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Editor's Notes . . .

In 1971 the *Victorians Institute Journal* was created as an organ of the Victorians Institute. Though it was never meant to be simply a means of promoting any single interest of that organization, it serves by including news of special interest to its members and by publishing papers which have been read at the annual meetings. The effect of this policy is to give *VIJ* some special characteristics: its interests will range over the broad spectrum of Victorian culture, its idiom will tend toward the standard rather than the specialized, and its format will be thematic. But we are not consistent. For instance, in the first issue four of the five articles were first papers read at previous meetings of the Institute, and Dickens was the subject of all but one of the articles. In this issue, the emphasis is on the Pre-Raphaelites, but two of the six articles are on figures who were outside that movement and only one of the articles was presented at a meeting of the Institute. Furthermore, both issues of *VIJ* have dealt exclusively with literary figures. Since these inconsistencies may cause some confusion, especially among prospective contributors, we should like to confirm our intention to be guided by our stated policy; however, we will continue to fill the needs of each issue with what we consider best from among our resources, even if this means that we will be inconsistent with our policy. Therefore, we urge our contributors to note the theme of the forthcoming meeting of the Institute and we especially request manuscripts treating aspects of Victorian culture other than literature. But we most especially do not wish to discourage any worthwhile work of scholarship simply because it does not seem to conform with any special or limited characteristics of *VIJ*.

The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals will hold its Annual Conference on October 12-14 in Washington, D.C. Meetings will be held at the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress. The program will be devoted to three general subjects: bibliographical topics and problems, the ways periodicals have shaped social attitudes and literary tastes, and science and technology in Victorian periodicals. Further information may be obtained from Philip J. Landon, University of Maryland—Baltimore County, Baltimore, Md. 21228.

The Victorians Institute will meet at Old Dominion University on October 20, 1973. The program emphasis will be on the 1890's and a full day of lectures, discussion and entertainment has been planned. See inside back cover of this issue.

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**BEAR ME WITNESS TO LOVE:  
MORRIS'S LOVE IS ENOUGH**

Benjamin Dunlap  
University of South Carolina

"Morris has set to work with a will on a sort of masque called 'Love is Enough,' " Rossetti reported in 1871, shortly after Morris returned from his first voyage to Iceland:

The poem is, I think, at a higher point of execution perhaps than anything he has done, having a passionate lyric quality such as one found in his earliest work. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Rossetti evidently perceived in the poem's initial drafts a resumption of the romantic idealism and operatic bravado of Morris's previous ventures in lyric drama — especially "Rapunzel," Rossetti's favorite poem in *The Defence of Guenevere*. He must have also recognized devices borrowed from his own testament to the sufficiency of love, the songs and sonnets that were eventually to comprise part of *The House of Life*, many of them addressed to his erstwhile protegee's wife. The relationship of Morris and Rossetti during this period is almost grotesque in its anfractuosity, but it is clear that *Love is Enough* reflects that emotional labyrinth of evasion and betrayal, and that Morris wrote the story of Pharamond the Freed in order to explore ways of breaking out of it. J. W. Mackail notes that the poem "gave him more real trouble than any other of his poems,"<sup>2</sup> and May Morris, as if to explain the uncharacteristically arduous composition, described it as the only work that dealt with her father's inner life. "I have been in trouble with my own work," Morris complained to Georgie Burne-Jones four months after Rossetti's letter, ". . . but I think I have now brought it out of the maze of rewriting and despondency, though it is not exactly finished."<sup>3</sup> He continued to tinker with the poem throughout the spring and summer of 1872, elaborating a simple parable of the world well lost for love into a tortuous expression of his own conflicting emotions. By November, when the poem was finally published, it had become as intricate as one of Morris's more convoluted pattern designs. By that time too, Rossetti, after failing in a suicide attempt, had experienced complete nervous collapse, and Morris, his intimacy with Georgie temporarily interrupted, had found an ardent

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confidante in Aglaia Coronio.

Because he is regarded as a story-teller, an idle singer of other men's tales, Morris's poetry has largely escaped the prurient curiosity of biographical critics — unlike Rossetti, whose verse has too seldom been read for anything else. Nevertheless, Morris confided his deepest anxieties and disappointments to his poetry, and, indeed, seems to have felt disinclined to write verse except in periods of emotional turmoil. Neither he nor Rossetti possessed the essentially naturalistic imagination that Holman Hunt considered properly Pre-Raphaelite; but where Rossetti tended towards the symbolic, Morris tended towards the decorative — towards an emphasis on spatial composition, and hence towards a literary preoccupation with structure. Morris is one of those poets — Spenser is another — whose "meaning" is most explicitly articulated in their form. Thus it is not surprising that the structural complexity of Morris's verse should reach a crescendo in *Love is Enough*, or that the new poem's complex interaction of dramatic planes should evolve directly from the structural conception of *The Earthly Paradise*, in which Morris had first confronted the domestic crisis subsuming *Love is Enough*. For all its thematic and metrical affinities with Morris's verse of fifteen years before, the "sort of masque" he now produced was not entirely the triumphant retrogression Rossetti announced.

Morris initially derived his story from the legend of Maxen Wledig in *The Mabinogian*; but, finding the implications of his Welsh original counter to his intentions, he deftly incorporated elements of his earlier narrative, "Ogier the Dane," emphasizing the futility of worldly success by returning the hero — now called Pharamond — to his former kingdom for a period of further disillusionment before a final renunciation of the mundane world. In *The Mabinogian* love is manifestly not enough, for the emperor resumes a career of bloody conquest after his amorous dalliance. But the world from which Pharamond recoils at the end of Morris's poem is no longer the legend's world of heroic strife: like Maxen Wledig, he tires of erotic repletion; but, like Ogier the Dane, he returns to find a contemptible society of venal cowards, in which — according to the masque's personification of Love — the only incentive to heroism is unrequited passion. It is important to Morris's dramatic purpose that Pharamond is a hero as well as an idle dreamer, a compound of Ogier and the earlier Prince Sebald in "Rapunzel." Like Ogier, Pharamond belongs to a more stalwart generation than the degenerate one to which he returns: he can boast of being

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A worker of great deeds after my father,

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Freer of my land from murder and wrong,  
Fain of folk's love, and no blencher in battle.<sup>4</sup>

Like Sebald, Pharamond impulsively abandons the court to seek his elusive dream-mistress, wandering the world in purgatorial misery until at last, just as he begins to despair, they are rapturously united. Their bliss is interrupted only for a final demonstration of the futility and deceit of public life, after which they withdraw once more to an incessant delirium of love.

The roots of this story of abdication and pastoral retirement are archetypal, but its literary use at least since the middle ages has tended towards one of two allegorical connotations — denouncing neglect of duty for indulgence of the flesh, or recommending spiritual fulfillment by the analogy of withdrawal. Morris is speaking literally rather than figuratively, however, and Pharamond only superficially resembles Walter in "The Hill of Venus" or the Wanderers in the Prologue to *The Earthly Paradise*. In effect, Pharamond is twice freed in the course of the poem — first from dispossession of his kingdom, and secondly from its worthless repossession.

As if to reinforce his departure from *The Mabinogian*, Morris further subverts the spirit of his Celtic original by the pervasive presence of his love of the North, creating a curious combination of saga and romance unlike anything in his early work — except, perhaps, "The Hollow Land." Indeed, in its idiosyncratic mingling of genres, *Love is Enough* suggests the "strange diagonal" of Tennyson's *The Princess*, from which Morris drew his hero's name in that early prose romance and from which he probably borrowed the trances that afflict the love-struck Pharamond. Even more suggestive is the resemblance of *Love is Enough* to Sidney's *Arcadia*, which in turn presumably influenced Tennyson's poem. But neither of these parallels displays the approbation Morris implies for his hero's disengagement from society or the elaborate structure by which he was to reflect the moral complexity of such a decision.

The medieval morality was Morris's most significant thematic model, but it was his own poem, *The Earthly Paradise*, that provided his immediate structural paradigm — not only by its overall narrative framework of interspersed lyrics and linking episodes, but by the technical virtuosity of individual tales. As in "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon," the relatively simple plot of *Love is Enough* constitutes but the inner pivot for Morris's extraordinary structural ingenuity. The masque is enacted in the context of what Mackail calls "receding planes of action" — five distinct perspectives, each with its characteristic meter and

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metaphysical distance from the central story of Pharamond and Azalais. At the outermost level of society are the rustics Giles and Joan, with their uninhibited sensuality mirroring the more restrained passion of Emperor and Empress, who, with their subjects, watch a drama of romantic love presented by the town's Mayor and performed by rustic actors in honor of the imperial wedding. Within the masque, introducing each scene with remarks both interpretive and oracular, is the figure of Love, a majestic personification who solicits the submission and devotion of all lovers in the poem. And, at the outermost perimeter of the masque — at once the oblique representation of Morris himself, as in the linking lyrics of *The Earthly Paradise*, and a sort of formal chorus, making omniscient observations on the action — is the Music, a group of singers who provide musical entr'actes as a matter of stagecraft and who utter the most elevated pronouncements of Love as a matter of thematic exposition. Coincident with this shifting point of view is Morris's adroit manipulation of the meter: the unpretentious rustics speak in octosyllabic couplets, while the Emperor and his lady converse in various forms of iambic pentameter, generally heroic couplets — the meter also employed by Love for his exalted commentary. In the play within a play, Pharamond and the other characters use a four-beat alliterative measure freely adapted by Morris from medieval verse — although once, in a moment of ecstatic abandon, Pharamond and Azalais briefly break into the more lyrical rhyming dactyls of the Music, just as the Emperor and Empress in an earlier moment of mutual distraction depart momentarily from their strict adherence to heroic couplets.

So intricate is this superstructure of dramatic planes and metrical variations that it is easy to understand Bernard Shaw's irascible objection that *Love is Enough* was merely gratuitous virtuosity, no more than "a parterre of flowers":

the title repeated that irritating nineteenth century cliché "love is enough" (which is not its moral) and therefore suggested a very idle singer and damnably empty day to anyone who had just read Marx and was raging for justice, not for love.<sup>5</sup>

But Shaw was too quick to assume a necessary distinction between justice and love. In the year he began his poetic masque, Morris had reluctantly accepted a directorship of the Devon Great Consuls Company, from which he had received most of his now dwindling fortune. He was not to study Marx for more than a decade; but he had read too much of Carlyle and Ruskin not to be troubled by what he later called his "ministering to the swinish

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luxury of the rich,"<sup>6</sup> and even in his early prose romances there is a persistent contrast of heroic recklessness and bourgeois compromise. The outer drama of *Love is Enough*, for which Morris devised such elaborate structural scaffolding, evinces the crisis of conscience provoked by his acquaintance with the stark simplicity of Iceland.

The audience of "Pharamond the Freed" represents three distinct levels of social reality — peasants, nobility and bourgeoisie — each of them anxious to understand or control the other two. The rustics Giles and Joan wonder if the Emperor and Empress feel emotions comparable to their own; the Emperor in turn speculates on the off-stage passion of the rustic actors; and the Mayor, acting as impresario, obsequiously urges the Emperor not to take offense at this drama of regal deposition. The effect of the Mayor's repeated insistence on the inappropriateness of the masque is, of course, to emphasize the proposition it presents, that kings must choose between public duty and private sensibility. The Emperor's somewhat haughty retort to the Mayor implies that, since the shoe doesn't fit, he has no intention of wearing it; but, in fact, before the play begins, the Emperor and Empress, so preoccupied with each other that they depart from their stately couplets for a more lyrical exchange of rhyming stanzas, confess that amid wars and crises of state they have thought only of each other. The "old tale" of Pharamond and Azalais thus offers an obvious parallel to the recent courtship of its royal audience, a courtship sorely trying to the burghers of the Good Town on whose behalf the nuptial play is presented. Its sponsors must tread carefully between insolence and a tactful plea for kingly responsibility — hence they flatter while admonishing, and deprecate themselves while issuing an ultimatum. For them the crucial point in the story of Pharamond the Freed is that a king who ignores his kingdom for love will lose his crown.

The masque freely exposes the ignoble venality of those subjects who prefer Pharamond's successor Theobald, a former constable whose incapacity for kingship has already been demonstrated by dereliction on guard-duty. Pharamond is clearly a man of superior character and ability, but his complex sensibility unsuits him for the simple exercise of power evoking wayward and unpredictable moods,

sorrowful yearning in the midst of mirth,  
Pitty midst anger, hope midst scorn and hate,  
Languor midst labour. . . .<sup>7</sup>

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After the "gold lords" have deposed Pharamond and established

their bourgeois monarchy under the sinister direction of Theobald's Metternich-like councillor, Pharamond bitterly denounces the world's hatred of "the faith and fire of the heart" and withdraws with his Nordic mistress to the "poor land and kingless of the shepherding people." The masque ends with a pious reiteration that love is enough, but the proposition with which the Emperor has actually been presented seems rather to have been "you pays your money and you takes your choice."

After the performance, in reply to the Mayor's sycophantic query, the somewhat chastened Emperor assures the people he has taken the lesson to heart and promises them that

if for me regard come first,  
Yet will I hope that ye have seen the worst  
Of that my kingcraft, that I yet shall earn  
Some part of that which is so long to learn.<sup>8</sup>

He now addresses the Empress in the heroic couplets appropriate to affairs of state, exclaiming that their eminence necessarily isolates them even more than the lovers in the masque. Her answer indicates that she is also willing to accept the conditions of *noblesse oblige*, that they will love in the intervals of duty in their "toil-girthed garden of desire" — that, in short, love is not enough after all for the socially and politically ambitious.

The poem ends as it began, with the frank sensuality of Giles and Joan: it is for them, immersed in the natural world, that love is truly enough. On a less self-conscious but more plausible level, they embody Pharamond's alternative ideal of pastoral simplicity. Giles is far from the rebellious peasants of "A Dream of John Ball," of course, but he instinctively shares Love's indifference to the vanities of wealth and power. "Wherewith will ye buy it, ye rich who behold me?" asks the Music on behalf of Love; and Giles, at the poem's close, quietly insists

Surely our feast shall deeper move  
The kind heart of the summer-tide  
Than many a day of pomp and pride. . .<sup>9</sup>

There can be little doubt that Morris shared these sentiments, but the financial survival of Morris and Co. still depended upon his catering to the pomp and pride of the rich. As much as he identified with Pharamond's romantic idealism, Morris could not have failed to see himself in the Mayor's hypocrisy as well: he may have written the poem to please himself, as Mackail maintains, or to flatter another, as much of the evidence suggests; but publication for profit from a largely bourgeois audience was no

less a contradiction of the claim that love was enough than intimidation of the Emperor within the poem itself. Only a structural design as intricate as the one Morris devised could adequately represent the complexity of his efforts to free himself as Pharamond was freed, to break out of the claustrophobic entanglements of domestic and financial anxieties into the passionate simplicity he had glimpsed in the wastes of Iceland. Only the nest of Chinese boxes with which we are confronted in *Love is Enough* could draw us like an optical illusion into the dilemma that so troubled Morris, forcing us to question whether we ourselves stand in relation to the poem as Emperor and Empress watching the masque or as Giles and Joan watching the Emperor and Empress as they watch the the masque. Or, to cast the problem in Freudian terms which Morris would have despised, the structure of *Love is Enough* poses the question all romantic primitives must ultimately ask themselves — whether id, however free of social inhibitions, can ever get the drop on super-ego.

## II

"O how I long to keep the world from narrowing on me, and to look at things bigly and kindly," Morris wrote his friend Aglaia Coronio in the month *Love is Enough* was published:

I am going to try to get to Iceland, hard as it will be to drag myself away from two or three people in England: but I know there will be a kind of rest in it, let alone the help it will bring me from physical reasons. I know clearer now perhaps than then what a blessing & help last year's journey was to me; what horrors it saved me from.<sup>10</sup>

For Morris, desperately evading the adulterous imbroglio at Kelmescott, Iceland was an escape and an ordeal from which he returned impatient with the constriction of his emotional life. He had not entirely resolved his inner conflicts and uncertainties; but he had faced his deepest anxieties and concluded, as he noted in the valley of Laxdale — the setting of "The Lovers of Gudrun" and thus associated in Morris's mind with tragic discord as well as natural beauty — "Whatever solace your life is to have here must come out of yourself or these old stories."<sup>11</sup> It is Laxdale, or a landscape closely resembling it, in which Azalais appears in Pharamond's dream; and it is the bleak depression that Morris felt in this symbolic place that is reflected in one of the most intimately revealing of the Music's lyrics:

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LOVE IS ENOUGH: through the trouble and tangle  
From yesterday's dawning to yesterday's night  
I sought through the vales where the prisoned winds wrangle,  
Till, wearied and bleeding, at end of the light  
I met him, and we wrestled, and great was my might.

O great was my joy, though no rest was around me,  
Though mid wastes of the world were we twain all alone.  
For methought that I conquered and he knelt and he crowned me,  
And the driving rain ceased, and the wind ceased to moan,  
And through clefts of the clouds her planet outshone.

O through clefts of the clouds 'gan to world to awaken,  
And the bitter wind piped, and down drifted the rain,  
And I was alone — and yet not forsaken,  
For the grass was untrodden except by my pain:  
With a Shadow of the Night had I wrestled in vain.

And the Shadow of the Night and not Love was departed;  
I was sore, I was weary, yet Love lived to seek;  
So I scaled the dark mountains, and wandered sad-hearted  
Over wearier wastes, where e'en sunlight was bleak,  
With no rest of the night for my soul waxen weak.<sup>12</sup>

Upon his return to England, Morris made several attempts to write himself out of his despondency. He began a novel set in Victorian England, concerning two brothers in love with the same woman — a subject he had previously skirted in "The Lovers of Gudrun" and an obvious effort to come to terms with his own domestic trouble. He eventually rejected the novel as "nothing but landscape and sentiment," but much of its preoccupation with the conflict of love and friendship found its way into *Love is Enough*. The doggedly faithful Master Oliver offers a striking contrast to the faithless Rossetti, of whom Morris complained in the same letter to Aglaia Coronio:

... Rossetti has set himself down at Kelmscott as if he never meant to go away; and not only does that keep me from that harbour of refuge (because it is really a farce our meeting when we can help it) but also he has all sorts of ways so unsympathetic with the sweet simple old place, that I feel his presence there as a kind of slur on it.<sup>13</sup>

The wretchedness of Morris's marriage during this period find expression as irrepressibly in *Love is Enough* as it had in *The Earthly Paradise*. It is Morris's own despair, and more specifically the presumably autobiographical exchange recorded in the linking lyric for January, that is evoked when the Emperor, in the midst

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of his nuptial celebration, wonders how his wife's eyes would seem "loved but unloving." And it is Morris's own marital disaster to which Love seems to allude as it unites Pharamond and Azalais only to separate them again:

— Ah, Well-beloved, I fell asleep e'en now,  
And in my sleep some enemy did show  
Sad ghosts of bitter things, and names unknown  
For things I know — a maze with shame bestrown  
And ruin and death; till e'en myself did seem  
A wandering curse amidst a hopeless dream.<sup>14</sup>

But despite such passages and despite the bleak ordeal of Pharamond's search for Azalais, the insistent message of the poem, the argument advanced by Love before every scene, is that tragic love, like tragic heroism, functions as a necessary part of a dialectical design, something more than the senseless futility depicted in *The Defence of Guenevere* and repeatedly implied in *The Earthly Paradise*. But it is not merely consolation for love's martyrs that is heralded by the Music; it is the inevitable renewal of love, as much a part of the nature of things as the cycle of seasons to which it corresponds:

LOVE IS ENOUGH: have no thought for to-morrow  
If ye lie down this even in rest from your pain,  
Ye who have paid for your bliss with great sorrow:  
For as it was once so it shall be again.<sup>15</sup>

LOVE IS ENOUGH: it grew up without heeding  
In the days when ye know not its name nor its measure.  
Yet noted it not mid your hope and your pleasure;  
There was pain in its blossom, despair in its seeding,  
But daylong your bosom now nurseth its treasure.<sup>16</sup>

LOVE IS ENOUGH: while ye deemed him a-sleeping,  
There were signs of his coming and sounds of his feet.  
Change is come, and past over, no more strife, no more learning:  
Now your lips and your forehead are sealed with his seal,  
Look backward and smile at the thorns and the burning.<sup>17</sup>

It is, of course, misleading if not altogether wrong to suggest that every lyric of love's labor won or lost must be assigned autobiographical coordinates. But it is self-evident that *Love is Enough*, a poem his daughter considered uniquely revealing of Morris's inner life, persistently manifests a sustained optimism wholly unlike the lugubrious cynicism of *The Earthly Paradise*, though written in what must have been the darkest moments of Morris's painful relationship with his wife. In the masque of

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Pharamond the Freed, this sudden renewal of spirits seems to thrive in counterpoint with the repeated observation that love is as often a torment as a delight, as if to justify present bliss by past unhappiness. To pursue the point incautiously, *Love is Enough* seems to have been written, not in a mood of compensatory evasion, but as a celebration of Morris's conviction that he had endured his days in the wilderness and been rewarded by the return of love. It was not to Jane Morris that he owed this emotional regeneration, and not to Georgiana Burne-Jones, who had been preoccupied with her own domestic misery — her husband's *opera bouffe* affair with Rossetti's "Greek damsel," Marie Zambaco, and her loss of a prematurely born child in the fall of 1872. It was to Georgiana that Morris was to direct the deepest and most lasting devotion of his life, but their mutual embarrassment during this time did not foster the intimacy that flourished between them afterwards. "I am so glad to have Janey back again," Morris plaintively confided to Mrs. Coronio on November 25th:

her company is always pleasant and she is very good & kind to me — furthermore my intercourse with G. has been a good deal interrupted; not from any coldness of hers, or violence of mine; but from so many untoward nothings: then you have been away so that I have had nobody to talk to about things that bothered me: which I repeat I have felt more than I, in my ingratitude, expected to.<sup>18</sup>

Aglaia Coronio — daughter of a prominent Pre-Raphaelite patron, Alexander Constantine Ionides, and herself strikingly Pre-Raphaelite in Rossetti's portrait — had gradually become Morris's chief confidante during the years preceding *Love is Enough*. The fragmentary evidence of Morris's correspondence — his notes to Janey and especially his letters to Aglaia in Athens, to which she had been packed off by her husband shortly before the poem was published, rather as Morris had taken Janey to Germany three years before — suggests that Mrs. Coronio was a calculating lion-huntress who had set her cap for Morris from the spring of 1870, when she persuaded him to instruct her in the reading of Chaucer. At first Morris complained of Aglaia's "bland flatteries," perhaps hoping to prick Janey's vanity: "I do rather wish she wouldn't butter me so, if that isn't ungrateful, so you needn't chaff me as one who can't see the fun of it." A few months later he was more subdued, though still regarding Aglaia's attentions with wry amusement: "I am going this afternoon to get a little sentiment out of Aglaia, in case she's in." But in 1872, when *Love is Enough* was in the press, he had begun to address Mrs. Coronio with a degree of self-revelation and persistent self-pity never

displayed to anyone else. Evidently Morris had grown emotionally dependent on Aglaia's flatteries — indeed, there is a note of urgency in his querulous inquiry, "when are you coming back again? you know how much I miss you so there is no need of talking of that anymore." He writes quite candidly of his marital distress, of his having failed in life, of his need to return to Iceland once more. Mackail notes that the friendship between Morris and Aglaia was "affectionate and unbroken through life," but it seems to have reached its greatest intensity during the troublous years of Morris's difficulty with Rossetti and the dissolution of the Firm. In September, 1873, Morris called on Mrs. Coronio less than twenty-four hours after returning from his second voyage to Iceland; but, having failed to see her, he wrote instead the matter-of-fact but provocative declaration that the stark beauty of the North had "made all the dear faces of wife & children, and love, & friends dearer than ever to me." — adding, as if to explain the otherwise baffling allusion to "love," "I hope I shall not miss your face from among them for long: please write and tell me when I shall see you." The remaining correspondence consists for the most part of complaints that they have missed each other, or arrangements for meeting: ". . . could I come on Wednesday or Thursday or Friday — the sooner the better," Morris wrote in 1875. "It is a great disappointment to have missed you: all the more from the selfish reason that I am not very well, & that an hour or two with you would have helped me to get along." Once Aglaia sends Morris jasmine blossoms from her window, and she apparently insists on writing to him, not at Horrington House where he was living with Jane and the children, but at the offices of Morris and Co. in Queen Square. For his part, Morris's letters to Aglaia are invariably longer, more detailed and more sentimental than letters written to his wife on the same occasion. But in 1876, the year of *Sigurd the Volsung* and the year of Morris's first involvement in politics, the need for a sympathetic ear seems to have declined, and with it the intensity of Morris's relationship with Mrs. Coronio. It is from this period that his abiding love, if not passion, for Georgiana Burne-Jones becomes the central emotional commitment of his extra-marital life.

The supposition that *Love is Enough* was in part addressed to Aglaia Coronio receives some support from the resemblance of her name to that of Pharamond's dream-mistress, Azalais — indeed, the one almost seems a scrambled anagram of the other. Morris may have used Provencal variants of Germanic originals for the names of his characters, but there can be little doubt that he enjoyed concealing personal allusions in such matters of detail. In the year following *Love is Enough*, he wrote an imitation of eddic

verse that he signed in the manuscript version as "Vilhjalmr Vandraeoskald," the first word meaning William and the second the nickname of a poet of saga times translated by Morris in *The Heimskringla* as "Troublous Skald." In manuscript versions of *Love is Enough*, Morris had concealed a similar etymological puzzle; for the heroine's name through many revisions — as noted by May Morris, who seems to have missed the allusion — was Bertha. Aglaia's father, drawing self-consciously upon his cultural heritage, had selected her name from Greek mythology: Aglaia is one of the three graces, the personification of *aglaia* or splendor, from the root word *aglaos* meaning "bright" or "splendid." With equally deliberate erudition, Morris chose for his heroine a name appropriate to the poem's Northern setting — a name that is, as it happens, the exact Teutonic equivalent of Aglaia; for Bertha is derived from the Old High German *Beratha*, meaning "the bright one," from the root word *berabt* meaning "bright" or shining." It is extremely improbable that such a coincidence occurred unintentionally — in fact, Morris's decision to employ another name in the published version suggests cold feet at the last minute and the substitution of a somewhat safer reference that would flatter Aglaia without publicly compromising their relationship.

Such evidence does not, of course, suggest that Morris's involvement with Aglaia Coronio was anything more than a sentimental *affaire de coeur*; indeed, it may be doubted if a Victorian bluestocking like Mrs. Coronio had anything else in mind. As for Morris, his interest in Aglaia was almost certainly more impersonal than her interest in him. There is a curious reminiscence by Aglaia's brother, Luke Ionides, in which he maintains that Morris "was not a bit susceptible to the charm of women. . . He had a few men friends who were mostly artists, or people who sympathized with art, but women did not seem to count with him."<sup>19</sup> On the surface, this observation appears a suspiciously disingenuous effort to conceal his sister's indiscretion; but, in a deeper sense, it suggests the psychological cause of that interpersonal ineptitude Morris confessed to Aglaia as "this failure of mine," his reluctance to flatter a woman by that ritualistic exploration of the inner self that was Rossetti's stock in trade. Certainly it must have been more satisfying to a woman's vanity to be loved by Rossetti, with his brooding introspection, than worshipped by Morris, with his "grave wide-open eyes, like the eyes of some dreaming beast," as Yeats described him.<sup>20</sup> The "radiant materialism" that was Morris's instinctive philosophical position rendered him as impatient with psychological complexity as with metaphysical speculation — he tended to relate to another person as if they were two natural objects in proximity, and to

admire a beautiful woman, not because her beauty reflected the infinitude of self, but because it was a manifestation of the beauty of the earth. Morris felt, as he said, an "intense and overweening love of the very skin and surface of the earth on which man dwells, such as a lover has in the fair flesh of the woman he loves."<sup>21</sup> One may wonder if for such a sensibility it is ever accurate to speak of "sublimating" sexual frustration into higher emotions of romantic pantheism; it is equally plausible to argue that women were for Morris convenient if impractical repositories of natural beauty and fecundity.

### III

The ostensibly radical transition from romantic escapism to revolutionary agitation consists primarily of concluding that one's fantasy world is, after all, a functional blueprint for the transformation of society. The crucial difference between the earthly paradise of "The Hollow Land" and the socialist utopia of *News from Nowhere* actually lies in Morris's gradually increasing dissatisfaction with mere dreaming, not in a repudiation of the dream itself. The constant factor in all Morris's work is his passionate love of the earth and the consequent conviction that happiness necessarily involves an harmonious adjustment to the rhythms of nature. *Love is Enough* was written at a pivotal moment in Morris's life — it is both a highly personal statement and an oblique reassessment of the values implicit in Victorian society; but critics of his poetry, impatient to get from the poetic upholsterer to the warrior bard, have too frequently dismissed the poem as a thematic retrogression: at a time, they say, when Morris himself was preparing to exchange the world of domestic confusion for the heroic realm of the sagas, the central character in his masque decides to abandon the world of strife and enterprise for the bliss of an earthly paradise.

It is true the poem contains passages reminiscent of the early prose romances — Pharamond's vision of Azalais, for example, singing in "a place of flowers," does suggest a reversion to the traditional earthly paradise motif adapted from Dante for "The Hollow Land" and emphatically rejected as evasive self-delusion in *The Life and Death of Jason*. But Morris's depiction of Azalais also anticipates the heroines of the late romances, those delectable creatures who — as Yeats observed — are always somehow more or less than human, more closely related to the earth, less complicated by the tangle of men's emotions. Pharamond's is the only fully developed ego in the poem; Azalais is unadulterated id, a



symbolic embodiment of Morris's association of Eros with nature's regenerative cycle of growth and decay, an association reiterated in virtually every speech of Love and the Music — which is, indeed, the dramatic justification for separating a single thematic entity into complementary parts. "Breathe gently between them, O breeze of the morning," chants Love as Pharamond and Azalais are at last united,

Wind round them unthought of, sweet scent of the blossoms!  
Treasure up every minute of this tide of their meeting,  
O flower-bedecked Earth! with such tales of my triumph  
Is your life still renewed, and spring comes back forever  
From that forge of all glory that brought forth my blessing.<sup>22</sup>

So deliberate is Morris's association of Azalais, as the votary of Love, with the beauty of nature, and so vague is her presence in personality and appearance, that a reader of the late romances immediately recognizes her as one of the sisterhood of Habundia and Birdalone and the Maid, manifestations not merely of erotic wish-fulfillment but of that sensuous love of the earth that inspired Morris's socialism as clearly as it did his wallpaper designs. When Pharamond decides to renounce worldly pomp for Azalais and her land of kingless shepherds, he intimates a political consciousness that, like John Ruskin's disquisition "On the Nature of Gothic," tends to weigh corruption by its alienation from nature: "Wert thou the crown of all rulers," Pharamond scathingly mocks his successor Theobald,

No field should'st thou ripen, free no frost-bounden river.  
Loose no heart from its love, turn no soul to salvation. . .<sup>23</sup>

It is probably true that Morris sought in his love of the earth — and possibly in the ideal of fellowship as well — some compensation for the failure of romantic love; but it is more significantly true that he had always longed for human love redolent of the mystery of the earth, a symbolic embodiment of all he revered so passionately in nature. Morris was not, like Wordsworth and Ruskin in their youthful naivete, blind to the destructive side of nature; nor did he suppose that Love always triumphs in the end. He had tempered his faith in the bleak wilderness of Iceland, and he recognized Love as both creator and destroyer — at one moment "holding a crown and palm-branch" and in the next "with a cup of bitter drink and his hands bloody."<sup>24</sup> The only love that is enough is ultimately the love of the earth; or, put another way, for those who have overcome the ego's chronic preoccupation with self, it is enough to love. The freeing of

Pharamond is romantic parable in which the mask is repudiated for the self, a rejection of the false world of social and domestic entanglement for the true world of natural sensuality and affection — and it was upon this substratum of archetypal rebellion that Morris was to erect his prophecies of bucolic socialism.

Perhaps because Marxist critics are reluctant to take Morris's religion of the earth as seriously as they take the eschatology of scientific materialism, and perhaps because Christian humanists suppose spiritual allegories must inevitably imply neo-platonic aspiration, *Love is Enough* has been denounced and praised as Morris's only mystical venture, a morality play that uses the traditional motif of the journey to recommend an other-worldly salvation. Such an interpretation is, of course, antithetical to Morris's intention, though it points to one of the poem's most intriguing devices: Morris has not merely returned to the inversion of courtly love so cleverly exploited in "Rapunzel"; he has boldly extended his allegorical perimeter to incorporate Christian coordinates — identifying Love with Christ, not in order to affirm Christian belief, but to reverse the conventional assertion that God is love.<sup>25</sup> Where a Christian mystic like Coventry Patmore interprets human love as a paradigm of God's love of man, Morris regards it as a symbol of man's place in nature. Thus he is careful to emphasize the physical reality of Pharamond's experience, as if to counter any hint of platonic sublimation. "I know thee no dreamer in this world that thou lovest," Master Oliver protests in a manuscript version of the poem,<sup>26</sup> and, in a stern allusion to the eternal recurrence of nature, the Music rebukes those of little faith "who tremble for death or the death of desire."<sup>27</sup> Before his vision materializes, when Pharamond fears he is merely dreaming, Love insists, "Put forth thine hand, feel the dew on the daisies!"<sup>28</sup> And Azalais, anticipating Pharamond's astonishment as he wakes, promises reassurance in the sensual immediacy of his surroundings:

when thou seest  
How the rose-boughs hang in o'er the little loft window,  
And the blue bowl with roses is close to thine hand,  
And over thy bed is the quilt sewn with lilies,  
And the loft is hung round with the green Southland hangings,  
And all smelleth sweet as the low door is opened.<sup>29</sup>

The transformation of the symbolic roses and lilies of Morris's earthly paradise motif into the simple decor of a Northern cottage indicates how firmly grounded in reality Pharamond's dream world has been. The dominion of Love, "eterne in mutabilitie,"

more closely resembles Spenser's Garden of Adonis than Morris's earlier Hill of Venus; for Love explicitly represents the cyclic regeneration of the earth and is alternately known by men as God and Death. But Love also represents the summation of human suffering and desire — like the gods of Asgard in *Sigurd the Volsung*, who function ultimately as extensions of human aspiration. And as Sigurd, the solar hero of Northern legend, is identified not only with Baldur but also with Christ, so Love adumbrates a messianic intercession in its recurrent rhetoric of salvation:

I am the Ancient of Days that were,  
I am the Newborn that To-day brings here,  
I am the life of all that dieth not,  
Through me alone is sorrow unforgot. . .<sup>30</sup>

O hearken the words of his voice of compassion:  
"Come cling round about me, ye faithful who sicken  
Of the weary unrest and the world's passing fashion!"<sup>31</sup>

Lo, for such days I speak and say, believe  
That from these hands reward ye shall receive. . .  
Have faith and crave and suffer, and all ye  
The many mansions of my house shall see.<sup>32</sup>

Morris's use of such obvious allusions to the New Testament in so secular a context is neither blasphemous, as one might suppose from Swinburne's example, nor inconsequential, as one might deduce from the tendency of critics to ignore them. Morris has, in fact, employed Biblical paraphrase and allusion to clarify his essentially religious intention, though his religion is not as that of the scribes and Pharisees. When the Emperor calls his bride a "pearl beyond price," for example, Morris is referring to a parable in the 13th chapter of St. Matthew that summarizes in miniature the story of Pharamond the Freed, who, "when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." The same chapter is repeatedly alluded to by the Music in its imagery of love as a seed brought painfully to fruition, imagery derived from Christ's justification of teaching by parable and a succinct expression of Morris's own anxiety lest he compromise his faith too much: "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." But for Morris the literal seed is more important than the figurative word, and in the midst of what appears to be Love's most overtly Christian peroration, Morris interrupts to exclaim

— What sign, what sign, ye cry, that so it is?  
The sign of Earth, its sorrow and its bliss,  
Waxing and waning, steadfastness and change;  
Too full of life that I should think it strange  
Though death hang over it; too sure to die  
But I must deem its resurrection nigh.<sup>33</sup>

#### IV

*Love is Enough*, for all its structural ingenuity and metrical virtuosity, does not contain very much of Morris's most memorable verse; but neither is it "the lowest ebb of Morris's creative life," as critics have preferred to believe without sufficiently considering the poem's intricate workmanship.<sup>34</sup> Most significantly, *Love is Enough* is a refutation of the despairing pessimism of *The Earthly Paradise* and a strengthening of resolve for a new beginning. "O sweet wind of the summer tide, broad moon a-whitening," cries Pharamond at the end of the masque, triumphantly articulating Morris's renewed conviction of the intrinsic harmony and design of earthly existence:

Bear me witness to Love, and the world he has fashioned!  
It shall change, we shall change, as through rain and through sunshine  
The green rod of the rose-bough to blossoming changeth:  
Still lieth in wait with his sweet tale untold of  
Each long year of Love, and the first scarce beginneth,  
Wherein I have hearkened to the word God hath whispered,  
Why the fair world was fashioned mid wonders uncounted.<sup>35</sup>

For Morris, whatever his subsequent disappointments and frustrations, this was enough. "I entreat you (however trite the words may be)," he wrote a friend in distress several years later, echoing the deepest meaning of *Love is Enough*, "to think that life is not empty nor made for nothing, and that the parts of it fit one into another in some way; and that the world goes on, beautiful and strange and dreadful and worshipful."<sup>36</sup> □

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>J.W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris* (London: Longmans, 1922), I, 280.

<sup>2</sup>Mackail, *Life of William Morris*, I, 280.

<sup>3</sup>Philip Henderson, ed., *The Letters of William Morris* (London: Longmans, 1950), p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>William Morris, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, May Morris, ed. (London: Longmans, 1915), IX, 39.

<sup>5</sup> May Morris, *William Morris* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), II, xxxvii. Morris himself, in a disclaimer somewhat less reliable than his comparable remark that the best thing about *The Earthly Paradise* was its name, later insisted the title of *Love is Enough* was a lie. According to his sometime son-in-law, Halliday Sparling, "On one occasion, talking about the deeper things with J.H. Middleton and others, he electrified those present by snatching down the volume from his bookshelves, rapping upon it with a paper-knife, pointing to its title, and exclaiming: 'There's a lie for you, though 'twas I that told it! Love isn't enough in itself; love *and* work, yes! Work and love, that's the life of a man! Why, a fellow can't even love decently unless he's got work to do and pulls his weight in the boat!'" As this essay attempts to demonstrate, *Love is Enough* was not incompatible with Morris's later socialism, nor with the spirit of the late prose romances. Ironically, Morris uses in this anecdote by Sparling the same turns of phrase he employed in a letter of 1856 which concluded "my work is the embodiment of dreams in one form or another." Morris was a notoriously bad judge of his own work in retrospect, as his revisions of *The Defence of Guenevere* for the Kelmscott edition clearly indicate.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted by Paul Thompson, *The Work of William Morris* (New York: Viking, 1967), p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 84.

<sup>9</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 87.

<sup>10</sup> Henderson, *Letters of William Morris*, p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> Morris, *Works*, VIII, 108.

<sup>12</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 47.

<sup>13</sup> Henderson, *Letters of William Morris*, p. 50.

<sup>14</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 66.

<sup>15</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 63.

<sup>18</sup> Henderson, *Letters of William Morris*, p. 49. The quotations in the following paragraph are taken from the fragmentary correspondence recorded by Henderson, pp. 35, 48-49, 58-59, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Luke Ionides, "Memories," *Transatlantic Review*, February, 1924, 39.

<sup>20</sup> W.B. Yeats, *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1958), p. 95.

<sup>21</sup> Morris, *News from Nowhere*, *Works*, XVI, 132.

<sup>22</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 58-59.

<sup>23</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 73.

<sup>24</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 77, 48. The paradoxical identification of love with pleasure and suffering, as well as the lyrical exposition of the Music, suggest several possible influences upon *Love is Enough*. The most obvious is Swinburne, whose cosmological paean to the earth, "Hertha," was published in 1871. A more obscure parallel occurs in Chapter VII of *At the Back of the North Wind*, published in the year Morris wrote *Love is Enough* by George Macdonald — whose former house, The Retreat, was renamed Kelmscott House when Morris made it his London quarters. Macdonald resolves the question of how nature can be both kind and cruel by reference to a "far-off

song" beyond all human suffering that "tells me that all is right." The most probable influence in this respect, and the most surprising, is that of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Despite Morris's later contempt for the diminution of Siegfried to a tenor tweedle-de-deeing in tights, the resemblance of his operatic climax, as Pharamond and Azalais are united, to the love-duet in Wagner's music-drama is unmistakable. Probably Swinburne brought the libretto to Morris's attention — though Morris did not read German with any facility and, as with Swinburne, there is no indication that Morris had heard Wagner's music.

<sup>25</sup> Rossetti is the obvious source of this association of Christ and Eros — though Swinburne also played with the idea, and the poetry of Christina Rossetti, where it is put to antithetical use, suggests that its ultimate source is *The Song of Solomon*. A far different Solomon, Rossetti's friend Simeon, published *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* in 1871, the year before Morris's poem, depicting Love as a similar amalgam. Either Rossetti or Swinburne, who praised Solomon's turgid prose-poetry, might have shown it to Morris.

<sup>26</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, xxxiii.

<sup>27</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 51.

<sup>28</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 56.

<sup>29</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 60.

<sup>30</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 22. Cf. Ezekiel, 7:9; John, 14:6.

<sup>31</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 76. Cf. Book of Common Prayer: "Hear what comfortable works our Saviour Christ saith unto all who truly turn to him..."; Matthew, 11:28.

<sup>32</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 77. Cf. John, 14:2.

<sup>33</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 77.

<sup>34</sup> E.P. Thompson's estimate in *William Morris, Romantic to Revolutionary*, an exemplary study of Morris's political career, is representative of most recent critical opinion.

<sup>35</sup> Morris, *Works*, IX, 75.

<sup>36</sup> Henderson, *Letters of William Morris*, p. 78. It is tempting to regard this letter as Morris's tactful disengagement from his intimacy with Agalaia Coronio, but Mackail's circumspect introduction (*Life of William Morris*, I, 327) suggests it was addressed to Mackail's mother-in-law, Georgiana Burne-Jones.