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From Scotland to Utopia (via Hammersmith): William Morris, George MacDonald and the Science and Aesthetic of Utopia

Franziska Kohlt

‚Die Himmel erzählen die Ehren Gottes,
Und seiner Hände Werk zeigt an das Firmament'
Psalm 19:1

In 1879 an unassuming and 'conventional', and yet 'handsome' brick building, 26 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, changed hands.[1] Known as 'The Retreat', it had been the house of George MacDonald, who moved there in September 1867 to experience some of the happiest, most challenging but also most productive times of his career. Renamed 'Kelmscott', it became the London showroom of William Morris, artist and socialist, until his death in 1896. Although rarely mentioned in the same breath, Morris and MacDonald shared as many philosophies as they shared friends and role models. Their fiction and utopian visions, their scientific knowledge, and the way in which it was expressed in their social concerns but especially also their art seemed, at times, so uncanny, so that even critics, such as Colin Manlove have been led to wonder whether 'Morris's early prose romances' may be the 'stimulus' or even the 'source' for such works as *Phantastes* (1856).[2] Investigating the social circles that gathered at the Hammersmith house and the circles both men frequented reveals even more complex intellectual cross-currents and intersections between their fiction, and the connections of the latter to wider discourses of psychology, social science and the history of the decorative arts.

The Retreat

George MacDonald moved to a large though austere-looking house in Hammersmith to accommodate a family that had increased to eleven children. Although unassuming from the outside, the house was, as Greville MacDonald remembered, 'a great success': it had a 'garden of nearly an acre', 'a great

[1] Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (London, 1994), 391.
[2] Colin Manlove, 'Did William Morris Start MacDonald Writing Fantasy?', *North-Wind*, 24 (2005), 60.

walnut tree', 'a tulip tree, said to be the biggest but one in England' and was 'quiet' and 'undisturbed.'[3] As unremarkable as the outside of the Georgian house may have been, it was all the more remarkable on the inside. The interior was designed by MacDonald's friend Daniel Cottier, a Glasgow Arts and Crafts artist who became a major influence on Charles Rennie Mackintosh and William Comfort Tiffany. As Greville noted, he 'attained much the same position in New York as William Morris in London, so far as influence in the decorative arts was concerned.'[4] The most remarkable feature of the house was its study, designed in 'barbaric splendour' after MacDonald's 'own heart':

> Crimson-flock wallpaper with black fleur-de-lis stencilled over, a dark blue ceiling with scattered stars in silver and gold, and a silver crescent moon; and specially designed brass ball wall-brackets and chandeliers for the gas.[5]

Common in church architecture, starry blue ceilings that imitated the solar system (according to its contemporary theoretical perceptions), with depictions of the moon and sun often as central lanterns reminded worshippers of God's creation of the heavens and the earth, under whose artificial recreation they were humbled. Even modern scientific discoveries elicited reactions that crystallised in divine art, so that Haydn wrote *The Creation* (1798) after observing the stars and planets using William Herschel's telescope, praising what he had seen in the words of the Psalms: '[t]he heavens are telling the glory of God | The wonder of his work displays the firmament.'[6] It was in this room, Greville recalled, MacDonald had a vision of a 'stage for acting upon', which 'looked to me like the human heart waiting to be filled with the scenes of its own story', scenes 'that the heart itself will determine.'[7]

The scenes wrote themselves as the house was always filled with visitors who were 'a colourful mixture', as William Raeper notes, of 'East End accents and pre-Raphaelite poise.'[8] Although MacDonald did not move in the most illustrious circles, and was in fact often sickened by them, eminent guests joined them nearly every week, all year round. 'Literature was well represented', as

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[3] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife* (London, 1924), 379.

[4] Ibid., 386.

[5] Ibid., 386.

[6] Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science* (London, 2008), 68; Psalm 19:1.

[7] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, 386.

[8] William Raeper, *George MacDonald* (Tring, 1988), 214.

Greville remembered.[9] Even the Poet Laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson once invited himself to their famous annual parties for the Oxford and Cambridge boat race – the house was situated on the course. Tennyson examined MacDonald's library with which he was delighted; he even borrowed a copy of Ossian's poetry, whose authenticity he had doubted.[10] A regular visitor was 'Uncle Dodgson', better known under his pseudonym Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

But the MacDonald family equally received the less illustrious: the presence of the poor, who were abundant in Hammersmith, was a more pressing matter to MacDonald than famous acquaintances. The fate of the poor moved MacDonald deeply, as he confessed in a letter to his wife Louisa:

> I have been anxious – for the first time in my life about the future of our country, and the kind of days on which our children will fall […] it is only for moral considerations. I feel I must do something for it and them for my poor part.'[11]

It was at Hammersmith MacDonald's social concerns were translated into action. He became involved in the efforts of Octavia Hill, a social reformer and founder of the National Trust, in whose housing schemes many of the Hammersmith poor were accommodated. Hill became a family friend of the MacDonald's, who, as Greville recalls, 'ministered to Octavia Hill's energies'; her houses, as Jeffrey Smith notes, became 'a significant outlet for MacDonald's ministry,' and thus his and his family's art. [12] The MacDonald children put on musical entertainments, Greville would play the violin and 'Grace would play Beethoven', Schumann and Chopin on the piano; their 'speciality' were Carols at Christmas time', for which MacDonald read specially composed nativity verses.[13] The MacDonald ministry was almost always a family endeavour. They brought to the poor also their performances of the *Pilgrim's Progress* as their theatrical performance at the housing estates, but also organised plays

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[9] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, 380.

[10] Letter to Helen McKay Powell, 24 March 1875; repr. in Glen Sadler, *An Expression of Character: The Letters of George MacDonald* (Grand Rapids, MI., 1994), 41.

[11] Letter from George MacDonald to Louisa MacDonald, 21 October 1868; repr. in Raeper, *George MacDonald*, 266.

[12] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, 382; Jeffrey W. Smith, 'Victorian Social Reform in *The Vicar's Daughter*', in *Rethinking George MacDonald: Contexts and contemporaries* (Glasgow, 2013), 71.

[13] Greville MacDonald, *Reminiscences of a Specialist* (London, 1932), 34.

and meals at The Retreat, in which their eminent friends were also involved.[14] While the poor were the central audience, friends such as Ruskin, the Burne-Jones family, and Arthur Hughes came along too; Hughes's nephew even assisted in painting the stage sets.[15] Louisa and George MacDonald's priorities are reflected in their cordial letters to such Victorian giants as John Ruskin (who in part funded Hill's efforts) in which they confessed that in their 'anxiety to entertain the poor people' at the first of these dinners, they may have 'neglected to make provision' for Ruskin, who Louisa feared must have gone 'home half dead with unfed fatigue.'[16] The MacDonalds' participation in social efforts was significant: Greville understood his father 'in the first rank of thought-reformers' and Hill echoes this sentiment in a letter to Greville in 1905 in which she writes his parents and her will remain 'united' in history in their common 'lasting work.'[17]

The stories that MacDonald's heart wrote upon the stage of his mind were drawn to a significant degree from their Hammersmith surroundings, whose concerns preoccupied him greatly. Smith believes that Hill's social concerns and efforts were 'directly mirrored in *The Vicar's Daughter*', but it was also the house in which he wrote *At The Back of The North Wind* (1868), the story of a cab worker and a crossing sweeper, child workers who succumb to illness inflicted by poverty, ill-regulated work environments and dismal housing conditions, and *Princess and the Goblin* (1872).[18] MacDonald's work became part of a movement of London's social writers, of whose work he was aware. As a reader of Carlyle, and soon-to-become editor of the working-class prophet Charles Kingsley, MacDonald was all too aware of social tensions among the working poor which they had addressed in such work as Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1834) and Kingsley's *Alton Locke* (1850) or *The Water-Babies* (1862–3). MacDonald, like Kingsley, was a sympathiser of Christian Socialism – one of the focal points of his Hammersmith life was Vere Street chapel, where Frederick Denison Maurice preached, who was an immense influence on his fellow fantasists Kingsley and Lewis Carroll – an admirer of Maurice and close friend of the MacDonald's.[19]

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[14] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, 383.

[15] Ibid., 381.

[16] Letter to John Ruskin, 24 June 1868; repr. in Sadler, *Expression*, 162.

[17] Greville MacDonald, *Reminiscences*, 87, 95.

[18] Smith, 'Social Reform', 71.

[19] Christian Socialism, a term coined by Maurice, centred around such figures as Maurice, Kingsley or John Malcolm Ludlow who were outspoken working-class advocates, and critics of utilitarianism and *laissez-fair* capitalism. Their activism was founded

It was the joint influence of MacDonald's direct engagement with the social problems around him, as well as the philosophical and moral concerns underlying them, that shaped his writing, as well as the mere physical environment. Behind such poetical imagery as the starry blue ceiling of the tower room of the Princess Irene's castle in *The Princess and the Goblin* is MacDonald's own study's ceiling, but MacDonald also layers into his physical detail more profound philosophy. As the room in which Irene's fairy-godmother appears to her, who, being her great-great-great-grandmother knows everything that is past, but also endows her with a golden thread to lead the Princess through the future, it reflects likewise MacDonald's concern about the present state of society, and what kind of philosophy could guide him out of it. And all this is encapsulated in literary imagery, such as the attic room, which, drawn from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, already embodied the imagination in MacDonald's first faerie-romance, *Phantastes*.[20] MacDonald's houses and castles acted almost always as allegories for the body; the body's organisation, or malfunction, by analogy, was also indicative of the organisation of society. While the imagination, closest to the heaven that, as the psalms proclaimed, 'showed His handiwork', the caverns of the castle's basement as clearly indicated the lower desires of society, which very clearly revealed what MacDonald thought was the cause of the plight of Hammersmith's suffering poor, brought on by selfish, and capitalist desires.

In these caverns dwelled 'a strange race of beings': goblins, which were once 'very like other people', but, because 'the king had laid what they thought too severe taxes upon them', and 'had required observances of them they did not like', they retired below ground.[21] There, instead of any king, heavenly or otherwise, they worshipped only their material possessions, valued in gem stones, and, accordingly 'greatly altered in the course of generations'; 'no wonder', the scientifically-trained MacDonald interjects, 'seeing they lived away from the sun, in cold and wet and dark places.'[22] They grew 'not ordinarily ugly, but either absolutely hideous, or ludicrously grotesque both in face and form', but also 'grew in cunning' and 'mischief.'[23] The mythological goblins were a parable for a society that turned its back upon the laws a good king had set

primarily in scripture and manifested in action for instance in the Chartist uprisings, in which their ideas were spread in pamphlets and speeches; Raeper, *MacDonald*, 219.

[20] *Phantastes* drew its name from the room in Spenser's House of Alma that was an allegorical embodiment of the creative imagination.

[21] George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin* (London, 1911), 11.

[22] Ibid., 13.

[23] Ibid., 25.

out for them, and who instead founded a society upon capitalist, selfish, and immoral principles which could not fail to make them morally degenerate. It is the moral evil that is expressed in their physical degeneration, as MacDonald clearly indicates their immoral ideology is inhumane, and therefore not for humans but for beasts which they have accordingly become.

MacDonald feeds scientific theory and practical concerns about the state of mid- and late-Victorian society into a literary image that had already gained currency in Victorian literature. Goblins as an image of immorality, embodiments of modernity's temptations and wayward desires had been used by Christina Rossetti, who was part of MacDonald's wider artistic circle, in her 'Goblin Market' (1862). As the ultimate threat to the innocence of her two girl-protagonists, but also in a wider sense as a danger to children and thus to the future of mankind. It is noteworthy that the danger they exert is conveyed through commerce. They also appear in Dickens's 'The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton' from the *Pickwick Papers* (1836), a Christmas tale in which a miser is converted where Dickens rehearses the ideas underlying his most famous tale of capitalist criticism embedded in a dream-fairy-tale: *A Christmas Carol* (1843). MacDonald's Hammersmith novels aim to overcome the fictional division between the imagination and real-world society and its problems, as they expanded upon the imagery of his literary predecessors with a focus on application.

Through the fiction MacDonald wrote at The Retreat he attempted to shape minds that could better direct society through the real synthesis of arts and science which had long been an ideal of his; the scientific basis for this had been laid a long time before. Unlike most of his London circles, MacDonald was a trained scientist, and, what is more, not at the mid-Victorian English universities, but the King's College of what was in 1860 to become the University of Aberdeen. Aberdeen taught the Natural Sciences alongside Philosophy, with a focus on the practical application for the improvement of industry and society in mind.[24] It is telling that it was MacDonald's desire to continue his work in Giessen, in Germany, under the tutelage of Justus von Liebig, who was famous for his work in chemistry for the improvement of agriculture and population health.[25] MacDonald's training was accompanied

[24] The curriculum of the Artium Magister of King's College is explained in detail in P.J. Anderson, *The Arts – Curriculum* (Aberdeen, 1892), 17; Colin A. McLaren, *Aberdeen Students, 1600–1860* (Aberdeen, 2005), 99, 108.

[25] The works of Justus von Liebig, which included *Analysis of Organic Bodies* (1839) and *Organic Chemistry in its Applications to Physiology and Pathology* (1842), were translated by MacDonald's tutor William Gregory, with whom he discusses his future career in a

by extensive reading in German philosophy, such as Hegel and Schelling and German Romanticism, especially of the scientifically-trained authors Novalis and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whom he translated.[26] The significance of this reading alongside his scientific training was, primarily, that these writers treated differently the relationship between science, as the godmother to industry and industrialism, on the one hand, and nature, art and poetry, on the other: a difference that had a lasting impact on MacDonald's mind and philosophy.

MacDonald was distinctly unopposed to science. This is contrary to the 'general belief among critics' that MacDonald 'turned away from his early studies in physics and chemistry *absolutely*, allowing science *no place* in the discovery of worthwhile knowledge', as Manlove believes, supported by assertions such as Hal Broome's that he 'rejected science altogether.'[27] While rarely discussed in the context of MacDonald's non-fiction nor fiction, it is there MacDonald instead conveys a subtly different philosophy. In such psychological essays as 'A Sketch of Individual Development' or 'The Imagination', MacDonald established that there were two modes of enquiry into nature's truths – Science and Poetry – and that it is their synthesis, rather than one superseding the other, that constitutes the ideal philosophy. Only by combining the 'twain wings' of science *and* poetry, could the mind to 'rise up' to the dimension of knowledge it pursues; 'when one of the two [wings] is paralysed or broken', the mind could not rise to the heights to which it has been created to aspire.[28] In a lecture on Wordsworth's poetry, in which he described poetry as the literary form truest to nature, he re-emphasises this fundamental difference between science and the poetry, as well as the ideal of their synthetic relationship:

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letter exchange.

[26] Discussions of MacDonald's education and complementary reading can be found in Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, 68–70 and William Raeper, *George MacDonald*, 42-4, 48-9. Records of his science lectures are kept in the University of Aberdeen's Special Collections; MacDonald published a translation of Novalis's *Hymnen an die Nacht* soon after graduating, and republishes towards the end of career alongside other earlier and more recent translations in Novalis, 'Hymns to the Night', in George MacDonald, *Rampolli: Growths from a Long-Planted Root, Being Translations, New and Old, Chiefly From the German* (Longman, 1897).

[27] Colin Manlove, Modern Fantasy: Five Studies (Cambridge, 1975), 58; F. Hal Broome, 'The Scientific Basis of MacDonald's Dream-Frame', *The Gold Thread: Essays on George MacDonald* (Edinburgh,1991), 88 [my emphasis].

[28] George MacDonald, 'The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture', in *Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and Shakespeare* (London, 1882), 6.

> The poet may be man of science, and the man of science may be a poet; but poetry includes science, and the man who will advance science most, is the man who, other qualifications being equal, has most of the poetic faculty in him.[29]

MacDonald's portrayal of the goblins, as an embodiment of an unnatural, man-made desire, that is corrupting society and endangering the future of mankind, echoes these convictions, and frames them within contemporary evolutionary theory, which endorsed the idea of a normative morality implicit in natural law. MacDonald's goblins mirror in particular the framework of Herbert Spencer's evolutionary psychology, which was, more directly concerned with the organisation of society than Darwin's more prominently cited *Origin of Species*, and the place of science, and arts, including imaginative disciplines, within it. As Spencer explains, for instance, in *Social Statics*, this conception of evolution is based on the idea of man's dual identity, the individual being shaped via its psychological faculties by, firstly, its inherited nature, and, secondly, its social environment, and that, in its ideal state, the organisation of man mirrored the organisation of nature, which, thus, in turn, was the model for society. Nature, as it were, provided the 'true social philosophy', 'the moral law of society', which he referred to as 'the Moral Sense', and thus 'warns us against adopting any fundamental doctrine' such as 'the greatest happiness to the greatest number' – the chief principle of Utilitarianist philosophies which left entire classes behind, criticised by MacDonald in such works as *At the Back of the North-Wind*, and ultimately the goblins who look after the wealth of their own.[30] If society were, in an 'unnatural' state, it would exert an unnatural influence upon the individual, which would in the long term lead to moral and then physical degeneration, and, in accordance with Darwin's evolution by natural selection, to extinction – as the species was thus maladapted to natural law.

'Progress', as it should occur, was therefore defined as the state in which mankind was, as Spencer put it, 'all of a piece' with nature, its development as natural as 'the unfolding of a flower.'[31] MacDonald uses the same image in *Liltih*, where 'living' souls dreams 'live thoughts' that unfold as flowers in

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[29] George MacDonald, 'Wordsworth's Poetry', in *Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and Shakespeare* (London, 1882), 256–7.

[30] Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics: or, The Conditions essential to Happiness specified, and the First of them Developed* (London, 1851), 17.

[31] Spencer, *Social Statics*, 65.

the dimension of the imagination.[32] Once this mental state was achieved, Spencer stated, the development of the species, when in harmony with the 'law underlying the whole organic creation' must 'end in completeness' and 'so surely man must become perfect.'[33] Spencer believed it was primarily through the study of science, and secondarily through the pursuit of the arts this quasi-Utopian state could be reached, whereas MacDonald's priorities were inverted. Both believed, however, in their union, a doctrine that must be conveyed through education.[34] While Spencer derived his theory from observation of society and spread them through scientific prose, MacDonald's fiction, likewise drawn from the observation of society, drew on science, but appealed to the imagination, which he sought to stimulate through his fantastic fiction, the second of the 'twain wings', which could bring the 'two levels of experience', science, and imagination, 'together as a coherent whole.'[35]

'Art for truth's sake': Morris's Kelmscott

In this context of social science and the embodiment of its findings in imaginative art, on the intersections of fantasy, decorative arts and nature, it is intriguing that it was the Arts and Crafts pioneer and socialist William Morris who was to buy the house from the MacDonald family. Mrs Cobden-Sanderson remembered that life at The Retreat was 'full of excitement and interest' and 'Christian Socialism', and 'with the MacDonalds' departure […] the days of Christian Socialism came to an end at Hammersmith.'[36] It was certainly a time of breaks, but also of continuities, although the Morris's were rather less enchanted by the house. William Morris called it a 'convenient shelter from the weather' and his daughter May remembered that her father never felt at home in it. His dislike of the house began with its name, which 'made it sound like an asylum.'[37] Morris feared that were he to invite guests,

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[32] MacDonald, *Lilith: A Romance* (New York, 1895), 30.

[33] Spencer, *Social Statics*, 65.

[34] Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical* (New York, 1861), 73, 33.

[35] MacDonald, 'The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture', in *Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and Shakespeare* (London, 1882), 8.

[36] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, 387–8.

[37] The Quaker-run 'Retreat' of the Tuke family near York was one of the most prominent and progressive, and most well-known asylums of the country. Its non-restraint methods included communal tea-parties for the inmates and visitors, which spread throughout Victorian psychiatric practice and were parodied in Lewis Carroll's *Wonderland*, cf. Franziska Kohlt, 'The Stupidest Tea-Party in All My Life': Lewis Carroll and Victorian Psychiatric Practice', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2016), 147–67, (155).

'people would think something was amiss with me.'[38] The rest of the house did not fare much better in his evaluation. He came to see it with William de Morgan, a Pre-Raphaelite affiliate, painter and potter, who was 'distinctly unimpressed by the decoration of the principal rooms' and noted, with horror, 'their blood-red flock papers and long book cases, painted black' as well as the 'ceiling of azure blue, dotted with gilt stars, considerably tarnished.'[39] Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote 'vitriolic' letters against it, and Morris, equally appalled, wrote to Jane Morris that the garden was 'a complete swamp' and the staircase was 'a sort of ladder with no light at all, which would assail the ear whenever a meal was going on.'[40] He saw in most of the smaller, damp rooms evidence of the 'dourness of so many Scots interiors'; 'The Macs', he concluded, 'had done their best to make it look dismal.'[41]

A remarkable transformation, however, occurred: Morris started working, first, upon the basis of MacDonald's and Cottier's designs, and, breaking loose from them, transformed the house into a palimpsest, one layer covering another to create new, and yet common form. Upon MacDonald's blue carpet, evocative of rivers and the ocean, were 'strewn floral eastern rugs'; the red wallpaper became covered in 'piercingly blue flower-heads'; and the room became warm and colourful.[42] Morris's houses served as showrooms for his designs: the dining room became Morris's 'Damascus room', and the garden with its walnut, its chestnuts and its 'very fine tulip tree' was tidied up under Jane's instruction.[43] The garden was a crucial feature of any house Morris lived in; at Kelmscott Manor and the Red House the gardens had inspired his designs. Just as the fritillaries on the banks of the Cherwell in Oxford during his student days grew in his mind into the fritillary patterns of his fabrics, Jane enhanced Louisa's strawberry patches in the Hammersmith garden, and Morris designed the 'Strawberry Thief' in the house in which he was to set up a silk loom and Kelmscott Press.[44] Even those visitors who knew Morris marvelled at Kelmscott House: it was a 'remarkable' and 'queer place'; George Bernard Shaw wrote there was an 'extraordinary discrimination at work in this magical

[38] MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 391.
[39] Ibid., 392.
[40] Ibid., 392.
[41] Ibid., 396.
[42] Ibid., 395–6.
[43] Ibid., 397.
[44] Tony Pinkney, *William Morris in Oxford: The Campaigning Years, 1879-1895* (Grosmont, 2007), 98.

house.'[45] The house and the imaginations of its inhabitants who transformed it were at play, and intermingled. Morris continued the MacDonald tradition of the boat-race parties, and Morris's no less illustrious friends and their families began to populate the house: the Burne-Joneses and their children, and the young Rudyard Kipling were among its visitors. Finally, Morris renamed the house 'Kelmscott', after his paradisiacal Cotswold manor which he had no desire to leave. The houses were connected by the Thames, a thought that dwelled on his mind, until it, too, was turned into fiction.

One of the rooms whose layout remained unchanged was the 'stage' room, and, as with MacDonald, the house and its environs played with his imagination. It was meant to be a 'happy refuge from the world' for him to pursue his artistic endeavours, where he 'tried to live like an artist unconcerned with other matters', but the contrast it constituted to the 'other' Kelmscott plagued him.[46] 'The view from his study window', Fiona MacCarthy notes, 'came to haunt him.'[47] Though already steeped in Victorian social criticism, Morris was warned of the densely crowded slums, in which his name was known – he was often stopped by the poor in the street. And not even the splendour of his own house isolated him: he notes in his diary how a suicidal man was dragged out of the Thames just outside Kelmscott house, which had a 'terrible allure' for the poor, and died shortly thereafter – Morris was summoned as a witness by the coroner.[48] Suicides, a third of them committed by drowning, 'quintupled' during the industrialisation of Victorian Britain and were, as a medical paper reported, 'the poor man's remedy': an expression of his 'appetite for calm' an idea of 'improving his condition' it was the one 'of the forms of the pursuit of happiness' which some in society as it was, could achieve by no other means.[49] Natural beauty and 'nerve-racked' despair, imagined utopia and dismal reality, took hold of his mind in equal intensity.[50]

Morris 'imagined a long line of hungry desperate poor […] pressing close to his window' and the thoughts about what lay outside the house begin to dominate his Hammersmith writings.[51] In imagery strikingly resembling MacDonald's *North-Wind*, and Ruskin's 'South-West-Wind, Esquire' from *The King of the Golden River* (1851), in Morris's 'Message of the March-Wind' (1885)

[45] Shaw in McCarthy, *William Morris*, 397.
[46] Arthur Clutton-Brock, *William Morris* (Hoo, 2007), 60.
[47] MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 400.
[48] Ibid., 400.
[49] [Anon], 'Suicide', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 127 (1880), 719–20.
[50] Morris in McCarthy, *William Morris*, 400.
[51] Ibid., 400.

the truth of the ills of London's slums is revealed, as it is to Diamond, by the voice of nature carried by the wind. Blowing from London, it 'telleth of gold, and of hope and unrest | Of power that helps not, of wisdom that knoweth | but teacheth not', 'of a people' and 'of the life they live there, so haggard and grim.'[52] The wind reflects Morris's fear of the contagious, corrupting and degenerating situation of the poor, and of the immoral influence of immoral environment that usurps individual free will, which he lectures on in socialist meetings. These concerns echo in the poem: '[a]s I hear the yells and shrieks and all the degradation', the same degeneration MacDonald references in his Goblins, 'as I see the brutal reckless faces and figures go past me, it rouses recklessness and brutality in me also, and fierce wrath takes possession of me.'[53] Morris's active engagement and perception of nature, and its juxtaposition with the current state of society, gives rise to such insight that presses him to act. Accordingly, Morris's house became centre of his efforts for the Socialist League, a prominent though not uncontroversial discussion forum, which was to attract a broad variety of thinkers inclined towards socialist thought, including MacDonald's admirer H. G. Wells.

The March Wind spread the message of socialism through very similar dialectics of light and dark as that encountered in MacDonald's writing, asking '[f]or what and whom hath the world's book been gilded | When all', that there is for the poor, is the 'blackness of the night' – the 'hope that none seeketh' it hints, 'is coming to light.'[54] The solution for healing the wounds of nineteenth-century urban suffering lies in nature, Morris writes from Hammersmith: '[i]t seems to be nobody's business, to try to do better things – isn't mine, you see, in spite of all my grumbling – but look, suppose people lived in little communities among gardens and green fields, so that they could be in the country in five minutes' walk, and had few wants […] then I think we might hope civilisation had really begun.'[55] 'To-morrow's uprising to deeds shall be sweet', the March Wind whispers, and 'against the background of the filth and degradation of industrialization' Morris founded the Socialist League and its paper *The Commonweal* in 1885, and the Arts and Crafts movement, by this

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[52] William Morris, 'The Message of the March Wind', *The Collected Works of William Morris*: *With Introductions by His Daughter May Morris*, *Volume 9: Love is Enough; Poems By the Way* (Cambridge, 2012), 121.

[53] Morris in MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 400.

[54] Morris, 'March Wind', 121.

[55] Morris in Clutton-Brock, *William Morris*, 60.

name, in 1887, which gave rise to Morris & Co, that translated his socialist philosophy of nature back into society.[56]

The Arts and Crafts movement was thus a direct reaction against *laissez-faire* capitalism and those who aimed to shift the blame for its effects onto the poor themselves. Thus, a contemporary article in *The Economist* justified the suffering of the disadvantaged, with an opposing interpretation of nature, stating that 'suffering and evil were nature admonitions, they cannot be got rid of, and the impatient attempts of benevolence to banish them from the world by legislation have always been more productive of evil than good.'[57] Rosalind Blakesley emphasises the importance of to the movement of such predecessors as Morris's master Ruskin, and 'Ruskin's Master Thomas Carlyle.'[58] Carlyle had upheld that the 'British industrial experience seems fast becoming one huge poison-swamp of reeking pestilence physical and moral; a hideous living Golgatha of souls buried alive.'[59] In this economy, he proclaimed, 'men are grown mechanical in head and heart […] they have lost faith in individual endeavour and in natural force of any kind'; 'man's mental and spiritual growth was being sacrificed in the name of technical progress.'[60] Visions of men with mechanistic minds, and men of science who had lost the post-Darwinian perspective of social improvement for preservation of the species primary end of science, practically effecting its opposite, haunted the apocalyptic visions of human degeneration and extinction of *fin-de-siècle* literature. Mind and Imagination, the body and its urban surroundings the last of which were perceived to be in stark opposition to the beauties of nature, stood in tense interrelation, a struggle both MacDonald and Morris felt deeply and personally. Both MacDonald and Morris turned their impressions into art of the imagination, into practical thought, which sprang from their urge to 'do something', as MacDonald wrote to Louisa, guided by beauty and truth: their art became the synthetic voice of their philosophy.[61]

The applied philosophy of MacDonald's and Morris was an act of materialising an ideal, while maintaining the influencing potential of the latter. For that, they drew on a maxim of the Pre-Raphaelites, with whom both Morris's

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[56] Morris, 'March Wind', 121; Rosalind P. Blakesley, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London, 2006), 7.

[57] Blakesley, *Arts and Crafts*, 13.

[58] Ibid., 13.

[59] Thomas Carlyle, *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (London, 1850), 22.

[60] Ibid., 23.

[61] George MacDonald in Raeper, *George MacDonald*, 266.

and MacDonald's circles intersected.[62] The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and especially their later affiliates had ventured into the decorative arts and architecture, still guided by their prime principle of 'mimesis' of nature and conveying of pure and good emotion through art. They not only worked in painting and sculpture, but their affiliates, many closer to Ruskin than to the brotherhood, such as William De Morgan, especially also forayed into the decorative arts. De Morgan, who was closer to MacDonald's circles than the Brotherhood, had designed the fireplaces not only of Morris's Kelmscott, but also those of Lewis Carroll's study in Christ Church, his Oxford college: these included ruby lustre motifs of such creatures as a gryphon and a dodo. He was the son of the mathematician Augustus De Morgan, who had been a tutor and mentor to the mathematician Charles Dodgson, and the character of De Morgan's mathematically structured tiles appealed to the principles of Geometry and Astronomy, the measuring of the Earth and the heavens, at that time still the two main professorial chairs in Mathematics at the University of Oxford.[63] Their designs for the people conveyed the awe-inspiring perfection of Nature and the divine creation. De Morgan and his whole family were deeply invested in moral and social matters; his mother was invested in the promotion of Bedford College for Women at which MacDonald later taught. This was as representative as it was typical of their shared social environment and of the individuals drawn towards Morris's efforts at Kelmscott House, and of those loosely affiliated with Morris, but acting as part of a common influence upon a common course in a common location and intellectual discourse.

It is crucial to dwell on the ideals of this movement and some of their creations. The Oxford Natural History Museum and its structures, for instance, were created as a temple to science. Its columns were adorned with leaves and flowers carved from life specimens provided by the University's Botanic Gardens, and its glass ceiling revealed the same starry blue sky as MacDonald's study. Despite being a temple to science, it was built to awe its beholder, so adhering to older ideals of sacred architecture, and scientific ideals more akin to Natural Theology than perhaps to Darwin's natural selection – the topic debated at its opening evening, in what became known as the 'Great Debate.'[64]

[62] MacDonald was close friends with Pre-Raphaelite sculptor Alexander Munro and Arthur Hughes, who also illustrated many of his books, as well as *Good Words for The Young*, which was for a time edited by MacDonald.

[63] John Catleugh, *William de Morgan Tiles* (Shepton Beauchamp, 1983), 37.

[64] The 'Great Debate' was the name given to the much-discussed altercation between Bishop Samuel Wilberforce and T. H. Huxley on the 30 June 1860 at Oxford's Natural

The museum was a philosophy and a discourse set in stone. This illustrates the manifold ways in which the ideals of the imagination in MacDonald's and Morris's circles were embodied in art and imaginative writing, under the influence of the same social and scientific discourses, which offer a richer and more complex response to the question Manlove poses, '[d]id William Morris Start MacDonald Writing Fantasy?'[65]

Although the work of Arts and Crafts artists also consisted of churches and public buildings, the focus of the movement was on the domestic sphere, and focused in particular on the production of furnishings and household goods, as Rosalind Blakesley highlights.[66] This was all part of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* which society should become: 'every element had to be designed as part of a single, organic whole', which in turn was to stand in harmony with nature itself.[67] Morris embodied the ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in his housing experiments, in which every individually designed part reflected the same overall philosophy which aspired to harmony with nature – as was the case with his own houses, such as Kelmscott. Morris had a clear and comprehensive idea of how his ideal society and its constituent parts should be run, which he presented in a lecture entitled 'How We Live and How We Might Live' (1884). Morris pleaded for a revolution to return the technological discoveries of his day, which he believed were misused to the misery of the greater part of the population, to reasonable application. For instance, the 'victory over nature', 'the steam-engine' was 'used for the base work of producing a sort of plaster of china clay and shoddy' – shoddy being the material gained from shredded and reformed

History Museum during a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. In a discussion of the then recently-published *Origin of Species* (1859), Wilberforce humorously enquired whether it was 'through his grandfather or his grandmother that he claimed his descent from a monkey' and Huxley replied he was not ashamed to have a monkey for his ancestor; but he would be ashamed to be connected with a man who […] obscured the truth' (Isabella Sidgwick, 'A Grandmother's Tales', *Macmillan's Magazine*, Oct 1898, 433-4). Huxley thus suggested an absolute truth of natural evidence, even if it contradicted institutional doctrine, such as the immutability and fixity of creation which stood against evolutionary theories, or fixity of evolutionary processes, and in particular natural selection which complicated the idea of a God with the power of interfering agency. A theory of fixity of evolutionary processes was suggested by William Paley in his *Natural Theology* (1802), which MacDonald had rejected as a theory of a 'mechanistic God' ('Wordsworth's Poetry', in *Orts* (London, 1882), 250).

65 Manlove, 'Did William Morris Start MacDonald Writing Fantasy?', 61.

66 Blakesley, *Arts and Crafts*, 7.

67 Ibid., 7.

textiles – while machines could be used to afford workers more leisure time.[68] Now that 'the conquest of Nature is complete', 'our business', he proclaimed, was 'the organization of man, who wields the forces of Nature', into a society, not build on competition, but co-operation.[69] This was a necessity, as the current system was 'a hideous nightmare' which deprived its citizens of the arts, of 'animal and intellectual pleasure, by starving and overworking them, making them 'unable to read a book, or look at a picture, or have pleasant fields to walk in.'[70] Morris demanded provisions for health, and education, but on the final and main point of an ideal society, Morris was adamant: its 'material surroundings […] should be pleasant, generous, and beautiful': if this could not be achieved, and such an environment could not be provided 'for all its members, I do not want the world to go on; it is a mere misery that man has ever existed.'[71] Housing should follow the model of nature, and 'every child should be able to play in a garden close to the place his parents live', and these dwellings should, in turn, be ornaments to Nature, not disfigurements of it.'[72] It was this doctrine which Morris captures in his own botanical ornamental patterns, which were meant to 'lead the mind outdoors':

> the successful pattern (a surface 'thicket wall' of planes which create the effect of an open field beyond) may invite us to dwell on the busy surface, or it may lure us to delve beyond the surface to the blank space beyond […] inspiring us to envision our dream.'[73]

Morris and MacDonald shared the belief in a rebalanced, nature-orientated society to encourage the thriving of 'morality', in Spencer's sense, the way in which natural laws intended mankind and society to function. While MacDonald, like Octavia Hill, agreed they should 'bring beauty to the communities of the poor', Morris's idea of man's having 'conquered nature' struck a different note from MacDonald's striving for a harmony with nature, which he held

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[68] William Morris, 'How We Live and How We Might Live', *The Collected Works of William Morris: With Introductions by His Daughter May Morris, Volume 23: Signs of Changes; Lectures on Socialism* (Cambridge, 2012), 14.

[69] Ibid., 15.

[70] Ibid., 19.

[71] Ibid., 19.

[72] Ibid., 19.

[73] Morris in Inge Bryden, review of David Latham (ed.), *Haunted Texts: Studies in Pre-Raphaelitism* (Toronto, 2003), *The Journal of William Morris Studies* (Winter 2004), 80–3, (82).

in awe.[74] Morris believed man should wield the power of industry to amplify the voice of nature; MacDonald suggested, science should be utilised by the imagination, the element of unfettered nature in man. Art, the product of the imagination, was an expression of beauty, and 'beauty', MacDonald alleged, 'is the only stuff in which Truth', being nature, God's creation, 'can be clothed.'[75] In Nature, and the imagination, truth and 'the moral world' resided; its law was equal to 'natural law', and, as 'the mind is the product of this live law.[76] Thus, in order to create true art, man 'must invent nothing', as was demonstrated in the fluidity of natural imagination and art in the opening scene of *Phantastes*, which will be discussed below.[77] This held true for fiction likewise, where 'in physical things', MacDonald is clear that the author 'may invent; in moral things he must obey.'[78] True and beautiful art would thus not 'convey meaning' but 'wake meaning', it would stimulate the soul 'as the wind assails an aeolian harp', and thus 'rouse [man's] conscience', 'wake things up in him' as nature itself is 'mood-engendering.'[79] But, conversely, if a man was not exposed through his environment (in Spencer's sense) to such influences of beauty, but only greed, as the goblins, the embodiments of man-made philosophies that corrupted mind and thus society, he 'cannot help himself' and must become a 'little man.'[80] 'The Fantastic Imagination' and 'How We Might Live' convey the differing foci of MacDonald's and Morris's philosophies at the heart of their artistic representations of nature, with its associated ideals. MacDonald's art focused on stimulating the right frame of mind, while Morris provided the detailed measures to be taken in waking realities once this was achieved; yet, their minds, however, strove towards a common aim, rooted in a common context of nineteenth-century science, psychology and social criticism.

'How we might live': Utopia and the journey's end

While self-reflective, Morris's and MacDonald's literary dream-visions are also forward-looking, towards a future of goodness: they are utopian visions. The image of Utopia came from Thomas More's eponymous work, and denoted 'no place', as well as, in its homonym 'eu-topia', 'good place.'[81] Emelyne Godfrey

[74] Smith, 'Social Reform', 71.
[75] George MacDonald, 'Fantastic Imagination', in *Orts*, 315.
[76] Ibid., 316.
[77] Ibid., 315.
[78] Ibid., 315.
[79] Ibid., 319.
[80] Ibid., 322.
[81] As defined in the *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 'utopia', 'from

summarises the common purpose of Morris and MacDonald when she defines 'Utopian thinking' as a 'holistic thinking about the connections between economic, social, existential and ecological processes in an integrated way.'[82] As such, it was 'concerned with aesthetics […] because the ultimate criterion of our social arrangements is how far they can deliver the satisfaction of human lodging.'[83] The Utopian mode of thinking that structures MacDonald's and Morris's writing was inherently linked to moral ideals through aesthetics, as its eventual manifestation was meant to propagate and maintain them as a balanced system.

While the utopian element recurs as a prominent general theme throughout their work, in Morris's 'Earthly Paradise' (1868-70), or the orchard society of the Little Ones in *Lilith* (1895), it is in this wider, not strictly literary framework, the commonalities of MacDonald's and Morris literary work can be more easily identified. Literary themes act as framing devices to convey aesthetic, moral and social ideas, as in their common use of medievalism, which Manlove has identified this in MacDonald's 'quasi-medieval Fairy Land' in *Phantastes* (1858), or Morris's medieval tropes and settings in *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (1858) and *News From Nowhere* (1890).[84] To Morris, the appeal of medievalism lay primarily in an idealised perception of the role of the craftsman, and the creative mind, as an ambassador between nature and society. Clive Wilmer elaborates, to Morris, the artisan delighted in nature and 'took in the physical world' in such a way that it was in turn 'expressed in his own workmanship' which 'returned his delight to the world.'[85] Morris orientated his medievalism according to the ideals of Ruskin who believed that 'greed was the natural enemy' of this idealism, and this medieval culture came to an end with mercantilism and its 'pursuit of medieval gain' which 'superseded the love of God and the beauty of his handiwork.'[86] Morris's utopia is a secular expression of the same idea. Accordingly, in *News From Nowhere*, in the future utopian society the 'extravagant love of ornament' had given way 'to the feeling that the house itself and its associations was the

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Greek *ou "not"* + *topos* "place" […] a pun on eutopia "place (where all is) well"' (London, 1992; 1016).

82 Emelyne Godfrey, 'Tomatoes and Cucumbers', in *Utopia and Dystopias in the Fiction of H. G, Wells and William Morris* (London, 2016), 2.

83 Ibid., 7.

84 Manlove, 'Did William Morris Start MacDonald Writing Fantasy?', 60.

85 Clive Wilmer, 'Introduction', in *News From Nowhere and Other Writings* (London, 2004), xxiv.

86 Ruskin in Wilmer, 'Introduction', xxiv.

ornament of the country life amidst which it had stranded in old times, that to re-ornament it would but take away its use as a piece of natural beauty.'[87] Nature itself is the model for society, and all efforts in constructing society must be modelled upon and complementary to it, as Morris had described in his lecture, a state he believed had been achieved in the past.

Secondly, Manlove highlights their common use of the dream narrative: a traditional narrative form to achieve catharsis by revisiting the past and retrieving from it lessons for the future, as literary dreams from *The Pilgrim's Progress* to the *Christmas Carol* demonstrate. They functioned along the katabatic archetype, which, through its associated patterns of descent, confrontation and ascent provided ample metaphoric imagery based on nature, which fulfilled an effectively psychological function.[88] Thus, perhaps unsurprisingly from Morris and MacDonald's discussion of social and political ideals, nature acts as the guiding force, and, simultaneously as the metaphoric embodiment of psychological processes that lead to projected insights. It was not only the wind, but especially also rivers which with their steady, constant, and one-directional flow conveyed a pre-determined natural course of both thought and insight, an indicator of a normative natural law upon which society was best modelled. It appears thus in both MacDonald's first fantastic novel *Phantastes* (1858), leading Anodos through Fairy Land, and in Morris's *News From Nowhere*. As noted initially, Kelmscott House in Hammersmith was connected to Kelmscott Manor in Oxfordshire by the Thames, which offered itself as such a metaphor in Morris's novel. Its protagonist William Guest falls asleep after a socialist meeting like the one at which Morris had presented his lecture 'How We Might Live' in November 1884, and has a dream of a future world.[89] As the 'Nowhere' in the title indicates, the dreams guide him through a utopia, and its governance, in juxtaposition with memories of his Guest's own environment. As in MacDonald, the river connects waking

[87] William Morris, *News From Nowhere*, 221.

[88] The mythological katabasis is the hero's journey into the underworld in which allegorical embodiment of world sin are encountered; as it is a journey through the underworld, the realm of the brothers Hypnos and Thanatos, sleep and death, it facilitates psychological insight into the individual and social structure; cf. John Docherty, 'Anodos and Kathodos in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*', *The Carrollian: The Lewis Carroll Journal*, 9 (2002), 46; Fernando Soto, 'Chthonic Aspects of *Phantastes*: From the Rising of the Goddess to the Anodos of Anodos', *North-Wind*, 2000, 20; Kiera Vaclavic, *Uncharted Depths: Descent Narratives in English and French Children's Literature* (Oxford, 2010).

[89] The Hammersmith Branch of the Socialist Democratic Foundation met regularly at Kelmscott House.

reality, dreamed ideas. From Hammersmith Kelmscott's, via the ideas gained in the utopian dream, Guest find his Journey's End, his peace, in the setting of Kelmscott Manor: Morris's Cotswolds cottage. From there, Guest will rise up into deeds, as indeed Morris himself did in manufacturing the domestic designs of Morris & Co at his Manor.

In *Phantastes* the river functions in an identical fashion. MacDonald's protagonist, like Guest, falls asleep after pondering a philosophical question, namely that of the truth found in Fairy Land. Anodos awakes into his dream, a vision that alternates, in the manner of Goethe's *Faust*, between natural spaces of creative and reverent thought which reveal the truth inherent in the natural state of the world and mind, and the dark. In such spaces as Faust's 'Studierzimmer', and 'Wald und Höhle', or *Phantastes*'s Church of Darkness, whose chapter epigraph references *Faust*, and the natural Fairy Land, man-made spaces of selfish and narrow applications of scientific thinking, are juxtaposed to an opposite natural state, mirroring the binaries of MacDonald's psychological essays in literary imagery.

At the hypnagogic onset of Anodos's dream, however, the dimensions of waking reality and dream are not yet separate, and their increasing separation traces their connection, the incident of an that ideal state of their synthesis. Still in his room, Anodos is 'looking out of bed' and suddenly sees that a 'stream of clear water was running over the carpet', and, 'stranger still', the 'carpet, which I had myself designed to imitate a field of grass and daises' had been brought to life by the vision associated with his particular state of consciousness, so that 'the grass-blades and daisies seemed to wave in a tiny breeze that followed the water's flow.'[90] The 'branches and leaves designed upon the curtains of my bed were slightly in motion', and, likewise, the 'elaborately carved foliage' of the dressing table, 'of which ivy formed the chief part' had undergone a 'singular change.' First, they began to look 'curious' until they *were* 'unmistakeably ivy', and just beyond it, the design seemed to continue itself where the designer had stopped, so that 'a tendril of clematis twisted itself about the gilt handle of one of the drawers.'[91]

Creation and the created, material and the immaterial, are one in the imagination of the creative artist, and that this perfect union of nature is manifested in a decorative object, pieces of furniture, seemingly to pre-empt the ideals of Arts and Crafts artists is no coincidence. William Raeper notes

[90] George MacDonald, *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women,* ed. by Nick Page (London, 2008), 47.

[91] Ibid., 48-9.

how the similarities in thought manifested in visually similar ways. The stage sets and theatre curtains that were designed and hand-painted by the MacDonald daughters with the help of Arthur Hughes' brother Edward for the family-devised performance of the *Pilgrim's Progress* had a 'Morrisy' appearance.[92] Anodos's aesthetic vision echoes not only MacDonald's own geometric floral and botanical patterns that adorned his poetry manuscripts, and that of his children in the MacDonald family sketchbooks – the MacDonald family's ministry through their very own *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which enacted on and off the stage while in Hammersmith. It was the same spirit that was reflected in the design ideals of Morris and likeminded figures of the arts and crafts movement.[93] As Morris and MacDonald encode their ideals of nature, and mind and society's relationship with it, into pattern, this dream-vision that enacts these ideals, accordingly teaches Anodos the right kind of thinking, guides him to where his own decorative art, which made his own life more beautiful, has come from, a mindset diametrically opposed to the scientific materialism, 'like [that of] a geologist', which he displays at the beginning of the novel.[94] The dream facilitates the psychological conversion with which Anodos is dispatched back into waking reality, where he now approaches 'the duties of [his] new position', of managing the estate he inherited, 'somewhat instructed […] by the adventures that had befallen me in Fairy Land.'[95] Wondering whether he could 'translate the experience of [his] travels there, into common life', he feels like 'a ghost, sent into the world to minister to my fellow men', as MacDonald ministered at Hill's houses for the poor, preaching and practising the utopian imagination.[96] When unsure about his progress, Anodos seeks counsel in nature, and in the final vision of the novel, he hears the fairy voice of his dreams say 'a great good is coming […] to thee Anodos', indicating he has averted the path of the unnatural philosophy that has misshapen both the London MacDonald experienced in Hammersmith, and the goblins that embodied its faults.[97]

The position of both Anodos and Guest's journeys ends are thus noteworthy. In *News From Nowhere*, having travelled from Kelmscott House to Kelmscott Manor in a dream, it is the river that connects the two houses:

[92] Raeper, *George MacDonald*, 338.

[93] cf. These sketchbooks, along numerous loose uncatalogued visual materials are held at Aberdeenshire Museums Archive, Mintlaw [MS ABHER 2007.011].

[94] MacDonald, *Phantastes*, 42.

[95] Ibid., 42, 271.

[96] Ibid., 271.

[97] Ibid., 272.

one situated in the din of the metropolis, the other nestled in the countryside, closer to the source of the Thames. The hidden source of the rivulet that leads Anodos through the fairy forest into Fairy Land, and carries his boat to the edge of it and his resting consciousness, springs from his house and returns him to it. In the same uncanny doubling, the house on his departure and the house to which the changed Anodos returns, and then changes, are two very different places: one, the beginning of his journey, the other, the end. Rather than an end of restfulness as Guest's, it is in MacDonald's fashion a restlessness, reflective of their differing attitudes to nature, as a conqueror, in Morris's case, as outlined in 'How We Might Live', or, in MacDonald's case, as a minister in constant awe of creation, constantly acting according to its instructions.

The distance of a river from its source measures its distance from the ideal of nature which both authors strive for, and indicates the way towards it. As the Thames flows from the natural countryside near Kelmscott through London, where it is polluted and barely visible; the later fiction of MacDonald embodies cities built upon the un-ideals of the mind – minds which have, unlike Anodos's, not become reformed. In Mr Vane's vision in *Lilith* (1895), Bulika is a dystopian future reflection of a society based on purely capitalistic values, governed by Eugenics, as 'poverty was an offence' and '[D]eformity and sickness were taxed.'[98] The sound of waters is only faintly audible below ground; no waters are in sight. Like the wind, its sound indicates the direction of Utopia, and, accordingly, while subdued in Bulika, the river bursts forth in its counterpart, the vision of the Celestial City. Both Morris's and MacDonald's fantastic utopian visions function along temporal, and dialectical axes. As the medievalism that pointed to a more natural, idealised past, their dream-visions do not, however, advocate a return to the past. Through dialectical juxtapositions of such pasts original, the source, with their antithesis, their corruption, or potential corruption, their Utopias are not Romantic Edens – the orchard of the Little Ones remains an impossibility. MacDonald and Morris strive for synthetic post-Industrial visions: they are *New* Jerusalems, the redemption of mankind after its fall, which is granted by the already inherent laws of the world, and society's reconciliation with them, a continuing and renewed effort MacDonald had undertaken ever since his studies of applied science, and reading of poetry at King's College Aberdeen. And despite the differences in the aesthetic and literary visions of both Morris

[98] MacDonald, *Lilith,* 162.

and MacDonald, it was nature that was the source, providing the map and the practical instructions, as it is always where the voice of nature calls from, as in *At the Back of the North-Wind*, where the in this case, hyperborean, post-human paradise was located – an earthly paradise which both Morris and MacDonald hoped there could yet be built in their green and pleasant land.

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