

The Time Traveller speeds forward to a landscape seen first in a wide establishing shot featuring a futuristic domed hall and tower falling into decay. Like Robert Paul's walk-through simulations of the future, the settings are "realistic" in terms of visible detail, dimension, props and set dressing. In 802,701 the buildings and sets in Pal's film draw on an eclectic mix of forms familiar to the audience of 1960. The domed pavilions and towers are reminiscent of the structures built for Disneyland (which opened in 1955), Disney World, the 1951 Festival of Britain, and other realised versions of the future built for the tourist visitor of the period. Settings are to some extent matched with contemporary preconceptions of the relation between architectural form and function, so that the dome in which decayed books and museum exhibits are found has the wide steps and frontage of a European or American palace of culture. The dark caverns inhabited by the cannibal Morlocks contain the heavy-industrial machines of a dank nineteenth-century factory, while the Morlocks' gruesome deserted dining area, littered with the bones and skulls of their Eloi prey, seems like a reconstruction of an archaeological site. The costumes of the sylvan and vegetarian Eloi are toga-like, and they are most often seen in a wooded and verdant setting like an idealised recreation of the civilisation of ancient Greece. Pal's version of the future is not visualised as a consistent environment. It is neither solely utopian nor dystopian in terms of the signification of elements of *mise-en-scène*, but draws on the cultural currency of signs in the physical environment which were in circulation in the period when the film was made. This virtual future is necessarily unlike the present the spectator knows, but far from alien because of the use of a bricolage of elements with familiar connotations and resonances.

Cinema in general, as the film theorist Jean-Louis Baudry argued, proceeds from a "wish to construct a simulation machine capable of offering the subject perceptions which are really representations mistaken for perceptions."²⁰ As theories of spectatorship have shown, the principle of cinema and other audio-visual technologies is to offer what is recognisable and familiar, balanced against the pleasures of the new, the alien, of what cannot be seen or experienced in quotidian reality. The spectator is moved through represented space and time, offered an imaginary spatial and temporary mobility. The case of *The Time Machine*, novel and film, provides a strikingly literal illustration of the principles of pleasure in representation which cinema became focused on from a very early period in its development. A brief consideration of Paul's time travel spectacle links

²⁰ Jean-Louis Baudry, 'The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema', in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed. by P. Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p.315.

Wells's novel with cinema historically, showing that the novel was read, at least by someone who knew of the technical possibilities of the new medium, as a proto-cinematic experience. At the same time, as a science fiction story, *The Time Machine* reminds us that science fiction is especially significant in an examination of the subjectivity of modernity. Works in this genre often focus on spatial and temporal mobility and on the realisation of imaginary alien scenarios. The principle of science fiction is the simulation of an other world which is both alien yet representable through the conventions, competencies and technologies we already know. In 1902 in France, only a few years after Wells's novel was published and Paul had entered his patent for a time travel entertainment, the first science fiction film, *A Trip to the Moon*, was first shown. It portrayed a journey through space by means of a gigantic projectile to an alien world where strange creatures are encountered, and used theatrical sets, backdrops, and trick effects drawing on the capabilities of the film camera. The film's director, Georges Méliès, had formerly made his career as a stage magician. Just a few years after Paul's idea for a time travel attraction, movement in time and space were simulated on the cinema screen, rather than by elaborate combinations of film, static images, built sets, viewing platforms, and tour guides. The modern notions of travel in space and time, which Wells's novel narrated in such visual form, began to become the stock in trade of film as commercial entertainment for the individual consumer, enjoying a mobile gaze but sitting still in the auditorium. The subject in modernity, strolling either literally or by means of a mobile gaze, through a virtual reality associated with commodity consumption and mass entertainment, is both necessary to and furthered by the pleasures of cinema, time travel, science fiction, and tourism.

Jan Hollm

The Time Machine and the Ecotopian Tradition

In the following I should like to investigate the relationship between H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* and utopian romances and utopian novels that envision an ecologically sound society and could thus be called ecotopian. I hope to demonstrate that *The Time Machine* is inter-linked with this literary genre because Wells addresses problems that lie at the very centre of the ecotopian discourse.

I would like to start by explaining what I mean by ecotopian writing because "ecotopian" is certainly not a widely used and well-established term. According to Krishan Kumar, William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) can be considered as the "prototype" of ecotopian literature.¹ Contrary to technocratic anthropocentric attempts at subduing nature, Morris and his successors expressed reverence for the beauty of nature and showed the dependence of the individual on it as a source of physical regeneration and mental inspiration.

The term "ecotopian" is derived from the novels *Ecotopia* (1975) and *Ecotopia Emerging* (1981) by the American writer Ernest Callenbach. The societies described in ecotopian writing oscillate between two poles. On the one side, unrealistically harmonious human communities have transformed the earth into a paradisaic garden. On the other side, subsistent agrarian societies, which are more or less post-industrial, attempt to use only renewable resources. As far as the form is concerned, the ecotopian genre can be seen as an amalgamation of different genre influences that all meet in the author's attempt to create the vision of an ecologically sound society. Such a mixture can already be seen in *News from Nowhere* as is indicated in the subtitle in which William Morris calls his book a utopian romance.

In 1907, Robert Blatchford published *The Sorcery Shop*, which can be seen as a follow-up ecotopian romance to *News from Nowhere*. Robert Graves' *Seven Days in New Crete* (1949) and Aldous Huxley's last novel, *Island* (1962), could be seen as further English examples of the ecotopian genre. Furthermore, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915), Austin Wright's *Islandia* (1942 posthumously), Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) and Kim Stanley Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1988) could be understood as American representatives of the ecotopian tradition.

These works of fiction share three characteristics which represent the central classifying elements of the ecotopian literary genre. First of all, ecotopias can be understood as counter-utopias to technocratic utopias that try to solve the problems of human society through technological progress and administrative improvement. Morris's *News from Nowhere*, for example, was written as a personal response after reading Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. Linked to this concept of an intertextual motivation is the second element that all ecotopian writing shares. It can be seen as an attempt to overcome

¹ Cf. Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), p.103: "Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975) appears to have named the form; but, as with the feminist utopia, the essence of the ecological utopia was presented much earlier, in William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890)."

the modern but also the postmodern feeling of having reached a *cul-de-sac* in human society. William Morris explained his reason for struggling to turn *Nowhere* into reality with a statement which may stand as the ecotopian motto: "So there I was in for a fine pessimistic end of life, if it had not somehow dawned on me that amidst all this filth of civilization the seeds of a great change, what we others call Social-Revolution, were beginning to germinate."²

Thirdly, I would see ecotopian romances and novels as a romanticizing of the utopian novel because nature and love build the very core of the ecotopian vision. In addition to this, counter-cultural notions of the Romantic Movement bear particular importance in the ecotopian vision of a better world. Shelley's propagation of vegetarianism and De Quincey's description of mind-expanding drugs, for instance, find their counterpart in ecotopian writing. Whereas traditionally utopian novels concentrate on the best way of adapting nature to human demands, ecotopian endeavours try to overcome such an anthropocentric approach and try to find a non-dominating position for humanity in the great chain-of-being. Since Thomas More's *Utopia* love has played a relatively unimportant role in the utopian discourse. Contrary to this, love stands at the centre of ecotopia. Love is seen as the very life force that makes life worth living and humanity's journey through the ages worth undertaking.

Contrary to pastoral and Arcadian literary forms, ecotopian writing does not delete industrialization and its effects from its fictitious macrocosm in an escapist way but aims at representing – more or less – realistic ways of transforming the world. Literary vraisemblance is the foundation of the ecotopian vision. This explains why the ecotopian aeon is designed as a catalogue of proposals open for discussion by the readers rather than as an eschatological prophecy of a Golden Age.³ Ecotopian novels could thus be seen as a constructive answer to Karl Popper's criticism of utopian blueprints.

Following a central insight of ecology, ecotopian writing assumes growth and decay as the central processes of life on earth and thus overcomes the conceptual limitations of the western progressive paradigm in which the traditional utopian novel is

² William Morris, "How I became a Socialist", *Political Writings of William Morris*, ed. A.L. Morton (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1973), p.245.

³ Cf. For instance Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston* (Berkeley: Banyan Tree Books, 1975), p.135: "...but evidently the Ecotopian revolution, whatever else it may have accomplished, has not touched the basic miseries of the human condition." And p.144: "Still, it is doubtful if Ecotopians are happier than Americans. It seems likely that difference ways of life involve losses that balance the gains, and gains that balance the losses. Perhaps it is only that Ecotopians are happy, and miserable, in different ways from ourselves."

rooted. Particularly after the Second World War, ecotopian writing seems to have followed the guideline which H.G. Wells set up for utopias after Charles Darwin: "the Modern Utopia must not be static but kinetic."⁴ This might explain why, with the exception of feminist utopias, ecological utopias are the only literary utopias that have survived the rise of dystopian and the decline of eutopian literature after the Second World War.

To what extent is this ecotopian genre relevant for reading H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*? First of all the prototype of the ecotopian genre, *News from Nowhere*, seems to be of particular importance because it represents a major influence on *The Time Machine*. Wells himself tells us in his *Experiment in Autobiography* that for him as a student Morris was one of the most impressive intellectual figures of the day:

Socialism was then a splendid new-born hope... Wearing our red ties to give zest to our frayed and shabby costumes we went great distances through the gas-lit winter streets of London and by the sulphureous Underground Railway, to hear and criticize and cheer and believe in William Morris, Bernard Shaw, Hubert Bland, Graham Wallas and all the rest of them, who were to lead us to that millennial world.⁵

Even in his preface to *A Modern Utopia* in 1905, Wells points out that it would be wonderful if we could follow Morris to his Nowhere. But at the same time Wells emphasizes that he finds Morris's utopian design utterly unrealistic.⁶

Morris's vision of a better world, *News from Nowhere*, was first published in *The Commonweal*, the weekly paper of the Socialist League, in 39 instalments from January to October 1890 and came out in book form a year later. *News from Nowhere* was a major

⁴ H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p.5. Cf. Also Bülent Somay, "Towards an Open-Ended Utopia", *Science-Fiction Studies* 11 (March 1984), pp.25-38

⁵ E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York: Pantheon, 1976), pp.552-3.

⁶ Wells, *A Modern Utopia*, p.7: "Were we free to have our untrammel[ed] desire, I suppose we should follow Morris to his Nowhere, we should change the nature of man and the nature of things together; we should make the whole race wise, tolerant, noble, perfect - wave our hands to a splendid anarchy, every man doing as it pleases him, and none pleased to do evil, in a world as good as its essential nature, as ripe and sunny, as the world before the Fall. But that golden age, that perfect world, comes out into the possibilities of space and time. In space and time the pervading Will to Live sustains for evermore a perpetuity of aggressions."

literary success and influenced *The Time Machine* in manifold ways. For Patrick Parrinder, Morrisian influence can be detected mainly in the setting of *The Time Machine*:

Morris's pastoral, idyllic society is centred on Hammersmith, while the society of the Eloi is centred on Richmond; both are placed in a verdant parkland by the River Thames. Morris's narrator learns the history of his society by visiting the British Museum, while the Time Traveller journeys to the Palace of Green Porcelain, an abandoned science museum near Banstead. [...] On the evening of his first day with the Eloi the Time Traveller climbs to a hilltop, surveys the view and exclaims "Communism!" to himself: the Communism referred to must be the pastoral utopia of Morris and More, rather than the revolutionary industrial society of Marx and Engels.⁷

The thoughts of the Time Traveller when arriving in the future and his interpretation of the situation of the English future make one think that the Time Traveller had finished reading *News from Nowhere* just shortly before embarking on his journey through the ages. In a sense, the Time Traveller seems to have arrived in a post-Nowherian England. Right after stopping in the year 802,701 the Time Traveller is overwhelmed by the impression that England has been transformed into a garden with beautiful, delicate inhabitants. The warm climate that the traveller experiences recalls the romance-like Mediterranean weather of Nowhere. The disappearance of houses and cottages and the demeanour of the inhabitants give the Time Traveller the opinion that he has entered a communist age.

Almost immediately after arriving, this positive impression is mixed with negative sensation. The people of the future seem to have lost the interest characteristic of *Homo sapiens*. Whereas William Guest arrived in an England where the filthy capitalist past is still a living memory among older Nowherians, Wells's Time Traveller arrives, it seems, at a post-Nowherian England where innumerable generations of living the good life in an English paradise have transformed the English into an infantile lot with almost animal-like stupidity. Experiencing this change turns the Victorian visitor into a cultural

⁷ Patrick Parrinder, "The Time Machine: H.G. Wells's Journey through Death", *The Wellsian*, 4 (1981), p.20. See also "News from Nowhere, The Time Machine and the Break-Up of Classical Realism", *Science-Fiction Studies*, 3,3 (1976), pp.265-74, and Robert M. Philmus, "'A Story of Days to Come' and *News from Nowhere*: H.G. Wells as a Writer of Anti-Utopian Fiction", *English Literature in Transition*, 30.4 (1987), pp.450-5.

pessimist who laments the decline of civilization: "This has ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then come languor and decay."⁸

While the Time Traveller is still debating in interior monologues whether living in paradise is such a desirable lot for the human race, traces of the Morlocks and their actions are starting to deconstruct his first reading of the culture that he has entered through time travel. In this sense, it can be said that Wells's description of the Eloi mirrors Morris's merry Nowherians of the future, but by adding the cannibalistic Morlocks to the picture Wells satirizes Morris's idyllic vision of a peaceful post-industrial England of the future in a sarcastic way. – Actually, I think that 'sarcastic' is a very appropriate adjective in this context if you think about the etymology of the word.

The Time Machine can thus be read as H.G. Wells's attempt at pointing out the unrealistic parts in William Morris's utopian design: a Nowherian paradise on earth is not possible. For the Time Traveller it seems debatable whether such a society without toil and pain but also without challenges is at all desirable. In a sense the Time Traveller can be seen as a person taking up the line of argument that the old grumbler in *News from Nowhere* follows. The major part of *News from Nowhere* is a panegyric on the new utopian world; the old way of life is harshly criticized. It is only in the last third of the romance that we are confronted with a figure who is discontented with life in Nowhere: Ellen's grandfather, who belongs to the group of those grumbling about the new society. He is bored by the epoch of rest that he has to live in. He finds this earthly paradise without competition dull: "I think one may do more with one's life than sitting on a damp cloud and singing hymns."⁹ The praiser of past times believes that Guest's age, full of struggle, was much more exciting and tells the visitor, "you are brisker and more alive, because you have not wholly got rid of competition."¹⁰

In *The Sorcery Shop* Robert Blatchford follows Morris's utopian vision uncritically and restricts himself to adding decorous details like avid propagation for vegetarianism to the ecotopian picture. This might explain why Laurence Thompson comments about *The Sorcery Shop* in his biography of Robert Blatchford: "It is the dying

⁸ H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (London: Dent, 1978), p.38.

⁹ William Morris, *News from Nowhere*. ed. James Redmond (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p.130.

¹⁰ Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p.128. Cf. my article, "The Old Grumbler at Runnymede", *Journal of the William Morris Society*, 10,2 (Spring 1993), pp.17-21.

voice of William Morris in a world thrilling to the new voice of H.G. Wells."¹¹ It seems though as if Robert Blatchford had sensed the epigonal anachronism that underlies his utopian romance and tried to update his vision of a better society by evoking the name of his famous contemporary: Nathaniel Fry, the wizard who in *The Sorcery Shop* acts as a cicerone to the ecotopian Manchester of the future, introduces himself as an artist who works for the company Wells and Wells.¹²

In contrast to Blatchford, later ecotopian writing takes up Wells's criticism of Morris. In *Seven Days in New Crete* Robert Graves demonstrates, just like H.G. Wells in *The Time Machine*, the possible danger of stagnation that an ecotopian society has to face. Furthermore, Graves illustrates why a fully harmonious society, a paradise, is not possible on earth. To quote the argument of the Old Raja in Aldous Huxley's ecotopian novel *Island*:

One third, more or less, of all the sorrow [...] is unavoidable. It is the sorrow inherent in the human condition, the price we must pay for being sentient and self-conscious organisms, aspirants to liberation, but subject to the laws of nature and under orders to keep on marching, through irreversible time, through a world wholly indifferent to our well-being, towards decrepitude and the certainty of death.¹³

The same kind of anti-Morrisian realism is characteristic of the experience of the Time Traveller. The insight he gains through time travel goes beyond the knowledge that death is certain for everybody. He has experienced the end not only of mankind but also of life on earth. The Time Traveller is too puzzled and too overwhelmed by his experience to ponder how one should deal with the insight that all human endeavours seem so futile and vain in the end. He is so fascinated by his experience, in a sense, so addicted to time travel that he leaves the Victorian age after collecting a few items that he hopes to find helpful on his journey. This explains why writing down the story remains as a task for the narrator and not for the Time Traveller. It is also the narrator who tries to

¹¹ Laurence Thompson, *Robert Blatchford: Portraits of an Englishman* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1951), p.184.

¹² Robert Blatchford, *The Sorcery Shop: An Impossible Romance* (London: The Clarion Press, 1907), pp.5-6.

¹³ Aldous Huxley, *Island* (London: Grafton, 1976), p.99.

assess what has happened by adding an epilogue to the account of the Time Traveller. The tale of the future has somewhat sobered the narrator from utopian optimism but the flowers that Weena gave to the Time Traveller remain as symbols of the ecotopian credo of love. These flowers, to quote from the interpretation by the narrator, "witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man."¹⁴

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The Copy Texts of American Revised Editions of *The Time Machine*

The various forms of the text of *The Time Machine* are well known. It is generally agreed that the Heinemann 1895 edition constitutes the final form of the text. This was very slightly revised in the Atlantic edition of 1924. Among the minor changes is the replacement of the term "Over-world" with the more suggestive "Upper-world." However, as pointed out by David J. Lake in an earlier study, this revision was not done thoroughly. Consequently, later editions sometimes corrected omissions and, just as often, introduced unwarranted modifications and further typographical errors. It is these variations found in the early subsequent editions of the Atlantic text that make it possible to trace the origins of the copy texts for American revised editions of *The Time Machine*.

Part I: A Second Look at David J. Lake's 'The Current Texts of Wells's Early SF Novels: Situation Unsatisfactory'

David J. Lake's study published in *The Wellsian* #11 is admirable but some of his assumptions concerning the copy texts of American editions of the revised Atlantic text of *The Time Machine* are somewhat inaccurate.

He states on page 4 that "the SR [*The Scientific Romances of H.G. Wells* (Gollancz 1933)] texts have been reproduced [...] in the Dover edition (New York 1950)

¹⁴ Wells, *The Time Machine*, p.105.