

The Aristophanes of Hammersmith: William Morris as Playwright

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It is widely acknowledged that William Morris was one of the most talented polymaths ever to come out of England, and that his abilities as artist, poet, political essayist, designer and printer are beyond question. Few, however, would make claims for Morris as a playwright. This is partly because his dislike of Victorian theatregoers, and the plays on offer to them is so well-documented, in articles such as the one Morris wrote for *To-day* in 1884.¹

May Morris also stated that: 'As a form of art my father disliked the modern play, as an amusement it bored him almost (sometimes quite) to swearing point, and modern acting, with its appeal to the emotions, its elaborate realism and character-study, was intolerable'.² Morris's attitude to Shakespeare was also surprisingly ambivalent, for although he included him in his list of Best Hundred Books, or Bibles,³ he clearly felt that the plays were better suited to being read than being staged. Ever the mediaevalist, Morris had, according to his daughter May, a 'dislike for the plays as formalized since Shakespeare's time'.⁴ For all this, Morris experimented with dramatic forms on numerous occasions throughout his career. It has been argued that, aside from *The Tables Turned; or Nupkins Awakened* (1887), the long poem *Love is Enough* (1873), and also four poems in *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858) are also experimental dramas in their own right. In addition, as explored below, all of these texts owe something to the main types of theatrical entertainment staged during the Middle Ages; the Mystery and Morality plays.

One of the essential differences between these two kinds of mediaeval drama concerns the types of character they employ; the Mysteries, being based on episodes from the Old and New Testaments, draw upon biblical figures, while the Moralities employ allegorical ones. Overall, however, their ultimate purpose is the same; to offer a combination of entertainment and moral instruction to their audiences. Indeed, this twofold function lies at the heart of a great deal of medi-

aeval art. In *The General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales*, for example, Chaucer's Host, Harry Bailley, asserts that the best stories are those which contain the 'best sentence and moost solaas' ('pleasing instruction', in other words).⁵ Indeed, Morris's plea to his contemporaries to 'Have nothing in your homes that you do not know to be useful and believe to be beautiful' owes much to Chaucer, as does his stance on didactic literature, a topic explored below.

The average nineteenth-century play-goer, however, would have known next to nothing about the distinctive characteristics of Mysteries or Moralities, for these were not staged in Victorian Britain. According to William Antony Shepherd, this was because: 'By the end of the sixteenth century, in the wake of the Reformation, the performance of mystery plays had been suppressed in England and would remain so until the mid-twentieth century'. He continues: 'Victorian sensibilities had been firmly opposed to the portrayal of religious themes on stage, and nineteenth-century British theatrical censorship strictly reflected this outlook'.⁶ Catherine Barnes Stevenson is rather presumptuous, therefore, in suggesting that Morris and Burne-Jones 'might have seen a mystery play in performance' as undergraduates. Indeed, such a performance is unlikely to have occurred, owing to a then ban on the portrayal of biblical subjects on the stage. It is not surprising, therefore, that extant records for Oxford 'do not list any college or University performances during those years'.⁷ And yet, as we shall see, Morris possessed a sound knowledge of the mediaeval theatrical tradition. The question to ask, then, is where did this knowledge come from?

Stevenson is of help here, for she informs us that Morris would have had access to scholarly editions of some of these plays:

Printed versions of [mystery] plays were available to him, however, from at least two sources, both of which are owned by the Bodleian Library, where we know that he and Burne-Jones read Chaucer and studied the illuminated manuscripts (...). In 1825 Thomas Sharp had published a detailed and beautifully illustrated study of medieval dramatic practice at Coventry entitled *A Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries Anciently Performed at Coventry by Trading Companies of that City*. In addition to precise information about the material circumstances of medieval drama gleaned from a study of the records of the guilds that produced the plays, Sharp also printed the complete text of the 'Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors Company'. In addition, William Marriott's *A Collection of English Miracle-Plays or Mysteries* (1838) made available ten dramas from the Chester, Coventry, series, including two of the *Ludus Coventriae* ('Joseph's Jealousy' and the 'Trial of Mary and Joseph') which he wrongly attributes to the Coventry cycle.⁸

It also seems likely that Morris discussed this material with his contemporaries. George Bernard Shaw, for example, tells us that Morris 'used to quote with great

relish as his idea of a good bit of comedy [...] lines of those scenes in the Towneley mysteries between the “shepherds abiding in the field”⁹

Before examining *The Tables Turned*, however, some mention should be made of critics who argue that Morris was already experimenting with dramatic forms before 1887. Stevenson and Hale, for example, believe that “‘Sir Galahad’ and the poems which immediately precede it and follow it in the *Defence of Guenevere* comprise a kind of nascent mystery cycle based on episodes in Malory’. Their theory is based partly upon the fact that ‘Like these dramas, Morris’[s] “‘Sir Galahad’ opens with a complaint’, as well as the observation that ‘Like the medieval mystery cycle, ... “‘Sir Galahad’ accords a central place to the mystery of the Eucharist’. Most significant of all, however, they note that: ‘Although the first two thirds of the poem are enriched monologue, in the middle of line 153 it shifts into the present tense (‘the bell comes near’) and blossoms into a full-scale drama, complete with stage directions, four saintly ladies, and three characters from the *Morte D’Arthur*’.¹⁰

Morris’s inclusion of stage directions in ‘Sir Galahad, a Christmas Mystery’ is indeed interesting, and merits further discussion. The directions read as follows:

*Enter Two Angels in white, with scarlet wings; also,
Four Ladies in gowns of red and green; also an Angel,
Bearing in his hands a surcoat of white, with a red cross.*¹¹

The Angels appear costumed in the manner of those in mediaeval drama, although the scarlet wings give pause for thought. Morris may wish us to think of these figures as Seraphim (those angels believed to be closest to God), for they are associated with the colour red. The colour symbolism may also be allegorical, as is often the case in the staging of Morality plays. In addition, when one of the Angels commands Galahad to

Rise and be arm’d: the Sangreal is gone forth
Through the great forest, and you must be had
Unto the sea that lieth on the north:¹²

one is immediately reminded of the scene in *The Wakefield Second Shepherds’ Pageant*, where something similar occurs. In this Mystery play, from the Towneley cycle alluded to by Shaw above, an Angel appears to the three shepherds and bids that they journey to Bethlehem in order to pay homage to the new-born Christ:

Rise, herdsmen gentle, attend ye, for now is he born
From the fiend that shall rend what Adam had lorn,
That warlock to shend, this night is he born,

God is made your friend now on this morn.
 Lo! thus doth he command –
 Go to Bethlehem, see
 Where he lieth so free[.]¹³

This pilgrimage leads to the shepherds' salvation, thus concluding the pageant on a celebratory note. The ending of 'Sir Galahad' is very different in tone, however, as Sir Bors returns from his adventures bringing 'nought good' news from the court:

Poor merry Dinadan, that with jape and scoff
 Kept is all merry, in a little wood
 Was fond all hack'd and dead: Sir Lionel
 And Gawaine have come back from the great quest,
 Just merely shamed; and Lauvaine, who loved well
 Your father Launcelot, at the king's behest

Went out to seek him, but was almost slain,
 Perhaps is dead now; everywhere
 The knights come foil'd from the great quest, in vain;
 In vain they struggle for the vision fair.¹⁴

Unlike the journey of the Wakefield shepherds, the quest for the Grail is far from complete. Such lack of proper closure in 'Sir Galahad' is due to a number of factors, but most especially to Morris's fidelity to his Arthurian source, as well as his refusal to reiterate the Christian certainties at the very heart of the mediaeval Mystery cycles.

It has further been argued that *Love is Enough* is also heavily influenced by mediaeval drama, although in this instance Morris was channelling the Moralities as opposed to the Mysteries: the reliance on this genre is made explicit in the Argument to the poem, which reads:

This story, which is told by way of a morality set before an
 Emperor and Empress newly wedded, showeth of a King whom
 nothing but Love might satisfy, who left all to seek Love, and,
 having found it, found this also, that he had enough, though he
 lacked all else.¹⁵

Interestingly, Morris's use of what we might call a 'theatrical spoiler', where the outcome of the drama is given away before the piece even begins, may be influenced by the preface to *Everyman* which functions in an identical way:

Here beginneth a treatise how the high father of heaven sendeth
 Death to summon every creature to come and give account of their
 lives in this world, and is in manner of a moral play.¹⁶

In addition, the genre of both *Love is Enough* and *Everyman* is established in these prefatory remarks; the former being defined as ‘a morality’ and the latter ‘in manner of a moral play’.

Karen Herbert also addresses the mediaeval influence on Morris’s poem:

From the morality tradition, Morris adapts the central allegorical figure who presents and interprets events, the undramatic debate form, and the motif of the soul’s pilgrimage through life. Common to both the morality and the masque is their retarded progression (...) The lack of distinction between the actors’ space and that of the audience is another characteristic shared by the morality, the masque, and Morris’s poetic drama.¹⁷

Though Herbert’s analysis of the Morality genre is largely accurate, the question remains as to how Morris would have known about drama of this type. The most obvious answer, of course, is that he again had access to scholarly editions of this material. In 1773, for example, Thomas Hawkins, Samuel Leacroft and Daniel Prince had published *The origin of the English drama: illustrated in its various species, viz. mystery, morality, tragedy and comedy, by specimens from our earliest writers*, and the volume contains two Morality plays: *Everyman*, and *Hickscorner*. The Bodleian Library holds a copy of this book, and there is, then, every likelihood that Morris had read this volume during his undergraduate days. Morris’s own contemporaries were not slow to spot the connections between *Love is Enough* and earlier English drama either. To Rossetti, the poem seemed ‘a sort of [court] masque’,¹⁸ a point on which Herbert elaborates in the following manner:

From the masque, Morris takes the musical interludes and the celebration of a ruler’s love for his ‘queen’ and his people; however, the various perspectives dramatized in the frame section and in the layers of the work as a whole widen the masque’s traditional focus on the monarch, the most important spectator, to include the audience as a whole.¹⁹

With its indebtedness to various forms of early drama, and its overall theatrical style, it should perhaps come as no surprise that *Love is Enough* was actually staged during the early twentieth century by William Poel (1894–1905), the founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society. Poel, a Fabian Socialist and disciple of Morris, possessed strong ties to the Pre-Raphaelites (as a child he is alleged to have sat for Holman Hunt for the painting *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*), an association best summarised by Robert Shaughnessy:

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s Poel's project can be readily aligned with those of Ruskin and William Morris, whom he described as 'that apostle of radicalism'; his Elizabethanism extended the concerns of the Arts and Crafts movement, and the Gothic Revival. In the spirit of his utopian mentors, Poel revived early modern forms of theatrical production in order to attempt to retrieve an unalienated mode of social existence, wherein everyday life, work and culture could become organically integrated; following the lead of the Pre-Raphaelites, whose commitment to 'truth to nature' Ruskin championed, Poel promoted a medievalised, vibrantly colourful, stylised-realist art as a way of restoring a lost wholeness of life to an increasingly mechanised industrial society. For Poel, to revolutionise the Shakespearean theatre was a step towards changing the world.²⁰

In July 1919, at the Ethical Church in Bayswater, this Pre-Raphaelite of the theatre staged *Love is Enough* 'coupled with an arrangement of scenes from *Henry VI* called *The Wars of the Roses*'.²¹ Though the precise details of this production may well be lost, it is hoped that further research will yield more information regarding this highly intriguing subject.

There is, however, one performance of a fully-fledged play by Morris about which we do know quite a lot. Shaw describes this piece as 'a topical extravaganza, entitled [*The Tables Turned, or*] Nupkins Awakened the chief "character parts" being Sir Peter Edlin, Tennyson, and an imaginary Archbishop of Canterbury'.²² Further information is provided by Fiona MacCarthy:

This political mini-farce was first performed in the Socialist League hall in Farringdon Road on 15 November 1887 to raise funds for *Commonweal*, and it marked William Morris's *début* not only as a playwright but as an actor. He stepped into the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury offered to, but refused by, Walter Crane [...] Shaw, who watched his performance with a critical eye, noted that he had not troubled with stage make-up, insisting that all that was required for stage illusion was a distinctive symbol for the character: the twentieth-century modernist view. 'A pair of clerical bands and black stockings proclaimed the archbishop: the rest he did by obliterating his humour and intelligence, and presenting his own person to the audience like a lantern with the light blown out, with a dull absorption in his own dignity which several minutes of the wildest screaming laughter at him when he entered could not disturb'.²³

Several points from the above quotation merit further comment. First, it should be clear from everything argued thus far, that *The Tables Turned* does not strictly mark Morris's 'début' as a playwright. It should also be noted that the belief that 'all that was required for stage illusion was a distinctive symbol for the character' is not originally a 'modernist view'; rather, it is one which we see already operating in the mediaeval Morality plays, where symbolic colours, masking and props

were often used. In turn, one is also reminded of what Sir Walter Scott, that most influential of neo-mediaevalists, wrote, along similar lines: ‘Everything beyond correct costume and theatrical decorum [is foreign to the] legitimate purposes of the drama’.²⁴

Mention has already been made of the relationship between *The Tables Turned* and morality plays of the Middle Ages. Fiona MacCarthy, again, for instance, defines Morris’s ‘socialist interlude’ as ‘a topical extravaganza with resemblances both to the medieval Morality play and the zany political satire that flourished in Britain in the 1960s’.²⁵ She does not, however, go on to explain the exact nature of this resemblance. As a consequence, a more extensive comparative analysis will be provided here.

To begin, morality plays are noted for their use of allegorical characters. The *Dramatis Personæ* for *Everyman*, for example, is as follows:

Everyman-----	Strength
God: Adonai-----	Discretion
Death-----	Five-Wits
Messenger-----	Beauty
Fellowship-----	Knowledge
Cousin-----	Confession
Kindred-----	Angel
Goods-----	Doctor
Good-Deeds	

In comparison, the cast of *The Tables Turned* reads:

Usher
 Clerk of the Court
 Mr. Hungary, Q.C.
 Mr. La-di-da
 Mr. Justice Nupkins
 Sergeant Sticktoit
 Constable Potlegoff
 A Voice
 Mary Pinch
 John/Jack Freeman
 Archbishop of Canterbury
 Lord Tennyson
 Prof. Tyndall (1820-93)
 William Joyce
 1st, 2nd & 3rd Neighbour

Upon close examination of this list, it becomes clear that most of Morris's characters, like those in *Everyman*, function allegorically, in that their very names are representative of the figures' function and meaning. Mr. La-di-da for example (a name which would not be out of place in Restoration comedy), is, unsurprisingly, a refined gentleman who, because he is upper class, is given special treatment by the law even though he is guilty of embezzling from his friends and relatives. As Mr. Justice Nupkins (the onomatopoeia of whose surname suggests his ineptitude) explains to La-di-da:

[...] I shall take care that you shall not be degraded by contamination with thieves and rioters, and other coarse persons, or share the diet and treatment which is no punishment to persons used to hard living; that would be to inflict a punishment on you not intended by the law, and would cast a stain on your character not easily wiped away [...] You will, therefore, be imprisoned as a first-class misdemeanant for the space of one calendar month.²⁶

The foil to La-di-da is Mary Pinch, a woman falsely accused of stealing food for her children (and originally played by May Morris):²⁷

Mr. Hungary, Q. C.: [...] I shall be able to show, gentlemen, that this woman has stolen three loaves of bread: (*impressively*) not one, gentlemen, but three.
A Voice: She's got three children, you palavering blackguard.

(pp. 35–36)²⁸

In relation to her circumstances, Mary Pinch's name is fairly easy to deconstruct. Her role as the good, devoted mother living in poverty and persecution readily reminds us of that of the Virgin Mary, and of her surname Pamela Bracken Wiens has written that: 'Mary's personal testimony reveals that her whole life is lived in a "pinch", a slang term which provided a double edge of humour, as it connoted both stealing (the accusation against poor Mary) and "to bring into difficulties or troubles, to afflict or harass" (OED)'.²⁹ Mary also, as with the Virgin, undergoes her own Assumption into Heaven in Part II of *The Tables Turned*, although her particular paradise is the *earthly* one brought about by the Revolution. When we meet her in the second half of the play, she is transformed beyond recognition and is now '*prettily dressed*' and deliriously happy: 'And how tired out with happiness I was before the day [of the Revolution] was done! Just to think that my last-born child will not know what to be poor meant; and nobody will ever be able to make him understand it'. (pp. 72–3)

Another noticeable characteristic of the *Dramatis Personae* of the play is that it includes characters representative of the Church (Archbishop of Canterbury), the Nobility (Lord Tennyson) and the Commons (Mary Pinch, Freeman *et al.*). In utilising these types, Morris seems to be drawing upon yet another genre of

mediaeval literature, the Estates Satire. According to Jill Mann, this term may be defined as ‘any literary treatments of social classes which allow or encourage a generalised application’.³⁰ It also goes without saying that *The Tables Turned* is a satire of the most biting kind. MacCarthy perceives it to be ‘almost a Victorian *Beyond the Fringe* or *That Was the Week That Was*’,³¹ while Bracken Wiens suggests that:

The Tables Turned does not satirize only the anarchist faction of the Socialist League, however. Morris’s satire is leveled at all the divisions within the current body of British socialism. The play is full of insider jokes and topical allusions [... and Morris] poke[s] fun at the eccentric personal practices of some well-recognized Fabians, among these Shaw’s avid vegetarianism, Annie Besant’s conversion to theosophy, and Sydney Webb’s rigidly mechanical economic theory. (pp. 25–6)

The main thrust of the satire is, however, against the rich and all who use their power in a malign way against those less fortunate. The post-Revolution fate of Justice Nupkins is a case in point. Now living in a world without lawyers, Nupkins must turn to farming to earn his living. As Jack Freeman gleefully explains to him:

Well, to use your own jargon, citizen, the sentence of this court is that you do take this instrument of effodiation, commonly called a spade, and that you effodiate your livelihood therewith; in other words that you dig potatoes and other roots and worts during the pleasure of this court. (p. 83)

Nupkins’s spade, aside from being the literal tool of the former Justice’s new trade, also possesses a symbolic function. This point becomes clear if we think about the use of the spade in the mediaeval Morality *Mankind*, where this tool is carried by the central character. In that play, the spade symbolises both the physical and the spiritual advantages of ‘useful’ work, while also simultaneously functioning as a *memento mori*. Spades are, after all, used for digging graves as well as potatoes.

The way in which Morris chooses to end *The Tables Turned*, with a song, is also influenced by mediaeval drama. We need only examine those ‘Towneley mysteries between the “shepherds abiding in the field” ’ which Morris loved so well in order to see the similarity. *The Wakefield Second Shepherds’ Pageant*, for example, a play as political and topical as Morris’s own, concludes with a celebratory song reflective of the shepherds’ new-found salvation in Christ:

PRIMUS PASTOR.

What grace we have found!

SECUNDUS PASTOR.

Now are we won safe and sound.

TERTIUS PASTOR.

Come forth, to sing are we bound.

Make it ring then aloft.

*[They depart singing].*³²

Interestingly, Morris does not end his play with a mediaeval song. Instead, he has the cast sing the following words to the tune of the ‘Carmagnole’:

What's this that the days and the days have done?

Man's lordship over man hath gone.

How fares it, then, with high and low?

Equal on earth, they thrive and grow.

Bright is the sun for everyone;

Dance we, dance we the Carmagnole.

How deal ye, then with pleasure and pain?

Alike we share and bear the twain.

And what's the craft whereby ye live?

Earth and man's work to all men give.

How crown ye excellence of worth?

With leaves to serve all men on earth.

What gain that lordship's past and done?

World's wealth or all and every one. (pp. 84–5)

The choice of this particular tune is convincingly explained by Bracken Wiens: ‘The “Carmagnole”, a lively song and street dance popular during the French Revolution, was obviously more appropriate to the comedic vein of *The Tables Turned* than would have been the more serious “Internationale”, another French tune, but one more often used as an inspirational hymn at socialist meetings and gatherings’.³³ Thus, both Morris and the anonymous playwright of *The Wakefield Second Shepherds' Pageant* were able, in the conclusions of their respective dramas, to strike just the right tone through their use of highly appropriate and uplifting music.

One might think that because *The Tables Turned* was not well-received Morris never wrote another play. This was not the case, however. In fact, the anonymous reviewer for *The Pall Mall Gazette* who was present at the first performance of the drama wrote a highly favourable piece under the memorable headline ‘ARISTOPHANES IN FARRINGDON ROAD: “A Socialist Interlude”, by the Author of “THE

EARTHLY PARADISE”.³⁴ Of particular relevance to our discussion here, though, is his description of the performance space in which the play was put on):

The hall of the Socialist League is, in fact, a long, narrow garret, with white washed roof and rafters, and red-ochred walls [...] The whole available width of the stage is certainly not more than fifteen feet, with a depth of perhaps eight or ten – rather a narrow cradle for a new art form.³⁵

While this may have been ‘a narrow cradle for a new art form’ it would not have been so for an *old* one, for the dimensions of the stage cited above would have been typical of the playing areas in which many mediaeval plays were performed (and the pageant wagons upon which the Mysteries were staged would probably have been even smaller). It is also interesting to note that the Moralities were acted in a variety of venues, both indoors and out, which would not have been that different from the hall of the Socialist League in which *The Tables Turned* was first produced.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate that Morris’ career as a playwright ended in 1887. W.B. Yeats however (whose own interest in mediaeval drama was such that he ‘invited a production of three plays from the Wakefield cycle to be performed at the Abbey Theatre’ in 1912), wrote to Katharine Tynan during the summer of 1888 that Morris was ‘writing another [play] – of the middle ages this time’.³⁶ It is intriguing to imagine what a Morrissean drama set in the actual mediaeval period would have been like. Perhaps Morris would have taken some inspiration from his friend Burne-Jones’s costume and set designs for Henry Irving’s 1895 production of J. Comyns Carr’s *King Arthur*. The subject was, after all, a ‘sacred land’³⁷ for them both. But that is the subject of another essay.

NOTES

1. Nicholas Salmon, ‘The Unmanageable Playgoer: Morris and the Victorian Theatre’, *Journal of the William Morris Society*, XII, No. 4 (Spring 1998), pp. 29–35. (p. 29). Afterwards Salmon.
2. As quoted by Salmon, p. 29.
3. Philip Henderson, ed, *The Letters of William Morris to his Family and Friends*, London: Longman, Green & Co., 1950, p. 246.
4. Salmon, p. 30.
5. Larry D. Benson, ed, *The Riverside Chaucer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 36.
6. William Antony Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Theater*, Los Angeles: California University Press,

- 2001, p. 118. (Afterwards Sheppard)
7. Catherine Barnes Stevenson & Virginia Hale, 'Medieval Drama and Courtly Romance in William Morris'[s] "Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery"', *Victorian Poetry*, 38, No. 3 (Fall 2000), pp. 383–391. (p. 390, n. 7) (Afterwards 'Sir Galahad')
 8. *Ibid.*
 9. George Bernard Shaw, *Pen Portraits and Reviews*, London: Constable & Co. Ltd, 1931 (1949), p. 231. (Afterwards *Pen Portraits*)
 10. 'Sir Galahad', pp. 383, 387, 386, 388.
 11. *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1900, p. 53. Afterwards *Defence*.
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. A.C. Cawley, ed, *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*, London: J.M. Dent, 1956 (1993), p. 101. Afterwards Cawley.
 14. *Defence*, p. 56.
 15. *Poems by the Way & Love is Enough*, London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1898, p. 225.
 16. Cawley, p. 199.
 17. Karen Herbert, 'No "Fourth Wall": The Experience of Drama in William Morris's *Love is Enough*', *English Studies in Canada*, XVII, No. 3 (September 1991), pp. 301–317. (p. 302).
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 301.
 19. *Ibid.*, pp. 301–312.
 20. Robert Shaughnessy, *The Shakespeare Effect: A History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 36.
 21. Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1954, p. 234.
 22. *Pen Portraits*, p. 213.
 23. Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, London: Faber & Faber, 1994, p. 564. Afterwards MacCarthy.
 24. William Poel, *Shakespeare in the Theatre*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd, 1913, p. 204.
 25. MacCarthy, p. 254.
 26. Pamela Bracken Wiens, ed, *The Tables Turned, or Nupkins Awakened*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1994, p. 34. (Afterwards *Nupkins*). All future references to this text are from this edition.
 27. Unlike her father, May Morris possessed a fervent interest in the theatre, and acted on several occasions. Salmon (p. 30) tells us that: 'In November 1884, for example, Morris was present at an "Art Evening" sponsored by the SDF at the Neumeyer Hall in Bloomsbury at which Edward Aveling and

- Eleanor Marx acted out a play based on their own life. Engels was also present at this event. On another occasion, in January 1885, Morris was in the audience when his daughter May, Aveling, Shaw and Eleanor Marx appeared in the comic-drama *Alone* by Palgrave Simpson and Herman Merivale. May, who later described herself as having “play-fever badly”, [...] later tried her own hand as a dramatist. Her play *Lady Griselda’s Dream* appeared in *Longmans Magazine* in June 1898 [...] and a second, *White Lies. A Play in One Act*, was privately printed by the Chiswick Press in 1903’.
28. Bracken Wiens (*Nupkins*, p. 88, n. 4) writes that: ‘Morris’s friends and comrades in the Nupkins’ audience would have recognized the humorous “role” of the voice interrupting Hungary’s cross examination of the witness against Mary Pinch as a clever allusion to his own role in the trial of the Dod Street affair (20 September 1885), during which Morris was arrested for having called out “Shame” and hissing aloud against the judge in the courtroom. The Dod Street “affair” had been a peaceful – albeit large—demonstration protesting other recent “obstruction” persecutions’. (cf E.P. Thompson, *William Morris. Romantic to Revolutionary*, London: Pantheon, 1976, pp. 394–397).
29. *Nupkins*, pp. 8–9.
30. Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: the Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1973, p. 3. *Editor’s note*: The character ‘Professor Tyndall (1820–93)’ refers to John Tyndall, the nineteenth-century physicist who was the first person correctly to measure the relative infrared absorptive powers of the Earth’s atmospheric gases (‘On Radiation Through The Earth’s Atmosphere’, 1863), to whom we therefore owe the terms ‘Greenhouse Effect’ and ‘greenhouse gases’, and after whom the prestigious Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research (<http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/>) is named. Tyndall was also a member of a club which strongly supported the ‘application’ of Darwin’s theory of natural selection to human society (other members were Thomas Henry Huxley and Herbert Spencer), and an opponent of Irish Home Rule (he was born in Co. Carlow, but his father was an Orangeman), but just why Morris singled him out for satirising instead of, for example, Huxley, is not clear, to me at least. Tyndall once gave a somewhat notorious address (*Address Delivered Before the British Association Assembled at Belfast*, 1874) in which he was rather scathing about Charles Kingsley the Oxford don, friend of Morris, and author of *The Water Babies*, but whether this dismissal merited his inclusion in *Nupkins* as a target of fun, I have yet to discover (PO’S).
31. MacCarthy, p. 564.

32. Cawley, p. 104.
33. *Nupkins*, p. 95.
34. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 October 1887, p. 1.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Sheppard, p. 119; John Kelly, ed, *The Collected Letter of W.B. Yeats*, vol. I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, p. 60.
37. Penelope Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones*, London: Sutton Publishing, 1997, p. 256.