THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

"WILLIAM DE MORGAN"

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ART & DESIGN
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE.

BY

MARK JOHNSTON

FACULTY OF CRAFT DESIGN
(CERAMICS)

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INTRODUCTION:-

The most important book of the relatively few that are published on De Morgan are William De Morgan and His Wife, Stirling, A.M.W., 1922. This gives a good account of his life and that of his wife. The other two major books I have drawn on are; William De Morgan's Tiles, Catleugh, Jon, 1983 and The Designs of William De Morgan, Greenwood, Martin, 1989.

William De Morgan's tiles tells us the reason why tiles were so popular in De Morgan's day as well as an analysis of his manufacturing techniques and designs. The Designs of William De Morgan is the most extensive record of his working sketches and designs on dishes and tile uses.

I came up with a different angle of approach which was to look at De Morgan's influences on his designs and the reasons for their successes and also the problems with De Morgan's work. This means I could draw on a variety of sources.

Chapter two put De Morgan's work into a historical context and compares and contrasts De Morgan to his main influence, William Morris.

The final chapter shows how society saw its own values in De Morgan's work.

CHAPTER 1

Section 1: An account of the life of William De Morgan.

William De Morgan was born at 69 Gower Street, London , on 16th November 1839. His father, Augustus De Morgan was a professor of mathematics. His mother, Sofia, was involved in the fight for higher education of women, as well as being involved in causes such as prison and workhouse reform.

The young De Morgan showed little zeal for academic studies and so began to study art at evening classes in Cary School, Streatham Street, Bloomsbury. In 1859 he was admitted to the Academy School at the same time as notable artists such as William Blake Richmound.

Having left half way through the eight year course he began working for William Morris. Through this association he became acquainted with Morris's influential circle of friends which included Edward Burn Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Ford Maddox Brown.

De Morgan worked for a while on some of Morris's own designs, however the main thrust of De Morgan's work was then in stained glass. As well as working for Morris's firm, Marshall, Faulkiner & Co., he also worked privately on both stained glass and tiles in Fitzroy Square. It was at Fitzroy Square in the late 1860's that he made a discovery which was to have significant influence on his work; he noticed an iridescence on the stained glass caused by the silver in the paint which was to outline his designs. This led him to experiment and thus develop ceramic lustre glazes. A fire in 1873 necessitated a move to new premises in 30 Cheyne Row, Chelsea and one year later he took additional accomodation at No. 36 of the same street.

De Morgan received some noticeable commissions in the late 1870's such as a panel for the Czar of Russia's yacht, Livadia. He also completed some 300 tile designs in Orange House, Cheyne Row before he moved to Merton Abbey, near Morris's workshop in 1882. In 1886 he suffered a weakness of the spine. He married his wife Evelyn, the following year, 1887. The Merton Abbey Pottery closed in 1888 but was re-established at Sand's End, Fulham. This was a new epoch for De Morgan in terms of the vast amount and variety of work that was produced. He also entered into a partnership with Ricardo Halsey. However, there were financial problems and De Morgan spending the winter in Florence because of health worries, meant that all technical difficulties had to be resolved through correspondence, thus the partnership fell apart. He entered into an agreement with the Passenger Brothers

and Frank Iles, who had been employed by the company but this only lasted until 1906, when the firm ceased production and De Morgan left to publish his first novel, Joseph Vance.

Section 2: De Morgan's Influences.

Throughout De Morgan's designs there is a severe lack of real development. He relied throughout his whole career on the themes of animals, mythological beasts, plants and the Italian Renaissance.

Because of a lack of extensive dating, we cannot trace any development in his early tiles. We can only start with those tiles from the 1870's. The themes I mentioned altered only very slightly over a period of more than thirty years. These slight developments were often only a matter of the use of a different colour, or the application onto a different surface, while the basic ideas stayed the same. An example of this kind of variation in his tiles and dishes is shown in figures 1, 2 & 3.

There is a slight trend here as we see the lizard has been reduced to total two dimensions, by 1900, as opposed to the original three dimensional qualities. The main colours that De Morgan used were yellow, turquoise, green, blue, purple and brown as shown in figure 4 & 5.

The depth of the colour varied according to how much pigment was used. The lustre colour that was used was mainly red and gold as show in figures 6 & 7. After 1890 we saw a silver lustre being used a lot. An example of this is shown in figure 8.

Up until the 1880's he produced mainly tiles and it was at Merton Abbey Pottery that he used his design on bowls, or 'rice dishes' as they were called, and vases using a continuation of his tile designs. The early dishes tended to be red lustre Italian Renaissance style (figure 9) and animals, both real and mythological (fig. 10). However, after 1885 we saw more Persian (11) inspired designs and colours (fig. 12).

His early vases were decorated in Persian colours and we see more lustres throughout the 1890's. These were first red and gold and then after 1890, silver became more predominant. The basic pot shape that De Morgan used can be seen in figure 13. All these shapes, or basic variants, were used by De Morgan. The only one which showed a development was the long stemmed vase, which did not appear until the 1890's.

De Morgan's designs were unique in his day because of their strong Persian colours and lustres and also his use of the Persian motif and the freedom of his execution. He was the first manufacturer to use Islamic inspired designs and we can see the inferior results of his competitors. One of these was Pilkington (figure 14) whose

ideas had a lack of spontanaiety and weak colours compared to De Morgan's (fig. 15).

One of the major influences in De Morgan's work is that of the artist, intellectual and poet, William Morris, whom De Morgan met at the age of 24. There are a number of obvious connections in De Morgan's early work and that of Morris's. He made a similar tile to Morris's Columbine (figure 16), when he made Bedford Park Daisy (fig. 17) and Morris's Small B (figure 18), which is similar to De Morgan's vertical leaf (figure 19). This is used in conjunction with Bedford Park Daisy (figure 20), which again echoes Morris's Small B.

De Morgan has used a number of Morris's principles of pattern, making the most basic motifs with their cottage garden feeling and their simplicity. Many De Morgan designs in the Chelsea period are in essence Morris designs, using the idea of a small flower or leaf patterns with larger leaf patterns printed on top (fig. 21). In De Morgan's case we can see animals instead of the large flowers (fig. 22). Rose Trellis is another overtly Morris inspired design as we can see in Trellis design by Morris (fig. 23) and De Morgan's wooden trellis covered in roses (fig. 24), which was made in 1869.

Animals and birds form a large part of De Morgan's design work and many are done in a natural way. His use of animal forms could have been inspired from his childhood as throughout his childhood he had access to books of bird engravings and natural history books of the time.

It is known that one of the such mentioned books he had was Thomas Bewick's book of bird engravings. According to A.M.W. Stirling, the young De Morgan would look at this for hours on end and so was able to name almost all the birds in it. The standard reference books of De Morgan's time, that one would imagine he would have been familiar with, are Conrad Gessner's Historical Animalium (1551 - 87) and Edward Topsell's History of Four-footed Beasts (1607). All had hundreds of engravings and descriptions of animals, birds, reptiles and mythological creatures. In looking at Thomas Bewick's illustration of a vulture (fig. 25) we see that it bears close resemblance to De Morgan's vulture (figure 26).

A common element of most artists at that time was the humurous and grotesque subject matter. In keeping with this, De Morgan as a child was always drawing on scraps of paper, making make-believe animals, such as humbugs and hobgoblins. In addition to this, his father would send him and his siblings letters decorated with monsters and dragons. These influences must have led further into De Morgan's studying of heraldic motifs such as unicorns, griffins and lions. Using medieval themes in his work, De Morgan uses scroll work backgrounds, with animals

on top of one another, biting their own tails and eating each other (fig. 27).

De Morgan also used the Italian Renaissance for inspiration and got his ideas from motifs found on 16th century Italian maiolica (2) from the areas of Gubbi and Derata, where lustre pottery was made. Renaissance decorative motifs are used from time to time by him, such as the Hippo Camp (fig. 28). His early academic work was the basis for a series of dishes showing a cupid with women and geese (fig. 29).

De Morgan studied Islamic pottery at the South Kensington museum. It is important to remember that at this time the decorative arts from other cultures had formerly been unknown and the arts and crafts had been influenced only by the three areas medieval, Greek and Roman art. Therefore, De Morgan was coming in touch with something that was new to the Victorians. De Morgan used Islamic and Persian design as a source for his ideas. We can see the Islamic spirit in many of his designs (figure 30).

Section 3: Reasons for De Morgan's Successes and his Ultimate Downfall.

There are a number of reasons why De Morgan's work was successful in its time. It succeeded not just because of the designs, but also of his understanding of ceramic methods and his use of the hand made finish as an aesthetic advantage.

De Morgan was able to devise his own methods for applying his designs. The pattern was copied onto tracing paper in strong black and stuck onto a sheet of glass. It was placed upright and the painter was able to apply his pigments to the strength he felt was required, using a coloured drawing or tile as a guide. The painted paper was then placed, face down, over the slip-coated tile, while the back of the paper was brushed with glaze and sodium silicate. The paper would be burnt off during the firing and the thin layer of ash would itself form part of the glaze, which would fuse to the slip, and in turn would fuse to the clay body. This method gave De Morgan a high degree of precision without losing the quality of hand painting. De Morgan was also aware of the fact that there was tonal variations in the pigments, according to how thickly they were painted. For example, manganese dioxide would produce colours which varied from deep purple to off brown (fig. 15). Because of this, the painter needed to be very precise in his judgement of the thickness of the pigment in the glaze used, in order to achieve the correct colour.

One of De Morgan's most important developments was his rediscovery of the lustre effect that had been used in Persia, years before. This discovery, along with his development of strong Persian colours came at the perfect time because at this stage Victorian society was taking an interest in the middle east. This interest is also reflected in the orientalist paintings (3) of the time. Persian design particularly appealed to the newly rich industrialists who did not have a background in the classics. It was also a firm favourite in the decoration of Turkish Baths and smoking rooms (fig. 31) which were being built at the time.

Other factors which led to De Morgan's work being successful included the fact that he made the decision to develop ceramic tiles rather than glass, as Morris's firm had already cornered that market. However, at the same time Morris's firm had created a style which complemented William De Morgan's designs. The arts and crafts (4) look for an interior was ideally an overall look (fig. 31). Morris's firm had not gone deeply into the market and thus to some extent De Morgan's designs filled a gap for them.

The 1860's were a time of economic prosperity in Victorian Britain. This lasted until the early 1870's which meant there was money to spare for more expensive design items. Tiles in Britain had not really been used a great deal since the mid

19th century, when they increasingly became more and more popular. The link between dirt and the spread of diseases was beginning to be established in the public mind, which meant they were being favoured more and more, overall for reasons of hygiene. De Morgan himself dreamed of constructing a tile-covered building, which could be hosed down and thus combat the London smog build-up on the outside of buildings.

The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society also played an important role in promoting De Morgan's work. He himself was a member of the society and in the first exhibition in 1888, his own work very much dominated the scene with a tile panel designed for the conservatory of Princess De Scey Mont Ciliard. As well as giving their work a wider audience, the society was also a meeting place for different artists and allowed the spread of ideas which was necessary for the artists to be exposed to.

De Morgan's work was not only successful because of his own skill, but also because of the talented staff he employed, particularly the Passenger Brothers, Fred and Charles, who were his best painters and whose initials normally appear on pots and dishes. Some of De Morgan's designs were saved from being geometrically boring by the quality of his colour and the skillful, freehand way they were painted, the latter giving them a new lease of life.

The major problems in De Morgan's career were that of health and financial worries, which must have placed him under much stress. London was an unhealthy city and he constantly feared ill health. Thinking he had contracted a disease of the spine he spent his winters in Florence, from where he had to organise his business and all the difficulties that it entailed, by correspondence. Later on it was discovered that these fears of health were groundless and that the pain had been caused by stress and anxiety.

Although there was money coming in through his wife and his partnership with Ricardo Hulsey, as a business man De Morgan under-capitalised. His tiles were also expensive and there was little difference between a plain tile made by De Morgan and a plain tile made by anyone else, except for the large difference in price. Although it was intended to be laughed at rather than taken seriously, De Morgan's letter to Blunt shows his casual attitude towards pricing:-

" Multiply the height in inches by the largest diameter in centimetres and divide by the number of hours employed. Multiply this result by the logorithm of the number of shillings per week and it will give the price of the pot in half pence". (Stirling, A.M.W., 1922, page 216).

However, the depression of 1906 proved to be too much for this kind of attitude and De Morgan went out of business as his customers tightened their belts. De Morgan's designs had obvious assets but it could be said that they failed to develop. In a

period of over 30 years his style remained little changed (fiure 1, 2 & 3), and at the beginning of the 20th century they were seen to be old fashioned.

FOOTNOTES

1. In the mid 19th century Persia referred to the whole of the middle east.

2. Maiolica was a certain type of glaze which resembled enamel.

3. The Orientalists were painters who painted exotic scenes of the middle east in the mid 19th century in a photographic way.

4. Arts and crafts was a term for the movement of which William Morris and De Morgan were a part of and it was more concerned with ethics as well as aesthetic design.

CHAPTER 2

Section 1: Changes in society as a result of the Industrial Revolution and its effects on design (as seen in the Great Exhibition of 1851)

Britain underwent major structural changes which had not been seen before during the 19th century. The period of the 1850's was a time when many of these changes could be seen in all their 'glory'. Industry in terms of manufactured goods, was at the heart of the nations' economy. The majority of the population no longer lived in the countryside but were city-dwellers. As a result of this, and of the drastic rise in population, housing was a big problem. In 1801 the population was 12 million in England and Wales. By 1851 it had reached 18 million and in the next 50 years rose to 32 million. Such a rapid increase was explosive compared to other centuries.

Overall the standard of working class housing was extremely low. Builders tended to be unscrupulous, in making big money, putting as little material and labour as they possibly could into their work. Because of the huge demand for housing, small areas of land were subject to a high density of houses which were built as quickly as possible: row upon row of back to back houses were constructed. There were no gardens and toilets were at the end of the street.

In many cities, houses were constructed around a courtyard which had only one entrance. Such courtyards were dismally dark, as the sunlight could not reach down inside. It also made for very bad ventilation and smells of rubbish, animals and people would linger in the air. De Morgan would have been aware of these atrocious living conditions as the street where he lived, Gower Street, was not far from tenanted slum housing.

City dwellers had a much lower life expectancy than those living in rural areas. Furthermore, social class was also shown to be an important factor in determining just how long a person was going to live. As the towns grew larger, the churchyards and burial grounds could not cope with the larger numbers of dead people. This was particularly evident during the epidemics of cholera. In 1847 with 7,000 deaths and 1853 and 1866 in which 30,000 and 18,000 died respectively. Bodies were buried on top of each other so often human bones actually poked out of the ground. The dead bodies were not being buried straight away and were thus d decomposing. With the lack of proper sewerage systems this all contributed to disease and bad smells.

Urban poverty, pollution and a general lowering of the quality of life, due in many cases to an exploitation of the labour forces, were all the effects of the Industrial Revolution on the working classes of Britain.

The main achievement of the industrial revolution in Britain in 1850 was that she was the leading industrial power and was about to enter into a period of unprecedented economic prosperity. It was for this reason she was called the 'Workshop of the World'. Britain could boast growing material prosperity, a level of industrial production and foreign trade which set her far ahead of all the other nations at the time.

Nowhere was the nation's image expressed better than in the Great Exhibition held between May and October of 1851. The exhibition was housed in a prefabricated structure of iron and glass which soon came to be known as the Crystal Palace. Most nations of the world were represented, bringing together some 14,000 exhibitors in a spirit of friendship and peace. In total, 6,200,000 people visited the exhibition and it symbolised the strength of British Industry, which was in clever machinery, as well as giving the public a feeling of pride.

Victorian middle class taste could be summed up by the British products in the 1851 Great Exhibition. Everything of a decorative nature had become ridiculously fussy and it was assumed that the more expensive a piece looked, the better it was in terms of gilt, marble and complicated carvings. This method of drawing such conclusions may have been, to some extent, valid, when the articles were skilfully made of natural materials, by hand, but most of the goods tended to be made by machines which tried to imitate hand made goods and the result was very much second rate. The general public loved this, as they wanted the most luxurious fittings available. British industry was at a peak of churning out tasteless, poorly made, mass produced goods.

Section 2: William Morris's beliefs regarding good design and manufacture as opposed to the designs and manufacture of goods during the Industrial Revolution.

William Morris's thinking was influenced mainly by three books: Past and Present by Thomas Carlyle; The Stones of Venice by John Ruskin and The Heir of Redclyffe by Charlotte Young.

The first publication of 1843, painted a picture of a caring and idyllic monastic settlement of the 12th century in contrast to a 19th century of cruelty and suffering.

The Stones of Venice praises the idea of medieval craftsmanship, in which workers found happiness through their work. Ruskin saw that in the building of a cathedral, ordinary workmen came together; often producing work that was crude or naieve but this was immaterial for as a whole, the product they made transcended the crudeness. Ruskin did not believe that crudeness was wonderful in itself, but because it showed it was made by human hands and not a machine, made it wonderful.

Charlotte Young's book came into print at the same time as Ruskin's. In her book she used the chivalric ideal of the middle ages in 19th century society. The theme which ran commonly in all these three books was that medieval society was a world in which people worked alongside of each other, rather than in competition.

Because this medieval society was not one of industrial exploitation, but was in Morris's belief, governed by religious standards and ethical ideals, these people lived in happiness.

William Morris fell in love with this romantic idealism of the medieval ages and in order to live out his dream he had a house built, which was medieval in style. Red House, as it came to be known (fig. 33), was built in the style of a Cotswold cottage, which was inconsistent with the classical style with its over the top fussy decorations.

Red House said much about Morris as it was built with his ideals of honest use of materials and craftmanship that was in vogue at the time. Simplicity was the striking feature of the house. The exterior consisted of simple red brick which was a radical move, as heavy stucco or ornate, expensive looking stone was the norm. It was decided that form was more important than decoration and so, the building kept with English architectural traditions of tall chimney stacks, very steep tiled roofs, long ridge lines and porches set in a deep recess.

Again, in the interior, the theme of simplicity was kept up with plain tiled floors, an open staircase and a large wooden dresser (fig. 34). The decoration of the interior was completed by Morris and his friends. Morris himself made tiles for the porch and stained glass windows as well as an embroidery hanging. The drawing room walls were painted with scenes from the medieval romance of Sir Dergrevaunt. As a result of decorating this house Morris saw a business opportunity in designing and producing all the decorations needed to decorate a house. He could do this with the help of his friends. They saw themselves as a latter day medieval craft guild in which artists would made and design all kinds of decorations. This went against the norms of the factory system.

The firm was formed in April 1861 and was known as Morris, Marshall, Faulkiner & Co. The manifest of the firm's intent was that it should work in stained glass, mural decorations, carvings, metal-work, furniture and embroidery as well as every article necessary for domestic use. Morris wanted every domestic good, like cups and knives to "look as naturally lovely as the green fields, the river bank or the mountain flint". In his dream of the middle ages he saw simplicity everywhere "in the palace as well as the cottage". (Adams, S., The Arts & Crafts Movement, 1987, page 20).

This Morris idealogy can be seen in his Daisy wallpaper (fig. 21). It was a traditional, simple design that was in contrast to the over complicated designs of the period that were no longer flat patterns which had lost any of their original connection with natural plant forms.

Section 3: How De Morgan's Work Was Against the Industrial Revolution but Also How His Work Differed to William Morris's Approach.

De Morgan's designs, although seperate, are very much executed in the spirit of William Morris. Indeed, De Morgan sold work through Morris's firm, as well as receiving commissions from it. De Morgan's work is related to Morris's as the work borrowed from the past tended to induce a flat patterning and show a hand made quality in the way it was decorated. As well as being a designer, he was also involved in the production process, to the extent that he knew all about the glazes and clays in their application, although, like Morris, he did not make the majority of his works.

If De Morgan's work was in the Morris spirit, it can therefore be seen as a reaction against the type of design being produced in industry whose methods went against the soul of Morris's idealogy. Morris saw everything as a step towards changing society as a whole:

"I go about preaching the divine gospel of discontent" he told the young De Morgan (A.M.W. Stirling, page 75, William De Morgan and His Wife).

Morris was not satisfied with the existing order of Victorian society, his aims went beyond trying to revive medieval traditions and rebelling aginst industrialised designs of the time. He believed that the art produced at a certain time was a reflection of the society that produced it. The main difference between the art of his time and the art of medieval times, in his eyes, relied on the economic conditions in which it was created. Also, he believed that goods that were created in the middle ages were beautiful as they were made by craftsmen who were independent because they had control over their means of production, and worked in a tradeguild. The growth of capitalism, after the rise of the Renaissance, destroyed the co-operation in favour of one based on competition, with a profit margin for guidance of wages and jobs. The desire for luxury and the trappings of wealth by the new rich capitalist, replaced the simplicity and honesty of medieval design. This process was quickened by the industrial revolution when workers lost the independence they had become accustomed to, and became slave to the system that subjected them to their factory bosses and machines. Therefore, if art reflected society, contemporary art should be rejected, as it was a reflection of a rotten society. Morris saw socialism as the only way forward for art and mankind.

"I, of course", relates De Morgan, "followed Morris's lead enthusiastically and had gone that way, should have attended Tory meetings to denounce Liberalism.

But I was rather disconserted when I found that an honest objection to Bulgarian (1) atrocities had been held to be one and the same thing as sympathetic with Karl Marx, and that Morris took it for granted that I should be ready for enrolement with Hyndeman and Co! (2) I wasn't and I remember telling him so, when he remarked that I wasn't a radical. I said I was according to my definition of the word. He said mine was wrong and that a proper definition of the word 'radical' was a person opposed to the existing order of things. I said, very well then, I wasn't a radical and se we had it, up and down ....."

(Stirling, A.M.W., De Morgan and His Wife, page 151).

The question I find myself asking is just this; to what extent was De Morgan a radical? In looking at De Morgan's work we see that it was radical in the sense that it was not in keeping with the normal, everyday design of the times. I believe that De Morgan saw the inherent faults in the early socialist thinking and was therefore uncommitted to any political action in this field, largely because it did not provide any real solutions to the problems of poverty. We can see Morris's belief was that De Morgan suffered from apathy and did not want to do anything that would radically attack the problems of the age.

I believe that De Morgan was a realist about the way one could change society for the better. De Morgan's radicalism was evident when he wrote his book, Joseph Vance in 1906, for it became a bestseller in Britain and America for some time. It had a much greater importance because it brought the hard truths about society's problems to many people. De Morgan's novel tells us of a man, Christopher Vance, who because of his drink problem got into a fight and lost his job. Thus in a very direct way we see De Morgan pointing to the problems of society.

Morris writes:-

"that it was his good luck of being respectably rich that has put me on the other side of the window among delightful books and lovely works of art and not on the other side in the empty street, the drink steeped liquor shops and foul and degrading lodgings". (Bradley, Ian - William Morris and His World, page 75).

Morris felt guilty about being from a rich background and wanted to change all of society, from top of bottom. However, political events and the passing of time have shown socialism failed badly and caused more pain than existed before. De Morgan was more concerened in affecting society's individuals, rather than society at large. This was his aim and achievement throughout his life. Stirling tells us that when the De Morgan's discovered that their cook was suffering from alcoholism, they did not turn her out but tried to help her to make a permanent recovery.

De Morgan was more of a pragmatic socialist than Morris in his practical actions, and his writing of Joseph Vance. When asked whether he was a socialist or not, De Morgan replied:

"First tell me, what a socialist is, and then I'll tell you if I am one".

(Stirling, A.M.W., De Morgan & His Wife, page 177)

In other words, De Morgan was a radical at heart, in his concern for others, but at the same time, he was not so naieve as to try to create an earthly paradise.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Bulgarian atrocoties refers to the massacre of Bulgarians by the Turks in the 1870's.

2. Hyndeman & Co. were leading members of the socialist movement of which Morris was a part of.

CHAPTER 3

Victorian Values and The Extent to Which De Morgan Reflected Them in His Ceramics.

Nowadays, we tend to look to the Victorian period as one of great moral revival and high standards. However, the situation was not quite as clear cut as we imagine.

Under the apparant puritan values prevailed the corruption of severe class distinction, male domination and imperialism. To some extent, I feel that these values, although not deliberately intended are reflected in De Morgan's work.

Although the work of De Morgan was in opposition to the designs produced by the Industrial Revolution, many people of the Victorian age would not have seen it in this fashion. The fact that they were hand made meant that the retail cost was very expensive compared to De Morgan's rivals who machine manufactured their goods. Maw & Co's (who were one of the largest commercial manufacturers in the 1890's) plain tiles were about one third of the price of De Morgan's plain tiles. The printed designs of Walter Crane were only a quarter of the price of De Morgan's painted tiles.

I believe it is obvious that due to the high cost of De Morgan's products it was only the rich that could afford to decorate their homes and businesses with his work. This point is illustrated by some of his prestigious customers, such as the Livadia, and the other very large commissions of panels for a number of luxury ships belonging to the P & O Shipping Line.

The fact that copies of De Morgan's tiles were made by firms such as C.J. Edwards, Minton China Work, Maw & Co and Pilkingtons revealed an example of class structure. The upper class would have owned genuine De Morgan tiles whereas the middle class and perhaps the lower class, would have owned reproductions of the originals.

In the mid 19th century society women were considered to be of lesser intelligence than men and in marraige a wife was looked upon as the 'property' of her husband. The husband was very definitely the head of the household. In the middle class household a wife was seen as the child bearer and a career was out of the question. She was expected to spend her day occupied by the genteel arts of embroidery and knitting whilte the servants did all the housework. She had few legal rights. For instance, in the eyes of the law, any property she owned when single automatically became the possession of her husband on marraige as was also the case of their children. Middle class girls received a basic education and could become governesses for example, but the pay for this was pittance. Women were banned from entering any profession such as law or medicine and were also excluded from any political

role, even voting.

The Victorians saw the East as a place of mystery and colour and sensual desire, which was not overtly available in a country with puritan values. Colonial conquests were also being carried out, throughout the 19th century, in a bid to 'Christianise' and control the 'heathen' nations. The question which arises here is, what kind of puritan values were these if their solution was to stimulate their own sensual desires in another country?

The Orientalists are a prime example of this as they set up highly exotic scenes with very intense realism, which evoked an eroticism that was safely project into another country and people. The blatantly erotic nudes that Gerome painted, for example his Slave Girl (fig. 35) surrounded by fully dressed Arabian men, were condoned by Victorian society, whereas if the same scene had been painted of a London brotherl there would have been moral outrage.

In order to make their paintings acceptable the Orientalists put a great deal of emphasis on realistic detail of Turkish tiles, thus taking away the two dimensionality of the painting and mkaing the pictures a factual account of middle eastern life (fig. 36).

I believe it is here we see a connection with the work of William De Morgan and the Orientalists as he made the Persian world more realistic to Victorian men in order that they could act out the role of master in their smoking rooms which were decorated by his tiles. Smoking rooms (fig 31) were exclusively male dominated areas and were a place they retired to after dinner, while the ladies would adjourn to drink sherry and engage in 'chit chat', which was believed to be conversation of no importance. Smoking rooms were often places where politics were discussed and business deals transacted and therefore were seen as 'power bases'.

De Morgan was able to produce Persian style glazes that were practically identical to the real thing. The quality was so high that his tiles were used in the restoration work of an Arab hall, owned by Frederick Loughton, when he ran out of genuine Persian tiles. The common factor in Victorian and Persian society was their treatment of women.

De Morgan's Persian tiles were also lending support to the domination of other cultures. He first became aware of Persian ceramic tiles through the then relatively new South Kensington Museum. It contained examples of the decorative arts from other cultures from around the world. Although most exhibits in Victorian museums were bought or were gifts to the nation, some articles such as the Elgin Marbles in the British museum, were basically stolen. What De Morgan did, when he used Persian designs, was to take the arts of another culture and place it safely

in the business environment of upper class Victorians. This gave credence to the idea of what Rudyard Kipling called the 'White Man's burden', the burdening responsibility of ruling over and controlling countries like India, as it was in the main interest of the native population and to the economic gain of Britain to use other cultures for their own reward.

CONCLUSION:

Chapter one is a career outline of De Morgan, showing an overall view of the major events in his life and the development of his career.

Chapter one also tells us what influenced De Morgan in a design sense. In short, this is composed of William Morris's wallpaper designs, a childhood book on birds, and very possibly judging from his work, the general animal reference books that were around at the time. These books covered mythological creature as well as animals and plants. Other influences were medieval heraldic motifs, Italian Renaissance and Islamic pottery.

This chapter also gives us the reasons for the successes and problems with De Morgan's work. We see that De Morgan had a good understanding of ceramic methods, particularly the application of glazes. He was also lucky in developing Persian glazes at a time when there was a growing interest in eastern culture. This interest made his work an attractive product. Morris had laid down the groundwork and develoned a market for art and craft goods which De Morgan was able to compliment. There was also the fact that these tiles were in fashion and De Morgan's work was kept in the public eye with exhibitions and presitigious customers. Also mentioned in this chapter are the problems which affected De Morgan's work which were anxiety over health problems, business worries and failure to change with the times.

Chapter two deals with the very radical changes that occurred in the 19th century which had not been seen before. The population exploded and many people were living in poverty dealing with extremely bad living conditions. These factors were reflected in the very low life expectancy, especially among the lower classes. These conditions were the cost of the industrial revolution. It was the sacrifice that Britain made in order to be a leading power. Britain churned out mass-produced goods cheaply, which aimed to reflect expensive, fussy items of design. The general standard of factory produced goods was apalling, yet the public loved them. This love was reflected in the pride the Victorians invested in the Great Exhibition of 1851, as a wonderful symbol of the nation's good.

The next section of this chapter reveals how William Morris had fallen in love with a romantic idealism of the medieval period and had tried to recreate this world in the building of 'Red House'. This house, to Morris, was not just a yearning for the past but a rebellion against the society in which he lived, especially the designs of that time. It was the decoration of this house which gave him the idea of going into the business of designing, producing and marketing domestic appliances which were in opposition to the traditinal Victorian tastes as what they produced was simple in design, honest to the materials they were made of and to the skills of the craftsperson.

I have also shown how De Morgan's work is similar to Morris's in spirit and therefore showed the common aim of being in opposition to the type of designs that were being produced as a result of the industrial revolution. After this I have shown how Morris's idealogy was, that the art of the Middle ages was successful because the craftsperson was working under a different economic system in which he was his own master, rather than being a slave to the system like the mid 19th century factory workder. Then, with the rise of the new middle class, the people wanted all the accessories of wealth and as a result they lost the simplicity of their design. Morris saw the only answer to society's ills was to have a socialist revolution. Morris did not see De Morgan as a radical but I feel this is wrong, for De Morgan affected the lives of individuals for the better in a more lasting way.

Chapter three shows what Victorian values consisted of and the extent to which De Morgan's tiles reflected them. I brought out that the main Victorian values were class distinction, male domination and the domination of other cultures.

Firstly in chapter three, I talked about how, although De Morgan's work was against the society in which he lived and the industrialised design, the cost of his work created another social barrier as only the wealthy could afford to buy his pieces and not the lower classes. I then brough out that the lower classes would have had copies of De Morgan's tiles, copies that were mass produced at a lower cost, specificially to facilitate the lower classes. This in itself was a reflection of the class system in Victorian Britain.

I then described how women were treated as inferior beings in the 19th century. I found that the Victorians saw the East as a place of erotic and sensual desire and that the Orientalists invoked this world in their paintings. De Morgan's work made a Persian world real to the Victorians bringing this mysterious culture much closer to home, a culture that in fact, reflected the less attractive aspects of Victorian culture. In using the art of these countries in his work, De Morgan upheld the imperialistic attitude that already prevailed in the upper classes of British society.

Fig. 1.
De Morgan's tile drawing of two lizards. Chelsea period 1872 - 1882.

Fig. 2.
De Morgan's bowl with two lizards. 6½ inches high. 1885.

Fig. 3.
De Morgan's dish with two lizards. Lustre glaze. 1900.

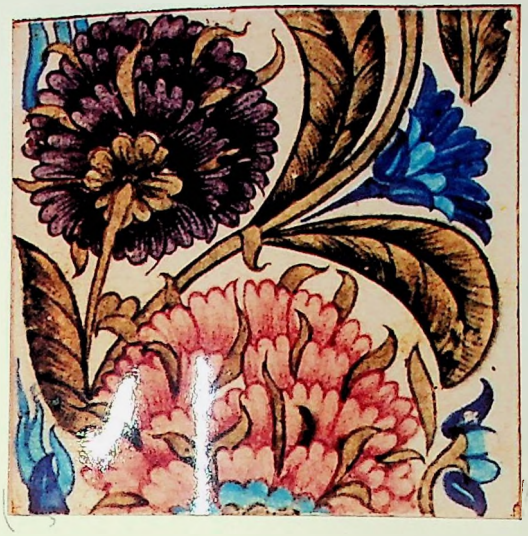

Fig. 4.
De Morgan's tile with chrysanthemums. Fulham 1888 - 1907.

Fig. 5.
De Morgan's tile with carnation. Fulham 1888 - 1907.

Fig. 6.
De Morgan's tile with mythological creature. Red lustre.

Fig. 7.
De Morgan's dish with peacock.
Lustre glaze. 1888. 14⅛ inches

Fig. 8.
De Morgan's Sunset & Moonlight
Suite vase. 1890.

Fig. 9.
De Morgan's dish with woman &
child. Lustre glaze. 1880.

Fig. 10.
De Morgan's dish with mythological creature. Lustre glaze.
14¼ inches.

Fig. 12.
De Morgan's dish with owl and persian motif. 1885. 16¾ inch.

Fig. 11.
De Morgan's dish with leopards.
Lustre glaze. 1880. 14¼ inches.

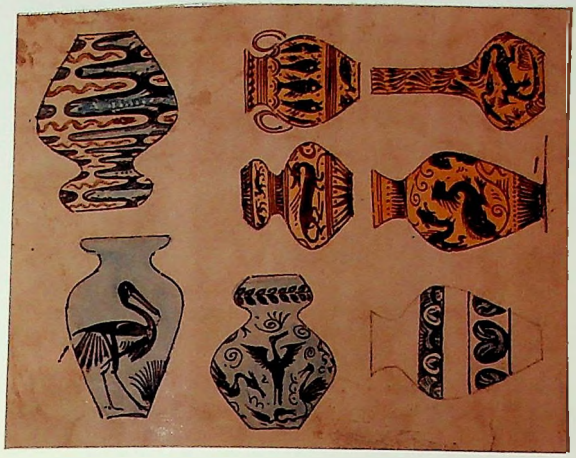

Fig. 13.
De Morgan's vase design.

Fig. 14.
Pilkington's Persian tile.
Hand decorated - 1900.

Fig. 15.
De Morgan's flower on tile.

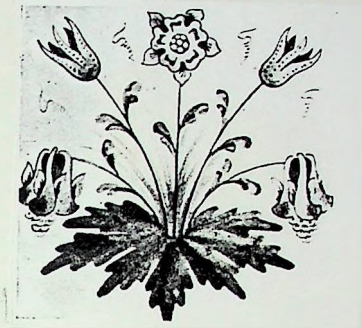

Fig. 16.
Morris's Columbine on tile.

Fig. 17.
De Morgan's Bedford Daisy tile design. Chelsea period; 1872 - 82.

Fig. 18.
Morris's Small B on tile.
Early 1870's.

Fig. 19.
De Morgan's vertical leaf on tile design. Chelsea period; 1872 - 82.

Fig. 20.
De Morgan's vertical leaf & Bedford Daisy tile. Chelsea period. 1872 - 82.

Fig. 21.
Morris's Daisy wallpaper. 1862.

Fig. 22.
De Morgan's ducks on leaf background. Chelsea period. 1872 - 82.

Fig. 23.
Morris's Trellis wallpaper.
1862.

Fig. 24.
De Morgan's Rose Trellis tile
sketch. Chelsea period.
1872 - 82.

Fig. 25.
Bewick's Crested Vulture
engraving.

Fig. 26.
De Morgan's sketch of vulture
on tile. Before 1888.

Fig. 27.
De Morgan's vase with big cat eating dragon design.

Fig. 28.
De Morgan's Hippo Camp on tile 1888 - 1907.

Fig. 29.
De Morgan's Woman with Cupid and Geese. Sepia sketch. 15½ inches

Fig. 30.
- De Morgan's vase with fish and floral decoration. Persian style, 15 inches. 1890.

Fig. 31.
De Morgan's tiles in a smoking room on a P & O liner. Persian style.

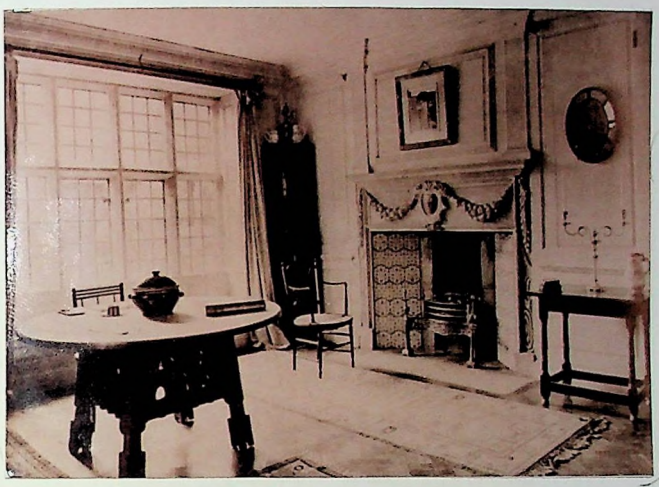

Fig. 32.
Simple panelled room in
Morris's house at Kilnscott.

Fig. 33.
Red House designed by Philip Webb, 1859.

Fig. 34.
Simple entrance hall at Red House.

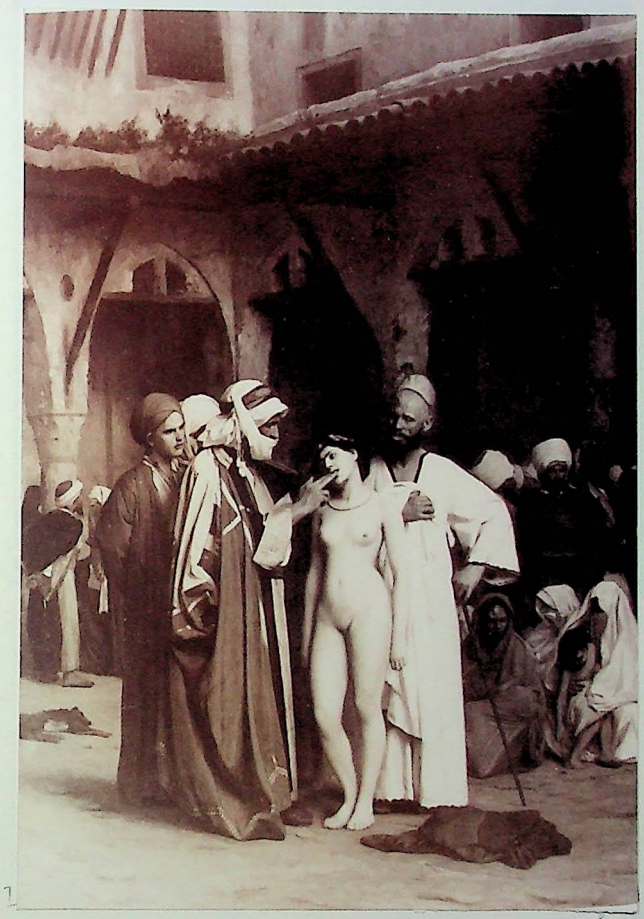

Fig. 35.
Gerome's painting of Slave Girl.

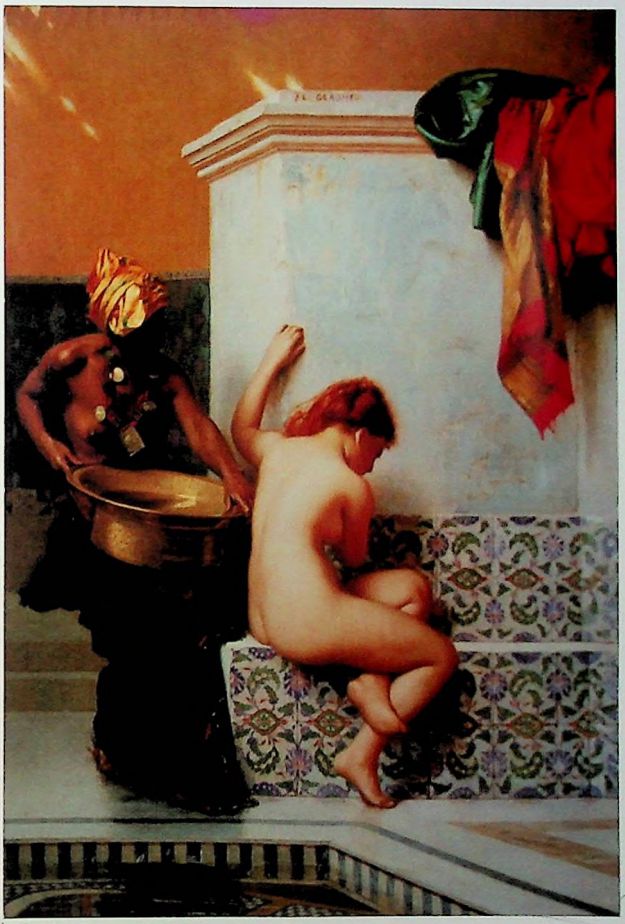

Fig. 36.
Gerome's painting of Woman
Bathing with Servant.

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