

invader becomes the interloper and the ideology of the imperialist is turned upon itself in both an ironic and provocative way. The irony may be short-lived but the horror is profound and haunting. Unpredictably, in a seemingly familiar imperialist literary formula, it is the western reader with all his cultural baggage and iconoclasm, who is made to run and hide, to protect what he treasures, and justify and interrogate his own right to life under the gaze of an unrelenting, voracious and ruthless power, the ideology and practice of subordination and domination.

Works Cited

- Behn, Aphra. *Oronooko, or the Royal Slave*. 1688. Will Canning.
- Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. 1719. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Greenblatt, S.J. *Essays in Early Modern Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- . *The Clarendon Lectures and Carpenter Lectures*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Haggard, Sir Henry Rider. *King Solomon's Mines*.
- . *She*.
- Hawkes, Terence. *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society*. London: Arnold, 1973.
- Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. Latimore. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1945.
- Kipling, Rudyard. *"The Man who Would be King" and Other Stories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1993.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. London: Harper Collins, 1951.
- Voltaire, François. *Candide, or the Optimist*. London: Routledge, 1984.
- Wells, H.G. "The Country of the Blind". *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells*. London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1974.

J.R. Hammond

The Significance of Weena

In his seminal study, *The Early H.G. Wells*, Bernard Bergonzi finds the Time Traveller's dalliance with Weena "the biggest flaw in the narrative, for it is totally unconvincing" (50), while V.S. Pritchett, in a celebrated passage, describes their relationship as "faint squirms of idyllic petting" (119). My own reading does not support either of these contentions. Instead it finds in the Time Traveller's love affair with Weena an episode of central importance to *The Time Machine* and one rich in autobiographical significance.

In the light of Jungian psychology, Weena can be seen as a characteristic anima figure. She is rescued from drowning; she is described as a "tiny figure of white and gold" (the colour white, because of its associations with the moon, is often associated with symbols of the anima); she has to be awakened from sleep ("she seemed scarcely to breathe"); the Traveller has to overcome a series of obstacles and dangers in his attempts to rescue her from the Morlocks. She is characteristic of the anima figures in that she is the enigmatic female who beckons and consoles. She is the precursor of a number of anima symbols which recur in Wells's fiction, including the Fairy Lady in "Mr Skelmersdale in Fairyland", the mermaid in *The Sea Lady*, the tall fair girl who welcomes Lionel Wallace on entering the enchanted garden in "The Door in the Wall", Rowena in *Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island*. Throughout his life, Wells's imagination was haunted by this goddess figure, by the beautiful, alluring female who would beckon and embrace. As he expressed it in his autobiography, from the age of seven onwards he was fascinated by "nameless goddess mistresses of which I never breathed a word to any human being" (82).

Wells's decision in January 1894 to leave his wife, Isabel, and elope with Amy Catherine Robbins, living with her in lodgings as if they were man and wife, was a courageous one. Today it would perhaps attract little comment, but to take such a step in Victorian England was to fly in the face of all established conventions. It meant risking ostracism and the condemnation of society. The young couple not only had to contend with the tearful pleas of Mrs Robbins (who continually pleaded with Catherine to abandon Wells and return home) but with various male relatives of the Robbins family who were sent to remonstrate with him. It is not difficult to see in the description of the Morlocks' attempts to capture Weena and drag her away a symbol-

ic representation of society's attempts to free Catherine from Wells's grasp and, in a wider sense, from all the forces of convention and inertia attempting to hold him back.

Images of entanglement are frequently repeated in *The Time Machine*. The text is filled with such terms as "clutched", "grasped", "tugged", "clinging", "caught", "overpowered", "trapped". *The Time Machine* can be read not only as the story of the Time Traveller and his journey to the future but also as an allegory of the young Wells and his struggle to free himself from all the forces restraining him.

Weena is a member of the fragile race known as the Eloi. The terms used to describe the Eloi are "slight", "beautiful", "graceful", "frail", "Dresden china", "pretty". It is significant that these are precisely the terms employed in descriptions of Catherine, who became Wells's wife in 1895, the same year in which *The Time Machine* was published in book form. The Wellses' governess, Miss M.M. Meyer, describes Catherine Wells as "a little lady, as delicate as Dresden china, very simply dressed in brown, and wearing no ornaments whatsoever. She had an abundance of beautiful fair hair, lovely, soulful brown eyes, a soft voice and great charm" (12). In *The Book of Catherine Wells*, Wells himself describes her as she was at the time of their first meeting: "I thought her then a very sweet and valiant little figure indeed, with her schoolgirl satchel of books . . . and I soon came to think her the most wonderful thing in my life" (8). Thus the key words in description of her are "little", "delicate", "beautiful", "sweet", "valiant", "girl".

The Time Traveller records Weena's devotion to him, observing, "She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always . . . she was somehow, a very great comfort" (72-73). Similarly, Wells records Catherine's total devotion to himself: "She stuck to me so sturdily that in the end I stuck to myself" (*The Book of Catherine Wells* 27). Catherine was constantly by his side during the months in 1894 when *The Time Machine* was being written, both at Mornington Road, Camden Town, and at Tusculum Villa, Sevenoaks. Indeed, in the preface to the 1931 edition of *The Time Machine*, Wells recalls "discussing it and the underlying notions of it while he walked in Knole Park with that dear companion who sustained him so stoutly through those adventurous years of short commons and hopeful uncertainty" (vii). What more natural, then, than that she should be continually in Wells's thoughts, and that in the relationship between the Traveller and Weena he not only personified the contradictions within the Traveller's temperament but echoed the tensions implicit in his own

life? (In reality Catherine, or "Jane" as Wells preferred to call her, was practical and resourceful – in contrast with the rather indolent Weena. I am simply asserting that Weena embodies facets of Catherine's personality as it was at the age of twenty when Wells first knew her: she was shy, self-effacing, diminutive in stature, fragile, and utterly devoted to Wells.)

The Traveller is well aware that as a rational man of science he has no business involving himself in a love affair: "I had not, I said to myself, come into the future to carry on a miniature flirtation" (73). But as an emotional man he is aware of drives pulling him in the opposite direction: "The creature's friendliness affected me exactly as a child's might have done. . . . Until it was too late, I did not clearly know what I had inflicted upon when I left her. Nor until it was too late did I clearly understand what she was to me" (72-73). This contradiction between reason and emotion is a recurring theme in Wells's fiction and can be seen, for example, in the careers of Lionel Wallace in "The Door in the Wall", in that of Chatteris in *The Sea Lady* and of Remington in *The New Machiavelli*.

The relationship between Weena and the Traveller cannot simply be dismissed as sentimental. At first he is grateful to her for assuaging his loneliness: "For, by merely seeming fond of me, and showing in her weak futile way that she cared for me, the little doll of a creature presently gave my return to the neighbourhood of the White Sphinx almost the feeling of coming home. . ." (73). Gradually their relationship deepens until when at the last she dies, he is overwhelmed by grief: "I felt the intensest wretchedness for the horrible death of little Weena. It seemed an overwhelming calamity. Now, in this old familiar room, it is more like the sorrow of a dream than an actual loss. But that morning it left me absolutely lonely again – terribly alone" (128). It is Weena who sustains him through most of his sojourn in the world of 802701 by her companionship and devotion to him; it is Weena who accompanies him on his journey to the rest of the Palace of Green Porcelain (corresponding to the enchanted castle of fairytales); it is she who is at his side during his crucial encounter with the Morlocks in the forest; and it is she who, by her gift of flowers, convinces the narrator that "gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man" (152).

Weena does therefore play a central role in the narrative, for it is she, alone of all the Eloi, who engages the Time Traveller's feeling. Her loyalty and tenderness are such that instead of dismissing the Eloi as irredeemably worthless he has to acknowledge the over-hastiness of his judgements: "I had got to such a low estimate of her kind that

I did not expect any gratitude from her. In that, however, I was wrong" (71-72). In providing him with companionship and solace Weena evokes a reciprocal response from the Traveller and thus provides the narrative with a human perspective it would otherwise lack. In contrast to the anonymity of the effete Eloi and the repellent Morlocks Weena stands out precisely because of her human qualities. As the Traveller comments in a revealing aside: "She always seemed to me, I fancy, more human than she was, perhaps because her affection was so human" (107-108).

Without Weena *The Time Machine* would still be a gripping narrative and a vividly written account of a journey through time but, with Weena, it is a haunting depiction of a quest; a quest to free the sleeping princess of legend from the clutches of her pursuers. In rescuing Weena from drowning, befriending her, taking her side against her enemies and journeying with her across a landscape beset with dangers and obstacles, the Traveller calls upon all his resources of strength and intelligence. Beyond this, despite his inclination to regard himself as a sceptical man of science, he is forced to acknowledge the presence within his own makeup of feelings and tenderness and compassion. It is this which adds a humane perspective to *The Time Machine* and enhances its power as an allegory of the human adventure.

Works Cited

- Bergonzi, Bernard. *The Early H.G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1961.
- Meyer, M.M. *H.G. Wells and his family (as I have known them)*. Edinburgh: International Publishing Co, 1955.
- Pritchett, V.S. *The Living Novel*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1946.
- Wells, H.G. *The Book of Catherine Wells*. With an Introduction by her husband H.W. Wells. London: Chatto & Windus, 1928
- . *Experiment in Autobiography*. 2 vols. London: Gollancz, 1934.
- . *The Time Machine*. Heinemann, 1895.
- . Preface, *The Time Machine*. New York: Random House, 1931.