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NO "FOURTH WALL": THE EXPERIENCE OF DRAMA IN  
WILLIAM MORRIS'S *LOVE IS ENOUGH*

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In September 1871, Morris returned from his first visit to Iceland and in the same month began to write his poetic drama *Love is Enough*. As most critics find, *Love is Enough* is a "problem" work: difficulties begin with the title, accumulate through the layered design, and remain unresolved by the work's ambiguous concluding sections. One way to approach this elusiveness, I suggest, is to read the poem in the context of Bertolt Brecht's dramatic theory. Then, the complex spectator/participant relations of the framing sections, the montage of loosely connected scenes, the roles of Music and Love, and the predominantly indirect action of the innermost drama suggest Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*.<sup>1</sup> In turn, the response of the audience — that is, both the reader and the dramatized audience of the frame — to this "structure too composite for easy apprehension" (Mackail 286) progresses from a conditioned to a reformulated awareness of the organic interaction among society, nature, and love's several manifestations. Tension between resemblance and difference (for instance, Pharamond is referred to as the "Freed" [26, 53, 84]<sup>2</sup> before, during, and after his quest) foregrounds the dialogism within and between each distinct narrative voice and its particular "gest," Brecht's term for the tone of each incident or scene.

This dramatic montage, characteristic of Brecht's "epic" or "dialectical" theatre, is akin to the episodic structure of the morality drama. Another association supports this connection between Morris and Brecht: as John Willett points out, similarities in style and technique link the social realism of the Icelandic sagas to that of Brecht's plays (*Theatre* 217-18).<sup>3</sup> Thus, Brechtian dramatics suggest aspects of Norse myth and of the morality tradition, Morris's main literary concerns in 1871.

Rossetti's description of *Love is Enough* began the tradition that identifies the poem as a masque; however, Rossetti's term is not a "masque" but "a sort of masque" (1014; emphasis added). This generic uncertainty is in keeping with the work's thematic and structural ingenuity, the result of Morris's incorporation of characteristics of the masque into his innovative form of the earlier tradition, the medieval morality. From the masque, Morris takes the musical interludes and the celebration of a ruler's love for his "queen" and his people; however, the various perspectives dramatized

in the frame section and in the layers of the work as a whole widen the masque's traditional focus on the monarch, the most important spectator, to include the audience as a whole. Stephen Kogan suggests that in the masque, "spectacle, politics, and meditation" (28) contribute to the celebration of divine right; in *Love is Enough*, Morris designs the tale of Pharamond as an allegorical "meditation" on the frame's drama of spectacle and politics. Accordingly, the historical and ideological "realism" of the primary dramatic level surrounds the morality to form a Brechtian sequence of discontinuity and self-reflexive comment. As an affirmation of cosmic order and social hierarchy, the traditional masque concludes with the revels; as an enquiry into this type of certainty, Morris's poem, like Brecht's dramas, suggests that any possible resolution lies beyond either the text or the stage and within the reader's/spectator's sense of the interpenetration of love, art, and life.

Rossetti's presence at Kelmscott (1871-74) suggests that *Love is Enough* is a diagrammatic working out of Morris's uncertainty about the confusion of art, love, and loyalty in his own life. The frame's complex narrative "gaze" (with its distinctions between who sees and who is seen) and the morality's proposal that love takes forms other than romantic passion reflect Morris's desire to assess his emotional response to the relationship between Rossetti and Jane; as a result, Morris's "maze of rewriting and despondency" (Kelvin 155) is his attempt to revive his productive dialectic of work and love. If *Love is Enough* is read as Morris's warning to himself to see his situation in its totality, then within the text the Mayor's oblique warning to the Emperor displaces this cautionary impulse: like Morris, the Emperor must balance evenly his love for society, for heroic action, and for his beloved. Using the frame's social hierarchy to present a kaleidoscopic response to love's paradoxes, Morris distances himself from his personal situation by dramatizing an assessment of the applicability of romantic to "workday" (78) love. This device parallels Brecht's "historicizing," or the conception of the present as a past that requires judgment, not empathy. The recurrent scenarios in Brecht's *Days of the Commune*, like the framing voices in *Love is Enough*, present official and personal points of view, each controlled by the character's situation, as assessments of the "drama" of politics and desire.

From the morality tradition, Morris adapts the central allegorical figure who presents and interprets events, the undramatic debate form, and the motif of the soul's pilgrimage through life. Common to both the morality and the masque is their retarded progression. In Brechtian drama, the same technique creates a series of semi-autonomous or "paratactic" (Suvin 63) episodes that oppose incremental plot development and dissuade the audience from empathizing with the events on stage.<sup>4</sup> The lack of distinction between the actors' space and that of the audience is another characteristic shared by the morality, the masque, and Morris's poetic drama; Brecht's

aim to eliminate the "fourth wall" (Willett, *Brecht on Theatre* 136) by creating a critical audience with a judicial function resembles the morality's psychological transformation of each spectator into an "Everyman" and the physical movement of the masque's audience into the drama. Originally a popular or "market-place" genre, the morality became an instrument of the ruling class when, as the masque, the productions were staged in the banquet halls. In *Love is Enough*, the street performance before the Emperor and the acclamation of the ruler's function indicate again Morris's integration of a popular and an aristocratic form.

The Brechtian premise of *Love is Enough* is dialectical contradiction. Complexity results from the recurrence of these contradictions in rearranged patterns of paradox at each narrative level. As in *The Earthly Paradise*, the frame guides the reader toward an appropriate reading and interpretation of the enclosed sections. Actual or imaginary communication among the rustics, the rulers, and the actors forms the drama's first level. After the performance, the four spectators' more profound awareness of the complex implications of love and of dramatic narrative reflects Morris's idea, in 1871-72, of an appropriate response to art in general and to "the tale" in particular.

*Love is Enough* begins with the paradox of spectators (Giles and Joan) watching the "drama" of other spectators (the Emperor and Empress). Inexperience limits Joan to a "misreading" of the opulent costumes, or semiotics, of the official bearers of power. To her, the sergeant is a knight and the chamberlains are kings. Giles uses figurative analogy to teach Joan how to interpret the unfamiliar in the terms of familiar myth or experience: "how like some heaven come down / The maidens go with girded gown" (3). Joan's antiphonal reply — she learns quickly — refers to her own experience: the maidens "scatter roses e'en like those / About my father's garden-close" (4). These comparisons between the known and the unknown progress to analogies between similar emotional states as the rulers and the peasants reflect on the possibility that love is universal and can transcend class boundaries. By extension, *Love is Enough* encourages the reader to approach the work as an analogy to his/her experience; this perceptual reorientation generates the dialectics of recognition and estrangement that, in Brecht's dramas, lead to an objective or distanced view of the self and its circumstances. As the audience with the most comprehensive view (we see the drama of Giles and Joan and "hear" the sovereigns' private conversation) we benefit from the rustics' perceptual progress from error and awe to a critical observation of life's drama.

The motif of hands introduced in the opening line ("Look long, Joan, while I hold you so" [3]) continues throughout the work as a symbol of the similarity in difference or the division in unity. Although Giles lifts Joan to

give her a view of the procession, inadvertently his hands could inflict "pain" (3). Similarly, at the allegorical level, the image of hands reflects Love's twofold ability to intensify or repress spiritual vision and to create both joy and misery. Morris uses the symbol of hands to link and to distinguish the sections: differentiated repetition suggests the dialectical function of hands as guidance or deception, alienation or fellowship, work (energy) or meditation (idleness). As a result, the potential unity of the circular design of joined hands is undermined by the symbol's multiple connotations. Also possible is an allusion to "Hand and Soul," Rossetti's tale of Chiaro, an artist who desires first fame then faith before achieving his union with his anima; unlike Pharamond, however, Chiaro effects an authentic fusion of love and work in this world.

As the rustics try to touch the Emperor and Empress, the hands motif suggests the dialectics of union and separation; here, the distance referred to is both physical and perceptual as metrics, diction, and imagery reflect the universal, but futile, desire to overcome the barriers of class, language, and consciousness. The Emperor and Empress use the motif to describe the division between their public and private lives (6-7) imposed by their civil duties. The Empress is conscious of the role enforced upon her by her political function:

They looked to see me proud and cold of mien,  
I heeded not though all my tears were seen,  
.....

They bade me sign defiance and command;  
I heeded not though thy name left my *hand*. (6; emphasis added)

In contrast, the Emperor recollects (as a memory within a memory) in metaphor his vision of the Empress's hand as a talisman that gives him inspiration and purpose during battle. Repetition, parallelism, and the varied refrains of the alternate stanzas of each speaker simultaneously suggest both rapport and the physical and spiritual estrangement that persists in even the closest of human relationships. Like Morris, Brecht attempts to make the reader/audience aware that the inevitable strictures of time and place shape consciousness and limit action. While the interpolation of Music's stanzas reflects this division between desire and circumstance, the convergence of the speakers' stanzas in the third section of the opening frame suggests their physical proximity as a unified, yet heterogeneous, audience. Brecht, too, points out that an audience is not uniform but is composed of individuals with different sensibilities and with varied class and political allegiances.

The inward movement from an unspecified street location to the stage area of the street corresponds to the actors' movements before and behind the stage curtain. Such a doubling of acting space suggests, in the terms of narrative "gaze," the increasingly narrowed perspective of the layered

audiences of the reader, Joan and Giles, the rulers, and lastly, the actors themselves who look only at each other (11). In a similar manner, Brecht meticulously divides stage space into areas conducive to groupings that make visible the fragmentation of society caused by economics, class occupations, and ways of thinking. The visual disorder of the "thronging" crowds (3, 7) and the violation of dramatic decorum by the focus on the private lives of the actors contrast with the order of the procession and, structurally, of the successive framing layers. The "drama" of the official welcome and the "reality" of the actors as lovers suggest the limitation of conventional distinctions between art and life; as Pharamond discovers, alienation can transform reality into a "pageant" (73) and dreams into "deeds" (39).

In similar processes of demystification, the actors are presented as people whose work is role-playing and the play's text is revealed to be arbitrary. As the frame's "producer" (Love fulfils this function within the play itself) the Mayor represents the inseparability of power and discourse. As a political censor, he apologizes for any lack of propriety suggested by the tale's moral and regrets that he could not "fashion" the tale's "otherwise" (83) diction into a form and content more appropriate for the royal wedding. Context suggests, however, that Morris introduces ambiguity into the Mayor's revisionary function: if, as Benjamin Dunlap argues, the tale is, from one perspective, an exemplum of incompetent kingship, then the Mayor presents the drama as propaganda in order to coerce the Emperor into reigning effectively. Because Love, too, admits that he manipulates language and its meaning, thematic links between narrative voices affirm and/or contradict the work's two planes of unity: the dramatic logic of a performance and the thematic coherence of a dramatic poem. When the Mayor wonders whether the play has been presented "fouly" or "fairly" (84), these oppositions allow the reader, along with the Emperor, to attain the critical distance demanded both by the sagas and by Brecht's epic theatre. At another level of power, the Emperor competes for the control of functional language: he "bids" the Mayor to "speak without stint or sparing" (8). Because the frame's drama makes these explicit political and aesthetic statements, the context, or conditions of production, of the tale of Pharamond is as relevant as its content.

Brecht considers fantasy to be valid if it comments on reality as it does in Swift and Shelley. The historical "realism" of Morris's romance frame makes this comment. The verbal "unmasking" of the actors, the twofold significance of the Emperor and Empress as "performers" in their own drama and observers of another, and the linking images between the dialogues reflect the dynamic and potentially dialectical basis of perception and society. The historically determined circumstances of the drama's production give the reader scope to consider these dialectics and, in retrospect, their subsequent displacement in the enclosed allegorical drama. By designing his morality as

a play in a play, Morris undermines our expectations of genre while, at the same time, he alienates us from our habitual practices as readers of drama by allowing us to observe others who, like us, respond according to their encounters with love and society.

As the frame makes explicit, the play is a "wrought" (12) artistic form rather than an illusory reality: the actors do not become but "reproduce" (Willett, *Brecht on Theatre* 137) the characters, the costumes are "dear bought" (8), and the dialogue, as Giles points out, is a "well-taught" (83) account of a past event. Each of these devices anticipates the "theatricality" of the theatre, which Brecht compares to the story-telling of the oral tradition, the paradigmatic mode for the Brechtian actor, who intervenes between the character he plays and the audience. Again, the genres of the saga and "epic" theatre coincide. Morris accentuates the dialectic between the real and the imaginary by using stage directions to introduce the actors as the "player-king and player-maiden" (10). In addition, because we move into the drama through the consciousnesses of the frame's three couples, the story of Pharamond's mystical love is refracted through the experiences of these worldly lovers. The Emperor inadvertently prefigures this dialectical tension between actual and "fictive" passion when he reflects upon the actors as lovers:

dreamily they stare  
As though they sought the happy country, where  
They two shall be alone, and the world dead. (11; emphasis added)

The importance of the italicized words becomes clear when they recur in the concluding frame: neither repression nor indulgence resolves the allure of romantic idealism. Instead, analogy, as the *conscious* juxtaposition of the finite and the infinite, holds both reality and dream in dynamic and, therefore, productive tension.

The Empress's conclusion that the actor's strife with nature makes him "Still fresh desired, still strange and new, though known" (11) anticipates Morris's description of perceptual renewal in *The Pilgrims of Hope*: "familiar things made clear, / Made strange" (24: 376). Brecht's definition of *Verfremdung* is very similar to Morris's appeal for this new way of seeing reality: "Before familiarity can turn into awareness the familiar must be stripped of its inconspicuousness . . ." (Willett, *Brecht on Theatre* 144). The multiple audiences in *Love is Enough*, each with its own experience and interpretation of love, distance us from Pharamond's quest and allow us to judge the tale's effectiveness as an assessment of desire. In order to make this judgment, Brecht suggests, there should be "no illusions that the player is identical with the character and the performance with the actual event" (Willett, *Brecht on Theatre* 195). Because the frame anticipates and, in the closing section, reflects upon the thesis and events of the enclosed drama,

the layered structure of *Love is Enough* creates this illusion-breaking effect. The actor's "turning round" (11) to face the stage symbolizes our perceptual change as we observe the drama from a detached and critical distance.

As Frederick Kirchhoff points out, Pharamond "both succeeds *and* fails" ("*Love is Enough*" 298).<sup>5</sup> This double effect results, in part, from Pharamond's interpretation of the "drama" of his life as a sequential or punctuated series of events. Discontinuity characterizes the broken scenes of the morality, the masque, and Brecht's episodic drama. Pharamond, however, is unable to reason dialectically or to visualize the cumulative effect of events that to him appear successive and unrelated. As he explains to Oliver,

thou knewest a child once:

Pharamond the fair babe; Pharamond the warrior;

Pharamond the king, and which hast thou feared yet?

And why wilt thou fear then this Pharamond the lover? (28)

To be sure, Pharamond does understand the Heraclitean premise that "no river / Runneth back to its springing" (68), but he does not apply this perspective to his own experience. Accordingly, although Pharamond admits that the past "brought on times better" (71), his verb tense indicates that he cannot evolve beyond a conception of the past *as* past. Possibly, this limited perspective explains why Pharamond does not take Azalais when he returns to his land: such an active introduction of the past into the present would unsettle Pharamond's conceptual division of his life into segregated "epochs." Our task is to remedy Pharamond's deficiency by assessing his role comparatively in the context of the frame and the interpolated voices of Love and Music or, as Brecht explains, by the "fitting together of all the gestic incidents" (Willett, *Brecht on Theatre* 200).

The failure of dialectics also appears as the irresolvable conflict between the epic and romantic impulses, which compete for the control of Pharamond's desire. Oliver, Pharamond's foster-father, represents the heroic voice of epic action.<sup>6</sup> His "hand" (39) attempts to guide Pharamond away from dream toward "glory" and "deeds" (27) worthy to be recorded by chroniclers: "Stretch forth thine hand, foster-father, I know thee, / And fain would be sure I am yet in the world" (39). The tale opens with Oliver's "epic catalogue" of his attempts to reawaken Pharamond's desire for the heroic and active life. Whereas Oliver remembers the quest's "deeds great and dreadful" (42), Pharamond remembers only the minstrel's song, mythical tales, and dreams. Thus, generically, Oliver's epic narrative contrasts with Pharamond's lyrical mode. This inclination toward song and romance is given to Pharamond by Love, who competes with Oliver for domination over Pharamond's desire. As Love explains in his first speech, he rejects both the classical epic and the saga; instead, he chooses the "wavering tune" of the "pipe" (13), the instrument associated with the pastoral romance. A

series of parallel allusions (often associated with either the unifying or the divisive connotations of the "hand" motif) emphasizes the contest between Oliver and Love: "glory," "crown," "banner," Troy, and Mars are claimed by both as valid symbols of their authority. As a result, while Oliver hopes that these symbols of Pharamond's heroic deeds will be materially recorded by the words carved on Pharamond's tomb, Pharamond prefers to be remembered in "a tale for the telling / A song for the singing" (67).

Pharamond's intense belief in his vision prevents him from evolving reality and dream into a productive synthesis: "life" fails to "rend" the "tangle" of vision and dream (45). Conversely, Oliver deems imagination and vision irrelevant: "clean gone is the story: / Amid deeds great and dreadful, should songs abide by me?" (42). Neither Pharamond nor Oliver applies the moral of the enclosed (at a third narrative level) tale of "The Praising of Prudence" to Pharamond's quest for Azalais; in part, this fairy tale is an exemplum showing the consequences of the loss of a critical distance between text and reader or, thematically, between desire and effective action. As in the saga tradition, neither the characters nor the narrator refers to this moral; instead, as Morris explains in the preface to *The Saga Library*, "the reader is left to make his own commentary on the events, and to divine the motives and feelings of the actors in them without any help from the tale-teller" (xi). Like *Love is Enough*, the tale of Prudence, retold by Pharamond, is open-ended and subverts its title. This device of a tale in a play in a play generates multiple self-reflexive images of the text/reader (and actor/audience) relations. Each level implicitly (and often explicitly) comments and is a comment on subsequent levels.

In the opening frame, thematic anticipation adds to the tension between the observer and the drama that, in turn, contains the tension between the voices of epic and romance. The Mayor and the Emperor refer to the three types of love that Pharamond will attempt to reconcile: love "Toward you [the people], toward Love, toward life of war and deed" (8). This list omits the tale's most performative love, that of Oliver for his foster-child. Pharamond obliquely suggests that such a love, a fusion of kinship and fellowship, might be a redemptive force: "Full fair were the world if such faith were remembered, / If such love as thy love had its due, O my fosterer" (71). The compassion and loyalty of fellowship might well activate the dialectics between sexual and patriotic love. The figure of Love makes it quite clear that he forestalls these dialectics when, like the wise ones in the enclosed fairy tale, he leaves gifts at Pharamond's cradle. Because these gifts conflict with the "ballads of battle" sung over Pharamond's "cradle" (69), they are potentially dialectical, but at present are "Unmeet belike for rulers of the earth" (22); accordingly, seduced by Love, Pharamond renounces his allegiance to his people, and his desire for heroic action: Pharamond must be



"single-hearted" (23) in the pursuit of his vision. Love manipulates Pharamond and admits that his "hand" has "untwined" Pharamond's "double life" (37).<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his career, Morris criticizes such a one-dimensional approach to life and insists that any possible form of happiness must evolve from the interaction of opposites, whether these be "idleness" and "energy" or, as he writes to Cornell Price in 1856, "love and work, these two things only" (Kelvin 28). Morris's later depreciation of *Love is Enough* as a "lie" rephrases this sentiment: "Love isn't enough in itself; love *and work*, yes! *Work* and love, that's the life of a man" (Sparling 100). In 1871, Morris's personal turmoil leads him to design *Love is Enough* as a self-conscious statement of his determination to integrate work and love (or "body" and "soul" [14, 23, 41]) into the synthesis that advances productive contentment. The work is a cautionary tale and, as Philip Henderson correctly suggests in his introduction to Morris's letters, its title "can only be ironic" (xlviii);<sup>8</sup> similarly, George Bernard Shaw notes that the work's title "is not its moral" (xxxvii). Willett explains that Brecht uses dialectics to show how "different forces will tug a man (or a family, or a society) in different directions, and out of this 'contradiction' some movement will come; then new forces will come into play, and so on, and on" (*Theatre* 193). For Morris too, existence is shaped by ambiguous, yet necessary, contradictions; by rejecting society, Pharamond also rejects life's dialectical basis. Hence, the renunciation of this principle of totality is Morris's equivalent to the vice of the morality or, alternatively, the disorder of the anti-masque.

The Mayor is the "producer" in the frame; Love is both the producer and the reviewer of the play itself. As the central allegorical figure of the morality tradition, Love comments on events and addresses the characters and the audience. Moreover, Love's speeches reveal that he is also a semiotician whose "signs" (12), the emblematic motifs of the morality and the masque, reflect his power to induce the antitheses of joy and misery, hope and fear, and desire and fulfilment. Nevertheless, because these oppositions draw Pharamond away from the world of action, they become inoperative. This stasis explains why each "sign" (25) of Pharamond's love vanishes: literally, the signs exist only in dream; symbolically, they are incommensurate with Pharamond's heroic role as king. Apparently, Love bequeaths his deficient semiotics to his followers: Pharamond does not identify the yew trees (nor their melancholy connotation) as the sign associated with Azalais's valley (25, 33, 46). Love's arbitrary selection of the mode of the tale for "this day" (13) and his self-conscious references to his "stored" (12) signs further the internal frame's Brechtian function of dispelling dramatic illusion: like the frame's other officials, Love controls both the text and the production of the play. Love's various disguises, especially those of the "image-maker" (22) and

the "maker of Pictured Cloths" (37), remind us that although his function, like that of the sagaman or Brecht's singers, is to be a "teller of tales," Morris complicates this role by making Love perform at three narrative levels: he is a creation of the ancient poet and of the actor, the teller of Pharamond's tale, and, in the union scene, a participant in this tale.

In his last two appearances, Love appears increasingly uncertain about the meaning of his power. This uncertainty begins after he enters the consciousnesses of Pharamond and Oliver and then, in indirect discourse, reveals their "unspoken" (64) love for each other. The compassion of worldly kinship (as opposed to the ethereal compassion between Pharamond and his "twin sister" [29], Azalais) overcomes Love's erotic desire. At this point, Love contradicts his previous statements by suggesting that before fulfilment, desire "scorn[s] the world too utterly" (64); moreover, as Love asks, once desire is satisfied, "what next shall feed the fire?" (64). Pharamond's return to his people for the sake of Oliver's fellowship and happiness and from a new-found desire to link his former heroic and patriotic love to his present romantic love answers Love's question. Fulfilment implies a cessation of contradiction, and, therefore, of fulfilment itself. According to Morris, the retention of hope and fear prevents this stasis; here, in a non-Marxist context, Morris reveals his understanding of the principle of the "negation of the negation." Love cannot always counteract Pharamond's desire for the "hope" of fellowship and for the "fear" associated with heroic deeds. Thus, the contradiction between desire and human circumstances, the tragic principle that underlies Brecht's dramas, occurs in *Love is Enough* as the ironic insufficiency of desire's satisfaction. In the opening frame, Giles anticipates this irony when he wonders whether the Emperor is "content now all is won" (4). The connotations given to "content" determine any hypothetical reply: if content is taken to mean Pharamond's paradise of "no pain, but rest, and easy bread" (64), then, for Morris, content is not commendable because it lacks a heroic dimension. On the other hand, prior to Love's "pain," Pharamond's "content" (23) prohibits romantic love and is, therefore, equally reprehensible.

Anticipation and reflection, the functions of the opening and closing frames respectively, recur as the structural principle of Pharamond's tale.<sup>9</sup> This technique estranges the reader from an identification with the "reality" of a dramatic present by showing that experience is narrative shaped either by selective memory or by imagination. Thus, Pharamond and Oliver give different "readings" of Pharamond as ruler, as "quester," and as lover. By avoiding a sustained focus on the narrative present, Morris, like Brecht, presents experience as drama rather than the other way around. Because the events of the quest are placed at two removes, *distanciation*, augmented by the self-reflexive critical voices in each framing layer, reveals the dialectics that structure existence.

As further evidence of these contradictions, each narrative level considers the interaction of lived or clock time with subjective time (Bergson's *durée*). In the opening frame, the Empress introduces this contrast when she explains that the relativity of subjective time remedies the fixity of measurable time: "dreamland has no clocks the wise ones say" (9). Love offers to replace the "days," "hours," and "minutes" (33) of Pharamond's episodic life with time that "is no more" (81); accordingly, as Pharamond moves toward the timelessness of fulfilment, he loses his ability to measure time (42). The juxtaposition of oneiric and linear time, together with Love's reminder that in the play all indications of time are artificial ("think a long tide / Of days are gone by" [37]), "demonstrates," in Brecht's sense of this word, that these three orders of time, like the three orders of love, should, as the Empress suggests, enhance rather than exclude each other. Morris uses the conscious artificiality of narrative order and duration to foreground the dialectics of sequential and subjective time. This technique supports Pharamond's misconception of existence as a series of "scenes" rather than as a totality. Accordingly, although Love suggests (but is Love a "reliable narrator"?) that Pharamond intends to relate his heroic past to his "days of love" (65), Pharamond's desertion of Azalais reflects his failure to transform this theory into praxis. Substitution rather than dialectic directs Pharamond's thought.

Whereas Love comments on the poem, Music's universality presents the tale of Pharamond within the broader scope of the "world's tale" (10). Music interprets time, love, and change in the context of the natural cycle's dialectic of death and rebirth. References to the world's degeneration, to materialism and "passing fashion" (76), and to the loss of the ability to "see" the dialectics at work in nature and society suggest that Music's criticism of the present and promise for the future may be read in a nineteenth-century context. Thus, Music's lyrics contribute another critical voice and point of view to the poem's multiple layers. Nevertheless, when Music suggests that finality is desirable ("Change is come, and past over, no more strife, no more learning" [63]) he contradicts his apostrophes to the evolutionary and perpetually creative forces. Thus, by contradictions within their arguments and by their structural and metrical separation from the tale, Love and Music offer both criticism and verification of the quest. In "A Short Organum," Brecht describes the function of music in "epic" theatre as an interruption as well as a comment on the play. Like the breaks between a play's dialogue episodes, the abrupt transition to music allows the audience to make judgments (Willett, *Brecht on Theatre* 201-03). In *Love is Enough*, the sections by Love and Music dramatize, or at least articulate, this critical process.

The ambiguity of Music's closing lyric suggests that the frame presents the work's most appropriate interpenetration of opposites: the refrain's varia-

tions of "Love, lead us home" (76), together with its allusions to Love's "House of Fulfilment of Craving" (76) and to "the Cup with the roses around it" (76), have their counterparts in the rustics' "harvest-home" (7). For fear of contradicting his own philosophy, Love only tentatively identifies the "sign" for his pastoral romance as the dialectics of earth's "Waxing and waning" (77); unknown to Love, Morris's choice of a "sign" for love is the pastoral home of the rustics. As Love explains in his opening song, his instrument for the "wavering tune" of his pastoral song is the pipe. Like the cup, the roses, and the motif of "hands," the pipe is associated with the family and fellowship of the frame's rural community (7). The structural incongruity of this association (Love and Music are inside the pastoral frame and the dramatic "gaze" moves inward, not outward, through the layers) distorts dramatic logic but, at the same time, reflects the superior position of the reader, who is the only observer of both Love and the rustics. Again, structural design reminds us not to repeat Pharamond's error of sequential reasoning but to consider the poem in its totality as a spiral of incremental meaning. As Brecht points out, meaning evolves from the audience, not from the stage. The anonymity of the narrator in the Music lyrics (the speaker is alternately Love's echo, contradiction, and complement) contributes to this "thick veil" (77) of inconsistent statement. Even Love is uncertain about the meaning of his production:

ye gaze,  
 And lacking words to name the things ye see  
 Turn back with yearning speechless mouths to me. —  
 — Ah, not to-day. . . . (77)

In the epilogue to *The Good Woman of Szechwan*, Brecht's singer, like Morris's Love, asks for the audience's judgment: "We're disappointed too, struck with dismay / All questions open though we've closed our play" (103).

Love begins his last address by referring to himself as a costumed allegorical figure. This "unmasking" anticipates the perceptual "turning round" (11) demanded by the return to the point of view of the spectators in the concluding frame; to mark this change there is an abrupt transition from fantastic to diurnal time. The responses of the spectators, I suggest, dramatize Morris's idea of appropriate interpretations of his drama. Again, the reader becomes a spectator observing other spectators who, in turn, watch the drama of the Emperor's response to the performance. Although the speakers retain their characteristic metrical patterns, the classes are not separated by structural divisions or by the private speech of "asides"; symbolically, social dialectics are working.

No member of the audience mistakes the play for "reality," because, in Brecht's terms, they retain the "rationality" of a critical perspective. As a result (and Brecht insists that emotion is not absent from epic theatre but

is present as a dialectical counterpart to reason), Joan is *conscious* of her emotional response to the play. In the opening frame, Giles helps Joan to interpret the semiotics of reality; in the closing frame, he explains how the allegorical drama will both clarify and penetrate experience: "for nowise dead / Within our hearts the story is; / It shall come back to better bliss" (81). This type of perceptual development is consistent with the Brechtian audience's progression from unconscious familiarity to incomprehension and, finally, to conscious understanding: although Joan affirms in the opening frame, "clear I see, and well at ease" (3), the play unsettles her confidence in her ability to "see": "A longing yet about me clings, / As I had hearkened half-told things" (83). The complete meaning of the morality will be understood only after its further estrangement by the passage of time and during recollection in the presence of nature, the paradigm of dialectical change. The play transforms an unconscious awareness of existence into knowledge that can be articulated: the seasonal cycles and the pervasive influence of art interact and generate a conscious appreciation of life as the aggregate of previous experience. Because the dialectics of life and death puzzle Love with their intensity, he believes them to be beyond translation into finite language: "How shall my tongue in speech man's longing wrought / Tell of the things whereof he knoweth nought?" (78). Giles, however, defines the unknown as he does in the opening frame, that is, in the terms of the dialectics of figurative analogy:

Until at last thy feet stay there  
*As though* thou bidedst something fair,  
 And hearkenedst for a coming foot. (81, emphasis added)

This "historical" perception of the antiphonal forces or "voices" in nature (reflected by the alternating pattern of the frame's dialogue) allows the "changeless" essence of "change" (82) to offer a potential resolution of the contraries that Pharamond can only perceive as being fixed, or, at least, sequential.

The peasants are aware that Love is not embodied but shown (as a literalization of allegory) by a "minstrel-lad" (82) who rehearses words and represents a character borrowed from the oral tradition. Jessie Kocmanová correctly suggests that Morris's "actors are more real than the persons of the drama" (124).<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the rustics praise the tale rather than the actor, and understand that the play's language, like its costumes, is not intrinsic to the dramatic world but is selected for dramatic effect. References to the "seeming" Pharamond and Azalais and the displacement of Love's wisdom onto the actors' real life "roles" as lovers show the effectiveness of the drama's alienation techniques: "O bid them home with us, and we / Their scholars for a while will be" (86). The peasants' desire to "learn love's meaning more and more" (86) overtly contradicts Music's claim that "learning" (63) ends with the realization of love. Thus, as Love's "signs,"

home and "fellowship" (87) are the goals of the "quest" for a productive dialectic between art and audience. Azalais's longing for a similar pastoral "homestead" (60) expresses her paradoxical desire for a "story" (60) of reality at the moment of her realization of vision. Again, Morris presents bliss and content as changed, not fulfilled, desire. As Boos argues, the merit of the quest is its *process* rather than its destination (71); similarly, Brecht's theatre expects us to observe the process of historical, social, and individual transformation without imposing any preconditioned expectations of the outcome of these dynamics. The ambiguity that defines Love's diction (78) also defines Morris's drama and the realities it holds up for judgment.

The knife and chain, the rulers' gifts to the actors, symbolize the imprisonment of the rulers within their civic function. Whereas Azalais uses "story" or narrative to articulate her desire for a pastoral reality, the Emperor and Empress, made more "conscious" of their social isolation by the solitude of Pharamond and Azalais, use metaphor to shape a pastoral analogy to their confinement by their political responsibilities:

our toil-girthed garden of desire,  
How of its changeless sweetness may we tire,  
While round about the storm is in the boughs  
And careless change amid the turmoil ploughs  
The rugged fields we needs must stumble o'er. (85)

Azalais's pastoral idyll, the rulers' image of the separation of the dialectic of "change" and "changeless," and the rustics' domestic realism (which unites "change" and "changeless" [82]) form a progressive movement toward the productive interaction of the multiple forms of time, of activity or contemplation, and of love. As the morality reveals, freedom is paradoxical and requires the presence of heroic, kinship, and romantic love in contradictory yet complementary relations with each other and with society and nature.

Although the Emperor's life does include love of action, compassion for his people, and desire for his beloved, his separation of "toil" from "desire" (85) compels him to formulate a conclusion not supported by the play's text: Pharamond, suggests the Emperor, "wrought out a twofold life" (84) before his reunion with Azalais. Because the Emperor reads the isolated "scenes" of Pharamond's life as a spiral of cumulative experiences leading to the completion of the quest, he reveals his need, as wish-fulfilment, for the traditional comic resolution of the fairy tale (or, as in Brecht's ironic criticism of his audience's preconceived expectations of cathartic drama, "The ending must be happy, must, must, must!" [104]). Then too, for the Emperor this reading is politically expedient. In contrast, Giles and Joan consider the play's conclusion to be the reality of the *actors'* fellowship when romance will persist as conscious and distanced artistry rather than as illusion:

And there we four awhile shall dwell  
As *though* the world were nought but well,  
And that old time come back again  
When nought in all the earth had pain. (87; emphasis added)

The mundane domesticity of "sops-in-wine" (87) juxtaposed with idyllic floral imagery repeats this dialectic of the self-conscious introduction of romance into everyday realism and dissuades us from an idealistic reading of Love's "home."

*Love is Enough* concludes with the image of Love's "hand" scattering tales that generate the dynamics of natural and human activity. With this reminder of the play's theatricality (and intertextually, of *The Earthly Paradise*) we are again required to adopt two perspectives simultaneously: that of the "authorial audience" who knows that the work is a constructed fiction and that of the "narrative audience" who believes in the "truth" of this fiction (Rabinowitz 20-29, 93-104). As Morris's exemplum of reader/audience response, *Love is Enough* not only encourages the retention of the dialectic between construct and content, but also examines the generic and political circumstances of the play's production. The ambiguity of Pharamond's last sentence (does "lacking" [75] mean both absent *and* insufficient?) and of the framing design and the story it shapes creates tension as each layer interrogates, yet completes, the others. The generic anomaly of a morality within a masque, motifs that show the essential similarities underlying historical and cultural difference, and the forms of love relevant to both epic and romance establish the work's thesis of the dialectical, and therefore inconclusive, basis of reality. Techniques akin to Brecht's alienation devices dramatize and evoke the perceptual change required to observe and to participate in these forces.

Hans Egon Holthusen suggests that "Death and love, nature and fellow feeling, and the unfathomable mystery of the world as a whole . . ." define Brecht's characters. Holthusen continues, "To see these creatures act puts us in a position to *understand* an 'historicized' process in a certain sense, as well as to *see through it* in a dreamlike manner" (116). In *Love is Enough*, Morris designs the structural and thematic movement as a pattern of dialectics in which the "historical" setting frames the dream of the morality with a drama of expectation, interaction, and response. J.W. Mackail suggests that Morris wrote *Love is Enough* "to please himself" (285); specifically, Morris wrote his morality to reassure himself of the need, as he wrote in 1872, "to keep the world from narrowing on me, and to look at things bigly and kindly" (Kelvin 173). *Love is Enough* demonstrates that the capacity to see the world holistically as the interplay between love, work, and fellowship begins the movement toward the hope that, in 1871-72, Morris desperately sought. As one of the "Tales of old time, whereby alone / The fairness of the world

is shown" (83), *Love is Enough* is a cautionary message that displaces and defers Morris's anxiety so successfully that, as he admits in his February 13, 1872 letter to Louisa Baldwin, for "a long time" he was troubled and perplexed by his inability to make the tale "march" (Kelvin 155).<sup>11</sup>

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> As Willett explains, Brecht adopted the phrase *Verfremdungseffekt* after his 1935 visit to Moscow, where he first encountered the alienation techniques of Chinese theatre and Shklovsky's term *Priëm Ostranenniya* (*Brecht in Context* 218-21).
- <sup>2</sup> Citations from *Love is Enough* are referred to by their page number in volume 9 of May Morris's *Collected Works* edition.
- <sup>3</sup> Here, Willett refers to W.H. Auden's article on the sagas' realism. Although Auden does not refer to Morris, his description of the narrative techniques in the Icelandic sagas is very similar to points Morris and Magnússon make in their preface to *The Saga Library*. Auden translated several of Brecht's works.
- <sup>4</sup> Schell and Shuchter identify "echoes" of the morality play in Brecht's theatre (xiv).
- <sup>5</sup> For an alternative reading of *Love is Enough* as Pharamond's (and Morris's) renunciation of "Romantic love in order to recover a love freed of Romantic narcissism," see Kirchoff, *William Morris* 224-37.
- <sup>6</sup> In contrast to my reading, Mackail suggests that although aspects of epic and romance appear in *Love is Enough*, the "fluctuating contest between epic and romantic treatment which is visible in 'The Earthly Paradise' is here put aside" (281).
- <sup>7</sup> See Kirchoff ("*Love is Enough*") and Boos for other studies of Love's paradoxical duality.
- <sup>8</sup> However, in his biography of Morris, Henderson argues, "One would think the title ironic, except that Morris was not given to irony" (128).
- <sup>9</sup> See Boos's perceptive study of memory and anticipation in the tale of Pharamond.
- <sup>10</sup> In a note, Kocmanová identifies this emphasis on the actors as people as "an almost Brechtian touch" (124) but does not elaborate on this comment.
- <sup>11</sup> I acknowledge with gratitude the financial support I received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada while this paper was being written.

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