

Nevertheless, Starr's justification for conducting this Deleuzian study of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine* – that it should be done, because it can be done – suffers from its own modesty. The conclusion of his book builds on Sylvia Hardy's examination of Wells's poststructuralism, investigating Wells in terms of Deleuzian 'conceptual personae', 'minor literature', and 'eternal return'. Despite the lack of sufficient explication of these concepts, which is slightly disorienting for non-experts, Starr effectively demonstrates the integral place Wells inhabits in the 'in-between' of the Victorian and Modernist literary canons. While it is unfortunate that editorial oversight has left occasional syntactical, grammatical, and typographical errors throughout this edition of *Wells Meets Deleuze: The Scientific Romances Reconsidered*, these do not detract from Starr's analysis of Wells's influence across seemingly disparate spheres, such as cinema, politics, and philosophy, on our continuing re-evaluation of the 'human'.

**ANDREW TATE, *APOCALYPTIC FICTION* (LONDON: BLOOMSBURY, 2017)
ISBN 978-1-4742-3350-7 (PB) £49.00 [MAXIM SHADURSKI]**

Apocalyptic Fiction is a stimulating, lucid and compact study and guide to further research on twenty-first century British, US, and Canadian writing about the end times. Andrew Tate treats the subject of his book as a composite phenomenon manifesting itself in various forms, which include dystopia, fantasy, post-catastrophic and young adult fiction. He investigates such manifestations along thematic lines, with each chapter highlighting a particular feature of how apocalypse is imagined, and whether its condition is potentially (but not always necessarily) overcome. For the definition of apocalypse, Tate recruits insight from the New Testament's Revelation of St John, wherein *apocalypsis* means 'a mode of disclosure in which something once hidden is brought to light' (27). This insight permits Tate to problematise the popular aestheticisation of the end times as an end in itself. It also constitutes one of the critical lenses through which he inspects fiction.

Comprised of seven chapters, Tate's book begins by setting an intertextual scene and theoretical frame of reference. Largely informative about the extant designations of a grim future, Chapter 1 offers a marginally overwhelming record of the author's findings, which flick the reader's attention through dozens of examples and allusions, most of which, like those to H. G. Wells, receive little elaboration even in subsequent chapters. Tate furnishes his argument, based on the readings of St John's Revelation in the

work of religious and secular philosophers, such as Tom Wright, Michael Northcott, and Slavoj Žižek, among others. He contends that apocalypse is more than ‘spectacular destruction, death on a vast scale and the collapse of all that a society might hold dear (families, cars, the comforts of home)’ (11-12). According to Tate, apocalypse in fiction may have causes, yet resistance to them has none, an event which can bring forth new ways of living after an end. In expanding on his contention, Tate turns to John Gray’s polemical exposition of the post-9/11 politics. In *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (2007), Gray has denounced the eschatological trope, which, being inherent in both the Christian religion and secular Enlightenment thought, ostensibly demands a break in history in order for a better humanity to emerge. This denunciation has led Gray to equate utopia with German Nazism, Soviet Communism and the more recent ‘War on Terror’, and, by extension, disavow social revolutions and emancipatory movements as disruptive and blood-thirsty events. Albeit infrequent (17-18, 130), Gray’s speculations hover around the edges of Tate’s analyses of apocalypse, which construe it not only in contradistinction to the spectacle of destruction, but also in opposition to any socially or politically necessitated rupture that might be.

Theme-bound, Chapters 2 through 6 explore the following facets of apocalypse: the deluge, the concept of postmillennial dispensationalism, residual elements of culture, peripatetic existence, and marketisation of the end times. In Chapter 2, Tate looks at David Maine’s and Maggie Gee’s 2004 novels, both named *The Flood*, which allows him to distinguish the writers’ uses of the deluge from the mediatised references to disasters of ‘biblical’ proportions. Unlike the media, both writers resort to the Bible as a wider context for human resistance to the ‘injustices of the present’ (41). Chapter 3 considers Tom Perrotta’s novel *The Leftovers* (2011), centred on what Tate spells out as the concept of premillennial dispensationalism. Developed in the nineteenth century and reaching its peak during the American Civil War, the latter doctrine endorses the rapture, or the rise to Heaven, of the faithful, followed by a downward spiral of events for the rest of the world. Even though Tate criticises Perrotta for not disclosing a hidden message, as would be appropriate to *apocalypsis*, he reads the novel’s ending as a celebration of life (60). In Chapter 4, Tate examines Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003-2013), taking special notice of the roles of creativity and art in sustaining humanity. Tate takes his cue from Wells’s *The Time Machine* (1895), when he compares the Eloi with Atwood’s Crakers: both species are God-forsaken and therefore unable to practise their beliefs, which results in the absence of culture in their communities (73-4). Tate avoids giving a

theological spin to this comparison; instead, he interprets Atwood's valorisation of faith as the originator of song and, in consequence, writing. Being in danger of disappearing, writing and the printed word remain holy, as they have the power to transcend the closure of the end times. Chapter 5 is devoted to Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) and Jim Crace's *The Pesthouse* (2007), whose road-trip narratives reassert walking in defiance of modernity and propel the walker into the mode of immemorial existence. Tate observes that, while McCarthy designates walking as a means of life and survival, Crace posits it as a form of resistance to the world coming to an end. In both cases, walking liberates its agent from 'a variety of tyrannies including the insidious idea that speed is the true index of freedom' (101). In Chapter 6, Tate analyses Suzanne Collins's trilogy *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010), an example of young adult fiction which at once subverts and conforms to the ongoing mediatisation of violence. Tate records how the trilogy and its screen adaptation foreground the symptoms of the end times not through the observable ingredients of life, but through the mediated images of the end, in which technology takes centre stage. As in real life, the displays of violence in Collins's trilogy seek to alert the viewer to their (relatively) safe position, lulling them, though, into a state of apathy. Yet Tate discerns in *The Hunger Games* a move towards entrusting the young with the task of undoing the errors committed by the previous generations, and such a task may concern the existing notions of apocalypse (128).

Placed at the book's conclusion, Chapter 7 infers that apocalyptic fiction is haunted by the fear of the end times, when all culture will have ceased, and the transmission and reception of stories have become impossible. For his final say, Tate draws on Emily St John Mandel's novel *Station Eleven* (2014), which predicates salvation on 'an act of reading; a departure, on foot; and the imagined possibility of other forms of mobility' (137). These premises will look to the Wellsian reader like familiar tropes, traceable throughout Wells's work. Further to *The Time Machine*, which is indeed centrally concerned with the end of culture, we may remind ourselves of Mr Polly's peripatetic experiences and Wells's own promotion of innovative transport as a means to achieving alterity. The Wellsian idea of *apocalypsis* matches Tate's definition, in that it relishes in destruction less than it discloses a message. In *The War of the Worlds* (1898), Wells pleads for a different humanity, warning at the same time of extinction. Even though Wells's imaginaries of fresh starts, such as evident in *In the Days of the Comet* (1906) and *The World Set Free* (1914), do not belong in Tate's repertoire of apocalyptic scenarios, they reinstate the importance of pre-empting and thinking beyond the rupture, rather than obfuscating its need.