

# The Art of Printing and ‘The Land of Lies’

## The Story of the Glittering Plain

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### I. A ‘LOVE BORN OF IMAGES’

Others have noticed that William Morris’s beautifully made romance, *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, is at once a critique of beautiful illusions and an example of them. For example, Norman Talbot has recently shown that ‘Morris is subverting exactly this kind of sentimental quest-romance, and the beguiling “love” born of images’.<sup>1</sup> Because an editor is accustomed to working deliberately with the ‘materiality’ of printed texts, it is perhaps fitting that Talbot, himself an editor of a recent edition of Morris’s romance, cogently explains the book’s anti-illusionism, its critique of the escapism which others have attributed to it:<sup>2</sup> the theme of *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, Talbot says, is ‘that you’d have to be a damn fool not to be tempted by the glittering legend of an Earthly Paradise of eternal youth, love and unselfish happiness – and a damner fool to be seduced by it’. I agree with Talbot that the book is about a ‘readiness to live a wholly mortal life’, and ‘the thinning out of value and meaning on the Glittering Plain’, which is no earthly paradise but ‘a land of lies’.<sup>3</sup> As Talbot indicates *passim*, Morris’s critique of the ‘land of lies’ is a critique of fiction, of fictitiousness, illusionism and escapism, all of which Morris (like the fictitious Hallblithe) treats as examples of deceit and (sometimes malicious) fraud.<sup>4</sup>

Talbot connects that theme in the romance with Morris’s resignation from the Socialist League in 1890, the year in which *The Story of the Glittering Plain* first appeared,<sup>5</sup> and he interprets the book as, in part, a revisionary response to Morris’s own, slightly earlier *News from Nowhere* (published in *Commonweal*, 1890), whose arcadian socialism, Talbot suggests, is likely to have appeared differently to Morris after the political conflict which resulted in his resignation from the League. In more general terms, Amanda Hodgson has suggested that ‘it is as if Morris were warning himself not to place too much reliance on the coming of

his Utopia'.<sup>6</sup> Both scholars judiciously contextualize the work's theme in terms of Morris's political history and in biographical terms, including his newly diagnosed and untreatable illness.

In the present essay, I propose to consider again the book's anti-illusionism, but within a different context. From Morris's contemporaries onward, it has always been obvious that his artistic theory and practice are thoroughly engaged in a social vision whose utopian premises include disalienation of work and the actualisation of beauty in conjunction with the values of use: as we know, from his undergraduate reading of Ruskin's 'The Nature of Gothic' in *The Stones of Venice*, Morris argued consistently and often that the character and quality of art are 'bound up with the general condition of society'.<sup>7</sup> The theoretical foundations of such a project are eloquently articulated in Morris's essays about printing, about woodcuts, illuminated manuscripts, and (more generally) all of the arts under the social conditions of capitalism. After more than a decade of Morris's social polemics, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* develops, in contrast, a reflexive or metatextual theme about its own *modus operandi*. Much of Morris's earlier work had done likewise, including the manuscript *A Book of Verse* (1870).<sup>8</sup> Like other books printed at the Kelmscott Press, but in a special way, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* of 1894, with all its artful typography and pictorial illustration, is at once a visible signifier of the social value of beauty and a metafictional critique of escapism, including its own highly-crafted illusionism. Examining the material book, however, in bibliographical detail, reveals more: in at least one significant way, the 1894 *Story of the Glittering Plain* knowingly contradicts some of the aesthetic, social, and moral principles which, in Morris's own terms, such work was meant to illustrate and to promote.<sup>9</sup>

## II. IDEAS AND THE IDEAL

In an essay of uncertain date not published until long after his death, Morris writes of a scholar's book printed in the Renaissance: 'the craftsman, scribe, limner, printer who had produced it had worked on it directly as an artist, not turned it out as the machine of a tradesman'; and the craftsman's 'relation to art was personal and not mechanical'.<sup>10</sup> From this historical observation, Morris elsewhere derives a prescription for printing: the business of the printer and engraver, Morris writes, 'is sympathetic translation, and not mechanical reproduction. ... This means, in other words, the designer of the picture-blocks, the designer of the ornamental blocks, the wood-engraver, and the printer, all of them thoughtful, painstaking artists, and all working in harmonious cooperation for the production of a work of art'.<sup>11</sup> The preference for handicraft becomes an explicit point of doctrine: 'This is the only possible way in which you can get beautiful

books'; and, further, book illustration 'is seldom satisfactory unless the whole page, picture, ornament, and type is reproduced literally from the handiwork of the artist'.<sup>12</sup>

That principle appears often in Morris's lectures and essays: 'things grow beautiful under the workman's hands'; but under conditions of industrial capitalism, the dominant modes of reproduction are obviously 'mechanical' as opposed to the 'handiwork of the artist', and thus 'it must be the *rule* that all things made by man for the use of his daily life will be ugly and base. . . . They will be tokens of the enduring sorrow and slavery of the great mass of mankind'.<sup>13</sup> Morris considers the principle in the context of historical change: 'In these days [of mechanical reproduction] the inborn instinct for beauty is checked and thwarted at every turn [and what is produced is] sham ornament'.<sup>14</sup>

In 'Art Under Plutocracy', Morris's wording indicates very clearly that the artificiality of mechanical production leads to falsehood—'sham'—where beauty should be. Sometimes, too, in the same essay, Morris's language includes terms of bitter enmity: those who would compromise with the modern, degraded condition of art 'would be traitors to the cause of art'.<sup>15</sup> Again, the stakes are not only aesthetic, but very broadly social: 'machines should never be used for doing work in which men can take pleasure: whereas at present, as we all know too well, men do the work of machines, and machines of men — both disastrously'.<sup>16</sup>

### III. FICTION AS 'THE LAND OF LIES'

As the genre of romance calls for, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* presents its plot with magic and mystery and unpredictable apparitions aplenty. Despite its fanciful and defiant anti-realism at the level of the plot, one systematic feature of the story in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* is the consistency with which it develops the theme of the 'sham' which Morris had been articulating in his polemical lectures and essays.<sup>17</sup> Some illusions are manufactured, but some are simply dreamed, and the unreality of the dreaming is emphasized by the placement of dreams within dreams: for example, on the boat with the professed thief (Puny Fox), on which he embarks hoping to retrieve Hostage, Hallblithe asleep has 'dreamed that he had dreamed'. His enclosure in the dream, like its unreality, is doubly emphasised: in the dream he dreams in a doorless and windowless room. Arriving at the Isle of Ransom, he undergoes an illusion which is ambiguously a dream or a vision, in which it is not Hallblithe 'but the image' of her which appears to him. Not only is there another double-removal from reality (not her but an image, and even that image appearing only in a dream), but further, upon awakening, Hallblithe complains, albeit to nobody: 'even that image of my Beloved which I saw in the dream, perchance that was a mere beguiling'.<sup>18</sup>

The numerous manufactured illusions in the story in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* represent metaphorically the same one to which Morris had devoted himself with legendary productivity all of his adult life. The book is itself an assemblage of such illusions—the verbal narrative, its typographic form, and its woodcut illustrations in the 1894 volume. *The Story of the Glittering Plain* was first published without the woodcut images by Walter Crane, but, as everyone knows, Morris had been working on illustrated pages since his undergraduate days, and he had been writing and lecturing about ornamental art for many years prior to the composition of this tale. When he writes in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* about the carved wooden images which decorate the room in the hall where he sleeps on the Isle of Ransom, he therefore writes of a craft in which he had been personally involved for decades; and his reflections about the unreality of the imagery, in contrast to the reality of personal and interpersonal presence, possess a reflexive significance in relation to his life's work and to the arts to which he devoted that work, including this volume itself. The people around Hallblithe pay him no more heed than 'if he had been an image'. The unreality takes on a commercial frame of reference: Hallblithe says that he is not regarded more than he would be 'if I were an image which they were carrying to sell to the next mighty man they may hap on'.<sup>19</sup>

The fictional critique of fictitiousness has (like Morris's own work) a multi-media reach: after the episode of play-acting in which his hosts enact a pretend-battle, Hallblithe says, 'mummery hath not slain me'. Sometimes, however, the domain of illusion threatens its devotees with amnesia: a hoary old man tells Hallblithe that, in the Land of the Glittering Plain, 'thou shalt see me as I was'—not as, in fact, he is. When he arrives in that land, Hallblithe is told, 'such as come hither . . . soon forget what they were'. As the narrative itself makes increasingly clear, this last sentence might be positioned as a warning over the door of a bookshop (or a video store), as Dante posted his more famous warning over the gate of Hell. In the beguiling land of amnesia, a person is strong and full of joy, whereas, in reality, he is 'but a gibbering ghost drifting down the wind of night'. Unlike Henderson's 'land of eternal youth spent in the delights of free love', *The Story of the Glittering Plain* presents, at the expense of its own beguiling charm, a contrast between the artificially sweetened land of lies, and the ghostly and ghastly emptiness of withering age which Morris situates outside and—despite its grimness—evaluatively above the land of lies: without, there is battle, famine, and longing unsatisfied; within, there is 'pleasure without cease'; nonetheless 'I seek no dream, but rather the end of dreams'.<sup>20</sup>

The half-page illustration for Chapter Thirteen depicts a beautiful woman holding a book which contains a mere image with which she has fallen in love; it is an image of Hallblithe. As we know and as Hallblithe learns subsequently, he has been beguiled into the land of lies in order to gratify the illusion and desire of

this woman, the daughter of the 'King of dreams and lies'. His adventures, he sees and says, are a 'tangle of lies wherein I have been entrapped'. Hallblithe's question, 'What is this tale about a book?', might fruitfully be read, 'What is this tale about? A book'. Hallblithe wonders, 'Has the earth become so full of lies[?]', and he decides that it has indeed become a domain of untruth: what has happened to him is 'nought true and real but a mere beguiling'.<sup>21</sup>

The tale's climax is Hallblithe's escape from the illusion of text and image (the Land of the Glittering Plain); its happy ending is his restoration to home and Hostage, to marry her, making thus 'an end of her sitting in the hall like a graven image'. The romance's moral tags are *sententiae* stating his lessons about fictions: his mentor in the Land of the Glittering Plain tells him, 'I have been trying to learn thee the lore of lies'. Hallblithe affirms, 'I have been straying amongst wiles and images', and he refers specifically to the means of production of those deceptions – i.e., text and image: 'images have mocked me, and I have been encompassed by lies'; and his beloved Hostage replies, 'I also have been encompassed by lies, and beset by images of things'. At the level of diegesis, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* is organized by the dichotomy of the 'true and real' as opposed to 'images' and 'lies'. The text and the woodcut illustrations deny the truth and value of text and (woodcut) illusion.<sup>22</sup>

#### IV. TRUTH AND THE MATERIAL TEXT

Partly because of the striking and undeniable beauty of the illustrated books published by Morris's Kelmscott Press, and partly because of his own eloquent statements about the importance of the particular form of beauty in which 'the whole page, picture, ornament, and type is reproduced literally from the handiwork of the artist',<sup>23</sup> Morris's works are sometimes beneficiaries of a nostalgic myth of integrity, whereby the physical work of one's hands somehow represents or expresses the untrammelled truth of feeling and thought. Despite Ruskin's (and Morris's) consistent emphasis on the importance of collective production, the art of a group, the romantic and post-romantic illusion of authorship and artist—the individualistic model of personal intention and integrity—have so endeared Morris's works to those who admire fine books that in 2006, according to the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, a single leaf from the 1896 Kelmscott *Chaucer* (with a floral border by Morris and a woodcut by Edward Burne-Jones) was offered for \$1,500.00.<sup>24</sup> To examine the 1894 *Story of the Glittering Plain* in some bibliographical detail is to discover, however, some ways in which the facts of that volume's production connect informatively with the metacritical themes of the book's internal narrative, its denial of the truth, and ultimately the value of its own illusions – the mix of falsehood amongst its

appealing verbal and visual figments.

Emphasising the physical manufacture of the visible book, and not the conception of the tale, the 1894 colophon (p. 179) dates the work 'the 13<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1894', with no reference to its prior publication. In fact, after the half-title page and the full-title page (which encloses its gothic-font title in a text-box surrounded by floral vines), the text of the tale begins in a way which visually recalls Morris's own prior publication of the work, also at the Kelmscott Press, in 1891, but which marks a significant visual advance over the earlier work. Already in 1891, the first word of the text ('It') begins (Figure 1) with an ornamental capital which, imitating medieval and early-modern illuminated books, inserts slots in the stem of the letter through which vines pass, representing in a visual metaphor the tie-ribbons in the spine of the vellum binding of the book itself. Morris uses a very similar capital 'I' in his printing of 'Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery' (Figure 2), in his 1892 Kelmscott edition of *The Defence of Guenevere*.<sup>25</sup> In the 1894 printing of *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, however (Figure 3), the first initial in the text (in the text-box) is the lower-case 't' of 'It'; the initial capital 'I' of that word 'It' is located *outside* the text-box altogether. In the marginal decoration, it is ornamentally slotted like the earlier initial 'I' letters in the 1891 and 1892 versions, but here vines amongst the floral ornaments in the non-textual margin loop through the pictorial slots in the 'I'. Moving of the initial capital outside the frame of the text and into the floral ornamentation abrogates the distinction between text and ornament; the language is itself presented as a visible ornament, honoured in the design as a shape rather than a lexical entity.

The tendency to see and to present even words and the parts of words less as meaningful utterances and more as visible artifice, valued for the sake of the shapes, is also evident in the colophon in the Kelmscott edition of *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (1897):

Here ends the Water of the Wondrous Isles, written by William Morris. It was printed at the Kelmscott Press, Upper Mall, Hammersmith, in the County of Middlesex & finished on the first day of April, 1897 by William Morris, except the initial words Whilom and Empty, which were completed from his unfinished designs by R. Catterson-Smith.<sup>26</sup>

The art and craft of 'Whilom' and 'Empty' are treated as such utterly *visual* art that one does not see those words, in the sense in which the author(s) writ, except by seeing them on the page which Morris (and Catterson-Smith) made. The reason for the collaborative work on those visual elements is of course that Morris died on 3 October 1896: Sydney Cockerell writes in his diary for 4 September 1896: Morris 'sat up & was going to design "Empty" for the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* – but only just managed to black in the spaces, & just rough in the word'; and two days later, 'W. M. rather tired, but decidedly



Figure 1. William Morris, *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1891, p. 1.

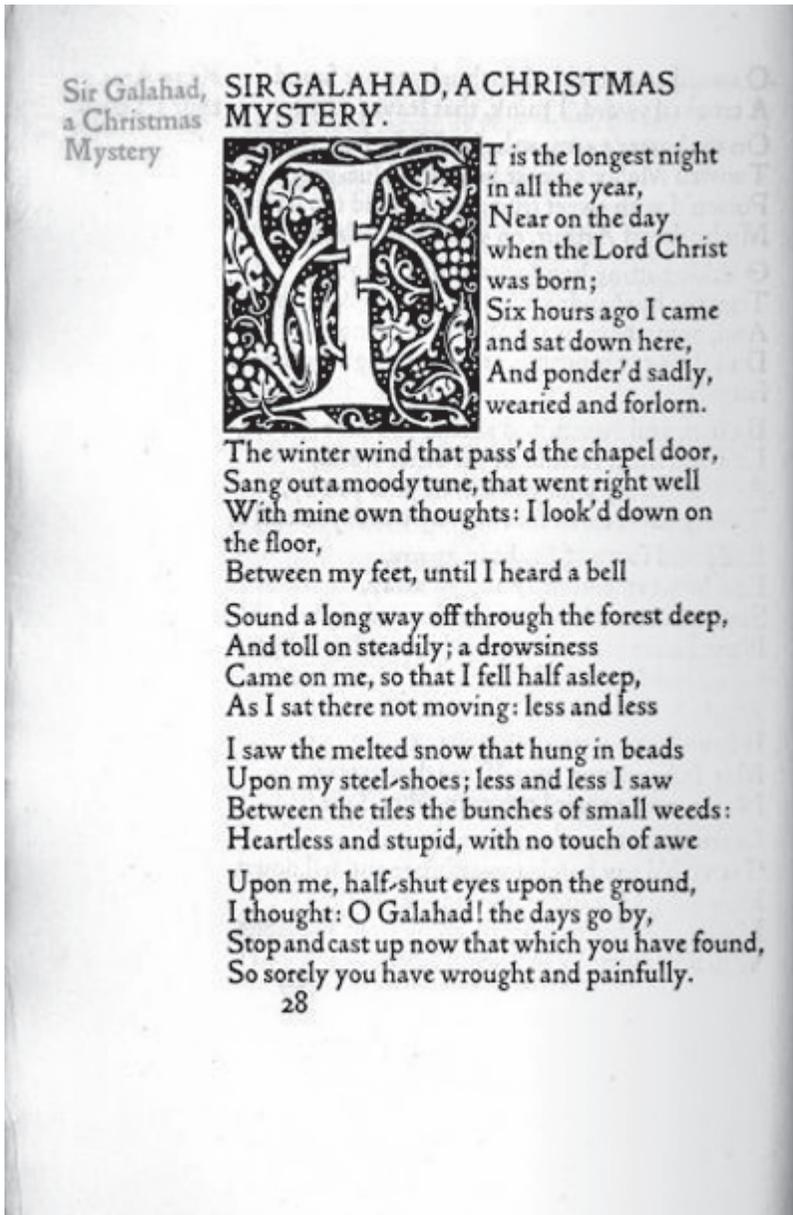


Figure 2. William Morris. Detail from *The Defence of Guenevere*, *Hammer-smith: Kelmscott Press, 1892, p. 28.*

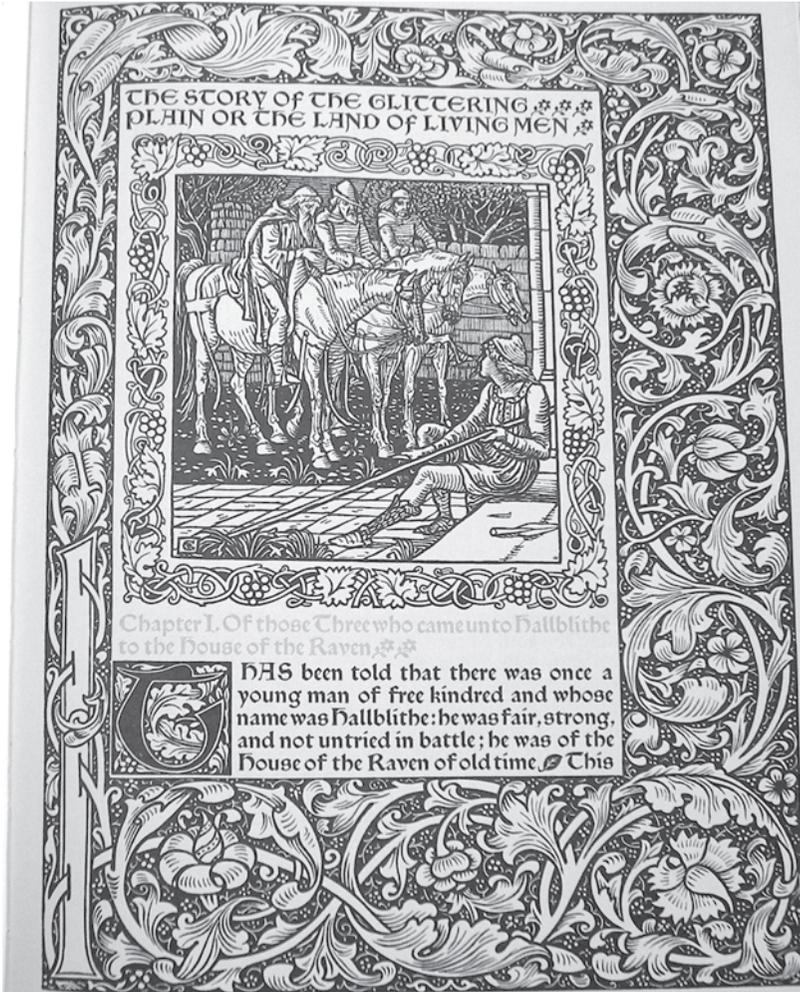


Figure 3. William Morris, *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1894, p. 1.

no worse. He had done a little more to “Empty”’.<sup>27</sup> That account of the word ‘Empty’ as a physical project (rather than a concept) illustrates a philosophical principle: physical reality has a tendency to supersede or to contradict an author’s intention and idea.

That philosophically materialistic principle is already a theme in *The Story of the Glittering Plain*. In the 1894 volume, the printing of the text and the ornaments, including the marginal flora and the woodcut illustrations, is uniform and solid, with exceptions which are easily visible under magnification: initial capitals, and most frequently the smaller initial capitals, some of which are used repeatedly here and there in the work, are printed poorly, their letter-forms containing white spots in the black printed ink. I have examined three copies of the 1894 edition (two at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, and one at the University of Chicago) under the magnification of a hand lens, and all three exhibit this same feature: the spots are not uniformly located, but they appear with great frequency in the repeated, small initial capitals, though not so often in the larger, woodcut initials, and not at all in the woodcut illustrations or in the floral ornaments outside the frame of the text. The faulty (spotty) printing is uneven and inconsistent. For example, one opening (pp. 166–67) uses the same initial 't' three times. In one of the copies at the University of Texas, the first two printings of this ornamental initial 't' are not spotted with white, but the third printing of the same initial is spotted; in the second copy in the same collection, that same pattern appears—the third printing of the 't' is weak with white spots. In all three copies whose printing I have examined under magnification, both the initial 't' and the initial 'y' on p. 3 are printed spottily. Page 11 includes the same ornamental 't' as p. 3, with different spotting from p. 3 and different in each copy, but obvious under magnification, in all three.

The reason for the anomaly in the printing is suggested by documentary evidence, in the form of a sheet (located at the Pierpont Morgan Library) on which Emery Walker, the printer whose lecture on 15 November 1888 on the art of printing had inspired Morris, and whom Morris consulted often during the Kelmscott Press years, displays four ornamental initials, each printed twice. Walker's note says, 'One row printed from wood, the other from electrotypes. (Done to convince W.M. that electros cd be used without artistic loss [])'.<sup>28</sup> The fact that Morris resorted to electrotypes for the printing of the ornamental initials has been known for some time—for example, Paul Thompson says in passing, and without comment, that 'the title pages and initial words were printed from woodblocks, but the recurring initials and ornaments from electrotypes. Otherwise the old methods were used'.<sup>29</sup> More substantively, the Ransom Center's excellent (but unsigned) online exhibition catalogue *William Morris and His Circle* states that 'the woodcut initials and intricate borders (usually with floral or vine motifs) are directly related to the ornamentation of Morris's tapestries, chintzes, and wallpapers. They were specially designed to contribute to the total visual effect of the Kelmscott book, alongside the type, woodcut illustrations, paper, and ink, and were later imitated by scores of commercial and fine presses in England and (especially) the United States. The initials were produced using

a modern electrotyping process'.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the Ransom Center's catalogue also specifies the crucial issue, in terms of Morris's theory of art including the art of printing: 'text would be balanced by complementary illustrations, by which Morris meant woodcuts, rather than conventional wood or metal engravings. Finally, Morris argued that woodcut ornaments, borders, and initials were important, if not essential, elements of the printed page; these were also appropriately part of what was fundamentally a handmade object'.<sup>31</sup>

Of course 'fundamentally' means 'not entirely' or 'not really'; and that concept or theme – the 'not-really' theme—is doubly interesting here, in connection with the 1894 *Story of the Glittering Plain* because it inhabits the physical features of the book, its production history, and the artistic and intellectual theme of the narrative itself. One troubled relationship of which the narrative has much to say is that between illusion and realities of earthly kinds: the illusions and images, for example, in the 'land of lies' are relentlessly resisted by Hallblithe's determination to 'seek no dream, but rather the end of dreams'. At the level of printing, Morris's determination to produce 'a handmade object' is part of his longstanding project to recover and to promote important social values, so that it would be true of the book that 'the craftsman, scribe, limner, printer who had produced it had worked on it directly as an artist, not turned it out as the machine of a tradesman'; and the craftsman's 'relation to art was personal and not mechanical'. The fact that on the Isle of Ransom Hallblithe saw not his beloved but rather 'the image' of her, expresses—with deliberate intention or not—the same problem as a woodcut initial that is not really a woodcut initial but is printed from electrotypes.<sup>32</sup> Of these conflicts between idea and object, illusion and the earthly facts of the matter, *A Story of the Glittering Plain* has much to show and tell.

Because no object is ideal, and every printed book is an object, it is no particular condemnation or complaint about *The Story of the Glittering Plain* to say that it is not only about failures of idealism but is also, itself, a failure of idealism. Philip Webb did find fault with Walter Crane's illustrations in the volume, including the accuracy of the depicted costumes, and Sydney Cockerell wrote on Webb's letter that 'Morris was no less dissatisfied than Webb with Crane's illustrations to his Glittering Plain & thought this volume his one Kelmscott Press failure'.<sup>31</sup> However, as I have tried to suggest, both the narrative within *The Story of the Glittering Plain* and its methods of manufacture represent, with beauty and clarity, a much larger and apparently inescapable problem: no object is ever and only a dream. One of the book's great achievements is the clarity and grace with which it unfolds the failure of the dream.

NOTES

1. Norman Talbot, '“I Seek No Dream but Rather the End of Dreams”: The Deceptions of *The Story of the Glittering Plain*'. *Mythlore* 83, Autumn 1997, p. 26 (Afterwards Talbot).
2. Philip Henderson's widely-read biography of Morris suggests that *The Story of the Glittering Plain* presents 'a land of eternal youth spent in the delights of free love', where the hero Hallblithe 'is only bent upon his quest for a lost maiden whose image he is shown in a painted book' (Philip Henderson, *William Morris: His Life, Work, and Friends*, 1967; reprinted London: André Deutsch, 1986, pp. 143, 343).
3. Talbot, p. 27.
4. Talbot is not alone, or even first, to interpret the romance in this way, in contrast to Henderson's suggestion that the book celebrates escapism: more than a decade earlier, Amanda Hodgson, for example, had written that *The Story of the Glittering Plain* 'employs the form and conventions of romance in order to criticize an unquestioning acceptance of the romance ethos'. Within the story, Hodgson aptly observes, the land of the glittering plain 'turns out to be one of lies and evasions': Amanda Hodgson, *The Romances of William Morris*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 151–152 (Afterwards Hodgson).
5. *The Story of the Glittering Plain or the Land of Living Men* was first published serially in *English Illustrated Magazine*, vol. 7 (June–September 1890); Morris published an edition at the Kelmscott Press (1891); and an edition was published in London by Reeves and Turner, also in 1891. According to Temple Scott (*A Bibliography of the Works of William Morris*, 1897; reprinted. Ann Arbor: Gryphon Books, 1971, pp. 14–15), the London edition appeared after the Kelmscott Press edition. In 1894, Morris published a different edition, including twenty-three pictorial illustrations, new ornamental capitals, a Gothic typeface, and a colophon which says nothing whatsoever about the prior publication of the work. Because I will be discussing the visible and material features of this illustrated edition of 1894, I will be taking my quotations from that edition of the romance. This 1894 edition (afterwards Morris 1894) was reproduced in 1990 in facsimile by Dover Publications.
6. Hodgson, p. 151 (see note 4).
7. William Morris, 'Art Under Plutocracy' (1883); reprinted in Norman Kelvin, ed, *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, Mineola, New York: Dover, 1999, p. 108.
8. On *A Book of Verse* considered in metatextual terms, see Jerome McGann, '“Thing to Mind”: The Materialistic Aesthetic of William Morris', in his own book, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism*, Princeton:

- Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 45–75.
9. Amongst others who have written previously and trenchantly on contradictions involved amongst Morris's political commitments and artistic works, the most influential is E. P. Thompson: 'There is a sense in which Morris, as Utopian and moralist, can never be assimilated to Marxism, not because of any contradiction of purpose but because one may not assimilate desire to knowledge and because the attempt to do so is to confuse two different operative principles of culture' (*William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, rev. ed., London: Merlin Press, 1977, p. 807). More recently, and more negatively, Laurence Davis has argued that 'Morris' hostility to modernity severely diminishes the force of his otherwise radical criticisms of art and labour under advanced capitalism' (Laurence Davis, 'Morris, Wilde, and Marx on the Social Preconditions of Individual Development', *Political Studies* 44, no. 3, September 1996, p. 719). It will become evident in the course of the present essay that I am less concerned about the opposition of desire and knowledge than I am interested in the opposition of desire and knowledge (on the one hand) and the facts of the matter on which and amidst which Morris worked. Nonetheless, at the level of its themes, inside the fiction itself, the work recovers the idealism which its material form cannot—or at least does not—consistently sustain.
  10. William Morris, 'Some thoughts on the Ornamental Manuscripts of the Middle Ages', privately printed 1934. Reprinted in William S. Peterson, ed., *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts of the Book by William Morris*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, p. 2 (Afterwards Peterson 1982).
  11. Kelvin, p. III.
  12. William Morris, 'The Woodcuts of Gothic Books', (1892). Reprinted in Peterson 1982, p. 37.
  13. Morris, 'Of the Origins of Ornamental Art' (1886), reprinted in Kelvin, p. 171.
  14. Kelvin, p. III.
  15. Kelvin, *ibid.*
  16. Kelvin, p. 172.
  17. Pauline Dewan's excellent essay on the structural coherence of *The Story of the Glittering Plain* discusses the problem of 'fantasy and illusion' and the systematic display of the dangers posed by those meretricious values. Writing only one year after Talbot's essay (cited above), Dewan shows how the plot of the work sets out from an illusion to return to illusion, and that, like the Isle of Ransom and the enclosed Glittering Plain, this circularity in the narrative 'underscores the idea of entrapment': P. Dewan, 'Circular Design in Morris's *The Story of the Glittering Plain*', *Journal of the William Morris*

- Society*, 12, no. 4, Spring 1998, p. 19.
18. Morris 1894, pp. 18, 8, 26–27, 31.
  19. Morris 1894, pp. 39–40, 41, 58.
  20. Morris 1894, pp. 51, 61, 70, 76, 99, 100.
  21. Morris 1894, pp. 94, 90, 82, 88, 157.
  22. Morris 1894, pp. 168, 157, 166, 167.
  23. See note 12, above.
  24. Martha Woodmansee, Anthony John Harding, and others have recently explained how the nineteenth-century concept of personal and individualistic authorship transformed the valuation of literary work in the direction of putative privacy, inwardness, and the authenticity of subjectivity. See M. Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, 200 pp., and A.J. Harding, ‘“Domestick Privacies”: Biography and the Sanctifying of Privacy, from Johnson to Martineau’, *Dalhousie Review*, 85, no. 3, Autumn 2005, pp. 371–89.
  25. William Morris, ‘Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery’, in *The Defence of Guenevere*, Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1892, p. 28.
  26. William Morris, *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1897, p. 340.
  27. William S. Peterson, *A Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, p. 125 (Afterwards Peterson 1984).
  28. Walker’s note is located at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. It is reproduced and transcribed by Peterson 1984, p. xxxiii.
  29. Paul Thompson, *The Work of William Morris*, New York: Viking, 1967, pp. 142–43.
  30. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, Online Exhibit: *William Morris and His Circle*. [[http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/morris/#kelmscott\\_images](http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/morris/#kelmscott_images); last accessed 9 September 2008]. I would like to thank Rich Oram, curator at the Ransom Center, for helpful conversation about this feature of the Kelmscott Press books.
  31. *ibid.*
  32. Webb’s letter to Morris, and Cockerell’s note, are quoted in Peterson 1984, p. 61.