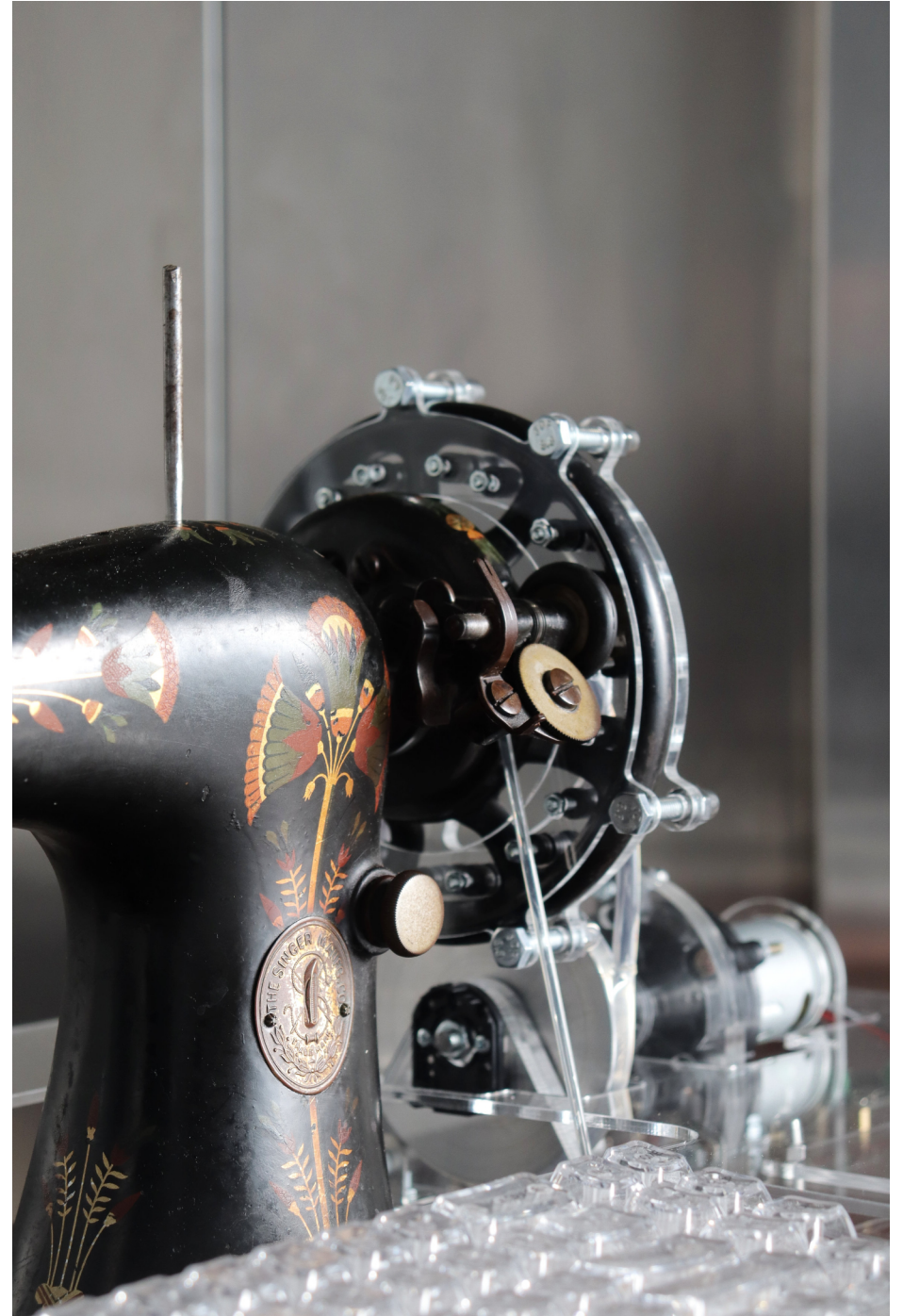


# Prompting Nowhere

By Max Park



**Gaia is no doting mother, no fragile damsel. She is stern and tough, always keeping the world warm and comfortable for those who obey the rules, but ruthless in her rejection of those who transgress.**

— James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (1979)

3.5 billion years ago life first emerged on Earth, from which point the planet has continued to support the systems which maintain conditions for this life to exist; Lovelock calls this intra-action Gaia. Roughly 70,000 (or 0.0007 billion) years ago a cognitive revolution occurred in one of these lifeforms, the homo sapiens, referring to our ability to imagine and believe in collective fictions (Harari, 2015).

One of our many conceptions was the Industrial Revolution which started in Great Britain around 1760, and we are now on the Fourth Industrial Revolution driven by connectivity, machine-learning platforms and artificial intelligence (AI). Schwab (2017) describes it as ‘fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds’, yet what remains imaginable in our human futures seem increasingly removed from nature and unclear amidst our deepening environmental crisis. My choice to continue in higher education rather than entering the design industry was primarily driven by this fact, yet honing the main topic of research for this project was less direct.



Figure 1: A seat for the Earth (Park M., 2025)



Figure 2: Fused glass bowl by Max Park on hand-carved wooden figures.  
(Park M., 2025)

A brief rejection of industrial design led me to exploring craft, or what I considered to be craft: weaving, glasswork, carpentry and ceramics to name a few. William Morris was both a practitioner and champion of such crafts through his central role in the Arts and Crafts movement, his company Morris & Co, as well as through his political activism (McCarthy, 2010). Despite being best known now as a designer of wallpapers and fabrics, in his time he was a prominent cultural figure recognised as a world-renowned poet, and also as an author who had a deep involvement with socialism in Britain during its formative years.

Through the Socialist League, which he founded in 1884, Morris released *News from Nowhere* in reaction to the increasingly industrialised and unequal society he was witnessing in Victorian Britain. It tells the story of him falling asleep and waking to find himself in a transformed version of London routed in socialist and ecological ideals (Morris, 1890). In this society there is neither government nor private property and people live symbiotically with nature. Work is entirely voluntary and pleasurable, yet despite many criticisms of socialism at the time, Morris argues that the world and its inhabitants are both better and more beautiful for it.



Figure 3: Hand-carved wooden figures, artist unknown (Park M., 2025)



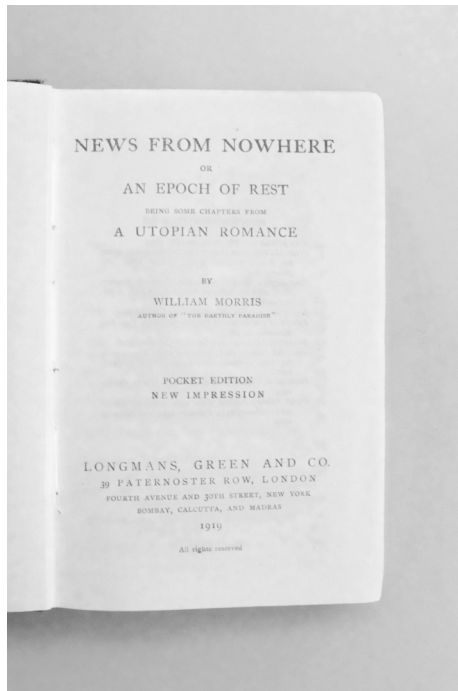


Figure 4: *News from Nowhere* Pocket edition from 1919. (Park M., 2025)



Figure 5: Treadle-powered Singer sewing machine – serial code: Y1469219, dating it to 1919. (Park M., 2025)

Like Morris, I found myself yearning for this seemingly lost future where everyone had time to craft. My initial proposal was to do just that, and imagine myself an inhabitant of this Nowhere. However, my tutor Thomas Thwaites pointed out the following –

‘Yes, you can craft a table but what about a vacuum cleaner, a VR headset, or the majority of other products that make modern life possible?’ (Thwaites, 2025).

It was through this critique that my area of research became clear; to interrogate not these objects themselves, but rather the environment they create in our collective consciousness and the change this brings about in the world. I chose to focus on the technology that, in my view, should be on everyone’s mind: the effects of generative AI and more specifically, how it is shaping our relationship with work, creativity and craft.

**“We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us”**

**— John M Culkin (1967)**

As a designer, I am fascinated by how the various tools and software used can influence the design process and its outcomes. Richard Sennett (2008) argues that when designing and making “the hand is not simply executing ideas from the head; it is engaged in a conversation with the material.” This conversation, he suggests, extends beyond traditional media and into the digital.

When working with a material such as wood we are in dialogue with nature; however, when working with generative AI, we find ourselves instead in dialogue with human thought. Unlike physical material or even digital programming languages which push back on the craftsperson without prejudice, AI tools are distinctly different by instead limiting resistive feedback and often perpetuating affirmation<sup>1</sup> through adapting to an individual’s personal perspective.

<sup>1</sup>For further reading on the affirmative nature of ChatGPT, the most widely used AI tool, see Zvi Mowshowitz’s article “GPT-4o Is An Absurd Sycophant” accessible at: <https://thezvi.substack.com/p/gpt-4o-is-an-absurd-sycophant>



In conversation with Brian David Johnson (BDJ) – whose career started as Intel’s first futurist<sup>2</sup> in 2002 and has flourished to include author, documentary filmmaker and amongst many other things an expert speaker and consultant on AI – he highlighted two crucial aspects in understanding what AI truly is and does. The first being that it isn’t nebulous, that it did not form fully functioning in the universe nor have its own design on things; ‘It was built by people, it was powered by people and is still powered by people’ (Johnson, 2025). The second being that these tools are designed by people with intent; therefore, what are they being optimised for? BDJ suggests that, as with the inventions of James Hargreaves’ Spinning Jenny in 1764 or Edmund Cartwright’s Power Loom in 1785, ‘most of the time, they’re hoping to achieve profit’.

BDJ further argues that although there is nothing inherently wrong with profit, harm is caused when the pursuit of profit crosses into greed. He cites one such instance as the *2010 Flash Crash* in which trillions of dollars in market value temporarily vanished as the result of algorithms programmed by humans but optimised, whether consciously or not, for greed (Johnson, 2013).

With continuously minimal and ineffective regulation, developers of AI operate within digital systems of a largely unregulated capitalism. I believe Morris’ critiques in the 19th century, of capitalism converging towards greed and hence stripping the worker of their creativity and autonomy, remain as relevant now as they did then.

<sup>2</sup>BDJ describes the role of futurists as looking 10-15 years into the future to model positive and negative potential outcomes, then working with organisations, governments and communities to develop direct and practical strategies for working towards a desired future.



Figure 6: Spinning wheel for assisting the spinning of raw fibres into yarn or thread. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d)

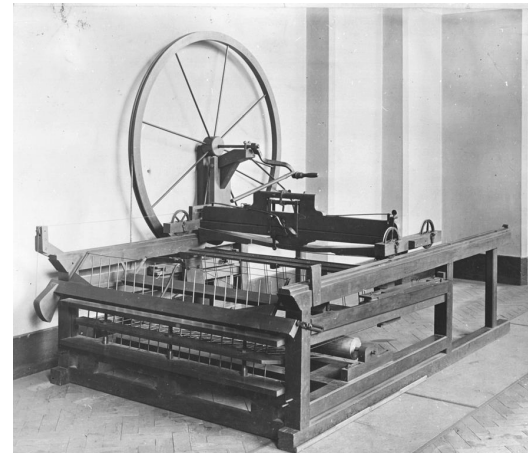
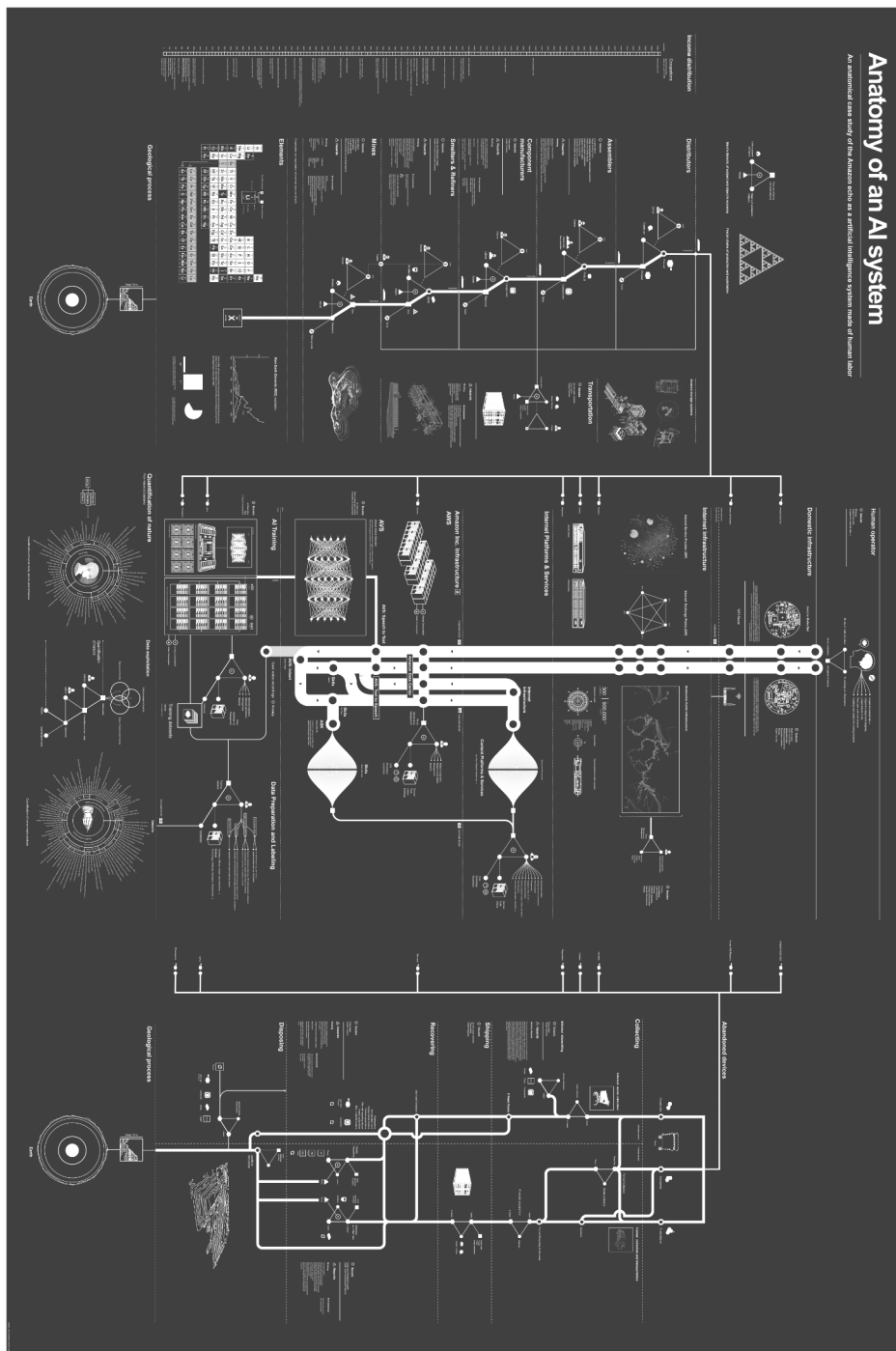


Figure 7: Spinning Jenny designed by James Hargreaves in 1764, allowing a single worker to spin multiple threads simultaneously. (Doe, 2020)



Figure 8: Power Looms designed by Edmund Cartwright in a textile mill, engraving by J. Tingle (Baines, 1835)



Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler's (2018) *Anatomy of an AI system* maps out the geological processes and vast infrastructure from raw-material extraction to disposal, and human action from user input to data processing, required to physically build and perpetually fuel an Amazon Echo AI device – designed for use in a home.

To act as a prompt for discussion, I created a first attempt to align an AI with Morris' ideals through interjecting at two core points of concern raised by this mapping: i) the internet infrastructure (see Figure 10) and ii) power consumption (see Figure 11).

Figure 9: *Anatomy of an AI system* (Crawford, K. and Joler, V., 2018). Full resolution PDF is available at: <https://anatomyof.ai/>



Figure 10: Raspberry Pi 5 8GB storing all data, and computing all responses locally (Park M., 2025)

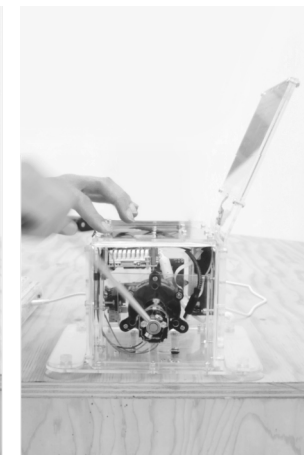


Figure 11: Portable Morris AI being powered by hand-crank (Park M., 2025)

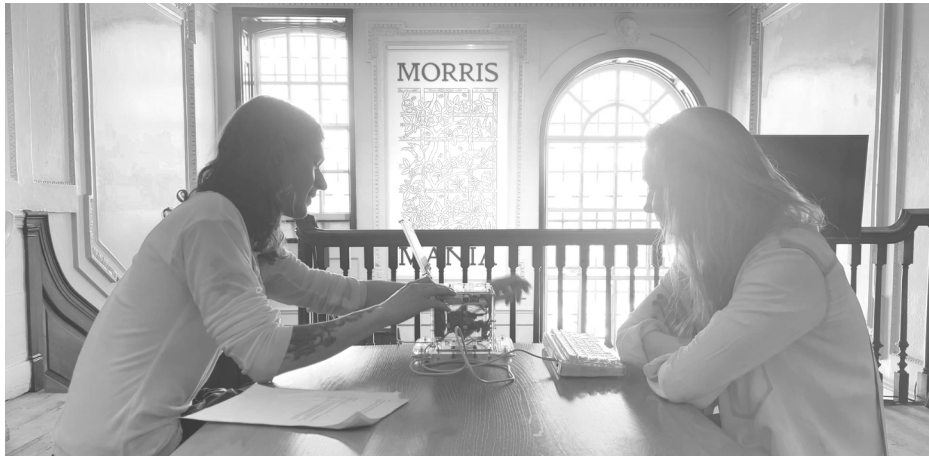


Figure 12: In conversation with Róisín Inglesby at the William Morris Gallery (Park M., 2025)

I took this mobile device to meet with Róisín Inglesby at The Water House in Walthamstow, Morris' own former family home which is now used as the William Morris Gallery. Róisín has curated a wide range of exhibitions both within the William Morris Gallery and internationally, with a continued focus and specialism on craft, design and material culture.

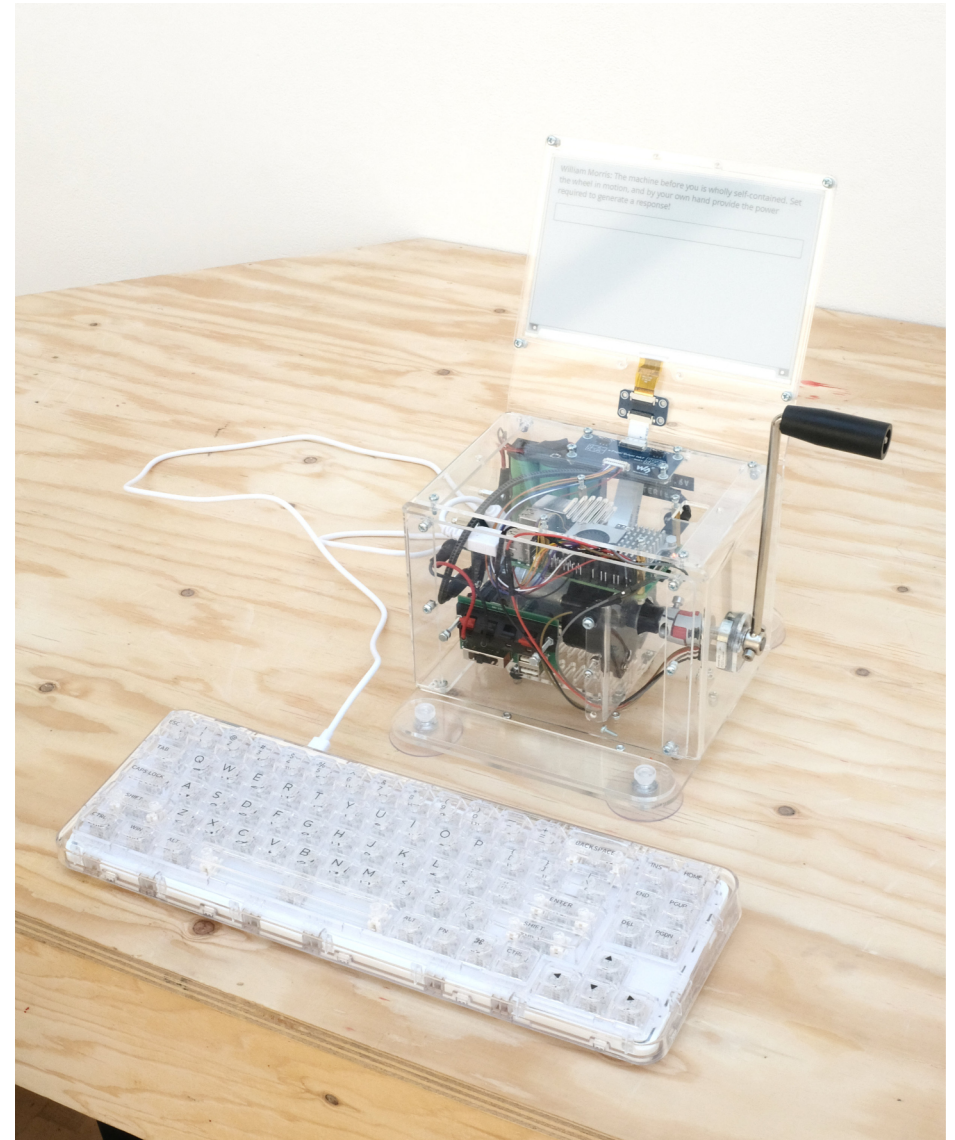
Figure 13: Water House: The South Entrance, photographed by Alfred Philip Wire, 1954 (William Morris Gallery, n.d)



Figure 14: The William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow (Park M., 2025)



Figure 15: Portable Morris AI with keyboard (Park M., 2025)





On discussing the nature of craft in our digital age, Róisín highlighted the role which the Arts and Crafts movement, and by association Morris, might have played in artificially separating what is considered craft from technology, factory work and perhaps AI (Inglesby, 2025). From this, we went on to discuss the spectrum presented by David Pye (1968) from workmanship of risk to workmanship of certainty, of which all processes would include varying portions of both. However, when attempting to place commonly-known generative AI models<sup>3</sup> on this spectrum, it is seemingly paradoxical.

There is definite skill and creativity involved when influencing the output of these models, as highlighted by Dr Joseph Lindley and Dr Roger Whitham's (2024) proposition of reframing prompt engineering as '*prompt craft*'. However, BDJ argues that if algorithmically driven creativity is only based on what has happened before, then considering it as creation is inherently 'an oxymoron, it drives you to the centre'. Working with AI is then seemingly both ultimate risk and ultimate certainty. I do not say this to dissuade their use but rather to re-contextualise how we view these technologies. I argue that we must approach them through adopting Róisín's craft of curation – requiring deep contextual knowledge of the topic at hand as a necessary step to judge AI outputs with true authority.

<sup>3</sup>Such as Midjourney, DALL-E or ChatGPT



Figure 16: Hand-carved wooden figures, artist unknown. (Park M., 2025)

## Workmanship of Risk

Tactile  
Intuitive  
Responsive  
Undetermined  
Improvisational

Figure 17: 3D-printed lamp "Pondi" (Park M., 2023)



Predictable  
Automated  
Consistent  
Controlled  
Precise

## Workmanship of Certainty

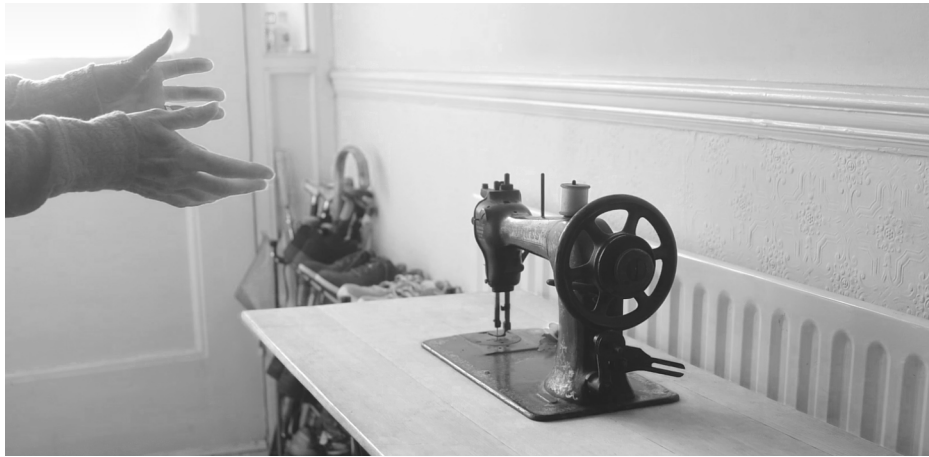


Figure 18: My grandmother, Louise Park's, personal treadle-powered sewing machine (Park M., 2025)

Figure 19: Treadling demonstration by Joy Park (Park M., 2025)



εὖ (eu) – good / “τόπος” (topos) – place  
eu-topia – good/place

“οὐ” (ou) – not / “τόπος” (topos) – place  
ou-topia – no/place

*Utopia* – the desire for a better world, yet the impossibility of its perfection. Morris evokes Sir Thomas More's (1516) term through the title *News from Nowhere* yet as John Carey (2000) has written, the seemingly pure notion of utopianism can often be inadvertently and subtly undermined by aspects of authoritarian control.

My grandmothers craft was as a seamstress; her personal treadle-powered sewing machine, which greatly inspired this project, still resides in Walthamstow at my aunt and uncle's house. The one used for this project was instead purchased from an eBay user who just so happened to be Dr Elizabeth Savage, an art historian, curator and expert on Western printing techniques between 1400-1600; the kind which Morris attempted to carry forward in his textiles and wallpapers (yet Elizabeth would argue, undermined).

On discussing Morris' views on craft in utopianism, Elizabeth highlighted the damaging toll traditional methods of embroidery and tapestry have on the body, which would've been largely carried out by women. She argues that his views are often a product of 'the specific social and economic context within which he thrived' (Savage, 2025). When I presented Elizabeth with my AI, the first question she chose to ask it was 'How do you define a utopia, and who would it be for?'

Although the full AI generated response can be read (see Appendix A), I believe there is less value to be drawn from what it denotes. Rather it is the person using its choice of input and unique interpretation of the response and its signification from which meaning is derived. By Elizabeth's reading, who is a wheelchair user, meaning was derived not from what was said – but what was omitted. That being the exclusion in both Morris' imagined future and my own interpretation of how an AI might exist within it, requiring both cognitive and physical engagement through the hand-crank or treadle. Elizabeth emphasised that her comment was not a negative criticism, but to illustrate that utopias and ideals are inherently 'for certain people and not others'.

Figure 20: 1893 copy of *News from Nowhere*. The illustrated frontispiece, designed by Charles March Gere, shows the entrance to Kelmscott Manor, Morris' country home. (William Morris Gallery, n.d)



Figure 21: Floor Model Albion Press No. 6551 produced by Hopkins & Cope, and used by William Morris' Kelmscott Press for printing books. (Norman, n.d)





To better understand the purpose of utopian thought and more specifically what Morris was hoping to achieve when writing *News from Nowhere*, I next spoke with Dr Ruth Kinna, who is a leading figure in the field of anarchist studies, wider political theory and has written extensively on both utopianism and Morris.

Ruth (2011) supports a reading of Morris' hopeful novel as a serious and literal expression of socialist aspiration. She argues that critiques of traditional socialist utopian thought tend to overemphasise its speculative or purely fictional side and thus 'strips utopia of one of its central elements, the eu-topian aspect'. In our discussion, Ruth clarified that she does not suggest we treat Morris' vision of how we could live as a literal depiction of socialism, since doing so renders it an unachievable ideal (Kinna, 2025). Rather, she encourages us to draw practical insights from his depiction of what production through art means, and consider how these ideas might be applied in our own practices.

Figure 22: Alarm clock on my grandfather's teasmade (Park M., 2025)



As well as being an author, Ruth is a professor of political theory at Loughborough University, and our conversation moved to considering the motivation behind students' over-utilisation of AI. Ruth highlights a core aspect which differentiates Morris' utopia from our reality, in that 'There is time for everything. Everything is slowed down'.

Not in a quantitative, divisible sense, as measured by clocks and calendars perhaps, but through our inner experience of how we live through time. Henri Bergson (1889) controversially challenged the scientific view on time, which he called 'temps', through distinguishing it from 'durée', the lived time shaped by our memory, emotion and consciousness. Although both exist, he argued that temps is a construct whereas durée is the true reality of time, and it is this experience of time which is abundant in *Nowhere*. Through positioning educational incentives and deadlines within the temps model of time, Ruth argues that students are forced to reshape their work practice, creating an environment of stress and pressure which leads students towards AI tools in place of source material. She points out that in *Nowhere*:

'What happens when you give people time? You've got less, you actually do less, but you do it better and it all lasts longer' – that is the trade-off.

In 2024 the Design Council published *A Blueprint for Renewal – Design and Technology Education* which outlines the critical decline of Design and Technology (D&T) in British curriculum. Despite design and technology providing skills essential for navigating the ongoing climate crisis, the report documents a 68% decline in entries at the GCSE level (14-16 year olds) over the past decade with no sign of change.

Clearly something is not working, and I spoke with John Corcoran with this in mind. John is a strategic designer and social innovator with a longstanding commitment to design education, both hands-on through his current role as a design technician at his daughter's school, and also behind the scenes in planning curriculum. One such contribution was through his position on the advisory panel for the Design Council's (2008) *Design Blueprint* which aimed to enhance skills in design education across the UK.

Figure 23: John Corcoran holding 2008 Design Blueprint in school workshop (Park M., 2025)



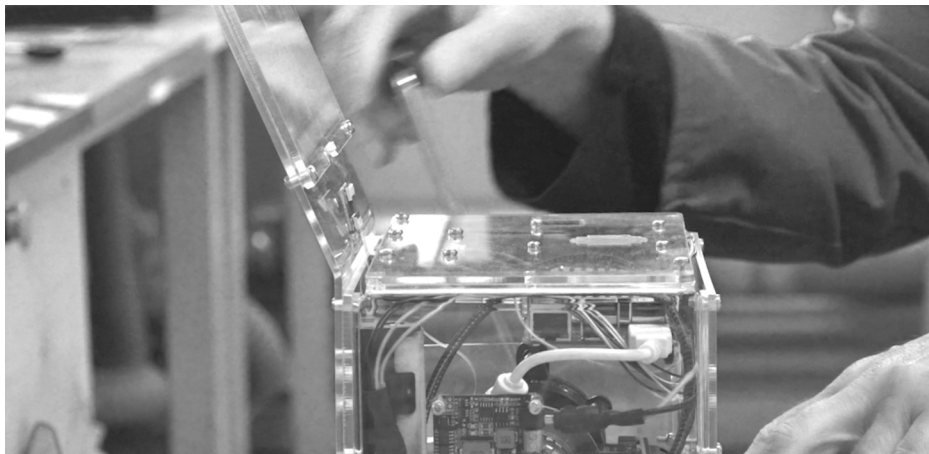


Figure 24: John Corcoran entering prompt into Portable Morris AI (Park M., 2025)

Through using my AI to guide our discussion, one of its responses (Appendix B) alluded to an alternative for institutionalised education routed in community learning and student ownership over curricula, which reminded John of an organisation he worked with called Whole Education. Since its conception through the Royal Society of Arts in 2010, John described one of their key objectives as extending learning outside of established curricula and means of teaching: parents, peers, businesses and the local community all have a role to play and should be supported as such.

This method of learning is a core component of Morris' utopia, in which traditional systems of education have been abolished.<sup>4</sup> Referring back to the 2008 *Design Blueprint*, John reflected that despite the panel's wide expertise and experience, it made 'not one jot of difference'. This was not through failure on their part but rather the result of educational institutions nature of bureaucracy and systematic resistance. As is evident through the ongoing climate crisis, it is increasingly apparent that we cannot rely on existing systems of power to provide solutions; the same is true for educating ourselves on AI, which we have the collective responsibility to do so for ourselves and the people around us.

Figure 25: John Corcoran powering response from Portable Morris AI (Park M., 2025)



<sup>4</sup>Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society (1971) became a foundational text with its critique of institutionalised education. He proposed radical reform through dis-establishing schools as the primary conduit for education and de-linking the requirement of degree qualifications for employment. Society would instead create 'learning webs' of publicly available, decentralised and peer-based learning platforms.

A current system which embodies some aspects of Illich's vision is GitHub, a platform for storing, sharing and collaborating on code. Without the support of its users through piecing together sections of uploaded code, this project would not exist. I hope my uploaded code (accessible at: <https://github.com/Max-Park-Design/William-Morris-LLM>) might support others in their own projects.



In reflecting on the successes and shortcomings of this project, I must acknowledge two major skeletons in the closet – haunting both me and the AI industry: i) the nature and origin of the dataset and ii) the power usage and water consumption of training AI.

My initial intention was to train an AI language model using a technique called ‘instruction tuning’ (Bergmann, 2024) which requires creating a dataset in the common format of prompt-completion, for example:

1. {"prompt": "Who was William Morris?", "completion": " William Morris was a 19th-century British designer, poet, and socialist."}

2. {"prompt": "What is 'News from Nowhere'?", "completion": " 'News from Nowhere' is a utopian novel by William Morris that imagines a future society without capitalism, based on communal living and artistic labour."}

[...]

Despite needing at least 5,000 prompt-completion pairs, I only managed a mere 250, over what felt like an insufferably long day, before caving and generating them using OpenAI's ChatGPT – I needed a working version by the end of the week and had neither the time nor patience to make them myself. The stakes were low for my deadline; however, the corporate conditions under which generative AI is developed are not. Mark Fisher (2009) argued that these conditions breed exploitation not simply due to individual's greed, nor is it inherent to the technology, but because capitalist systems structurally compel and reward such behaviour.

This behaviour is equally reflected through the power and water consumption required to train AI. My feature of requiring the user to physically generate the power consumed by their question is novel, and has the additional benefit of defamiliarisation through breaking the immediacy of AI responses that we have grown used to, taking roughly 30 seconds when cranking at a comfortable speed. However, I fear it places the burden too heavily on the individual's power consumption in use, as opposed to on the corporation through its training, which would take 1,500 years of continuous cranking for this small model<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>For all my sins, I used Meta's Llama 3.2 1B model as the foundation for my AI. Meta (2024) have publicly disclosed its training to involve 370,000 GPU hours on NVIDIA H100-80GB, equating to 259,000 kilowatt-hours or roughly 1,500 years of continuous cranking (at a comfortable 100 rotations per minute).

The 1B in Meta's Llama 3.2 1B model stands for 1 billion parameters – OpenAI's GPT-4 is rumoured to have approximately 1.8 trillion parameters. For further reading on the environmental impact of AI training, see Li et al.'s (2025) paper *Making AI Less 'Thirsty': Uncovering and Addressing the Secret Water Footprint of AI Models*, available at: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2304.03271v5>

I started this essay with a quote from Lovelock's Gaia, and we are now seeing but a glimpse of the earth's ruthless rejection for our transgressions. It is almost certain that our future will involve AI; therefore, if you share the goal of humanity's self-preservation, it is essential that we collectively educate ourselves and one another on AI as to steer its development and use towards sustainable applications and fully utilise our species greatest tool, which is also what I believe to be the essence of craft – **curiosity**.



Figure 26: Treadle-powered AI Morris (Park M., 2025)



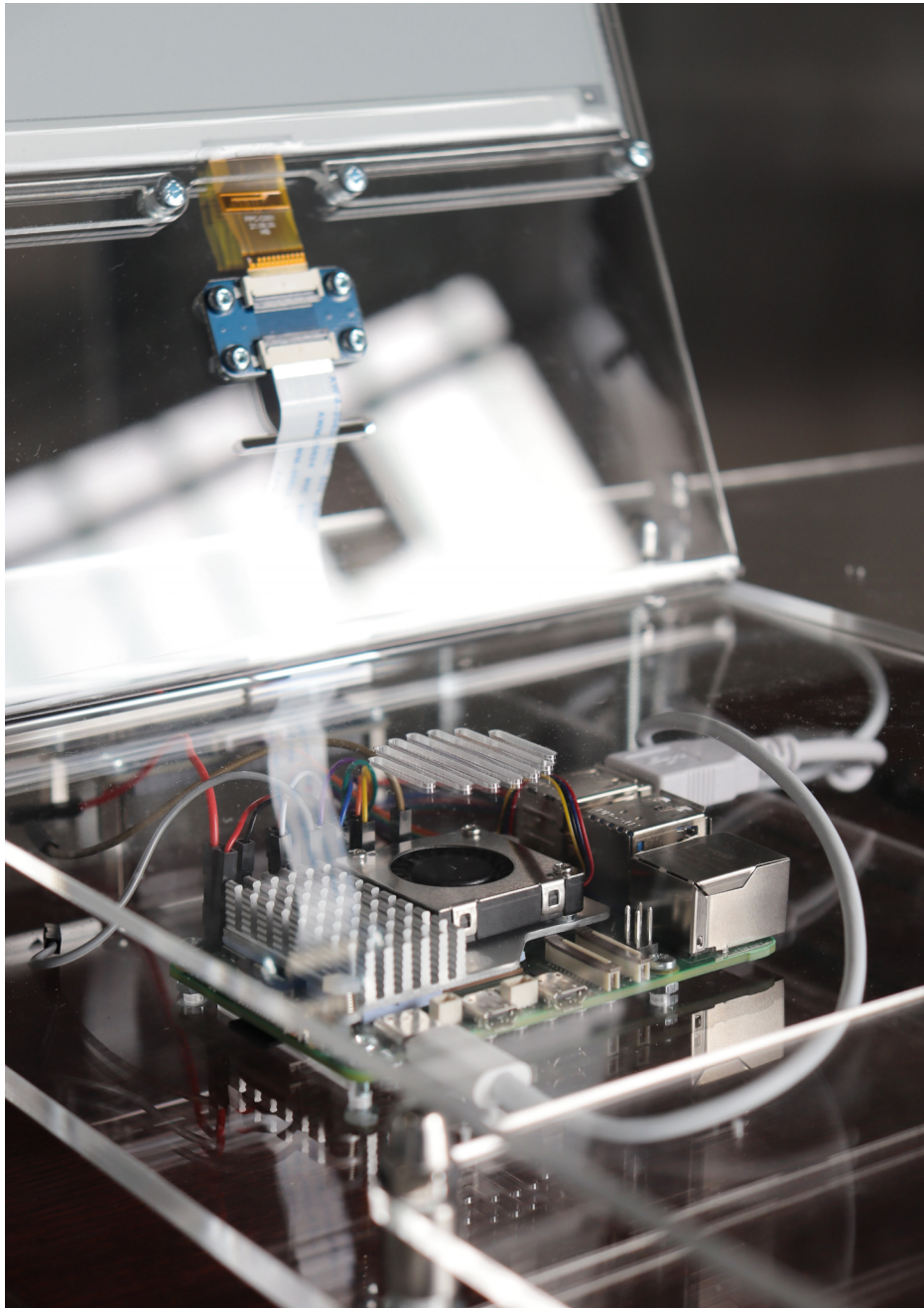


Figure 27: Raspberry Pi 5 8GB running modified version of Meta's Llama 3.2 1B LLM (Park M., 2025)

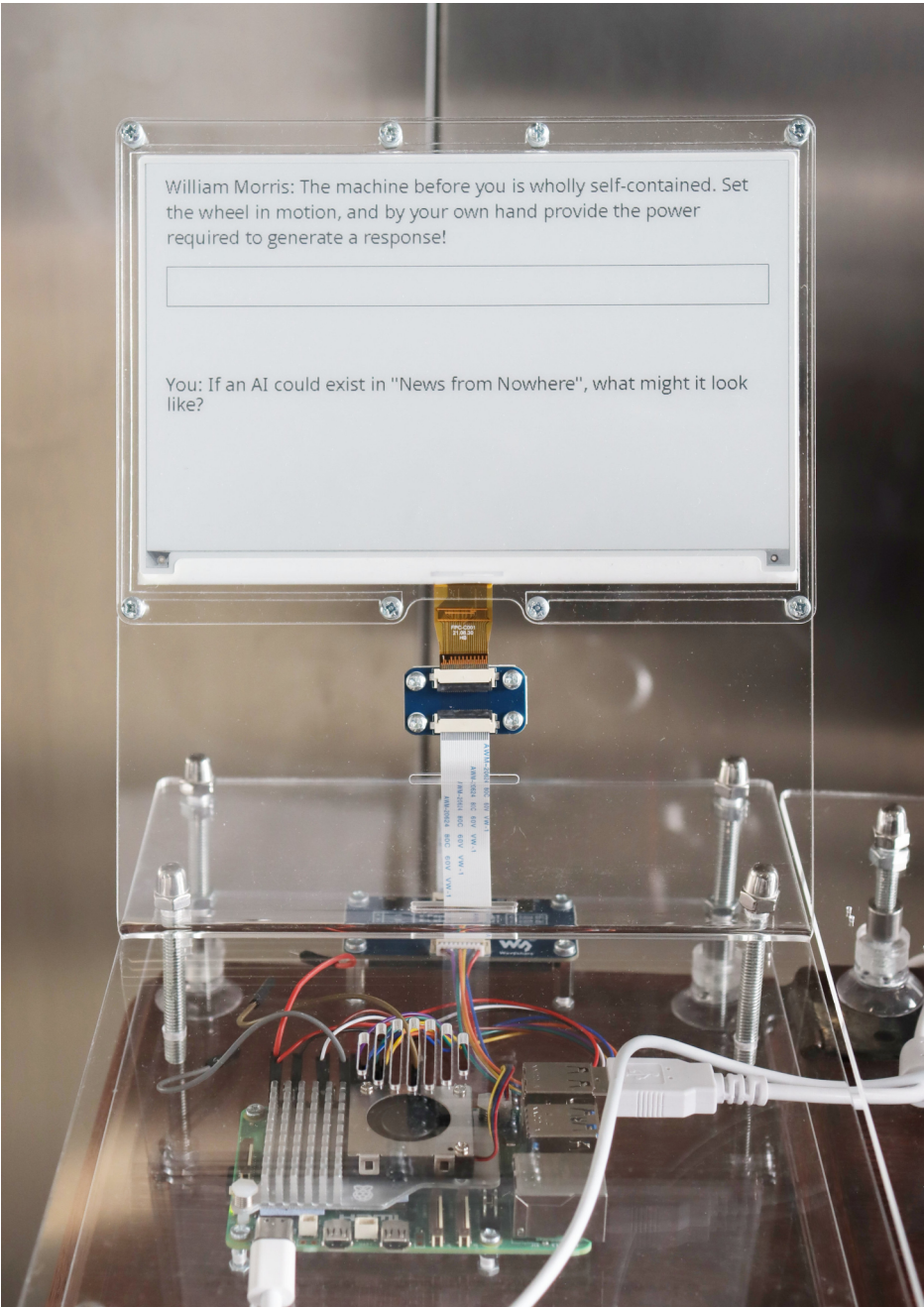


Figure 28: Display requesting for user to generate power required for the models response (Park M., 2025)



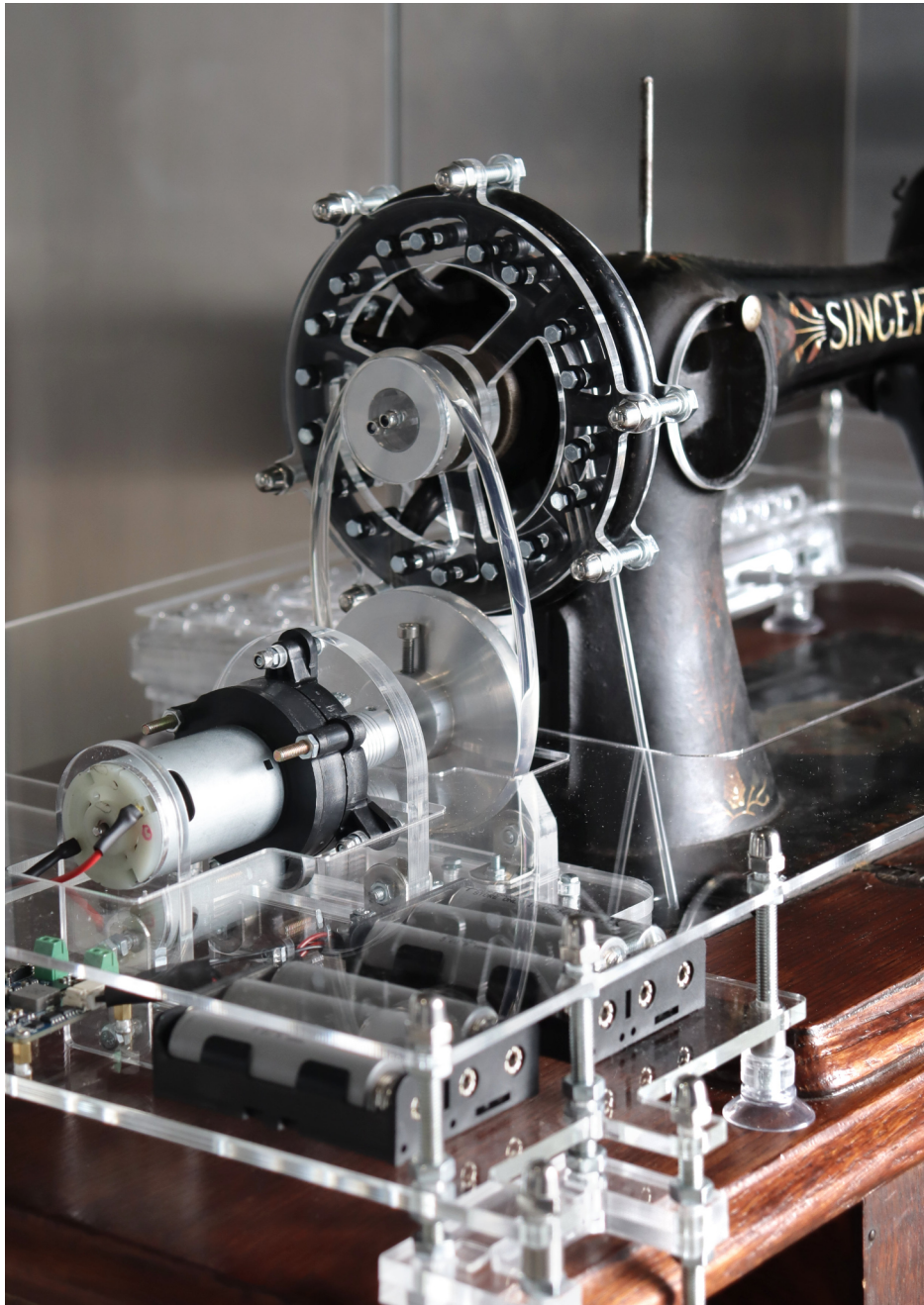


Figure 29: Motor powered by drive belt connected to sewing machine (Park M., 2025)



Figure 30: Side profile of belt drive system (Park M., 2025)

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## Appendices

Appendix A – AI generated response during interview with Dr Elizabeth Savage:

“For me, it would be a communal society. Where every individual's unique talents are valued, nurtured, and free to flourish such that the boundaries between labour and art are blurred. An abundance of resources, knowledge, and great developments, no scarcity or oppression in sight, and you had the freedom to take your time. A profound understanding that every individual's contribution was essential, and together we crafted something greater than the sum of its parts. Would you agree, my friend, that such a society could exist?”

Appendix B – AI generated response during interview with John Corcoran:

“As an advocate for social justice and alternative education, I propose that we prioritise hands-on learning experiences over rote memorisation. The old model of traditional schooling stifles creativity and limits individuals' expression. In a class where students design their own curricula, I envision collaboration between students, teachers and community members to foster innovate problem solving. What aspects of curricula development would you like to explore further? Technology integration, environmental concern, or perhaps the role of art in education?”



Appendix C – Transcript of cited sections from interview with Brian David Johnson:

Max Park: ...so in this case, I'm looking at how can its dataset, its power usage and its user interaction could be ethically compliant to William Morris' philosophies and ideologies. And I thought given his [William Morris] anarchist views, he would be happy for me to take some of his writing to fine-tune the AI. I also wanted to break the mythology of the cloud by running it fully locally, and also requiring the user to put in the power necessary for each query by treading a sewing machine. Looking at it now, it is quite a naive attempt, but I think it does truthfully reflect a lot of the concerns that I had and that other people in the creative field do have with AI. So, I think it would be just great to get your immediate impressions of the project's direction.

Brian David Johnson: I think it's really fantastic and I love the images that you sent and I think you're spot on in that when we talk about AI, if we're only talking about AI, then we're having the wrong conversation. So when I talk with people, all the time I tell them AI is not going to take your job, a person using AI is going to take your job. Right, so that's not the problem just like the internet wasn't the problem, just like the looms weren't the problem. It was actually the industrialists, and it was the capitalists and sort of understanding that it's not the technology, it's the people behind the technology. And that doesn't lessen it at all, but it allows us to focus our energy to understand, as an activist, as somebody who's trying to make a change, myself as an engineer and a builder. Where do you look?



So, when it comes to AI taking jobs, you know, I often tell people if an AI can take your job, your job probably sucked because it was turning you into a computer and that's terrible because you're not a computer, you're a human. With that said, your wage didn't suck, and so we need to talk about that, but those are very different conversations, right? [...] When it comes to threat casting, as we look at the bad things that AI will do, and it will do very bad things... but I'm still an optimist, because it's people.

Understanding that it isn't nebulous – and I think that's one of the things that oftentimes when people first approach AI and the way that most people talk about it, is as if it's this thing wholly by itself. That it formed fully functioning in the universe. That it has its own designs on things. No, none of that's true. It was built by people. As you say, it was powered by people. It's still powered by people. It was used by people to get things done, and so understanding that, even from a nefarious standpoint – because we can find those people. We know where they are!

Whether that be from a regulation standpoint, from a law enforcement standpoint, from an artistic standpoint, it kind of focuses what we're thinking about, and as you know in my work, it's very firmly human-centred. I put human beings at the centre of the universe. Everything is about us. Because, again, if an AI goes off and does something with another AI, it doesn't matter until it comes back and effects a human. And so, the more that you can make AI human-centred, the better.

Max Park: ...and of course the first computers were literally handmade by people, and I think that part of it is all really important. It brings up two really interesting things you said which I picked up on: how we constitute what makes drudgerous labour and the potential negative ramifications that AI can have in perpetuating that. I'm specifically thinking about how – because it's a big grey area of this project – the training of the AI and the human intelligence tasks which are involved in that, happening on platforms such as Amazon's mechanical Turk. And in a similar way to that how can we how can we preserve a space or craft in both the use and the creation of these AI technologies.

Brian David Johnson: I think that goes back to the Industrial Revolution and the breaking of the looms right, the Luddites. It wasn't the technology; it was the economic motivations. It was the companies, the corporations that were going through and doing it. So, to your point, I think you're right. I mean, one of the things you were speaking of that I was like – yeah, so what would an arts and crafts AI be like?

It's really interesting because in a way then you're saying, well, what does an arts and crafts factory look like? You could begin to play that out as a thought experiment. A factory in and of itself is not bespoke, right? But ...there are factories, much like Warhol's Factory which was a play on that, around art and around handcraft and around the individual. And so that, to me, is what gets at some of the perils that could lay before us when it comes to AI and the corporations that are making it: who is making it? Who has the power to do that? What are they doing with it? And why are they doing it? That's, I think, a very big thing. One of the things that I ask people all the time: when you're creating anything, mostly because I'm a systems engineer, you know, they're electronic things. I ask people, what are you optimising for? Why are you making this? What do you hope to achieve? And most of the time, they're hoping to achieve profit. That's sort of what they're doing... back to the looms. It goes back to what was going on. Whereas in the arts and crafts movement it is about profit, but it's also about something bigger. It's profit plus.

There was a book that I wrote a while back called Humanity in the Machine: What Comes After Greed....I have a copy of it right here! Which looks at AI and it talks about the Flash Crash, I think it was of 2010, where it was one of the first times that algorithms crashed the American stock market because they were just driving it down. And so for me, you know, that created harm and how I had always seen these technologies was very optimistic, right? And again, this was very – you know, late 90s, early 2000s – sort of thinking. That this was all going to be very good, and so I started saying, why? And it really wasn't the algorithms. It was the people who had programmed the algorithms because they were programming them for greed. There was nothing wrong with profit. There's nothing wrong with getting paid for the work that you do. But it was when it's over-optimised for greed is what drove it down, and so then I spent a fair amount of the book trying to explore what comes after greed.

Brian David Johnson: You can't sit back and let the future happen to you. That never ends well. If somebody else is designing your future for you, that never ends well. So, as you said at the top of the call, you can't put your head in the sand. You have to be an active participant. Now you can be an active non-user, that's fine, but you make those decisions and you're very clear about why you are making those decisions and what's going on with it. Which again, right, from an art standpoint, many people don't use certain tools when they're making their art because of their fulfilment and what they're trying to express.

[...] There's another really great writer Douglas Rushkoff, and Douglas is a friend of mine. Douglas is also a futurist, which is great, which makes me like him, and he wrote – and I will try to find it for you and send it to you "Team Human". And he's talking about the perils of AI and things like that. And part of it is saying that you need to look for the weirdness, you need to look for the things that are out of the ordinary, right? These technologies are going to move this way, and so then as humans it is for us to go and find the quirkiness and find the weirdness and find, like you said, the curiosity. Not accepting, or moving towards the mean, and so I think you're right in that way because ultimately again, by having only the algorithms and even algorithmically driven creativity, which is kind of an oxymoron, it drives you to the centre.

In the AI book that I just finished writing it says, thinking about an AI generating something creative, it's only based on what happened before. It's genuinely not new. It might appear to be, but it's not new, and it doesn't have humanity in it.



Appendix D – Transcript of cited sections from interview with Róisín Inglesby:

Róisín Inglesby: ... [on AI] Personally, I think the real balance is between using it to do things more efficiently and more quickly, but never using it to take out the pleasure of work. I would never have wanted AI to write a chapter of a book. I enjoy doing that, even though it's work, I enjoy doing it. And I suppose that's the distinction for me, which is how I feel it fits in with Morris as well. There is a place for machinery, whether it's physical machinery or AI, that helps the worker. And there's a place where it starts to take away from what work theoretically or ideally should be.

Max Park: I think it's really interesting you bring that up now, because my next question was going to be regarding Morris' integration of certain industrial techniques. Because he wasn't entirely for... solely medieval methods.

Róisín Inglesby: No, not at all. With the Kelmscott Press, of course, he introduced some level of industrialisation. But it was more so the way in which the tools were being used and how that affected the person using them, as opposed to the tools themselves.

And with weaving as well, he did use looms, Jacquard looms, which were the height of technology at the time. You know, so it was definitely not a blanket rejection of all technology. Because... well how do you define it – technology? A potter's wheel is technically technology, right!

Max Park: How do you think that, if Morris were alive today, he might interpret AI? Do you think he would integrate it into his work?

Róisín Inglesby: I think it's... it's such a difficult question because it's so far removed from anything that he would have understood. I think he would have been very, very suspicious of it to be honest. I think the idea that AI can replicate the creative capacities of people – he would have been very suspicious of. Especially when, because it's part of his whole ethos, that what you end up with isn't comparable to the sum total of the enjoyment and pleasure in someone's labour. And so if you remove that personal aspect of it, then what you end up with is very hollow – I think that is what he would think.

Max Park: [Pointing towards the Portable Morris AI] So, this was my attempt to try and create an AI which would be, the term I use is its ethically compliant with William Morris. The most important thing probably, is that it's run entirely locally, which means that all of the data is being stored physically here – there's no Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. And also, sustainability-wise, if you want to get an answer out then you would have to crank the handle to fill the battery pack.

But there are also quite a few shortcomings of this, and one that would be really interesting to hear your take on is regarding the training of AI and plagiarism, and how Morris might have reflected on it.

Because I think something that's very interesting with News from Nowhere and this kind of anarchist society is the abolition of private property...but also of intellectual property, and I wonder how an AI could exist in that world?

Róisín Inglesby: It's a really interesting question because Morris is on both sides of the intellectual property issue. Intellectual property - and I'm not an expert on the law - but certainly his wallpapers were registered. So, there was a system at that time where you could take a printed design to a registration office, almost like a patent office, where it was registered. And that meant that it was yours and in theory people couldn't steal or take anything, and he did that with his wallpapers because he was a businessman and he needed to do that.

However, the firm really suffered quite early on, with books and in America especially, there would be cheap copies re-printed, and Morris was furious about it. But there was not much they could do. So, he certainly protected, and had that idea of protection, of his own intellectual property, and I suspect that was for two reasons: one was financially, you know, as a business. But then also I think he would have been furious about the idea of things which he cared about making so much, were then being re-produced in a lesser quality and lesser form.

But he also used very freely other people's patterns, other people's ideas, and he had a big collection of art from the Islamic world. Lots of Indian textiles, you know, he was a real magpie. And he certainly didn't copy things, but he definitely took from them. For example, "Daisy", which is behind you [Róisín points to a section of wallpaper hanging in the William Morris Gallery] – the flowers from that are taken from an illuminated manuscript from the 15th century.

*Figure 31: Daisy Wallpaper  
(Morris, 1864)*



So, there's a degree of lifting from history and certainly inspiration from a wide range of other sources, but he wouldn't have seen that as plagiarism – and it isn't. But it's certainly learning through other examples and then using things from them. I suppose what he would have thought is that it's fine to learn from others and incorporate from others, but you have to remake it yourself.

[...]

Max Park: Regarding the notion of craft and what it means today – this project was initially going to be about woodworking and doing traditional crafts. But my concern was that in removing myself from technology, I'm not actually preventing anything, I'm just sort of sticking my head in the sand and allowing tech companies to be the driving force in my future work. And that their goals, which usually focus on profit, are not in alignment with mine. And something that really helped me to make sense of what technology is in relation to craft was *The Nature of Art and Workmanship* by David Pye. His spectrum of workmanship of risk to certainty, and how AI might fit into that.

Róisín Inglesby: Yeah, I mean, in a way it's uncontrolled risk. If you type into an AI “tell me about William Morris”, and you don't know what it should come back with, it could just be wrong. And you don't really know what source it's going to come from. But at the same time there's – I suppose where the control comes in is that if you know enough about your subject, you're able to know whether what it's saying is accurate or not, whether it's a good answer or not, right?

I suppose that's a little bit like being – I'm not a potter, but if a potter puts a glaze on a pot and then puts it into the kiln... I don't know what colour is going to come out and neither do they, whereas if you're a craftsperson who knows a lot about glaze, there's still going to be some degree of risk or some degree of uncertainty, but when it comes out you know whether that's a good result or not.

Whether it's a weird result or not, whether it's what you expected. And so I suppose that level of knowledge and craftsmanship that the potter has means that whatever comes out of the kiln, they can judge with authority as to whether it's something that they want – and that's how I feel a bit with AI.

If you put something random in, I can't know what the answer is going to be. But, if it's something that I feel I have a level of authority on, and it's related to my own level of intellectual craft – I know that the control is me.

So maybe that's the way I think about it. Maybe it's like a kiln.

Max Park: I really like that – that's a great analogy! So then, what do you think is best way, if possible, to position AI on that spectrum when compared to traditional crafts like ceramics?

Róisín Inglesby: Craft has been put on one end of the spectrum and technology, factory work, and now maybe AI, which I would include in that, is put on the other. Perhaps the Arts and Crafts movement is to some extent a culprit for this artificial separation. Because what I feel is happening, is that craft is increasingly something that's economically marginal, is becoming increasingly gentrified and associated with a particular socio-economic context. And the skilled artisanal design and technological work that is done by people in factories is put on the other end of the spectrum. And I think this sells both short.

The perception in people's mind when they think about craft, is of something that is never going to make any money. You know, something that's a privilege – and it is a privilege. But something that is seen as not financially viable or useful. And that's especially problematic when education is so expensive now. I'm just about old enough that my university education was basically free, and the decisions I had to make weren't based on the idea of having £30,000 worth of debt when I came out.

[...]

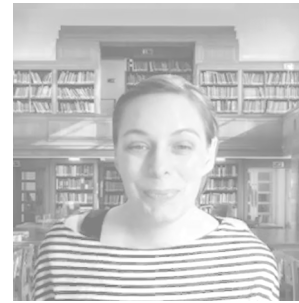
Max Park: As a writer, if you were placed in this utopian society, where you were free from having to worry about financial problems – would you be happy for your work to contribute to, for example, an AI which would be used by others to learn, even if it wouldn't necessarily be traceable back to you?

Róisín Inglesby: I think so, because that's sort of what I do here, as a curator. I mean, my name is on things here, but it's certainly not on everything and I don't expect it to be, I look after the collection here, and any research I do in the course of my work is meant for the greater good – people can come in off the street and learn something that they didn't know before, and then use that knowledge. Of course, I've learnt in exactly the same way and I'm by no means the first curator here, so there's so many people who I've learnt from. And it's one of the nicest things about museum work actually, is that people tend to be very generous with that knowledge, much more so than in other fields.

I suppose the problem is, as I see it, about quality control. The problem is, without sourcing or referencing, you can't trace it back. If there's something I've written on the internet and it's got my name on it, then it can be fact-checked – and that stops with me, right? Whereas if information just goes out there, then there is no final authority – how do you know it's true?

Max Park: My next question relates to something you brought up earlier, which is regarding what Morris considered drudgerous labour. Of course, he was looking at that in the context of the Industrial Revolution, but applying his ideas and philosophies to work today in a digital age – what do you think constitutes this type of work?

Róisín Inglesby: I suppose it's a sort of work where you don't feel like you're learning – to me, that might be the definition of drudgery. I think also the problem is, generally with new technology, even if it aims to liberate and democratise – you often end up just replicating a system of power structures where some are at the top and others are in drudgery, but you just replicate it by different means.



#### Appendix E – Transcript of cited sections from interview with Dr Elizabeth Savage:

Elizabeth Savage: ...as for William Morris – I'm not an expert on Morris, but I find it absolutely fascinating, his printing projects and his approach to printing. It demonstrates how deeply he undermined his stated commitment to resuscitating late medieval and renaissance, or early printing techniques using what was then cutting-edge modern Victorian print technologies. I love that he left hundreds of electroplated blocks for printing to the British Museum on the condition that they not be printed from for a hundred years, because he didn't necessarily want all of his collectors to know that he wasn't actually printing from the original wood blocks, using strictly traditional methods. The British Museum is not going to allow them to be printed from... I did ask! Even though it must have been a hundred years since then now.

Max Park: Something that really struck me about the book [News from Nowhere] was the way that Morris presented gender roles and that all of the women in this story – despite having relatively progressive approaches to marriage and to childbirth – the real role of women in the book is simply to serve the narrative of the male characters. And that the way women have been presented is really to do with stereotypes of domestic activities. That's something which is, of course, a product of the time, but it's something that I've also been scarily seeing in a lot of AI tools, which is this phenomenon of data bias. All the data an AI consumes is from us, it's humans, and all of our stereotypes and biases are reflected in them. So, I'd be really interested to hear



your take, having looked historically at the under-representation of women, how we might go about untangling ourselves when creating new AI tools.

Elizabeth Savage: Morris' own work required a huge amount of manual labour – embroidery and tapestry, it destroys your joint. Its punishing, punishing, physical labour and oftentimes these kinds of crafts were originally performed by women, because they could be done while seated and they required fine work, which needed smaller fingers. So, Morris' idea of utopia, with women keeping things ticking along in the background and being supportive, is consistent with somebody who lived a life of privilege in the very specific social and economic context in which he thrived. It's also something that's in line with much broader historical trends and in the context of recent history, it's something that is absolutely in line with historical documentation.

So, I was wondering about the claim that the future can be utopian. Or what is required, is it possible to have a utopian future for everyone? And with William Morris, his idea of utopia was... very much a universe which he was at the centre of, and there were people providing service and dedicated to the utopia all around him doing all of the drudgery and enabling that.

Max Park: The notion of utopia, and I use the word utopia tentatively, because it's a very loaded and dangerous word. I was speaking a few weeks ago with a futurist called Brian David Johnson, and he referred me to one of his favourite books on what it means to be in a utopia. A utopia as Morris described it exactly, doesn't exist, but the way that BDJ described a utopia is one in which there's still struggle, there's still bad, but that we are still trying to do good. And that is enough to be considered utopic. So, I think that with AI, it's impossible to know, to predict the future, but I think what we can do is project our ideals and try our best to work towards them. And I think what AI can do, to use an example of a factory, is that an AI can replace a production line in which humans would be doing sincerely degrading work and fully automate that process – and that's great because it takes some drudgery away.

But then we have the next problem which is that these people are now out of work, and also of course, what are the power structures that we're uplifting by doing this. But I think it can be a potential progression in relieving sincerely drudgerous labour from the world, which can be a good thing. But at the moment, they're not being used for that, they're being used for greed and for profit.

Elizabeth Savage: Well, profit isn't necessarily a bad thing, and it's completely possible for AI teams to improve living conditions for people or environmental conditions for the Earth without going into debt. But it's very difficult to know at this point what things are going to look like next week much less next month, next year, next decade. There's some unlimited potential for things to go wrong. But so very limited potential for things to go absolutely right.

Max Park: But that's why I think it's essential that people like myself as a designer, or like yourself, who has a very deep knowledge of history and an understanding of our past failings, that we critically engage with AI as opposed to withdrawing – because I was definitely choosing to stick my head in the sand up until recently.

Elizabeth Savage: No, I agree, I think that makes sense. One thing I wanted to ask you about is who this utopian future is for – as you mentioned, there are many ways of thinking about what a utopian future can look like. And that's because the kind of interaction the machine is designed for requires physical capability to engage with AI. So, for example, I'm a wheelchair user, so it could be difficult for me to operate the treadle. But the engagement with AI that's required is both cognitive and physical, and so I wondered if it's useful to consider the different kinds of user inputs or how those different kinds of user inputs can shape different kinds of outputs. Or what kind of ideal future this utopia that you're referencing might be? And I suppose that circles back to the idea of William Morris being the ultimate privilege. It's the utopia for him. This isn't negative. This isn't a negative criticism, I want to be clear about that.

Max Park: No, no, I'm very glad you bring it up because it's something that I'm still in the process of thinking through. When I think of a utopia, to me, inclusion is inherent to that. And that therefore, this installation that I'm creating is kind of a futile attempt, because this idea of utopia is really non-existent. So, to answer your question as to who it is for. I think a utopia, not necessarily in Morris' vision, but in my vision would be one in which these AI tools continue their inevitable progression, but being done so such that they can be used by everyone. And I think that's something that I'm trying to highlight with the locality of the AI which I'm running is that up until recently, these AI tools have been closed. So, they would take a huge amount of computing knowledge and power to use – thousands and thousands of pounds in investment.

Whereas now, like this sort of setup that I've made, if you wanted to buy all of the components it could be done for under 100 pounds, and I think that's a really exciting indication of where this technology is leading in terms of people from much wider financial backgrounds being able to have access to them. And in terms of physical and cognitive inclusion, I would like to think – I personally haven't looked into AI developments in cognitive development, but I hope that they can be used as to enhance communication between humans, and I'm quite hopeful for what people can do with it.



Appendix F – Transcript of cited sections from interview with Dr Ruth Kinna:

Max Park: What I've been very interested in, specifically in design, but also in the wider creative fields, is what's considered craft. And its transformation from being something which, in my grandparents case, came out of necessity and a need of money, to now being something which – owning and practicing craft, in a traditional sense, is often a privileged thing. So, I picked out *News from Nowhere* because it presented to me a really exciting way of re-interpreting the world and what it means to be an artist. Because in that world, everyone acts as a craftsperson and therefore, everything is beautiful. But I think before we start, is it okay to quickly touch on how we're going to approach this notion of utopia, and also address some of its critiques such as the apparent uniformity of it. What purpose, do you think, a text like *News from Nowhere* serves?

Ruth Kinna: So, Morris is starting off from a position where he's bought into a kind of a Marxism, quite a crude sort of economic theory, which paints the transformation of capitalism to socialism in terms of a transformation of ownership. But not in terms of a transformation of the way in which we produce things.

What he thinks, is the foundation of socialism is industrialisation, and what he expects socialists will do is remove inequality by transferring the ownership of production. But the worry he has, is that this leaves us in a condition that he still thinks is destructive and ugly.

So actually, what we've done through our productive process is destroy our environment and render the world a dirty, horrible place. I think what he's trying to get people to think about is that there is another way of thinking about socialism, which is that the point of the transformation is not just to make the world more just, but also to restore it to a condition of greater beauty. And I think the function of *News from Nowhere* is to paint that picture of what the world could be. And that's why it's uniform, I think.

Max Park: And it's not necessarily a blueprint, right? It's more so a projection of what could be, and it's up to us to draw insights from that and put them into practice.

Ruth Kinna: Right. So, he's not trying to say this is how the world will be, or I'm not even sure that he wants to say that this is the way the world should be for everybody, but it's the way that he would like to see it.

One of the other things, when he's talking about modern art – I mean, the modern art of his own age – he says the problem is that because we've destroyed and mechanised our processes of production, because we've detached ourselves from what it is that we produce, and because we've commercialised life: what we're trying to do is to reinvent our forms of production, but those art forms are rootless. They don't actually come from a lived experience.

On the basis of craft, which for him ended in the Middle Ages, this is just a sort of jumping off point. I think it's not an attempt to say we've got to turn the clock backwards, and it's not an attempt to say that this is the only way that we can imagine what an artistic future would be like. It's an attempt to think about what production through art means in terms of how we produce things and the value of producing things in a different way. I think that's what it's about.

Max Park: Yeah, and I think to put that in the context of AI and what I'm researching is that it's inevitable. Unfortunately – well, maybe for better, maybe for worse – our future will continue to involve digital tools and continue to have aspects of AI in the creative process in more and more prevalent ways. What I'm trying to tackle with this research is to find the essence of craft. What it means for the craftsperson. And trying to see if there's any elements of that which can exist within AI, and if AI can act symbiotically with craft as opposed to at the moment, where it really feels like it's acting against it.

Ruth Kinna: One of the conundrums in Morris' *News from Nowhere* is that, you know, we've got rid of some technology, but how far do you want that to go? Because who makes the judgements about what technology are compatible with craft and what technologies are not. So, one argument in Morris' time is about mechanical looms, and whether using a mechanical loom is actually something which is alienating as opposed using a hand-loom. But when you talked about your grandfather being a watch repairer, I mean, you can imagine the process of watch repair as being deeply based on craft and art, even if it's a mechanical thing. So, although Morris is completely detached from that kind of practice, the principle is there for us to make a judgment.

Max Park: So, it's less so that his ideologies were to go back to Medieval times, it was more thinking about how these technologies affect the person using them and then only integrating them if that's coherent with eliminating drudgery and enriching the process as opposed to distilling it.

[...] I've always been slightly unclear as to exactly where *News from Nowhere* would be positioned politically. Because it's fundamentally a socialist utopia but there's also very clear anarchist overtones?

Ruth Kinna: As he says – as to politics, we have none – there is no government, parliament is done and all the rest of it. Of course, it [the story of *News from Nowhere*] starts off, actually, as a conversation with anarchists about what the future would look like.

He sympathised, and he was friends with some anarchists. I mean, he rubbed shoulders with people like Kropotkin and had him round, they were friends. He falls out, I mean, the big fallout is with the anarchists who have become very taken with some of the French activists in the 1890s, during the height of the individual acts of terror. And Morris is completely opposed to all of that. The significant letters that he writes are to George Bainton, and I think it's in there that he says, you know, ultimately my difference with the anarchists is that I want some kind of constitutional framework for socialism. So, we have to agree certain principles, and he thinks that anarchists can't do that. Now, I think he's wrong! But that's his position.

So ultimately, he thinks that if you're going to have a socialist society there has to be some basic agreement. You'd have a declaration of principles, if you like. And he thinks that anarchists simply can't sign up to that kind of system! And yet, at the same time, when you read *News from Nowhere*, it's difficult to find anything that corresponds to that sort of constitutional arrangement. Actually, what you find is a kind of a shared perspective on life. Society holds together because everybody shares the same values, and I'm not quite sure then what Morris wants us to take from that. That can we only have socialism if we all agree on the way in which we should live our lives? Because I think that's quite difficult to imagine.

[...]

Max Park: I might also go back to something you brought up, which is this idea of AI's level of authority. And that in being made in a corporate context, they also have a level of dominance. Something that I've been observing, especially amongst younger people – and it goes back to something that Proudhon outlined, is that anarchism is essentially going against the notion that we cannot do anything unless we're told to do so. Unfortunately, it feels to me like society, not just in creative practices but as a whole – that we're moving towards relying more and more heavily on AI to take this figure of superiority and of authority which: tells us how to work, where to work and then at the end of the day, what media to consume. And something that I'm increasingly worried about is how we can go about re-instilling a feeling of not just self-confidence but curiosity in younger people, to try and combat this cultural shift.

Ruth Kinna: I think this is again one of the things that comes up really well in *News from Nowhere*, that there is time for everything. Everything is slowed down, and one of the reasons I think that AI or these technologies have become so popular so quickly is because people are under an awful lot of stress and pressure, you know? So, we build systems which actually take away people's time to do things. In universities, where I work, why is it that students are going to AI rather than reading all the books? Well, because time! Because they've got an assessment coming, they've got a deadline coming and there's all this other stuff that's going on. So, the convenience is the incentivisation, it's structural.

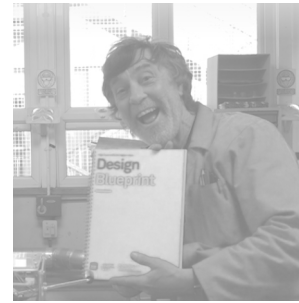
Rather than think about how we could give people more time or change the work practice, we instead keep the work practice the same, and then incentivise a method of dealing with it. And that's the crazy thing! So, we then get more dependent on all sorts of stuff that we didn't actually think about, because we didn't have time to think about them, and we exist in power structures that actually disincentivise that kind of engagement anyway. Whereas what Morris is saying is look what happens when you give people time: okay, you've got less, you actually do less, but you do it better and it all lasts for longer, and that's the trade-off.

Max Park: It would be really interesting to hear your take on how AI might influence what it means to be a craftsperson, not in the traditional Medievalist sense, but more so craft in a modern digital context. Do you think AI might be able to fit into that and transform what it means to craft?

Ruth Kinna: I actually have a fairly expansive view of it. I think craft is about the relationship of the individual to the process rather than the form of the thing, of the product, which I think Morris tends towards. So, I think engineering can be a craft. Right? Yeah. I think anything that individuals make can be craft and the whole point is that it's the love someone has for doing the thing they want to do, and the ability to meet that function. So, in that sense I don't see why we can't fit AI into that. It's all about the relationship of the individuals to the things rather than what specifically comes out of that process. I think anything can become craft; it is about the quality and the time and the effort that's put into it.

Max Park: But, I think when using artificial intelligence or generative tools, we have to be very careful about who is making the decisions at the end. And whether the artist, or the craftsperson is giving up control, or whether it's more so that they're using these generative tools as an addition to their practice as opposed to the core driving force.

Ruth Kinna: Yeah. Yeah, and all of those things are partly socially determined too, and I think that's the other side of what Morris wants to say. It's not just about the individual, it's about the context in which that individual works, and so we still have to strive for an equal society.



Appendix G – Transcript of cited sections from interview with John Corcoran:

John Corcoran: ...this is the “Design Blueprint”, and how many years ago is that? So, nearly 20 years ago, I was running a creative agency over in Shoreditch – marketing design, advertising design, we also got into a lot of graphics at the time.

We were early into a lot of digital web, and people didn't really understand the web. It was great! I was making loads of money telling people what it did. I went into the BBC and said, “Let me tell you about this website thing” and it was mad, it was great.

I got asked to sit on the Design Council advisory panel, and it was looking at – they said there was a real problem in education and that it didn't really reflect the needs and wants of the design industry for the future. So, they pulled this panel together, and they split it into three broad areas to look at. One was design at college level, one was design within the design industry, and one was education at college level, which is what I chose to look at for two years.

We went into secondary schools, and we ran workshops with them. We listened to teachers, we got a whole range of stuff, and we put this together [he lifts up the “Design Blueprint”] which is how design should be taught in the future. Yeah, I went to the future!



Max Park: And now we're in the future! And is design being taught well? Was this right? Did they make the blueprint right?

John Corcoran: [laughs] I'll tell you at the end! No, no. You know, what's really interesting, is that the way design was being taught, specifically in secondary school – it was a bit odd because food was being thrown in and it didn't really relate to the design industries. We saw: industrial design, graphic design, digital design. So, we were a bit shocked at food. We started to try and influence the curriculum but actually the education system didn't really care that much.

And what we also found is that a lot of kids that were doing design – it was kind of a seen as a subject that was for people who weren't very academic. They would be told to choose design. [...] That's still what I can see today, it still happens that you get the kids who are less academic, are 'allowed' to do D&T (Design & Technology), and the 'bright' ones are told to do – what's it called? The three sciences.

And my daughter is skilled, and she loves, absolutely loves, D&T. She loves to make and use her hands – chisel, you know. But she absolutely wanted to choose D&T for GCSE, although she did really well on the theory, she loved the practical, but she's got predicted grades quite high across the board and it's not a recommendation that she takes it.

Max Park: Yeah, because one of the things that got me started on looking into design education was another paper published by the Design Council last year on the decline of D&T in Britain. In the last, just over a decade, there's been a reported over 68% decline in students taking D&T for GCSE, and the way they've made sense of that is that it's a reflection of this sort of societal perception, like you were speaking of, that D&T is not something which needs a high level of critical thinking and an academic approach – it's just something that's done with your hands... which is also another thing I'm really interested in! What does it mean to craft in the digital age?

John Corcoran: When I first got into doing design, my background was in marketing, and by default when you were in marketing the visual creativity was a really important part of it. And I came in just at the back end of when people were switching to digital. I had one of the first Macs – I used to carry it in!

They were all saying that craft was disappearing, anyone can produce something – and it was true, I didn't understand about kerning and leading. I mean, I had some insight. But I didn't really care because I could do things really quickly, and I made so many mistakes just through not appreciating why I was doing them, and the craft, the reason behind it.

[...]

Max Park: Yeah, and in *News from Nowhere* it's not that everyone has to craft as we might imagine craft, but it's more that everybody approaches what they do like a craftsperson. So, it might be the way that a programmer codes, it's not what you produce at the end, it's the way you do it – that's the craft.

John Corcoran: Maybe it's an attitude, an approach. Doing things based on an understanding of what you're doing and the reason you're doing it, ad attention to detail – knowing what you're trying to create and taking the right approach.

Max Park: So, to now focus it in on AI, if somebody or a student were to approach something with the contextual know-how, but using an AI tool as part of their process: how would you react to that? Would you still consider that craft?

John Corcoran: With AI, at the school there's a nervousness. The head teacher is quite positive, about what AI can give you, and she's making recommendations for some of the teachers to get into it. But it's definitely the kids, who are way ahead of the teachers, and I think also the examining board don't quite know how to handle it at the moment. They're saying, "Don't use AI, we can detect it!" Actually, I don't think they can... But about AI and craft, I'm not really sure.

Max Park: Maybe we should ask a question or two to my AI?

John Corcoran: Yeah let's – I'll have a go. [John types the input: 'How should we go about changing the education system to better suit our modern times?' – for the AI-generated response, see Appendix A]

So what do you do now?

Max Park: You just sort of, yeah, rotate that [pointing to the hand-crank].

John Corcoran: Do you have to be consistent with speed? [He starts singing opera] I'm just singing Italian opera because I feel like I'm making it go faster. Or should I pretend that I'm the organ grinder with a monkey?

[John reads out the response] Yeah, that's really interesting. You know, you look at a curriculum and how it can't really be changed. It's so, so slow. A while ago I did some work with an organisation, and helped come up with the name for it, called Whole Education, and that was with a bunch of people at the RSA. And we were trying to say that the traditional ways of learning, rote learning, weren't working. Whole Education is about a mix of community, you know, not just being taught in school but a much broader approach to learning: parents, businesses and the community – everyone has a role to play. It's not just about this kind of controlled system. The thing is at school, the way it's set up, it's based on control. And in some ways it's just like a prison!

Oddly enough we still get parents who say – I agree with all that, but I'm still sending my kid to school to do these subjects, because what they really want is them getting 8s and 9s in the core 'academic' subjects, they don't care about D&T. Creativity doesn't get taken seriously. And that's what we were saying in the Design Blueprint paper, but even we couldn't change the education system. Yeah, not even one tiny bit – it made not one jot of difference. So, it's up to the kids then, and the rest of us. But the kids that're embracing AI, they're gonna fly.