

Boos, Florence S.  
**“*News from Nowhere* and ‘Garden Cities’: Morris’s Utopia  
and Nineteenth-Century Town-Design.”**

*Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* n. s. 7.2 (Fall 1998): 5-27.

In the opening scene of *News from Nowhere* (first published serially in 1890-91), William Morris’s narrator describes a branch meeting of the Socialist League at which six speakers, four of them “Anarchists,” have debated fiercely “on the future of the fully-developed new society.” Riding home afterward in the “vapour bath” of a railway carriage, disheartened by interminable quarrels, Guest yearns to “see a day of it . . . if I could but see it!”

Morris was not alone in his desire to “see it,” of course. His historically informed anarcho-socialist utopia reflected prior anarchist, anarcho-socialist, and municipal reformist ideals, including ideas about land use developed much earlier in the century in William Thompson’s *Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities* (1830) and varied in more recent works such as William Thomson’s *A Prospectus of Socialism* (1894), Peter Kropotkin’s *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* (1898, assembled from essays published in 1889-90), and Morris’s own *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome* (co-authored with Ernest Belfort Bax and serialized in 1886-87 as “Socialism from the Roots Up,” and revised for republication in 1893). Morris’s literary insights into the social and aesthetic implications of human living arrangements, in turn, anticipated and influenced Ebenezer Howard’s more gradualist views in *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898, revised as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, 1902), and through Howard’s work, many subsequent attempts to put cognate ideas into practice.

Many contemporary theorists recoiled from the gaping social wounds created by the unsafe and unlivable metropolises thrown up by the industrial revolution. Morris’s London, for example, newly engorged with almost six million inhabitants, was the largest city in Europe, and comparably brutal low wages and high rents, merciless overcrowding, and squalid sanitation inflicted great suffering and staggering rates of disease and mortality on the poor in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, and other citadels of the new capitalism. Much of the traffic that jammed these cities’ filthy, narrow streets conveyed food and other goods hauled [page 6] in at great expense, often from depopulated and impoverished rural areas whose former inhabitants had been forced to seek economic survival in the cities.

In opposition to this squalor, nineteenth-century reformers and theorists developed a variety of ardent ‘isms’—mutualist anarchism, anarcho-socialism, socialism, social democratic cooperativism, and populist communitarianism—about which they disagreed almost as much as Guest’s contentious colleagues. But they also struggled to learn from each others’ insights, and proposed a variety of flexible and sophisticated remedies to a persistent breed of interrelated problems. *News from Nowhere* is only the most eloquent literary product of these efforts to make aesthetic means justify social ends.

## Kropotkin's Agrarian and Industrial Mutualism

Many nineteenth-century would-be reformers designed plans for improved living conditions for ordinary people, but only a few favoured communal ownership. Charles Fourier, for example, and William Thompson, a founder of the Co-operative movement, envisioned larger cost-efficient dwellings which would balance the privacy of small individual apartments with social gathering places. These would provide for the pleasures of sophisticated society (schools, theatrical productions, libraries) as well as the harmony and potential plenty of rural life with improved farming methods. The communities could be financed by contributions from co-operative societies and by individual sponsors, who might be able to advance (say) twenty pounds each towards a resident's expenses until the community became self-supporting.

Another socialist planner was the late-century William Thomson, a member of Henry Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation and an ardent Co-operator (co-operators sought to eliminate the divisions between owners, producers, and consumers, and to establish worker-and-consumer-owned enterprises which redistributed profits to their members). Thomson's *A Prospectus of Socialism* (1894) advocated the establishment of Barbican-like "communal palaces," which would incorporate the latest technology for sanitation, cleaning, and heating, and include both private apartments and larger social spaces, decorated with electric light displays and other forms of artistic ornamentation. Like his earlier near-namesake, Thomson also suggested that all who wished to do so should be able to eat together in large communal dining halls, and others could arrange for dishes to be brought to their apartments. The non-profit mail-order systems mentioned above were designed to obviate the waste and duplication of stores.

Thomson's idealized "high-rises" reflected an age of widespread confidence in urbanization, but other, more far-sighted reformers wished to preserve the natural elements of countryside and landscape for all. The agrarian aspects of *News from Nowhere* paralleled certain features of contemporary anarchist theory, as advocated by Peter Kropotkin, whom Morris knew well through their mutual [page 7] political propaganda from the time Kropotkin settled in England in 1886 until Morris's ill-health and the changing composition of the Socialist League forced his semi-retirement from political activities in the early nineties. Though Morris expressed irritation at what he believed were the anti-social qualities of libertarian and terrorist strands of anarchism, Kropotkin's ideas about the need for balanced land use could not have evoked such objections.

Indeed, Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), a pragmatic and open-minded humanist, has always suffered from the opprobrium attached—*ab ignorantia*—to the word "anarchist." His ideology might rather be called "decentralized communism," and its communitarian insights and affinities have continued to surface in "green," ecological, and back-to-the-land movements from his time to ours.

Born a Russian prince in Moscow, Kropotkin became deeply attached to the serfs who raised him after his mother's death. Urged to seek a commission or

civil-service post at nineteen, he sought a scientific appointment in Siberia rather than a career-enhancing post at court, and evolved into a gifted naturalist and self-taught anthropologist. In an impressive series of publications on Siberian meteorology, geography, and zoology, he developed the conviction that Darwinian and ‘social-Darwinist’ tendencies to explain evolutionary survival solely in terms of competition within and between species ignored observable benefits of organic cooperation under stress.

Kropotkin was hardly unaware of the role of competition and war in human affairs, of course, but argued that scientific and quasi-scientific speculations which aggrandized perturbative phenomena and hostile behaviour distorted reality, and suppressed study of equally remarkable but less conspicuous human capacities for social organization, coexistence, and “mutual aid.” Imprisoned by the Czarist government for his ‘subversive’ views in 1874, Kropotkin later escaped and made his way to England. With interludes of revolutionary activity in Europe and further imprisonment (described in his memoir, *In Russian and French Prisons* [1887]), he devoted the rest of his life there to the advocacy of mutualist anarchism.

In *Mutual Aid* (1902, assembled from articles which appeared between 1888 and 1896), Kropotkin undertook to rewrite the social history of “savage” and “barbarian” peoples to demonstrate the underlying presence and persistence of order and cohesion, and expressed his clear-sighted scholarly opposition to the imperialism and Eurocentrism of most nineteenth-century social science. He rejected with special force the view that organization of human society into competing nation-states represented any ideal of liberty, and argued that more informal, ‘primitive’ modes of organization into tribes and guilds realized human aspirations to freedom in deeper and more substantive ways.

Kropotkin also attacked as *unscientific* as well as morally pernicious the received Malthusian view that poverty, starvation, and wars are inevitable instruments in some sort of invisible hand for the control of excess population. In *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, for example, he adduced detailed regional [page 8] economic studies in support of his view that better-conceived and realized methods of organization and production could enable relatively populous societies to feed their people. Unlike most Marxists and social-democrats—who typically considered large-scale urban-based industrial production efficient and desirable, and counted on redistribution alone to improve workers’ living conditions—Kropotkin also maintained that small and mid-scale industries are actually more efficient than larger ones, in ways that benefit naturally from informal planning and experimentation.

Kropotkin further argued that villages with a mixture of industrial, craft, and agricultural production provide healthier living conditions, more real wealth, and a more efficient and flexible economic organization than large, centralized forms of production, and that self-sufficiency and reciprocal local markets are more desirable than extended networks of transportation that served vast, disparate, and uncertain global markets. Respect for flexible small-scale efforts and undertakings that would grow and decline in ways adapted to different regional conditions was in itself neither “capitalist” nor “socialist,” but it was

consistent with some applications of both, and certainly with Morris's views. As practised by Kropotkin, this appreciation of the merits of (morally informed) local self-determination also added elements of pragmatism not always present in the schemes of visionary planners.

For example, Kropotkin also brought to his arguments an extensive knowledge of European and American agricultural methods, regional craft economics, and labour-saving technical advances. The stereotypical assumption that anarchists are, by definition, closed-minded practisers of rural stasis and opponents of technological advance, was thoroughly belied in Kropotkin's case by his passion for technical and scientific discoveries, his radical advocacy of a basic scientific education for each child, and his ardent interest in the use of engineering advances for humane ends. As a person of scientific bent reared in an agricultural society, Kropotkin wished to foster an unillusioned concern for the possibilities and problems attendant on rapid economic change, but he also brought an outsider's skepticism to his assessment of Europe's largest megalopolis and most industrialized nation.

In "The Possibilities of Agriculture," a chapter of *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, Kropotkin argues as follows for cooperative—rather than collective or state-managed—farms, in terms which anticipated certain aspects of the developmental sequence later proposed for "garden cities":

Two hundred families of five persons each, owning five acres per family, having no common ties between the families, and compelled to find their living, each family on its five acres, almost certainly would be an economical failure. . . . But the same two hundred families, if they consider themselves, say, as tenants of the nation, and treat the thousand acres as a common tenancy . . . would have . . . every chance of succeeding, if they know what is the best use to make of that land. In such case they probably would [page 9] first of all associate for permanently improving the land which is in need of immediate improvement, and would consider it necessary to improve more of it every year, until they had brought it all into a perfect condition. On an area of 340 acres they could most easily grow all the cereals—wheat, oats, etc.—required for both the thousand inhabitants and their livestock. . . . On twenty acres, two of which would be under glass, they would grow more vegetables, fruits and luxuries than they could consume. And supposing that half an acre of land is attached to each house for hobbies and amusement (poultry keeping, or any fancy culture, flowers, and the like) they would still have some 140 acres for all sorts of purposes: public gardens, squares, manufactures and so on. . . . The amount of labour required to grow food under a rational culture is so small, indeed, that our hypothetical inhabitants would be led necessarily to employ their leisure in manufacturing, artistic, scientific, and other pursuits. (237-39)

It is common now for cash-crop farmers in midwestern North America to argue that one cannot support a single family on less than several hundred acres,

but there are interesting parallels between Kropotkin's ideals and successful practices of self-sufficient farmers in certain areas—Amish and Mennonites, for example, in the midwestern United States.

In *News from Nowhere*, Guest also notes that Nowhere's citizens are eager to discuss "the weather, the hay-crop, the last new house, the plenty or lack of such and such birds. They talked of these things not in a fatuous and conventional way, but as taking, I say, real interest in them" (359). One might compare this "real interest" with Kropotkin's advocacy of a nature-based education and kindred ideals in his peroration to "The Possibilities of Agriculture":

From the technical point of view there is no obstacle whatever for such an organization being started to-morrow with full success. The obstacles against it are not in the imperfection of the agricultural art, or in the infertility of the soil, or in climate. They are entirely in our institutions, in our inheritances and survivals from the past—in the "Ghosts" which oppress us. But to some extent they lie also—taking society as a whole—in our phenomenal ignorance. We, civilised men and women, know everything. . . . We only know nothing about whence the bread comes which we eat;. . . we do not know how it is grown, what pains it costs to those who grow it, what is being done to reduce their pains, what sort of men those feeders of our grand selves are;. . . we prevent our children from obtaining this sort of knowledge—even those of our children who would prefer it to the heaps of useless stuff with which they are crammed at school. (240)

Extensive further parallels and affinities can be traced between Kropotkin's complex communitarian ideals and those of Morris, reviewed in the next section. This would include (among others) their shared distaste for conventional narrative historians' obsessive preoccupation with the martial and oligarchic, their indifference to the heroism and struggles of ordinary people, and their strongly held beliefs that labour and art can complement each other in natural and sustaining ways. Striking resonances can even be found at the level of diction. Compare, for example, Kropotkin's diction—

[page 10] How much the poet would gain in his feeling of the beauties of nature, how much better would he know the human heart, if he met the rising sun amidst the tillers of the soil, himself a tiller, if he fought against the storm with the sailors on board ship; if he knew the poetry of labour and rest, sorrow and joy, struggle and conquest! (407)

with Morris's diction—

Nor would he who took to heart the piping of the wind and washing to the waves as he sat at the helm of the fishing-boat, be deadened to the beauty of art-made music. It is workmen only and not pedants who can produce real vigorous art." [1] ("Society," 2: 467)

Nineteenth-century capitalists and socialists alike tended to see various forms of industrial gigantism as “progress,” and most socialists of the 1880s thought more about class-warfare and industrial action than mutualist cooperation or the need for an egalitarian balance between regions and occupational ways of life. Kropotkin’s rigorous analyses of agrarian economics of scale and demands that land-use and industrial production be governed by middle-sized groups of workers and consumers provided an alternative set of economic ideals for reformers in the 1890s, and these ideals also underlay the semi-pastoralism of *News from Nowhere* and Ebenezer Howard’s epigonal “garden cities.” Like Kropotkin, Morris and Howard believed that many forms of economic activity could (and should) flourish in a common spatial domain of accessible size. Both valued self-sufficiency, local administration, and interdependent forms of craftwork and agricultural production—all significant, even essential, aspects of the carefully balanced society of “fields, factories, and workshops” Kropotkin envisioned.

### **Morris and E. B. Bax’s Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome**

Critics have given relatively scant attention to William Morris and Ernest Belfort Bax’s joint treatise. Morris and Bax first serialized it as a series of *Commonweal* essays under the collective title “Socialism from the Root Up” (1886-87) and later gathered and reprinted them between covers as *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome* (1893), with an expanded final section which bore the chiliastic title, “Socialism Triumphant.” Other commentators and I have traced some of the parallels between Morris’s convictions and the tenets of mutualist anarchism, but no one has ever imputed such sympathies to Morris’s collaborator and fellow Socialist League member, E. Belfort Bax, historian of German Marxism, philosopher of the English socialist movement, author of *The Religion of Socialism* (1891), and a virulently bigoted opponent of all forms of legal equality for women. Despite this marked divergence in their personal behaviour and wider social views, Morris and Bax did collaborate successfully on their articles for *Commonweal*, prompted perhaps by their common interest in the origins of socialism as a historical process, deep respect for the Paris Commune, and shared conviction that socialism might become “a religion of humanity.”

[page 11] Bax’s lack of interest in aesthetic matters in his other writings also suggests that Morris was responsible for most of the work’s extended comments on architecture and town design. Designed as a reasonably acceptable didactic handbook for a wide socialist audience, *Socialism* presumably sketched only those aspects of the new society upon which its authors could agree, but these included a clearly stated need to do “away with all antagonism between town and country, and all tendency for the one to suck the life out of the other” (316).

The volume’s more detailed remarks about planning also show an informed interest in several alternate schemes for settlement, and a willingness to let future socialists choose among them. Among the authors mentioned so far,

Thompson, Thomson, and Howard would all have found common cause with one or the other of the alternatives:

Again we give three theories of the transformation of the modern town, industrial or capital, into the kind of entity to suit the new social conditions. The first would leave the great towns still existing, but would limit the population on any given space; it would insist on cleanliness and airiness, the surrounding and segregation of the houses by gardens; the erecting of novel public buildings; the maintenance of educational institutions of all kinds—of theatres, libraries, workshops, taverns, kitchens, etc. This kind of town might be of considerable magnitude, and the houses in it might not be very different in size and arrangement from what they are now, although the life lived in them would have been transformed. . . . In view of the limitation above mentioned, no individual or group could be allowed to engross an undue area.

The second method of dealing with the unorganized and anarchic towns of to-day proposes their practical abolition, and the supplanting of them in the main by combined dwellings built more or less on the plan of the colleges of our older English universities. As to the size of these, that would have to be determined by convenience in each case, but the tendency would be to make them so large as to be almost small towns of themselves; since they would have to include a large population in order to foster the necessary give and take of intellectual intercourse, and make them more or less independent for ordinary occupation and amusement. It is to be understood that this system of dwellings would not necessarily preclude the existence of quite small groups, and houses suitable to them, although we think that these would tend to become mere eccentricities.

Yet another suggestion may be sketched as follows:—a centre of a community, which can be described as a very small town with big houses, including various public buildings, the whole probably grouped about an open space. Then a belt of houses gradually diminishing in number and more and more spaced out, till at last the open country should be reached, where the dwellings, which would include some of the above mentioned colleges, should be sporadic. (314-16)

These alternatives could be blended and varied in many ways, but Morris's outline of them shows how carefully he wished to consider the socialist implications of architecture and regional design.

#### [page 12] **The Depopulated City of Morris's Utopia**

Morris's revolutionary-apocalyptic view of contemporary society and condemnation of Fabian gradualism precluded the sorts of tidy calculations that endeared *To-morrow* to philanthropic capitalists, but Morris anticipated many of Howard's prescriptions and recommendations. Generations of readers of *News from Nowhere* have puzzled over the scene in which Guest awakens in the

garden-surrounded Guest House (former site of the Morris family's Hammersmith home), and learns that "the great clearing of 1955" has returned the northeast London suburbs of Walthamstow and Woodford, among many other London sites, to forests and pasturage. One of the chief plot elements of the early chapters of *News from Nowhere*, in which Guest travels with his guide from Hammersmith in West London, eastward through Kensington, Charing Cross, Piccadilly, and Trafalgar Square, is the traveller's mounting amazement at gardens, gracefully spaced and eclectically designed houses, new public buildings, open and enclosed arcades, and even forests in the centre of the nineteenth-century city he has left.

As a spatial paradigm for the inversion of capitalist priorities, Morris's pastoralized London provided a socialist thought-experiment about what complete "renewal" of an existing city might mean. In the reality of the 1990s, by contrast, the highway that runs in Morris's book "through wide sunny meadows and garden-like tillage" (202) is the arterial "Great West Road" (A4), a sluiceway of flyovers and thundering lorries, but Guest learns that the Victorian royal Kensington Gardens have become part of a wooded ring which surrounds inner London. Dick adds that the woodland

goes from here northward and west right over Paddington and a little way down Notting Hill: thence it runs north-east to Primrose Hill, and so on; rather a narrow strip of it gets through Kingsland to Stoke-Newington and Clapton, where it spreads out along the heights about the Lea marshes; on the other side of which, as you know, is Epping Forest holding out a hand to it. (206)

Ebenezer Howard's later plans for "garden cities," described below, provided for the preservation of a green ring around each city of the sort described in *News*, as well as easily accessible arcades for goods and produce. Drastic depopulation has transformed Bloomsbury and other areas of central London, and those public buildings which still stand have found other uses. The former British Museum in Bloomsbury, for example, 'now' surrounded by trees and parkland, has become a public gathering place and arcade for people's wares:

[Dick] turned the horse under an archway which brought us into a very large paved quadrangle, with a big sycamore tree in each corner and a plashing fountain in the midst. Near the fountain were a few market stalls, with awnings over them of gay striped linen cloth, about which some people, mostly women and children, were [page 13] moving quietly, looking at the goods exposed there. The ground floor of the building round the quadrangle was occupied by a wide arcade or cloister, whose fanciful but strong architecture I could not enough admire. Here also a few people were sauntering or sitting reading on the benches. (231)

Dick observes that on Fridays the place is usually "thronged, and gay with people, and in the afternoon there is generally music about the fountain." The new society requires its books and memorials, but these are diffused more evenly and

accessibly throughout Nowhere's green and pleasant land. At the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square (which still stands), Dick remarks that "I have sometimes puzzled as to what the name means; anyhow, nowadays wherever there is a place where pictures are kept as curiosities permanently it is called a National Gallery, perhaps after this one. Of course there are a good many of them up and down the country."

Morris's most notorious transvaluation of spatial and political values is probably Nowhere's use of the neo-Gothic Houses of Parliament to market nominally coarser wares (the "Dung-market"). This ironic detail was not without oblique relevance to contemporary city planners, many of whom commented on ways better to recycle waste. Guest also remarks (with relief) that the new society no longer uses coal-based steam power, and other advocates of small-scale and reciprocal consumer markets have noted from time to time that (some) natural wastes can be conveyed to urban gardens, parks, and nearby farms for use as fertilizer. Morris's 'Central London' might indeed benefit from a convenient location by the river for such a redistribution-centre.

Piccadilly Circus, London's vestigial town centre, also survives, for its multi-storied buildings serve in *Nowhere* as visitors' hostels:

We came suddenly out of the woodland into a short street of handsomely built houses, which my companion named to me at once as Piccadilly: the lower part of these I should have called shops, if it had not been that, as far as I could see, the people were ignorant of the arts of buying and selling. Wares were displayed in their finely designed fronts. . . . On each side of the street ran an elegant arcade to protect foot-passengers, as in some of the old Italian cities. . . .

Said Dick: "Here, you see, is another market on a different plan from most others: the upper stories of these houses are used for guest-houses; for people from all about the country are apt to drift up hither from time to time, as folk are very thick upon the ground, which you will see evidence of presently, and there are people who are fond of crowds, though I can't say that I am."

I couldn't help smiling to see how long a tradition would last. Here was the ghost of London still asserting itself as a centre—an intellectual centre for aught I knew. (213)

Morris—who derived most of his actual income in middle-age from the production and sale of elegantly designed furniture and interior decorations—obviously wished to eradicate, or at least mitigate, the ill-effects of money and commercial exploitation. But he was hardly insensible to the pleasures of variety and individual [page 14] choice. Other contemporary projections had also tried to accommodate such desires in different but possibly complementary ways. The more technologically-minded William Thomson, for example, had envisioned in his Prospectus a socialist community without banks or stores, whose citizens were served conveniently by an elaborate catalogue order system.

In any event, Morris's utopian London also provided a good deal of architectural variety, from cottages and houses to large public buildings. At one extreme are the bucolic dwellings of *Nowhere's* Hammersmith:

There were houses about, some on the road, some amongst the fields, with pleasant lanes leading down to them, and each surrounded by a teeming garden. They were all pretty in design, and as solid as might be, but countrified in appearance, like yeomen's dwellings; some of them of red brick like those by the river, but more of timber and plaster. (202)

At the other, of course, are Morris's British Museum, National Gallery, and Piccadilly Circus.

But how many larger communal buildings of the latter sort should utopian-socialist societies build or preserve? Other socialist town planners had already commented on the extra expense, labour, and danger created by multiple passageways, fireplaces, kitchens, gardens, and so on, but even so, most utopian designers favoured Morris's preferred model of smallish but comfortable private cottages.

In *Nowhere*, Guest enjoys several meals hospitably served in counterparts of tribal folk-halls and nineteenth-century phalangsteries and communes, but the housing and domestic arrangements are noticeably traditional (almost all servers of food are women, for example). Old Hammond, Morris's principal spokesperson for the new society, is well aware of nineteenth-century socialist plans for communal dwellings, but he defends the prevalence of household-sized units as follows:

"Phalangsteries, eh?" said he. "Well, we live as we like, and we like to live as a rule with certain house-mates that we have got used to. Remember, again, that poverty is extinct, and that the Fourierist phalangsteries and all their kind, as was but natural at the time, implied nothing but a refuge from mere destitution. Such a way of life as that could only have been conceived of by people surrounded by the worst form of poverty. But you must understand therewith, that though separate households are the rule amongst us, and though they differ in their habits more or less, yet no door is shut to any good-tempered person who is content to live as the other house-mates do." (247)

Several concrete nineteenth-century prototypes existed for the more or less benignly balanced industrial, farm, and craft societies envisioned by socialist planners. These included factory-communities such as George Cadbury's quasi-pastoral Bourneville (Marsh, ch. 14), and Morris and Company's Merton Abbey [page 15] "works," which the Firm had established in 1881 on the River Wandle. Kropotkin and other contemporary planners believed that newer sources of power could permit redispersion of industrial work once again from large factories to outlying areas or homes, and Morris observes of *Nowhere's* miniature "workshops" that

“We don’t call them factories now, [Dick remarks] but Banded-workshops; that is, places where people collect who want to work together.”

“I suppose,” said I, “power of some sort is used there?”

“No, no,” said he. “Why should people collect together to use power, when they can have it at the places where they live, or hard by, any two or three of them; or any one, for the matter of that? No; folk collect in these Banded-workshops to do hand-work in which working together is necessary or convenient; such work is often very pleasant. In there, for instance, they make pottery and glass—there, you can see the tops of the furnaces.

I see no smoke coming from the furnaces,” said I.

“Smoke?” said Dick; “why should you see smoke?” (227)

Most readers of *News from Nowhere* have sensed that the effortless minimalism and self-sufficiency of its pastoral utopia reflect forms of economic equilibrium possible only with exquisitely nuanced cooperative planning, if at all. Morris provided no such prescriptive or managerial scaffolding, but the very *fluidity* of Morris’s ideal order—in which Nowhereans move from harvesting to road maintenance to shop-keeping or the entertaining of guests—was an ardent *desideratum* for Kropotkin and other contemporary socialist and social-reformist planners. Intentionally or not, Morris sketched and ‘applied’ several hypotheses placed in contemporary circulation by Kropotkin’s expositions of village economics and the proposals of other *fin de siècle* city and social planners, and background awareness of such expositions helped his audience “see it” as Morris hoped they would.

### **Howard’s Garden City**

Ebenezer Howard, a lifelong promoter of the notion of a “garden city,” first published his quasi-Fabian views in *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* several years after the appearance of Morris’s anarcho-socialist *News* and the co-authored *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome*. In this work and its successor, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, Howard struggled to realize some mixture of dispersal and cohesion, planned cooperation, and open-ended flexibility along gradualist, social-democratic lines. *To-morrow* did not address the deeper social issues and controversies considered in *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, *News from Nowhere*, or *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome*, but offered many pragmatic as well as theoretical counsels in service to its more concrete reformist goals.

Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928), the youngest of three children of a farmer’s daughter and London confectioner, left England at nineteen to travel and work for [page 16] ten years in the United States. After he returned to London, he earned his living as a stenographic recorder of Parliamentary debates, but his years in the social and geographic spaces of North America seem to have fostered

his distaste for cramped physical environments, [2] and confirmed his apostasy from the sectarian Protestantism in which he was raised (his “garden city” plans explicitly provided equal access to municipal land for all religious and educational groups). While in the U. S. he attended lectures by the Christian Scientist Cora Richmond, who suggested that he should turn his attention from mechanical inventions to social reform: “I see you in the centre of a series of circles working at something which will be of great service to humanity” (qtd. in Macfadyen, 11).

Howard continued his efforts as an amateur inventor in England all the same—he suggested improvements, for example, in the Remington typewriter—and he later returned at least once to the U. S. to promote one of his inventions. In 1879, he married Elizabeth Bills, and the two became vigorous fellow-advocates of “garden cities.” Their four children later remembered Elizabeth Howard’s cheerful practicality, as well as both parents’ unceasing zeal for new projects and amiable indifference to material concerns.

Inspired in part by the co-operative principles of Edward Bellamy’s 1889 *Looking Backward*, Howard began in the 1890s to imagine alternatives to Bellamy’s collective farms and industries, and promoted his town planning ideas among acquaintances on the London County Council and elsewhere. In 1898, an American friend George Dickman offered him £50 to develop these ideas in book form, and at forty-eight Howard set about to dictate the manuscript of *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* to his daughter. Knighted in 1927, he devoted the remaining thirty years of his long life to advocacy of his theories, and the establishment of the fledgling “garden cities” Letchworth and Welwyn.

By temperament, therefore, Howard was as much a reformer and secular preacher as he was an inventor, and his concise exposition in *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (the title of its revised edition, by which the book is now generally known) included careful diagrams and lovingly detailed calculations that helped him persuade his contemporaries. He oversaw the founding of the Garden City Association in 1899, and its agenda attracted several members of the Land Nationalisation Society, as well as a wide variety of “members of the London County Council, (Moderate and Progressive) Socialists and Individualists, Radicals and Conservatives” (Howard, *Garden Cities*, 165). By 1902, the organization’s 1300 members included H. G. Wells and “Madame Sarah Grand.” The GCA worked immediately to found a city on Howard’s principles, and purchased in 1903 in area of nearly four thousand acres whose separate parcels in Hertfordshire included the Letchworth estate which gave its name to the first “garden city.”

Contemporaries described Howard as personally selfless and more than willing for others to take public credit for things he had done. He also left most matters of administration to others, and worked principally as a publicist for his movement. [page 17] Rather to the surprise of some of Howard’s critics, Letchworth’s promoters quickly attracted a variety of crafts and industries—bookbinding, printing, the Icen Pottery, the St. Edmundsbury Weaving Works, motor car manufacturers, and a corset-company—and this first town (and later its

younger sister Welwyn) proved economically self-sustaining and socially coherent in all the ways Howard had predicted.

Letchworth's rents remained low, in fact, and its municipal services good. Its citizens were among the healthiest in Great Britain (Osborn, 13), and its cultural and philanthropic endeavours flourished. The latter included, among others, a library, a museum, progressive schools, sports clubs, "new life Cloisters," and a health care association. Indeed, Letchworth became a centre for such "new life" interests and also for scandalously informal (i.e., comfortable) clothing, vegetarianism, and abstinence—the town voted to grant a pub-license only to the non-alcoholic Skittles Inn (Marsh). In keeping with its name, the "garden city" also overflowed with flowers and vegetables, and its activities included garden-exhibitions and flower shows.

A few visitors complained that Letchworth's many gardens made its dwellings too dispersed, and Howard tried to redress this 'oversight' in his design for Welwyn. He also chose its site somewhat nearer London, as a model for how the government might respond to the postwar London housing shortage, which he hoped might be remedied with a hundred or more such towns (Evans, 13). Shortly after Howard's death in 1928, like-minded planners developed Wythenshawe, an outlying district of Manchester.

Howard always maintained that his principal aim was not to create self-contained suburban idylls, but to foster feasible modes of regional planning that would benefit middle-class and poor alike. But critics of Letchworth pointed out that only forty per cent of Letchworth's inhabitants were working class, and its unrepresentatively abstinent, vegetarian, and (mostly) middle-class population imposed disproportionately light burdens on the town's services (Evans, 10). This criticism was accurate, but Howard could respond that the proportion of working-class people in Letchworth remained much higher than in other, comparably comfortable towns.

Truly revolutionary changes would have required, of course (and would still require), creation of more than the "hundred Letchworths" Howard sought—as Morris would have been quick to observe. Nevertheless, development of these towns accomplished much social good on a modest human scale. In Dugald Macfadyen's *Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Town Planning Movement*, for example, Bill Furnston, a factory worker from London and bartender of Letchworth's 'pub,' who raised with his wife eight children in the new town, reviewed the effects of the move on his own life:

Thirty years ago I was in a London factory, artificial light most of the time, and wife in rooms with children. It worried me what would happen if I got out of work. We [page 18] determined to emigrate; went on the Ruapehu, a new Zealand ship, saw the accommodation and were preparing to go. Got stock of clothes, needles and cottons, tools, woodman's axe, and what we thought might be wanted. Then came the Garden City movement, and instead of leaving all friends and relatives, we built a cottage here for 300 pounds, and rented 2 and a quarter acres of land. . . . The result is that on this ground some three thousand pounds

[derived from the orchard) have been spent in wages in 25 years, and one thousand pounds in seeds, manure, ground rent. . . . greenhouse, bees, ducks, fowls, trees, plants, bushes, stringbaskets, and all kinds of things, nearly all of which has been got back in produce.

I can't sing . . . but have been able to show how to bring a family of eight children up, and keep a bit of old England cultivated as it should be.

We can hear the blackbird, thrush and cuckoo, gather a cherry or a strawberry, apple or nut, blackberry or flower and say to the flying motorists scurrying past on the Hitchin-Cambridge road, "You are going nowhere better." (107)

The GPA continued to campaign for town planning through the depression, when national and London committees, headed by Neville Chamberlain and Raymond Unwin (the first, of course, was a Conservative Prime Minister, and the second, a GPA architect, co-designer of Letchworth, and a former member of the Socialist League), drafted government guidelines for the establishment of more "new towns." [3] The new postwar Labour Government approved and implemented a New Towns Act in 1946, and subsequent Labour and Conservative administrations supported the establishment of thirty-four such "new towns" in all. Reprinted many times, *Garden Cities* itself also became a handbook of city planning, and many visitors travelled to Letchworth and other new towns to observe Howard's ideas in operation. Howard's intention "that there should be unity of design and purpose—that the town should be planned as a whole" (51) remains now the ground-aspiration of its field, though it has been distorted by economic pressures and political compromises of every conceivable kind.

What were some of Howard's more notable arguments in his original treatise? Among other things, he pointed out that the problems of rural districts—depopulation and lack of social and economic opportunity—naturally complemented those of large cities—great expense, low wages, and overcrowding. If one started anew in carefully planned but limited ways, one might be able to neutralize these problems in relatively small but loosely confederated and spaciouly laid-out towns, whose inhabitants would then benefit both from the natural advantages otherwise available only in the countryside, and from the social advantages 'normally' associated with larger cities.

Howard buttressed his assertions with some persuasive economic data and projections. Suppose, for example, that farmers didn't have to export their milk to distant cities, for example, but could sell it directly within "Garden City." Then,

assuming each person in the town consumed only one-third of a pint a day. . . . 30,000 would consume 1,250 gallons a day, and might thus save, taking railway charges at a [page 19] penny per gallon, upwards of nineteen hundred pounds per annum in railway rates upon the one item of milk, a saving which must be multiplied by a large figure in order to

realise the general saving to be effected by placing consumer and producer in such close association. (32)

In another passage, he contrasted the cost of land to the turn-of-the-century London School Board with the cost he projected for his Garden City—and asked a deceptively “simple” question:

Can children be better taught where land cost 9,500 pounds an acre than where it costs 40 pounds? Whatever may be the real economic value of the London site, for other purposes . . . for school purposes, wherein lies the advantage that the sites on which its schools are built are frequently surrounded by dingy factories or crowded courts and alleys? (48)

Readers temperamentally unattracted to “radical” arguments—Neville Chamberlain, for example—may well have been won over by such argument-bites of reformist sweet reason.

Howard, in any case, was clearly influenced by proponents of common ownership of civic land when he advocated that we “adopt the expedient . . . of securing that the *landowners* [who will gain] by a project specially designed to benefit a class now low down in the social scale, shall be those very people themselves” (51). Such land might be more readily obtained, he suggested, by group purchase and management, rather than by force, expropriation, or radical political action. In the process, such concerted action might also obtain for ordinary citizens the monetary advantages usually reaped by land speculators, who bought agricultural land cheap and sold it dear when anticipated “development” increased its value.

“Garden City” leases were therefore to be semi-permanent, so that residents would have secure tenancy. In the case of termination or transfer, tenants would be entitled to compensation for unused improvements on the land—an obvious gesture toward fairness, but also an incentive to discourage construction calculated to deteriorate at lease’s end. The town itself would retain ownership of all property, and all inhabitants would therefore benefit equally from the town’s increased collective value, including the value of civic improvements. Low initial land-cost would enable the town to charge very low rents, yet repay the initial purchase-loan over thirty years, a short period by contemporary standards. Residents’ “rate-rents” [North American “property taxes”] would cover municipal services, such as electricity or sewage. Residents of London, Howard pointed out, paid heavy interest-rates on bonds for city improvements that could be undertaken without additional cost in his projected garden city, on already owned public land.

## [page 20] **Demographical. Details and Open Questions**

The question which confronts all utopians still remains: how can all this begin, on a scale large enough to matter? The early-nineteenth-century Irish Cooperator William Thompson, as I mentioned earlier, suggested that an initial

base of capital might come from contributions by co-operative societies and individual sponsors, but he also gave much of his personal fortune to his tenants while he lived, and bequeathed most of the rest to found a co-operative community.[4] In a way, then, purchasers of shares in Howard's "garden city" were acting as Thompsonian "sponsors." Alternately, the later-century Thomson suggested in his Prospectus that cooperative stores might set aside a percentage of their profits for building "communal palaces."

In *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* and *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin did not suggest in detail how the new towns and forms of social organization he advocated might arise. In *Nowhere*, Morris hoped that the "Change" would finally come when bands of ordinary people—some of them women—began to resist the predations of police and government and form self-governing committees in a largely non-violent blend of self-defense and mutualist self-determination.

Howard's GPA, by contrast, was a 'respectable' joint-stock company, organized to achieve mutualist quasi-socialist ends. Some of its more affluent members were also moved to invest a thousand pounds each at four per cent, a low rate by contemporary standards, so that such investment was really a kind of contribution, secured by the town's property. In *Garden Cities of To-morrow* Howard commented wryly on the ambivalence of such reformist investments (compare the prospectus-rationale for contemporary North-American "social conscience" funds):

I do not forget that, though its points of novelty are the very elements which really *make* it secure, they may not make it *seem* so, and that those who are merely looking out for an investment may eye it with some distrust because of its novelty. We shall have in the first instance to look to those who will advance money with somewhat mixed motives—public spirit, love of enterprise, and possibly as to some persons, with a lurking belief that they *will* be able to dispose of their debentures at a premium, as they probably will. Therefore, I put down 4 and a half per cent., but if anyone's conscience prick him he may tender at 2 or 2 and a half, or may even advance money without interest.

Ultimately, of course, the scheme's success depended on coordinated purchase of its land sites, for prospective sellers who realized that their buyer(s) wished to establish a model town might well hold out for higher prices.

According to *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, city affairs could also be conducted at moderate expense, once the original land purchase was made, and even more economically when the initial debt was repaid. New residents could move to the [page 21] new site within a relatively short time and development would be rapid, so the debt would be repaid in timely fashion as land and commercial values rose. A certain genuine social-democratic ardour also shone from time to time through Howard's predictions—in his remark, for example, that "the whole scheme will in the long run make such [nationally mandated poor relief] unnecessary, as Garden City will provide, at all events from the time when the estate has been fully paid for, pensions for all its needy old citizens" (64).

Howard also remarked in *Garden Cities* that the generic garden city be built on the inner 1,000 acres of a 6,000 acre territory (the size of Kropotkin's basic peasant-cooperative). Five and a half acres of garden at the centre would be surrounded by public buildings, and large boulevards would divide the town as a whole into smaller neighbourhoods. The central part and public buildings would also be surrounded by 145 acres of public park, at whose perimeter the builders would site a "Crystal Palace," or partially open "arcade" area for exhibition and recreation. Like most other *fin de siècle* planners, Howard considered such arcades especially desirable:

This building is in wet weather one of the favourite resorts of the people, whilst the knowledge that its bright shelter is ever close at hand tempts people into Central Park, even in the most doubtful of weathers. Here manufactured goods are exposed for sale, and here most of that class of shopping which requires the joy of deliberation and selection is done. . . . Its circular form brings it near to every dweller in the town. (23)

The town's residential houses would be outside this small central ring. "The fullest measure of individual taste and preference" would be encouraged, and homes might therefore be constructed and arranged in various ways, some with common gardens, and some with co-operative kitchens. All residents would have a short distance to traverse from home to school and work, and all would have gardens, including an extra one at the town-perimeter if desired. Howard's original plan also provided for a "Grand Avenue"—not a road, but green areas which would divide the residential district into concentric rings, rimmed by an outer park-like perimeter (fig. 3). Later disciples quietly set aside this aspect of the original plan. Just outside the town's periphery, in any case, would be factories, timber yards, and markets served by a railway line, which would branch to encircle the town. Use of the cleanest known forms of energy would minimize expense as well as pollution, and "all machinery [would be] driven by electric energy, [so that] the cost of electricity for lighting and other purposes [would be] greatly reduced" (25). An "agricultural belt," finally, would ring the town, furnish its crop-yields to it, and take its supplies and manufactured goods from it.

Howard summarized the overall plan as follows:

This fortunately-placed community obtains . . . ample space for roads, some of which are of truly magnificent proportions, so wide and spacious that sunlight and air may freely [page 22] circulate, and in which trees, shrubs, and grass give to the town a semi-rural appearance. It also obtains ample sites for town-hall, public library, museum and picture-gallery, theatre, concert-hall, hospital, schools, churches, swimming baths, public markets, etc. It also secures a central park of 145 acres, and a magnificent avenue 420 feet wide, extending in a circle of over three miles, unbroken save by spacious boulevards and by schools and churches, which, one may be sure, will not be the less beautiful because so little money has been expended on their sites. It secures also all the land required for a railway 4

and a quarter miles long, encompassing the town; 82 acres for warehouses, factories, markets, and a splendid site for a crystal palace devoted to shopping, and serving also as a winter garden. (39-40)

Finally, Howard devoted an entire chapter of *Garden Cities* to the “pro-municipal work” of prospective local organizations which would “represent a far higher level of public spirit and enterprise than that possessed or displayed by such communities in their collective capacity” (87), and outlined some of the tasks such organizations might undertake, with the aid of carefully calibrated ground-rents and low-interest municipal loans:

The authorities . . . can the better afford to be thus generous, as the spending power of these institutions greatly benefits the whole community. Besides, as those persons who migrate to the town are among its most energetic and resourceful members, it is but just and right that their more helpless brethren should be able to enjoy the benefits of an experiment which is designed for humanity at large. (27)

Under this category Howard included low-profit housing construction and the forming of workers’ co-operative societies and lending organizations, and he digressed at one point to make one of his favourite irenic arguments: that self-help would free resources now lost in bitter confrontation: “The true remedy for capitalist oppression where it exists, is not the strike of *no work*, but the strike of *true work*, and against this last blow the oppressor has no weapon” (90).

Many cooperative benefits in Howard’s garden community would actually flow from private organizations, to which the town authorities would grant assorted forms of tax-relief, and Howard’s city would make extensive use of its power to grant leases. Howard’s storekeepers could rent arcade-space in the ideal conditions of proximity to their customers, but they would be expected to abide by community standards for quality, variety, pricing, and—ideally—to share profits with employees: “If the example were set of profit-sharing, this might grow into a custom, and the distinction between master and servant would be gradually lost in the simple process of all becoming co-operators” (82).

Every reformer since Raphael Hythlodaye has also observed that scarcity and unemployment breed crime. *Nowhere* has no prisons, since crimes against property are (formally) impossible and violence is punished by community sanction. In his chapter on municipal administration, Howard argues more cautiously that “there will be but one landlord, and this the community, [so] it will not be difficult to [page 23] prevent the creation of those surroundings which make the intervention of the police so frequently necessary” (65).

Secondarily, Howard intended his “agricultural belt” to hold in check the inevitable tendencies toward urban sprawl:

How shall [Garden City] grow? How shall it provide for the needs of others who will be attracted by its numerous advantages? Shall it build on the zone of agricultural land which is around it, and thus for ever destroy

its right to be called a “Garden City”? Surely not. This disastrous result would indeed take place if the land around the town were, as is the land around our present cities, owned by private individuals anxious to make a profit out of it.

Like Thomas More, Howard also believed that when a given town’s population reached a threshold of about 32,000 or so, its inhabitants should “colonize” new towns in turn. A consequence of such fissiparous town-division would be the formation of a wider “social city” or aggregate of smaller towns, each surrounded by its protective ring of farm- and woodland. Howard never specified in further detail how these should be aggregated, in turn (not a trivial planning question), but did remark that an area’s component towns should be connected by railways and share any cultural and commercial benefits conferred by such aggregation.

In the last stage, as Howard envisioned it, London itself would be emptied out and reformed, and the result is a somewhat less spectacular version of the depopulation which precedes Guest’s visit in the twenty-first century:

House-property in London will fall in rental value, and fall enormously. Slum property will sink to zero, and the whole working population will move into houses of a class quite above those which they can now afford to occupy. . . . But what will become of this slum property? Its power to extort a large proportion of the hard earnings of the London poor gone for ever, will it yet remain an eye-sore and a blot, though no longer a danger to health and an outrage on decency? No. These wretched slums will be pulled down, and their sites occupied by parks, recreation grounds, and allotment gardens. . . . Nor will I think, the compulsion of any Act of Parliament be necessary to effect this result: it will probably be achieved by the voluntary action of the landowners, compelled, by a Nemesis from whom there is no escape, to make some restitution for the great injustice which they have so long committed. . . . Elsewhere the town is invading the country: here the country must invade the town. (147)

### **Conclusion: Is ‘Nowhere’ a Garden City?**

Some aspects of Howard’s benign meliorist scenario recall Morris’s socialist comedy *The Tables Turned; or, Nupkins Awakened*, as well as *News from Nowhere*, but Howard never mentions Morris’s writings in *Garden City*. He did, however, allude to John Ruskin, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Peter Kropotkin, and the eighteenth-century agrarian communist Thomas Spence, and took care to contrast [page 24] his views with those of Henry Hyndman, chief architect of the Social Democratic Federation, and Robert Blatchford, the editor of the *Clarion* and author of *Merrie England*. Perhaps Morris’s political romance seemed excessively “literary” to Howard, but it may have seemed excessively “political” as well, for he was particularly sensitive to criticisms that his projects were “utopian.”

Whatever the cross-currents of Howard's omission, it is hard, in retrospect—indeed, impossible—not to see *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* as a kind of gradualist cadaster of *News from Nowhere*, inspired in its detail-driven way with a desire kindred to Morris's more radical and historically resonant yearning to help "others . . . see it as I have seen it, [for] then may it be called a vision rather than a dream" (401).

Admittedly Morris anticipated armed conflicts in which workers battled police and government armies in "How the Change Came." But *Nowhere's* post-revolutionary voluntarism and communion with nature clearly foreshadowed the peroration of *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, in which city dwellers flock to the country, and slums sprout into gardens. Consider, for example, Hammond's description of the physical transition to the "new society":

The change . . . which in these matters took place very early in our epoch, was most strangely rapid. People flocked into the country villages, and, so to say, flung themselves upon the freed land like a wild beast upon his prey; and in a very little time the villages of England were more populous than they had been since the fourteenth century, and were still growing fast. . . . The town invaded the country; but the invaders, like the warlike invaders of early days, yielded to the influence of their surroundings, and became country people; and in their turn, as they became more numerous than the townsmen, influenced them also; so that the difference between town and country grew less and less; and it was indeed this world of the country vivified by the thought and briskness of town-bred folk which has produced that happy and leisurely but eager life of which you have had a first taste. (253-54)

One might compare this with the final quasi-Biblical cadences of Howard's optimistic work of "social engineering":

Parks and gardens, orchards and woods, are being planted in the midst of the busy life of the people, so they may be enjoyed in the fullest measure; homes are being erected for those who have long lived in slums; work is found for the workless, land for the landless, and opportunities for the expenditure of long pent-up energy are presenting themselves at every turn. A new sense of freedom and joy is pervading the hearts of the people as their individual faculties are awakened, and they discover, in a social life which permits alike of the completest concerted action and of the fullest individual liberty, the long-sought-for-means of reconciliation between order and freedom—between the well-being of the individual and of society. (141-42)

Of all of *News from Nowhere's* many yet-to-be-realized ideals—harmonious human relations; pleasure and variety of creative work; the disappearance of [page 25] "politics" as we know it—few are more 'utopian' or more poignantly essential than the need for "gardens" to live in and cultivate.

Ecological, socialist, and social democratic hopes to realize such ideals, indeed, remain elusive and evocative a century later, when seventy-story condominiums mock Thomson's "communal palaces," the car-culture has distorted Howard's "garden cities," and debasements of his "covered arcades" assault the senses of those who must work and shop in them. The mass-marketed amorality of global commerce has become entrenched in intricate ways that co-opt and confuse the efforts of the most serious and principled reformers, and more serious forms of widescale and intensifying ecological destruction may threaten life and the earth itself.

None of the writers I have considered, moreover—not even Morris—specifically anticipated the relentless pressure of population-growth, the stubbornly oppressive power of racism and ethnic animosities, the ruthless spiral of competing technologies, or the roles these militarized technologies have played as abettors of recurrent genocides. Only Morris, and to a lesser extent Kropotkin, understood the threat of worldwide environmental degradation, or the extent to which technologies that served labour, concentrated energy, and facilitated travel might destroy Morris's "beauty of the earth." Howard's trust, for example, in that beauty, and in the earth's inexhaustible capacities for self-regeneration and renewal, took touching and near-religious, but in the end naive, forms:

There is, however, one form of material wealth which is most permanent and abiding; from the value and utility of which our most wonderful inventions can never detract one jot, but will serve only to make more clear, and to render more universal. The planet on which we live has lasted for millions of years. . . . Those of us who believe that there is a grand purpose behind nature cannot believe that the career of this planet is likely to be speedily cut short now that better hopes are rising in the hearts of men. . . . The earth for all practical purposes may be regarded as abiding for ever. (122-23)

At a less cataclysmic level, moreover, *all* these reformers and revolutionaries would have been deeply appalled to witness pervasive late twentieth-century retreats from social commitments of all sorts, as ever larger percentages of the world's population crowd into megalopolises plagued by exactly the sorts of inadequate provision of sanitation, transportation, and safety they struggled to avert. They might have found almost equally disheartening the stupefying vapidness and manipulation of "popular culture," so called, its stultifying "action-films," and its endless hours of electronic soap-opera. Above all, however, they would have condemned the growing scarcity of meaningful work, decried the persistence of obscene violence and ethnic hatreds, and warned against the persistent menace of chemical, biological, and nuclear predation.

Haunted by these dystopian spectres, we can still read the writings of these revolutionaries and reformers with pleasure, and appreciate their prescience, their ingenuity, their courage, and their flashes of benign wisdom. Their complex and [page 26] carefully crafted projections bequeathed us a legacy, as we struggle in

our turn to balance city and country, caution and trust, individual and community, “freedom” and more comprehensive forms of “fellowship” and “mutual aid.”

## Notes

- [1]. Some who have discussed the resemblances between the ideas of Morris and Kropotkin include James Hulse, *Revolutionists in London* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970); Florence and William Boos, “Utopian Communism of William Morris,” *Journal of Political Thought*, 7 (Winter 1986), 489-510; and Lyman Tower Sargent, “William Morris and the Anarchist Tradition,” in *Socialism and the Literary Artistry of William Morris*, ed. Florence S. Boos and Carole Silver (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1990), 61-73.
- [2]. Howard remarks that he had participated in two small unsuccessful social experiments (Macfadyen, 21), and *Garden Cities of To-morrow* criticizes “a most interesting experiment in Topolobampo,” described in A. K. Owen’s *Integral Cooperation at Work* (New York: U.S. Book Co., n. d.).
- [3]. In *Raymond Unwin* Mervyn Miller examines Unwin’s lifelong and influential efforts to publicize, adapt, and implement the ideas of Morris, Ebenezer Howard, and others in Europe and North America, where he served as an advisor during F. D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal.”
- [4]. After Thompson’s death, however, lawsuits brought by jealous relatives and would-be-heirs drained away much of his bequest (Pankhurst, *William Thompson*).

## Works Cited

- Evans, Hazel, ed. *New Towns: The British Experience*. New York: John Wiley, 1970.
- Howard, Ebenezer. *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1902.
- . *To-morrow. A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. London, 1898.
- Kropotkin, Peter. *Fields, Factories, and Workshops, or, Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Manual Work*. 1898. Revised 1913. Rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968.
- Macfadyen, Dugald. *Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Town Planning Movement*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970.
- Marsh, Jan. *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in Victorian England from 1880 to 1914*. London: Quartet, 1982.
- Miller, Mervyn. *Raymond Unwin: Garden Cities and Town Planning*. Leicester: Leicester UP, 1992.
- Morris, William. *News from Nowhere in Three Works by William Morris*. Ed. A. L. Morton. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968.
- . “The Society of the Future.” In *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*. Ed. May Morris. Oxford: Blackwells, 1936.
- . *The Tables Turned; or, Nupkins Awakened*. 1887. Rpt. Ed. Pamela Bracken Wiens. Athens: Ohio UP, 1994.
- and E. Belfort Bax. *Socialism: Its Growth & Outcome*. London: Sonnenschein, 1893.
- Osborn, F. J. Preface to *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. Rpt. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965.
- Pankhurst, R. K. P. *William Thompson, 1775-1833: Pioneer Socialist*. London: Pluto, 1991.
- Thompson, William. *Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities on the Principles of Mutual Co-operation, United Possessions and Equality of Exertions and of the Means of Enjoyments*. London: British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, 1830.
- Thomson, William. *A Prospectus of Socialism*. London: Reeves, 1894.

## [page 27] Illustrations

Fig. 1. Ebenezer Howard, *The Three Magnets. No. 1*, 1902, in *Garden Cities of To-morrow*.

Fig. 2. Ebenezer Howard, *Garden-City. No. 2*, 1902, in *Garden Cities of To-morrow*.

Fig. 3. Ebenezer Howard, *Garden-City. Grand Avenue*, 1902, in *Garden Cities of To-morrow*.

The cities of Ecotopia 2121 are presented in the form of "scenario art", which involves a review of both global and local environmental challenges as well as their unique histories and cultures. This allows for a diversity of future scenarios rather than one common vision of the "future city". What you will see below are a series of artworks, but this is not an art project.