

# A Darker Shade of Green: William Morris, Richard Jefferies, and Posthumanist Ecologies

*Jed Mayer*

When William Guest, the mental traveller of William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, steps out into the England of 2102, he enters a sunny, robust, and healthy environment, a visionary ecology brought about by a more enlightened future populace. Many of these changes were proposed in Morris's lectures and essays, which from 1877 onward would place an increasing emphasis on the relationship between the human exploitation of nature and other, social injustices. As a kind of culmination of Morris's vision of a social and ecological harmony, the future painted in *News from Nowhere* is almost universally bright. Nevertheless, the work was clearly inspired by an earlier, darker vision of future ecologies and their effects on human society. In his response to one of the key works in a subgenre of late Victorian gothic novels which evoke horrific images of nature – one which I will describe later as 'ecological gothic', or 'ecogothic' – Morris envisioned a world liberated from human dominance. By reading Morris's future vision in light of contemporary posthumanist theories, this essay will seek to situate Morris within some of the more challenging developments in contemporary ecological thought.

*After London* (1885), the sole work of fantastic, or science-, fiction by the naturalist Richard Jefferies, occupies, in its generally grim portrayal of a future England taken over by the unchecked forces of a wild nature otherwise celebrated in Jefferies's work, a curious place in the author's *oeuvre*. Part I of the novel, 'The Relapse into Barbarism', depicts in meticulous detail the transformation and evolution of the English landscape following a largely unexplained 'change'. The absence of human impact allows plants and animals to develop unchecked, the wheat fields to be eaten by birds 'feasting at their pleasure' and 'trodden

upon by herds of animals', and the great watercourses of England changed or destroyed by plant growth and the destruction of dams by 'water rats'.<sup>1</sup> After nature takes its revenge, humans are brought to a feudal state of existence, divided by petty conflicts and mired in ignorance and superstition, as depicted through the romantic quest narrative of Sir Felix, which makes up the novel's second part, 'Wild England'.

Jefferies's vision of a future ecology and its social consequences is almost unremittingly pessimistic, yet in this dystopian vision William Morris found the roots of his own ecological and social utopia. While at Millthorp, the experimental farm near Sheffield of friend and fellow socialist Edward Carpenter, Morris wrote to Georgiana Burne-Jones in May, 1885 to tell her of reading 'a queer book called "After London" ... I rather liked it: absurd hopes curled round my heart as I read it. I rather wish I were thirty years younger: I want to see the game played out'.<sup>2</sup> The discovery of hope in a portrayal of ecological catastrophe helped to make more vivid for Morris the limits of anthropocentrism, and offered greater possibilities for advancing a mode of environmental criticism which would regard humans as only one strand of a diverse web of organic life.

Although the importance of human stewardship of the nonhuman world would remain an abiding concern of Morris's social criticism, Jefferies's dark ecological vision challenged the limitations of human dominance, opening up, in *News from Nowhere* and other works, what might be called a posthumanist perspective. Cary Wolfe has identified two main strands in contemporary posthumanist thought: one, which I here mean (cautiously) to identify with Morris, situates itself before and after the emergence of the autonomous subject of Enlightenment humanism, that disembodied human 'I' imagined as existing outside of the contingencies of biology and history. In Cartesian philosophy, this idea, of the sovereign human subject, is achieved via a constitutive rejection and mastery of the nonhuman, a freedom from, and dominance over, the material world, resembling the possessive individualism of Western capitalism.

The other form of posthumanism, often called 'transhumanism', is regarded by Wolfe as an extension, rather than a critique, of Enlightenment humanism. Following Donna Haraway's influential 'Cyborg Manifesto', a number of cultural theorists have embraced the technological and philosophical possibilities of developing beyond the limitations of human embodiment. The notion of becoming posthuman, Wolfe argues, 'derives directly from ideals of human perfectibility, rationality, and agency inherited from Renaissance humanism and the Enlightenment'. Thus 'transhumanism should be seen as an intensification of humanism' rather than a challenge to its philosophical limits.<sup>3</sup>

Morris's scepticism regarding the perfectibility of humans via technology became particularly acute during the later 1880s, culminating in his response to that other vision of the future which would significantly influence *News from*

*Nowhere*; Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. In his review of the novel, Morris characterises the author's naïve faith in technological solutions to human problems as an extension of the possessive individualism which a truly socialist utopia should reject. While 'a machine-life is the best which Mr Bellamy can imagine for us on all sides', Morris stresses that 'the development of man's resources, which has given him greater power over nature, has driven him also into fresh desires and fresh demands on nature, and thus made his expenditure of energy much what it was before. I believe that this will be always so, and the multiplication of machinery will just — multiply machinery'.<sup>4</sup>

More precisely, Morris came to regard this 'multiplication of machinery' as connected with a disastrous enhancement and extension of particular human tendencies aided and abetted by Enlightenment faith in human transcendence over nature. In his visionary lecture 'The Society of the Future', delivered on 13 November, 1887, Morris presented his idea of a future in which humanity had relinquished its dominance, forming a society united by a common 'wish to keep life simple, to forgo some of the power over nature won by past ages in order to be more human and less mechanical, and willing to sacrifice something to this end'.<sup>5</sup>

Although some of Morris's earlier social criticism regarding the role of technology in a future socialist state is often ambivalent, particularly in pieces such as 'How We Live and How We Might Live' where he writes of 'machinery being used freely for releasing people from the more mechanical and repulsive part of necessary labour',<sup>6</sup> the later 1880s saw Morris developing a more nuanced critique of human dominance, perhaps inspired by his reading of the opposed posthumanisms of Jefferies and Bellamy. In 'The Society of the Future' he argues that technological efficiency 'tends to reduce man to a machine without a will; to deprive him gradually of all the functions of an animal and the pleasure of fulfilling them, except the most elementary ones. The scientific ideal of the future of man would appear to be an intellectual paunch, nourished by circumstances over which he has no control, and without the faculty of communicating the results of his intelligence to his brother-paunches'.<sup>7</sup> The idea of the animal—which in Cartesian thought signifies the merely physical, material substance, or *res extensa*, from which the *res cogitans* or thinking subject, distinguishes itself—is reclaimed by Morris as being coextensive with the human; indeed, as constitutive of what is most vital in humanity.<sup>8</sup> To the rational subject — which, as Foucault argues, is imagined as 'transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history'<sup>9</sup> — Morris polemically attaches a fleshly, animalistic 'paunch', thus restoring the transcendental subject to the physical world it seeks to transcend.

The strange mingling of bitterness and joy which Jefferies's *Wild England* inspired in Morris reflects the unsettling experience of witnessing human domi-

nance give way to a new biological order. Writing again to Georgiana Burne-Jones, a fortnight after the letter from Millthorp, Morris confesses that he has 'no more faith than a grain of mustard seed in the future history of "civilization", which I know now is doomed to destruction, and probably before very long: what a joy it is to think of!' However dystopian Jefferies's work might have been in intention, its reception by Morris was clearly liberating. Although Morris regards human civilisation with scepticism and bitterness, its dissolution brings him a kind of posthumanist joy, as he celebrates the future death of the myth of human progress: 'I used really to despair once because I thought what the idiots of our day call progress would go on perfecting itself: happily I know now that all that will have a sudden check— sudden in appearance I mean—as it was in the days of Noë'.<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, supposedly antonymic terms such as 'utopian' or 'dystopian' will not suffice for characterising the complex response engendered in Morris by his reading of *After London*. In an essay on Margaret Atwood, whose 'ecotastrophes' *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* continue to explore themes raised by that book, Dunja M. Mohr offers the term 'transgressive utopian dystopias' to describe works such as Jefferies's, which 'incorporate within the dystopian narrative continuous utopian undercurrents'. In the heroic quest narrative of the second part of *After London*, there is a sense of liberation from the constraints of modern industrial society which functions as a utopian undercurrent to the ecological catastrophe of the first part. But at the novel's conclusion, the story of the character Sir Felix culminates in the building of an estate at a position of significant economic and military importance, thus re-establishing a kind of human dominance. The 'transgressive' element of Jefferies's 'utopian dystopia' emerges via Morris's critical reading, as he processes the text in order to 'criticize, undermine, and transgress the established binary logic of utopia', a logic which posits a clear distinction between 'good' and 'bad' futures.<sup>11</sup> In this respect, Morris read Jefferies in the manner which Fredric Jameson has identified as the critical perspective offered by works in the genre of science-, or speculative, fiction; namely, 'to defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present, and to do so in specific ways distinct from all other forms of defamiliarization'.<sup>12</sup>

The first part of *After London* offers a remarkable example of the defamiliarising potential of speculative fiction. The unidentified narrator takes on the voice of a future natural historian, providing a strikingly detached and unemotional description of nature's gradual takeover. The wild and 'waste' places which were becoming increasingly marginal during the nineteenth century gradually creep in, while the urban spaces which were once central, grow increasingly marginal as they are covered by unchecked growth: 'By the thirtieth year there was not one single open place, the hills only excepted, where a man could walk, unless he fol-

lowed the tracks of wild creatures or cut himself a path'. Humans are now obliged to follow animals, and as Jefferies's visionary natural history progresses, meticulous attention is paid to the evolution of animals left to run wild. Attempts by the dwindling number of humans to raise crops are foiled by the rising mice population, a problem mitigated somewhat by expanded weasel numbers, rather than human stewardship. The cause of the change remains shrouded in mystery, but some claim that 'the first beginning of the change was because the sea silted up the entrances to the ancient ports, and stopped the vast commerce which was once carried on'.<sup>13</sup> Water, the very element which facilitated global expansion of the British Empire, becomes the source of its downfall, an irony which would not have been lost on Morris.

*News from Nowhere* shows Morris adopting Jefferies's defamiliarising strategies to depict an ecological shift in many ways as dramatic as that portrayed in *After London*, but with a significantly different tone. Whereas Jefferies renders its dethronement with grim detachment, Morris shows a future humanity actively bringing about and welcoming its own disempowerment. After violent social revolution and political upheaval, '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'. Urbanised humans become animalistic in their return to country life, but unlike Jefferies's future human populations, which become increasingly brutal and violent, Morris's migrants grew more gentle: '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'.<sup>14</sup>

In distinguishing Morris's envisioned future from that of other late-Victorian speculative writers, Peter Preston observes that the world seen by William Guest 'has taken shape as a result of a desired change formed by the collective will of men and women thinking and acting in accordance with a desire for peace, harmony and beauty'.<sup>15</sup> In Morris's later social criticism, the model for these ideas of 'peace, harmony and beauty' is nature itself, and thus it might be argued that the 'desired change' offered by *News from Nowhere* is brought about humans acting in accordance with the nonhuman. This point is emphasised in a key speech by Clara, the lover of William Guest's guide Dick, as she contrasts their way of doing things with that of the nineteenth century:

Was not their mistake once more bred of the life of slavery that they had been living? – a life which was always looking upon everything, except mankind, animate and inanimate – 'nature,' as people used to call it – as one thing, and mankind as another. It was natural to people thinking in this way, that they should try to

make 'nature' their slave, since they thought 'nature' was something outside them.<sup>16</sup>

During these moments of critically looking backward to the nineteenth century, Morris intensifies the defamiliarising effect of his posthumanist vision for polemical purposes, offering a radical critique, not just of the effects of industrialisation and urban sprawl, but of the anthropocentrism which serves as their conceptual foundation. The very landscape of Morris's imagined future, in its blurring of boundaries between town and village, wild and domesticated, artificial and natural, vividly embodies these posthumanist ecological attitudes. Morris's unambiguously enthusiastic portrayal of future ecological change is in stark contrast to that of *After London*, which betrays a strong sense of anxiety about the powers of uncontrolled nature. As J. R. Ebbatson argues, their respective representations of the relationships between humans and nature reveal 'a fundamental opposition in the mind of the two authors'.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the abiding love of wild spaces, and the celebration of nature in all its diversity running throughout Jefferies's life and work, there is also a strong faith in the human dominance of nature which is a part of Enlightenment philosophical heritage. While environmentalists and animal rights advocates such as Edward Carpenter and Henry Salt found inspiration in Jefferies's work, they also criticised his celebration of blood sports, and his tendency to objectify nature.<sup>18</sup> In a late essay entitled 'Natural History,' published in *Knowledge: An Illustrated Magazine of Science* two years before the appearance of *After London*, Jefferies celebrates human ascendancy over nature, which he regards as providing a chiefly utilitarian value to a civilisation of great scientific advancement. After weighing in on the debate over vivisection then currently raging, lending his voice strongly to advocacy of physiological experimentation, Jefferies praises scientific inquiry in diverse fields, united in their salutary belief 'that every single atom of matter should be employed for the good of the human race. While this motive animates the inquirer, the search is consecrated and the seeker dignified'.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast to the misguided beliefs of earlier generations, whose idea of natural history was informed by a reverence of the natural world, 'In our age nothing is holy but humanity. The human being is the one shrine towards which all pilgrims of our latter-day faith toil; the human being of itself, irrespective of race, sex, age, or distinction of good or bad. These are the ethics of natural history'. Though the unabashed anthropocentrism of this passage is so pronounced as to resemble caricatures of the increasingly professionalised 'Priesthood of Science' to be found in antivivisectionist tracts of the time, Jefferies concludes his lionisation of modern scientific faith in unambiguous affirmation: 'I want to see it recognised as a truth so great as to be the first lesson of youth, the law of manhood, the chief dogma of the world'.<sup>20</sup> Though it would be wrong to characterise *After London* as

merely a polemical dramatisation of a world bereft of human dominance, given the fact that at least one contemporary reader was able to find in it the basis for a radical ecological vision, the wild England envisioned in that work would seem to embody the anxieties haunting the otherwise sunny confidence in the values of Enlightenment humanism expressed in this brief essay.

Late Victorian literature is rife with expressions of such anxieties, as economic fluctuations, unrest in the colonies, and doubts regarding the morality of Imperial rule increasingly undermined national faith in progress and improvement. In late-Victorian gothic fiction particularly, fears regarding the nation's future emerged in a variety of grotesque forms. Patrick Brantlinger has identified a particular set of texts as embodying what he describes as 'Imperial Gothic', fantastic tales depicting horrors 'symptomatic of the anxieties that attended the climax of the British Empire', which 'seem often to be allegories of the larger regressive movement of civilization'.<sup>21</sup> In works such as Rider Haggard's *She*, Conan Doyle's *Sign of the Four*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and the early stories of Kipling, the foreign assumes monstrous forms which threaten to undermine British sovereignty and their heroes' sanity.

Many of these works depict what Stephen Arata characterises as narratives of 'reverse colonization', as alien forces take over domestic spaces, bringing about a 'terrifying reversal' in which 'the colonizer finds himself in the position of the colonized, the exploiter becomes exploited, the victimizer victimized'. Arata stresses that these 'fantasies of reverse colonization are more than products of geopolitical fears. They are also responses to cultural guilt', as the invasive forces become monstrous reflections of Britain's own colonising practices. Such horrific reversals present 'powerful critiques of imperialist ideologies, even if that potential remains unrealized'.<sup>22</sup> *After London* might be classified as just such an Imperial gothic narrative of reverse colonisation, but with a notable difference: the monstrous forces do not come from abroad but emerge, quite literally, from native soil. If the narrative patterns of Jefferies's depiction of ecological catastrophe resemble in some ways those of Imperial gothic, then clearly a slightly different, though related, set of anxieties is being manifested.

Since the publication of Alfred Crosby's *Ecology and Imperialism*, a number of historians and cultural theorists, including Helen Tiffin, Graham Huggins, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, have addressed the ways in which attitudes toward the nonhuman have shaped imperialist attitudes and practices.<sup>23</sup> Although it is now generally acknowledged that during European colonisation of India, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, 'the lands of the colonized and the non-human populations who inhabit these lands were often plundered and damaged, as an indirect result of the colonisation of the people', as Val Plumwood argues, 'the concept of colonization can be applied directly to nonhuman nature itself, and that the relationship between humans, or certain groups of them, and

the more-than-human world might be aptly characterized as colonization'. During the process of colonisation, differences between colonisers and colonised are often exaggerated, and non-Europeans regarded as closer to animals and nature than the colonisers themselves, a perspective which serves to underwrite Imperial domination. 'The ideology of colonization', Plumwood argues, 'involves a form of anthropocentrism that underlies and justifies the colonization of non-human nature through the imposition of the colonizers' land forms and visions of ideal landscapes in just the same way that Eurocentrism underlies and justifies modern forms of European colonization'.<sup>24</sup> Eurocentrism may thus be seen as informing attitudes towards nature at home as well as abroad, as wilderness and other wild places are regarded as resources to be exploited as well as exotic realms holding a dangerous allure.

Jefferies's visionary account, in *The Story of My Heart*, of an epiphanic spiritual and sensual merging with nature, was likened by Henry Salt to Buddhist philosophy, and may be seen as Orientalist in its exoticisation of nature, while the darker side of this allure clearly emerges in hypnotic descriptions of nature's reverse colonisation of England in *After London*. Although the novel is unique in the meticulous detail and richly evocative language of its ecological catastrophe – informed by the author's extensive knowledge of natural history – there are a number of works of the later-nineteenth and early-twentieth century with which it may be compared. Darko Suvin's exhaustive survey of late-Victorian science fiction includes a significant number of narratives focusing on ecological disasters; clearly reflecting cultural anxieties regarding the environmental effects of industrial development and urban sprawl. Several other works from the 1880s present a future England suffering under the effects of industrial 'fog'.<sup>25</sup>

Other works portray England overtaken by animals such as intelligent apes, or Swiftian horses. Some even envisage a future ecology disastrously transformed by climate change, or suffering from overpopulation. Yet others imagine the germs of disease used in warfare.<sup>26</sup> Many of these motifs appear in the most enduring of these late-Victorian fictions, H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*,<sup>27</sup> which depicts invading Martians, explicitly presented as a vision of what humans will evolve into, colonising our planet by changing its ecologies. These accounts of reverse colonisation by nature may be seen as occupying a distinct subgenre of the gothic; one which might, for its peculiar reimagining of cultural anxieties regarding human environmental abuses in the form of monstrous or horrific future ecologies, be called 'ecogothic'.

While the ecological future imagined in *After London* seems more anxious about what happens when we cease dominating nature—perhaps reflecting an implicit awareness of the practical and philosophical limitations of the exclusively materialistic treatment of the nonhuman presented in 'Natural History'—the novel's most haunting images emerge during its account of the

pestilent space London becomes once it is flooded. As the eastern windings of the Thames become clogged with the refuse of commerce, the checked waters rise to cover the vast city, forming a polluted swamp which exhales a toxic miasma.

They say the sun is sometimes hidden by the vapour when it is thickest, but I do not see how any can tell this, since they could not enter the cloud, as to breathe it when collected by the wind is immediately fatal. For all the rottenness of a thousand years and of many hundred millions of human beings is there festering under the stagnant water, which has sunk down into and penetrated the earth, and floated up to the surface the contents of the buried cloacæ.<sup>28</sup>

Although a sense of benumbed awe attends the description of nature's reclamation of England, it is not until unchecked growth meets urban pollution that Jefferies's future ecology takes on a voice of genuine horror. When Sir Felix later encounters the pestilent swamp which London has become, the sense of loathing is more explicitly directed towards the human producers of those pollutants which make this uncanny environment so toxic:

He had penetrated into the midst of that dreadful place, of which he had heard many a tradition: how the earth was poison, the water poison, the air poison, the very light of heaven, falling through such an atmosphere, poison. There were said to be places where the earth was on fire and belched forth sulphurous fumes, supposed to be from the combustion of the enormous stores of strange and unknown chemicals collected by the wonderful people of those times.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast to the celebration of human science and industry of 'Natural History', this bitterly ironic description of the 'wonderful' inventors of the past suggests a nagging concern with the effects of such development. Although Sir Felix finally escapes this toxic environment, and lives to lay the foundations of a future kingdom, the taint of the encounter lingers, poisoning any sense of hopefulness with anxieties regarding the by-products of human development. The haunting sense of human complicity in future ecological disasters may be seen as the defining quality of what I am calling 'ecogothic', a literary subgenre which emerges in response to late-nineteenth century growing concerns with the deleterious effects of industrialisation.

The uncanny merging in late-Victorian ecogothic of the artificial and the natural, reflects an awareness that the categories of nature and culture are permeable, particularly as idealised natural spaces free of the signs of human presence were dwindling. As Timothy Morton argues, the modern idea of 'environment was born at exactly the moment when it became a problem. The word environment still haunts us, because in a society that took care of

its surroundings in a more comprehensive sense, our idea of environment would have withered away'.<sup>30</sup> Along with a number of postmodern ecocritics who bring post-structuralist and deconstructive practices to bear on environmental questions, Morton argues that the idea of nature as something 'over there' needing our protection which informs environmentalist thought fundamentally misrepresents the complex relationships between humans, other organisms and the planet we share. One way of thinking our way out of untenable ideas of nature, Morton argues, is by recognising, and in a sense embracing our current ecological plight, rather than imagining environmental solutions which seek to purify nature, restoring it to a pristine wholeness which has never really existed. Morton calls this approach – a mode of interconnectedness in which we 'stay with a dying world,' a 'gothic' identification with nature's decay – 'Dark Ecology'.

Now is a time for grief to persist, to ring throughout the world. Modern culture has not yet known what to do with grief. Environmentalisms have both stoked and assuaged the crushing feelings that come from a sense of total catastrophe, whether from nuclear bombs and radiation, or events such as climate change and mass extinction. ... If we get rid of the grief too fast, we eject the very nature we are trying to save.<sup>31</sup>

Our persistent attachment to idealised images of nature – part of the Romantic legacy of modern environmentalism – has hindered engaged contemplation of the ecologies in which we are actually immersed. While the devastation of natural beauty is certainly an occasion for grief, it is not one for escape. The grotesque ecology which emerges from the coalescence of nature and industry in *After London* is a haunting one, yet fantastic as it is, this ecogothic vision serves as an apt representation of the strange ecologies which emerged during the nineteenth century, and remain our polluted heritage.

Although the future ecologies presented in *News from Nowhere* would seem far removed from the toxic environment of Jefferies' future London, ecogothic imagery suffuses Morris's social criticism. While idyllic visions of an unpolluted English landscape are also abundant in his essays and lectures, these often seem to hover just out of reach, representing a fading Romantic ideal. The image of dying nature is a palpable and persistent one, emerging memorably in what might be considered Morris's first piece of environmental criticism, his lecture on 'The Lesser Arts' delivered in 1877:

Is money to be gathered? cut down the pleasant trees among the houses, pull down ancient and venerable buildings for the money that a few square yards of London dirt will fetch; blacken rivers, hide the sun and poison the air with smoke and worse, and it's nobody's business to see to it or mend it: that is all that

modern commerce, the counting-house forgetful of the workshop, will do for us herein.<sup>32</sup>

Here, as in so much of his later writing, Morris makes vivid the deleterious effects of industrial development by maintaining ‘pleasant trees’ and ‘blackened rivers’ in fraught equilibrium. Although he never succumbs to despair at what we have lost, he also refuses to allow his listeners to become complacent in fantasies of lost beauty. This is a technique he learned from John Ruskin, whose later writing is also rife with images of dying nature, the most memorable being *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century* – that exhaustive weather report on late-Victorian air pollutants and their moral meaning.<sup>33</sup> Such works provided Morris with a more complex vision of ecology in a state of flux, one in which brightness and beauty are inextricably tied to corruption and decay.

Such imagery would seem to be absent from Morris’s vision of the future, suggesting that his idyllic vision stands apart from the hybrid imagery of Jefferies, Ruskin, and other practitioners of ecogothic. Nevertheless, the dark ecological perspective from which Morris’s visionary ecology arose is present in the frame narrative of *News from Nowhere*. At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist envisions a brighter future from his seat on the underground railway, ‘that vapour-bath of hurried and discontented humanity’. At the novel’s melancholy conclusion, after we, along with Morris’s protagonist, have shared extensive experience of this idyllic future vision, it fades, and the narrator reflects that he was ‘conscious all along that I was really seeing all that new life from the outside’, and decides he could not have stayed; because he belongs ‘so entirely to the unhappiness of the past’ that future happiness ‘even would weary you’.<sup>34</sup> The vision has added ‘hope’ to his ‘struggle’, but he must continue to strive for this vision fair; a vision made all the more vivid via its grounding in a darker perception of nature.

## NOTES

1. Richard Jefferies, *After London*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 1-3. (Subsequently *After London*) ‘Water rats’ here presumably refers not to actual rats (i.e. members of the genus *Rattus*), but to the old English country name for the Water Vole, (*Arvicola amphibius* L.; hence ‘Ratty’ in *The Wind in the Willows*).
2. Philip Henderson, ed, *The Letters of William Morris to his Family and Friends*. London: Longman’s, Green & Co., 1950, p. 236. (Afterwards Henderson)
3. ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the

- Late Twentieth Century', in Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 149-182; Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. xv.
4. Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000-1887*, Boston: Ticknor & Co, 1880, 470 pp. Morris's review appears as 'Looking Backward' (1889), in Clive Wilmer, ed, *William Morris: News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, London: Penguin, 1993, p. 357. (Afterwards Wilmer)
  5. 'The Society of the Future' (1887), in Norman Kelvin, ed, *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, Minneapolis, New York: Dover Publications, 1999, p. 183. (Afterwards Kelvin)
  6. 'How we live and how we might live' (1884), in May Morris, ed, *The Collected Works of William Morris*, London: Longman's, Green & Co., 1915, Vol. XXIII, p. 24.
  7. Kelvin, p. 177.
  8. In his later work, Jacques Derrida has explored ways in which the rational subject achieves an imagined autonomy by rejecting its connection to the physical body, which is identified with the animal. Thus, 'the discourse on the subject ... continues to link subjectivity with man. Even if it acknowledges that the "animal" is capable of auto-affection [or autonomy, freedom], this discourse nevertheless does not grant it subjectivity'; "Eating Well", or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview', in Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor & Jean-Luc Nancy, eds, *Who Comes After the Subject?*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 105. We might thus, following Louise Westling, describe the critique of humanism I have been discussing, in its concern with resituating the constitutive role of the animal in humanist discourse, as 'animal posthumanism'; Louis Westling, 'Literature, the Environment, and the Question of the Posthuman', in Catrin Gersdorf & Sylvia Meyer, eds, *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006, p. 29.
  9. Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power', in Paul Rabino, ed, *The Foucault Reader*, London: Vintage Books, 2010, p. 59.
  10. Henderson, p. 236.
  11. Dunja M. Mohr, 'Transgressive utopian dystopias: the Postmodern reappearance of utopia in the disguise of dystopia', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, Vol. 55, part 1, 2007, p. 10.
  12. 'Progress versus utopia, or, Can we imagine the future?', in Frederic Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, London: Verso, 2005, p. 286.
  13. *After London*, p. 3, p. 15.
  14. Wilmer, p. 104.

15. Peter Preston, *Dreaming London: The Future City in Morris & Others*, London: The William Morris Society, 2007, p. 44.
16. Wilmer, pp. 193-194.
17. J. R. Ebbatson, 'Visions of wild England: William Morris and Richard Jefferies', *Journal of the William Morris Society* III, No. 3, Spring 1977, p. 21.
18. In his monograph on Jefferies, Salt laments that 'his early books are disfigured by many revolting details of the seamy side of sportsmanship, which are intolerable to any reader in whom either the humane or artistic instinct is well developed'; Henry Salt, *Richard Jefferies: His Life & His Ideals*, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1970, p. 37.
19. Richard Jefferies, 'Natural History', *Knowledge: An Illustrated Magazine of Science*, 5 January 1883, p. 6.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 228-229.
22. Stephen D. Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization', *Victorian Studies: A Journal of the Humanities, Arts and Sciences* Vol. 33, part 4 (Summer 1990), p. 623.
23. Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, rev. ed. 2004, 386 pp.; Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001, 478 pp.; Helen Tiffin & Graham Huggan, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, London: Routledge, 2010, 245 pp.
24. Val Plumwood, 'Decolonizing Relationships with Nature', in Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin, eds, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 503, 504.
25. Darko Suvin, *Victorian Science Fiction in the UK: The Discourses of Knowledge and Power*, Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1983, 461 pp.; William Delisle Hay, *The Doom of the Great City: Being the Narrative of a Survivor Written A.D. 1942*. London: Newman, 1880, 52 pp.; J. Drew Gay, *The Mystery of the Shroud: A Tale of Socialism*. Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1887, 134 pp.; Robert Barr, *The Face and the Mask*, London: Hutchison, 1894, 304 pp.
26. Arthur Montagu Brookfield, *Simiocracy: A Fragment from Future History*, Edinburgh: Blackwood & Co., 1884, 186 pp.; Walter Copland Perry, *The Revolt of the Horses*, London: G. Richards, 1898, 229 pp.; John Ames Mitchell, *The Last American: A Fragment from the Journal of Khan-I, Prince of Dymph-Yoo-Chur, and Admiral in the Persian Navy*, New York: Stokes, 1889, 78 pp.; Henry Crocker Marriott Watson, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire; or, The Witch's Cavern*, London: Trischler, 1890, 291 pp.; William

- Fergus Hume, *The Year of Miracle: A Tale of the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred*, London: Routledge, 1891, 148 pp.; Robert Potter, *The Germ Growers: The Strange Adventures of Robert Easterley and John Wilbraham*, London: Hutchison, 1892, 274 pp.; Matthew Phipps Shiel, *The Yellow Danger*, London: Richards, 1898, 348 pp.
27. H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*, London: Heinemann, 1898, 303 pp.
  28. *After London*, pp. 37-38.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
  30. Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 141.
  31. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
  32. Wilmer, p. 252.
  33. John Ruskin, *The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century: two lectures delivered at the London Institution, February 4th and 11th 1884*, Orpington, Kent: Allen, 1884, 152 pp.
  34. Wilmer, p. 43, pp. 228, 206.