

## William Morris's *News from Nowhere*: Degrading Victorian Art and Literature

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### Abstract:

This research paper examines William Morris's perspectives regarding true art and literature in his novella, *News from Nowhere*, through mirroring two different systems in the utopia that he has invented, socialism and capitalism. According to Morris's understanding, we need a socialistic system to produce a true art because this system stands against class struggles, allows people to own pleasure in their works and endorses a popular art. On the other hand, capitalism, as the system of the Victorian age, does not permit the art and literature that Morris calls for coming into the existence because, in addition to being free from the mentioned characteristics, life becomes full of competitions resulting in labor divisions, people do not enjoy doing their works, and machines takes role of handiworks.

**Keywords:** socialism, capitalism, art, labor.

### Abstract:

To attest the existence of a genuine art in the context of a socialistic society and the impossibility of that kind of art under capitalism, Morris invents a utopia based on a socialistic system in a way that readers notice the reason behind the non-existence of art under a capitalistic system, and the necessity of socialism for producing the art. In this socialistic atmosphere, art and literature mingle in people's daily lives. People live in a pleasurable life because of their reconciliation of their daily works with art; this attachment of their daily works with art leads them to spend happy times in their lives and enjoy works that they are doing in life. In contradiction to the Victorian age, dwellers of the utopia become free from any restriction that once existed upon a labor and undermine any obligations against labor because the freedom of work results in creating a true art and literature among the dwellers of the utopia. Thus, William Morris's *News from Nowhere* rebukes art and literature that exist under capitalism, and at the same time, appraises the medieval period and the life of the dwellers of the utopia for allowing a system based on socialism in which art becomes a part of labor, and this art truly reflects in their life.

Victorian books do not render the exact representation of life. According to Morris's depiction in *News from Nowhere*, the economical problems that exist in the nineteenth century occupy Victorian writers' minds. Their brains are like a "cobweb" for economical purpose so that these writers cannot shed light on the important issues of life. In examining Hammond's historical speech regarding the problems that result from capitalism, readers observe the bad consequences of bourgeois ideology in front of people's imaginations (Buzard 93). Instead of revealing the matters that the society struggles with, Victorian authors pursue a wrong direction in their books in a way that these "old novels, who, according to the authors, [are] prepared to trample down all good manners in the pursuit of utilitarian knowledge" (Morris 56). In Morris's view, Victorian novels, should have provided some moral lessons about the society rather than ignoring all social matters for the sake of pursuing happiness. On the contradictory to Morris's perspective, Victorian novels undermine good manner for the sake of laughter while in reality people live unhappily in life.

However, Victorian artists and writers think that their works should reflect their contemporary life; conversely, their works never demonstrate that convention. Through the characters of *News from Nowhere*, Morris reminds Victorian readers that artists and writers need to follow the Victorian belief based on "a theory that art and imaginative literature ought to deal with contemporary life" (Morris 131), but according to Matthew Beaumont, their works "appeared to be inconsistent with a world shaped by temporal and spatial insecurity" (34). In other words, these writers and artists never follow the convention to record life as if it is. To continue undermining Victorian art and literature, Old Hammond, a professional historian character in *News from Nowhere*, examines Victorian art and literature and attests the detachment of these works from the life of which these works have been produced; he thinks that if these novels portray the contemporary life of the age, "the author always took care ... to disguise, or exaggerate, or idealise, and in some way or another make it strange; so that, for the verisimilitude there was, he might just well have dealt with the times of the Pharaohs" (Morris 131). Therefore, art and literature do not reveal to readers from any manner of the reality of Victorian life because, as Beaumont believes, these writers and artists "[naturalize] the present even as [they alienate] it from human understanding" (38). Thus, Victorian novels do not provide a precise depiction of the period while these books do not make any effect on people's understanding of the bad system that exist – capitalism.

To produce a genuine art, Morris considers pleasure as the most important component of labor because a pleasurable work results in a productive art. Therefore, people, opposite to the Victorian age, must possess enough freedom in choosing works that these people like. This freedom does not sound real until life becomes empty from any idleness – slaveholders or employers of labor. According to Morris, this idleness is a disease that needs an immediate treatment because labor is not pleasurable while these idle people force other people to work for them. To this regard, Morris portrays the Victorian period in *News from Nowhere* by recording the present as a past so as to show the emptiness of art and literature because of non – availability of pleasure in work due to the obligations upon labor by capitalists.

In addition, the art in which William Morris calls for is a popular art. This kind of art does not exist in the Victorian age because class struggles cause a distinction in labor’s product. This distinction does not allow all people to obtain the same benefit from a product. Therefore, capitalism stands against Morris’s demand because this system produces labor division such as “slave-wares for the poor and mere wealth-wasting wares for the rich” (Morris 160). Thus, a separation of a group of people from the rest of society using the same product results in isolation of art in society and an obstacle towards producing a popular art. For Kinna, *News from Nowhere* endorses two basic matters; “[Morris’s] hostility to the effects of industrialization and his opposition to the division of labor” (493). While the system destroys nature because of having many factories, this system also results in a division of labor in a way that people do not have leisure in labor. As a result, the popular art—as Morris believes, it should be shared by all people—cannot be achieved (Brantlinger 37). Thus, Morris belittles all the Victorian art and literature when he notices the impossibility of existence a popular labor among people.

In Morris’s point of view in *News from Nowhere*, books that are produced under the context of capitalistic system (the Victorian period) contain infinite competition. This competition does not only denote the hardship of life during the period, but this competition also undermines those books that have been written in the period because these books show contentment with this bad social tradition while the contents of the books duplicate the same conflict that exists wrongly within society. According to Ellen, a character of *News from Nowhere*, these novels were written based on “the imaginations of the lives of other people”:

There is something loathsome about them. Some of them, indeed, do here and there show some feeling for those whom the history – books call ‘poor,’ and of the misery of whose lives we have some inkling; but presently they give it up, and towards the end of the story we must be contented to see the hero and heroine living happily in an island of bliss on other people’s troubles; and that after a long series of sham troubles ( or mostly sham) of their own making, illustrated by dreary introspective nonsense about their feelings and aspirations, and all the rest of it; while the world must even then have gone on its way, and dug and sewed and baked and built and carpentered round about these useless – animals. (Morris 175-6)

Here, Ellen reveals the lack of compatibility between Victorian novels and the actual Victorian life; she considers these books an inaccurate depiction of Victorian life since people live in suffering and full of competition, poor characters of these novels reach happy destinations. These books have basis in “bourgeois individualism with its cult of personality and its massive blindness to the larger workings of history and to the larger interests of society” (Brantlinger 41). Thus, these novels, according to Morris’s depiction, mislead Victorian readers for not portraying life accurately.

In comparing *News from Nowhere* to Victorian novels, readers notice that Morris’s *Nowhere* does not follow Victorian conventions for writing novels. Although, *News from Nowhere* has a quest plot—examining art and literature under capitalism and socialism, opposite to Victorian novels, this novel does not include any plot or multiple plots. For Morris, class division causes Victorian novels to have conflict (Brantlinger 42). While life of dwellers do not possess any class struggle, constructing a plot seems meaningless. Also, the characters of *News from Nowhere*—opposite to Victorian novels—does not go under the process of development because all people own equal rights in the society so that these people do not need to have social ambitions. For Brantlinger, “if social injustice has been eliminated –then there is no need for plot” (42). Thus, the plot means a reference for the injustice that exists under the context of capitalism so that the Victorian novels do not ignore this convention.

Another reason for not finding art in the Victorian period is using elaborate machines instead of handiworks. Because of capitalism, machinery replaces handiworks in the period. Therefore, life forms a new shape in “which [this mechanical life] despised everybody who could use his hands” (Morris 58). People construct their minds based on the ways of which machines work so that this shift from work results in losing art. Forming a genuine art becomes impossible while people entirely depend on the imitation of machinery to work so that country people even forget to bake bread. Art dies with the revelation of machines in the Victorian period while all the ideas of handicrafts have been driven from machinery. Henry Morsom, an old antiquary in *News from Nowhere* who relates the historical shift from handiworks to machine, emphasizes the loss of art in the period because of the lack of aspiration in their works while works of art replaced by machines. As it is clear, in *News from Nowhere*, even “ the towns people who came to into the country used to pick up the agricultural arts

by carefully watching the way in which the machines work, gathering an idea of handicraft from machinery” (Morris 199). Thus, capitalism in which it introduces machines to the Victorian people spoils people’s minds in providing an atmosphere that creates a genuine art that becomes improbable in the period because machines control life, and as a result, people lose their aspirations for producing art.

Furthermore, Victorian people divorce nature from Victorian life. While people are addicted to using machines, these people ignore the important part of life – nature. Nature shares a great role in aspiring artists and writers to create a true art and literature. Since recognition to machines, as Clara notices, everything has value, “except mankind, animate and inanimate – ‘nature’” (Morris 200). In order to make reconciliation with life and create a genuine art, people must look upon nature as “their slave, since they thought ‘nature’ was something outside of them” (200). According to Morris’s view in *News from Nowhere*, this separation of life from nature results from capitalistic system because all people in the nineteenth century depend on the products of factories, and these factories become a destructive power for nature. Davis notices Morris’s depiction in *News from Nowhere* among of the dwellers of the utopia when he states, “work and art—and nature—blend harmoniously” (215). Work, art, and nature all give pleasure to people and cause the beauty that exist in the life. Therefore, people must break down the capitalism and replace this system with socialism in order to make an atmosphere in which people obtain aspirations from nature in a way that people (writers and artists) enable to get a benefit from the nature. This demand that Morris asks for is an attempt “to return to the fertile spring of a mythic cycle of art” (Gordon 272). Therefore, by a return to nature, producing a genuine art becomes accessible.

Although nature shares a significant role in producing art and literature, for Morris, nature cannot stand alone. Nature in present must be mingled with the most beautiful works of the art of the past; both of them are two essential parts in producing the genuine art in which Victorian people divorce them both in their works. Thus, Morris demands Victorian people’s reconciliation with nature and the works of past – the medieval age—to produce the true art that exists in the life of the dwellers of the utopia.

Opposite to the Victorian period, Morris expresses his admiration to the medieval period in *News from Nowhere*. Readers observe the connection between the dwellers of utopia and the medieval age, especially in their clothes; William Guest, narrator of *News from Nowhere*, often shares his admiration for the beauty of the clothes of the dwellers of the utopia, and he thinks that “their dress was somewhat between that of the ancient classical costume and the simpler forms of the fourteenth century garments” (Morris 53). In Morris’s view, the existence of such kind of resemblance in the dwellers’ clothes to the past attests the reality of existence of genuine art in the utopia. For Morris, people should follow the footsteps of the past so as to find a genuine art and a true literature.

William Guest finds similarity between the medieval age and the life of the utopia not in costumes. But also in architecture of the buildings of the utopia also highlights correlation that exists in both societies. Since, as Gordon notes, “during the medieval period, all production, at least in Morris’s eyes, was individualistic in method, for the workmen were combined into great associations as citizens, not as workmen” (Gordon 271); therefore, they could produce art. Thus, the same in the utopia, all dwellers, however, are workmen, and simultaneously, these people are citizens. Therefore, the beauty that shapes the life of the utopia originally follows the same steps of the medieval period. While, in describing utopian dwellers’ buildings, Guest notices:

They were all pretty in design, and as solid as might be, but countrified in appearance, like yeomen’s dwellings, some of them of red brick like those by the river, but more of timber and plaster, which were by the necessity of their construction so like medieval houses of the same material that I fairly felt as if I were alive in the fourteenth century (Morris 61).

These architectural designs for the buildings of the dwellers of the utopia look like the medieval buildings in which these designs demonstrate the essential senses for their decorations such as “trim and clean, and orderly and bright” (Morris 105). On the other hand, Victorian buildings, which have been kept among the dwellings of the utopia, look “as worthless, and public nuisances” (69). In Old Hammond’s view, the ugliness of these Victorian buildings serves “as a kind of foil to the beautiful ones which we build now” (60) because designs and decorations of these buildings completely stand opposition to buildings that dwellers of the utopia build. Thus, similar correlation of buildings of the utopia to the medieval buildings emphasize on Morris’s notion for value of art in the past and necessity of such kind of art in labor and, conversely, reveals the emptiness of such kind of art in the Victorian period.

According to Morris’s depiction in *News from Nowhere*, socialism is the most favorite system to allow art and literature to exist among people. Morris’s preference to socialism has been mostly based on Marx’s view for a socialistic society. From Holzman’s point of view, *News from Nowhere* is “an English Marxism, particularly a Marxism with the humane face of William Morris” (597). As we see, the society is free from class division and capitalists, and money does not have value so that, as Morris depicts, art becomes a part of labor. To attest the reality of this depiction, the art and literature clearly reflects in the life of dwellers of the utopia; life becomes enjoyable for all people equally. This life results from the recognition to the system that Morris demands for his life; as it is depicted in the utopia, life seems an architectural decoration. Bridges, buildings, and

the common material of these people's daily lives have been decorated so beautifully that William Guest sometimes doubts the reality of these wonderful architectural designs that exist among these people. As Plotz believes, "the work of art forms a material part of human lives rather than simply representing those" (932). As it is clear, the utopian dwellings look so beautiful that Guest sometimes thinks that an artist has designed. As we see, for Guest, the bridge that he sees shakes his belief, and – in Guest's view – this bridge is "never seen such an one out of an illuminated manuscript, for not even the Ponte Vecchio at Florence came anywhere near it" (Morris 48). Also, the designs of the buildings are far beyond Guest's imaginations; these building are "well executed, and designed with a force and directness which I had never noticed in modern work before" (Morris 52-3). Everything, even common material like a pipe, has been designed handsomely. On the contradictory to the capitalism, labor in the utopia is pleasurable for people so that the dwellers of the utopia are able to shape their life beautifully.

The influence of art does not only revolve on the material things (clothes and buildings) of the dwellers of the utopia, but this influence can also be noticed on the people's faces and ages of the utopia. These people are young and beautiful so much so that William Guest is surprised when he meets these people. Through this depiction, Morris shows the importance of the genuine art for life. As we see, the existence of such kind of art results in happiness of the life of the dwellers of utopia. While labor becomes enjoyable for these people, all people spend the moments of their lives happily so that these people look younger. Thus, some women in the Guest House approve the need for that kind art in life and show the reflection of such kind of art through their beautiful faces. According to Guest's observance, these women look "as good as the gardens, the architecture, and the male men" (Morris 53). Thus, readers observe a parallel connection of appearances among decoration of the buildings, materials, and all people in the life of the utopia.

Moreover, Morris shows how the socialistic system provides equality for all sectors of life. In Sypher's view, only women's natural tendency for housework is not changed. In the utopia, women "are not coerced into this role by elders or by economic necessity" (Sypher 98). Therefore, Morris has not isolated women from the society. But, instead, women have "happy-looking in expression of face [and] shapely and well-knit of body" (Morris 53). Besides depicting an architectural life in the utopia that results from the practicality of art among people. Morris highlights the practical importance of this kind of system for life in regard to providing enough chance to allow art mingles with people's lives and bodies.

Throughout *News from Nowhere*, Morris obviously reaffirms the notion of a popular art in the utopia. Actually, all people participate in producing art. Besides portraying a collective creative art in the utopia, this art should be used to serve all people equally. Dwellers of the utopia prefer keeping art among themselves as an appreciation to the value of the art that exists among them; as we see, "wherever there is a place where picture are kept as curiosities permanently it is called a National Gallery" (80). In other words, the dwellers of the utopia keep pictures under a collective name "National Gallery"; this name highlights the collectivity of art among the people of the utopia, and simultaneously, this name does not separate itself from the rest of the people.

Popularity of art reflects on everything, even a simple pipe, among the life of the dwellers of the utopia. In this utopia, architecture becomes so common among the dwellers that these people produce nothing without an architectural design. William Guest cannot hide his astonishment about the carving of the pipe; he wonders how these people enable "turning out such trivialities" (Morris 80). Indeed, Dick and Guest consider the pipe to be a "toy," but the carving of the pipe does not surprise Dick because "there are plenty of people who can carve—in fact, almost everybody" (81). While art becomes popular among all people, life gains an architectural design because all people enjoy their works, and as a result, art mingles with these people's works.

Opposite to the Victorian period, the dwellers of the utopia value their works based on the profit that human beings can gain from these works. While, according to Morris's depiction in the utopia, the interest of a work belongs to all of society not just a single person who is a capitalist. As a result, all products become useful in life as it happens in the utopia. For these people, work means an enjoyable and a profitable work. Likewise, Freeman-Moir considers work to be a "quality of restfulness" (28). Therefore, in this community, work is not boring, but this work causes pleasure and progression. As we see, while Old Hammond talks to William Guest, Hammond emphasizes the importance of this concept by stating, "since I must talk, make my talk profitable" (Morris 89). He does not want to spend his time on talking nonsense. Therefore, a profitable work dramatizes the life of the utopia.

To notice the difference of the state of art between the two systems capitalism and socialism, Morris denotes the existence of the reality of popular art in the utopia, and on the contrary, the separation of art from labor in the Victorian period through William Guest's observance on some wall-pictures in Old Hammond's house. In Guest's view, the subjects of these pictures "were taken from the queer old-world myths and imaginations which in yesterday's world only about half a dozen people in the country knew anything about" (Morris 130). Opposite to that period, "everyone knows the tales" in the utopia, and for these people of the utopia, these pictures "are graceful and pleasant subjects" (130). Here, indeed, readers observe a clear opposition between these two societies and know that the art that exists in the utopia becomes completely practicable and

productive.

In addition to the existence of popular art, Morris attests the pleasantness of a life that results from terminating of capitalism because “ ‘popular art’ under “plutocracy” is impossible” (Brantlinger 37). Art exists in life, as it is in the utopia, and this art must become empty from any commercial restrictions. Only then can the true art be produced, that results in a life that is full of pleasure and beauty—as it is for the dwellers of the utopia. According to Kelvin, while these people have pleasure in work, this feeling results in art (426). To this regard, readers notice the practicality of this notion while William Guest has a breakfast with a group of people in the utopia; during the breakfast, Guest astonishes to see:

Everything was cooked and served with a daintiness which showed that those who had prepared it were interested in it; but there was no excess either of quantity or of gourmandize; everything was simple, though so excellent of its kind; and it was made clear to us that this was no feast, only an ordinary meal. The glass, crockery, and plate were very beautiful to my eyes, used to the study of medieval art; but a nineteenth-century club-haunter would, I daresay, have found them rough and lacking in finish; the crockery being lead-glazed pot-ware, though beautifully ornamented; the only porcelain being here and there a piece of old oriental ware. The glass, again, though elegant and quaint, and very varied in form, was somewhat bubbled and hornier in texture than the commercial articles of the nineteenth century. The furniture and general fittings of the hall were much of a piece with the table-gear, beautiful in form and highly ornamented, but without the commercial “finish” of the joiners and cabinet-makers of our time. Withal, there was a total absence of what the nineteenth century calls “comfort”—that is, stuffy inconvenience; so that, even apart from the delightful excitement of the day, I had never eaten my dinner so pleasantly before (Morris 130-1).

The leisure that these dwellers of the utopia with Guest obtain from only a simple breakfast meal evokes a new and an incomparable joy for Guest. In this meal narration, all the basic necessities of life, in Guest’s view, gather together to make this wonderful enjoyment that the narrator feels during the meal; Morris shows that art cannot have effect alone in the society, but this art must pursue a reaction with the simplicity of life, the leisure of labor, and equity of people. Therefore, the dwellers of the utopia enjoy their lives by embracing each basic component of life.

Although the dwellers of the utopia are so interested in their life, these people do not relate the art and literature that these people produce to their daily lives; pictures and poems “seldom deal with [their] modern life” (Morris 131). Instead, “dreadful times of the past [become] so interesting to” these people of the utopia (131). The life of Victorian people attracts the dwellers of the utopia so that the content of what the dwellers of the utopia write or paint a historical event of life under capitalism. For the people of utopia, life becomes the essential concentration of these people’s thinking. Therefore, they do not prefer to write or paint about themselves while “the world [they] live in which interests” (175) them. A society requires writing book while the society possesses shortages like the Victorian age so that book about their life becomes unnecessary for the dwellers of the utopia because their life does not involve any lack.

Labor and art are identical in the utopia. Morris does not portray the art as a separate part of labor under the socialistic system in the utopia. In Kinna’s view, “Morris’s love of art led him to argue that the abolition of the division must mean its eradication and a return to specialized labor” (510). As the division of labor dies out in the society, people then enable to produce art. Therefore, art becomes a crucial part of the labor; the division of labor—as it exists in the Victorian age—does not possess any space in the life of the utopia. Thus:

Slave wares for the poor and mere wealth-wasting wares for the rich—ceased to be made. That remedy was, in short, the production of what used to be called art, but which has no name amongst us now, because it has become a necessary part of the labour of every man who produces (Morris 160).

In this society that Morris depicts in the utopia, art becomes a fundamental part of labor, but also this society does not have any name for art; in other words, art is labor, or labor is art. Both of art and labor revolves together so that these people enable the production of art that Morris calls for.

While art and labor become identical under the socialistic system, labor no longer is painful. Work for the dwellers of the utopia becomes enjoyable since they reconcile art in their works. For this reason, “the art or work-pleasure, as one ought to call it” (Morris 160) portray the reality of the existence of the utopia; these people enjoy at their works and the decorations that these people make on the products that they produce. The beauty of these decorations that the dwellers of the utopia make in their works leads these people to “[get] pleasure into [their] work; then [they] became conscious of that pleasure, and cultivated it, and took care that [they] had our fill of it; and then all was gained, and [they] were happy” (160). Thus, the art that mingles with these people’s works results in the pleasure that all people ecclesiastically enjoy in experiencing the moments of life in their works. In Morris’s vision, labor becomes enjoyable as long as people have enough freedom for producing and decorating in their works.

The art that Morris considers as a work-pleasure roots in the works of art of the past, the mediaeval age. The art of the past with nature becomes a basic guideline for any work of art that the dwellers of the utopia produce. The people of the utopia can produce the true art that Morris demands for life while these people produce art based on the art of the past and “[mingle] with the lovely nature of the present” (Morris166). William Guest, the narrator of the novel, witnesses an art that exhibits the work of the past and “nature of the present”(166). According to Morris’s depiction in *News from Nowhere*, people can produce such kind of art when these people live in the society in which socialism becomes the system of life, as it exists in the utopia. Opposite to a socialistic society, capitalism prevents producing such kind of art because this system destroys nature, and people cannot benefit from the nature that Morris thinks it as an essential part of producing the true art. Both of them, works of the past and nature, possess an important role in producing art because “both of them, in fact, the result of the long centuries of tradition, which had compelled men to produce the art, and compelled nature to run into the mould of the ages”(166). Thus, nature and the works of the past provide a beautiful inspiration in producing art. As a result, the art that Morris calls for in which it revolves in the life of the utopia beautify the world and gives pleasure to the artist and the rest people.

The benefit of pleasure in work that results in art is “[pushing] out the mechanical toil”(Morris 201). As soon as people obtain familiarity with the pleasure in work, “machine after machine was quietly dropped under the excuse that machines could not produce works of art”(201). In relating the historical facts, Morsom one of the dwellers of the utopia, reveals the cause of the Great Change (the time that people realize that art or work-pleasure becomes necessary for life) to William Guest; according to Morsom’s historical retelling, people start producing art after the change, since “works of art were more and more called for”(201). Through this scene, Morris shows the positive points of the socialistic system, and at the same time, he reveals the cause for demanding such change from the capitalism into the socialism through portraying an ecstatic pleasure in labor.

Equality among people becomes a crucial reason to cause the beauty of the life of the utopia. In addition, all people are equal in their rights. These people possess enough freedom in choosing the work that they like independently or they think this work is necessary without forcing any person. This kind of atmosphere leads people to gain reflection of art in their daily lives. As Brantlinger notes, “the only way to achieve truly ‘popular art’ is through the creation of a completely democratic society” (37). Opposite to the utopia, readers witness “the sordidness and bareness of life”(Morris 212) of the Victorian period in which this kind of life mostly results from inequality among people, rich and poor. This division that exists among the Victorian people, unlike the dwellers of the utopia, results in an ugly life in which art dies out with restriction because the inequality becomes:

an essential condition of the life of these rich men that they should not themselves make what they wanted for the adornment of their lives, but should force those to make them whom they forced to live pinched and sordid lives; and that as a necessary consequence the sordidness and pinching, the ugly barrenness of those ruined lives, were worked up into the adornment of the lives of the rich, and art dies out amongst men (Morris 212-3).

As Morris depicts in *News from Nowhere*, to get rid of this ruined lives and reflect art in their lives, people need to break down the class struggles that exist in the society, and this reaction cannot happen until these people replace the system from capitalism into socialism. For Morris, while people possess freedom in their works, these people feel pleasure in labor; a freedom that enables them to produce art that results in a life that resembles the life of the utopia.

Thus, William Morris exposes the status of art and literature in both systems of socialism and capitalism by portraying the life of the dwellers of the utopia in *News from Nowhere*. In this depiction, Morris reveals the reason behind the emptiness of art and literature under capitalism—the Victorian period. Although many novels are written in the period, these novels only provide a fake representation of the society. A genuine art becomes improbable while labor is not enjoyable for people; hence while Victorian rich people force other poor people to work, labor is not pleasurable. As a result, a popular art does not exist in the society. Under a capitalistic system, people forget handiwork, and the Victorian people depend entirely on machines. Thus, creative art and literature becomes a dream while these people think like a machine. Though many factories cause the destruction of nature that, for Morris, nature possesses a great role in producing a true art, Victorian people become unable to get benefit from this nature. Thus, these people are not only unable to use nature to their imagination, but they also ignore the important works of the past—the medieval period. Therefore, William Guest, narrator of the novel, finds similarity in arts, buildings, clothes, and architectures between the medieval age and the utopia because, according to Morris’s depiction in *News from Nowhere*, art and literature becomes more accessible under socialism. Opposite to the Victorian period, art and labor no longer separate from each other for the dwellings of the utopia while all people find work as a pleasurable and profitable activity of life under the socialistic system. As a result, this life becomes so enjoyable and beautiful for all dwellers equally, and this enjoyment reflects on these people’s works and faces. Thus, as Morris depicts in the utopia, art and literature become practical and real in the life of the dwellers of the utopia under the existence of socialism.

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