

The ZINEgeist

Cyrus, Georgia, Camryn



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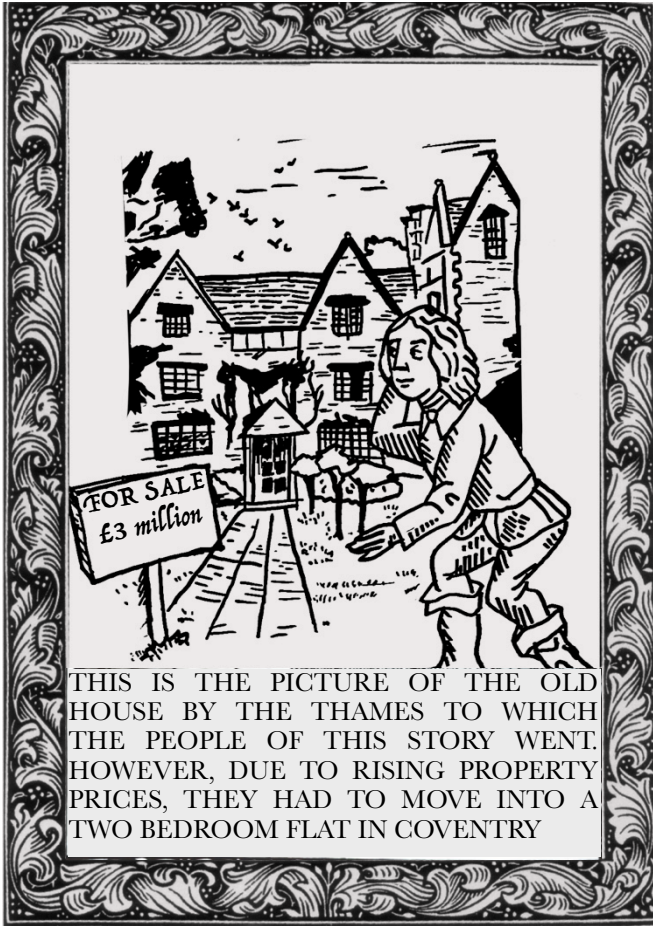
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THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE OLD HOUSE BY THE THAMES TO WHICH THE PEOPLE OF THIS STORY WENT. HOWEVER, DUE TO RISING PROPERTY PRICES, THEY HAD TO MOVE INTO A TWO BEDROOM FLAT IN COVENTRY

Following his insightful trip to the year 2090,

'William Guest' re-emerges from the dark clouds that consumed him in ...



2023 BRITAIN

'FROM CRISIS TO HOPE'

crisis [noun]

A time when a difficult or important decision must be made.

The turning point of a disease when an important change takes place, indicating either recovery or death.



Following the devastating effects of COVID-19, The United Kingdom has reached a point of undeniable

economic contraction (Smith, 2023). With the annual rate of inflation reaching 11.1% in October 2022 and

10.4% in February 2023 – tax increases, rising prices, energy price hikes, social security cuts and stagnating wages have pushed the country into **A COST OF LIVING CRISIS** (Pybus, 2022).



‘That’ll be twenty pounds, please.’

I blushed, and said, stammering ‘Please don’t take it amiss if I ask you; I mean no offence: but – don’t you perceive my payment a troublesome and roundabout custom? That ferrying and giving people casts around the water is your *business*, which you would do for anybody?’

He laughed loud and merrily, as if the idea of *not* being paid for his work was a very funny joke.

[*News from Nowhere*, p. 9]



While these economic shocks are not exclusive to the United Kingdom, with the number of global unemployment increasing by an estimated 33 million (United Nations, 2022), the pandemic has illuminated the British government's ill-preparedness for a mass-scale crisis such as COVID-19 and a level of political dissension that has lingered almost three years since its outbreak.

It begs us to consider how this country will continue to respond to the ever-present issue of climate change and

whether the current Western way of life will be sufficient
in our inevitable need for mass ecological restoration.



‘I don’t understand,’ said I.

‘Why would you continue to conduct your affairs in such a way? Was not the parliament on the one side a king of watch committee sitting to see that the interests of the Upper Classes took no hurt; and on the other side a sort of blind to delude the people into supposing that they had some share in the management of their own affairs?’

The old man answered my smile with a nasty glare, and said:
‘Now, dear guest....stop asking questions please.’

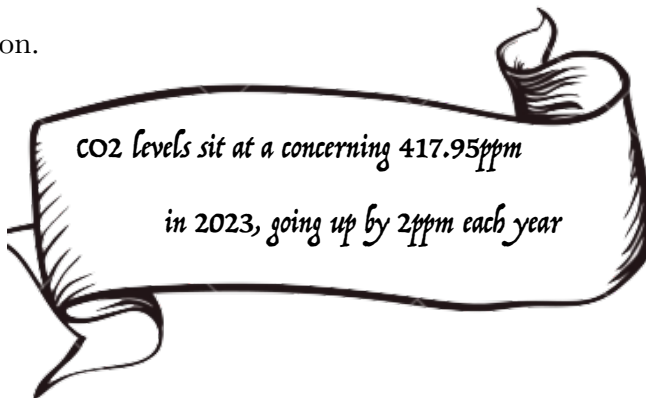
He then proposed I – ‘jog on.’

[*News from Nowhere*, p. 106]



In 1973, *The Ecologist* – a British environmental magazine, asserted that “we do not need to destroy the ecosphere to bring catastrophe

upon ourselves; all we have to do is carry on as we are – clearing forests, ‘reclaiming’ wetlands, and imposing quantities of pesticides, radioactive materials, plastic, sewage, and industrial waste upon our air, water, and land systems.’ (Goldsmith, 22). Over thirty years since its publication, we have carried on as we are, inflicting irreversible damage to the natural resources we depend upon.



CO2 levels sit at a concerning 417.95ppm

in 2023, going up by 2ppm each year

By the end of the 21st century, all areas
of the UK are projected to be warmer



‘Where are the great many cherry-trees laden with
fruit?’ [*News from Nowhere* p. 60]

‘Why aren’t there salmon swimming in the
Thames?’ [*News from Nowhere* p. 14]

‘And what on earth is carbon omission?’

We have entered a new era of environmental crisis, a turning point in which an important change takes place, indicating either recovery or death.

'If things go on unchanged, we face the collapse of global ecosystems with economic and social chaos to follow' (Garforth, 28).

While the media has a tendency to look forward; to publicize the prospect of a disastrous future resulting from our dominant humanist traditions – perhaps what is needed to progress and prevent the same level of ill-preparedness for a mass-scale crisis across the country is to regress or to look backwards.

To regress is to progress



isa Garforth's seminal 2017

text, *Green Utopias:*

Environmental Hope Before and

after Nature, dissects the radical

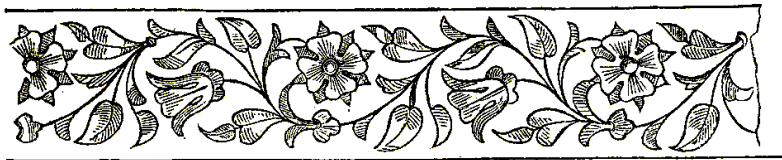
body of thought known as 'deep

ecology' that emerged during the early 1970s.

Coined by environmentalist

thinker Arne Næss (1973),

the movement took ecology



in a new direction. Instead of shallow ecology, which

saw the 'environmental as problematic in terms of

managing resource and pollution issues through

institutional reform, regulating bad practices and developing new technologies,' (Garforth, 50) deep ecology viewed the environmental crisis as the inevitable outcome of Western modernity and called for a 'transformative greening' of our consciousness.

Offering utopian alternatives to Western culture and the anthropocentric (human-centred) lifestyles that have led to ontological divide, deep ecology argues that, like humans, all organic entities deserve the right to self-realization, the capacity to unfold or blossom in their own way. Humans are a part of the natural world, and as such, nature is part of us (Garforth, 51).

Enmeshed in industrial urban societies, humans have fallen into cycles of instrumentalism, losing not only their autonomy but touch with nature and the broader conception of life's value.

Infused with the politics of personal liberation, at its core, deep ecology “expresses a desire for nothing less than the complete transformation of modern social structures and lifestyles” (Garforth, 53).

And as such, utopian visions for a greener society such as William Morris' 1890 novel *News from Nowhere* construct an ‘ecologist blueprint’ that has the potential to be utilised in our contemporary world.

Transported to a utopian future in which socialism has flourished, the protagonist – William Guest, catches a glimpse of a British society devoid of private property, devoid of financial systems, devoid of centralised authority, and devoid of dense urban areas.

Operating as an agricultural society, the population is motivated to work the land by their investment in the environment.

‘How you get people to work when there is no reward of labor, and especially how you get them to work strenuously.’

‘No reward of labor?’ said Hammond, gravely.

‘The reward of labor is life. Is that not enough?’

‘But no reward for specially good work,’ quoth I.

“Plenty of reward,” said he, -- “the reward of creation,-- the wages which God gets, as people might have said time ago.”

[*News from Nowhere* p. 126]

In alignment with The Ecologist’s *A Blueprint for Survival* (1973), *News from Nowhere* depicts a society dedicated to the conservation of resources –
Acting as a proposal for creating a sustainable society,

people exist in “small, tightly integrated communities and learn to enjoy a lifestyle that was less mobile and more communal, less consumerist and more politically participatory,” (Goldsmith, 60).

Abiding by the fundamental attributes of deep ecology, Morris uses his narrative to highlight that the industrial capitalist way of life is the root cause for the systematic ecological problems we face and links human social development to the deindustrialisation of society rather than to economic expansion and material possessions. While *News from Nowhere* is by no means the perfect blueprint for the contemporary issues circulating Britain in 2023, Morris’ exploration of deep ecology and its

themes could provide us with direction during this time
of uncertainty.

*Perhaps looking back is our only way
forward....*

PLUTARCH CANON PLEASE SHOOT ALEXANDER

This is the “*Organism Knot*”. (Næss, p.95) Alexander has come to the garden. The capital oracle, hidden from view visited by only some, said he would unloose the knot. For now, Plutarch is in conversation with Arne Næss outside the city walls as Alexander is scheming to untie the Gordian knot and Plutarch’s Canon remains unloaded, impotent.

Arne Næss: [Stop him Plutarch Canon, we are those] knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations [that he wishes to unloose] (Næss, p.95)

Plutarch Canon: Alexander finding himself unable to untie [their] knot, the ends of which were secretly twisted round and folded up within it, cut it asunder with his sword. (Plutarch, p.276)

Arne Næss: [Even without the sword he would have severed the knot]

Plutarch Canon: But Aristobulus tells us it was easy for him to undo it, by only pulling the pin out of the pole, to which the yoke was tied, and afterwards drawing off the yoke itself from below. (Plutarch, p.277)

Arne Næss: [this] the so-called struggle [it] should be interpreted in the sense of ability to coexist and cooperate in complex relationships, rather than ability to kill, exploit, and suppress. (Næss, p.96)

Plutarch Canon: which whosoever should untie, the inhabitants had a tradition, that for him was reserved the empire of the world. (Plutarch, p.276)

Arne Næss: 'Live and let live' is a more powerful ecological principle than 'Either you or me'. (Næss, p.96)

Plutarch Canon: [Look here, Gordium,] which is reputed to have been the home of the ancient king Midas [is to be captured by our Alexander.] (Plutarch, p.276)

Arne Næss: [Your Greek theatre say that Midas, was being tortured with hunger and was forced to beg! His touch gave him nothing of use. Even after he cuts our knot, Alexander lives in a] field of intrinsic relations [he can't deny.] (Næss, p.95)

Plutarch Canon: After this Alexander [will march] northward and [win] over the peoples of Cappadocia and Paphlagonia. (Plutarch, p.276)

Arne Næss: [This, again,] the so-called struggle of life, and survival of the fittest, should be interpreted in the sense of ability to coexist and cooperate in complex relationships, rather than ability to kill, exploit, and suppress. (Næss, p.96)

Plutarch Canon: [A] legend which was believed by all the barbarians. (Plutarch, p.277)

Arne Næss: [Again, Canon shoots truth. We are,] Organism[...] knots in the biospherical net. (Næss: p.95)

Plutarch Canon: Next he marched. (Plutarch, p.276)

Arne Næss: The global approach is essential, [remember our net Canon,] but regional differences must largely determine policies [not by marching in but looking out.] (Næss, p.100)

Plutarch Canon: [I hear their cheers, the soldiers voices. Alexander has] cut it asunder with his sword. (Plutarch p.276)

Arne Næss: The vulnerability of a form of life is roughly proportional to the weight of influences from afar. (Næss: p.98) [Alexander's empire breaks apart on his return to Macedon, leaving the colonised lands behind. He killed, he died. His knot was also cut when he sliced our rope. His rope, our rope.]

NEWS FOR GARFORTH

Apology for Garforth inserted into News From Nowhere

“Now,” said [Garforth], “I have come to the point of asking questions which I suppose will be dry for you to answer and difficult for you to explain” [Garforth, seeing in practice a kind of bioregionalism wondered how this society has achieved its own Deep Ecology Movement.] “What kind of a government have you?”

The old man [for Morris was by now very old] answered “the whole people is our parliament.”

“I don’t understand,” said [Garforth, often bemused.]

“No, I suppose not,” said [Morris]. “I must now shock you by telling you that we have no longer anything which you, a native of another planet, would call a government.”

[Garforth, replying with the degree of shock appropriate to an apologist] “how do you manage, and how have you come to this state of things?”

Old [Morris] settled himself in his chair with a look of enjoyment which rather alarmed [Garforth], and made [her] dread a scientific disquisition: so [she] sighed and abided. [Morris] said: “I suppose you know pretty well what the process of government was in the bad old times?[...] Do you want further explanation?”

TWO ESSAYS MAKE ONE LIFESTYLE

For one *William Morris* penny, I will become a practical Socialist, for our *Arne Ness* knot is our commonwealth, and our biospherical net makes nature, pleasure, art, us, all organisms horizontally intertwined, inseparable at all times, commonwealth is common life as we are all common friends. We are to one another, without error, and should fire the canon at the greek-roman-palladian-WhiteHouse-St.Paul's-bodleian-CapitalCalling-BankDoor-BackDoor-capitalist-explitters-SatAtop-SatUpon-We-Underneath column.

[...]the study of history and the love and practice of art forced me into a hatred of the civilization which, if things were to stop as they are, would turn history into inconsequent nonsense, and make art a collection of the curiosities of the past, which would have no serious relation to the life of the present. (Morris, How I Became a Socialist)

This lends support to our efforts to strengthen local self-government and material and mental self-sufficiency. But these efforts presuppose an impetus towards decentralization.” (Næss, p.99)

But the consciousness of revolution stirring amidst our hateful modern society prevented me, luckier than many others of artistic perceptions, from crystallising into a mere railer against "progress" on the one hand, and on the other from wasting time and energy in any of the numerous schemes by which the quasi-artistic of the

middle classes hope to make art grow when it has no longer any root, and thus I became a practical Socialist. (Morris, How I Became a Socialist)

Today, ecologists try to influence policy making bodies largely through threats, through predictions concerning pollutants and resource depletion, knowing that policy-makers accept at least certain minimum norms concerning health and just distribution. But it is clear that there is a vast number of people in all countries, and even a considerable number of people in power, who accept as valid the wider norms and values characteristic of the Deep Ecology movement. There are political potentials in this movement which should not be overlooked and which have little to do with pollution and resource depletion. In plotting possible futures, the norms should be freely used and elaborated. (Næss, p.99)

A last word or two. Perhaps some of our friends will say, what have we to do with these matters of history and art? We want by means of Social-Democracy to win a decent livelihood, we want in some sort to live, and that at once. Surely any one who professes to think that the question of art and cultivation must go before that of the knife and fork (and there are some who do propose that) does not understand what art means, or how that its roots must have a soil of a thriving and unanxious life. Yet it must be remembered that civilisation has reduced the workman to such a skinny and pitiful existence, that he scarcely knows how to frame a desire for any life much better than that which he now endures perforce. It is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life before him, a life to which the perception and creation of beauty, the enjoyment of real pleasure that is, shall be felt to be as necessary to

man as his daily bread, and that no man, and no set of men, can be deprived of this except by mere opposition, which should be resisted to the utmost. (Morris, How I Became a Socialist)

'Live and let live' is a more powerful ecological principle than 'Either you or me' (Næss, p.96)

*[...]the realization at last of the meaning of the word
COMMONWEALTH. (Morris, How I Became a Socialist)*

To Regress is to Progress: How Applying The Visions of Arne Naess and William Morris to Simplifying The Food Industry Would Improve The Wellbeing of Humans and Our Environment

Originally coined by Arne Naess, Deep Ecology is a theory which suggests there is no more inherent value in a human's life than there is in even a single blade of grass; all living organisms are equal and should be treated as such, rather than viewed as a hierarchy. The utopian visions of deep ecologists imagine a future in which the natural world is seen as worthy of protection and preservation, rather than simply for its utility to human life. Bioregionalism, going hand in hand with deep ecology, suggests that all cultural, economic, and sociopolitical systems pertaining to human life and operation are more efficient when taken with a sustainable and regionalized approach. For example, bioregionalism would favour the utilization of local, and therefore more sustainable, natural resources—this provokes the question, would all living organisms benefit from humans taking a step back in the food industry and returning to a simplified system? By regressing to a less produced, capitalistic food industry, both humans and their natural environment would thrive. With reference to L. Garforth's "Deep Ecology: Wild Nature, Radical Visions," as well as W. Morris's *News From Nowhere*, this essay will discuss the notion that regression is

progression, and how this is applicable to the modern food industry in the UK and North America.

Having lived in both North America and The United Kingdom, as well as taken classes on nutrition and environmentalism, I am very aware of the implications of the modern food industry in these areas, and feel equipped to discuss it. From highly processed foods (some of which are banned in certain regions), to lack of local options, to overproduction and extreme amounts of waste, the modern food industry primarily revolves around money and convenience, rather than the health of the consumer and the environment. Research shows that over half of the food we consume in the UK and in North America is considered highly processed, containing artificial flavours, colours, preservatives, and chemicals. In addition to this, much of the food consumed in these areas is imported. Accounting for 28% of global greenhouse gas emissions, the food industry is one of the main culprits of global warming. Along with emissions, the number of food and packaging waste is astonishing. The UK alone wastes an approximate 9.4 million tonnes of food each year, with Canada and The United States surpassing this number at 50 million tonnes, and 119 billion tonnes respectively. In addition to the detrimental effects that the food industry has on our planet, the consequences of our consumption show themselves in human health. It is without question that there is a significant correlation between processed foods and life-threatening health concerns such as cardiovascular diseases, stomach diseases, cancer, diabetes, and mental health effects.

Around 30-35% of cancers today are directly linked to one's diet. Although shocking, the mentioned negative impact of the food industry is avoidable—if change is made.

The core values of deep ecology and bioregionalism come down to prioritizing the health and existence of our natural world, rather than stripping it of resources for human benefit, as well as regionalising sociopolitical and economic operations where possible. By looking at the previously mentioned issues stemming from the modern food industry, these values could be applied in beginning to reverse the damage created. By taking an approach to breaking down the current food industry with a focus on these principals, humans would better themselves and their environment by fighting capitalism, consuming more whole, nutrient dense foods, and eliminating unnecessary waste and emissions. Health is often reserved for the wealthy, as organic, unprocessed foods are so inaccessible that we have to have dedicated overpriced shops for them. If the values of bioregionalism and deep ecology were prioritized within the food market, this would not be the case. In doing this, highly processed foods could be eliminated, and a focus would be placed on making local, whole foods more accessible. This would result in not only less food and packaging waste, but the physical and mental wellbeing of people would most likely increase. An example of why this works is the Mediterranean diet, which is considered one of the healthiest ways to eat for multiple reasons. Countries which follow the Mediterranean diet not only have higher life expectancies and lower rates of health

conditions, but food waste is significantly less than in North America and the UK. Locally grown foods are not only healthier for us as they are the most nutrient dense, but they are better for the environment as less waste is created. When food must travel a long way, the likelihood of it becoming spoiled or damaged increases.

Additionally, more packaging must be used for imported and non-local foods. Lastly, highly processed foods are often made in factories or environments which produce harmful emissions. By cutting out highly processed foods and sticking to a food market which prioritizes both people and the planet with the values of deep ecology and bioregionalism, humans, animals, and plants alike would flourish—in this respect, regression is progression.

In *News From Nowhere* by William Morris, the protagonist, William Guest travels from 18th century England to the year 2090, and comes across his utopian vision—a socialist society. Deep ecology theory and socialism intertwine as both share a core value of deconstructing capitalism and the negative impacts it has. To put the argument at hand into perspective, the following portion of this text will examine two imagined futures: one in which the values of deep ecology and bioregionalism have been applied to the food industry, and one where humans have continued to live the way we currently do in 2023. If William Guest were to travel to either 2090 England or North America, in which capitalism has only grown, and our food intake has only continued to be about convenience and money, he would likely stumble upon a society where chronic illnesses have continued to increase. The overconsumption and wasting of food

goods would likely be at an all-time high, and the cost-of-living crisis would most likely have driven many people to have no option but to eat fast, highly processed foods as that is what would be affordable to the average person (this is already happening today, as we know). Global warming and pollution would also have significantly increased due to emissions released, food wasted, and excessive use of disposable packaging. Not only this, but animals would likely start to suffer more than they already do today, due to the effects of global warming and the food industry. To assume that 2090 society could look like a dystopia is not far off when looking at what capitalism is currently doing to our world. This imagined future would go completely against Guest's vision for ideal living conditions, as it would revolve around capitalism rather than socialism. Should change be made in the UK and North America, and the values of deep ecology and bioregionalism be applied in doing so, Guest's utopian vision could partially come to be in 2090. If we were to regress regarding the food industry today by taking a simplified, environment-first approach, progress would be made in fighting both the climate crisis and capitalism. Humans would be happier, life expectancy would likely increase due to lessened diet-related illnesses and deaths, and far less waste would be created. The environment would thrive due to lessened pollution, but by being more conscious about what we consume, animals would be less affected by the food industry. By implementing the principals of deep ecology and bioregionalism in relation to the food market, our society would look much more like Guest's utopian vision, should he travel to this imagined future.

By regressing to a simplified version of what we know as the food industry, and relying on more regionalized, sustainable food options, positive progress would be made to the wellbeing of humans and our natural world—this proves that in some cases, to regress is to progress.

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