FANTASIES OF PATTERN:
THE SPIRIT OF DESIGN IN THE LATE ROMANCES OF WILLIAM MORRIS

by

EVANGELINE ROSE MARIE CAREW

A Thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of

M. A. (RESEARCH) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Abstract:

Recounting the many avenues of William Morris's vast career and his prolific creation of patterns, May Morris refers to her beloved father as a 'literary artist'. Taking this title as a useful coda of Morris's work across the many fields of his fancy, such as stained glass, tapestry, chintz, wallpaper, poetry, revolutionary newspaper, and prose romance, this thesis will demonstrate the ways in which pattern ought to be treated as the definitive key to understanding his complex and fantastical works centring on how this is expressed in his late prose romances. A pattern designer, pattern maker and pattern writer, Morris's affinity with this mode and form of order and instinct, and beauty and delight, is no less at the fore of his compositions in the romances than in his heyday, designing wallpapers at Morris and Co.. The Wood Beyond the World, The Well at World's End*, and* The Water of the Wondrous Isles *are the creations of a rich interdisciplinary mind. A craftsman who took prose as his final medium of choice, in these romances Morris drafts the most intricate and affecting worlds which are not only replete with a sense of both fantasy and pattern as distinct qualities but are in fact, fantasies of pattern.*

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

List of Figures

Fig.1: Morris, William, *Honeycomb,* 1876, Wallpaper, V&A Textiles and Fashion Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O271020/honeycomb-furnishing-fabric-william-morris/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.2: Morris, William, *Pink and Rose*, 1890, Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O74639/pink-and-rose-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.3: Morris, William, *Willow Bough, 1887,* Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78227/willow-bough-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.4: Morris, William, *Fruit,* (1866), Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O73421/fruit-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.5: Morris, William, *Lodden,* (1883), Furnishing Fabric, V&A Textiles and Fashion Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O224709/lodden-furnishing-fabric-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.6: Morris, William, *Spring Thicket,* 1894, Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O248858/spring-thicket-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.7: Burne-Jones, Edward, *The Rock of Doom,* 1885-8, Oil on Canvas, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart <https://www.thehistoryofart.org/edward-burne-jones/rock-of-doom/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.8: Burne-Jones, Edward, *Pygmalion and the Image – The Godhead Fires,* (1878), Oil on Canvas, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery Fine Art, Paintings and Sculpture Collection, Birmingham <https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/explore-art/items/1903P25/pygmalion-and-the-image-the-godhead-fires> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.9: Morris, William, *Acanthus,* 1875, Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78222/acanthus-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.10: Morris, William, *Pimpernel,* (1876), Wallpaper, Own photograph, Rugby, February 2021

Fig.11: Morris, William, *Daisy,* 1864, Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London < https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O248429/daisy-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.12: Morris, William, *Strawberry Thief*, 1883, [Furnishing Fabric], V&A Textiles and Fashion Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78889/strawberry-thief-furnishing-fabric-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.13: Morris, William, *Corncockle*, 1883, [Furnishing Fabric], V&A Textiles and Fashion Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O270847/corncockle-furnishing-fabric-william-morris/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.14: Morris, William, *Kennet,* 1881, Furnishing Fabric, V&A Textiles and Fashion Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O89397/kennet-furnishing-fabric-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.15: Morris, William, *Scroll,* 1872, Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O249258/scroll-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.16: Morris, William, *Branch,* c.1868-70, Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O249371/branch-wallpaper-sample-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.17: Morris & Co., *The Brook,* c.2022, Furnishing Fabric, Morris and Co. Online Catalogue <https://morrisandco.sandersondesigngroup.com/product/wallpaper/archive-iii-wallpapers/the-brook/dm3w214887/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.18: Morris, William, *African Marigold,* 1876, Furnishing Fabric, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O271002/african-marigold-furnishing-fabric-william-morris/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.19: Morris, William, *Chrysanthemum*, 1877, [Sketch]. V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O249075/chrysanthemum-wallpaper-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.20: Morris, William and William De Morgan, *Tile Panel*, 1876, Ceramic, V&A Ceramics Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O8046/tile-panel-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.21: Morris, William, *Windrush,*1883, Wallpaper, V&A Prints, Drawings, & Paintings Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O166216/windrush-furnishing-fabric-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.22: Morris, William and John Henry Dearle, 1889 *Carpet* [Woven wool]. V&A Textiles and Fashion Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78824/carpet-dearle-john-henry/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.23: Morris, William. and John Henry Dearle and Phillip Webb, *The Forrest*, 1887, Tapestry, V&A Textiles and Fashion Collection, London <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O89213/the-forest-tapestry-morris-william/> [Accessed 12 July 2022]

Fig.24: Own photograph of Kelmscott edition held at the Bodleian Library

Contents

Introduction:
Faeries and Fantasy: Crafting Prose in Pattern
Page 3

Chapter 1:
Fabric and Fabrication: Textiles and Artefacts in the Fantasy Landscape
Page 33

Chapter 2:
Pleats and Patterns: The Structure of the Romances
Page 55

Chapter 3:
Duplicity and Duplication: The Pattern of Character
Page 93

Conclusion:
Pattern, Fantasy, and the Kelmscott Press
Page 124

List of Figures
Page 130

Bibliography
Page 132

Introduction
Faeries and Fantasy: Crafting Prose in Pattern

Describing her late father's 'Honeycomb' pattern, May Morris declares with a tone of delight that it is 'in pale silver-pink and gold and blue—like fairyland!'[1]. A whimsical pattern that does indeed possess a distinct character of fairyness, May's gleeful assertion that this piece of cloth is 'like fairyland' is compelling and evocative. Yet, despite the ineffable accord felt by viewers that this pattern does in fact encapsulate and embody a certain sense of the fairy realm and way of being, it is not immediately critically obvious what it is about it that is so fantastical. The leap May makes in stating that a piece of woven cloth is 'like fairyland' and thus an object of and portal into the fantasy realm raises a host of questions: how can a non-figurative work of art, a woven pattern, embody a 'fairyland' and thus inspire fantastical delight in its viewer and critic? How can a visual pattern encode a narrative – a prerequisite for the 'fairyland' to exist in the first place? Why does May defer to literary reference (fairyland, after all, is a characteristic facet of storytelling in the



Fig. 1: Honeycomb

[1] May Morris, *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.49.

tradition of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, for example) to describe this visual, textile pattern? Crucially, what is the relationship between fantasy and pattern? And how does the construction of an expanse of pattern correspond to or echo the authorial composition of a plane of the fantasy landscape?

The narrative frame of the fairy story is a compelling reference point in expressing an interpretation of 'Honeycomb'. However, this is not a comparison to be made literally. When looking at the pattern no attempt should be made to suggest that certain motifs of it represent a fairy palace, or that this motif here is a magical wood typical of fairy tales, or that motif there embodies the ruddy, stock character hero and a correspondent motif is his iconic damsel in distress. The components of the pattern are not to be seen as the components of the fairy story as if pattern were a translative, illustrative work which merely represents the figments of fantasy in a visual medium. If this were the case, then the 'Honeycomb' pattern would be a resounding failure as no such illustration is apparent. Instead, it must be understood that pattern itself is the embodiment of fantasy; the pattern as a whole is the essence and fullness of the honeycomb fairyland. The spirit of design and quasi-magical orderliness of the pattern produces a realm of fairyland. It is through their shared procedures and effects that fantasy and pattern become so compellingly interspersed and symbiotic in Morris's works; fantasy and pattern both institute the reformulation of figures of the everyday world into order, scheme and design and, thus, the elevation of these forms into the fantastical.

There is an essence of fantasy and fairyland in the 'Honeycomb' pattern emerging from its particular character of honeycomb-ness. Its main structure is a hexagonal net, marked out in the diagonal and vertical avenues of crescent moons which pivot about the hinges of formalised, quasi-heraldic daisies. Morris invigorates the natural, geometric structure of honeycomb with detailed design and intricate embellishment. The hexagonal fields are filled with fantastical

sprawls of botany and swathes of colour which are draped from the peaks of foliated forms. The blue willow-bough style leaves which lavishly adorn the central spines of crescents are suspended in flourishing symmetry. Not figurative but suggestive and evocative, these forms employ symmetry to compellingly gesture to a sense of wings: perhaps they are intended to imply those of a fairy, or most aptly, a honeybee of the most illustrious and fantastical variety, set about her work on the comb net. This pattern is an evolution or elevation of honeycomb, and its narrative life. Indeed, the glimmering metallic quality lent to the pattern through the selection of colour allows for the ascent of the forms into a state of supernaturalness, despite the fact that they are originally, before Morris's pattern work, motifs extracted from the natural world. There is life and narrative in this relational network of forms unique to this particular pattern; it is a fairy story, a fairyland, a fantasy of honeycomb.

Taking May's identification of a visual pattern and an aspect of narrative fantasy (fairyland) as an enticing point of critical entry, this thesis will be occupied with finding the patterns at the heart of Morris's late romances. May's initial image will be inverted to explore the reciprocal relationship between Morris's literary fantasy and the patterns that exist within it. This image opens up the following critical prospect: that for a Morris pattern to be understood as a fantasy landscape, it must be concurrently possible for a Morris fantasy landscape in prose to be understood as a pattern. The questions of how Morris wrote his romances with patterns, through patterns and to attain patternedness will be posed and considered in the three most thoroughly realised fantasies of his writing career: *The Wood Beyond the World*, *The Well at World's End* and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*. The imagined reformulation of the real world into pattern, resulting in a sense of fantasy and fairyland, was the chief endeavour of Morris as designer. The same is true of Morris as a writer composing these three prose romances. They are patterned endeavours of fantasy. Their fantasy is rooted in and most beautifully attained through the expression of pattern.

Just as there is an innate conjuring of narrativity in Morris's patterns there is a reciprocally inherent patternedness to Morris's prose romances.

Pattern is the most discursive and enduring element of Morris's career. His patterns are captivating and have continually drawn great critical attention and commercial success. From 'Daisy' in the early 1860s to his last patterned wallpaper, 'Compton' in 1893, Morris's career was bookended by design and accounts of his life and career, such as Fiona MacCarthy's authoritative biography and Linda Parry's numerous works on Morris, acknowledge the immensity of his contribution to the world of pattern.[2] Yet an element of Morris's works that remains to be extensively commented upon is his relationship to fantasy as expressed in both his textiles and his texts. Morris's perpetuation of fantasy is inextricably united to his compulsive inclination towards the creation of pattern to the extent that there is seldom a Morris pattern that lacks a sense of fantasy and likewise, Morris's fantasies always embody a compelling character of pattern. The equivalence of pattern and fantasy demands a conceptual and expansive view of Morris's works across media. It is not sufficient to confine fantasy to the field of literature (in the sense of genre) nor pattern to the materiality of textiles (in the sense of ornament). The operation of pattern in Morris's prose presents a real challenge to critically apprehend and express due to the evasive broadness of the terms in question and the demand for interdisciplinarity, but in doing so, the fullness of Morris's spirit of design can be explicated.

The labyrinthine interactivity and florid profusions of Morris's patterns are undeniably affecting and striking; he clearly possessed a profound grasp of the visual realm and had an unmatched ability to express or translate this into the flourishing and suggestibly fantastical scrolls, buds, blooms and elaborations of his designs. Such is the extent of their patternedness and

[2] Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, (London: Faber, 2010); Linda Parry, *William Morris* (London: Philip Wilson in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1998).

overwhelming sense of harmonious effloresce, the natural motifs he employs cease to be natural but ascend to the realm of fantasy. Expanding on this, a reading of his prose demonstrates him to be a unique writer who has the same tendency and skill for the effective, artistic ordering and blossoming of the narrative space within his texts too. His works of fantasy prose readily employ his artistic, design flair in the construction of vast and sublime new worlds, populated by intriguing characters and enlivened by quest narratives.

Patterns in Literature: Critics on the Literary Craftsman

Walter Crane, a contemporary and sometimes collaborator of Morris remarked: 'His patterns are decorative poems in terms of form and colour. His poems and decorative romances are decorative patterns in forms of speech and rhyme. His dream world and his ideal world were like one of his own tapestries'.[3] Like May Morris, Crane understands Morris's visual patterns as somehow possessing a certain literariness: they are 'decorative poems.' Notably, Crane uses a metaphor here, not a simile, thus taking May's comparative image further and suggesting that not only is there an affinity between Morris's patterns and prosody but that they are one and the same thing. Reciprocally, he acknowledges that the 'decorative romances are decorative patterns', again using the congruent works as metaphors for the qualities and nature of the other. Crane's suggestion that Morris's works are not chiefly defined by their medium but by a characteristic that is shared by the whole oeuvre is expanded to include Morris's 'dream world and his ideal world'. All Morris creations, be they produced in prose, textiles or thought, are not limited by their medium but are elevated and joined in simultaneous endeavour through their nature of pattern and fantasy. The inclusion of the 'dream world' in Crane's assessment of Morris's creative hybridity emphasises the state of the imagination as a significant element of his artistic and literary craft and output. Crane compares the fantasy site of Morris's imagination to 'his own tapestries'

[3] Walter Crane, *William Morris to Whistler: Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1911), p.4.

which crucially are the first works in which Morris fully explicates the fusion of the literary and the artistic modes in his fantastical style. His tapestries frequently feature short verses (later compiled and published in *Poems by the Way*) woven into bold and declarative scrolls amidst the rich grounds of formalised foliage, populated by medievally idealised women and heraldic, prowling animals. Examples of this include the 'Woodpecker' tapestry and the 'Greenery' tapestry. It is not sufficient to say that Morris had an inclination to use text in his textiles and therefore used textiles in his texts. Crane implies that the patterns and tapestries, the 'dream world and [the] ideal world', and the 'poems and decorative romances' do not simply share formal elements or features, but they are of the same spirit and endeavour: the craft and perpetuation of fantasy through pattern.

Critical metaphors that explore Morris's works as textile texts or textual textiles appear often. This is in part due to their affinity with Ruskin's thinking on the link between reading and art. Ruskin was a significant figure in Morris's career. Such was his influence that Ruskin's *The Nature of Gothic* was reprinted at Morris's own printing press, the Kelmscott Press. In *The Nature of Gothic*, Ruskin implores readers: '*Read* the sculpture. Preparatory to reading it, you will have to discover whether it is legible (and, if legible, it is nearly certain to be worth reading)'.[4] This sense of legibility as a potential characteristic of art, and treatment of it as a necessary component of successful art is applicable to an understanding of Morris's design work, but also of his prose. The worthiness of a sculpture to be read suggests a gradation of different types of art: those which are imbued with such consciousness and narrativity that they can be 'read' and those which are not. Reading ceases to be the mere act of apprehending words on the page; a higher critical, artistic practice is called for within the act of reading. What then, is the understanding of reading that we ought to apply in the act of engaging with Morris in both his

[4] John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice, Volume II,* (Project Gutenberg eBook, 2009), p.236.

prose and his patterns? If we ought to 'read' his patterns (as they are artforms akin to sculptures), what should we do to his romances? To seek the literariness of a sculpture or a pattern instigates in Morris an impulse for the inverse too: to seek the patterns and designs of a prose romance. It will not do to merely 'read' Morris's prose; there must be an approach to his works that is made with a deliberately patterned consciousness and in pursuit of patternedness and its meaning. There is no verb to describe the apprehension of pattern distinct from the mere viewing of art. Pattern, without question, requires a different form of artistic attention to a Rossetti painting (for instance) and whatever this particular quality of vision is to be called, it must be applied to Morris's prose romances, not just to his wallpapers.

The suggestion of an affinity between Morris's writing and his works in the 'lesser arts' (Morris's own appellation for the textile and design works he undertook) is subtly present in much Morris criticism but is rarely delved into in significant depth. A critical metaphor likening a textile work to a narrative, or a narrative to a woven or patterned or stitched textile, is a convenient one to grasp for to attempt to synthesise quickly and with sham simplicity the complex relationship between ideas of narrative, fantasy, art, design and pattern in the imagination of a writer and designer such as Morris. Such metaphors are used frequently in Morris criticism but, typically, critics who do so neglect to fully interrogate their implications. This extra critical step would be most revealing in a consideration of Morris. Victoria Mitchell comments on this general critical instinct at length, noting that 'text, textiles and *techne* are etymologically linked, reflecting an intimacy and a complexity for thought in [the term *techne*'s] association with making'.[5] The cognitive and tactile procedures of composing, creating and crafting in texts and textiles are

[5] Victoria Mitchell, 'Textiles, text and techne' in *The Textile Reader*, edited by Jessica Hemmings (London: Berg, 2012) pp.5-13, p.6.

considered as profoundly interrelated by Mitchell. Both text and textiles have the ability to 'form structural relations between components' and thus, the critical shorthand of using textile images to explain the effects and nature of texts, and the use of threading (also extensively explored by J. Hillis Miller in *Ariadne's Thread*) to account for the linear unspooling and twists and turns of a narrative is justified.[6] Yet, when it comes to Morris, such equivalences made in critical metaphor must be pushed further or they risk being redundant or counter-intuitive. In the prose of a pattern maker and the patterns of a writer, such seemingly convenient and neat images occlude a full understanding of the deliberations and acutely conscious freighting of Morris's compositions and dull their delightful and striking effects.

The convergence of many critical disciplines in the creative output of Morris is at times particularly striking and presents a vast challenge to untangle and express in a critical account. Whilst focused on Morris's literary works, it would be a disservice to the romances were the thesis to dwell only on their literariness as the sum of their status as fantasy stories or romances. Furthermore, to merely use textile metaphor in this account in order to ease the expression of the nuances of Morris's prose would constitute a vastly limiting application of Morris's status as craftsman and his patterns. The patternedness of the romances is perhaps the main source of their stylistic success as literary works and the definitive aspect of their natures as fantasies, therefore the textile and conceptual pattern work of Morris's prose requires sustained, detailed attention.

[6] Mitchell, (2012), p.7; J. Hillis Miller, *Ariadne's Thread* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Making the fleeting critical connection (but not directly addressing its implications) between Morris's prose (specifically how his works develop in their manuscript forms) and his textile works, David Latham comments: 'the revisions in his manuscripts reveal a serious craftsman's careful attention to detail'.[7] He frames this in the context of Morris's socialism, arguing that, despite Morris's political activism and serious commitment to communism, the 'romantic dreamer's interest in poetry and interior design' endured in his late prose. The implicit argument here is that Morris's identity as a 'romantic [dreamer]' in his prose writing is manifested in the 'craftsman's careful attention to detail'; thus, the romantic and dreamlike qualities of Morris's late prose are rooted in his earlier identity as a fantastical poet and pattern maker. The specific dreamlike quality of Morris's late prose is a product, not of his writerly inclinations, but his craftsmanship.

Herbert likewise considers the relationship between Morris's patterns and poetry: 'Like visual designs, the verbal/aural designs of oral poetry rely upon patterns which meet the audience's expectations of recurrence'.[8] It is perhaps more immediately critically accessible to liken pattern and poetry as pattern is a significant constructive characteristic of poetry. A most rudimentary definition of poetry, most especially one that excludes post-modern poetry, would hinge on aspects such as rhyme schemes and syllabic structures: an audible pattern. But this understanding of pattern as chiefly a structural device that is most critically useful through its nature of

[7] David Latham, 'A Matter of Craftsmanship: William Morris's Manuscripts' *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 6 (1985), 2-11 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/06.3Summer1985/SU85.6.3.Latham.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022] (p.10).

[8] Isolde Karen Herbert, 'The 'Sympathetic Translation' of Patterns: William Morris as Singer, Scribe, and Printer' *Journal of William Morris Studies,*13, (2000), 21-9 <http://www.morrissociety.org/JWMS/13.4Spring2000/SP00.13.4.Herbert.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022] (p.23).

'recurrence' neglects entirely the spirit of pattern. What is pattern beyond its critically, audibly or numerically accessible cognates such as a rhyme scheme? There is an ineffable sense of a spirit of patternedness that is not strictly quantifiable or formulaic. No doubt, patterns are in effect in Morris's poetry (in Herbert's numerical terms of course but also through the spirit of design, beauty and instinctive order), but when we look at the romances, there is no such chance to dwell on line numbers, rhyme orders and syllabic sequences. A literary application of pattern cannot be confined to poetry and approaches that seek to only address poetry are not sufficiently applicable or congruent to a consideration of the romances. However, Herbert's strides into introducing Morris's pattern work to his literary work are indeed compelling and pave the way for this thesis's endeavours to commence a wider critical understanding the patternedness of the romances.

Pauline Dewan likewise sets a precedent for using pattern to discuss Morris's writing. Writing briefly in the *Journal of William Morris Studies* about his early prose published in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, she notes the 'variety of techniques' Morris' employs in the construction of his narratives, most especially those which are 'patterns of enclosure'.[9] Here Dewan acknowledges the impact of Morris's visual imagination which is so steeped in pattern that it began informing the organisation of space in his early forays into prose. However, she does not make the explicit comparison between the prose and any of Morris's actual designs nor with the nature, spirit and effects of these patterns; instead, pattern is used in a more metaphorical

[9] Pauline Dewan, 'Patterns of Enclosure', *Journal of William Morris Studies,* 11, (1995), 9-11 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/11.2Spring1995/SP95.11.2.Dewan.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022] (p.9).

sense to convey a general sense of entrapment and structure. This is a promising critical offering but one that demands much more sustained attention.

Patricia Crown likewise has some suggestive thoughts on Morris's patterning that could be interrogated further. She states, in her discussion of ornament and Morris, exploring the relationship between his patterns and Rococo:

> Not since the Gothic period had there been such a profusion of leaves, tendrils, flowers, birds, and fruit incorporated into ornament. These forms were not rendered with empirically observed exactitude, but rather translated by memory and imagination into rich designs suggestive of their models. Rococo decoration is not meant to be examined searchingly, bit by bit. It does not convey information. There is a general sense of fantasy, even mystery in its entire effect. Indeed this non-rational fantastic quality is one of things which its detractors found so objectionable. But to Morris fantasy and mystery are important and desirable qualities.[10]

Her sense of how natural forms are 'translated by memory and imagination into rich designs' is suggestive of a literary aspect to the process; the act of translation indicates a sense of language in Morris's visual style and pattern design. Like Ruskin, Crown affirms that there is a certain readability here. Furthermore, Crown's assertion that ornament 'does not convey information' is intriguing; instead of being informative, ornament possesses 'a general sense of fantasy'. The implied notion, which this thesis will affirm, is that Morris's patterns and prose translate the visual

[10] Patricia Crown, 'A Language That All Can Understand: William Morris, William Hogarth and The Decorative Arts', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 8, (1988), 5-13 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/08.1Autumn1988/AU88.8.1.Crown.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022] (p.10-11).

forms of the natural world into patterns and fantasies. Pattern is not functional but is imbued with the same communicative, dreamlike qualities of fantasy. Ray Watkinson alludes to a similar effect, arguing that the romances, treated in isolation from Morris's other writing, are composed in a specific mode which allows for them to be seen as the 'verbal equivalent of the leisurely ornament he was then designing for his Kelmscott Press'.[11] Just as 'a wallpaper should be able to turn a room into a bower, a refuge, without insisting on its presence in the room with us',; through its character of ornament and pattern the design can instigate a temporary departure into the fantasy realm.[12] This is the effect of pattern in the romances: they institute the fantasy.

Another critic who remarks upon the connection between Morris's patterns and a sense of narrative is Elizabeth Carolyn Miller. Focusing on the political meaning of his patterns, she states:

> Replication is a key feature across William Morris's work and thought in the decorative arts and the art of the book. Patterns of rhythmic, repeating structures, mostly botanical in form, populate the surfaces of his designs, and while Morris and his subsequent critics have frequently discussed the affective quality of this formal emphasis on replication, there has been less discussion of its politics.[13]

For Miller, the nature of replication in Morris's patterns is indicative of his deep-seated political convictions: repeating forms manifest socialistic commentary. She considers A.S. Byatt's account of Morris's ostensible mathematical formalism and the feelings she experienced upon noting the presence of the Fibonacci sequence in a pattern:

> I remember being overcome with delight when I first realised how rigorously the geometry of plants worked among the apparently accidental forms of particular flowers or leaves. There are plants which grow according to the Fibonacci spiral - 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, etc. - which always seemed to me a peculiarly human construction - each number being

[11] Raymond Watkinson, *William Morris As Designer* (Studio Vista, London: 1967), p.26.
[12] Watkinson (1967), p.51.
[13] Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, 'William Morris, Print Culture, and the Politics of Aestheticism', *Modernism/modernity* 15 (2008) 477-502 <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/article/254139> [accessed 16 July 2022] (p.144).

> the sum of the previous two numbers - and not a growth pattern at all. In the Honeysuckle and the Willow Boughs the feeling of free growth is contained in the geometrical repetitions.[14]

Based on this remark, Miller argues that if Morris's use of replication and patterns can 'evoke such a feeling' of delight in Byatt, then 'can they not also evoke a politics?'[15] Byatt's delight is not rooted in the mere apprehension of prettiness or acclaim for the visual feat of the ornament, but has a somewhat intellectual foundation in the mathematical awareness of geometric laws and biological growth encoded in the pattern. Prompted by Byatt's critical and informed expression of 'delight', Miller treats this as a precedent for mapping other disciplines onto Morris's patterns to access their meaning. Her approach projects political narrative onto the designs. She argues that Morris made 'a connection between the rhythms of labor and life in a socialist arrangement of society and the rhythms and patterns of his replicated designs'.[16] According to Miller, utopianism, which fuses the literary and the political in wishful narrative building, undoubtedly demonstrated in Morris's *News From Nowhere*, can be seen expressed in his patterns. Just as a utopia is marked by an overall sense of social design and harmony, these qualities can easily be applied to a reckoning of Morris's patterns. Yet, couched in a discussion of Morris's revolutionary ideals and his printing work at Commonweal, his own socialist newspaper, Miller's argument about pattern devotes little space to Morris's actual patterns and their alleged political signification. Morris's patterns themselves are treated as second to Miller's own general sense of pattern as a system comparable to a political order in her criticism. She reduces the essence and address of pattern to 'structured replications', thus evading the necessity to dwell on the actual nature of patternedness itself. Instead, pattern is being referred to as merely one of its characteristics (its ability to repeat) in such a way that this singular sense of replication seems to

[14] A. S. Byatt, *Peacock and Vine: On William Morris and Mariano Fortuny* (Knopf, New York: 2016) p.107.
[15] Miller, (2008), p.145.
[16] Miller, (2008), p.146.

become representative of the whole nature of pattern. It is this limited attitude towards pattern that then allows for easy political equations. This is not to say that these critical strides are flawed or misguided, rather that they miss the fullness of the pattern and its characterful, intellectual, and fanciful scope. No doubt, Morris's aspirations for an ideal society can be likened to his arrangement of botanical forms in ideal order, but it cannot be so that political symbolism is the extent of Morris's pattern-designing. It is of note that Miller does not devote much critical space to the romances which, unlike Morris's real political feats of *News from Nowhere* and *A Dream of John Ball*, have no immediately explicit political content.

However, other critics do feature the romances at length in considerations of Morris's politics. For example, Owen Holland's lengthy assessment of Morris's writing approaches his prose through the specific lens of socialistic utopianism.[17] And Phillippa Bennett's extensive account of the romances in her book *Wonderlands* explores Morris's social vision in great detail. It is through his depiction of the body, use of the sublime and magical landscape, and notions of retreating from society and the home that Bennett considers the role of 'wonder' in demarcating the realisation of Morris's political ideals. She persuasively argues that the romances are not, as it may seem at first glance, literary curiosities that are awkwardly appended to the long and serious career of a successful businessman and prominent socialist. Bennett powerfully suggests that the romances are culminating texts that are a remarkably apposite concluding note to his corpus. For Bennett, the sense of continuity between Morris's career and the late romances is attained through the consistency of Morris's political spirit and the ways in which his earlier socialist fervour permeates the landscape and characters of the romances. This takes her criticism into an

[17] Owen Holland, *William Morris's Utopianism: Propaganda, Politics and Prefiguration* (Palgrave, London: 2017).

in-depth consideration of feminism, socialism and intimations of eco-criticism. This thesis will likewise illustrate how the romances are the most natural and coherent development of Morris's previous thought and ideals, however; whereas Bennett illustrates this through exploring political continuities, here it will be demonstrated that it is through the spirit of design, pattern and fantasy that the truly characterful and consistent facets of Morris's identity and vision endures in the romances. The romances are the culmination of a lifelong developed style: one of pattern.

Thus, it is less so in her focus on politics that her work is most suggestive for the purposes of this thesis, but in the notion of congruity with his previous works. Additionally, the primacy placed on the sensation of 'wonder' in her account is also of note. She says:

> We must understand them as stories which ask us as readers to be open to the experience of wonder and to engage purposefully in the act of wondering. To reclaim the last romances thus demands simultaneously a reclamation of the value and the necessity of wonder, and a renewed understanding of its function as a social and cultural as well as an individual phenomenon.[18]

Wonder, the primary emotional experience explored in Bennett's criticism, is explored as a potent political device, highlighting the revelry in realised ideals and being used to affirm Morris's political vision. However, it is also readily applicable to a consideration of pattern. Wonder is a more critically ungraspable response to prose than other emotions might be (such as joy, fear, suspicion, curiosity, sorrow) as it is necessarily contingent on a sense of mystery and encodes an implicit sense of fantasy. By its very nature, wonder is indicative of the inexpressible. The experience of the sublime, a key instigator of wonder that Bennett notes in the romances, gestures to the romances as the expression of a visual reality that is beyond the scope of normality. She argues that the elevation or even escape from normality that Morris achieves in his landscapes is

[18] Phillippa Bennett, *Wonderlands: The Last Romances of William Morris* (Peter Lang: 2015), p.5.

politically motivated. Yet, another understanding of this is that to wonder at the romances is to subscribe to their pervasive and affecting natures as fantasies (an idea that is to a degree compatible with a sense of utopianism in the romances). Curiously, the term 'fantasy' is absent from Bennett's criticism. There is a sense in which the political freighting of Bennett's other terminology and arguments would seem somewhat incongruous alongside explicit notions of fairy stories and fancy. 'Wonder' is seemingly used as a straddling term that resists the complete acknowledgement of the fantastical in the romances but does speak to the potent emotional, visual and narrative effects of Morris's use of the romance form. However, in the consideration of pattern that will be presented here fantasy cannot be overlooked. The emphasis on 'wonder' goes a great way to implying the significance of the fantastical in Morris's works but it is worthy of outright address. An experience of 'wonder' is indicative of the success of Morris's patterns. Indeed, all of Morris's patterns aspire to the emotional response of 'wonder' through his affecting and striking feats of visual and verbal configuration, conforming material and image into inextricable, yet still blossoming, order. Images or patterns that inspire wonder are not moments of mere signification (for example, of political symbolism, gesturing to an ideology). They signal to themselves, calling the attention of the reader's mind and eye, crafting epochs of design in which Morris's fantasy world can be delighted.

Fantasy and Pattern: The Spirit of Design and Definitions

Neither the terms 'fantasy' or 'pattern', both of which are central to this argument, have strictly designated material or critical fields of reference. There is no one medium to which these terms can be applied exclusively; the art critic, the literary critic, the psychologist and the philosopher all have uses for these terms, as does the layperson in day-to-day conversation. This breadth of

usage somewhat complicates the application of both terms. This is especially true in this consideration of Morris, a man actively engaged in the craft and perpetuation of both fantasy and pattern in a range of media.

When considered in a piece of literary criticism such as this, in the first instance 'fantasy', is indicative of a specific genre of literary works which conform to certain expectations and tropes: prose such as that by J. R. R Tolkien, H. G. Wells, and H. P Lovecraft exemplify this, and critics such as Brian Attebery and Michael Saler explore at length the particular requirements and qualities of literary works that are formulated as such.[19] Even works that predate the critical recognition of the genre and uptick in output of works written in the twentieth century can be co-opted into a sense of belonging to the genre through exploring their precursory, anticipatory styles and features. This being said, it is not the purpose of this thesis to propose an over-arching and exhaustive definition of the *genre* of fantasy. Rather, this account will seek to offer an acute critical lens onto fantasy, as it is expressed in the late prose romances of William Morris, seeking, applying, and appreciating the specific role pattern plays in Morris's distinctive fantasy vision. Further exploring the reaches of its definition outside of genre, when considered in the singular, 'a fantasy', the scope of its applicability is radically broadened to include psychological experience, aspiration and dream. A fantasy does not have to be a formally expressed entity but is an experience that requires as little as thought and sentiment alone. A daydream, for example, falls into the category of psychological fantasy. It is a narrative constructed in the mind that extracts features of day-to-day reality and invigorates them with fanciful and potentially

[19] Brian Attebery, *Stories about Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth* (Oxford; Oxford University Press: 2014); Michael Saler*, As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality* (Oxford; Oxford University Press: 2012).

supernatural circumstances; daydreams lift you out of reality and into a secondary world of imagination that is nonetheless derivative of the primary world.

Furthermore, its adjectival form 'fantastical', helps to further express the full meaning of the term. To find something fantastical is to be moved into wonder, delight, and curiosity by many of its features including: its character; its believable unbelievability; the uncanny coherence of its charming motifs; its specific visual character of craft; its intricacy and intrigue; its sense of mystery and the narrative that accounts for or shrouds that mystery; the sense that it has instituted an elevation from the natural, normal, quotidian into the supernatural, the idealised, the dreamlike; and an overall sense of its design. Fantasy is thus more than a mere prescriptive genre that can only be used as a categorising term but comes to represent a realm or quality that is replete with its own essence and character and has reach, influence and potentialities across every discipline. A work or experience of fantasy can be described as such by the acknowledgment of the presence of the specific character and nature of the fantastical.

'Pattern' likewise has a wide scope of definition. In the first instance 'pattern' is a preliminary design or prototype. Secondly, 'pattern' is a formalised repeating design that is a complete work of art or apprehended visual feat. Lastly, 'pattern' is an esoteric descriptor that recognises a sense of congruity or continuity across behaviour, vision, language, interaction, and nature; this is a far more conceptual definition, whereas the former two dwell more on the specific artistic, textile applications of the term.

What unites both terms is their requirement for design in their formulation. However, both exceed the mere act and status of designing and of being a design. In fact, when a pattern exceeds mere design, it ascends to fantasy. And when fantasy exceeds design, it ascends to pattern. A crucial point of similarity between the terms is the sense in which they describe two temporal phases of the creation of a work of art or piece of writing; they designate the initial, sketching (mentally and perhaps literally) and designing phase of the final work and the finished product itself. Furthermore, fantasy and pattern are implicit characteristics. One could easily view a Morris wallpaper or read one of the romances and walk away without any explicit awareness or experience of pattern or fantasy. But to the attuned eye, the walls papered in 'Pimpernel' effuse fantasy through its patterned scrolls and flowers and the fantasy narrative folded in the pages of *The Well at World's End* lauds its own patternedness. The sense of pattern or fantasy is innately intuited as opposed to empirically assessed.

Tolkien, an authority on fantasy, proposes an extensive definition of fantasy in his essay *On Fairy Stories* and the role played by craft in this account is evocative and suggestive. Tolkien himself acknowledged the debt he owed to Morris. Fellow Oxford men, enthusiasts of Icelandic sagas, medievalism, and both fantasy writers, there is a compelling case to made for the similarities between the two and thus the critical payoff of considering them alongside one another. Tolkien refers to the chief challenge facing the fantasy writer as the requirement to create a world and text in which there is a conceivable and convincing 'inner consistency of reality'. In the terms of this thesis, this struggle is for the establishment of a world in prose that is sustained through and for a sense of patternedness. Pattern demands this same sense of 'inner consistency' and perpetuates it across its planes in such a way that its order appears not only inherent but compulsive.

Tolkien discusses how:

> Fantasy thus, too often, remains undeveloped; it is and has been used frivolously, or only half-seriously, or merely for decoration: it remains merely 'fanciful.' Anyone inheriting the fantastic device of human language can say the green sun. Many can then imagine or picture it. But that is not enough — though it may already be a more potent thing than many a "thumbnail sketch" or "transcript of life" that receives literary praise. To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few attempt such difficult tasks. But when they are attempted and in any degree accomplished then we have a rare achievement of Art: indeed narrative art, story-making in its primary and most potent mode.[20]

The sense of design and pattern that the romances espouse firmly situates Morris as a writer of fantasy in Tolkien's terms. Here, fantasy is seen as the elevation of ordinary objects or motifs from the primary world (reality) into a secondary world (the world created by the writer) in which their radically idealised or enchanted states are believable, affecting, and captivating. Tolkien does not call for the suspension or disregard of disbelief but for utter and crafted active belief. His example of the 'green sun' is compelling. A 'green sun' cannot be termed fantastical if the world around it does not affirm the possibility for its believable greenness. The landscape constructed in the fantasy's prose then must be convincingly designed so as to fully account for the greenness of the sun and affirm a visual fluency in which the green sun is not only acceptable but fully congruent and contributes to the wonder and sublimity of the scene. It must be akin enough to the primary world in the sense that the new prose world, like ours, has *a* sun, but it must also feature enough of a sense of the uncanny and the supernatural in order for the green glow of its rays to not appear ludicrous or childish. Crucially, it is not the statement 'green sun' that marks the departure into fantasy but the construction of a world around the 'green sun' that affirms the believability of the sun being green in the first place which is the true hallmark of achieved fantasy. As Tolkien points out, this is quite the feat and is to be aspired to by all fantasy writing. Pattern is a convincing apparatus for the creation of such a belief inspiring landscape.

---

[20] J. R. R. Tolkien, *On Fairy Stories* <https://coolcalvary.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/on-fairy-stories1.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022] (p.24).

Calling 'human language' itself a 'fantastic device' implies the profound capacity of language to attain fantasy; the epithet, 'fantastic device' not only lauds language as incredible and great (in one sense of the term 'fantastic'), but points to language's status as a method through which fantasy is attained or to the conjuring, delightful potential for fantasy that language possesses. To express how hard it is to produce good fantasy writing, Tolkien describes the act of designing such a world as an 'elvish craft'. 'Elvish' is naturally indicative of the fantastical with its connotations of magic and the cultural tradition of fairy stories that feature elves and pixies. Tolkien's own elves in *The Lord of the Rings* are great proponents of impressively intricate craft and enchantment, thus his use of 'elvish' here gestures to the sense that the fantasy writer transcends humble humanity in his prose. There is a quality of successful fantasy prose that is in itself, regardless of its subject matter, magical. That Tolkien compares fantasy writing to 'craft' is also significant. As already explored, Morris's writing is often habituated in criticism as a cognate of his various craft skills. This metaphor suggests the emphasis on design in the conception of fantasy; much as the craftsman labours intensively over the particular details and qualities of his work before even commencing the physical work, so too must the fantasy writer conjure his narrative world with as much forethought and attentiveness to its intricacies. Likewise, the metaphor also indicates the particular status of a prose fantasy as a craft object. Both conceptually and literally (in the case of the Kelmscott editions), Morris's romances are craft artefacts.

Tolkien reiterates his term 'elvish craft', stating that 'to the elvish craft, Enchantment, Fantasy aspires.'[21] Here he makes his likening of craftsman-like writing to magic more explicit; it is an aspiration to 'Enchantment'. The capitalisation of the term emphasises the sense that to Tolkien, 'Enchantment' is a creative act accessible through fantasy writing. A form of magic that not only

[21] Tolkien, p.26.

conjures a sense of delight and rapture in mysticism and mystery, 'Enchantment' is a verbal term too; it is incantational. Not only can one be enchanted as an emotional response, but Tolkien implies that there is a sense in which good fantasy prose is in some ways a spell that the writer or elvish craftsman casts in his verbal designs. To be enchanted is to fully subscribe to the fantasy and Tolkien's equation of an 'elvish craft' with 'enchantment' suffuses craft and literary endeavour in the pursuit of ideal fantasy. This speaks profoundly to Morris's late romances.

The totality of Morris's patterned vision in the romances is what contributes to their affecting believability and thus, their 'Enchantment' and identification as fantasies. Where Tolkien apprehends 'Enchantment', in the case of Morris this can be exchanged for or seen as synonymous with pattern. Thus, from Tolkien's statement that fantasy aspires to enchantment, the argument in the specific context of Morris is that fantasy aspires to pattern. Read alternately, good, achieved fantasy is pattern. The world-building capacity of pattern is abundant. The adoption of motifs into the orderliness of pattern affects a sense of design that is beyond the scope of the quotidian and can only be explained as an instance of fantasy.

How then can Tolkien's theory of the 'green sun' and the elvish design of fantasy be directly applied to Morris's works to elucidate the role of pattern in the attainment of fantasy? In the first instance his textile patterns and their status as fantasy can be addressed. Take Morris's 'Pink and Rose' wallpaper. These flowers and foliage are undeniably evocative of real botanic forms; Morris's fidelity to detail and the fluidity of his line forms a pattern that is truly roselike. Yet, these are without question the roses of fantasy, of pattern; without deferring to the abstraction of stringent geometry (as is characteristic of pattern-designers such as Owen Jones), Morris designs and prints roses that are not of the primary world. They are so intricately imbricated in the overall

sense of design and their forms contorted in such a masterful way that we cannot find these roses in the primary world – we recognise them in their fantasy, in their pattern. Then take Morris's 'Willow Bough'. A far simpler pattern, yet perhaps this simplicity demonstrates the inception of fantasy through design all the more clearly for this. There can be no doubt upon looking at the sinewy, lithe trailing branches, the slim, dextrous, curling leaves, and the shadowy effect of the layered plates of printing that create the sense of botanic reflections dancing on water, that these figures are indeed willow boughs. However, the particular configuration of each individual bough as it moves through the pattern as though wild and free, yet is rigidly deferent to the demands of the repeat which allows it to only effloresce in one exact way, affirms that these boughs are not the same as those of the primary world. The pattern is a fantasy of willow boughs. These are the forms and stories of nature. But they are by no means natural. Thus, the motifs of the pattern have a clear relation to the figures they are derived from reality yet we are acutely aware of the fact that they are not direct replications or photo-realistic depictions. Morris stylises his motifs yet, the reason we believe them to be roses and willow-boughs is the overall configuration of the pattern as a whole. The pattern itself wills our belief in their rosiness and likeness to willow-boughs. The motifs are enchanted into the overall scheme of the pattern and it is their submission to this sense of design that they become roses and boughs of fantasy.



Fig. 2 Pink and Rose



Fig. 3Willow Bough

This same effect is nowhere more beautifully exemplified in Morris's prose than by Ursula's and Ralph's drinking of the Well in *The Well at World's End*. Drinking from the Well elevates them from their original state of humanity; thus, they ascend from the constraints of reality to the enchantment of fantasy. Before drinking of the Well, both are indeed noble, upstanding, admirable characters. They are recognisably examples of humanity (albeit, the best of humanity) of the primary world. Yet drinking from the Well makes them into a version of humanity that pervades only the fantasy world – they are no longer from their primary world. They cease to be scarred; their goodness is amplified and their beauty magnified. Such elevation of their original state distorts their reality to the degree of fantasy; they become firmly rooted in the patterned fantasy as they can no longer be seen to be of their original world in their near-perfection. However, it is crucial that they are not granted immortality from the Well. To do so would estrange them too far from their original humanity; their subjectivity to the human condition of birth, life, and death is an undeniable necessity of the believability of the fantasy. Longevity however, alters these figures to the perfect degree – one which elevates them above the

constraints and reality of the primary world, but does not utterly sever these ties or absolve them of their compelling humanity. Here, Ralph and Ursula acquire an unprecedented abundance of life which is only attainable in pattern and fantasy. Their longevity is the facet of their design as characters that completes their identification with the pattern of the romance; this patternedness attained, the romance continues, telling of their return journey to Upmeads, retracing steps, reinvigorating landscapes, and composing the ranks of battle. Drinking of the Well does not end the romance, but is the culminating moment of the fantasy's design which foregrounds the romantic and military successes that await Ralph on his return journey. Morris dramatizes the process of enchantment and ascendancy to patternedness in this episode. Ralph and Ursula become, like the Lady of Abundance before them, full realisations of patternedness and fantasy in the story and landscape they pervade. The first drinker of the Well we encounter, the Lady of Abundance's name is indicative of her patternedness; 'abundance' points to perpetuity, profusion and intensity. These are qualities shared by Morris's visual patterns which are replete with effusing scrolls, interminable lines, and repeats that are ceaselessly pursuant of one another.

Some hints on pattern-design from Morris

It is important to dwell on Morris's own axioms in reference to successful pattern design. One of the necessities of the practice of pattern-designing, explored and asserted strongly in his lecture *Some Hints on Pattern-Designing*, is the deference of the pattern-designer to the particular material in which he is working. He notes of wallpaper design:

> the temptation to design a pattern as we might do for a piece of woven goods, where the structure is boldly shown, and the members strongly marked; but such a pattern done in a cheap material will be apt to look over-ambitious, and, being stretched out flat on the wall, will lead the eye overmuch to its geometrical lines, and all repose will be lost. What we have to do to meet this difficulty is to create due paper-stainers' flowers and leaves, forms that are obviously fit for printing with a block; to mask the construction of our pattern enough to prevent people from counting the repeats of our pattern, while we manage to lull their curiosity to trace it out; to be careful to cover our ground equably. If

> we are successful in these two last things, we shall attain a look of satisfying mystery, which is an essential in all patterned goods, and which in paper hangings must be done by the designer, since, as aforesaid, they fall into no folds, and have no special beauty of material to attract the eye.[22]

The pattern designed for wallpaper must necessarily be different to the one designed for a tapestry; the pattern for a stained-glass window, must differ from the design for a chintz and this is directly due to the difficulties and qualities posed by the individual materials. Whereas the wallpaper is constrained by its flimsiness and flatness, and the risk of shadows from the changing light, the tapestry is substantial, draped and animate but is constrained by its weight and thickness of line. Likewise, the stained-glass window must defer to its lead lines and functionality as a source of light and the chintz must acknowledge the lightness of its warp and weft and accordingly feature greater resolution and detail. Now this is all well and good for the pattern-designer to acknowledge and implement in his work. However, there is no precedent set by Morris in this lecture for how to design a pattern in prose. What can be said of the constraints (and reciprocal advantages and strengths) of prose as a material? The most obvious and crucial constraint is the lack of visual immediacy and palpability of prose – the patterns conjured in prose cannot ever be directly apprehended but belong to the domain of the imagination and thus the inner eye. What then are the advantages of prose in the creation of pattern; what can a pattern in prose do or feature that a wallpaper never could? Prose affords pattern the opportunity to embrace changeability and alteration; whereas the plates of a block printed pattern remain the exact same with every repeat they print, only ever altering when a new colour scheme is brought to the press, in prose Morris can animate and alter every iteration of the pattern and landscape with new detail and perspectives with ease and flair. Prose also enables Morris to grant his patterns a sense of time and history; the landscapes in the romances are never static captures of a scene in one

[22] William Morris, 'Some Hints on Pattern-designing' in *The Collected Works of William Morris: With Introductions by his Daughter May Morris* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press: 2012), pp.175-205, p.191.

moment (like how 'Strawberry Thief' chronicles the specific moment of thrushes creeping underneath the fruit nets in the gardens of Kelmscott Manor in 1883). Instead they possess a historical weight and allusion to all that has occurred within the narrative from ancient history to the present moment. Finally, in prose Morris is able to more effectively include and explore the whole scope of the sensory experience. Whereas a wallpaper can only address the visual sense, and a chintz is only capable of appealing to vision and touch, prose and the descriptive capabilities it possesses can produce a far more stimulating experience and induct this into its patterns.

The Thesis Structure

This thesis considers *The Wood Beyond the World*, *The Well at World's End*, and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* and the relationships between fantasy and pattern as illustrated within them.[23] This selection of texts has been made at the exclusion of *The Story of the Glittering Plain* and *The Sundering Flood*, two other examples of Morris's late prose writing which are sometimes treated alongside the romances of my selection in criticism. The choice of this trio has been made for numerous reasons. Primarily, these romances have been selected as they represent the fullest and most developed patterns and are thus most suited to this consideration of Morris's mode of patterned fantasy writing. This is not to say that the other texts lack this same style, rather that it is less pronounced or complete in them. In the case of *The Sundering Flood*, there is a compelling sense of pattern in its landscape which is defined by the body of water across which the narrative is conducted. However, Morris died before completing a final draft of this particular romance. Whilst it was indeed published, the edition was based on Morris's first draft of the romance. As noted by David Latham and May Morris, Morris was a prolific editor of his

[23] William Morris, *The Wood Beyond the World* (London; Ballantine Books: 1969); William Morris, *The Well at World's End* (Gloucestershire; Alan Sutton Publishing: 1996); William Morris, *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (London; Ballantine Books: 1972).

own works and made alterations to his prose with an eye for acute detail.[24] As the critical approach to patterning in prose is so contingent on such passages of Morris's prose that are composed with such deliberation and intricacy, it would not be accurate or just to subject the first draft of a romance to such scrutiny and expect to yield a comprehensive or representative account of the operation of pattern within it. Furthermore, the Kelmscott edition of *The Sundering Flood* was executed without his input, demonstrating again the sense that it is not a complete or sole work of Morris's. The three romances in the middle of Morris's late-prose output are thus the most apt texts to address in this first consideration of Morris's patterning and fantasy. There is certainly scope for this to be expanded to include other works by Morris, but this thesis will benefit from its tighter focus on its three selected works.

There is also an implicit sense in which these three romances are somehow treated by Morris himself as a set. The superficial alliterative effect of their titles is not necessarily the most intellectually profound feature to comment upon, however, the use of 'W' across all three titles draws attention to the other similarities in the configuration of the titles. *The Wood Beyond the World*, *The Well at World's End* and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* are titles which, in the first instance, identify a fantastical entity (the Wood, the Well and the Water) and then situates this within the wider landscape of the fantasy world. They demarcate the fantastical motif within the pattern from which the chief sense of enchantment, mystery, and delight is derived in the narrative. The wood that is on the edge of the quotidian world, the well that is at the end of the world, and the water at the heart of the land are the features that inform the structural organisation of the patterned space of the fantasy landscape. The spaces that surround these objects of fantasy

[24] Latham, (1985), p.10; May Morris, 'Experiment' in *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press: 2012), pp.373-398, pp.374-5.

are thus seen as contingent on their relational position and interaction with the narrative's central motif, thus affirming the configuration of space in patterned terms in their titles.

The selection of these three romances will also contribute to the overall structure of the thesis, as the consecutive romances chart the development of Morris's prose-pattern style. *The Wood Beyond the World*, the first of the three, represents Morris's first successful stride into writing and composing fantasy with a pronounced sense of patternedness and design. Addressed chiefly in the first chapter, the quality of pattern achieved in this romance is to a great extent reliant on the figuration of actual craft objects. Pattern is manifested by Morris here with a more limited definition of what pattern actually is. The sense of pattern, as a visual form of ornamentation, is what is most readily accessible in this first romance. The textile objects, clothing, and armour that Morris plants within the romance represent pattern most frequently here. *The Well at World's End*, the next romance, attains a new level of expressing pattern in prose. Fantasy ceases to be reliant on objects of magic and textile pattern but is encoded in the landscape and narrative structure as a whole. Thus, Chapter 2 considers narrative construction and the ways in which pattern is a compelling device in this process. Chapter 3 is mainly focused on *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*. This romance applies the techniques of the first two but builds upon them radically. The most affecting application of a sense of pattern in this romance is found in Morris's use of character. Fantasy is most affectingly achieved here through the pairings, trios, and the perpetuated or subverted narrative conventions of character.

Chapter 1

Fabric and Fabrication: Textiles and Artefacts in the Fantasy Landscape

This chapter will consider the instances in the romances in which Morris directly engages with craft objects. These objects, such as clothing, armour and fabric are rich features of the romances' texture and visual landscapes. Such artefacts are the most immediate and easily apprehended examples of the embodiment of Morris's patterned literary consciousness, being as they are,

moments imbued with conscious design. Textile and craft objects that adorn the landscapes and bodies of the late romances constitute concentrated sites of Morris's broader design and thus come to embody Morris's patterned vision. As established, the definitive characteristic of effective fantasy literature, especially that of Morris, is an overarching sense of design. Thus, as instances of consciously evoked craftsmanship which contribute to the design of Morris's patterned landscapes and narratives, these objects of craft, detail, texture and beauty affirm Morris's status as a writer of and with pattern.

Criticism such as J. Hillis Miller's *Ariadne's Thread* and Jessica Hemmings' *The Textile Reader* makes great strides towards understanding the intricate relationship between text and textiles – the shared etymology of these terms being an important point of analysis in exploring the symbiosis or similarity between these forms of expression for both critics. Indeed, there is a convincing sense that textiles can be used to illuminate the literary effects of our inclination towards linear, threaded thinking within the narrative structure. Equally, the consciousness we express verbally in texts can likewise be seen expressed in textile modes, as the artist and critic Anni Albers argues in her essays on weaving.[25] The critical impact of allowing texts and textiles to play off one another is significant and demands further, more detailed application. Reframing the compelling critical work of Miller and Hemmings, this chapter will use pattern design as a way of introducing a greater degree of specificity into their broadly conceptual textile literary scholarship. The anthology compiled by Hemmings and narrative theory of Miller collectively explore how we can read textiles and how we can use textiles to read. By making in-depth reference to both Morris's prose and his textile works, the practice established by Miller and Hemmings can be taken one step further and the identification of the operation of pattern as a

[25] Anni Albers, *Anni Albers: On Designing* (Middleton, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961).

unique intermediary between texts and textiles that operates within both forms and triggers their effects equally can be achieved. In the case of Morris, the deeply textured and rich forms of the words on the page and the craft artefacts which populate his physical workshops and literary landscapes require contextualizing in the practise of pattern-design. Merely to acknowledge the intellectual significance of cloth, embroidery, craft and thread is not sufficient here. In the late romances, evocations of the textile directly signal pattern and fantasy. Simply, pattern is the ideal mode to which both the text and the textiles of Morris's corpus aspire and it thus requires close attention and study, particularly in these hybrid moments where Morris is crafting textile objects in his prose.

The late romances are composed with sartorial flair: clothing, fabric, embroidery, weaving, armour, and physical appearance are constant preoccupations for Morris's narrative voices and the characters pervading his landscapes. Morris's narrative voice divulges a marked revelry in such features. In the romances, there is an acute attentiveness to crafted artefacts that surpasses mere passing description; Morris makes conscious effort to conjure textile and thus textural details throughout them, and further treats them as miniature epochs of descriptive, patterned repose. As we shall see, artefacts such as these are never made to feel incidental. It is rather that their presence is compulsively sought after or fixated upon by the narrative voices. John Helmer states that in *News From Nowhere*, one of the prose narratives to precede the romances*:*

> we are constantly aware of the press of objects in the world to which the narrator comes: he interrupts his conversation or delays his narrative in order to introduce them singly and in detail. To each human movement or to the performance of a task however simple, the narrator adds in his description a catalogue of its implements, until even the

> movement itself has been so slowed by the detail of adjectival interruptions and interpolations that it takes on the appearance and pattern of an object itself.[26]

This observation is as readily applicable to the romances as it is to Morris's utopian novel. In the romances, even at moments of tragedy, or perhaps especially at such moments, Morris pauses to note the presence of certain objects of beauty and craft. As Ralph comes across the tragic scene of the Lady of Abundance's death in *The Well at World's End*, the narrative voice is at first captivated not by the bloody and lifeless body of the beloved but the crafted objects adorning her killer:

> But even as he came up on to that pleasant place he saw all in a moment of time; that there stood Silverfax anigh the Cave's mouth, and the Lady lying on the earth anigh the horse; and betwixt her and him the Knight of the Sun stood up stark, his shining helm on his head, the last rays of the setting sun flashing in the broidered image of his armouries. (v.i p.228)

And once closer to the Lady, the 'press of objects' is reaffirmed as the narrative lens is redirected from 'the blood [...] flowing fast from a great wound in her breast' to 'a wreath of meadow-sweet on her red hair, and a garland of eglantine about her girdle-stead' and the fact that she had 'turned the bezels of her finger-rings outward, for joy of that meeting' (v.i p.228). The temporal instance of sunset is used to animate the 'helm' and 'broidered image' – in a scene of death, the narrative voice draws us to note the beautiful transcendent moment of animate craft before the mortal human body, the narrative action's focus, is acknowledged. It is striking to imagine the light of sunset dancing amidst the golden threads of this heraldic embroidery. Not only are we presented with the objects themselves, but in a moment of narrative action, we see them enlivened and

[26] John Helmer, 'The Prettiness of Utopia', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 4, (1979), pp.4-19 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/04.1Winter1979/W79.4.1.Helmer.pdf> (p.4).

ennobled by the setting sun. The embroidered sun on the knight's armour is a patterned iteration of the sun itself. Understanding pattern as a composed fantasy of objects or images, the 'flashing' embroidery on the Knight of the Sun appropriates the visual form of the sun and the effects of its light and 'last rays' and establishes a version of the sun that is only conceivable in the crafted landscape of Morris's text. Embroidery here institutes a moment of elevation from the secular or realist plane; the Knight's armoured body is enshrined in craft and pattern and despite Ralph's horror at the killing of his beloved, there is awe in the narrative voice as it conveys Ralph's own visual experience. The capacity of craft to attain transcendence and otherworldly beauty, even in moments of tragedy, is central to the narrative experience of the romances.

Observing this same effect, W. B Yeats, in his review of *The Well at World's End*, remarks that:

> In all his art one notices nothing more constant than the way in which [minute detail] heaps up, and often in the midst of tragedy, little details of happiness. This book is full of them, and there is scarcely a chapter in which there is not some moment for which one might almost give one's soul.[27]

The setting sun enlivening the embroidery on the killer of Ralph's lover is indeed one of many 'little details of happiness'. In the throes of tragedy, the beauty and poetry of embroidery in the colourful glory of sunset cannot be passed by; Morris's narrative eye is caught and hones in on the glimmering sights of pattern amidst the narrative. In some ways he is stolen from the story by them; they are irresistible and captivating but by no means distracting. They give another lens onto the tragedy; one in which pattern, beauty, and sense of design is emotionally instructive and visually compelling.

[27] W.B. Yeats, Review of 'The Well at World's End', *Bookman*, X, (1896) pp.415-417 <http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/YeatsWWE.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022] (p.417).

This effect is likewise seen in the Lady's tale of her life before meeting Ralph. In a moment of danger, awaiting execution after being found 'guilty of sorcery' (v.i p.199), she pauses in her account of events to describe the objects that populated and adorned the scene, 'the king in front of them, fully armed, his face hidden by his helm, and a royal surcoat over his hauberk beaten with his bearing, to wit, a silver tower on a blue sky bestarred with gold' (v.i p.200). Her attention, at this crucial moment, is held by craft, not her narrative fate. After the action resumes, it is again an artefact of beauty that interrupts the moment of potential execution and insurrection:

> just as the king was raising his sword, and his trumpet was lifting the brass to his lips, came a sound of singing, and there was come the Bishop and the Abbot of St. Peter's and his monks with him, and cross bearers and readers and others of the religious: and the Bishop bore in his hand the Blessed Host (as now I know it was) under a golden canopy, and he stood between the two companies and faced the king, while his folk sang loud about him. (v.i p.200)

The precipitous moment of conflict and death is bookended by descriptions of embroidered craft and the Eucharist. Both instances are moments of rupture in the narrative in which the action appears temporarily suspended; tied to 'the stake in the market place' (v.i p.199), the Lady's story departs from her immediate danger to dwell on the materials adorning her would-be-executor's body and their heraldic details. The physical forms and adornments of the king are instrumental devices in the crafting of the scene; they are not surface details but major constructive facets of the design. The heraldic embroidery affirms his mediaeval kingliness and thus makes the threat of the Lady's burning as a witch all the more palpable. The anger of the crowd and impending execution is interrupted by the Catholicized pageantry of the Bishop and 'Blessed Host'. At first glance, the inclusion of benediction or potentially a Corpus Christi parade

appears to simply be a quirk of Morris's medievalized landscape.[28] Indeed, the cessation of hostility and the pardoning of the Lady seem to emerge out of deference to the sacredness of the Eucharist; this divine, embodied presence, which is itself a site of transformative design, much like the embroidered canopy that shelters it, drastically reorganises the narrative trajectory of what is a potentially tragic scene.

Morris's lack of religious conviction – especially the fact he was never affiliated with the Catholic Church, the only Church in which the Incarnation is understood in such transubstantiate terms as demonstrated in this romance – complicates the sense to which we as readers can accept that the Eucharist is employed in solely Catholic and wholly reverent terms. There is a general inclination towards Catholic aesthetic references in the romances which has gone largely unremarked by criticism to date. Yet the effects of this religious imagery are not to be found in a theological reflection but in a consideration of design. Understanding craft artefacts and their significance in the design of Morris's fantasy prose provides an opportunity to understand what this Catholic sensitivity could actually mean or achieve. The effect certainly is not religious – Morris's fantasy societies, whilst featuring elements of the faith, are not positively transformed by this nor does the faith have any narrative significance. However, the visual attraction of the Catholic ritual, as instigated by the Oxford Movement for both Morris and his frequent collaborator Burne-Jones, is undeniable. The 'golden canopy' under which the Eucharist is held is a temporary crafted structure, carving out a space within the landscape to house this transcendent artefact which, at the time, the Lady did not know to be the 'Blessed Host.' Her attentiveness to it is not drawn from prior knowledge that the host is consecrated, or 'blessed', rather its status and presence as an artefact is affecting in its own right due to the textile canopy

[28] It is unclear as to what specific rite is being carried out here – the presentation of the Eucharist occurs at numerous points in the liturgical calendar and in standard modes of worship.

that demarcates it as something other. The arresting capacity of this sight gestures to the awe all of Morris's characters experience when faced with crafted objects of beauty: the Eucharist is in many ways a convincing analogue for Morris's craft objects and for understanding the transcendent capacity of his patterns to elevate the everyday or quotidian to the level of fantasy, magic, and ultimate design. In this sense, both the Eucharist and Morris's patterns operate as converted, elevated and designed entities. Just as the sun embroidered onto the Knight of the Sun's armour inducts the rays of light emanating from the sunset into a fantastical, patterned iteration of itself within the romance landscape, the 'Host' becomes 'Blessed' with the verbal consecration it undergoes and ceases to belong to, in Tolkien's terms, the 'primary world'. Tolkien's understanding of 'enchantment' is also compellingly applicable here. The right language, used by either priest or fantasy writer, is transcendent and this effect is most acutely apparent in the artefacts established by such moments. The little golden canopy of this scene forms an epoch of design and repose, one which is so compelling and affecting that it is the salvation of the Lady.

Morris's visual attraction to Catholicism in his medievalised landscapes not only prompts the discussion of the sacramental artefacts that feature in the romances but further allows for a consideration of the role of the designer and Morris's references to God and creation within them. Who is responsible for the design of bodies and artefacts is a question raised at numerous points in the romances. In *The Wood Beyond the World*, when he spies the Lady walking naked in the wood, Walter sees her 'in naught else save what God had given her of long, crispy yellow hair' (p.79). Emerging from the Well, Ralph 'stooped down as the ripple washed away from [Ursula], then said: "In sooth here is no mark nor blemish, but the best handiwork of God, as when he first made a woman from the side of the Ancient Father of the field of Damask"' (WWE v.ii p.97). And describing the Lady of Abundance to Ralph before he has happened

upon her, the priest he meets says 'I have seen her as God made her; and I shall tell thee that when he was about that work he was minded to be a craftsmaster; for there is no blemish about her that she should hide her at all or anywhere' (v.ii p.124). Accrediting God with these crafted bodies sheds lights on Morris as the writer; his character's harkening to divine craft necessarily gestures to his own crafting of them. Of course, Morris is not at any moment asserting that he is God, nor is he even Godly. But the transcendent capacity of pattern design as a literary mode is implied here. The acknowledgement of a Godly craftsman affirms that the figures of Morris's romances are elevated and designed figures within the fantasies as patterns.

Ralph's earnest compliment to Ursula as she is freshly bathed exacerbates the sense of God's acts of creation being related in the specific terms of craft, design and pattern. She is 'the best handiwork of God, as when he first made a woman from the side of the Ancient Father of the field of Damask.' Referencing Genesis and thus the fashioning of Eve from the rib of Adam in the Garden of Eden, Morris uniquely introduces textiles: the Garden of Eden is related as the 'field of Damask.' Damask, a silk jacquard fabric, is used to embody the landscape of the heavenly garden. Imbuing this moment of creation with textile zeal intimates that humanity bears a textile inheritance or ultimate drive to attain readmittance to a textile state. Understanding Eden, the ultimate cultural model of fantasy and idyll, as a field constituted of decorative fabric reveals the necessity of craft artefacts in Morris's narratives. As a model of bucolic landscapes and as a signifier of the crafted nature of bodies at the initial moment of human creation, this single image employed by Morris encodes his pattern impulse across all of the romances: to recreate the totality of the divine design of Eden in his own prose narratives.

Time, Transformation and Design

The sense of textiles being the ideal form to which the prose landscape aspires is further developed by Morris in the relationship he forges between time and textile craft. Birdalone's

experience of both embroidery and weaving is used by Morris to quantify time within *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*. When Birdalone begins embroidering her shoes and is then instructed to embroider for herself a whole new outfit, the relationship between her craft and the passage of time is stressed. When she begins it is March and her embroidered shoes feature 'oak-leaves done into them, and flowers and coneys and squirrels' (p.10). And at the end of her task:

> She had broidered the said gown with roses and lilies, and a tall tree springing up from amidmost the hem of the skirt, and a hart on either side thereof, face to face of each other. And the smock she had sewn daintily at the hems and the bosom with fair knots and buds. It was not past the middle of June, hot and bright weather (p.14).

Birdalone's embroidery reflects the seasonal change; her work in March figures 'oak-leaves' which start to appear in March, and as the seasons progress and move into summer, 'roses and lilies' appear concurrent with when they bloom. The passage of time is mediated by this process of embroidery. Similarly, when Birdalone waits at the Castle of the Quest for the return of the Knights and Virdis, Aurea and Atra, Morris describes this as 'Ten Days of Waiting Wear' (p.130). Of course, the '[wearing]' of time is simply is passage. However, this can also be understood as a reference to the clothing Birdalone wears for the duration of her 'waiting': black mourning attire. Furthermore, during this time, 'she took to her broidering again' (p.130). The act of waiting is quantified by a textile craft which acts a manifestation of the time that has elapsed. Morris also uses weaving in this way. The time Birdalone spends at the City of Five Crafts numbers five years, however, very little narrative time is expended here. The crafts she undertakes here stand as testament to the years she spends there. The significance of these artefacts and crafts within the landscape is not merely attained in visual terms, but they also occupy a temporal sway over the narrative and the pace at which it unfurls. They are not necessarily magical but they do have a temporal potency that is elevated beyond secular or non-crafted objects.

Objects of craft are powerful in the romances. In the king-making culminating episode of *The Wood Beyond the World,* clothing plays an instrumental and decisive narrative role. Presented with two forms of attire, Walter's narrative fate is contingent on the clothing he selects: 'For one was all of robes of peace, glorious and begemmed, unmeet for any save a great king; while the other was war-weed, seemly, well-fashioned, but little adorned; nay rather, worn and bestained with weather, and the pelting of the spear-storm' (p.217). The battered appearance of the armour seems to be described as though it were a facet of its design or creation. The 'robes of peace' are embellished and laden with gems and presumable embroidery. The armour is 'little adorned' in such a decorative sense; the texture on these objects is attained instead through lived experience: it is 'bestained with weather, and the pelting of the spear-storm.' 'Bestained' is a peculiar choice of adjective. The armour has not actually been stained in the sense of dye. Rust, corrosion and tarnishing are possible explanations of this effect; however, it can also be understood in a more figurative sense. The armour is imbued with the experience of battle and thus stained with narrative history, as well as being dented, scratched and damaged in its purpose of protecting the body of the wearer in battle. Thus, Walter's decision is between the decorative gown whose surface is populated with merely pretty adornments and an emblem of luxury, or the 'war-weed' which bears the signs of 'weather' and 'spear-storm' and is an embodiment of service and valour, thus is laden with experience of war. Choosing to don the suit of armour, the attire understood to denote kingliness in Stark-Wall, Walter is inducted into the traditional office of king. Pattern is at its most potent when derived from narrative and Walter's recognition of this is what makes him worthy of the throne. The narrative voice states that 'as he took up the helm, he noted that over its broad brown iron sat a golden crown' (p.217). Walter's preference for the armour is derived solely from an appreciation of its texture and imbricated history; the crown is not noted until after he has committed to don and inhabit the armour's historic, battle-won kingliness.

More complex than this episode of king-making is the transformation of the Maid. The Maid undertakes two forms of social elevation, both of which result in forms of queen-making. In the first instance she is transformed, through her own magical craft, into a pseudo-goddess, replete with Marian iconography, and in the second she becomes, as the wife of Walter, the Queen of Stark-Wall. What is striking is that the secondary occasion of transformation renders the former impossible; becoming Queen rids her of the magical capacity to enact the same enchantments that allowed her to originally convince the Bear people of her divinity. She asserts her status as a goddess by appropriating flowers, figures of nature, and working them into a supernatural craft object. Pattern converts. It elevates its figures into fantasies of themselves. This is what we see happening with Morris's use of flower clothing. The ordinary forms are elevated into a sublime, transcendent iteration of themselves. Later on, these same flowers them become immortalised in a secondary, non-magical mode – embroidery – after she becomes the Queen.

The first act of sartorial deification occurs when the Maid crafts the dress. This moment dramatizes the process of crafting garments:

> Then she fell to work, while Walter looked on; and she made a garland for her head of eglantine where the roses were the fairest; and with mingled flowers of the summer she wreathed her middle about, and let the garland of them hang down to below her knees; and knots of the flowers she made fast to the skirts of her coat, and did them for armrings about her arms. (p.173)

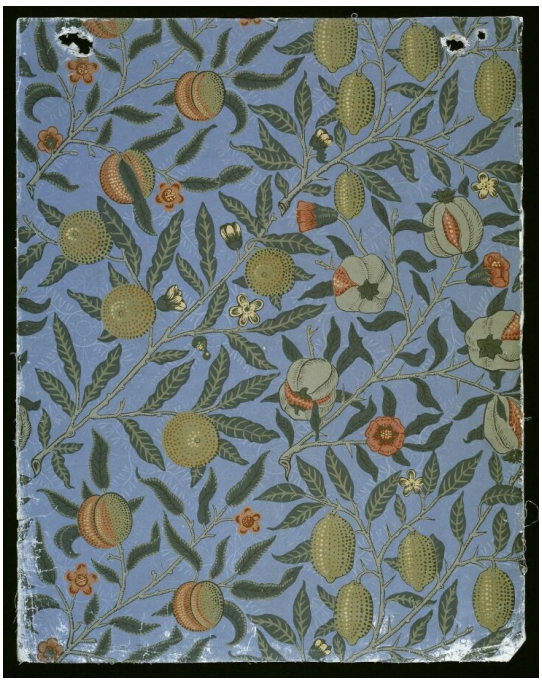


Fig. 5 Fruit

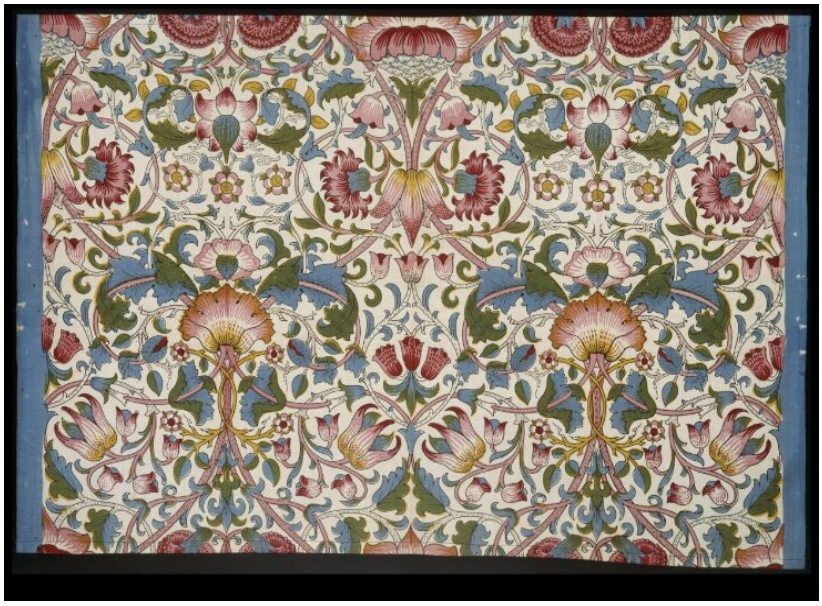


Fig. 4 Lodden

But this crafting of flowers into attire does not go far enough to assert the Maid's status as a goddess. Morris takes this episode one step further into the realms of compelling fantasy. Walter worries to the Maid that 'this flowery array of thine, in a few hours it shall be all faded and naught' (p.174). We are told that 'the meadow-sweet that hangeth from thy girdle-stead has waxen dull, and welted; and the blossoming eyebright that is for a hem to the little white coat of thee is already forgetting how to be bright and blue' (p.175). Morris's designs typically do not address the decay of the natural, rather they celebrate the fullness of bloom and life. For example, 'Fruit' depicts an array of fruits on the vine which are fresh and bursting; the moment of ripeness is preserved and repeated within the pattern. Similarly, in 'Lodden' every flower depicted in in full bloom; opening zealously and with full, bodied petals. Morris's patterns, as fantasies of the natural, do not leave time or space within the design for decay. Only the fullest moment of life and vitality is captured. Thus, this reference to wilting and fading in Morris's queen-making episode is notable. In its initial formulation, the dress the Maid dons is not a fully effective piece of fantasy design; susceptible to the decaying of time, the dress is still rooted in the ordinary world.

However, the Maid's magical intervention and revival institutes the elevation that fantasy design requires:

> She laughed at his word, and stood still, and looked back over her shoulder, while with her fingers she dealt with the flowers about her side like a bird preening his feathers. Then she said: Is it verily so as thou sayest? Look again! So he looked, and wondered; for lo! beneath his eyes the spires of the meadow-sweet grew crisp and clear again, the eyebright blossoms shone once more over the whiteness of her legs; the eglantine roses opened, and all was fresh and bright as if it were still growing on its own roots. (p.176)

What is also striking about the flower dress episode is that the dress is shown to die and be revived twice. It dies before Walter and then starts to wilt a second time in front of the Bear People. Thus, it is not only important that the Maid dons a beautiful flower dress, but that everyone witnesses her power to repeatedly convert the ordinary flowers and petals into an extraordinary, magically enduring garment that can only be comprehended in the terms of fantasy. Morris's description of the second floral revival is striking and beautiful:

> Lo then! as she spake, the faded flowers that hung about her gathered life and grew fresh again; the woodbine round her neck and her sleek shoulders knit itself together and embraced her freshly, and cast its scent about her face. The lilies that girded her loins lifted up their heads, and the gold of their tassels fell upon her; the eyebright grew clean blue again upon her smock; the eglantine found its blooms again, then began to shed the leaves thereof upon her feet; the meadow-sweet wreathed amongst it made clear the sweetness of her legs, and the mouse-ear studded her raiment as with gems. There she stood amidst of the blossoms, like a great orient pearl against the fretwork of the goldsmiths, and the breeze that came up the valley from behind bore the sweetness of her fragrance all over the Man-mote. (p.194)

In Morris's other patterns, the effects of time are impossible to express. His wallpapers for instance depict or muse upon the singular moment of a particular flower's blossoming. The design depicted here composed by the Maid is free of such temporal constraints and takes advantage of the added dimension that time contributes to the fantasy prose landscape. Enlivening the decaying flowers in this episode takes the ambition Morris held within his crafts and textiles to enliven the surface and bring depth and narrative to the flat wall to another level. Design is seen in perpetual action in the Maid's dress, dramatizing the process of pattern design. The flowers continually decay, thus gesturing to their natural formation, but are elevated again and again and drawn into a fantastical form. Morris's 'Spring Thicket' wallpaper both depicts budding lilies and has as its central motif a lily in full bloom, clearly attempting to gesture to the different stages of blooming but not quite getting there. It is not an overly successful pattern; the two different forms of lilies do not cohere within the pattern as it is clear that they are at different stages of life, and this difference between the main motifs is jarring and affects the fluidity of the overall composition. Yet, in Morris's prose description of the dress, the process of blooming is conveyed compellingly; the passage of time and its effect on the flowers becomes an asset in the design of the fantasy. The lilies that 'lifted up their heads' and let 'the gold of their tassels [fall] upon her' are animate within their design – an effect Morris's wallpapers can only gesture to in ineffective serialization. In possessing the ability to animate the moment of design in such a continuous way, the Maid becomes a goddess to the Bear People. Design again becomes the hallmark of divinity.



Fig. 6 Spring Thicket

Morris does not disparage the Bear People for their reverence to the Maid, nor is their devotion understood to be iconoclastic or heretic. Their simplistic culture and their deference to a perpetual act of craft is celebrated.

The flowers of the Maid's dress also undergo a later process of alteration. Once crowned Queen the Maid loses her magical powers. She wears 'a short white coat alone, with bare feet and naked arms; but the said coat was now embroidered with the imagery of blossoms in silk and gold, and gems, whereas now her wizardry had departed from her' (p.235). The blossoms embroidered on her coat can be understood as the final form of the flowers that she originally picked to design the dress. What once bore the stamp of the Maid's magical divinity, the perennially blooming flowers are eventually rendered in cloth and thread, naturalising her as a secular monarch. The embroidering of the flowers holds them in a static design; they no longer elide between blossoming, blooming life and decay. Instead, they are stitched in place. This loss of regenerative motion emphasizes the secularity of Stark-wall's monarchy. In becoming Queen, the Maid freezes the seemingly interminable and tumultuous process of floral design. The design is completed through its embroidery – and much as her office as monarch is enduring, so is the pattern adorning her body. The ephemerality of the initial magical floral design is replaced by the security of coronation and embroidery. Neither form of design is lauded above the other. Both for their virtues and beauty are celebrated by Morris.

Armour

Having thus addressed king and queen making in Morris's enticing sartorial terms, what remains to be considered is the wider figuration of armour in the romances. The romances are replete with knights and warriors – all of whom are clad in dazzling and intricate armour. Armour is not only understood as heraldic or militaristic metalwork in the romances. It possesses a visual

malleability which is an enticing facet of the fantasy rendering of craft artefacts. At first this might seem to be contradictory – why invoke a craft or a fabric to then assert that it operates or appears as something else? The literary ability of materials to act or appear as if they were other forms suggests that the artefacts denoted in the romances are not ekphrastic renderings of real-life objects. Instead, they are wholly literary and are thus afforded the capacity to be fluid, subject to verbal alteration, and are imagistic.

The Green Knight in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* 'bore his armour as though it were silken cloth' (p.106). This simile prompts an understanding of the armour in literary terms. The armour is not limited by its empirical figuration as a real crafted suit of armour would be. Instead, in the fantasy prose landscape, the craft object possesses the capacity to act as if it were of another material. There is an elevation of the craft artefact; free from literal materiality and the constraints that this tactile reality demands, literary renditions of artefacts are imbued with a far greater fantastical potential by Morris. The clothing of fantasy is under no obligation to retain a single form and the ways in which it can be refigured amidst the fantasy landscape demonstrates the intricacy of Morris's design. His landscapes are subject to the textures of the objects he fills them with and, as such, subject to the metamorphic quality these objects possess. Unlike a wallpaper pattern that is confined to paper and block-printed ink, the romances can dramatize the elision of craft forms and celebrate the fluidity of materiality when the medium in which the pattern is conducted is literary and thus not literal. In fact, such a treatment of craft artefacts is most befitting of fantasy – they are transformed by the mode in which they are explored and thus exacerbate the sense of pattern as a mode of elevating ordinary forms into the extraordinary.



Fig. 7 The Rock of Doom

The armour of the Green Knight calls to mind the figures of Burne-Jones's canvases. The lithe and trepidatious Perseus in *The Rock of Doom* similarly dons armour that refuses to be understood as mere planes of metal. Like Morris, Burne-Jones strives towards the convincing establishment of a fantasy scape. The extent to which he achieves this in oil paint is a separate discussion in its own right, and is compellingly explored by Caroline Arscott in *Interlacings*. What is impactful and beautiful is how Burne-Jones's sensitivity to material and its capacity to act as that which it is not is integral and conducive to the enaction of fantasy.

The inclination of the willowy and youthful Green Knight to wear his armour as silk is anticipated by Perseus here. Not only does this description of the Green Knight denote lithe Burne-Jonesian beauty but also the mighty strength of the Green Knight and his masculine elegance. The sheer weight of chainmail and armour is belied with the seductive ease with which these heroes appear to bear them like silk. The relationship between the figures of Morris's landscapes and Burne-Jones's canvases is a crucial one. Touched on but not lingered on for long by Arscott, the presence of Burne-Jones style protagonists in Morris's romances gestures to the collaboration of the men, most especially in the Kelmscott editions of the romances which Burne-Jones provided the figurative illustrations for. It is worth noting here, whilst considering the armoured bodies of the romances and Burne-Jones's work, that the metamorphic, material capacity that they both possess is not mere coincidence and that there is a formal and visual consensus between Morris and Burne-Jones that is not limited to their collaborative work; their works undertaken alone

perpetuate a shared vision and understanding of art, craft and fantasy. Although he wrote the romances alone, it is an attractive thought that Morris conceived of his prose characters with Burne-Jonesian litheness, elegance and malleable materiality. Indeed, the Perseus series is a prime example of this symbiotic narrative- and pattern-prone imagination; informed by Morris's 'The Doom of King Acrisius' from *The Earthly Paradise*, Burne-Jones takes narrative cues from Morris who in turn takes implicit visual cues from Burne-Jones's Perseus in the formation of his armoured bodies in his fantasy prose.

Looking in more detail at the Perseus painting, the fixation with motion and transfiguration Burne-Jones and Morris share and similarly explicate in their depictions of armour comes to light. The depth of colour used by Burne-Jones to form the shape and plates of armour is such that its sheen is silken. Especially on the breastplate, the use of highlight is minimal in terms of what one might expect glossy, buffed armour to possess. Instead, the subtle flashes of white against dark grey and blue material, appear more like the glossy finish of silk. Furthermore, there is perceptible organic movement in the shaping of the edges of the plates. The unique and elaborate crafting of the breastplate is more like couture than practical protective armour which one would expect to be more robust, linear and rigid. Renowned for its use of pleating, draping and its complex rendering of the garment surface, couture clothing is richly textural and structural. The innumerable plates that seem to piece together to form the breastplate can similarly be read as swathes of silk that have been pleated, pintucked, draped and bias cut to enrich and enliven the surface of Perseus's chest in a decorative fashion. The armour does not hang from the shoulders downward to protect the chest, rather it twists and contorts, its form a tumult more comparable to the lapping waves at Perseus's feet and akin to the fluidity of silken styles of the atelier than sturdy and combative. The fluted sleeves of chainmail further encourage the elision of armour and silk in our perception of the scene. The motion expressed in these

sleeves is that of weightlessness – suspended in mid-air, falling around Perseus's wrist, the chainmail is not subject to the heft that would actually accompany real armour. Instead it is stylishly flared. The blue silken tie that is complexly woven about Perseus's body and binding his sword to him further explores the relationship between armour and silk – both materials, metal and fabric, ensconce his body and pull together the key visual elements of Perseus's narrative and ornamental heroism.

The sense of design in this painted suit of armour informs and is echoed in the armour designs of Morris's prose. The visual richness of Morris's armoured figures must be acknowledged to understand their presence and beautiful figuration in the romances. The Green Knight is described as 'a man terrible of aspect, when one first beheld him', yet this sense of affront at his 'fierce hawk-eyes' and appearance is softened by the wearing of armour as 'silken cloth'. Like Burne-Jones's Perseus, the feeling of bulk, muscle and heft is softened by armour which one typically expects to be robust and harsh and a contributing element of intimidation and rigidity. Both armoured figures are graceful and supple. Design is intrinsically decorative, but what is striking about the design of armour in these instances is that it does not simply sit on the surface of the wearer but, by virtue of its converting power, seems to alter the nature of the body and character beneath it. Armour is a graceful craft for Morris and Burne-Jones; contrary to making the body harsh and bulky, it makes the body more delicate and fantastical.

The start of Ralph's quest in *The Well at World's End* features an armour dressing scene. This moment of departure from Upmeads thus sets up the entire narrative within the frame of the armoured body – prone and ready for battle, Ralph both becomes a knight and a feature of the fantasy's design as he clads himself. Still thinking about 'The Rock of Doom', Burne-Jones encourages a visual relationship between the silken, aqueous formation of the draped armour

plates with the water at Perseus's feet. Armour is not a rigid contrasting entity to the delicate landscape but actually elides with and echoes it. Similarly, when Ralph dresses in the willow copse, the trailing and prone forms of Morris's 'Willow Bough' are called to mind in our visualisation of this freshly armoured body. Ralph lays his armour in the willow copse before returning to it with his horse to dress; he plucks the armour from the trailing boughs and then moulds them to his body. This moment is visually striking. Just as Burne-Jones's Perseus is clad in armour that harkens to and embodies the sea at his feet, Ralph's armour can be understood to have a relationship with the willows from which it emerges. 'He had armed himself amongst the willows, whence he came forth presently as brisk-looking and likely a man-at-arms as you might see on a summer day' (p.9). Morris's armour is not cold, hard, unyielding metal; it is crafted and sensitive to the landscape around it. It is not of the natural world but has an affinity with it, as a vital design facet of the fantasy landscape. Ralph's armour, reflecting the trailing willow boughs that we can imagine clinging to it as he picks it up from the copse, is a thing of beauty and intricacy. All design demands our attention in the romances – especially that which behaves in ways we do not expect.

Material and Seduction

A different material that acts in comparably intriguing ways in the romances is the diaphanous fabric worn by the Lady in *The Wood Beyond the World*. Morris's description of the Lady as she seeks to seduce Walter displays a sensitivity to the effects of metamorphic, aqueous fabrics:

> she was clad but in one garment of some dark grey silky stuff, embroidered with, as it were, a garland of flowers about the middle, but which was so thin that, as the wind drifted it from side and limb, it hid her no more, but for the said garland, than if water were running over her. (p.115)

This idea of translucency and dress is provocative. Nakedness is not shameful in the romances; thus, clothing cannot be simply understood as a means to shield and dignify the body. The Lady's selection of a translucent gown is purely decorative – she does not require modesty, but does desire ornamentation and the potential transformation that craft artefacts can institute. Her semi-sheer dress eroticises her in a way that nakedness itself would not. In donning such a gown of 'dark grey silky stuff' she is able to render her form aqueous. It is this transformative capacity that seems to render her most irresistible to Walter: this being the objective of her dressing. Aphrodite who appears in sheer fabrics and in a pool of water in Burne-Jones's 'The Godhead Fires' is a compelling comparison here. By virtue of the barely-there fabric draped across her body and clinging to her thighs, Aphrodite appears almost more scandalously naked than Galatea who has nothing on her body at all.



Fig. 8 Pygmalion and the Image – The Godhead Fires

The sense of one material acting like something else raises the question of duplicity in the romances. Morris uses the textile to establish the complexity of his fantasy worlds – there are no straightforward distinctions of the morality of craft; weavers are both witches and maidens, Kings wear armour but also stride into battle bearing none, nakedness is virtuous but as is intricate adornment, embroidery is pastoral but also regal and stately. Morris resists the cultural consensus to equate clothing (and thus, craft artefacts – clothing is the product of weaving, embroidery, tailoring) and morality. Liberated from the weight of moral signposting, Morris's fabrics can operate to their full capacity as figures of design. Their importance is derived from the texture and status as crafted artefacts, not what they denote about their wearers or creators.

However, clothing does bear the weight of the moral transgressions or emotional attachments of its wearers – Birdalone conveys the clothes of Atra, Aurea and Virdis to the knights as they bear their love, and Ralph and Ursula must change out of their war-gear before they are taught the secrets of the Well as their armour is stained. Craft artefacts are thus important witnesses to the narrative and exist as objects onto which emotion and transgression can be transferred and stored – their crafting is never actually complete; they are constantly absorbing extra detail and weight from the narrative landscape in which they reside.

Morris's artefacts demand our time to visually conjure and dwell on. They are powerful, transcendent, elevated from the everyday and very often magical. In a landscape that is delicately crafted, it is natural that the objects which in reality are the products of craftmanship are afforded a higher level of intricacy and significance. Not only are they crafted objects but they are crafted objects within an entirely crafted world. As sites of explicit design, Morris uses these objects to compress and centre his creative, pattern-oriented energies. Like constellated instances of acute design, Morris's network of artefacts is the first layer of pattern to understand before apprehending the deeper and more conceptualised planes of pattern operating in these vast and impressive romances.

Chapter 2
Pleats and Patterns: The Structure of the Romances

The Wood Beyond the World features in one of its opening chapters a wistful image of two ships setting sail. Morris describes the second ship and how:

> all seemed but the double of what the other ship had done; and he [Walter] thought of it as if the twain were as beads strung on one string and led away by it into the same, and thence to go in the like order, and so on again, and never to draw nigher to each other. (*WBW* p.10)

Subtended in the landscape as perpetually spaced apart beads on a thread, the ships are both narrative and textile features of the romance's patterned structure. Bound on a textile route into the horizon and the events of the romance, Walter's ship is inducted into a landscape of carefully composed design. This bead and ship simile is just one of many ways in which Morris uses the apparatus of textile and pattern design to construct and conduct the landscapes of his romances. He successfully foregrounds his romance in patterned action and vision and establishes a willingness within his readers to seek out and follow the avenues and arches of pattern. We get the sense that Walter is willing his own ship down the same path as the one which preceded it. Pursuing this conjured thread image, readers too feel compelled into the horizon in pursuit of the first boat. However, the sombre tone established by the reflection that the ships, bound as they are on this thread, are 'never to draw nigher to each other' ironically alludes to the drastically different route that Walter's ship and personal narrative trajectory will follow. Walter's ship does not follow the threaded path of the former as he suspects; instead, he departs into the fantasy realm, to the landscape that lies 'Beyond the World'. Morris's early threading simile not only shows the textile composition and compulsion of figures within the landscape but gestures to Morris's ability, as designer, to break away from the expected and quotidian and fabricate a whole new domain in which pattern is the foregrounding technique. Morris takes Walter from one narrative world and embeds him within a new landscape, within a new pattern: he is taken into the wood beyond the world.

Morris's construction of landscapes becomes a far more conscious and freighted process when understood as the construction of pattern. This chapter will put pressure on the landscapes and narrative structures of the romances and examine the ways in which Morris's characterful descriptions of natural tableaus and scenes are contingent on the mechanisms and features of pattern. Further to this, the way in which the structures and landscapes of Morris's late romances not only rely on pattern for their particular style and visual configuration, but their visual and narrative effects are the same effects achieved by typical visual patterns will be explored. Both types of pattern desire and establish these same effects: perpetuity, expectation, coherency, and visual fluency. As both the cause and the effect of the romances' structures and landscapes, pattern will be shown to be not only a decorative but a constructive element of Morris's late prose style.

The Pleats of Fantasy

Understanding the structures of the romances as patterns is not a straightforward critical process. Greater specificity must be attained within the field of textile-literary study to establish a greater understanding of not just textile thought, but the specific vein of thinking expressed in pattern.

In this chapter Giles Deleuze's work *The Fold,* which considers the interactivity of material and the soul through the metaphor of the fold, will be used a framework within which to explore the ways in which Morris's narrative material acts, including characters, landscapes, fates, time, images and emotions. Deleuze's textile metaphor of the fold eschews the cultural shorthand of using thread as the dominant representation of thought and temporality in literary works. He uses the idea of folded fabric and its modes of behaviour to establish a philosophical understanding of the world, both material and immaterial. *The Fold*, seen as a study of a series of conceptual interactions of matter with other matter, and of the soul with the matter

surrounding and within it, is a compelling analogue to Morris's patterns. As well as exploring the ways in which Deleuze's thought aids a convincing understanding of the late romances as patterned, elements of Deleuze's idea of the fold will be refined and questioned so as to explore Morris's specific endeavour of patterning narrative material. This narrative material can be seen to be intwined, enfolded, and, advancing beyond the understanding of material interaction established by Deleuze: it is intricately and consciously patterned. Deleuze's initial concept of the fold will be developed into the idea of pleating: a process of complication, or rather formalisation, necessary to grasp the intricacies and design of Morris's patterns.

Deleuze asserts that 'every fold originates from a fold, *plica ex plica*': fold from fold.[29] Crucially for my understanding of Morris's structured landscapes, this affirms that every element emerges from that which precedes it and feeds into that which succeeds it. There is a unity established through figurative interaction. For Deleuze, no figure exists in isolation; this is likewise held true by Morris in his patterns. As illustrated by this sample of the *Acanthus* wallpaper, every leaf emerges from a previous motif. The beginning and end of the pattern is indiscernible. Even the subsidiary pattern of moss coloured foliage set against the dark wash background features interminable scrolls and is seen continually meandering beneath the primary structure of the acanthus leaves; these tiny figures are emergent from another, just as the bigger leaves are. Morris's use of colour further affirms the significance of the '*plica ex plica*' effect. Denoting the upper and lower side of the



Fig.9 Acanthus

[29] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, translated by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 1992); p.10.

leaves, colour allows us to see the leaves twist out of one another. This is particularly true of the perennial green and sage leaves that lay behind the golden ones; the murky underside curls from beneath the brighter upper and intimates that it is not just leaf that emerges from leaf but that every individual leaf, with its two starkly coloured faces, emerges from itself. This sense of distortion within the repeating motifs is dynamic and leads the eye to desire the continual spooling and unspooling of the individual leaf and the composition as a whole. Fold from fold, leaf from leaf: the relationship between Deleuze's model and Morris patternmaking emerges well from this axiom.

The idea of consecutive and emergent folds is also indicative of pleating. Considering Morris's pattern corpus, the *unrefined* concept of the fold is perhaps not the most effective analogue. When Tom Conley's translation of *The Fold* starts to unintentionally toy with the distinction between folding and pleating a great critical opportunity is posed but remains untapped in the original text.

Deleuze introduces Leibniz's Baroque House as a metaphor for reality and how we interact with the forms around us; the upper floor is the domain of the soul and the lower floor is the realm of matter and materiality. The matter of the lower floor is folded amongst itself; all tangible materials and figures rely on one another for their distinction, position and individuation. Further to this folding of physical matter in and amongst itself, the material world is folded into the upper floor of the intangible soul, mind and heart. There is a merging of the two that demands they are both on the outside and inside of one another. There is 'a correspondence and even a communication between the two levels, between the two labyrinths, between the pleats of matter and the folds in the soul.'[30] The distinction between pleats and folds here, made by Conley,

[30] Deleuze (1992), p.4.

demands further attention. When examining the French, the word for pleat and fold is the same: *un pli*. Indeed, the word *plissé*, which is used in English fashion discourse to refer to a completely pleated fabric that is formed of very fine accordion-pleats, simply means *folded* in French. There is no explicit difference between the two in the language Deleuze is writing in. Therefore, Conley's specification of 'pleats of matter' and 'folds in the soul' is an editorial decision or quirk. It can be read simply an attempt to further differentiate between the two levels of Leibniz's Baroque House; however, I find this moment conceptually provocative.

Disaggregating 'pleat' and 'fold' would further illumine pattern as an interactive, repetitive, and designed form in the romances. A fold is too incidental and natural a form to fully attest to the conscious design enacted by Morris in the romances. Furthermore, Morris's prose is not at all of the material realm, or Leibniz's lower floor. As a work of the mind, creative vision and soul, the romances belong solely to the upper floor of the Baroque House. As such, the idea of pleated matter and folded souls needs to be inverted; tangible material can be haphazardly enfolded within one another and randomly interact, whereas the material of Morris's landscapes is pleated: designed, patterned and conscious.

There is an inclination for pleating, like pattern, to be designated as a decorative afterthought in design and yet both are intrinsically, simultaneously structural and decorative. Allowing my consideration of Deleuze's textile theory to be reframed within the more specific lens of a pleat offers a more profound critical payoff. In his assessment of the cultural and theoretical role of pleating, Tsai-Chun Huang discusses the critical reception pleating receives in fashion and garment curation:

> [Fashion curators] situate pleating production as a post processing procedure which does not fundamentally affect the formulation of textiles in the same way that weaving and knitting do. In fashion, pleating is usually viewed as a couture craft, as ornamentation on garments, but at the same time sharing a similarity with tucks, which serve a practical

> function in garment construction. For these reasons, pleats and pleating have not been considered as fundamental to the formation of textiles and have therefore not been encompassed as part of the contemporary concepts explored in textile thinking. I believe that pleats and pleating have their own distinct methodology and conceptual potential.[31]

An additive process that is seen to merely adorn the already established structure of the garment rather than embody its thinking capacity and structural composition, pleating is subject to the same denigrative attitude as is pattern. Pleating, in Huang's assessment of fashion, like pattern in my analysis of Morris, is structurally foundational and essential, not just a trivial element of surface enrichment. Despite the formative role pattern plays in the composition of Morris's landscapes it has been overlooked. It is not, to use Huang's phrase, a 'post processing procedure'. Such a term would wrongly imply that pleating, or pattern in my case, is seen as a mode which is created after the psychic work of composition and structuring has been completed.



Fig. 10 Pimpernel

Glancing at Morris's whorled Pimpernel design, it is clear that pattern is necessarily structural and freighted. While this effect is less vivid in prose, it is no less true of it. In this particular pattern, were it Morris's purpose to merely depict pimpernel flowers, tulips and curved stems, the image produced would not appear like this design in the slightest. However, the necessarily structural character of pattern demands that the processing stage of the design's composition occur not within the individual motifs and colours, but through the repeating and structured nature of wider design. Its shapes, repetition and entwined form

[31] Tsai-Chun Huang, *In-between Pleats; Pleats, pleating and 'pliable logic'* (Royal College of Art: 2020) <https://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/4351/1/InBetween%20Pleats%20TCH%20redacted%20web.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022].

are the heart of the whole work. There is no meaning or mental work in the flowers or leaves. The meaning is derived from the structure of the whole pattern. This structure is one of hypnotic, swirling symbiosis and intricate imbrication – the dynamic effect of the rotating stems and the alternation of plates that appear in some cases laid atop the primary motifs but in other instances appear to be greatly subsidiary conveys Morris's structural thought. Here, the structure conveys the natural flair of botanic forms in such a pronounced and stylistic way that the tulips appear almost supernatural. This forms a structural fantasy of tulips and pimpernels; the pattern, through its structure, attains its status as a fantasy. Just as Huang argues that pleating does not just adorn a garment, when Pimpernel paper is pasted onto a wall, it does not just lay there – it bears the weight of Morris's patterned processing that occurs during its structural design and enlivens the wall with the fantasy it encodes.

Further considering the critical insufficiencies of Deleuze's fold: a fold is a static entity. A letter in its envelope, a closed book, or an unworn garment are folded. Objects that are being used are seldom folded but must be unfolded when called into play: the letter is opened in order for it to be read; the book is opened to free its contents; the folded shirt is unfolded to be worn. Folds do not designate design but the deferral or delay of functionality. And if not signifying a waiting period before utility, folds in the case of drapery are a temporary and arbitrary state in between movements. A pleat, however, is a consciously designed and executed form that is conceived of with both its structural functionality and beauty in mind. Unlike a fold which must be unfolded to become active, a pleat retains its pleatedness when in use; for example, a pleated skirt remains and gracefully moves in those firm, ironed and tacked forms as it is worn; the retention of the pleat is essential to the success of the garment in fact. Applying this conception of pleating to Morris, then, as we read the romances the patterns that inform and dictate the structure and flair of the prose do not require undoing, unravelling, or unfolding for us to apprehend the fantastical design. Instead, the text remains in its patterned forms, inviting the reader into its bends and

tumults, its repeats and its distortions. Made of meaningful, thoughtful pattern and intended to uphold the integrity of their patternedness, Morris's romances ought to be thought of in the same vein as the pleats of Huang's fashion theory.

My critical understanding of pleating, as derived from Huang and Deleuze, can be applied to Morris's literary patterns at different increments. Initially, its applicability can be seen in Huang's assertion that pleating, as a decorative form of art, is not a 'post-processing' procedure. Here, Huang sets the precedent for modes of decoration to also be designated as modes of thought as opposed to being confined to the status of mere ornament. When pleats are being formed, the thinking stage of design is not concluded; rather, the pleats themselves are the source of summit of the designer's thought. Huang's generally redemptive attitude towards the psychic freighting of pleating can be extended to pattern to likewise loosen pattern design from the implicit cultural assumption that it is mere decoration and therefore not conceived of with the same mental and narrative processing as other pieces of art – those that are above the so-called 'lesser arts', such as oil paintings, frescoes or statues. Turning back to Deleuze, the second way in which the critical thought of pleating can be applied to Morris and pattern is through a consideration of the fabric and tactile character of folding that pleats possess and the textile nature of the metaphor employed by Deleuze; material that enfolds, thus interacts and imbricates, is used to establish and perpetuate of philosophy that synthesises every form of interaction perceptible in the world. Deleuze affirms that a textile form is an appropriate, compelling and intellectually rich mode of accessing, processing, and encoding the world. Not only is pattern the fruit of processing (as effectively argued by Huang in his assertion that a pleat is the embodiment of the thought that went into its design, structuring and narrative), it is a tool of processing; it is used to understand and organise our perception of the world around us. The precedent set by Huang and Deleuze of affording this specific textile form its own linguistical and communicative status is a promising

and tantalising prospect for the critic of pattern. Pattern, which is a palpably more complex and interactive, and a more conceptually provocative mode compared to pleating, can be seen to further share in the same (if not a greater) processing effects and capacities. Thirdly, it is in when a consideration of fantasy is brought to this discussion of pleating that the most intriguing relationship between pattern and pleating can be explored. There is something of this transcendence in Deleuze's reckoning of Leibniz's Baroque House which allows for the ascendency of matter into the spiritual realm of the upper floor via the conceptual form of the fold and in Huang's breathless and zealous admiration of the sublimity of pleating as a mode of art in fashion. Yet in both these cases, a sense of transcendence is only implied; whereas, it is my intention to demonstrate how in Morris's romances the transcendent aspect of pattern as the aspiration of fantasy is a carefully crafted pursuit and beautifully attained, perpetual end.

Deleuze's philosophy of infinite interaction and emergence between folded forms attains a more striking and affecting sense of design and craft when the vague form of the fold is considered as the couturier's pleat and subsequently, the designer-writer's pattern. To further disambiguate Deleuze's ideas, it must be noted that the fold is an individuated, one-off form, whereas the pleat is serialized and bound on a patterned, repeating trajectory – this is especially true of knife pleats and plissé. Whereas the fold is a more compelling form in general philosophising, the pleat synthesises the more organised and obvious occurrences of pattern in Morris's works whilst still affirming that the relationship between repeats is not mere adjacency. The repeats or motifs are not just lined up one after the other: there is an imbrication and symbiosis between them. Spatial separation does not matter in the romances; irrespective of geographical or temporal differences between the units of pattern, they are pleated within one another by virtue of the patterned consciousness with which Morris conceives of them. Considering the carvings in the rocks that mark the way to the Well at World's End followed by Ralph and Ursula alongside this

conception of pleated pattern, they cease to be mere emblems that are placed apart at intervals. Instead, they can be seen as pleated units of repeat that enfold the expanses of land and text between them into a richly textured plane. The space between repeats is granted meaning within the pattern by refining Deleuze's philosophy of folds into a philosophy of pleats. Pleating as a facet of the overall pattern is crucial in gleaning the intensity of the planes of Morris's romances.

The landscapes of the romances, and the ways in which characters journey through (and back through) them, embody the patterned vision of Morris and this chapter will address each of the three late romances and their respective structural landscapes individually, so as to encourage a full realisation of the patterned design enacted within each of them. Each romance embodies a different relationship with the concept of pleating that I have laid forth here. Understood in their chronological order as a series of experimentations with pleating, the development of Morris's pattern-prose technique can be charted across the three romances. Written first and thus the initial stride into pleated and patterned prose, *The Wood Beyond the World* is indicative of pleating – a preliminary experiment; succeeding this and representing a mastering of the pleated, patterned form, *The Well at World's End* is emblematic of the technique; and composed last, *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* serves as the exception to the forms, expectations, and visual effects of pleating and instead, transcends pleating. Understood in the terms of Deleuze and Conley's folding and pleating as analogous to my own conception of pattern, *The Wood Beyond the World* is composed of folds, *The Well at World's End* fully achieves patternedness and pleatedness, and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* reimagines and reanimates pattern and pleats.

The Wood Beyond the World

The first of Morris's patterned fantasies, *The Wood Beyond the World* represents the formative stage of Morris's romance prose style. Here, Morris is establishing a style and structural vision that is striking and indicative of patterned prose. Pleating of the landscape is not fully achieved in this romance. This is not to say that this romance is not successfully patterned, rather, it is to say that the pattern achieved through this simpler and precursive text is an anticipation of the greater complexity and attained pleatedness of *The Well at World's End*. The landscape of this romance is the simplest of the three: Golden Walter traversers the boundaries of the known world and enters into and explores the fantasy wood in which dwell magical creatures, a damsel in distress and an evil witch. The establishment of pattern here is affecting and delightful albeit reminiscent of the earlier patterns of Morris's wallpaper sample book; *The Wood Beyond the World* inhabits a similar status to Morris's earliest designs 'Trellis', 'Fruit', and 'Daisy'. Doubtlessly these are successful patterns (both critically and commercially). However, considering the later patterns, 'Pimpernel', 'Compton' or 'Strawberry Thief', the abundance of structural and figurative interactivity achieved here is far more stimulating and fantastical than in the more junior designs. 'Daisy' is a simple diaper style pattern constituted of four different types of flower clumps, spaced at regular intervals and alternating in two lines of paired motifs. The background is a simple pointillistic flecking of sage atop a neutral wash. Watkinson refers to this pattern, also rendered in embroidery and tile, as 'formal' and 'innocent.'[32] Almost twenty years later, Morris's renowned 'Strawberry Thief' makes its first appearance. It is clear from the alternating nature of the birds in the pattern that Morris is still strongly inspired by his early pattern style – this characteristic is retained and perpetuated from the 'Daisy' pattern. However, Morris elaborates upon this and in 'Strawberry Thief' we see a greater wealth of botanic forms, multidirectional pulls of the gaze and structure, a deeper level of visual resolution and detail, and a boldness of colour. This is one of Morris's earliest indigo discharge works – a process which

[32] Watkinson (1967), p.45.

involves the submergence of the whole fabric in indigo dye and then bleaching the areas in which other colours are to be added (or areas which are to remain white and establish pattern through an absence of colour rather than the addition of it). This later infatuation with the indigo discharge method and tendency of Morris's later patterns to be set on backgrounds of deep, dark and luxurious colours gestures to the full-bodied nature of his late style and the more substantial and imposing structural character these patterns attain. Thus, the structure of this first romance is most convincingly understood as an anticipatory form; an experimentation with the techniques, such as landscaping and visual plotting that are mastered later on. Here we can discern the folds of the romance as budding pleats and appreciate them as the beginnings of Morris's later patterned, pleated prose style. The landscape here is not complex, but the patterns are still conducive to fantasy, beauty, and fascination.

An example of such a landscape is shown when Walter enters the wood. The scene is described:



Fig. 11 Daisy



Fig. 12 Strawberry Thief

> So he came to where the land was level, and there were many trees, as oak and ash, and sweet-chestnut and wych-elm, and horn-beam and quicken-tree, not growing in a close

> wood or tangled thicket, but set as though in order on the flowery greensward, even as it might be in a great king's park.

Here, Morris compiles a series of motifs which can be seen as the literary equivalents of his wood-carved plates used for block printing patterns. As they are listed, they are almost laid atop one another in sequential form. This layering effect of the list is exacerbated by the hyphenation. There is a sense in which the words themselves are bound together; the rhythm of the list creates a compulsiveness and imbrication of the visual features it denotes. The 'sweet-chestnut', 'wych-elm', 'horn-beam' and 'quicken-tree' produce a prosodic effect which is in itself another form of pattern that belongs to the auditory experience. Here, Morris collates a series of visual motifs (and audible arrangements of bonded words) and remarks upon their interconnected configuration amidst the landscape. They are not in 'a close wood or tangled in a thicket' and instead are 'set as though in order on the flowery greensward'. This sense of order is a direct evocation of pattern and visual harmony. However, the use of 'as though' before this suggests that whilst pattern is perceptible here, it is an entirely natural occurrence, or perhaps a magical one. The narrative voice suggests that Walter has not stumbled upon a curated and consciously designed landscape but one which is naturally harmonious and assents by instinctive impulse to a wider sense of patternedness. This is curious. Here Morris cleverly evades notice as the pattern-designer. In asserting that this ordered tableau is a natural phenomenon, he conceals the act of construction he has undertaken as pattern-designer and fantasy writer. The pattern is so successful that its patternedness is deniable; Morris's representation of the landscape seeks to emulate the intrinsic sense of pattern in the natural world without abstracting or stylising it beyond recognition.



Fig. 13 Corncockle

Thus, Morris has conjured a fantastical scene through pattern but affirms its realness and believability through the guise of alleged naturalness. This play is subtle and effective. Morris's clever reinforcement of the believability of the scene despite its patternedness and designed composition is compelling in the attainment of a sense of fantasy. Furthermore, in this constructed landscape, Morris subtly identifies the foreground motifs and the background ones. The list of hyphenated trees, all of which are bound up in themselves, is positioned as the upper plates of printing which are set atop the 'flowery greensward.' It is compelling to see this 'flowery greensward' as like the diapered 'Daisy' pattern or the silhouetted sprawl of floral background motifs in the 'Corncockle' chintz. The flowered background affords depth and delicacy to this chintz, and to the landscape described here. The tableau is awash with residual details which populate the ground that the larger, more substantial sweeping motifs cannot fully occupy. No space is wasted, dormant or neglected – it is all accounted for and inducted into the fantasy. Everything in the landscape must serve the writer and designer in the establishment of fantasy – nothing can be accidental or left to chance in such a world of visual curation.

The other landscapes in *The Wood Beyond the World* are all similarly patterned; pretty and botanical, we can see the order and interaction of their forms well. However, they are truly enlivened and their patternedness dramatized when they are traversed by the characters. The landscapes are not just pervaded by the characters but are altered by them. Relational formulations become visible here.

Upon their first meeting and instantaneous infatuation with one another, the Maid refuses to let Walter touch her for fear that their physical contact would mark her and thus expose their relation to the Lady, her captor. Walter, in his deep and immediate love of her, heeds her warnings:

> Since it must be so, I pledge thee my word to thee as I love thee. And therewith she knelt down, and did on her foot-gear, and then sprang lightly over the rivulet; and then the twain of them went side by side some half furlong thence, and sat down, shadowed by the boughs of a slim quicken-tree growing up out of the greensward, whereon for a good space around was neither bush nor brake. (p.61)

The effect of chastity between the two figures is intriguing. Chastity is not enforced on the Maid and Walter for any moralising or condemnatory reasons – sex is not feared by Morris in the romances. Rather contrary to his reputation as a sexless, or sex-fearing figure, there is a remarkably free attitude to sexual encounters; Walter, Ralph and the Lady of Abundance for example all have multiple romantic interests in their respective narratives and the consummation of these romances is treated with sensitivity and beauty, not judgement or conventional Victorian prudishness. Therefore, the reason behind the physical distancing of the Maid and Walter must lie elsewhere.

The visual effects of the parallel tracks of the two lovers within the landscape is a compelling motivation, aside of course from the narrative function of suspense and the concealment of their desire for one another from the Lady. Consider the scene alongside the printed textile 'Kennet'.



Fig. 14 Kennet

One of Morris's river patterns, 'Kennet' has a strong character that is reliant on the synchronized undulation of parallel lines. As Walter and the Maid walk alongside one another, tracing the flow of the small gulf of the rivulet, their motion is alike the trajectory of the lines within 'Kennet'. The yellow strands of stem always remain at the same distance from one another whilst tracing naturalistic curved shapes. As the line bends sharply to the right, the next stem is never allowed to get closer to its predecessor and must likewise buckle itself. This is unlike the stems of the 'Lodden' pattern (Fig. 5) which undulate apart and are then allowed to effloresce together. When one traces the stem forms of 'Kennet', the eye follows the motion of the entire pattern, carrying every motif and facet of the design along the trajectory of one singular stem, whereas the experience of tracing 'Lodden' is one of individuation, imbrication, twisting, diverging and merging. In forcing Walter and the Maid apart, their progress through the landscape is more profoundly linked; with the rivulet alongside them, the eye traces their twin paths, willing them on the same course and, like the boats of the opening bead simile, desiring their eventual but impossible collision. The indigo discharged background of 'Kennet' is an effective rendition of river water (Kennet is a tributary of the Thames). This gulf between the sunflower-like motifs of the main vine pattern has a wavering and coursing character, embodying a similar role to the rivulet which the Maid steps across to unite her pathway to Walter's parallel one. The deferral of sensual contact demanded by the Maid offers Morris a chance to enrich the

patterned landscape of the wood, overlaying the already established scene of greenery, flowers and forest with the palpable tracks of the two physically estranged but inextricably linked lovers. Their union attains a far profounder status by virtue of this compositional stride made by Morris.

Parallelism, a feature characterised by its nature of symmetry and dualized meander, is used by Morris here and is emblematic of the anticipatory role of pleating and patterning in the romance. The tracing of parallel lines through the landscape is suggestive of the vast and perpetuating structure of pleats (it does not achieve it). We see the parallel and thus joint lines coursing along the same trajectory but at a distinct and necessary remove from one another. Unlike pleating which demands the connection of proliferating units, parallelism requires the insurmountable and rigid distance of its forms. This is like the Maid and Walter who must retain distance. The stripes drawn atop the landscape of the wood by the Maid and Walter's tracks do not structurally alter it or affect its foundational nature. Instead, the paths traced along the rivulet and through the trees are surface flourishes on the fantasy world. The actions of the Maid and Walter become palpable elements of the visual scene as surface enrichment but Morris is yet to embed this sense of narrative and perpetuity into the landscape's structure – this is to come in *The Well at World's End*.

Further considering the anticipation of pleats and pattern in this romance, the metaphor of folding can be useful here. The tucking of the wood into the real world in this romance can be seen as a fold. It is one landscape enfolded within another. The folding of planes of action within the romance allow characters to drift from the secular, quotidian world into the fantastical realm. Walter's discovery of the wood is simple; he passes a boundary in a rock-wall and finds concealed behind it a new plane.

However, the way in which the Maid comes to be in the fantasy world is not so easily chartable or understandable. Unlike Walter, she does not happen upon it as an adventurer. Instead, she is ensnared as a thrall by the Lady and stolen away. She describes her kidnapping as (mediated by or communicated to her through) a sort of dream in which the world of her childhood pales into obscurity and she finds herself in the wood (p.156). The dream is the process of transition from one world to the next. The fantasy world is not a dream itself but is an extra, heightened plane of reality that is accessed via a dream, as though the dream was transportive instead of being an end or complete experience in its own right. The wood is 'beyond the world' not merely geographically but it is 'beyond' in the sense of being additive, elevated, and greater – the phrase 'it's beyond me' thus inaccessible, and too complex for easy comprehension, comes to bear here. The wood is not simply geographically beyond the world but intellectually there is something greater and more complex at play there: its patternedness and fantasy. The dream that the Maid experiences is used to enfold her in her new, higher reality. Using Leibniz's terms here, she moves from her quotidian hometown (the real world of material and things) to the upper floor of the Baroque house which is the fantastically patterned plane of the wood. This temporal elision isolates the Maid as a motif that can be extracted and replanted within a new setting: within a new pattern. As her original setting vanishes, the new pattern and landscape emerges around her: 'when I am awaken from [the dream], then I am verily in this land [...] I am in the pillared hall yonder, half-clad and with bound hands' (p.156).

This layering effect of the Maid's presence is further explored when she discusses another episode of landscape fading:

> the pillared hall wavered, and vanished from my sight, and my feet were treading a rough stone pavement instead of the marble wonder of the hall, and there was the scent of the salt sea and of the tackle of ships, and behind me were tall houses, and before me the ships indeed, with their ropes beating and their sails flapping; [...] Speedily it died out,

> and we were again in the pillared hall, wherein my thraldom was made manifest. (p.159-60)

The phrasing 'made manifest' is particularly revealing. Her thraldom is not a social institution she is thrust into, rather, it is a visual phenomenon that is manifested. Using the terms of materiality here, her thraldom is not only 'manifest' but it is imprinted by the Lady and Morris upon the landscape. This episode tells of the Maid's perspective of Walter's vision of her, the Lady and the dwarf on the quay before his ship sets sail at the start of the romance. This moment is the first instance of elision between the ordinary world and the wood. Here, Morris can be seen to sketch out the motifs of the fantasy realm on the quotidian as though experimenting with them before setting them loose in a proper pattern. In folding the fantasy world into reality, Morris can slide the Maid as a motif from one plane to the other, manipulating perspective, background and narrative. Ray Watkinson refers to Morris's designs as having a 'minor pattern' at play beneath a 'major pattern.'[33] This acknowledgement of layering is enticing in this occasion. Morris toys with his design for the romance by first employing the fantastical trio (the maid, the lady and the dwarf) as a minor pattern who subtly play within the wider, ordinary landscape before Walter later steps into the major pattern of the fantasy landscape and himself becomes a minor motif.

[33] Watkinson (1976), p.52.

The ability to extract and layer plates of motifs calls to mind Morris's *Scroll* and *Branch* patterns. In fact, these are not two wholly separate patterns. The underlay of *Scroll* was printed as an independent pattern and subsequently sold under the name *Branch*. Thus, the secondary paper is simply the lower plate of printing, allowed to exist as a complete pattern without its floral overlay. Indeed, when pictured alongside Morris's other patterns, there is a perceptible insufficiency in *Branch*. It is the delicate layering of motifs enacted with both botanic fidelity and fantastical flair that is so characteristic of Morris's designs and exemplified in *Scroll* that constitutes an enticing Morris pattern. The lack of a third colour to diversify the palette of *Branch* and want for additional intricacy and interest atop the mild background forms in this design emphasize the importance of layering. Bearing this in mind, the continual extraction and re-layering of the Maid in a multitude of landscapes affirms the successful and playful patternedness of the romance. She is a final and necessary flourish or motif, enriching, completing and adorning the landscapes that would be muted and lacking without her imposition upon them.



Fig. 15 Scroll



Fig. 16 Branch

Considering the romance as a whole, the execution and operation of pattern within it shows Morris's late prose style taking form. There are structural apparatuses that start to figure in this romance that come to fruition in the following texts. Much like his wallpapers and chintzes, the sequential development from design to design demonstrates an ever-increasing intimacy with the

capacities and intricacies of pattern as his grasp of the material grows stronger. As we read the romances in chronological order, the layers, parallelisms, and folds of the visual plane conjured in *The Wood Beyond the World* advance. Here, botanic motifs are layered like block-printed patterns – one form imposed atop the other in such succession that they appear imbricated and entwined; Morris sketches meandering, river-tracing lines amidst the fantasy wood, enlivening the scene with the parallel paths and all they narratively convey; and he folds the fantasy world within the real, gesturing to the capacity for such landscapes to infinitely sprawl, elide and thus attain pleatedness and patternedness. The pattern and the fantasy are only just beginning here. Each of these precursive, simpler features of Morris's patterned prose can be seen set to even greater and more striking effect in *The Well at World's End*.

The Well at World's End:

From the block-printed layers, parallel lines, and folds of the first romance come the sprawling and abundant pleats and patterns of the second. This romance is the full realisation of Morris's patterned, fantasy vision. Not only is there a compelling sense of landscapes being conveyed with visual flair but the landscapes are successfully structured and enlivened with pattern.

There are many instances in *The Well at World's End* in which Morris commences in the same descriptive tone as he did in its predecessor. He begins by assembling a list and visual configuration of motifs that amalgamate like block printed plates, forming a pattern of botanic depth and interconnectivity. In the course of Ralph and the Lady's wanderings, Morris describes how:

> in a little while they were come out of the thick woods and were in a country of steep little valleys, grassy, besprinkled with trees and bushes, with hills of sandstone going up from them, which were often broken into cliffs rising sheer from the tree-beset bottoms: and they saw plenteous deer both great and small, and the wild things seemed to fear them but little. (p.222)

Just like the descriptions of the wood in *The Wood Beyond the World*, this description uses the list form to create the sense of assemblage and intricate emmeshing of figures. 'Besprinkled' is particularly reminiscent of the diaper effect of the 'Daisy' pattern that Morris utilised previously.



Fig. 17 The Brook

The reference here to the 'deer both great and small' is difficult to resist as an inspiration for the later Morris and Co. 'Brook' linen. The winding character of the description that takes the eye from the thick woods, around the 'besprinkled [...] trees and bushes' and up and down the 'hills of sandstone' and 'cliffs' emulates the same sense in which the eye is drawn along the stream of the linen and around the motifs of multiple sized deer congregating around the lush and full-bodied trees, atop a background of diaper-like sprigs of vegetation.

However, Morris takes this description beyond the level attained in the previous romance. He furthers it and complicates its narrative and sensory reach. Morris can be seen acknowledging his deference as designer to his prose as the material in which he is set to work. As she gazes out on the scene, the Lady reflects on the 'histories and tales of this pleasant wilderness' (p.222). She says:

> I deem indeed that it was once one of the fairest of lands, with castles and cots and homesteads all about, and fair people no few, busy with many matters amongst them. But now it is all passed away and there is no token of a dwelling of man, save it might be that those mounds we see as yonder, and yonder again, are tofts of house-walls long ago sunken into the earth of the valley. (p.222)

The landscape is enlivened by this ancient history. There is something charming in the fact that the Lady does not know the actual history but is certain, after examining the features before her, that it is imbued with a cultural heritage that is now almost lost except for its general essence of antiquity. In a lecture given about fantasy literature, Stuart Lee remarks that one of the most effective techniques used by fantasy writers to affirm the believability of their landscapes and tales is the allusion to ancient history, as Tolkien so expertly does in *The Lord of the Rings*.[34] The creation of a fictional history ratifies the present moment of the fantasy and creates the sense that this one romance or novel is the tip of the iceberg – a mere glimpse into a rich and tumultuous world with its own anthropological heritage and cultural memory. Here, Morris effectively hints at this sprawling, but untapped mythological background of his romance and grants his pattern a temporal, as well as visual, depth.

This mythologising of the landscape occurs again when Otter and Ralph discuss the path to the Well at World's End and the Lady of Abundance. Otter imagines what the landscape on the approach to the well might look like:

> There would be a great plain like to this; whiles that there is naught save mountains beyond, and yet again mountains, like the waves of a huge stone sea. Or whiles I think that one would come to an end of the world, to a place where is naught but a ledge, and then below it a gulf filled with nothing but the howling of winds, and the depth of darkness. (p.342)

This demonstrates the potent character that Morris's landscapes possess; they are capable of sustaining an ancient and dramatic history in their own right. The 'stone sea' is not just the scene of a myth but a myth itself. Furthermore, the nature of the 'stone sea' is necessarily indicative of its history; the landscape tells of the events which occurred within it, namely the sea of lava which coursed through it and eventually solidified in the wavelike forms Otter imagines. This is a

[34] Stuart Lee, 'Approaching Fantasy Literature.' Lecture, Oxford University, Oxford, May 12 2020.

landscape that is constituted entirely of stone and is thus static but it is enlivened and animated by its historical wealth and by its status as myth and epic tableau.

The inclusion of the sensory experience in the patterning of this romance is a feature of Morris's prose from the very beginning. Morris foregrounds Ralph's fervour for adventure and a delving into the patterned landscape in his sensory interaction with it:

> Then he turned his horse about, and had the down-country before him; long lines of hills to wit, one rising behind the other like the waves of a somewhat quiet sea: no trees thereon, nor houses that he might see thence: nought but a green road that went waving up and down before him greener than the main face of the slopes. He looked at it all for a minute or two as the south-west wind went past his ears, and played a strange tune on the innumerable stems of the bents and the hard-stalked blossoms, to which the bees sang counterpoint. Then the heart arose within him, and he drew the sword from the scabbard, and waved it about his head, and shook it toward the south, and cried out, "Now, welcome world, and be blessed from one end to the other, from the ocean sea to the uttermost mountains!"' (vol.1 p.21-22)

Having first laid out the expansive pattern of the sight before Ralph (noting the 'long lines of hills [...] like waves' and the 'waving' road), Morris cleverly entwines Ralph within it. The description is linear – the eye is drawn and pulled in long sweeping lines and images are conjured to compare the swathes of land to the sea. Following this visual style, the wind – experienced by Ralph as a physical and auditory experience – similarly sweeps about him and is harmonised by the bees who seem to likewise play their role in the multi-sensorial pattern landscape. This masterful warping of sound into the visual plain demonstrates the scope of prose in pattern – by no means it is a solely visually descriptive endeavour. Ralph then jubilantly shouts of his eagerness to explore the lands that lay before him as though this sensorial imbrication of himself into the pattern invigorates his adventuring spirit.

The patterned landscapes can also be seen as communicating with the characters. The patterns enable them to navigate and interact with the lands before them. For example, the Lady of

Abundance can use the patterned landscape to discern her path. Emphasizing the extent of her acquaintance with the landscape and its subliminal communication with her, she is able to navigate it in the early hours of the morning when Ralph is unable to see a thing for the darkness. This capacity suggests a fluency with the pattern that is so absolute that she does not even need the light to situate herself within the wider landscape and strive through its streams and avenues. Morris describes how 'she led him along swiftly, fumbling naught with the paths betwixt the pine tree boles, where it was as dark as dark might be' (159). The swiftness and deftness of her movements as she leads and simultaneously seduces Ralph suggest that it is in part, her instinctive, fluent navigation of the patterned landscape that further enchants him with her. As they delve deeper into the wood, his infatuation and desire grow as she artfully winds their way through it.

Symbols also contribute to this sense of fluency the characters have in their reading of and discoursing through the patterned landscape. It is in the midst of the rock-sea that:

> the Sage showed them on a certain rock a sign cut, whereof they had learned in the book aforesaid, to wit, a sword crossed by a three-leaved bough; and they knew by the book that they should press on through the rock-sea nowhere, either going or returning, save where they should see this token. (vol.2 p.45)

These symbols appear repeatedly along the route to the well, confirming to the duo that they are on the correct path as designated by the Sage. As well as leading the explorers along the route to the well, they also have a unifying effect on the landscape along which they are dispersed. They pleat the landscape, rucking up the space between every carved iteration along Ralph and



Fig. 18 African Marigold

Ursula's path to the well, contracting the geographical separation between each symbol and demonstrating the totality of Morris's patterned vision for the whole fantasy realm. Morris makes sense of the whole sprawling scene by the regularity and conducting surety of these repeating motifs. Just as the marigolds in Morris's *African Marigold Chintz* are reassuringly repeated across the whole fabric, soothing the wandering eye of the viewer and cohering the pattern in their predictability and boldness, so do these engravings along the pathway to the well. As well as being a repeated motif, the image of the sword itself constitutes a complete example of a pattern in its own right. The trailing 'three-leaved bough' that coils around the sword features Morris's characteristic use of layering and imbrication. The two motifs, the sword and the vine, are entwined such that the synthesis of their forms converts them into a design. The botanic motif sprawling about the carved steel of the sword is almost incongruous within the waste of the rock-sea. Despite being an emblem of the natural world, the figuration of a three-leaved bough in the landscape's pattern here explicitly demarcates the crafted, mapped out way for Ralph and Ursula; the natural landscape before them of solidified lava is at odds with our typical expectation of a Morris natural tableau thus the image of a leaf, whilst what we expect of Morris, becomes uncanny and disjointed in the particular pattern of the rock-sea. Their route is designed and man-made or perhaps man-forged (in both the sense of forgery as a metalwork craft and in the sense of forging a path, forging on – the nature of quest, toil and fantasy), and this decorative leafy motif amidst the wasteland declares it as such. This symbol is one small example of Morris's larger vision of the romance's landscape as a whole. The romance is constituted of individual landscapes, however, at the farthest level of remove and lowest grade of resolution, the whole romance can be seen as occupying one singular landscape.

Ralph's journey commences in Upmeads and takes him to a string of towns, the journeys between which are mediated by woodland excursions and tableaus. We see him in Bourton Abbas then the Wood Perilous takes him to the Burg of the Four Friths. A great plain then takes him to the Castle of Abundance which is set in sprawling woodland which in turn delivers him to Whitwall. And so on, Ralph's journey continues. The sequential and emergent nature of these landscapes, ordered as such by Morris, attains a sense of pleatedness and imbrication. They feed into one another and propel Ralph along his narrative route whilst visually enriching the wider pattern as they do. The individual landscapes also have a character of pleatedness. It is important to consider what Morris himself would designate as a single pattern. Patterns are constituted of repeats but it is not necessary for there to be multiple repeats for the design to be designated the title of a pattern. Morris's 1876 sketch of the 'Chrysanthemum' wallpaper demonstrates this effect. Morris includes only one repeat but this in no way compromises the resounding patternedness of the work. Thus, each one of Morris's landscapes in the romance must be treated as a patten in its own right as well as being a repeat: a modular unit that assents to the design and totality of the romance as a whole, singular pattern. The pleats and forms, motifs and oddities of the individual landscapes are therefore self-contained but also eagerly reaching out to the next iteration; they desire and perpetuate the next repeat, forming the wider structure of pleatedness and patternedness across the entire fantasy world. This desire that Morris artfully embeds in each landscape for the next demonstrates the necessity of the wider patterned vision and impulse. The



Fig. 19 Chrysanthemum

unfinished, raw edges of the 'Chrysanthemum' sketch are testament to the necessity for iteration, connection and efflorescence from one visual scene to the next; pattern must perpetuate and that it does in *The Well at World's End*.

The journey to the well is largely constituted of pastoral scenes and merchant towns until the radical departure in Morris's visual style and the arrival at the rock-sea, a mythologised and dramatic sight to behold (or in the reader's case, imagine). The first sight on the approach to the rock-sea is the immense mountains. Morris describes:

> the Great Mountains which now looked so huge that they seemed to fill all the world save the ground whereon they stood. Cloudless was the day, and the air clean and sweet, and every nook and cranny was clear to behold from where they stood: there were great jutting nesses with straight-walled burgs at their topmost, and pyramids and pinnacles that no hand of man had fashioned, and awful clefts like long streets in the city of giants who wrought the world, and high above all the undying snow that looked as if the sky had come down on to the mountains and they were upholding it as a roof. (vol.2 p.42)

The fact that the mountains 'seemed to fill all the world' gestures to their expansiveness as motifs within a pattern. As is shown in this Morris and De Morgan tile panel, the central motifs of patterns are compelled to pursue the negative space of their backgrounds. The reaching of motifs into every crevice of the surface directs the eye to note the expansiveness of the space and thus the potency of the very forms that can so impressively fill this. Even though the mountains are rigid, stone forms, Morris's description here affords them a sense of fluidity and tumbling motion. The nesses are 'jutting', there are both 'straight-walled' stretches and 'awful clefts' and the fact they can 'fill all the world' visually suggests that they can push against the frames of Ralph and Ursula's view and curve back inside to further fill the negative space of the sky. The blue tinted leaves of the tile design



Fig. 20 Tile Panel

effectively fill their landscape. The sprawling vine and clefted leaves veer to the borders of the panel then elegantly double back into the centre, daring towards the edge of the expanse to demonstrate its dominance but then collapsing back inwards. Morris's mountains, it seems, act in a similar way; the landscape is not merely mountainous, it is a tumult of mountain that expands and bends, stretches and clefts. As Morris notes that 'no hand of man had fashioned' the 'pyramids and pinnacles', the whole landscape is not the product of architectural craft but of literary pattern design, described through successive analogies with man-made structures.

The use of snow in this description is also affecting: 'the undying snow that looked as if the sky had come down on to the mountains and they were upholding it as a roof.' As it is 'undying' the snow ceases to be a mere seasonal or temporary addition to the scene; it is to be understood as a permanent, integral facet of the design. Morris creates the impression of the snow pushing up against the sky 'as a roof' and thus introduces an effective sense of elevation into the landscape. In Morris's specific terminology of pattern design, this is called relief. Relief is the sense of visual repose attained when figures in a pattern are disambiguated from their backgrounds through the strategic use of colour to lift the motifs out of the flatness of the paper. Morris discusses in his lecture *Some Hints on Pattern Designing* the methods of creating relief. The one of most interest to this particular description is the process of using a paler colour for the motifs of a pattern and grounding these on a darker shade.



Fig. 21 Windrush

This colourway of *Windrush* illustrates this effect. The blue background is darker than the white motif which sprawls atop it. This is 'the relief of one plane from another; in it there is always an idea of at least more than one plane of surface, and often of several planes.'[35] White relief elevates the planes of the pattern and creates the illusion of depth. The 'undying' snow can be seen to occupy a similar role in the landscape. Resting atop the motifs of the scene, the snow reaches up to the sky, pushing against, thus creating an acute awareness in the readers of the vastness of the mountains beneath it. Here, Morris makes the dimension of the literary scene reliant on pattern.

Ursula and Ralph come across the 'great sea of the rock molten in the ancient earth fires'. Morris describes this 'like a huge river or firth of the sea it seemed, and such indeed it had been once, to wit a flood of molten rock in the old days when the earth was a-burning [...] we enter into the great sea of the rock molten in the ancient earth fires' (p.42). This landscape is barren, terrifying, and dark:

> So about sunset they came down into the plain, and found a belt of greensward, and waters therein betwixt the foot of the ridge and the edge of the rock-sea. And as for the said sea, though from afar it looked plain and unbroken, now that they were close to, and on a level with it, they saw that it rose up into cliffs, broken down in some places, and in others arising high into the air, an hundred foot, it might be. Sometimes it thrust out into the green shore below the fell, and otherwhile drew back from it as it had cooled ages ago [...] the rocks on either side were smooth and glossy, as if the heat had gone out of them suddenly, when the earth-fires had ceased in the mountains. (p.44-5)

Morris states that the sea, 'though from afar it looked plain and unbroken', up close the distortions, tucks, and clefts come to light. Instead of existing as one swathe of cooled lava, the rock-sea contains within it multiple planes or faces some of which 'rose', others of which 'fell,' others are 'broken down' or 'arising high', or 'thrust out into the green shore.' The fact that this

[35] William Morris, *Some hints on pattern-designing*, p.187.

body was once molten grants the rock a historic plastic character; it was once able to course and curl, pleat and pucker.

The rock-sea attains a patternedness within and of itself. It is one powerful mass whose ever-preserved and solidified contortions dominate the landscape. Bodies of water are typically the binding centre of Morris's patterned landscapes. The use of a rock-sea here is stark and explicitly demonstrates that Ralph and Ursula are entering into a completely new realm as they venture further and further towards the wall of the world. The laws of pattern are different here; seas no longer course or ripple, foliage no longer adorns and intricately amasses into plates of design. Here the texture is all derived from the singular tumultuous yet static cooled lava sea. There is no visual equivalent in Morris's textile designs. This new form of pattern that requires only one contorting form of solidified sea, like a sprawling plane of couturier's pleats, is magnificent. Morris finds the most striking perspective of the rock: here we have pleated abundance in barrenness.

This sea of rock is one of the final landscapes encountered on Ralph's long journey from Upmeads to the well. However, this is not where the romance ends. There is still the return journey to be made. Taking up the final quarter of the romance, the return journey is not an after-thought: Book IV is called 'The Road Home.' In a rare metatextual moment, Morris states that as the two retrace their steps 'they kissed and comforted each other in memory of the terror and loneliness wherewith they had entered the Mountains that other time; though, sooth to say, it was to them now like the reading of sorrow in a book' (vol.2 p.105). Walking back along their previously trodden pathways, the landscapes they previously visited bear readable accounts of their presence. Stepping into the landscapes a second time, the patterns are enlivened by the narrative history encoded in their forms. This return journey effects a reiteration or retraction of

each pleat in the landscape. Morris thus demonstrates the palpability of his patterns – his landscapes do not dissolve but they endure, waiting to be pervaded and mused upon once more.

On the journey home, they come to the ground upon which Ralph was betrayed into the hands of the men of Utterbol. He says to Ursula: 'Lo, beloved, this quicken-tree; hereby it was that the tent was pitched wherein I lay the night when I was taken [...] I will bid them pitch thy tent on this same place, that I may smell the wild thyme again, as I did that other while'. And Morris remarks that 'there on the field of his ancient grief they rested that night in all love and content' (vol.2 p.133). Ralph's sentimentalism and desire to reinhabit the exact spot of his imprisonment suggests a sensitivity to the specific configuration of the landscape – he wishes to reassume the same position within the pattern, behaving as though he were a deferential motif.

Likewise, Ralph's return to the site of the Lady of Abundance's murder is poignant:

> They came on that steep cliff with the cave therein, and the little green plain thereunder, and the rocky bank going down sheer into the water of the stream. Forsooth they came upon it somewhat suddenly from out of the bushes of the valley; and there indeed not only the Sage and Richard, but Ursula also, were stayed by the sight as folk compelled; for all three knew what had befallen there. (vol.2 p.167)

This sense of compulsion to bear witness to the landscape and call to mind the events that occurred within it is not mere sentiment but a gesture towards the capacity of pattern to ensnare not only visual forms but narrative events and perpetuate them within its confines. The past events appear layered atop the scene, shadowing the landscape and captivating the knowing onlookers. Not only does this scene involve a repeated description of the same landscape, but the events which transpire in it also threaten to repeat themselves. Ursula is attacked, just like the Lady of Abundance was. Thus, pattern is not just seen in the landscape but in the narrative that occurs (or threatens to occur) within it. However, already acquainted with the pattern, Ralph is

able to protect his beloved this time. At the site at which his first beloved dies at the hands of an attacker, Ralph is able to break the pattern of murder associated with it and Ursula is saved.

The Water of the Wondrous Isles:

The last of the three romances, the structure of *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* differs to its predecessors. In *The Wood Beyond the World* and *The Well at World's End* Ralph and Walter both transgress the bounds of the known world and find pockets of fantasy landscape at the edges. There is a sense of linearity in both their journeys which maps onto the pleating model effectively and convincingly. *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*'s structure, whilst featuring a journey which is retraced (similar to *The Well at World's End*), is most convincingly understood through its cyclicality as opposed to its folding back upon itself or rather, its pleatedness. The episodes of its narrative operate around the axis of the central lake around which Birdalone's sending boat takes her, thus establishing a sense of structural rotation.

George Gopen states that '*The Water of the Wondrous Isles* is constructed in the huge sweep of a compelling circle'.[36] In explaining this impression, Gopen places particular emphasis on the revisiting of each isle in the romance. His understanding of this revisiting structure as a 'circle' as opposed to there-and-back-again linearity suggests that the earlier pleating model is transcended in this romance. It is important to consider, in regards to the structure of this romance, the role of the eponymous wondrous isles themselves. Crucially, there is no clear answer to the question 'what are these curious islands for?' As little epochs of intrigue they ought to be treated as sites of critical play. They are not by any means essential to the development of the plot – little to nothing of the main action would change with their omission, so what remains to do with them

[36] George D. Gopen, 'The Music of the Mind: Structure and Substance in William Morris's *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 16, (2005), pp.92-102 (p.93).

other than to approach them with a spirit of pattern and play, and try and understand what they can reveal to us about Birdalone, Morris, and the romance as a whole? Free from the obligations of the romance's bigger picture storytelling, these islands are free to exist in an entirely different way. As Birdalone visits each island twice, Morris creates a natural pairing between the experiences she has on her first encounters at them and her second. The inversions and evolutions that occur there are revealing of both Birdalone's own character, and the changeable, characterful nature of the patterned structure Morris has crafted in this romance.

The return journey in *The Well at World's End* is one of familiarity and visual reacquaintance whereas the numerous revisits to the landscapes in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* sees them utterly changed and refigured. In the former, pleats are retracted whereas in the latter, the isles are regenerated. The separation of the isles by water severs the bonds of pleatedness, instead allowing a cycle of evolution to occur at each one. Predictability, a typically essential characteristic of pattern, is not afforded here. Instead Birdalone must contend with repeats that alter. Navigating the course of the action, the water at the centre of the assemblage of isles compels the narrative in a distinctive cyclical formation. This sense of cyclicality is reinforced by the changes that occur at each isle; they develop and progress without explanation or narrative time spent within them charting this progression, thus suggesting a sense of seasonality and circadian rhythm to their ineffable alterative state. It is striking that its motifs can change radically and surprisingly whilst still conforming to the sense of wholeness required to render the fantasy believable, again affirming the sense of an overall scheme or pattern to their figuration. Seemingly ruled by the water at the heart of the fantasy landscape, this final romance embellishes the linear, pleated fantasy journey of the previous two and introduces a greater sense of tumult, changeability and mysticism to the patterns and pleats of Morris's landscapes.

The Isle of Queens and the Isle of Kings are a fascinating pair of isles which embody a sense of inversion. Most importantly, upon Birdalone's first visit to these isles, they are utterly static; no action occurs here. It is curious why Morris includes them and fashions them in such a way. To undertake to create pattern in prose and to then deny these isles narrativity and action appears at first to be counter-intuitive. However, these isles can be seen as moments in the romance in which Morris is explicitly calling attention to the richness, symmetry and patternedness of his prose. The characters of these isles are emblematic as opposed to being fully fleshed out, active participants in the narrative. Frozen in the medievalised mourning scenes as they are, they appear like the poised and suspended figures of Burne-Jones's 'Briar Rose' series. The correlative aspect between the two isles wherein women mourn a dead king and men mourn three dead queens converts these scenes into a mirror pattern. As well as providing scope for Birdalone's exploration, the gendered symmetry of the isles enriches the ancient history of the fantasy realm. Birdalone has come across these static places at which two parallel stories have occurred. They are clearly narratively linked by the stasis Morris plunges them both into, yet he denies us knowledge of what has caused this. This is an effective device of fantasy world-building in which allusions to great ancient history exacerbate the believability of a world and further extends the reader's intrigue. Morris takes this device further than the mere suggestion of a rich history in having two, mirrored frozen isles; the symmetry exacerbates the sense of fantasy and prolongs the time in which the narrative dwells within these frozen sites of mirror pattern and ancient fantasy.

The isles are not only paired with one another but with the future versions of themselves which Birdalone encounters on her return journey. The mirroring of the isles at the first and second encounter reflects in many ways Birdalone's own character and awareness of the world. During her first visits to the Isle of Queens and the Isle of Kings, Birdalone's understanding of sexuality

is as something very static and prescriptive. She has only accrued knowledge of love through the stories of the maids – nothing personal, immediate, or first-hand – and their story, featuring a medieval style battle, courtly submission to a king, kidnap at the hands of a witch and subsequent imprisonment, provides an archaic, anachronistic presentation of love. Furthermore, the colour correspondence between the maids and knights is simplistic and lacks compelling emotional depth (this is not to say their love is hollow, rather that Morris is not interested in exploring nor educating Birdalone in the nuances of love yet, and for the purposes of the trios' narrative, this symbolic patterning and union is sufficient and effective in different ways). Love has not yet been made alive or exciting to Birdalone, instead it brings great grief to those who are sundered from one another. Perhaps owing to the mournful tone of love that Birdalone perceives in the imprisoned maids, the type of love she witnesses at the isles are of desolation and mourning; the women mourn the king and the men mourn their queens and there is a sense of parity and correspondence between the sorrowful compositions of these inverted yet paired kingdoms. Here, romance is medievalised and deathly. It is suggested through this lifeless vignette that Birdalone can imagine what love looks like but not what it is like when it is animate. Her only reference of love is what Habundia and the three maids have told her so she has no scope of her own as to how to play it out yet. Yet, when Birdalone returns to the islands, she has attained an understanding of sexuality and is thus greeted by youth, both men and women (men at the Isle of Queens and women at the Isle of Kings) who are, like she now is, sexually mature and actively pursuant of sexual relationships. Their passion is such that Birdalone flees; from stasis to overwhelming engagement, the depictions of sexuality set before Birdalone at these isles chart her own awareness and degree of emotional, romantic and sexual maturation.

Morris does not typically delve into the interiorities of his characters in the romances; this is by no means a criticism. However, in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, one of the last iterations

of his patterned prose, these islands facilitate the externalisation of facets of Birdalone's worldview, thus allowing him to visually represent the bildungsroman facet of the romance and intimate a sense of her internality. Gopen argues that the isles around Birdalone change in accordance to her own development. Thus, they are externalisations of the binaries she understands the world to be made up of – youth and agedness, men and women, abundance and desolation. The inversion of the isles upon Birdalone's return visits to them demonstrates her increasing knowledge.

The islands are separated plates of pattern that correspond and call to one another but are not fully realised patterns or societies in isolation. When Birdalone leaves each island, on both her first and second visits, she departs with a greater, more noble desire. Her aspiration to pattern, to civilization, to harmonious and peaceable love-matches grows with each foray into the strange isles. In a romance in which pattern is significantly derived from character, as the following chapter will demonstrate, this sense of Birdalone's internal life being manifested or represented, informing the figuration of the isles, is compelling. Here, Morris's pleating model has given way to a more complex arrangement, what Gopen refers to as a structural, cyclical 'masterwork' of bildungsroman.

Chapter 3
Duplicity and Duplication – The Pattern of Character

Following the exploration of Morris's textile patterns in Chapter 1 and his landscape patterns in Chapter 2, this chapter will consider the ways in which Morris uses character as the embodiment of pattern in his fantasy prose. Developing further his mode and techniques of patterned-prose writing in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, it is predominantly through his characters that Morris establishes a sense of pattern in this romance. *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* features a distinct network of relational patterns that are sustained by and through Morris's fantasy characters. Landscape and textiles, whilst present as forms of pattern in the romance, are not the tools through which pattern is foregrounded here. It is the characters and their networks of binaries and relationships which possess and exude the most compelling patterned nature.


Fig. 22 Carpet

To understand the literary devices of doubles, foils, pairs and trios as cognates of visual symmetry, parallelism and formation allow for Morris's characters and relational networks to be read alongside his pattern-design. The formal aspect of

Morris's late pattern-design style in his textile works is largely contingent on symmetry. This 1889 Bullerswood Carpet, designed by Morris illustrates the structural necessity and stylistic flair of symmetrical forms in the late patterns.[37] The border appears to perpetuate Morris's original, linearly fluid style of pattern design, however; the main body of the pattern is dominated by these undulating and mirrored lines in red and yellow upon which the bird motifs perch and the foliage scrolls. The use of symmetry allows for the repeated or mirrored plate of image to be far more complex than Morris's other styles of pattern-designing. Instead of the plates of image needing to be block-printable and correlative with the next identical iteration of itself, mirrored patterns do not have to behave in this way; the motifs at the far-right edge of the pattern do not have to correlate exactly with the formation and position of the motifs at the far-left to allow an exact, consecutive repetition of block-printing plates. Thus, Morris is free to allow the forms of the left panel to tumble across the plane of material with much greater expansiveness, playfulness, and twining caprice. The leaves that unfurl here can embody a sense of whimsy, free of the necessity to conform their shapes to the demanding structure of a repeating plate pattern. The mirror that lays along the middle of the carpet is instead the operative of pattern; the images on the far-right have the same character of freeness but assent to the carpet's sense of pattern by virtue of their reflectiveness. The spiral of the red structural lines further emphasises this effect; instead of line being necessary to conduct the gaze along the exactly repeated and imbricated plates of a non-mirrored pattern such as the diagonal pull of the fruit boughs in *Fruit*, these lines can concentrically spool within themselves and unwind internally. The gaze of the pattern-observer is malleable and in these mirrored patterns, Morris does not seek to stretch or coax it across a sprawling expanse as was his approach in earlier pattern-design. Instead, he seeks to explore the relationship between the mirrored panels and allow the eye to dwell in these whorls and knots. The mirror device duplicates the image so as to emphasise the necessity for repose within the

[37] He was potentially assisted by John Henry Dearle.

pattern it creates; we are asked to remain longer with patterns that employ mirrors instead of chasing the repeats of linear, non-mirrored patterns.

The use, then, of doubles and foils and trios in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* ought to be understood as a literary manifestation of this same mirror device and a call to consider in greater depth the repeating, numerically formatted figures. The eye of the pattern-observer, or in the case of Morris's romances, the eye of the pattern-reader, is allowed to dwell on the characters who exist in these binary networks; the visual and narrative effects of their formation via mirror devices is the demand for attentiveness and appreciation so as to ensure the reader fully realises the operation of pattern.

Using character as the primary means for the establishment of pattern is not something Morris does in earnest in his previous romances. Looking at Morris's characters in *The Wood Beyond the World* and *The Well at World's End,* they are by and large very distinct from one another and only bound by their narrative relationships; they are not creating pattern in and of themselves. They can be seen only to interact with the world of pattern that Morris has constructed around them as opposed to actively contributing to it. They are not units or motifs of pattern in their own right but are mere witnesses to and traversers of it. They can be adorned with patterned garments, or stride within the patterned landscape, but as figments within the fantasy, they are not pointedly freighted nor designed with pattern in mind. For example, the case for the patterned characterisation of Ralph in *The Well at World's End* is unconvincing beyond minor gestures to pattern in Morris's images denoting his character. He is granted mild patterned relation to his three brothers as they embark upon simultaneous quests into the landscape, each taking a point on the compass to pursue and thus venturing out in a suggestive formation; this is by no means a laboured point in the romance, however, nor does it have a

lasting impact on the patterned landscape as a whole. This gesture to pattern as a means of expressing the filial bond between the brothers and their journeys into the landscape is limited and easily forgotten – it does not inform the unfurling of the fantasy landscape in any compelling way beyond the singular reference to it at the very beginning. It is instead, Ralph's individual engagement with the landscape he traverses where Morris's patterned vision is realised in *The Well at World's End*. Similarly, *The Wood Beyond the World* features unfulfilled promises of numerical formations of characters. The trio which appears to Walter as quasi-dream visions throughout his journey have great potential to embody an affecting supernatural role in the romance, however the trio's relationships to one another and the implications of this group who seem to proliferate across the landscape with unnerving and dangerous potency remain unexplored. Whilst the visions of the trio intrigue Walter, no conclusion is drawn from them, nor do they effectively let us glean any further information about the evil lady, the taunting dwarf and the enthralled maid. Morris forms the trio but leaves it at that in this case. This is indeed a formation with a sense of repeatability and specific visual configuration that is eye-catching and compelling, yet it does not contribute to the overall sense of pattern in the romance. Not enough is made of why they appear to Walter in these peculiar, supernatural visions, nor does Morris reveal how the trio came to be such an inextricably linked unit of characters. He does not induct this trio far enough into his patterned vision of the story and the romance as a whole for them to be convincing agents of the pattern. As explored previously, this generally is a less achieved pattered romance compared to its successors, and Morris's hesitancy here to exploit the full potential of this trio as a unit of pattern demonstrates this. Thus, techniques such as character doubling and reflection, or formations of characters such as trios and quartets, or dream visions and apparitions are gestured to in these earlier romances as residual background motifs or exist as fleeting, grasping images but it is not until *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* that aspects of

character are featured in a position of primacy and bear the main thrust of a romance's patterned consciousness.

Another key aspect of the form of pattern created in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* is Morris's spirit of play with the strictness and exactness of replication in his character patterns. Here, Morris allows change and alteration within his patterns; no longer are patterns confined to exact sameness and repeatability in order for them to be effective and affecting, but they are now enlivened by motifs that change and thus redefine the relational patterns in which they exist. Whilst the relationships at play here often employ mirror devices, or devices of duplication, they are not bound, as Morris's visual patterns are, by exact visual replication. The prose opens a far wider set of characteristics and categories by which these characters can mirror one another – such as through gender, speech, action, and location. By using characters to convey pattern, Morris allows for a more animate, changeable and flowering pattern. Morris's landscapes or textile patterns are less prone to or capable of action, consciousness and wilfulness. Characters, on the other hand, introduce the exciting prospect of deviance within the pattern-designer's prose.

Mothers and Sisters

The exploration of binary relationships forms a substantial part of the romance. We can observe a continuous and compulsive forming and subverting of pairings throughout it. It is curious that this is the only romance that features a female character as its protagonist as, of the three romances at hand, it is the one which is chiefly concerned with relational patterning and thus situates its characters as being predominantly social beings opposed to merely serving the linear action of the plot. Here, Morris forges a new style of patterned prosody that is distinctly relational. Maternal, sisterly and romantic pairings preoccupy Morris in this romance as a means to enrich

and conduct the unfurling of the plot and the pattern. These relational pairings and structures of interaction are significantly gendered and specifically concerned with the networks and systems of female life, love and intimacy.

The romance commences with the kidnapping of Birdalone and thus establishes a void in her life: a lost mother. The absence of her real mother creates the opportunity for Morris to depict the fulfilment of this role with creative, patterned abundance; instead of having one natural mother, the void is simultaneously filled by numerous characters, all of whom overlap and are bound to one another as doubles or foils, sharing in their maternal relation to Birdalone.

Birdalone's mother figures start with her real mother, from whom she is stolen aged two in Utterhay and whom she does not see again until their reunion in the City of Five Crafts; the kidnapping witch then embodies the role of mother, being referred to by Birdalone as the witch-wife or witch-mistress; this character of witchy motherhood is then contrasted by Habundia, the nymphlike wood-woman, wood-wife and wood-mother; the last mother figure is the witch-wife's sister whom Birdalone encounters at the Isle of Increase Unsought and who is a double or extension of Birdalone's initial witch captor. The fact that Birdalone has multiple forms of address for Habundia and the witch neatly encapsulates the proliferative aspect of the mother role in her life. Motherhood is not a stable relationship for Birdalone; instead, it is a turbulent, skin-changing role, filled (not to fruition, however) by an assemblage of supernatural characters in relation to whom Birdalone experiences differing forms of daughterhood.

The first mother pairing, consisting of Birdalone's natural mother and supernatural witch captor, marks the start of the romance and designates Birdalone's entry into the magical, fantasy world. The youthful naivety of Birdalone's real mother is sharply contrasted with the witchy manipulation and sophistication of the kidnapper. The magical duplicity of the witch, as opposed

to the kindly humanity of Birdalone's poor and desperate mother, is further emphasised by the skin-changing scene, in which the witch sheds the visage she adopted for her trip to Utterhay and assumes her typical Evilshaw appearance which is harsh and haughty.

The next pairing is another one of opposition: Habundia and the witch-wife. Birdalone's titles for these magical mothers designate their opposite natures and roles in the romance. Both possess magical powers yet use these to opposite effects in their relation to Birdalone. The witch-wife uses magic to terrorize and punish Birdalone:

> Then she took the cup and took water in the hollow of her hand and cast it into Birdalone's face and muttered words withal; and presently she saw herself indeed, that she was become a milk-white hind. (p.30-1)

Habundia, contrastingly, plays a nurturing and educative role, teaching Birdalone about the world and about herself. Her speech to Birdalone is effusively maternal:

> I would ask thee a thing and crave somewhat of thee, as if thou wert verily my mother; wilt thou grant me? Yea, surely, child, said Habundia. Said Birdalone: This it is then, that thou wilt learn me of thy wisdom. Habundia smiled full kindly on her, and said: This of all things I would have had thee ask; and this day and now shall we begin to open the book of the earth before thee. For therein is mine heritage and my dominion. Sit by me, child, and hearken! So the maiden sat down by likeness under the oak, and began to learn her lesson. (p.40)

The gentleness of Habundia contrasts the harshness of the witch-wife, while Habundia's eagerness to educate Birdalone about 'the book of the earth' opposes the witch's continual obscuring of the real world from the naïve and imprisoned Birdalone. Morris's opposed models of motherhood dramatize the sense that Birdalone is on the precipice of adulthood. Whereas her captor seeks to confine her to the woods of Evilshaw, Habundia desires to send Birdalone into the fantasy landscape at large. Instead of Birdalone being trapped in a network of mothers and oppressors, Habundia, as an agent of the fantastical impulse of the romance, wants to draw Birdalone's attention to the oppressiveness of her current state and widen the pattern of her

knowledge and experience. Habundia does not only want Birdalone to be free of the witch, but also of Habundia herself; note that Habundia does not accompany Birdalone on her journey.

Not only are mother characters doubled with one another, the supernatural mother figures of the witch and Habundia also possess a range of skins, allowing for a sense of intra-character doubling. Birdalone's mothers are her only lens onto the world at the beginning of the romance, so their variability and tendency towards changeableness allows Morris to begin her education on the scope of femininity. At the very start of the romance, Birdalone is still very sheltered and her worldview is rather limited yet her intimated collection of mothers hints to her the possibility of a much greater and more complex world of relationships and experiences that lies ahead. However, she is only able to conduct relationships in which she is the inferior in age, maturity and knowledge, and her relational model is limited resulting in the compulsion for the women she encounters to somehow elide with the mother role.

The next mother figure we encounter is at the Isle of Increase Unsought and is the second witch by whom Birdalone is captured and imprisoned. Whilst the witch possesses no typically maternal characteristics, it is her similarity and relation to the witch at Evilshaw that designates her as a mother figure in Birdalone's scope of experience. The witch-wife's sister is an iteration of the witch-wife and embodies a similar role to her. She is an extension of her sister's oppression of Birdalone and allows not only for the perpetuation of the theme of imprisonment and maternal captivity but also takes it further; Birdalone was kidnapped alone, whereas this second witch has ensnared three thralls before taking Birdalone captive too. The witch emphasises her synonymity and collusion with her sister when she speaks to Birdalone:

> Laughed the lady: Thou art a fool, thrall, said she; if a sparrow fled hither from my sister, I should not wring its neck, but keep it for her. So shall I do with thee. I shall not slay thee, and so destroy my sister's chattel; nor shall I spoil thee, and spoil her possession. I shall send thee back unto her, the stolen thrall in the stolen boat, when I have learned

> thee a lesson here. Forsooth it was for that cause meseemeth that she let thee slip through her fingers, for she is wise enough to have stayed thee from this holiday had she willed it. But she is tender-hearted, and kind, and soft, and might well deem that if thy chastisement were done to her hand here, it were better done than by her mercy. (p.56)

Just as the first witch punishes Birdalone for her transgressions (such as during the deer transfiguration episode), the second witch echoes her sister's cruelty with threats of 'chastisement', promising that Birdalone will 'have learned thee a lesson here'. The sense of conspiratorial complicity between the sisters stresses the sense of the Isle of Increase Unsought as a patterned iteration of Evilshaw. Both landscapes are quite distinct from one another in regards to their visual features and structure, however, the corresponding fearful attitude each one has to the sister witches unites them as doubled realms. The pattern which they share is their submission to this bloodline of witch. For the establishment of a pattern, it is not enough for Birdalone to simply become ensnared by a new captor in their own right at the new island – she must fall into the clutches of a witch who significantly echoes and collaborates with her former witch: her sister. Despite Birdalone having just set out into the wide world, Morris limits the scope of newness Birdalone can encounter. Through this sisterly network, Morris extends the tone of oppression and danger established at Evilshaw, setting a precedent for the way in which this landscape will be conducted, as the narrative that unfurls and the isles that Birdalone traverses will be navigated and understood through the lens of character networks and a system of relationships.

Gopen comments on the use of the sister witches in his article which considers the isles of the romance as external representations of Birdalone's developing mind. Categorising the romance as a bildungsroman due to the psychic potential and chronicling of the isles, he argues that Birdalone's imagination is so limited by her time of youthful captivity, that the 'dream visions' it creates at each isle can only be constructed using the few features of the real world that she has

experienced to date. Thus, the appearance of a witch-captor who is a relative of her original captor demonstrates the narrowness of her view and knowledge at this stage of the romance. She can only imagine an isle which is dominated by a witch who is almost identical to her own witch:

> When she arrives at the Isle of Increase Unsought for the first time, she has never in her life seen any creatures other than the witch and Habundia - not a single man, and not a single human woman. [...] Reigning over all this splendour [at the Isle of Increase Unsought] would have to be another witch - a witch related to her witch - because the concept of a communal society simply is not yet available to her imagination. She cannot yet imagine a world free of thraldom.[38]

In this instance, Gopen's psychological reading of Birdalone's naivety proves compelling and poses great potential for an understanding of the romance as a pattern; Birdalone's psychological compulsion to seek out relational forms that she has seen before and the sense in which the landscape actively provides sites for binary and mirrored relationships to be staged and contrasted highlights the capacity of pattern to function as a tool of the bildungsroman genre. The sisterly duality of the witches provides a palpable link from one island to the next. As they are separated by a gulf of water, the island landscapes themselves cannot form or embody the link that would otherwise establish their patternedness (as was the function of landscapes in *The Well at World's End*) therefore, Morris uses the mirroring sisterhood of the witches to allow the pattern to develop and ensure a connection between the place of Birdalone's childhood captivity and her second captivity.

Habundia not only plays the role of a mother but is also a compelling sister and double to Birdalone. The duality of the women as duplicates as opposed to embodying a maternal relationship provides even greater scope for Birdalone's education about herself. Instead of merely learning about what lies beyond Evilshaw, Birdalone is allowed to literally and metaphorically reflect on herself. Habundia occupies the physical and visual form of Birdalone

[38] Gopen, (2005), p.96.

and thus becomes her exact double, affecting a sense of pattern at the level of symmetry. Their first encounter is a compelling mirror scene. There is a sense of creative negation in this moment – there is an absence of an actual mirror, despite the emphasis placed on them and the sense of reflection. Morris remarks how Birdalone is not allowed by the witch to polish the metal enough to induce reflection of herself on its surface: 'We have at home a broad latten dish, which it is my work, amongst other things, to brighten and keep bright: yet may I not make it so bright that I may see much of mine image therein' (p.16). This leaves space for a fantastical iteration of a mirror device. Instead of there being an actual mirror, Habundia's description game in which the women must 'play thy play' and verbally construct an image of the other and heed their identicalness establishes words as a palpable mirror form. The only way Birdalone has access to a vision of herself is through the apprehension of Habundia, her double, and through Habundia's description of her. This visual and verbal symmetry suggests that pattern allows for a drawing out of Birdalone from her immaturity and lack of awareness to a point of complex self-reflection. The mirror that Morris uniquely fashions in fantasy prose is used to prompt self-reflexive interrogation of identity. Thus, from the beginning of this romance, Morris clearly introduces a psychological valence to the construction of pattern as Birdalone is taught to understand herself as a relational entity.

Habundia declares to Birdalone 'it is well; now am I to be thy mirror. Thus it is with thee: thou standest before me a tall and slim maiden' (p.16) and proceeds to describe in great detail Birdalone's body. In this first passage of description, Habundia, in the role of oratorial mirror sets out the details of Birdalone's face, body and hair. There is a sense in which Morris himself indulges in this passage of description. The degree of detail attained such as the description of Birdalone's eyes as 'grey as a hawk's, but kind and serious, and nothing fierce nor shifting' creates the necessity for slowness and repose in the images Habundia conjures. The mirror device in

Morris's patterns is a call not only for visual reflection but for the intellectual reflection of the viewer as they behold the work. The mirror here allows Morris to command the mind's eye of the reader to find repose in the description of Birdalone and her double Habundia. The instruction that Birdalone close her eyes during the game highlights the need for pause here. The pattern creates an epoch of rest in the sprawling landscape of the wood in which the women find themselves.

There is also a sense in which Habundia notes the sexual qualities of Birdalone. This is not done with any coyness or shame, nor is Habundia attracted to Birdalone and doing so voyeuristically; instead, sex, nakedness and the apprehension of the body do not run as counter to a notion of innocence. Habundia notes details such as Birdalone's flesh which is 'bare of wont, as thy throat and thine arms and thy legs from the middle down, it is tanned and beauteous, and clean as if the golden sunlight which fulfilleth the promise of the earth, were playing therein' (p.16). The sisterly doubling of the women in this scene perhaps enhances the extent to which Morris can luxuriate in descriptions of Birdalone as a sexual being without lapsing into the scandalously erotic. Indeed, there is a disassociation of sexuality from guilt in the romance, allowing nakedness to be treated as something Edenic. Reconsidering an earlier point about Genesis, Eden, and pattern making, in which Morris refers to the 'damask fields of Eden', the unashamed nakedness of Birdalone, as emphasised and echoed by her sisterly double, is part of Morris's utopic pattern-design. The celebration of Birdalone's body is neutralised from any sense of crudeness through their bond of mirrored sisterhood and thus the body ceases to be the 'draw' of lust, as the witch warns Birdalone it shall be (p.30), and is elevated to the planes of innocently sexual pattern as befits Morris's Edenic design. Indeed, Habundia stresses the sense of design in Birdalone's form: 'Surely he who did carven thy chin had a mind to a master-work and did no less. Great was the

deftness of thine imaginer' (p.17). Here, Habundia plays the role of Birdalone's reflector and thus calls to mind the skill, craft and design enacted by Morris, the 'imaginer' or patterner.

After describing Birdalone she says 'so now I have played the play, and told thee of thee; tell me now of me, and play thy play' (p.17). This demand of reciprocity in the 'play' emphasises that the mirroring of this scene is not only affected visually but in the speech of the women. The call for Birdalone to describe Habundia requires that she offer the same service to her, thus mirroring her in the terms of the game, but also, as Habundia is identical to Birdalone, there is another layer of the mirrored paradigm, thus, Birdalone's description of Habundia is actually the first description she will ever formulate or offer about herself. The request for a Birdalone to offer the mirrored form of the 'play' emphasises the joviality Habundia has within the scene; this episode of pattern is a source of levity. As Habundia '[played the] play', the play of pattern can be seen to be achieved through the verbal feats and delights she takes in using words to construct an image of Birdalone. As Birdalone mirrors Habundia's form, 'form' can be used to denote the forms of the women's bodies that are the object of their descriptions but also refers to the literary form – fantasy prose – that Morris is using to affect the patterned vignette.

Birdalone timidly begins her attempt to mirror both the image of Habundia in prose and the deftness and skill of Habundia's descriptions. Birdalone repeatedly draws attention to their indistinguishable sameness: 'I take thine hair and lay the tress amongst mine, and thou mayst not tell which is which; and amidst the soft waves of it thy forehead is nestling smooth as thou saidst of mine [...], thy leg and mine as they stand together; and thine arm as if it were of my body. [...] now is this strange. Who art thou? Art thou my very own sister? I would thou wert' (p.18). Her description evokes the same bodily features as Habundia's did of Birdalone, noting the women's mirrored hair, skin, carven chins and limbs, further emphasising the mirroring practice.

The scene calls to mind many of Morris's mirrored bird patterns such as *Dove and Rose* or *Bird and Vine* in which reflected birds come face to face amidst a curling tumult of foliage and flora. It is notable that many of Morris's mirror style patterns feature birds as central motifs. There is a sense in which using the bird motifs, as opposed to merely foliage and flowers, emphasises the effects of the mirroring. The birds are seemingly endowed with an intimation of character and are more easily distinguishable as reflections of one another than reflected flowers might be for instance. For example, the birds in *Strawberry Thief,* which were inspired by the thrushes stealing fruit from Morris's Kelmscott gardens, are granted through this narrative and reflectiveness a suggestion of naughtiness, stealth and playfulness. The act of mirroring the birds instead of just the vegetation and fruit, brings a sense of character and this story to the pattern. Mirrors have great effect when Morris's patterns are particularly concerned with characterful motifs, be they the birds of *Strawberry Thief* or the women of Evilshaw's woods.

When describing the vision of Habundia before her, Birdalone also notes the surroundings.

> For this moreover I will tell thee, that I have seen nought in field or woodland that is as lovely to me as thou art; nay, not the fritillary nodding at our brook's mouth, nor the willow-boughs waving on Green Eyot; nor the wild-cat sporting on the little woodlawn, when she saw me not; nor the white doe rising up from the grass to look to her fawn; nor aught that moves and grows. (p.23)

The references to the features of the landscape contribute to the sense that Morris is developing his patterned mode from being largely concerned with and contingent on the construction and play of landscape to being one dominated by character. Instead of taking precedence, as it would have in the pattern drafting of *The Well at World's End*, the landscape here is used by Morris as background enrichment to the central, dual motifs at the heart of the pattern: the twinned characters. The motifs of this 1887 tapestry, *Forest*, cease to be the foreground elements of



Fig. 23 The Forest

Morris's narrative pattern in the Habundia and Birdalone mirror scene. Here the lion, foliage and scrolling acanthus leaves form the heart and focus of the image; the lion is enveloped in the curling foliage and seems to be suspended in his place on the tapestry by the golden stem of the leaves; the flower clusters punctuate the foreground, gently pushing upwards into the central panel of the tapestry and interspersing the blue toned acanthus with buds of red and white. These components are enough indeed in this composition to formulate a gripping and beautiful pattern that both pleases the eye and coaxes it along and through its tumults, spirals and hidden corners. What Morris does in Birdalone's speech is employ these same features, thus affirming the visual patternedness of the scene, but pushes them to the side to dwell on the characterful patterning which takes this landscape as a mere background. The mirrored women, replete with the narrative and emotional implications of their doubled sisterhood, provide a far more exciting patterned prospect than the configuration of the 'willow-boughs waving', the 'little wood-lawn' and the collection of woodland creatures that therein reside.

Habundia, despite the play of emphasising her physical mirroring of Birdalone makes sure to rebuke Birdalone for assuming their absolute sameness. We are reminded that the appearance of sameness between the women is not the full picture. Despite being her visual double, Habundia is also radically different to Birdalone. She possesses magical power, she is not a human woman but a nymphlike creature, she is well-versed in the world and has a wealth of knowledge and life experience, and she is mature and old (as is designated by her titles of 'wife' and 'mother') despite her youthful appearance.

A specific moment in which Morris interrogates the extent of Birdalone's and Habundia's mirroring is when Birdalone twists a lock of Habundia's hair with her own. During her first description of Habundia, Birdalone exclaims 'Look thou! I take thine hair and lay the tress amongst mine, and thou mayst not tell which is which' (p.18). This initial glee at the seemingly profound sameness between the women and their hair is undermined when Habundia offers Birdalone a lock of her hair as the means by which Birdalone can summon her wood-mother to her aid during her travels. Birdalone is instructed to burn the lock and this will magically call Habundia to her side. Crucially, the hair possesses supernatural power. Despite looking identical to the ordinary, human tresses of Birdalone, it is imbued with a higher power. In fact, it is only by virtue of Habundia's magic that the hair looks as ordinary and as similar to Birdalone's as it does. Morris describes how 'she mingled the tress of the wood-mother's hair with her own hair' (p.46). The binding of the hair in this moment is significant. As explored at length by Galia Ofek, hair in the period, especially that of women, was seen as a distinct distillation of their character

and moral standing.[39] In her study of contemporary literature, art and jewellery, Ofek considers the sentimental and moral freighting of hair. The lock twisting episode dramatizes the relationship between the wood-mother and Birdalone in a microcosmic way. The weaving of Birdalone's hair with Habundia's further emphasises both the inextricability of the women and also their distinctness. It is easy to imagine the two tresses of hair twisted about one another, forming one spiral, yet remaining distinguishable from one another due to the form of braiding undertaken to keep it in place.

After she has experienced the mirrored sisterhood she shared with Habundia, Morris teaches Birdalone further about sisterhood (conflated with profound female friendship) through the relational formations at the Isle of Increase Unsought where we first encounter the trio of Aurea, Viridis, and Atra. When she arrives at the first island, Morris allows for Birdalone's scope of sisterhood to be expanded from a very rudimentary sense of visual duplication and mirrored twinning that she became accustomed to through Habundia, to the colourful, exciting and complementary sisterhood of the trio. The relational abundance of the trio formation builds on the joy Birdalone finds in the accruement of one sister through the mirror duo with Habundia; she is now faced with the prospect of not one sister but three. And these three pseudo-sisters are not exact replicas of herself but are unique, distinct and fascinatingly other to Birdalone.

The decision for Birdalone to leave the Isle and seek the knights on the trio's behalf necessitates that she be clothed for her travels. The only way the maids can dress her is through giving up their own garments. In donning the clothing given to her by the maids, there is a powerful sense

[39] Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Routledge, Oxford: 2009).

in which Birdalone becomes an amalgamation of the three of them. Viridis offers clothing first, saying:

> Dear sister Birdalone, here is my smock, which I lend to thee, but as to my love, I give it thee therewith; therefore grudge it not, though thou give me back the linen, for happy will be the day to me when I have it again; for now none may do it on me save the Green Knight, my own love. Therewith she gave her the smock, and kissed her, and Birdalone did it on, and felt the valianter and mightier when she had a garment upon her (p.74).

Next it is Aurea who offers Birdalone a garment:

> Birdalone, dear messenger, take now my golden gown, and send it back to me when thou hast found the man unto whom it is due; and think meanwhile that, when thou wearest it, thou wearest my love, and that when thou pullest it off, thou art clad with my love instead of it (p.75).

Then Atra:

> Birdalone, sweet friend! wilt thou be my messenger to bear these shoon to my Black Squire, and meanwhile put up my love for thee under thy feet, to speed thee and to bear thee up? Wherefore be good to me.

Not only is Birdalone to be clad in their clothing, but she also bears their sisterly love for her. The clothes are also imbued with the maid's love for the knights, but this will be considered in due course. Viridis's smock, granted to her 'sister' Birdalone, makes Birdalone feel 'valianter and mightier' thus demonstrating how the sisterly bond of shared clothing ennobles and strengthens her. Similarly, Aurea uses her golden gown to permanently impart her love to Birdalone. The gown is the means by which Birdalone becomes enrobed in Aurea's love, however; she stipulates that even once Birdalone removes the dress, Aurea's love will have indelibly imbued her. Similarly, Atra states that her shoes will 'bear [Birdalone] up'. Atra's statement reads like a proleptic irony for how Birdalone will, addled with guilt and regret, end up trampling on Atra's love for Arthur. Birdalone's assembled outfit ties her physically, visually and emotionally to her newfound sisters. She is a distillation of the trio. Birdalone's previous nakedness is thus overlaid with the stamp of her new sisterhood as each contributes their own flourish to her developing identity.

At this point in the romance, Birdalone's identity is significantly defined by her relationships to those who surround her. Be it through her compulsive searching for mother-figures and natural subjugation of herself to witches (both good and bad) or her revelry in mirrored sisterhood without which she would have little to no conception of herself from an external perspective, Birdalone is not yet a fully-fledged individual. Instead, this phase of binary opposition and doubling forms the first stage of her self-education. These networks of female relationships also allow Morris to toy with a new kind of fantasy: one in which the landscape is dominated by women characters who, charged with social impulse, formulate intricate systems of mirrors and patterns, elevating their narratives from a string of linear events to a pattern.

Love Correlation

Morris's trio of maids are accompanied by a correlative trio of knights in the romance. Each of the maids loves and is loved by one of the knights. Thus, not only are there two distinct trio formations at play, but these groups are divisible into a series of pairings which are strongly tied to one another through their love and fraternal bonds. The Golden Knight, Baudoin, is the lover of Aurea; the Green Knight, Hugh, is paired with Viridis; and the Black Squire, Arthur, is matched by Atra. In his design of these characters, Morris is at pains to indicate the suitability and symmetry between the couples.

Colour is the most obvious delineator of the couples' visual and narrative congruity. All six of the lovers and members of the respective trios have names that explicitly point to colour. Firstly, the women all have names which denote the colour of their garments in Latin. Birdalone is told: 'Thou shalt call me Aurea, said the other: and my next sister is Viridis, and the third, Atra; for that is according to our raiment, and other names we have not now' (p.52). Their names, meaning

golden, green and black, directly correspond to their knights. Morris luxuriates in describing the appearances of the women. Birdalone's first apprehension of them is filled with awe and wonderment, and is particularly characterised by the distinctive colour each women dons. Their colours are the first elements noted in the long and detailed descriptions; Atra: 'she was clad all in black, a tall, slim woman, with the grace of the willow-bough in the wind, with dark plenteous hair and grey hawk-eyes; her skin privet-white, with but little red in her cheeks' (p.53); Viridis: 'Birdalone looked, and saw a woman coming toward them clad all in green, with a rose wreath on her head. And she drew nigh, and greeted Birdalone kindly, and she also was a very beauteous woman; not great of body whereas Aurea was tall and big-made, though excellent shapen. Light brown and goodly waved of hair was Viridis, her eyes brown, and rather long than great; her lips full and ruddy, her cheeks soft and sweet and smooth, and as rosy-tinted pearl' (p.52-3); and Aurea: 'a woman to wit, in a shining golden gown, and as she drew nigh Birdalone could see that she was young and fair, tall, white-skinned and hazel-eyed, with long red hair dancing all about her as she tripped lightly and merrily over the greensward' (p.52). Morris's attentiveness to the details of the maids' bodies, hair and dress is further emblematic of his textile technique of attaining pattern, as explored in Chapter 1. These textile objects are delighted in, dwelt on, and command attention. Enriching the texture of the prose, these descriptions place craft at the centre of Morris's creative vision. Through the mirroring device that makes this romance so intricately symmetrical and ascendant to patterned fantasy, the matching textiles worn by the knights and maids attains patternedness. These beautifully clad crafted characters point firstly to the presence of design in the romance and secondly, as the women are accompanied by men who are correspondently dressed, the clothing also functions as a device of mirror patterning, advancing the patterned impact of the textile presence.

Whilst the three maids do indeed correspond to the three knights, they are not identical pairs. They are compatible and clearly visually and narratively fused together but their symmetry is limited. Gender is a necessary difference between them; the perfection of the patterned pairing is attained in their deference to their medivalised figurations as ideal women and ideal men. They must differ in their fulfilment of idealised, romanticised gender roles in order to be wholly united in the love bond. This is exemplified by the rescue structure of the romance; the women must endure captivity and wait for their brave and noble knights to save them. Just as Habundia and Birdalone's symmetry and likeness is actually the result of great difference (Habundia's magic makes her Birdalone disguise possible), the suitability of the trios' love requires their differing genders. Symmetry, in this narrative form of pattern-design, does not demand identicalness but harmony, and thus its scope within the romance is broadened. Instead of being limited by empirical, exact repetition, Morris can affect pattern by means of mirrors whilst also allowing for difference, contrast and thus, narrative enticement; the interplay between correspondence and divergence makes the patterns at work here far more stimulating and fruitful.

Many critics situate *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* as a proto-feminist text, mainly through a consideration of Birdalone: the romance's wilful, often unashamedly naked protagonist. Her nakedness and status as Morris's only female protagonist leads critics to explore the narrative through the lens of her development, as shown in George Gopen's criticism. Owen Holland, in his study of Morris's politics and utopianism, is highly critical of the presentation of women in Morris's works aside from in *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*:

> With the exception of The Water of the Wondrous Isles (1897), Morris's fantasy narratives recount the quests of male protagonists in which female characters play secondary roles. Most problematically, the contrast between the chaste maiden and the sexually predacious Lady in *The Wood Beyond the World* (1895) indicates the extent to which Morris's romances are complicit with the ubiquitous doubled image of women and the sexual double-standard with which it is associated.[40]

[40] Holland (2012), p.80.

Birdalone is not, on the surface, an easy fit amongst the ranks of late-Victorian female protagonists. Much has been made of her lack of clothing yet this is a fleeting phase in the romance (she soon reaches the Isle of Increase Unsought and dons rich attire and remains clothed for the remainder of the romance) and there is a wider notion of innocence and Edenic naivety accompanying her nakedness that contravenes any sense of this being a bold and sexually empowered omission on the part of Birdalone herself or of Morris. Indeed, it is when Birdalone hears of Atra's passionate and sexual love for Arthur that she is granted clothing, suggesting that her impending sexual maturation requires Birdalone to attain the virtue of modesty as opposed to fall into promiscuity or brazenness.

There is also a compelling sense that gender subversion and proto-feminist, socialistic political statements were far from Morris's mind in his conceptualisation of Birdalone, and of the other characters. Florence Boos argues this same point, stating in her introduction to the romance: 'It is unlikely that Morris consciously set out to write a romance about a historically-displaced socialist "new woman" or to formulate ideal models for women's character(s) and social role(s).'[41] Holland's assessment perhaps demonstrates the pitfalls of Morris criticism that approaches the romances from a position of far too acute political seriousness. Boos accurately notes the lack of conscious politicism in Morris's depiction of gender. That is not to say that there is no merit in exploring the gender roles depicted in the romance, just that it would be a disservice to Morris to place too much emphasis on his presentation of gender in a back-attribution of any post-modern notion of feminism and gender. The lack of intentionality is where notions of proto-

[41] Florence Boos, 'Introduction to The Water of the Wondrous Isles' <http://morrisarchive.lib.uiowa.edu/introduction-waterofwondrousisles> [accessed 16 July 2022].

feminism fall short in a patterned conceptualisation of Morris's romances; consciousness is essential for design as Morris understood and produced it.

It is not through a rejection of gender roles or orchestration of a new mode of feminine behaviour, as argued for by Holland, that Birdalone most significantly contributes to the narrative and thus to the pattern of the romance as a whole. In fact, in regards to the text's patterning, it is the moments in which Birdalone is most inclined to conform to medieval and Romantic ideals of femininity that the sense of pattern is most affecting. For example, Morris uses the moment of Birdalone's dressing in Atra's, Aurea's and Viridis's clothing to emphasise her relationship to them within the wider network of female sisterhood patterns and to assert Birdalone's beauty, loyalty to her immediately formed bonds of kinship, and girlish enjoyment of pretty crafted artefacts. The emotional and textural effect of this moment of gendered patterning is beautifully achieved. The correlative effect of the trio of maids and knights further affirms this sentiment; their historical and chivalric characterisation as the stock men and women of fantasy romances comes to its fruition in the moments in which Morris explicates their patterned, gendered correspondence with one another and the typical heteronormative relationships they belong to. Existing as stock characters in the expanse of Morris's patterned romance is by no means a state of derogation or oppressive gender norms. The patterned interaction of men and women is lauded by Morris. The maids are imprisoned and require the valiant rescue efforts of the men for instance, and the men have previously offered them rich and beautiful clothing to tokenise their affections.

Contrary to what one might expect of a Victorian medieval-aspiring text, the patterns of gender networks are celebratory of the sexual passion between the men and women. Gender might be accompanied by traditional characteristics for both men and women but this is enlivened and

ennobled by Morris's rather striking and unashamed admission of the women's sexualities and the men's fraught emotional fragilities. As opposed to suggesting these facets of character are subversive, Morris encodes them within his patterned maps of gender as innate aspects of his characters whilst still affirming their idealisation as men and women. It is actually Birdalone's moments of defiance of traditional femininity, like her departure from the Castle of the Quest, that do the most damage to the pattern. This is not to say Morris was denigrative of women or insists that women be submissive to traditional ideals, rather, he utilises the natural state of the feminine in his patterns to perfectly complement the masculine as would befit a medieval romance. Deference to the pattern is not the same as a social yoke; it is the context in which the characters can realise fully the extent of their natures as the culmination of a long tradition of the men and women of fairy stories, fantasies and romances; and Morris allows for affecting passages of growth, flourish and flair within this. Patterns are not sites of subversion but of delicately balanced, beautiful perpetuation of orders, including the gender order most visually and narratively attractive to medievalist Morris.

The role of gender in Morris's symmetry is made apparent in the ways in which the trios' clothing corresponds. The embroidered, bejewelled and ideally feminized gowns of the maids are matched by the heraldic war-gear of the knights. Atra's appearance reflects the melancholic, more reserved nature she possesses. Black as her nominal colour is indicative of a sense of mournfulness and sorrow. This is reflected in her love-match, the Black Squire's heraldic-style stamp on his surcoat: 'the third bore a black surcoat besprinkled with silver tears' (p.106). There is a sense in which the black garments donned by the couple and the lachrymose embroidery on Arthur's clothing anticipate the dissolution of their love-bond. Morris's pattern fatalistically encodes its own destruction within its figuration. The means by which Atra and Arthur and visually united in pattern is in fact pre-emptively explicating the doomed future of their love.

They will not be united by their love bond indefinitely, rather, the basis of their fusion within the patterned trios will be the sorrow they jointly suffer at their parting.

Viridis's earthly figuration, as emphasised by the natural hues of her clothing, hair and skin, is matched by Hugh whose green surcoat bears 'a chief of silver with green boughs thereon, their ends a-flaming' (p.105). And Aurea's resplendent golden form is echoed by the effusive goldenness of Baudoin's surcoat, bearing a 'cleft heart of red' (p.105). Morris's intimations of heraldry in the knight's surcoats are certainly evocative of pattern as heraldry is the distillation of identity into a widely understood and repeatable motif or icon. That these emblems the men don are tied first to the colour of their surcoats then secondarily and necessarily to the women who share their colours implies that the women share in the legacy and implications of the symbols; namely, Atra and Arthur are bound in their woeful, tear-ridden love; Viridis and Hugh, as embodied by their earthly symbols, share in a natural and delicate love; and Aurea and Baudoin, whilst greatly in love, are subject to greater passion and thus risk than the other couples as the bold and powerful red heart denotes. Indeed, Atra and Arthur do suffer profound woes together as they part from one another and Baudoin, in the passion of combat, dies in his defence of Birdalone.

The knights are aware of the ways in which their clothing, and the clothing of their women, act as distillations of their love and characters. Upon finding Birdalone clad in the borrowed garments, the knights fall into jubilation and playful celebration:

> But the Green Knight ran to his horse with a glad shout, and anon was in the saddle with his bright sword in his fist; then he spurred, and went a-gallop hither and thither over the mead, making his horse turn short and bound, and playing many tricks of the tilt-yard, and crying, A Hugh, A Hugh, for the Green Gown! The Golden Knight was slower and more staid, but in manywise he showed his war-deftness, riding after Hugh as if he would fall on him, and staying his way just as it became perilous; and he cried, Baudoin, Baudoin, for Gold-sleeves! And all of this seemed to Birdalone both terrible and lovely. (p.109).

The exclamations 'A Hugh, A Hugh, for the Green Gown!' and 'Baudoin, Baudoin, for Gold-sleeves' are revealing. Their revelry in the clothing alone demonstrates the emotive reach of the colour correlation they share. 'Green Gown' and 'Gold-sleeves' are substituted for the women's names; thus, their coloured and symmetrical garments are interchangeable with or summative of their whole identities. It is significant then that Arthur does not engage in the same display and name swapping with Atra with whom his love is soon to wane.

The garments are designated as love tokens from the women to the men. Thus, they not only correspond with them in the sense of their colour matching the knight who is to be the recipient of them but also due to the emotional freighting the women imbue them with. Atra says of the tokens:

> Lo, sister, we pray thee to bear these lendings on thy body in such wise that when thou comest to the mainland they may be seen by knights seeking adventures, and that thou mayst answer to any who may challenge thee thereof, and say that thou bearest this raiment and these jewels from Aurea and Viridis and Atra to Baudoin the Golden Knight, and to Hugh the Green Knight, and to Arthur the Black Squire. And if thou deem that thou hast found these, then shall they tell thee a token, such as we tell thee, that they be truly these and none other. (p.75)

The dressing scene in which the maids adorn Birdalone for her journey in a set of clothes but also with jewels, one from each maid, is another mirrored episode; when Birdalone reaches the Castle of the Quest, the knights likewise clad her in jewels, echoing the actions of their women at the Isle of Increase Unsought. Birdalone's role as a messenger between the trios is thus framed with the jewel scenes. This symmetry further assents to the relational and narrative correspondence between the trios. Not only are they bound by their mutual love, but also in their actions within the romance towards Birdalone. Morris describes first how:

> Thereafter Aurea gave her withal a golden collar for the neck, and Viridis a girdle of silver well-wrought, and Atra a gold finger-ring set with a sapphire stone; and all these she did on her; but yet she knew that they were tokens to be delivered to the three lovers according to what was due. (p.75)

Then, once Birdalone has delivered these tokens from the maids to the knights, they likewise grant her jewels: 'As for jewels, each one of them was fain to give her something which he prized, and fair and rich were the gifts, though they had not been made for women' (p.118). The instinctive inclination of the knights to give Birdalone their jewels, just as the women did, indicates a reciprocity between the trios as mediated by Birdalone. She is cast in the role of mediator between the lovers – a position which she gladly accepts but is not successful in.

The fates of the trios, reliant on and symbolically communicated through Birdalone, are not ultimately as harmonious as their colour correlative bonds might indicate. The devastating irony of the romance is that it was Birdalone's mission to ensure the reunion of the trios, who are so clearly correlative and come together in such patterned, symmetrical harmony, yet she is the reason why this cannot happen. She is, to the trios, an arch-disruptor of pattern. Not only does Birdalone disrupt the harmony of the trios' love through falling in love with Arthur, but her wrongful flight from the Castle of the Quest results in the knights having to rescue her, during the course of which Baudoin dies. The pattern cannot come together as it ought at the Castle of the Quest at the moment of reunion of the maids and knights. The binaries cannot be resolved here as we expect them to be as Birdalone is present as a disruptor (albeit an unwilling one).

The death of Baudoin and disruptive love of Birdalone and Arthur illustrates how pattern that is established through character is fragile and fleeting. *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* is enlivened by the possibility of the patterns it creates unravelling due to the agency and free will of the characters who must assent to the pattern in order for it to survive. The pattern requires

the active participation of the characters as it is through these characters and their submission to their narrative, symmetrically designed fates that it is primarily sustained.

The devastation of the trios' natural harmony after Baudoin's death and as Arthur and Birdalone acknowledge their love of one another leads to great unhappiness for her and Arthur and both trios. Their guilt at their defiance of the ordained pattern and subsequent dissolution of the symmetry is powerful and denotes the sway pattern has over the narrative and the characters within it. Birdalone flees from the Castle of the Quest for five years in an attempt to assuage her guilt. She declares to Hugh: 'I am the fool whose folly has slain your friend and mine. Wherefore I am not worthy of thy fellowship, and ye shall cast me forth of it; or to slay me were better' (p.186). The strength of her feeling is undeniable in this passage; the death of Baudoin and thus the destruction of the trios is perceived as something profoundly grievous to Birdalone. Her journeying through the narrative thus far has powerfully imparted to her the significance of relationships and the sustainment of pattern, thus to have caused the destruction of one of these hallowed relations is a great hardship for Birdalone to bear.

Her sorrow is matched by Arthur who wears a ring, a love-token he once gave to Atra, as the embodiment of his guilt:

> I wear it now as a token of my grief for her grief [...] Birdalone drooped her head, and she spake in a low voice: Lo now! the shadow of parting and the shadow of death could not come between our present joy; but this shadow of the third one cometh between us and is present between us. Woe's me! how little did I think of this when thou wert away and I was sick of longing for the sight of thee, and deemed that that would heal it all. (p.233)

Here, Morris continues with his consistent psychic freighting of craft-objects. What is most compelling here however, is not only that the ring is imbued with sorrow, but that the ring embodies the rupture of the pattern it one served. It is not a token of his sadness alone; his sadness is a 'grief for [Atra's] grief'. This demonstrates that the correlative aspect of their

relationship has not been utterly eradicated – rather their love bond has been replaced by a dual mourning for the harmony that once was. Pattern cannot be evaded; it can be disobeyed and disrupted but the fates of the two once-lovers remain dual and symmetrical; whereas once theirs was a pattern that facilitated and affirmed their love, now it unites them in sadness.

However, it must be said that Arthur suffers a far more acute bout of sorrow than Atra. He has actively ruptured the pattern whereas she is merely a passive victim of its collapse. His subsequent fate is bleak and demonstrates the consequences of his shunning the path his patterned figuration was compelling him down. When Birdalone and Habundia come across the ravaged and wild Arthur, in the clutches of wildness and madness, it is an affecting and dismaying scene. The consequences of harmonious, pre-ordained pattern not coming to fruition are desolate for Arthur. One of the most pervasive symptoms of his madness is seeing multiple iterations and doubles of Birdalone. He is taunted by these replicas. In a romance so preoccupied with mirrors, symmetry and matches, it is apposite that the way in which Arthur lapses into lunacy is through a proliferation of these forms. Morris makes no moral out of this mirror theme; duplication and duplicity, whilst cognates, do not necessarily go hand in hand. There instances in which characters are duplicated, like Habundia aping Birdalone, which are benign and innocuous; yet these are likewise accompanied by episodes of madness in which the chief symptom of delusion is duplicated images which trick Arthur, thus being duplicitous. Mirrors make no moral statement in the romance but call our attention to moments of significance in the characters' development and encourage reflection and repose in these scenes. Considering the iterations of Birdalone that pursue the maddened Arthur, replication here is used to demonstrate the pervasiveness of Arthur's guilt. However, it equally affirms the profuseness of his love for Birdalone; the abundance of her image surrounding him demonstrates the eagerness and desperation he feels as he waits to one day be reunited with her. Perhaps there is something

penitential in this episode of mirroring, allowing Arthur to suffer for his love before he is granted it, thus highlighting the maturity of the love. Instead of a love that is dictated by external emblems of identity like the love of the original trios, the love between Arthur and Birdalone is complex, deep-rooted, and comes from the rich yet largely unexplored interiorities of the two characters. Arthur's madness of mirror image offers readers a chance to glean something of his consciousness, further illustrating how this is a romance in which Morris is introducing a psychological valence to his prose patterns.

The end of the romance demands the resolution of two different patterns: the first pattern that requires a conclusion is the correlative pattern of the trios which is broken by the death of Baudoin and dissolution of Atra and Arthur's love and the second is the ending of Birdalone's own cyclical quest which brings her full circle back to Utterhay, the site of her infant kidnapping. When the remaining characters are reunited, Morris must address the wider narrative structure which is a cyclical journeying through the isles and then find harmonious resolutions for the characters whom Birdalone has encountered on her travels. In this sense, the characters of the trios are co-opted into Birdalone's over-arching narrative pattern; whereas at the start of the romance, Birdalone lacked self-awareness and was defined in relation to the characters who surrounded her, by the end of the romance, it is they who are defined in relation to her. They all end up at Utterhay, the starting point of Birdalone's journey and life, and therefore become facets of her narrative pattern. We can celebrate the union of Birdalone and Arthur as she has become an autonomous character in her own right who is not a mere figment of extraneous patterns; she ceases to be Habundia's mirror as Habundia takes on a new form; the witch-wife dies thus she is no longer bound by the binary of captivity; and she departs from the trio of maids and trio of knights for five years so ceases to be their disruptor (incidentally, these trios themselves disintegrate). In maturing throughout the romance, Birdalone acquires self-knowledge to the

extent that she no longer needs binary patterns to understand herself; instead, she is free to craft her own life and pattern (in some senses she can even do this literally due to her flair as a weaver and embroiderer) as she returns to where the story began at Utterhay.

Conclusion
Pattern, Fantasy, and the Kelmscott Press

The three romances embody a spirit of design and in their individual compositions become fully realised fantasies and patterns. Each one constitutes its own form of patterning and thus attains its character of fantasy through different central techniques. Morris develops his pattern-prose

style across the three texts, experimenting with the prose medium specifically as a vehicle of pattern. *The Wood Beyond the World* uses pattern most literally: craft objects are emblematic of craft, and pattern is treated primarily as surface enrichment. The landscape of *The Well at World's End* is constructed as a series of conceptual pleats which establish a sense of structural patterning. *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* develops the structural and descriptive patterns of previous romances to allow for the perpetuation of pattern through the bonds and formations of character and psyche. Across the three, Morris nurtures his ability to not merely depict pattern in prose but to construct pattern through prose, inducting the constraints and expectations of the textual form into the pattern.

The departure into the fantasy world upon opening one of the romances is the direct result of Morris's compulsive and complete identification with pattern-design as a mode of composition, thought, expression, and enchantment. The Kelmscott editions of the romances compellingly demonstrate the extent to which this is true. The concluding note of Morris's career, his final enterprise before his death in 1896, the Kelmscott editions are the most apposite point at which to conclude this consideration of pattern, fantasy, and Morris's life of design.

Ruskin writes: 'truly a well-illumined missal is a fairy cathedral full of painted windows, bound together to carry in one's pocket, with the music and the blessing of all its prayers besides'.[42] This consideration of medieval illumination as the inception of both architectural dwelling within a text and a sense of magic, enchantment and fairies is suggestive for Morris's own printed Kelmscott books. Michaela Braesel considers at length the inspiration Morris took from

[42] John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin* edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen: 1908), xxxv, p. 491.

medieval manuscripts, exploring his specific sources.[43] Yet, as Ruskin intimates, it is less the particular styles and illustrations of the medieval manuscripts that inspired Morris to produce his own modern illuminated style but their capacity to create the illusion that the contents of it are a 'fairy cathedral' thus, a structural, patterned departure into the fantasy realm. Ruskin's allusion to fairies is compatible with May Morris's own remark that the pattern considered at the very start of this thesis, 'Honeycomb', is like 'fairyland'. Both writers consider the constructive element of design as conducive to the appreciation of and immersion in fantastical or religious works (which are similar forms in the sense that they both aspire to the supernatural and ascendancy above the quotidian). Morris's fantasy books can be understood through their spirit of design and literal adornment as patterned fairylands and beautifully and consciously constructed fantasies.

The Kelmscott editions visibly manifest the fusion of fantasy and pattern in prose; they are craft artefacts in their own right as well as containing texts which are themselves conceptually understandable as objects or expressions of pattern, craft, and design. They represent the ultimate, functioning synthesis of pattern and prose.

Considering the Kelmscott Chaucer which he was engaged in illustrating, Edward Burne-Jones writes:

> I am beside myself with delight over it. I am making the designs as much to fit the ornament and the printing as they are made to fit the little pictures - and I love to be snugly cased in the borders and buttressed up by the vast initials - and once or twice when

[43] Michaela Braesel, 'The Influence of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts on the Pre-Raphaelites and the Early Poetry of William Morris', *Journal of William Morris Studies*,15, (2004), pp.41-54. <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/15.4Summer2004/15.4.Braesel.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022].

> I have no letter under me, I feel tottery and weak; if you drag me out of my encasings it will be like rearing a statue our of its niche and putting it in a museum - indeed when the book is done, if we live to finish it, it will be like a pocket cathedral - so full of design and I think Morris the greatest master of ornament in the world - and to have the highest taste in all things.[44]

The way he speaks to the impact of the imbrication of text, pattern and illustration is striking. His creative bliss and the sense of fantasy he derives from being charged with such a task as filling the windows of borders and text with illustration demonstrates the pervasive and animate spirit of design that characterise Morris's pattern-work in the specific context of literature. The books selected by Morris to be printed by his press formulate and actively contribute to his distinct fantastical vision and life of pattern. This canon of valued texts is worthy, in his eyes, of Kelmscott printing and all of the freighted ornamentation this entails. Morris's own romances, thus, as some of the final volumes committed to Kelmscott printing by Morris himself, are significant contributors to this canon. They are the fullest expression of a lifelong spirit of design, fantasy and pattern.

One of their notable features is the quasi-illuminated lettering. The letters that commence each part, chapter and paragraph are inspired by medieval illumination; however, they are by no means derivative or replicative of them. Unlike the medieval sources Morris consulted, his 'illumination' was done in black and white and embodies a character of patterned ornamentation as opposed to figurative illustration. Morris takes into account the modern printing press in his design; to print illumination imitating medieval styles would be a sham, thus Morris's printed letters acknowledge their modern print medium whilst still evoking the same sense of textual imbrication in design.

[44] Edward Burne-Jones in Martin Harrison and Bill Waters, *Burne-Jones* (New York: G. P. Purnam's Sons, 1973), p. 164.

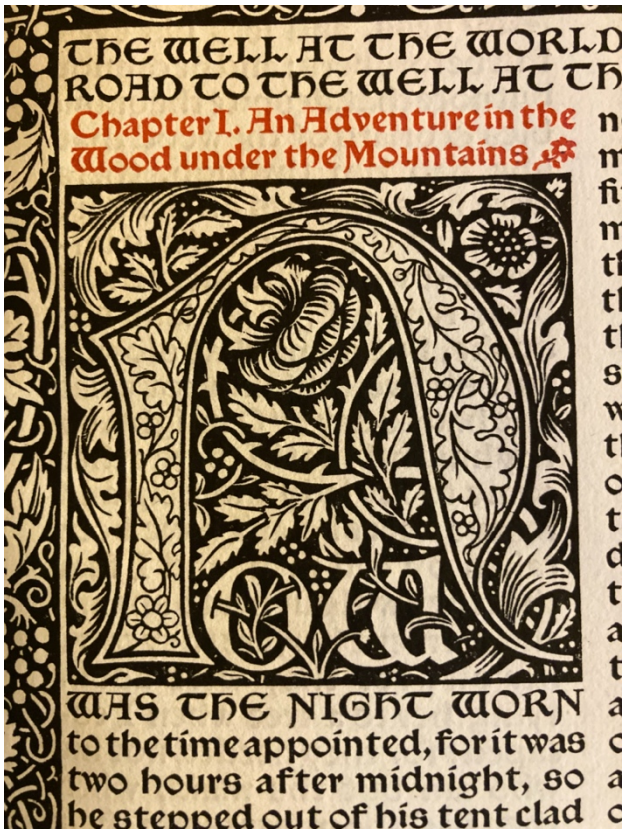


Fig. 24 The Well at World's End Part III Chapter 1

As exemplified by this image from the Kelmscott *The Well at World's End*, Morris's visual style is clearly dominant and enduring. Not only is the letter 'N' completed in Morris's modern print interpretation of illumination but the whole word, 'now', is induced into the typographical image. Pattern and lettering are utterly suffused here. There is the sense of the word itself being consumed by the initial letter as the 'o' and 'w' dwell beneath the dominant arch of the 'n'; thus, the word and meaning it conveys are swept into visual as well as semantic significance. The 'n' is imbued with pattern; characteristic Morris scrolls of foliage, flowers, and fruit are buttressed from within against the doubly outlined form of the character. The letter contains and thus encodes pattern. Inversely, the 'o' and 'w' are tangled into the pattern from the outside; budding vines twist about their forms, even piercing the 'o' and thus shooting it through with design. This one example represents an acute moment of Morris's conceptual elision of pattern, prose, and fantasy as we see letters themselves become motifs of patterns and patterns constructing and allowing for the profusion of lettering. Indeed, the proliferation of floral, scrolling pattern across the pages of the Kelmscott editions and their characterful visual busyness are treated as a distinct means of communicating the sense of fantasy encoded within the romances.

Morris's lecture on pattern, which stands as the synthesis of his central ideals and practices in the creation and observation of pattern, provides the most salient, conclusive lens onto his spirit as a

designer. He declares 'I must have unmistakable suggestions of gardens and fields, and strange tree boughs, and tendrils, or I can't do with your pattern.'[45] Here, Morris states that the most crucial facet of successful pattern-work is not a formal device or mathematical precision; it is not found in botanic fidelity or accuracy; but the most essential characteristic of a beautiful and affecting pattern is its suggestions of the natural world. The phrase 'unmistakable suggestions' does not demand that patterns perfectly represent nature, rather, they must, by something other than precise visual sameness, encode the essence and character of nature.

Assessing the relationship between nature and pattern, Ernst Gombrich considers our treatment of order, thus pattern, as a designator of the supernatural, most especially when it occurs in nature:

> So deeply ingrained is our tendency to regard order as the mark of an ordering mind that we instinctively react with wonder whenever we perceive regularity in the natural world. Sometimes, in walking through a wood, our eyes may be arrested by mushrooms arranged in a perfect circle. Folklore calls them fairy rings, because it seems impossible to imagine that such regularity has come about by accident. [...] What arrests our attention in the fairy ring is precisely the unexpected presence of order in what appears to be an environment of countless interacting forces: the random medley of the natural earth with its trickles of water through moss, its twisted roots and fallen leaves.[46]

Crucially, despite empirically understanding it, we cannot emotionally accept the naturalness of nature when it embodies visual, patterned forms of order. In fact, the ordering of the natural signals directly to the supernatural; a suggestive irony for the study of fantasy and pattern. Morris's patterns express and encode the natural with the same sense of order that Gombrich acknowledges in the fairy rings of mushrooms. Through the specific configuration of nature in Morris's patterns, they are elevated to the realm of fantasy. Their intimation of nature is so

[45] Morris, pp.195-6.
[46] E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art.* 2d ed. (London: Phaidon, 1984), pp.5-6.

affecting that they, like the fairy rings, are suggestive of magic, enchantment and fantasy, as opposed to mere natural reality. Thus, the prose romances, with their settings in curated landscapes of 'gardens and fields, and strange tree boughs, and tendrils' and all that is set to work and bloom within these flourishing planes, are suggestive of the natural world but in such an ordered and designed way that we compulsively perceive them as indicative of the supernatural. Pattern thus converts the natural, in its prose and textile instances of order and design, into fantasy. Reciprocally, it is our innate inclination to narrative and thus fantasy that compels us to seek out pattern as the root of the fantasticalness of the natural as it is depicted in Morris's prose and textiles. *The Wood Beyond the World*, *The Well at World's End*, and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* are indeed fantasies of pattern, and stand as lasting testament to Morris's whole corpus of work as a united endeavour, coherently informed by his perennial spirit of design.

Bibliography:

Abberley, Will, "To Make a New Tongue': Natural and Manufactured Language in the Late Fiction of William Morris', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17, (2012), pp.397–412 <https://academic-oup-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/jvc/article/17/4/397/4102523> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Albers, Anni, *Anni Albers: On Designing* (Middleton, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press: 1961)

Andrew, Sonja, 'Textile Semantics: Considering a Communication-based Reading of Textiles' ,*Cloth and Culture*, 6, (2008) pp.32-65 <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/doi/abs/10.2752/175183508X288680> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Arscott, Caroline, *Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris: Interlacings* (New Haven; London; Yale University Press: 2008)

Arscott, Caroline, 'Morris Carpets', *RIHA Journal* 0089, Special Issue *When Art History Meets Design History,* eds. Anne Puetz and Glenn Adamson, (2014) <https://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2014/2014-jan-mar/special-issue-art-design-history/arscott-morris-carpets> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Arscott, Caroline, 'Mutability and Deformity: Models of the Body and the Art of Edward Burne-Jones', *Nineteen: Interdsiciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century,* Special Issue: *Minds, Bodies, Machines,* 7, (2008) <https://courtauld.ac.uk/people/caroline-arscott> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Arscott, Caroline, 'William Morris, Ornament and the Coordinates of the Body' in Warren Carter, Barnaby Haran and Frederic J. Schwartz (eds), *ReNew Marxist Art History, (*Art/Books, London 2014), pp. 246-56 <https://www.academia.edu/24664767/_William_Morris_Ornament_and_the_Coordinates_of_the_Body_in_Warren_Carter_Barnaby_Haran_and_Frederic_J_Schwartz_eds_ReNew_Marxist_Art_History_Art_Books_London_2014_pp_246_56> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Arscott, Caroline, 'William Morris's Tapestry: Metamorphosis and Prophecy in *The Woodpecker'* in *Art History*, eds. C. Hunter and F. Lucchini, *The Clever Object*, 36:1, (2013) pp. 608-25 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-8365.12019?saml_referrer>[accessed 16 July 2022]

Attebery, Brian, *Stories about Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2014)

Barnett, Pennina, 'Folds, Fragments, Surfaces: Towards a Poetics of Cloth' in *The Textile Reader*, ed. Jessica Hemmings, pp. 182–190 (London: Berg, 2012) <https://www.academia.edu/1930709/Folds_fragments_surfaces_towards_a_poetics_of_cloth_in_Angel_Row_Gallery_Textures_of_Memory_the_poetics_of_cloth_Nottingham_1999_25_34_ISBN_0_905_634_39X_> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Barnett, Pennina and Claire Pajaczkowska. 'Introduction', *Cloth and Culture,* 5, (2007), pp.109-113 <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/doi/abs/10.2752/175183507X219399> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Bennett, Phillippa, *Wonderlands: The Last Romances of William Morris* (Oxford, Peter Lang: 2015)

Bennett, Phillippa, 'Rediscovering the Topography of Wonder: Morris, Iceland and the Late Romances', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 16, (2005), pp.38-48 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/16.2-3SummerWinter2005/2005.16.2-3.Bennett.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Bolus-Reichert, Christine, 'Aestheticism in the Late Romances of William Morris', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 50, (2007), pp. 73-95 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/208998> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Boos, Florence, 'Introduction to *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*' <http://morrisarchive.lib.uiowa.edu/introduction-waterofwondrousisles> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Braesel, Michaela, 'The Influence of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts on the Pre-Raphaelites and the Early Poetry of William Morris', *Journal of William Morris Studies*,15, (2004), pp.41-54 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/15.4Summer2004/15.4.Braesel.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Byatt, A. S., *Peacock and Vine: On William Morris and Mariano Fortuny* (New York, Knopf: 2016)

Clark, Kenneth., *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste* (John Murray: 1962)

Crane, Walter, *William Morris to Whistler: Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonweal* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1911)

Crown, Patricia, "A Language That All Can Understand': William Morris, William Hogarth and The Decorative Arts', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 8, (1988), pp.5-13 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/08.1Autumn1988/AU88.8.1.Crown.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Deleuze, Gilles, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, translated by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 1992)

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari., '1440: The Smooth and the Striated' in *The Textile Reader,* ed. Jessica Hemmings (Bloomsbury: 2012) pp.179-181

DeSpain, Jessica, 'A Book Arts Pilgrimage: Arts and Crafts Socialism and the Kelmscott Chaucer', *Journal of William Morris Studies*,15, (2004), pp.74-90 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/15.4Summer2004/15.4.DeSpain.pdf>[accessed 16 July 2022]

Dewan, Pauline, 'Patterns of Enclosure' *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 11, (1995), pp.9-11 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/11.2Spring1995/SP95.11.2.Dewan.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Dewan, Pauline, 'Circular Designs in Morris's *The Story of the Glittering Plain*', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 12, (1998), pp.15-20 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/12.4Spring1998/SP98.12.4.Dewan.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Doy, Gen, *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* (I. B. Tauris: 2002)

Dresser, Christopher., *Principles of Decorative Design* (Project Gutenberg: 2012) <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39749/39749-h/39749-h.htm https://archive.org/details/principlesofdeco00dresuoft> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Ellis, Martin; Timothy Barringer; Victoria Osbourne, *Victorian Radicals: From the Pre-Raphaelites to the Arts & Crafts* (Prestel, 2008)

Faulkner, Peter, 'Morris and Pre-Raphaelitism', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, v19, (2012), pp.40-62 <http://www.morrissociety.org/JWMS/19.4Summer2013/041-62MorrisPre-Raphaelitism.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Faulkner, Peter, 'Ruskin and Morris', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 14, (2000), pp.6-17 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/14.1Autumn2000/AU00.14.1.RuskinMorrisFaulkner.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Fiell, Charlotte & Peter, *William Morris: A Life of Art* (Taschen: 2017)

Fleming, Margaret, 'Nothing But Landscape and Sentiment', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 6, (1984), pp.4-9 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/06.1Summer1984/SU84.6.1.Flemming.pdf > [accessed 16 July 2022]

Forty, Adrian, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society Since 1750* (Thames & Hudson: 2000)

Freeman-Moir, John, 'Crafting Experience: William Morris, John Dewey, and Utopia', *Utopian Studies*, 22, (2011), pp. 202–232 <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/stable/10.5325/utopianstudies.22.2.0202#metadata_info_tab_contents> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Gombrich, E. H. *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art.* 2d ed. (London: Phaidon, 1984).

Gopen, George D., 'The Music of the Mind: Structure and Substance in William Morris's *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 16, (2005), pp.92-102 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/16.2-3SummerWinter2005/2005.16.2-3.Gopen.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Gribble, Barbara, 'William Morris's News From Nowhere; A Vision Impaired', *The Journal of William Morris Studies*, 6, (1985), pp.16-22 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/06.3Summer1985/SU85.6.3.Gribble.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Helmer, John, 'The Prettiness of Utopia', *The Journal of William Morris Studies*, 4, (1979), pp.4-19 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/04.1Winter1979/W79.4.1.Helmer.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Hemmings, Jessica, *An Embroiderer's Eye* (Catalogue of an Exhibition held at Macclesfield Silk Museum: 2009)

Hemmings, Jessica, *The Textile Reader* (Bloomsbury: 2012)

Herbert, Isolde Karen., "Nature and Art: William Morris's Conception of Progress." Journal of William Morris Studies, vol. 10, no.1, Autumn 1992, p.4-9 http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/10.1Autumn1992/AU92.10.1.Herbert.pdf

Herbert, Isolde Karen, 'The 'Sympathetic Translation' of Patterns: William Morris as Singer, Scribe, and Printer' *Journal of William Morris Studies,* 13, (2000) pp.21-9 <http://www.morrissociety.org/JWMS/13.4Spring2000/SP00.13.4.Herbert.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Hillis Miller, J., *Ariadne's Thread* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1992)

Holland, Owen, 'Spectatorship and Entanglement in Thoreau, Hawthorne, Morris, and Wells', *Utopian Studies*, 27, (2016), pp. 28–52 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/utopianstudies.27.1.0028?seq=1> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Holland, Owen, *William Morris's Utopianism : Propaganda, Politics and Prefiguration* (Palgrave Studies in Utopianism, 2017)

Huang, Tsai-Chun., *In-between Pleats; Pleats, pleating and 'pliable logic'* (Royal College of Art: 2020) <https://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/4351/1/In-Between%20Pleats%20TCH%20redacted%20web.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Jackson, Holbrook, *The Eighteen Nineties* (London: Cresset Library; 1988)

Jackson, Lesly, *From Atoms to Patterns: Crystal Structure Designs from the 1951 Festival of Britain* (Somerset: Richard Dennis Publications, 2012)

Jill Duchess of Hamilton, Penny Hart & John Simmons, *The Gardens of William Morris* (New York: Steward, Tabori & Chang, 1998)

Jones, Owen. *The Grammar of Ornament: A Visual Reference of Form and Colour in Architecture and the Decorative Arts - The complete and unabridged full-color edition* (Princeton University Press, 2016)< https://muse.jhu.edu/book/64548 https://archive.org/details/grammarornament00Jone> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Koepke, Peter, *Patterns: Inside the Design Library* (Phaidon: 2016)

Latham, David, *Writing on the Image: Reading William Morris* (University of Toronto Press: 2007) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/reader.action?docID=4672385&ppg=1> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Latham, David, 'A Matter of Craftsmanship: William Morris's Manuscripts', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 6, (1985), pp.2-11 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/06.3Summer1985/SU85.6.3.Latham.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

MacCarthy, Fiona, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite : Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 2012)

MacCarthy, Fiona, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (London: Faber; 2010)

Mackail, J. W., *The Life of William Morris* (London: Electric Book Company, 2001) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/detail.action?docID=3008521&pq-origsite=primo> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Mancoff, Debra N., Problems with the Pattern: William Morris's Arthurian Imagery', *Arthuriana*, 6, (1999), pp.55-68 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/426625/pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Mancoff, Debra N, *The Pre-Raphaelite Language of Flowers* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2012)

Miller, Elizabeth Carolyn, 'William Morris, Print Culture, and the Politics of Aestheticism', *Modernism/modernity,* 15, (2008) pp.477-502 <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/article/254139>[accessed 16 July 2022]

Miller, Elizabeth Carolyn, "William Morris and the Form and Politics of Replication" in *Replication in the Long Nineteenth Century* ed. Julie F. Codell and Linda K. Hughes (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press: 2018) <https://english.ucdavis.edu/sites/english.ucdavis.edu/files/users/ecmill/Morris_replication_article.pdf>[accessed 16 July 2022]

Mitchell, Victoria, 'Textiles, text and techne' in *The Textile Reader*, edited by Jessica Hemmings (London: Berg, 2012) pp.5-13

Morris, May, 'Experiment' in *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press: 2012), pp.373-398

Morris, May, 'Morris as a Designer' in William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.34-62

Morris, William, 'Some Hints on Pattern-designing' in *The Collected Works of William Morris: With Introductions by his Daughter May Morris* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press: 2012), pp.175-205

Morris, William, *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (London; New York; Ballantine Books: 1972)

Morris, William, *The Well at World's End* (Gloucestershire; Alan Sutton Publishing: 1996)

Morris, William, *The Wood Beyond the World* (London; New York; Ballantine Books: 1969)

Murray, Anna, and Grace Winteringham, *Patternity; A New Way of Seeing: The Inspirational Power of Pattern* (Conran Octopus: 2015)

Naylor, Gillian, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of Its Sources, Ideals, and Influence on Design Theory* (London: Studio Vista: 1971)

Newman, Hilary, 'Water in William Morris's Late Prose Romances', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 13, (2000) pp.41-47 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/13.4Spring2000/SP00.13.4.Newman.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Newman, Teresa, 'Wallpaper and Propaganda: Reflections on William Morris Today', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 6, (1984), pp.10-16 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/06.1Summer1984/SU84.6.1.Newman.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Ofek, Galia, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Routledge: 2009)

Pajaczkowska, Claire, 'On Stuff and Nonsense: The Complexity of Cloth', *Textile: Cloth and Culture*, 3, (2005), pp.220-249 <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/doi/abs/10.2752/147597505778052495> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Parry, Linda, *Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (Thames and Hudson: 1988)

Parry, Linda, *William Morris* (London: Philip Wilson in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1998)

Perkins Gilman, Charlotte, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Penguin 60s Classics: 1995)

Phimister, Evelyn J, 'John Ruskin, William Morris and the Illuminated Manuscript', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 14, (2000), pp.30-36 <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/14.1Autumn2000/AU00.14.1.Phimister.pdf >[accessed 16 July 2022]

Plotz, John, "Nowhere and Everywhere: The End of Portability in William Morris's Romances", *ELH*, 74, (2007), pp. 931-956 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/225280> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Rogers, David, 'A Catalogue of the Original Designs of Morris and Company in the Collection of the William Morris Society', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 13, (1998), pp. i-viii <http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/JWMS/chronicological_1990s.html> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Ruskin, John, *Selected Writings* (Oxford Word's Classics: 2009)

Ruskin, John., *The Stones of Venice, Volume II* (Project Gutenberg eBook, 2009) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/30755/30755-h/30755-h.htm#page151> [accessed 16 July 2022]

John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin* edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, (London: George Allen: 1908)

Saler, Michael, *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality* (Oxford; Oxford University Press: 2012)

Schneck, Gabriel., "The Living Past of William Morris's Late Romances," *Journal of William Morris Studies*, 19, (2011), pp.20-30 <http://www.morrissociety.org/JWMS/19.2Winter2011/19.2.Schenk.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Sennett, Richard, *The Craftsman*, Yale University Press, 2008 <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/detail.action?docID=3420443#> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Sullivan, Simon, 'Definition: Fold' in *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: 2005) pp.102-4 <https://www.simonosullivan.net/articles/deleuze-dictionary.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Tolkien, J. R. R. *On Fairy Stories* <https://coolcalvary.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/on-fairy-stories1.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Wager, Anna, "Photographs, Pens, and Print: William Morris and the Technologies of Typography", *Book History*, 21, (2018), pp.245-277 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/711055> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Watkinson, Raymond, *William Morris As Designer* (Studio Vista: 1967)

Weinroth, Michelle and Paul Leduc Browne, *To Build a Shadowy Isle of Bliss: William Morris's Radicalism and the Embodiment of Bliss* (McGill Queen's University Press: 2015) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/reader.action?docID=3332845&ppg=1> [accessed 16 July 2022]

Yeats. W. B., Review of 'The Well at World's End', *Bookman*, X, (1896), in *William Morris, The Critical Heritage* pp.415-417 <http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/YeatsWWE.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2022]