

herself.

We invent petty group loyalties and hide behind all kinds of mental barriers, made up of what Wells calls "aggregatory ideas", which to illustrate I shall quote from *A Modern Utopia* (the passage, by the way, is a fine specimen of Wellsian humour):

For example, all sorts of aggregatory ideas come and go across the chameleon surfaces of my botanist's mind. He has a strong feeling for systematic botanists as against plant physiologists, whom he regards as lewd and evil scoundrels in this relation; but he has a strong feeling for all botanists, and, indeed, all biologists, as against physicists, and those who profess the exact sciences, all of whom he regards as dull, mechanical, ugly-minded scoundrels in this relation; but he has a strong feeling for all who profess what is called science as against psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, and literary men, whom he regards as wild, foolish, immoral scoundrels in this relation; but he has a strong feeling for all educated men as against the working man, whom he regards as a cheating, lying, loafing, drunken, thievish dirty scoundrel in this relation...etc.⁶

History thus becomes a struggle between two aspects of human life, between two principles, the collective and the particular, or, as Wells puts it towards the end of his *Modern Utopia*, between "great and individual" that underlie the incongruity, the incompatibility he was unable to resolve.

Wells the educationist did feel that what was required was some kind of mutation of the human consciousness. At the end of his *Outline of History* he wrote: "History is becoming more and more a race between education and catastrophe." In a more avowedly pessimistic mood, however, as in *Mind at the End of its Tether*, his last published work, a similar enunciation takes on a distinctly ominous ring:

Man must go steeply up or down and the odds seem to be all in favour of his going down and out. If he goes up, then so great is the adaptation demanded of him that he must cease to be a man. Ordinary man is at the end of his tether.⁷

To Wells the prophet, history mattered primarily as a prelude and pointer towards the future. Whether his judgement was sounder in this respect in his early and hopeful *Anticipations*, or later, in the despairing *Fate of Homo Sapiens* - the destinies themselves will have to vouch for that.

Notes

1. Kenneth B. Newell, *Structure in Four Novels by H.G. Wells*, The Hague (Mouton), 1968, p.7.
2. Quoted in Ingvald Raknem, *H.G. Wells and His Critics*, Oslo (Universitetsforlaget), 1962, p.201.
3. H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*, Leipzig (Tauchnitz), 1929, p.5.
4. Geoffrey Barraclough, *An Introduction to Contemporary History*, Harmondsworth (Penguin), 1981, pp.2, 264.
5. Jozef Pajestka, 'Will there be room for all?', *Polityka* No.37 (1974), (translation mine, J.K.P.).
6. H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*, London (Chapman & Hall), 1905, pp.223-4.
7. H.G. Wells, *Mind at the End of Its Tether*, London (Heinemann), 1945, p.30.

Bryan Cheyette Beyond Rationality: H.G. Wells and the Jewish Question

An address to the H.G. Wells Society at its Annual Residential Conference, Tufnell Park, London, 23rd September 1990

"...I have always refused to be enlightened and sympathetic about the Jewish Question. From my cosmopolitan standpoint it is a question that ought not to exist."

H.G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*, Volume I (London, 1934), p.353.

Introductory

George Orwell, in an article on 'Antisemitism in Britain' (April 1945), predicted with startling prescience why discussions of the

"antisemitic strain in English literature" would fail to enter public discourse but would instead, after the Second World War, either be ignored or generate a "storm of abuse":

There has been a perceptible antisemitic strain in English literature from Chaucer onwards, and without even getting up from this table to consult a book I can think of passages which *if written now* would be stigmatized as antisemitism, in the works of Shakespeare, Smollett, Thackeray, Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley and various others....Anyone who wrote in that strain *now* would bring down a storm of abuse upon himself, or more probably would find it impossible to get his writings published.

The over-simple conflation of literary constructions with mass murder has enabled literary critics and biographers, including Wellsians, to disregard the Jewish representations in the literature of their chosen subject. Specialist studies of "Jewish stereotypes in English Literature" have, also, colluded with this post-War "stigmatization" and have too easily slipped from English literary texts into the horrors of European history. A recent study of "the Jew in the Victorian novel", for instance, was written with "the memory of Nazi Germany still fresh" and, as a consequence, includes an opening précis of Leon Poliakov's multi-volume history of antisemitism.¹ In America, academic debate has centred around the issue of whether or not to teach "literary antisemitism" given the potentially "lethal" charge of a literary text.

I hope, in the following essay, *not* to replicate the crude teleological assumptions of these approaches but, instead, to locate Wells's Jewish representations within a specifically British and Wellsian cultural context. That is not to say that Wells, in any way, made exceptional use of what I shall call a "semitic discourse". As Orwell indicates, Jewish representations were a commonplace in pre-Second World War Britain and I would like to think that this aspect of British history would be rationally discussed in the literary criticism of an ideal Wellsian state of the future - instead of generating intermittent "storms of abuse" in our literary journals - and that there would be no need for a "specialised" article (or book) on the subject. By emphasising the liberal context of the racial representations under discussion, I want to stress that "race" in this cultural context was not merely a "biological" category nor a sign of a particular "hatred" or "affinity" towards "the Jews". To be sure, Wells consistently denied the efficacy of race-thinking in a wide range of his works and made fun of the Webbs on the subject of "race"

as a biological category. In *Marriage*, for instance, one of the novels that I will look at in detail, Trafford points out, with reference to Aunt Plessington's Fabian-like Movement, that those who distinguish between the "'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Teuton' [or] the 'white race' and the 'yellow race'" are engaging in the "cackle of some larger kind of hen" (178). Wells vigorously condemned Nazism, could claim many Jewish friends whom he admired and, as we shall see, always made laudatory comments about certain aspects of Jewish history and culture. Taking his cue, I suspect, from Matthew Arnold's indeterminate use of "hebraism" in his *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Wells made use of a "semitic discourse" which ambivalently traversed both the cultural and the racial but was not necessarily reduced to the Jewish "race". As we shall see, some of Wells's most "hebraic" characters such as the Ponderevos, Marjorie Trafford and Isaac Harman were not "racially" Jewish. What seems to me to be of interest, however, is the extent that Wells needed a category of semitic difference to oppose to his own ordered, scientific view of the world. It is the ambivalence in Wells's utilization of a "semitic discourse" that I will now emphasise with reference to his *Anticipations*.

"Anticipations" and the Limits of Rationality

In the impending rationally-ordered world state which is envisaged by Wells in *Anticipations* (1901), future citizens will not be "squeamish...in facing or inflicting death, because they will have a fuller sense of the potentialities of life than we possess" (300). Like Abraham, Wells argues, the New Republicans will "have the faith to kill" and will have "an ideal which will make killing worth the while" which will, in turn, eschew any "superstitions about death" (300). Thus, in the last three chapters of *Anticipations*, Wells was to advocate a form of "positive" Eugenics which would enable humankind to rise above the "brutish level" (300) of their present condition. The most extreme version of Wells's Eugenics is to be found towards the end of *Anticipations* when he was to consider how "the New Republic [will] treat the inferior races" and concludes that they will be treated "not as races at all". In a "world-state with a common language and common rule...efficiency will be the test" of citizenship, notwithstanding whether a person is "white, black, red or brown" (315-316). But Wells was to end on an ominous note when determining the fate of "those swarms of black, and brown, and

dirty-white and yellow people, who do not come into the new needs of efficiency" in the New Republic (317). His conclusion was unequivocal:

Well, the world is a world and not a charitable institution, and I take it that they will have to go. The whole tenor and meaning of the world, as I see it, is that they have to go. So far as they fail to develop sane, vigorous and distinctive personalities for the great world of the future, it is their portion to die out and disappear. (317)

It is in this general context of the "treatment of inferior races" that Wells points to "that alleged termite in the civilized woodwork, the Jew" and notes that although "many Jews are intensely vulgar in dress and bearing, materialistic in thought, and cunning and base in method, [they are] no more so than many gentiles" (316). As with the other "inferior races" Wells, in the New Republic, did not envisage the treatment of Jews as a separate "race". "The Jew" will not be "abolished" for being racially inferior but only insofar as they are "parasitic" on the "social body":

It is said that the Jew is incurably a parasite on the apparatus of credit. If there are parasites on the apparatus of credit, that is a reason for the legislative cleaning of the apparatus of credit, but it is no reason for the special treatment of the Jew. If the Jew has a certain incurable tendency to social parasitism, and we make social parasitism impossible, we shall abolish the Jew, and if he has not, there is no need to abolish the Jew. We are much more likely to find that we have abolished the Caucasian solicitor. (316)

While the other "inferior races" have a stark choice between "efficiency" and "abolition", Wells is more ambivalent in relation to "the Jews". In a "century or so", he argues, Jewish racial "particularism" will have disappeared and they will "intermarry with Gentiles, and cease to be a physically distinct element in human affairs". But such assimilationism is tempered by Wells's hope that "much of [the Jew's] moral tradition will...never die" (317). Wells's "kinetic" view of utopia, meant that the ordered scientific evolution of even "the Jew" would eradicate the dangers of their racial difference while still retaining their "moral tradition". Far from the "dread or dislike" of "the Jew" of his Edwardian contemporaries Wells, in this optimistic context, believed that "the Jew" is:

...a remnant and legacy of medievalism, a sentimentalist, perhaps, but no furtive plotter against the present progress of things. He was the medieval Liberal; his persistent existence gives the lie to Catholic pretensions all through the days of their ascendancy, and to-day he gives the lie to all our yapping 'nationalism', and sketches in his

dispersed sympathies the coming of the world-state. He has never been known to burke a school. (317)

What is clear from *Anticipations*, is that Wells's rational "order" is constructed in opposition to racial difference but that "the Jews", unlike the other "inferior races", can be represented as both anticipating the rationality of the "new world" and as a feature of the irrational present. This ambivalence was also an aspect of the thinking of T.H. Huxley, Wells's scientific mentor, who described "the Jew" as both "as high an ideal as men ever set before themselves" and as "monstrously, shamelessly, base and cruel".² It is precisely this indeterminacy that will now be shown to be at play in Wells's Edwardian fiction.

The Edwardian Novels

In *New Worlds for Old: A Plain Account of Modern Socialism* (1908), Wells was to speak of "the developing British Plutocracy" as being, like the Carthaginian, "largely Semitic in blood" and this "inevitable" semitic plutocracy (178) was to be scrutinised by Wells in his Edwardian novels written immediately after this work. As G.R. Searle has recently shown in *Corruption in British Politics: 1895-1930* (Oxford, 1987), the rise of a specifically "semitic" plutocracy was a common political perception in Edwardian Britain. *Tono-Bungay* (1909), in part, illustrates the replacement of a "distinctively British" (12) aristocracy by an "alien, unsympathetic and irresponsible" plutocracy (82) and George Ponderevo is quite explicit about the "semitic" nature of this plutocracy. In the opening pages of the novel, he recalls a visit to Bladesover House, where his mother had been the house-keeper, and notes that "the old shapes, the old attitudes remain, subtly changed and changing still, sheltering strange tenants" (9):

Bladesover House is now let furnished to Sir Reuben Lichtenstein, and has been since old Lady Drew died;....It was curious to notice then the little differences that had come to things with this substitution. To borrow an image from my mineralogical days, these Jews were not so much a new British gentry as 'pseudomorphous' after the gentry. They are a very clever people, the Jews, but not clever enough to suppress their cleverness. (9)

Soon after this observation, George walks through Bladesover village and an "old village labourer touched his hat convulsively" (9) as he passed him by. George, however, refrains from asking the labourer whether he still remembers his poor mother as neither his

"uncle or old Lichtenstein" would have been "man enough to stand being given away like that" (9). The complicity, at this early stage in the novel, between Sir Reuben Lichtenstein and Edward Ponderevo is worth noting. As well as emphasising the racial "differences" between a historic Englishness and the "pseudomorphous" Jews, Edward's plutocratic history directly relates him to Lichtenstein. George's repeated emphasis on Bladesover as "essentially England" (35) - Bladesover "is my social datum": "all that is spacious, dignified, pretentious, and truly conservative in English life..." (51) - paradoxically points to the "alien" otherness of the plutocracy which both he and Edward help to promote. After visiting London in his early twenties, George speaks of the "presence of great new forces, blind forces of invasion, of growth" which are overwhelming the "system of Bladesover" (81). The invading "new forces" which are opposed to Bladesover are embodied, for George, in the "smallness" of the Lichtensteins which, on his last visit to Bladesover, had merely "replaced the large dullness of the old gentry" with a "more enterprising and intensely undignified variety of stupidity" (51):

These Lichtensteins and their like seem to have no promise in them at all of any fresh vitality for the kingdom. I do not believe in their intelligence or their power - they have nothing new about them at all, nothing creative or rejuvenescent, no more than a disorderly instinct of acquisition; and the prevalence of them and their kind is but a phase in the broad slow decay of the great social organism of England. They could not have made Bladesover, they cannot replace it; they just happen to break out over it - saprophytically. (52)

The Lichtensteins, in these terms, ambivalently represent both the false modernity of a "disorderly" capitalism which is, nonetheless, rooted in their medieval "instinct of acquisition" and their biological role as "saprophytes" (literally "an organism which lives on decayed matter"). There is an obvious contrast between the "hopeful" futuristic Wells of *Anticipations* - who located "the Jew" in an ordered, scientifically based utopia - and the ancient newness of the prevailing, parasitic Lichtensteins in *Tono-Bungay*. Far from adumbrating the future, the Lichtensteins are "but a phase in the broad slow decay in the social organism of England". When George visits London, which is at the heart of this "unorganised...tumorous growth-process" (82), he notes that "east of Temple Bar" London has "morbidly expanded, without plan or intention" and has now become "dark and sinister" moving ominously "toward the clean, clear

assurance of the West End" (81-82). George asks whether they will remain "cancerous" on the body politic. He goes on to note that "together with this hypertrophy there is an immigration of elements that have never understood and never will understand the great tradition" (82):

[There are] wedges of foreign settlement embedded in the heart of this yeasty English Expansion. One day I remember wandering eastward out of pure curiosity...and discovering a shabbily bright foreign quarter, shops displaying Hebrew placards and weird, unfamiliar commodities, and a concourse of bright-eyed, eagle-nosed people talking some incomprehensible gibberish between the shops and the barrows. And soon I became quite familiar with the devious, dirtily-pleasant exoticism of Soho. (82)

In Soho, George gets his "first inkling of the factor of replacement that is so important in the English and American process" (82). That is, while the "yeasty English Expansion" might have the potential to turn into something "new", the "exotic" Jewish immigration into London's East End complicates England's "hypertrophy" as, like the Lichtensteins, they are unable to evolve within "the great [English] tradition". The foregrounding of these semitic "foreign" invaders, who are destroying England's capacity for rational evolution, comes to its climax when George thinks of "his uncle's frayed cuff" proudly pointing to a London devoid of its "old aristocratic dignity" (82). The England that Edward points out is made up of "actors and actresses, moneylenders and Jews, bold financial adventurers":

A city of Bladesovers, the capital of a kingdom of Bladesovers, all much shaken and many altogether in decay, parasitically occupied, insidiously replaced by alien, unsympathetic and irresponsible elements; and withal ruling an adventitious and miscellaneous empire of a quarter of this daedal earth. (82-83)

Edward Ponderevo's superimposed "frayed cuff" on London's "parasitically occupied" West End highlights the double narrative within *Tono-Bungay* which, up until this point in the novel, has used the form of a *bildungsroman* to concentrate on George's shocked account of the alien semitic nature of the "developing British plutocracy". For George, Bladesover has thus far provided the "key" (71) to understanding the modernization of England since the 1870s and the dire "condition of England" that has made it possible for his uncle to become a millionaire by selling a fraudulent medical cure-all. But as J.R. Hammond has shown, *Tono-Bungay* is an ironic pastiche of the nineteenth century *bildungsroman* as, by the end of

the novel, George's narrative is far from discovering the "key" to his uncle's rise to power and Edward is hardly the replacement father that George seeks.³

Part of *Tono-Bungay's* ability to self-consciously parody itself, and question its own authorial voice, can be found in its juxtaposition of the semitic discourse in the novel's opening chapters with the story of Edward Ponderevo who, at the height of his degeneration, becomes an increasingly "hebraic" figure. After moving into the Elizabethan Lady Grove, George meets the local vicar who, as an "Oxford man", is described as "one of the Greeks of our plutocratic empire" who maintains a "general air of accommodation to the new order of things" (211). George explains that although he and Edward were known to the vicar as "pill vendors", a far worse "strain on a good man's tact" would have arisen if "some polygamous Indian rajah...or some Jew with an inherited expression of contempt" had moved into Lady Grove. In the circumstances, the vicar was prepared to accept the "substitution of new lords for old" who were at least "English and neither dissenters nor Socialists" (211). This disavowal of the Ponderevos' racial otherness is soon displaced by Edward's growing obsession with colonising Palestine which is described as "the most romantic quest in history" (210), an ironic rewriting of Edward's often repeated belief in the "Romance of Commerce". Edward is associated with the commercial exploitation of the Holy Land via the Suez Canal:

"There's that Palestine canal affair. Marvellous idea! Suppose we take that up, suppose we let ourselves in for it, us and others, and run that water sluice from the Mediterranean into the Dead Sea Valley - think of the difference it will make! All the desert blooming like a rose, Jericho lost for ever, all the Holy Places under water. ...Very likely destroy Christianity." (220)

Popular Edwardian novelists such as Guy Thorne and Marie Corelli had long since associated the rise of a dominant "semitic" plutocracy with the end of Christianity and Thorne's *When it was Dark* (1903), his best-selling novel, was explicitly constructed around this theme. There is an oblique reference to this popular tradition in Edward's megalomaniacal threat to "destroy Christianity" and in George's belief that Tono-Bungay had become a false form of Christian "salvation" (167). Edward Ponderevo's deranged vision of the future - "'Cuttin' canals...Making tunnels...New countries...New centres...Zzzz...Finance...Not only Palestine'" (220) - is not unlike a "semitized" version of Wells's earlier dystopias. As well as being a

hebraised plutocrat, Edward's name, "fatty" appearance and lechery was also an unflattering tribute to Edward the Seventh whose "Court Jews" and general decadence was itself commonly taken as a sign of the King's "semitic" proclivities.⁴

After the premature bankruptcy of Edward's financial empire, George's narrative increasingly lacks any rational Bladesoverian "key" to understand the world. At the same time as George dons the Wellsian mantle and becomes a science-based socialist, the Quap episode intervenes to finally demonstrate the irrationality and "waste" of the present. Semitic difference is once again evoked in this episode in the guise of the captain of the *Maud Mary*, a "Roumanian Jew" who learnt "English out of a book" and wanted to impress George with "the notion that he was a gentleman of good family". This drives George "into a reluctant and uncongenial patriotism" because of the captain's "everlasting carping about things English" (271). Interestingly enough, the unnamed captain acts as a moral check on George's outlandish plans to transport the "cancerous" Quap back to England and repeats many of George's own criticisms with regard to a "plutocratic" England which is dominated by the "bourgeoisie" (272). But, in a reference to the crude xenophobia of such "sailor's tales" as Kipling's 'Bread Upon the Waters' (1898), George overcomes the captain's apprehensions by appealing to the "taciturn" first mate who nods "darkly and almost forbiddingly" when George notes that the captain is a "Roumanian Jew". George does not say another word to the first mate after this and comments that "more would have been too much. The thing was said. But from that time forth I knew that I could depend on him and that he and I were friends" (273). However, George soon comments that "it happens I never did have to depend upon" (273) him, which neatly undercuts the reader's heroic Kiplingesque expectations.

Tono-Bungay, most significantly, ends on a note of extreme ambivalence. In a calculated break with the nineteenth century "Condition of England" novel, George is finally unable to control or order the "crumbling and confusion,...change and seemingly aimless swelling" (328-9) of contemporary England. Instead of offering any "truths" based on his "scientific" training, George eventually succumbs to a "semitized" England by building a "destroyer". By the end of *Tono-Bungay*, he can only be distinguished from the Lichtensteins and "their kind" by his self-consciousness at his betrayal of "England". In stark contrast to Wells's later fiction, the

last chapters of *Tono-Bungay* do not easily differentiate between the "scientific" Wellsian persona and the racial "other".

The binary opposition between a dystopian "semitic" England and scientific progress, which Wells plays with in *Tono-Bungay*, was first adumbrated in his *The Invisible Man* (1897). Towards the end of this book Griffin is confronted by his Polish-Jewish landlord at the point when he is just about to turn himself invisible. Wearing "German silver spectacles", a "long grey coat" and "greasy slippers", the unnamed landlord becomes suspicious of Griffin and, with his two "polyglot" Yiddish-speaking stepsons, threatens to evict him (147). Rather like the "Roumanian Jew" in the Quap episode of *Tono-Bungay*, Wells's most unEnglish of landlords represents a moral check on Griffin's frightening scientific advance. By setting fire to his landlord's house, Griffin also finally cuts himself off from society as a whole. But, if Wells's Polish-Jewish landlord is a peculiarly ambivalent representation of society's limits on scientific advance, Griffin's self-destructive "science" is equally ambiguous.

By the time of *Marriage* (1912), Wells seems to be less concerned with such ambiguities than with juxtaposing symbolic opposites. In this novel, the scientist Richard Trafford literally "fell out of the sky" to save his future wife, Marjorie Pope, from what is later acknowledged as her "silly upbringing" (215). The excessive hebraism of her background is particularly emphasised by the pronounced protestantism of the Vicarage - with its "Jerusalem lithographs" and "monogram" prints of the "Mosaic law" (15-16) - where, as the novel opens, the Pope family are spending their summer holidays. It has been argued that Wells associates Marjorie's extravagant consumerism with her femininity, but Marjorie is also a product of a peculiarly matriarchal hebraism.⁵ From the beginning of the novel, Marjorie is seen to have succumbed to the seductive influence of the Carmel family which has resulted in her "mind [being] strung up with Carmel standards" (11). We learn that at "Oxbridge University" it was Kitty Carmel who taught Marjorie to run up extravagant debts and that, in general, the "shockingly well off" (7) Carmels had fostered Marjorie's sense of inadequacy at her relative poverty (hence the foolishly expensive train journey which introduces Marjorie) and her "innate hunger for good fine things" (49). Even as an adult, Marjorie still needs to "impress" the Carmels because of "their racial trick of acute appraisalment" which meant that they "were only to be won by the

very highest quality all round" (160). This "racial" dimension to Marjorie's unrestrained consumerism, which destroys Trafford's career as an exemplary research scientist, is central to the novel. It is not insignificant that when Trafford leaps out of the sky to save Marjorie from a disastrous marriage, he is in an aeroplane with his friend Sir Rupert Solomonson. While the aeroplane in Wells's fiction is "associated with science, courage and freedom", its future import in *Marriage* is symbolically divided between the two opposing worlds of Trafford and Solomonson.⁶

Unlike the Carmels, who are subtly semitized as the novel progresses, Solomonson is "manifestly a Jew" who, as he lies injured on the ground, is described as a "square-rigged Jew (you have remarked, of course, that there are square-rigged Jews, whose noses are within bounds, and fore-and-aft Jews, whose noses aren't)" (84). As a result of Marjorie's lavish over-spending, Trafford is forced to sacrifice his scientific research to the commercial interests of Solomonson who suggests that Trafford "'make money' for a brief strenuous time, and then come back [to research] when Marjorie's pride and comfort were secured" (238). Commenting on Solomonson's proposal, Trafford particularly notes the "enormous gulf between his [own] attitudes towards women and those of...Solomonson" (235). When she stays with the Solomonsons in Geneva, their "alien" mood is said to be "closely akin to latent factors in Marjorie's composition" (228). In other words, the disorderly hebraism of Solomonson, and the other Jewish families in the novel, is displaced onto the perceived irrationality of women in general, as Victoria Glendenning has noted, who are represented by Marjorie. This is, one supposes, the "reasoning" behind Marjorie's formative attachment to the "Carmel girls"?

After reluctantly joining ranks with Solomonson, Trafford sees before him "enormous vistas of dark philoprogenitive parents and healthy little Jews and Jewesses...hygienically reared, exquisitely trained and educated" and he comments that "he wasn't above the normal human vanity of esteeming his own race and type the best, and certain vulgar aspects of what nowadays one calls Eugenics crossed his mind" (234). *The New Machiavelli*, following on from *Anticipations*, had already confirmed this belief in the Eugenic ordering of "the race" in the guise of Richard Remington who believed, along with George Bernard Shaw in *Man and Superman*, that "every improvement is provisional except the improvement of

the race" (306). In *The New Machiavelli*, Wells had represented the Jewish-born Liberal Cabinet Minister, Herbert Samuel, as the "excessively correct" Lewis who speaks with a "'mandate' from the Country" which is "sacred to his system of pretences" (225). Remington quickly becomes disillusioned with the Liberal Party and rejects Lewis's "system of pretences" for a "practical form of Eugenics" (337). Not unlike Trafford in relation to the "philoprogenitive" Solomonsons, Remington's vision of a Eugenically ordered future is starkly contrasted in *The New Machiavelli* with Lewis's randomly proliferating cousins:

Then there was Lewis, further towards Kensington, where his cousins the Solomons and Hartsteins lived, a brilliant representative of his race, able industrious and invariably uninspired, with a wife a little in revolt against the racial tradition of feminine servitude and inclined to the suffragette point of view. (193)

The main butt of Wells's political satire in *Marriage*, in a continuation of *The New Machiavelli*, is directed towards Marjorie's Aunt Plessington's Fabian-like Movement to help relieve poverty. This Movement, Wells emphasises, is full of well-meaning but ineffectual Jews who once again signify the inadequacy of a liberal hebraism which does not really get to the root of England's problems: "[Aunt Plessington] had been staying with the Mastersteins, who were keenly interested in [the Movement] and after she had polished off Lady Pletchworth she was to visit Lady Rosenbaum. It was all going swimmingly, these newer English gentry were eager to learn all she had to teach in the art of breaking in the Anglo-Saxon villagers" (53). At times, *Marriage* reads as if England had become almost totally hebraised, with the luxuriant opulence of Solomonson's Jewish friends creating an Eastern other-world full of "fine fabrics, agreeable sounds, noiseless unlimited service, and ample untroubled living" which had the Svengali-like "effect of enchantment" (226) on the Traffords. Trafford tries to maintain a view of the world based on scientific objectivity, which has "as such no concern with personal consequences", but he finally loses his "honour as a scientific man" (247) and yields to the ruthless animalistic individualism of Solomonson who believed that:

Civilisation's just a fight...just as savagery is a fight, and being a wild beast is a fight - only you have padded gloves on and there's more rules. We aren't out for everybody, we're out for ourselves - and a few friends perhaps - within limits. It's no good hurrying ahead and pretending civilisation's something else when it isn't. That's where all these Socialists and people come a howler. (243)

At one point in the novel, Solomonson transforms himself into a "turbaned Oriental" which "might have come out of a picture by Capaccio" (230) and, when persuading Trafford to join him, Wells observes that "for all his public school and university training" Solomonson had "lapsed undisguisedly into the Oriental" and "squealed" at Trafford (246). Beneath the bourgeois "sanity of comfort" - which is meant to be the "unquestioning belief" of the Jewish "race" (225) - there lies a rudimentary particularism (signified by Solomonson's "squeal") which threatens, in beast-like fashion, merely to take care of its own kind. By the end of the novel, Trafford realises that he has "wasted" (347) his potential contribution to science and that he has been feminized by Solomonson's materialistic hebraism:

I've got into this stupid struggle for winning money...and I feel like a woman must feel who's made a success of prostitution. I've been prostituted. I feel like some one fallen and diseased....Business and prostitution, they're the same thing. All business is a sort of prostitution, all prostitution is a form of business. Why should one sell one's brains any more than one sells one's body? (297)

After a year in Labrador with Marjorie, away from a degenerate England, Trafford eventually feels that he and his wife might now together be able to contribute to the "salvation" (341) of England by releasing "the human spirit from the individualist struggle" (360). In a reference to the virtues of Biblical Jewry, when compared to their contemporary plutocratic counterparts, Trafford tells Marjorie that she is "going to be a non-shopping woman now. You've to come out of Bond Street, you and your kind, like Israel leaving the Egyptian flesh-pots" (362). In the years leading up to the First World War, England was increasingly perceived by Wells, and many other Edwardians, as a nation that had grown increasingly corrupt. The "Marconi Scandal" (1911-1914), in particular, was a "Jewish" financial scandal which deeply disillusioned Wells in terms of the prospect of any kind of progress within a liberal consensus. Wells stated as much in an article on the "Marconi Scandal" in the *Daily Mail*, which was republished in pamphlet form as *Liberalism and its Party: What are we Liberals to do?* (1913). Wells's semitic representations in his Edwardian novels were not, therefore, a product of "one particular Jew who was annoying him during this period" but were related to this more general disillusionment with a "semitic" liberalism. It would be wrong, however, as we shall now see, to dismiss these representations as a peculiarly "antisemitic"

phase in Wells's fictional output which had very little to do with the rest of his oeuvre.⁸

The Later Fiction and Journalism

In *Joan and Peter* (1918), Joan speculates that "all Jews...ought to grow beards. At least after they are over thirty. They are too dark to shave, and besides there is a sort of indignity about their clean shaven faces. A bearded old Jew can look noble, a moustached old Jew always looks like an imitation of a Norman gentleman done in cheaper material. But that of course was exactly what he was" (320). Joan's simultaneous need to differentiate "the Jew" and, at the same time, her lack of a racial distinction between "a moustached old Jew" and a "Norman gentleman" gives something of the flavour of Wells's ambivalence towards "the Jews". This ambivalence is particularly acute in *Joan and Peter* given Peter's previous representations of "the full peculiarity" of his school-friend Winterbaum. Wells comments:

The differences in form and gesture of the two boys were only the outward and visible signs of profound differences between their imaginations. For example, the heroes of Peter's were wonderful humorous persons, Nobbys and Bungo Peters, and his themes adventures, struggles, quests that left them neither richer nor poorer than before in a limitless, undisciplined delightful world, but young Winterbaum's hero was himself, and he thought in terms of achievement and acquisition. (109)

Winterbaum, significantly, regarded himself as "one of the conquerors of England" (109) which echoes C.F.G. Masterman's social category of "conqueror" in *The Condition of England* (1909) as well as George Meredith's *One of Our Conquerors* (1891). But Wells did not always make a straightforward conflation between the broad social grouping of "conqueror" and the Jewish "race". In *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* (1914), for instance, Wells's Isaac Harman is too easily regarded as a "grasping, sneaking, socially inept and sexually insufficient Jew" when Harman is not, in fact, explicitly signified as a "Jew" in the novel.⁹ And yet, this reading is understandable. The name "Isaac Harman", and his involvement in the Liberal Party, directly relates Harman to the protagonists of the Marconi Scandal, such as Rufus Isaacs. Harman is also introduced in terms that relate him directly to Wells's previously unequivocal Jewish representations: "Sir Isaac was one of those men whom modern England delights to honour, a man of unpretentious acquisitiveness,

devoted to business, and distracted by no aesthetic or intellectual interests" (63). His nose, moreover, is "pointed...to an extreme efficiency" and he did not possess "any broader interests than [his] shop" nor did he "trouble to think about the nation or the race or any deeper mysteries of life" (64). These are statements that were earlier applied to the Lichtensteins or Solomonsons. Later on in the novel, Harman's increasingly estranged wife regards herself as a "captured alien in [Harman's] household - a girl he had taken" (267). For all his sexual "insufficiency", Harman can still be construed as a sexually rapacious "alien", a long-standing semitic representation that had been popularised by George du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894). Nonetheless, Wells, in the last resort, does not fix Harman as a "Jew" but, instead, emphasises a more generally applicable non-racial hebraism. Thus, Harman's "'International' organisation" is:

[W]hat we all of us see everywhere about us, the work of the base, energetic mind, raw and untrained, in possession of the keen instruments of civilisation, the peasant mind allied and blended with the Ghetto mind, grasping and acquisitive, clever as a Norman peasant or a Jew pedlar is clever, and beyond that outrageously stupid and ugly. (119)

In *The Outline of History* (1920), Wells was to characterize the early Normans as a racial group who, as they "grew powerful, discovered themselves [to be] such rapacious and vigorous robbers that they forced the Eastern Emperor and the Pope into a feeble and ineffective alliance against them" (350). It might not be too uncharitable to suspect that the analogy between the "rapacious and vigorous" Normans of medieval history and the contemporary acquisitive "semitic plutocracy" was present in *Joan and Peter* and *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman*.

Once removed from the darker world of his fiction, as we have already seen with reference to *Anticipations*, *The Outline of History* was to make apparent Wells's divided construction of "the Jews". In his "outline" of the role of Judaism in the early Christian era, for instance, Wells argues that: "The Jewish idea was *and is* a curious combination of theological breadth and an intense racial patriotism. The Jews looked for a special saviour, a Messiah, who was to redeem mankind...and bring the whole world at last under the benevolent but firm Jewish heel" (281). I have emphasised the shift to the present tense in this statement because it is worth noting the contemporary relevance for Wells of his "history". Just as Wells in *The Outline of History* was to differentiate in general terms between

progressive and reactionary traditions among specific nations and religious groups, he was also to repeatedly distinguish between the "broad" and "narrow" Jewish traditions. It is the Sadducees, in this view, who are the carriers of this "broad" Jewish tradition and who are therefore "disposed to assimilate themselves...and so share God and his promise with all mankind" (282). In stark contrast to this tradition, the Pharisees are the "high and narrow Jews, very orthodox...intensely patriotic and exclusive" (282) who eventually "made a racial hoard of God" (326). Wells ascribes the "financial and commercial tradition of the Jews" to the "Semitic" Phoenician peoples (281) and emphasises throughout *The Outline of History* the world-wide "religious and educational organizations" which, from the Babylonian Captivity onwards, kept such "commercial" Jews "in touch" with each other throughout the world (281). Such statements, represented by Wells as historical fact, were to have a particular resonance for Wells's contemporary readers given the popularisation of Jewish conspiracy theories in the early 1920s. Wells also noted that the "Jews of the left", the universalist Sadducees, were disposed to "assimilate themselves to the Greeks and Hellenized peoples about them" and so "share God and his promise with all mankind". The Sadducees were, however, opposed by the particularist Pharisaic Jews of the "right" who remained "greedy and exclusive" (282). In comparing the Hebraic and Hellenic traditions, Wells argues that "the Jews" have merely "persisted as a people" whereas "hellenism has become a universal light for mankind" (281). The "great universal religion of Christianity" (146) is, especially, deemed to have partly liberated "the Jewish idea" from its racial "narrowness" and refocused the "broad" aspects of the Jewish tradition onto humanity as a whole. The contemporary import is clear from this construction of Judaism. As with *Anticipations*, those Jews that physically assimilate are able to transmit the universalist moral tradition of Judaism and those that retain their Jewishness are bigoted, Pharisaic and selfish and persist to this day in this racially particularist form.

And yet, Wells could both associate a universalist tradition of Judaism with a future socialist world-state and represent the wholly assimilated Karl Marx, for instance, in terms of his "racial Jewish commercialism" (516). If "the Jew" could signify both a more rational future and, at the same time, a degenerate, contemporary world that was preventing the attainment of that future, Wells, by

the inter-war years, was to be much less certain about the utopian possibilities of a universalist "Jewish" tradition. In *The Research Magnificent* (1915), Wells's spokesman, for instance, gives a meeting of Russian-Jews the choice between financially controlling the whole of Southern Russia or making a "fresh beginning" for the betterment of world peace. But he is lynched when he tries to force these curiously bestial Jews to give up their financial strangle-hold on Southern Russia. Just before he is assaulted, he tells his Russian-Jewish audience that "it does not follow that because your race has supreme financial genius that you must always follow its dictates to the exclusion of other considerations" (474). In the next three decades Wells was to reinforce this representation of irrational, particularist Jews who have eschewed any possibility of a more enlightened future because of the dictates of their animalistic "race instincts".

To gauge the darkness of Wells's construction of "the Jew" during the inter-war years, one need only compare Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come: the Ultimate Revolution* (1933) with *Anticipations*. Unlike the rational evolution towards a world state in *Anticipations*, *The Shape of Things to Come* prophesies a World War of twenty-five years duration which began in 1940 and which plunged the world into barbarism. A world state, in this later work, only begins to emerge after a century of turmoil and is primarily in reaction to the forces of evil. In line with this relative pessimism, the dispersion of "the Jews" does not prefigure a world state in *The Shape of Things to Come* but, instead, Wells argues that in the years leading up to the predicted World War:

It might have been supposed that a people so widely dispersed would have developed a cosmopolitan mentality and formed a convenient linking organization for many world purposes, but their special culture of isolation was so intense that this they neither did nor seemed anxious to attempt. After the World War the orthodox Jews played but a poor part in the early attempts to formulate the Modern State, being far more preoccupied with a dream called Zionism...Only a psycho-analyst could begin to tell for what they wanted this Zionist state. It emphasized their traditional wilful separation from the main body of mankind. It irritated the world against them, subtly and incurably. (298)

This representation, which is repeated throughout Wells's later journalism, contrasts starkly with *Anticipations*. By keeping themselves a "people apart", Jews are represented in *The Shape of Things to Come* as being a "perpetual irritant to statesmen, a breach

in the collective solidarity everywhere....One could never tell whether a Jew was being a citizen or just a Jew. They married, they traded preferentially. They had their own standards of behaviour. Wherever they abounded their peculiarities aroused bitter resentment" (298). At the same time, something of the doubleness of *The Outline of History* is reflected in Wells's prognostication that, in the years between 1940 and 2059, this "antiquated, obdurate culture disappeared. It and its Zionist state, its kosher food, the Law and all the rest of its paraphernalia, were completely merged in the human community. The Jews...were educated out of their racial egotism in less than three generations" (299). Wells describes the complete assimilation of "the Jews" as a "success" which "the people of the nineteenth century would have deemed a miracle" and which points to his "revolution" having "ploughed deeper than any previous revolution" (299). In the decades leading up to the world state, the "family group had ceased to be the effective nucleus in either economic or cultural life" which meant that the "odd exclusiveness of the Jew [that] had been engendered in his close and guarded prolific home" (299) had also been expunged.¹⁰ Wells's rationally organised, universalist world state is both challenged by a virulent Jewish particularism and vindicated by the "disappearance" of "Jewish peculiarity". But, the "bitter resentment" supposedly caused by the racial difference of "the Jews" did not go away after the publication of *The Shape of Things to Come*. It was to be a dominant theme in Wells's journalism leading up to and including the Second World War.

Wells, in his *The Anatomy of Frustration* (1936), was to expand on his representation of an unassimilable Jewish particularity - a conflation of Pharisaism, Zionism and racial exclusivity - as being specifically responsible for the growth of European antisemitism. Based on Robert Burton's seventeenth-century philosophical text *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Wells's *The Anatomy of Frustration* utilizes the pseudo-diary of a Wellsian persona, William Burroughs Steele, who examines the reasons for the persecution of contemporary Jewry in Nazi Germany. Once again, the Jewish "tradition of acquisitiveness" (176) the "essential parasitism of the Jewish mycelium upon the social and cultural organisms in which it lives" (178) and, above all, "Zionism and cultural particularism", are characterized as a "blunder and misfortune for [Jews] and mankind" (181). It was these factors, Wells concludes, that had brought about

the Nazi assault on "the Jews". Furthermore, Wells cites a "surprising passage" (181) from Steele's diaries which he was to repeat in several subsequent books published during the War. That is, according to Steele:

"[T]he German National Socialist Movement is essentially Jewish in spirit and origin, it is Bible-born, an imitation of Old Testament nationalism. The Jews have been taxed with most sins but never before with begetting the Nazi. But Steele writes of it as if it were self-evident. National Socialism, he declares, is inverted Judaism, which has retained the form of the Old Testament and turned it inside out. Hitler never made a speech yet that could not be rephrased in Bible language." (182)

In his *In Search of Hot Water: Travels of a Republican Radical* (1939), Wells, as part of his anti-Zionism, was to put forward the extraordinary argument that "no people in the world have caught the fever of irrational nationalism, that has been epidemic in the world since 1918, so badly as the Jews" but, by this time, he was to concur with Steele that "the current Nazi gospel is actually and traceably the Old Testament turned inside out" (60). What is most disturbing about Wells's statements at this time is that in his *In Search of Hot Water*, for instance, he accurately foresaw the "systematic attempt to exterminate" the "Jew" - "to exterminate him brutally and cruelly" (56) - while, at the same time, arguing that this was a logical consequence of the refusal of "the Jews" to "assimilate" and give themselves to "the service of mankind" (59). This argument was once again made explicit in his *The Fate of Homo Sapiens* (1939) which was reprinted in *The Outlook for Homo Sapiens* (1942) during the War. In this work Wells vigorously condemns Nazism, as he did throughout his life, but he also notes that:

[Nazism] is a horrible recrudescence of primordial human reactions, but that is no reason why we should shut our eyes to the role of the alien nationalism of the Chosen People in exposing them first and foremost before any other people to this outbreak of hatred, cruelty, bestiality and every sort of human ugliness. They are first to suffer in the social dissolution of our epoch, because they have stood out most conspicuously. (148)

Wells's belief that the refusal of the Jews to "assimilate" caused antisemitism in both England and Nazi Germany was often cited during the war years by a wide variety of sources including Arnold Leese in *The Fascist* and Walter Holmes in the Communist *Daily Worker*. Mass Observation Sources, in particular, indicate

popular support for Wells's representations of Jewish particularism. A survey on the "means of overcoming antisemitism" in April 1943, for instance, has many references to Wells and concludes in general terms that "it was up to the Jews themselves to combat antisemitism" by mixing "freely with the inhabitants of the country of their adoption". Wells was also quoted by General Sikorski, the exiled Polish Government's Commander-in-Chief, who justified his government's refusal to refer specifically to the persecution of European Jewry in 1942 by claiming that this would be "equivalent to an implicit recognition of the racial theories which we all reject". At the end of his chapter on 'The Jewish Influence' in *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*, Wells was to maintain, in unusually garbled fashion, that there is "no other destiny for orthodox Judaism and those who are involved in its obloquy, unless that enormous effort to reconstruct human mentality for which I have been pleading arrives in time to arrest their march to destruction" (149). When faced with Jan Karski's eye-witness account of Belzec death camp in November 1942, Wells could only reply, in the words of Karski, that "there is room for very serious research into the question why antisemitism emerges in every country the Jews reside in".¹¹ By this time, it is clear that both "the Jew" and Nazism were cast in the same transient role as forces of "irrationality" *par excellence* which, like the "inferior races" in *Anticipations*, would "have to go" if they did not fit into an ordered world state.

The logic of Wells's eugenic vision of society accounts, in part, for Orwell's attack on Wells in his 1941 essay, 'Wells, Hitler and the World State'. By the 1940s, any form of Jewish difference was conflated by Wells into a Nazi-like inassimilable "orthodoxy". In Wells's *The New World Order* (1940), for instance, which was also reprinted in *The Outlook for Homo Sapiens* during the War, Karl Marx is finally metamorphosed into a "son of a rabbi" who, in the *Communist Manifesto*, is "shrewd enough to use hate and bitter enough to hate" the Bourgeoisie:

Let anyone read over the Communist Manifesto and consider who might have shared the hate or even have got it all, if Marx had not been the son of a rabbi. Read Jews for Bourgeoisie and the Manifesto is pure Nazi teaching of the 1933-8 vintage. (48)

With Karl Marx reduced to a Nazi-like Pharaonic Jew, what hope was there for the "assimilation" into "mankind" of the rest of European Jewry? Such was the logic, taken to its bitter end, of

Wells's semitic discourse. But this was Wells at his most "bullying" and far removed from his "comic" Edwardian fiction.¹²

Conclusion

One should, perhaps, distinguish above all between Wells's Edwardian and inter-war writings on "the Jews". As well as the generally more hectoring and less playful tone of the inter-war years, this distinction is also necessary when we note, for instance, Wells's publicly expressed views on Zionism. During the First World War, as David Smith has shown, Wells was to urge Israel Zangwill to "restore a real Judea" and let "the Jews have Palestine". In a letter sent to Zangwill in 1906, Wells had previously stated that Zangwill's Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO): "has my sympathy - in the abstract - and the project seems altogether sane and practicable. But it's not my doorstep, and I can offer you neither help nor advice. Your people are rich enough, able enough, and potent enough to save themselves".¹³ In his *In Search of Hot Water*, however, Wells was to maintain that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 confirmed that "Zangwill and the Jewish spokesmen were most elaborately and energetically demonstrating that they cared not a rap for the troubles...of any other people but their own" (54-55). This viewpoint was repeated in *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*, where Wells evokes the fear of the Jewish usurer and argues that Zionists take "no thought for the common danger and common welfare of the race. The rest of the world may go hang. In these matters these Zionists are not showing themselves to be citizens of the world but are behaving like infuriated creditors" (139). Wells was also to rehearse these arguments in *You Can't Be Too Careful* (1941) which, obviously, contrast starkly with his earlier statements on Zionism.

As we have noted Wells, during the inter-war years, was to increasingly construct Jewish racial difference as, ultimately, a threat to the rational organisation of the world. It was the failure of Jews to "assimilate" into a universalist mainstream that, Wells argued, helped cause their persecution. This extreme assimilationism was not, however, specific to Wells's fiction and journalism but, as many historians have argued, characterizes racial discourse in a liberal cultural context. According to one historian, "the desire to see Jews adapt to the norms of the dominant culture" is deemed to be "sufficient reason to present the negative image of the Jew and suggest it be erased by means of assimilation".¹⁴ For Wells,

the "dominant culture" can be read as a rationalist view of an ordered world state where "the Jew" could *both* ambivalently symbolize the potential fruits of his utopian vision and, at the same time, the immense dangers of failing to transcend one's petty religious, national and cultural particularisms. When Wells played with the inherent ambivalence in this semitic discourse, as in *Tono-Bungay*, it could be an important feature of a complex narrative. When he grew impatient with the supposed failure of "the Jews" to assimilate themselves into "mankind", as in much of his inter-war journalism, he was simply to reinforce the racial discourse which was an undoubted commonplace in liberal Britain and, I believe, signified the limits of Wells's "universalist" view of the world.

Notes

All references to H.G. Wells's works are in the body of the text. I will be referring to contemporary editions with the exception of *Tono-Bungay* (London: Pan Classic, 1978), *The New Machiavelli* (London: Penguin, 1978), *Marriage* (London: Hogarth Press, 1986) and *The Invisible Man* (London: Fontana, 1959).

1. Anne Aresty Naman, *The Jew in the Victorian Novel: Some Relationships Between Prejudice and Art* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), p.49 and chapter two.
2. *The Huxley Papers* Volume XLVIII, pp.146-147 cited in Charles Blinderman, 'Thomas Henry Huxley on the Jews', *Jewish Social Studies* (Volume 25), p.60.
3. J.R. Hammond, *H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* (London: Macmillan, 1988), chapter 6. John Batchelor, *H.G. Wells* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), pp.68-80 also discusses the double narrative in *Tono-Bungay*.
4. Michael Draper, *H.G. Wells* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp.93-97 discusses the religious imagery in *Tono-Bungay*. See also Batchelor, op.cit., p.73 and p.78 for references to King Edward the Seventh. G.R. Searle, *Corruption in British Politics, 1895-1930* (Oxford: OUP, 1987), pp.21-24 has many contemporary references to the "semitized" monarch.
5. Victoria Glendenning's 'Introduction' to the Hogarth Press

edition of *Marriage* (London, 1986) includes a feminist reading of Marjorie Pope. Patrick Parrinder, *H.G. Wells* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1970), pp.95-97 makes out a case for the "spiritual rootlessness" of the Pope family which is perhaps the corollary to their excessive hebraism.

6. Batchelor, op.cit., p.103.
7. Glendenning, op.cit. See also Patricia Stubbs, *Women and Fiction: Feminism and the Novel 1880-1920* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979), pp.175-194 for a discussion of Wells's "feminism".
8. Batchelor, op.cit., p.105 raises the issue of Wells's "antisemitism" in these terms. For the effect of the "Marconi Scandal" on Wells see David Smith, *H.G. Wells: Desperately Mortal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p.133 and p.256 and Searle, op.cit., p.152 and p.179.
9. Batchelor, op.cit., p.105 wrongly describes the "fact" that Sir Isaac Harman is a "Jew" as being "crucial" to *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman*.
10. Wells, in his *Post-Script to Experiment in Autobiography* (London: 1934), published as *H.G. Wells in Love* (London: 1984), pp.115-116 makes clear the connection between the "family group" and the "exclusiveness of the Jew": "I have always been disposed to despise people who cluster close in families, gangs, clans and nations. That is my main objection to Jews....It is my theory that a world socialism means a bolder, more fearless individualism."
11. General Sikorski is quoted in Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford: OUP, 1979), p.165. See also Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British society during the Second World War* (Manchester: MUP, 1989), pp.92-93 and Jan Karski, *Messenger From Poland*, Channel 4 television, 25 May, 1987. A version of the Karski interview has been published in Marcia Littell, et.al., *The Holocaust Forty Years After* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1989), p.34 and Chapter 4.
12. Batchelor, op.cit., p.29 makes this useful distinction.
13. Wells's letter to Israel Zangwill has been published in the *Jewish Chronicle*, March 30, 1906, p.33 under the heading "Interesting letters from Distinguished Writers". Smith, op.cit., pp.230, 236-237, 548 and 550 refers interestingly to

- Wells's relationship with Zangwill and Zionism at this time.
14. Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Antisemitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), p.203 and chapter 16 for a general account of "the Jewish stereotype and assimilation".

Michael Draper Wells Under Revision

Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe eds. *H.G. Wells Under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium, London, July 1986* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1990; London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990). £23.50

"Of the fifty or so academic conferences I have attended in my life, it was unquestionably the best." This was the verdict on the 1986 Wells Symposium given by W. Warren Wagar in his report for *The Bulletin of the Science Fiction Writers of America* (later published in an abridged form in the *Wellsian*). During the four days of the Symposium nearly a hundred participants had come together at Imperial College for a wide-ranging series of lectures and discussions. Additional events on offer included a screening of the Wells movie *Things to Come* at the National Film Theatre, a dinner at the House of Lords, and a coach outing to Uppark in Sussex where for thirteen years Wells's mother was employed as housekeeper.

By the end of the Symposium many of the other participants seemed to have come to the same view as Professor Wagar. Some of them, having attended many conferences where texts were inspected and analysed like exhibits in an old-fashioned museum, were surprised to encounter texts which so vigorously refused to stay in the glass cases, texts which preferred, like Graham in *The Sleeper Awakes*, to step out of the frame and insist, in a highly bolshy and eccentric manner, on their contemporary relevance. For those of us who had the good fortune to be at the Symposium, and to take part in the exhilarating discussions arising from it, the 'book of the