

第二届全国青年创新翻译大赛

C组——英译中【原文】

William Morris

William Morris (1834-1896) was one of the nineteenth century's most important designers. One of the principal founders of the Arts and Crafts Movement, he championed handmade craftsmanship truth to materials and the use of nature as a source of pattern design. Through his firm Morris & Co. he was responsible for producing hundreds of patterns for wallpapers, furnishing fabrics, tapestries, carpets and embroideries, helping to introduce a new aesthetic into British interiors.

Morris created a visual language that is uniquely 'Morrissian' - recognizable through his skillful arrangement of flowers, winding stems and undulating leaf shapes. His ability to capture both the beauty of British gardens and the wildness of its countryside into complex, well-ordered and attractive patterns for the home appealed to Victorian customers, and continues to resonate with audiences today.

For Morris, the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution - pollution, construction on a massive scale, and oppressive and alienated working conditions - combined to form an anxiety that Britain's 'green and pleasant land' was in danger of disappearing. Throughout his life he was to fight against this menace in remarkable ways: from challenging industrial manufacturing and its dehumanizing effect on workers by promoting quality handmade production, to agitating for full-scale revolution. His conviction that art and craft could change people's lives for the better means that Morris's floral patterns should not be regarded merely as reminders of a lost, bucolic past. Instead his patterns bring nature over the threshold, covering walls and furniture with flowers, trees and plants, reminding the Victorian public what there was to lose if

the march of industrial ‘progress’ remained unchallenged.

There was no indication in Morris’s upbringing of his future career as a designer, yet his childhood experiences laid the foundation for a lifelong appreciation and spiritual connection to the world of art and the natural environment.

Morris was the eldest boy of nine children, and as he acknowledged, had ‘the good luck only of being born respectable and rich’. This privileged upbringing was afforded by the financial success of his broker father. The Morris family occupied a series of large houses in and around Walthamstow and Woodford - pleasant Essex villages providing the benefits of country living while still close to London.

Although the rural character of this area was to change within Morris's lifetime, in the mid-nineteenth century it still maintained a sense of being cut off from London. This was mainly due to the broad marshlands of the River Lea, a tributary of the Thames which formed a natural barrier separating the area from the capital's easternmost reaches. Morris would later name a pattern after the river. In his 1890 novel, *News from Nowhere*, Morris evoked his childhood impressions of the empty Essex landscape, describing: ‘the wide green sea of the Essex marshland, with the great domed line of the sky, and the sun shining down in one food of peaceful light over the long distance’.

The nearby ancient woodland of Epping Forest was also a site of regular exploration for the young Morris. From the large parkland estate of Woodford Hall, his home from 1840 until 1847, he would set out on his pony, traversing the forest which he later claimed to know ‘yard by yard’. The tapestries that hung in the Elizabethan hunting lodge on the forest’s edge held particular fascination for him: ‘How well remember as a boy my first acquaintance with a room hung with faded greenery...and the impression of romance it made on me.’ Morris’s own tapestry production would attempt to emulate the historical romance he experienced in first encountering the art form as a boy.

From a young age, Morris was an avid reader, and many books he discovered in his father's library as a child were to remain lifelong favorites. One such book was *Gerard's Herbal*, a guide to the uses of plants compiled by the sixteenth-century botanist and herbalist John Gerard. As a child Morris spent many hours poring over its woodcut illustrations of plant forms, and in adulthood he shared his enthusiasm with his daughter May, who remembered how 'my father would point out this and that, such as the special elegance of the curves of the dog-tooth violet combined here with the wood-bell and wood sorrel'. The impact of Morris's early study is suggested later in the flat forms of his floral designs, as well as in his interest in the uses of plants as natural dyestuffs for fabric.

While Morris was a student at Oxford University, his fascination with the past intensified, providing him with an escape into a world of medieval history and poetry. He shared these passions with a close group of companions, who included his best friend, Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898). Together Morris and Burne-Jones pursued an interest in art and architecture. They found an affinity with John Ruskin's book *The Stones of Venice* (1853), particularly the chapter 'The Nature of Gothic', in which the art historian and philosopher decried the moral bankruptcy of Victorian art and society, urging a return to the values of the medieval age. Ruskin's views immediately resonated with Morris's rebellious nature and instinctive appreciation of the past, and contributed to his lifelong belief in the transformative power of art.