synaesthetic states: dreams, trances, winds, soft rustling noises, candles, waves, low music, or the dawn. A magical boat carries the hundred-year-old Ogier to Avalon, and as the lovers leave earth forever at the poem's conclusion, they look back on a bridge over the Seine. The two dawns at the beginning and end of Ogier's first life evoke quiet sensory detail and hushed anticipation of change in passages of real beauty. Avalon is a placid and sensuous paradise of mutual fulfillment, and Morgan le Fay assures her lover they will dwell there in "despite of knowledge or of God." Descriptions of the lovers no longer dwell on pallor and regality, and physical beauty is no

longer a matter of abundant hair and statuesque bearing. References to churches and ritual are less prominent, and concern with commemorative statuary yields to appreciation of the artifacts of an active life and the love of living human beings. Description is still indebted to Keats, but the Gothic monuments are replaced by descriptions of mutual love in verdant gardens.

J. Presentation of a beautiful, proud, changeable woman as object of love.

In "A Dream," Ella harshly upbraids Lawrence, then tenderly admires him; in this she resembles Guenevere of "King Arthur's Tomb" who vacillates between passionate love and rejection, and Yoland in "The Tune of the Seven Towers," who sends Oliver to his death to satisfy a caprice. Morris is somewhat unusual in his ability to perceive and describe the inward restlessness of figures such as Ella, whom emotional and practical constraints force into gratuitous dependence on male protagonists in pursuit of mutual aims. Since Morris' characters and narrators seldom criticize such women, it is noticeable in "A Dream" that Lawrence remonstrates with Ella and reproves "ladies" who jeopardize male lives:

. . . yet, I think, if the knights did well partly, the ladies did altogether ill: for if they had faith in their lovers, and did this merely from a mad longing to see them do noble deeds, then had they but little faith in God. . . but if these ladies did as they did, that they might prove their knight, then surely did they lack faith both in God and man. I do not think that two friends even could live together on such terms, but for lovers -- ah! (I, 161-62)

After Lawrence's departure, Ella turns to the piety of such other Morrisian heroines as the aged Guenevere in "King Arthur's Tomb," or Gudrun at the conclusion of "The Lovers of Gudrun."

In "Ogier" the painful sense of rejection earlier experienced by Lawrence is cheerfully inverted: the fifth, blushing fairy has guaranteed, after all, that Ogier will be sexually attractive and the object of all women's desire. Morgan le Fay's and the Queen's freely bestowed love is benign and accompanied by great gifts. Ogier loses memory of his earlier loves (though traces may remain in the wistful sense of dislocation mentioned above), and he enjoys earthly partners without marked guilt or prejudice to his final otherworldly union. The earlier sexual possessiveness has yielded to qualified acceptance

of a succession of physical lovers (at least for men), a pattern which continues in the later prose romances.

K. Use of fantasies to soften the motif of the proud woman.

In "A Dream" and the other early prose romances, the chief such fantasy is a queen-victorious knight configuration, a fantasy of temporary male subordination transcended through heroism. In another, the woman is literally a phantasm: at their second incarnation Ella is "pale with much watching," and by the third both lovers are described as ghostlike, Ella is clad in white, and her musical voice reminds the narrator of his own long-dead beloved. By the final reunion she is ageless, an object of veneration beyond death and life:

A cold shiver ran through the other men when she entered and bowed low to them, and they turned deadly pale, but dared not move. . . . she was plainly not young, oh no, but rather very, very old, who could say how old? . . . . Her face had the tokens of a deep sorrow in it, ah! a mighty sorrow . . . . (I, 173)

Compare the distant women of "Beata Mea Domina," or Persephone of "The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice."

By contrast, the protagonist of "Ogier the Dane" and his lovers are elevated in rank, and the women's status and ability to confer favors is an obvious source of reassurance for Ogier in his struggles.

L. Strict separation of sex roles.

In the early prose romances, inhabitants of outer frames and tellers of tales are all male. Women appear in The Earthly Paradise's tales and audience, but as in "A Dream" all narrators are male. In the early prose romances, joint labors of men and women seem forbidden -- in fact, complete isolation seems a precondition of final union. Lawrence enters the dark cave first, and Ella follows. In the fantasies of nurse-wounded knight and queen-victorious knight, Ella nurses, heals, and rewards, while Lawrence battles overwhelming obstacles; she is free from physical danger, while he is in constant jeopardy for his life. In her last reincarnation she seeks him, but their union directly precedes death; a kiss before death is one of the most frequent images in Morris' early writings. In a similar manner, Morgan le Fay dictates Ogier's return to life in France but then awaits the completion of his task, and the Queen remains in jeopardy while Ogier defends her kingdom. This rigid division of labor

is mitigated somewhat by greater affection and the protection of Morgan's ring, and role division is blurred by the greater activity and capacity of "Ogier"'s women. In the later tales, heroes are less bound to heroines by an ambivalent mixture of reverence and fear.

M. Ideal union with the beloved in death.

In "A Dream," death and apotheosis of the beloved immediately follow their final union. This pattern is essentially preserved in "Ogier," -- indeed, Morgan le Fay may be the ultimate limiting case of erotic reconciliation on the verge of death. Still, Ogier's earthly loves are happy, and the ideal union is not so ideal as to be ascetic. The motif of ultimate spiritual union with someone who has not been loved on earth recurs in other Earthly Paradise tales and later works, and may have some autobiographical significance. Though sexual and spiritual union are associated, one is no longer a precondition for the other.

The romantic motifs and patterns of "A Dream" sketched above are also found in other juvenile poems and early prose romances, as well as in The Defense of Guenevere, where heroic deeds result from frustrated heterosexual love. Such valorization of frustration is consistent with the Victorian Bildungsroman-commonplace, attainment of marriage in reward for social, moral, and professional maturation (cf. Alton Locke and David Copperfield). In the use of sensuous language and erotic themes Morris' early poetry also resembles late romantic and early Victorian poetry familiar to him from Keats' gothic narratives, Tennyson's poems of 1832 and 1842, The Princess, and Rossetti's early ballads.

Morris' early medievalism owes an even more fundamental debt to Ruskin. Although the influence of Stones of Venice on Morris' later political writings has long been noted, there may also be traces of Ruskin's earlier architectural writings in the young Morris' interpretation of memory and history. In The Seven Lamps of Architecture and The Stones of Venice, Ruskin ascribes to buildings something like Morris' cycle of stories, narrators and dreams, and the critic or narrator must confront past emotions in order to release his own. Morris was attracted when young to Ruskin's central metaphor of the Gothic cathedral, and shared his certainty that art alone conveys the true emotional meaning of the past, and that political or economic history must be filtered through imagination.

The young Morris both sexualized Ruskin's image of the medieval world and changed its political meaning. Morris' earliest heroes

seek brotherly comradeship rather than priority of rank, and the feudal hierarchy, religious submission, and fixed inequalities of Ruskin's Seven Lamps begin to fade. A residue of Ruskin's hierarchy persists in the early prose romance's queen-vassal pattern, in which the hero remains loyal under ill-treatment, but even this masochistic fantasy allows for vindication by love and heroism. (The converse motif, the high-born king who marries a beautiful peasant maiden, appears in the early prose romance "Gertha's Lovers" and later in Love is Enough; it remained a favorite theme with Morris throughout his lifetime.)

The improvement of technique from "A Dream" to "Ogier the Dane" also imposes a more careful structure on temporal discontinuities, and a more systematic use of multiple narrators and audiences sharpens the poem's sense of shared experience. Fate, not indecision, is responsible for loss, and there is a finer equilibrium between leisure and struggle, imagination and action. These changes suggest Morris' mature awareness that incompleteness and loss are part of the most heroic life and stoic endurance often the price of integrity. Perfect experience of physical love fades in importance as a poetic prerequisite for ideal love and identity with natural cycles and patterns.

Lovers of narrative are accustomed to seek it in fiction, and Morris' critical reputation as a writer of narrative poetry has suffered thereby. Until very recently critical tastes demanded brief lyrical poetry and dramatic monologues, and assumed that the highest art expresses intense conflict. So it is not surprising that most students of Morris have strongly preferred his early poetry and prose romances to the more extended works of his middle and later period. But as his mature style developed, Morris clarified earlier motifs and strategies for presenting human identity in time, and exchanged early distance and set locale for alternately blurred and surreally focused objects seen in a state of tension. Such shifts seem to reflect his growing conviction that loss and dislocation can be understood in an iterative, mythic context which expresses the community of human emotion through time. The alternations of prose and poetry partly obscure this essential affinity between the several stages of Morris' narrative writing, but the patterns of formal and psychological development from early to final prose romances are already evident in the period of The Earthly Paradise.

Morris' identification of freedom with participation in communal and historical reality recalls Browning and Ruskin among literary contemporaries, and his complex identification of sexual solace with ultimate peace and tranquillity suggests Tennyson and Rossetti, but his tendency to embody a processive dialectic in poetry was one of the

most significant characteristics of Morris' literary development. As a young man he set brief poems and prose romances in a static medieval past, but even in his mid-thirties he had begun to experiment with narrative epics whose narrators and actors move in complex temporal sequences of past, present, and future. The past in these epics is interrelated by mythical, thematic, and structural patterns, and history is both detailed and abstract: at its best it becomes a joyous process of memory, legend, and story which deepens and releases human emotion. Such processive arguments seem to have been his answer to an assertive individualism which he found inherent and troubling in the romantic literary tradition, and poetic reenactment of history deepened his own ability to understand and create a future history and personal identity.

Florence S. Boos

#### FOOTNOTE

<sup>1</sup>All quotations from William Morris' writings are from the Collected Works of William Morris, ed. and intro. by May Morris, 24 vols. (London: Longmans, 1910-1915).