Contents

Editorial

Maxim Shadurski

This forty-third number of *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society* contains four articles and seven book reviews. The first three contributions highlight the various facets of Wells as a social thinker and a biologist, drawing particularly on his scientific romances and tracing T. H. Huxley's streak in them. Steven McLean investigates the affinities between Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and Wells's *The Time Machine* in treating the plight of the poor in nineteenth-century Britain. Will Trinkwon explores the sanguinary symbolism of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* as Wells's mediated response to debates about laissez-faire trade and state socialism. Jeremy Withers and Brenda Tyrrell examine *The War of the Worlds* as a tale debunking human exceptionalism and trivialising war from a nonhuman perspective. In the fourth article contained in this journal, Judith Hendra excavates the reception of Wells's social novels in *The New Age*.

The Wellsian appears in Scopus, EBSCO, MLA Directory of Periodicals, and ERIH PLUS. Back numbers of the journal are stored online and should be updated following a three-year embargo period: http://community.dur.ac.uk/time.machine/OJS/index.php/Wellsian/issue/archive

The editor welcomes article submissions of 6-9,000 words on any aspect of Wells's life and work, and book reviews of no longer than 1,500 words. These materials can be forwarded to our editorial email address throughout the year. Further information about the journal may be found at: http://hgwellssociety.com/wellsian/

A recent Columbia-based evaluation suggests that 'The H. G. Wells Society is modest as an author society', but regards its journal as one of the 'crucial sustaining features for the study of Wells's work and life'.[1] I thank both authors and reviewers for making this happen.

[1] Sarah Cole, *Inventing Tomorrow: H. G. Wells and the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 32.

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Articles

SHADOWS OF A DIRE FUTURE: TIME TRAVEL AND SOCIAL REFORM IN CHARLES DICKENS'S *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* AND H. G. WELLS'S *THE TIME MACHINE*

Steven McLean

Abstract. This article examines the probable influence of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* on Wells's *The Time Machine*. While *The Time Machine* provides a scientific justification for time travel, Wells utilises the supernatural and magical elements found in *A Christmas Carol* to make time travel seem plausible. Both texts connect time travel with the emphasis on social reform that persists throughout the Victorian era. *The Time Machine* transforms the themes and metaphors of *A Christmas Carol* in light of Wells's understanding of evolutionary theory. *The Time Machine* might be read as a continuation of *A Christmas Carol*, warning what will happen if the social divisions Dickens highlights are not eradicated. Through Scrooge's redemption and adoption of Christian paternalism, Dickens suggests the future is easy to change. For Wells in *The Time Machine*, however, the competing demands of collective reform and evolutionary competition make it more difficult to change the future.

Introduction

On the surface, Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) would appear to have little in common – Dickens's celebrated festive tale is a ghost story, while Wells's famous narrative has long been applauded for its scientific plausibility. Close scrutiny, however, reveals definite affinities between the two texts. *A Christmas Carol* is the quintessential Christmas story. Indeed, in his famous study of *Charles Dickens* (1906), G. K. Chesterton even suggests that '[t]he Christmas atmosphere is more important than Scrooge, or the ghosts either'.[1] *The Time Machine* might also be read as a Christmas story – while the story's festive setting is often overlooked by critics, the Medical Man refers to 'that

[1] G. K. Chesterton, *Charles Dickens* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2007), 85.

ghost you showed us last Christmas'.[2] Both *A Christmas Carol* and *The Time Machine* can be identified with a tradition of tales about marvellous or supernatural occurrences at Christmas that goes back to the late fourteenth-century *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.[3] Dickens's text is famous for its ghosts: that of Jacob Marley, and the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Yet to Come. *The Time Machine* contains numerous ghosts too, or more precisely, ghostly metaphors. David Y. Hughes identifies Grant Allen's ghost story 'Pallinghurst Barrow' (1892) as a key source for *The Time Machine*.[4] Wells's fascination with spiritualist themes is also apparent in the ghost stories he wrote in the early stage of his career, notably 'The Plattner Story' (1896) and 'The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost' (1902), both of which contain unmistakable echoes of *A Christmas Carol*.

A Christmas Carol is, perhaps, the earliest example of time travel in English fiction. Wells's story of a dystopian future in which humanity has split into two species along class lines, the Eloi and the Morlocks, is the most famous of all time travel fictions. As Pete Orford points out, 'to suggest Dickens's tale as a time travel narrative is [...] to propose it as the first'.[5] Although David Wittenberg takes a different tack in his recent study *Time Travel: The Popular Philosophy of Narrative* (2013), he also acknowledges that *A Christmas Carol* is often identified as the earliest time travel story.[6] Scrooge may not be able to control his temporal journey using technology or

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[2] H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (London: Penguin, 2005), 11. Subsequent page numbers will be provided parenthetically in the text. The reference to Simon Newcomb's address to the New York Mathematical Society 'only a month or so ago' (4-5) strengthens the suggestion that *The Time Machine* is a Christmas story. Newcomb's lecture was delivered in December 1893, implying that the Time Traveller's guests visit his home over the festive period in that year. See my note in the Penguin edition (97, n. 1).

[3] Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) is another tale in this tradition.

[4] David Y. Hughes, 'A Queer Notion of Grant Allen's', *Science Fiction Studies* 25.2 (1998), 271-84.

[5] Pete Orford, 'The Ghosts and the Machine: A Christmas Carol and Time Travel', https://www.academia.edu/3122878/The_Ghosts_and_the_Machine_A_Christmas_Carol_and_Time_Travel, accessed on 23 January 2020. While Orford's article does not focus specifically on the relationship between *A Christmas Carol* and *The Time Machine*, it nevertheless contains the beginnings of a comparison between the two works.

[6] David Wittenberg, *Time Travel: The Popular Philosophy of Narrative* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 47.

interact with the shadows he witnesses, but he is still transported through time. Hence, he 'does not simply remember his past mistakes, he is forced to watch them all over again'.[7] Like the Time Traveller, Scrooge travels to a nightmarish future (that, from the perspective of Dickens's protagonist at least, might also be regarded as a dystopian one). Notwithstanding the construction of a scientific frame for the protagonist's temporal voyage in *The Time Machine*, there are definite affinities between Dickens's and Wells's portrayal of time travel. Using Wells's words, Hughes points out how, 'slipping like a vapour through the interstices of intervening substances' (20), the Time Traveller moves through time like a ghost. Indeed, 'in 802,701 the Time Traveller is a ghost – a ghost of the present – and would be that only but for the "dimensional" (science fictional) logic [...] that requires him to rematerialize whenever the machine stops'.[8] That the Time Traveller travels through time like a ghost, and is like a ghost of the past in 802,701, explicitly recalls *A Christmas Carol*.

Wells had certainly read Dickens before the publication of *The Time Machine*, so it is possible that *A Christmas Carol* was one of the influences on his evolutionary fable.[9] Regardless of the question of influence, however, both Dickens and Wells connect the time travel narrative (and ghosts, or ghostly metaphors) with the emphasis on social reform that persists throughout the Victorian period.[10] While both Dickens's and Wells's concern with social reform is well established, the probable influence of *A Christmas Carol* on *The Time Machine* in this respect has not been explored by critics. Both authors' texts provide a glimpse of the future to throw light on the dire consequences of continued indifference towards (or even scorn of) the plight of the poor in the Victorian present. There are, as would be expected, differences between Dickens's early Victorian paternalism and Wells's late-century collectivism: *A Christmas Carol* foretells the gruesome fate of a wealthy individual should he continue his selfish refusal to show

[7] Orford, 9.

[8] Hughes, 278.

[9] In *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934), Wells recalls reading Dickens as a teenager while staying at his uncle's in Windsor: 'There was a complete illustrated set of Dickens which I read in abundantly' (H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (since 1866)*, in 2 vols. (London: Victor Gollancz and The Cresset Press, 1934), I, 114.)

[10] Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) is a similar text, but its protagonist sleeps (rather than travels) through time.

benevolence towards the poor, while *The Time Machine* implicates the whole of society in the split of humanity into Eloi and Morlocks. Yet *The Time Machine* might be considered as a continuation of *A Christmas Carol*, and as a transformation of its themes, since Dickens highlights class division, and Wells shows its potential evolutionary consequences.

Framing time travel: science and the supernatural

There are differences in the explanation of (and justification for) time travel in each narrative. In *A Christmas Carol*, time travel is construed as an inexplicable supernatural occurrence: 'how all this [movement through time] was brought about, Scrooge knew no more than you do'.[11] In *The Time Machine*, however, there is a carefully constructed scientific justification for time travel. With the reference to Professor Simon Newcomb's lecture on four-dimensional geometry, Wells draws on contemporary science to establish verisimilitude for his protagonist's research into the fourth dimension. The Time Traveller is careful to emphasise the scientific nature of his research: 'Scientific People [...] know very well that Time is only a kind of Space' (5). If time is a type of space, then the protagonist's invention of a machine that can travel through that space becomes all the more credible, and is comparable to other machines traversing other spaces: 'He [humankind] can go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should he not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time-Dimension, or even turn about and travel the other way?' (6).

While Wells's understanding of science means that he creates a rationale for time travel where Dickens does not, *The Time Machine* utilises the magical or supernatural elements found in *A Christmas Carol*. Renewed interest in spiritualism, magic, and the occult existed alongside the discourses of late nineteenth-century science. As Roger Luckhurst points out in *The Invention of Telepathy* (2002), '[t]he emergence of a scientific culture [...] produced other, less predictable effects: strange, unforeseen knowledges, [and] hybrid and ephemeral notions'.[12] Wells's knowledge of spiritualism is remarked on by Hughes, who notes that, in 1897, he astonished a reporter 'when he admitted that he never missed a Psychical Research Society

[11] Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Writings* (London: Penguin, 2003), 59. Subsequent page numbers will be provided parenthetically in the text.

[12] Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10.

paper'.[13] Wells's interest in magic, and even in the possibility of genuine magic, is revealed in short stories like 'The Magic Shop' (1903).

It is thus unsurprising that Wells exploits magical and supernatural tropes, as well as the cultural authority granted to science, to make time travel seem plausible. Simon J. James points out that '[t]he frame narrative of *The Time Machine* is related in semi-darkness, hinting at the possible use of hypnosis or conjuring in the disappearance of the model time machine'.[14] Indeed, the Medical Man is convinced that the disappearance of the model is an act of conjuring, though 'how the trick was done he could not explain' (12). (Similarly, Scrooge initially believes that Marley's ghost is a trick of the senses conjured up by indigestion.) Commenting on how the model time machine vanishes like a ghost, Orford notes that Wells 'reverts to supernatural descriptions to describe what is ultimately a paranormal event'.[15] Wells's reliance on the reader's familiarity with, and acceptance of, the uncanny is apparent as the protagonist draws attention to the apparent unreality of the model time machine: 'You will notice that it looks singularly askew, and that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal' (8). The 'unreal', ghostly appearance of the model machine is reminiscent of the ghosts who visit Scrooge (this is another aspect of Wells's text that corresponds to Scrooge's initial refusal to accept that the ghosts are real). Towards the end of *The Time Machine*, there is a passage which explicitly recalls the transparent ghosts of *A Christmas Carol*: 'I seemed to see a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass for a moment – a figure so transparent that the bench behind with its sheets of drawing was absolutely distinct; but this phantasm vanished as I rubbed my eyes' (90).[16]

The inference that *A Christmas Carol* influenced *The Time Machine* is substantiated by those of his short stories that contain definite echoes of Dickens's famous Christmas tale. This influence of *A Christmas Carol* is particularly evident in 'The Plattner Story' (1896), published just one year after *The Time Machine*. Like *The Time Machine*, 'The Plattner Story' combines the notion of a fourth dimension with ghostly metaphors. After an explosion at the school he teaches in blasts him into the fourth dimension,

[13] Hughes, 280.
[14] Simon J. James, *Maps of Utopia: H. G. Wells, Modernity, and the End of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 55.
[15] Orford, 4.
[16] See also Orford, 4-5.

Plattner sees the figures of Lidgett and the boys move 'as faint[ly] and silent[ly] as ghosts', and initially believes he is dead.[17] The ghostly appearance of the world he has just left recalls the transparent Spirits of *A Christmas Carol*, as *'[t]wo of the boys, gesticulating, walked one after the other clean through him!*'.[18] The Spirits in *A Christmas Carol* are recalled still more explicitly by the mysterious Watchers of the Living, who the narrator speculates may 'indeed [be] the Dead'.[19] Like Dickens's Spirits, the Watchers of the Living 'closely and passionately watch a world they have left for ever'.[20] In *H. G. Wells and the Short Story* (1992), John Hammond makes a link between the keen interest in human affairs shown by the Watchers of the Living and the penultimate stave of *A Christmas Carol*: 'Particularly striking are the similarities between the paragraphs beginning "On the bed lay a lank man, his ghastly white face terrible upon the tumbled pillow" and Dickens's chapter entitled "The Last of the Spirits"'.[21] 'The Plattner Story' shows Wells's willingness to transform Dickens's story for his own purpose. Unlike Scrooge, Plattner is unable to communicate with the Watchers of the Living, adding to the mysteriousness Wells wants to create for the beings Plattner encounters.

'The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost' (1902), another of Wells's short stories that reveals the explicit influence of *A Christmas Carol*, does involve direct communication with a spirit. Clayton, who has stayed overnight at the Mermaid Club, tells his friends how he caught a ghost. Reminiscent of Scrooge's conversation with Marley's Ghost, Clayton's conversation with the ghost is portrayed as though he were talking to another living person, and like Marley's Ghost, the ghost Clayton meets retains its earthly character and 'purposeless[ness]' in the afterlife.[22] Like the Spirit of Jacob Marley, Clayton's ghost is transparent: 'He was transparent and whitish; clean through his chest I could see the glimmer of the little window at the end'.[23] The comical interaction between Clayton and the ghost recalls

[17] H. G. Wells, *The Plattner Story and Others* (London: Methuen, 1897), 14.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 23.
[20] Ibid.
[21] John Hammond, *H. G. Wells and the Short Story* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 95.
[22] H. G. Wells, *Twelve Stories and a Dream* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1905), 123.
[23] Ibid., 118.

that between Scrooge and Marley's ghost. Indeed, the instance where Clayton offers the ghost a seat explicitly echoes the moment where Marley's ghost sits down. 'The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost' again shows Wells transforming Dickens's story for his own purpose. The story is in many senses an inversion of *A Christmas Carol*. Whereas Scrooge is at the irresistible mercy of the Christmas Spirits, Clayton finds that 'the whole business' is in his hands.[24] In *A Christmas Carol*, the Three Ghosts guide Scrooge to redemption as a consequence of the sympathetic intervention of Marley's ghost. In 'The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost', on the other hand, Clayton becomes sympathetic towards the ghost because it is ineffective at haunting and has forgotten how to vanish. The key revelation of Wells's story, however, is Clayton's sudden and mysterious death as he attempts to mimic the hand gestures that allow the ghost to vanish. It is left to the reader to decide whether Clayton died 'by that poor ghost's incantation, or whether he was stricken suddenly by apoplexy in the midst of an idle tale – as the coroner's jury would have us believe'.[25]

Neither 'The Plattner Story' nor 'The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost' contains a journey through time, however, and it is in *The Time Machine* that Wells reworks this aspect of *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens does not elaborate on Scrooge's journey through time. Time travel in *A Christmas Carol* is instantaneous:

> As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground. (56)

Time travel can be instantaneous for Dickens because it only occurs across one individual's lifespan. Unlike Scrooge, who is a passive time traveller, the Time Traveller's grasp of science means that he is able to construct a machine that allows him to control his journey through time. Wells is dealing with evolutionary time: his protagonist arrives in the year 802,701, which makes it necessary for him to describe the process of time travelling. The Time Traveller mentions 'the peculiar sensations of time travelling' which

[24] Ibid., 116.
[25] Ibid., 135.

'are excessively unpleasant' (19).[26] Yet 'the unpleasant sensations of the start' merge 'at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration' (20). Wells describes time travel in sufficient detail that the Time Traveller witnesses night and day merge 'into one continuous greyness', and sees 'huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams', while '[t]he whole surface of the earth seemed changed – melting and flowing under my eyes' (19).

Dire shadows: Dickens, Wells, and social reform

Regardless of the different degrees of justification for, and representation of, the temporal voyage, the didactic purpose of time travel is the same in *A Christmas Carol* and *The Time Machine*. Time travel, and contact with supernatural or post-human entities, is a form of social intervention in both of these works. Both Dickens and Wells rally against the individualism of the present by depicting the nightmarish future consequences of the division between the 'two nations' of the rich and the poor in Victorian Britain.

In *A Christmas Carol*, as in *Oliver Twist* (serialised between 1837 and 1839), Dickens writes in protest against the 1834 Poor Law. Under the Old Poor Law, those unable to find work received financial support from their local parish. The rising costs of providing for the poor caused resentment amongst the middle and upper classes, who often considered the poor as too idle to work and berated them for having children they could not afford to bring up. A report by the Poor Law Commissioners states: 'Statues have had small effect, and idle and vagabond persons, being unprofitable members, or rather enemies of the common-wealth, have been suffered to remain and increase, and yet do so'.[27] Hence, the 1834 Poor Law compelled those in need of help to enter a workhouse. In exchange for food and clothing, the inhabitants of the workhouse had to undertake several hours of manual labour each day. The New Poor Law was underpinned by Thomas Malthus's theory of population. For Malthus, the growth of population increases at a far greater rate than the increase of food supplies, threatening catastrophe for the human race. As Stephen J. Thompson points out, 'there can be little doubt that the Poor Law Commissioners agreed with Malthus's first *Essay* in regarding the poor as powerless to resist [...] incentives to marry and

[26] See also Orford, 3.

[27] *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws* (London: B. Fellows, 1834), 7.

multiple'.[28] Those advocating Malthus's theories clearly thought that implementing the workhouse model would do more to prevent the poor having children at an alarming rate. For its supporters, 'Poor Law reform [...] was identified with the movement from darkness and disorder towards virtue and enlightenment'.[29] Hence, '[t]he Old Poor Law was associated with national ruin; the New Poor Law with national improvement. Under the Old Poor Law the poor were out of control; under the New they were properly regulated'.[30] Many, however, were appalled by the newly implemented poor laws, which they saw as akin to a form of imprisonment. Those sympathetic to the plight of the poor and the poor themselves attempted to disrupt the implementation of the New Poor Law, and there were riots and disturbances in various parts of England. These disturbances were fuelled by 'stories about the breaking up of families and starving of the poor [which] appear to have been circulated in most of the districts where trouble arose'.[31]

Dickens attacks the newly implemented Poor Law by having Scrooge vigorously advocate it before realising the error of his ways. At the outset of *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge vigorously supports the principles of the New Poor Law. Echoing the justification of other advocates of the New Poor Law, Scrooge emphatically declares: 'I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry' (39). When he is informed by two gentlemen seeking charitable donations towards provisions for the poor that 'many would rather die' than go to the workhouse, Scrooge retorts: 'they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population' (39). Scrooge thus believes that the 'useful course' (38) of the Treadmill and the Poor Law is preventing the catastrophic population growth Malthus warns against.

Scrooge's initial characterisation repeatedly emphasises his miserly, solitary nature and lack of sympathy for those less fortunate than himself. He is '[h]ard and sharp as steel, from which no flint had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster' (34). The cold

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[28] Stephen J. Thompson, 'Population Growth and Corporations of the Poor, 1660-1841', in *Population, Welfare, and Economic Change in Britain, 1290-1834*, edited by Chris Daniel Briggs, P. M. Kitson, and Stephen J. Thompson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 190.

[29] David Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Britain: From Chadwick to Booth, 1834-1914* (London: Routledge, 1998), 80.

[30] Ibid., 80.

[31] Nicholas C. Edsall, *The Anti-Poor Law Movement, 1834-44* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), 32.

within Scrooge does not thaw 'one degree at Christmas' (34). Scrooge 'edge[s] his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance' (35).[32] Scrooge's abundant hoarded wealth, and the pointlessness of wealth that is not put to good use, is emphasised as Scrooge inspects his banker's book alone.[33] The grave future consequences of the cold indifference of Scrooge and others like him towards those less fortunate is symbolised by the glimpse of Tiny Tim's death.

Scrooge's lack of Christmas and Christian charity is contrasted to his nephew Fred's kind-heartedness, Bob Cratchit's going down a slide 'twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas eve' (41), and the warmth the impoverished Cratchits derive from each other's company: 'They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their clothes were scanty [...]. But they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contended with the time' (84). During the ghostly visitations, Scrooge must rekindle the bonds of human sympathy, and learn the value of the warmth and benefit he can create and experience by using his money to help others. Marley's ghost, who arranges his former partner's chance for redemption, implores him: 'Mankind was my business [...]; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business' (49). As James A. Davies writes, Dickens's story 'is an argument for Benevolent paternalism'.[34] For Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*, individual generosity enhances collective well-being.

The purpose of Dickens's Christmas story and the view the author clearly wants his reader to adopt throughout the year is expressed by Fred:

> I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round – apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that – as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the

[32] There is an echo of Scrooge's desire to edge his way along the crowded paths of life in Wells's characterisation of Griffith in *The Invisible Man* (1897). Griffith 'rarely went abroad by daylight, but at twilight he would go out muffled up invisibly, whether the weather were cold or not, and he chose the loneliest paths and those overshadowed by trees and banks'. (H. G. Wells, *The Invisible Man: A Grotesque Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 19.)

[33] Dickens would again critique unused accumulated wealth through the figure of Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations* (1861).

[34] James A. Davies, *The Textual Life of Dickens's Characters* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 72.

> long calendar year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. (36)

Dickens's reference to seeing those of a lower class as 'another race of creatures bound on other journeys' and his story's emphasis on a lack of sympathy towards those less fortunate explicitly prefigure Benjamin Disraeli's emphasis on the 'two nations' of the rich and the poor. Indeed, Dickens was inspired to write his most famous Christmas story by a visit to the industrial northwest of England, where he spoke alongside Disraeli at the Manchester Athenaeum, at an event to raise money for this organisation's efforts in educating the working poor, on 5 October 1843. *A Christmas Carol* was then published on 19 December. In his novel *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (1845), Disraeli describes the rich and the poor as inhabiting different zones or even worlds:

> 'Two nations, between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws'. 'You speak of –' said Egremont hesitantly. 'THE RICH AND POOR'.[35]

Given their shared preoccupation with social reform, it is not surprising that Dickens's description of the poor as 'another race of creatures bound on other journeys' should strikingly anticipate Disraeli's description of the rich and the poor being 'formed by different breeding' and inhabiting different worlds.

The Time Machine also works in the tradition of the two nations. Wells's scientific romance shows the influence of Charles Lyell's theory of geology, which revealed a vast earthly evolutionary timescale, and Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which established the fact that all

[35] Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil, Or the Two Nations* [1845] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 66.

species are subject to change.[36] Hence, the Eloi and the Morlocks have emerged because the lack of sympathy and interchange, which characterises the two nations, has become an evolutionary distinction. As Patrick Parrinder puts it, '*The Time Machine* embodies not one future timescale but two [:] [... that] of historical time [...] and biological time measured by the evolution and devolution of the species'.[37] The future portrayed in *The Time Machine* is the explicit consequence of the division between the 'two nations' of the rich and the poor in Victorian Britain:

> Again, the exclusive tendency of the rich people – due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education, and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor – is already leading to the closing, in their interest, of considerable portions of the surface of the land. About London, for instance, perhaps half the prettier country is shut in against intrusion. And this same widening gulf – which is due to the length and expense of the higher education process and the increased facilities for and temptations towards refined habits on the part of the rich – will make that exchange between class and class, that promotion by intermarriage which at present retards the splitting of our species along lines of social stratification, less and less frequent. (48)

The Time Traveller's words explicitly echo that key passage from Disraeli's novel. Disraeli's characterisation of the two nations living in 'different zones' is clearly recalled by the Time Traveller's observation that the increasingly refined rich are enclosing land and shutting themselves in against 'the rude violence of the poor'. Yet rather than being 'formed by different breeding', the rich and the poor are now different breeds. To paraphrase Fred in *A Christmas Carol*, the poor are now another race of creatures.

In a broader perspective than Dickens, Wells also warns of the potentially devastating future consequences of the individualism of the present. Wells is writing in the context of the late-Victorian individualism vs. collectivism debate. Individualists like Herbert Spencer were adamant

[36] The Time Traveller, of course, witnesses geological change as the earth melts and changes beneath him.

[37] Patrick Parrinder, *Shadows of the Future: H. G. Wells, Science Fiction, and Prophecy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 41-2.

that human society should be governed by the relentless process of evolution apparent in the natural world. Applying a similar principle to Malthus, Spencer insisted that allowing the weaker members of the human species to breed would lead to its demise. For Spencer, collective intervention to improve the conditions of the poor would merely interfere in the competition between individuals that must necessarily occur. 'Society in its corporate capacity, cannot without immediate or remote disaster interfere with the [...] principles under which every species has reached such fitness for its mode of life as it possesses, and under which it maintains that fitness', he says.[38] For Thomas Henry Huxley, on the other hand, humanity was not bound to follow the relentless model of 'cosmic' evolution apparent in nature. Rather, humanity should implement a process of 'ethical' evolution to ensure the survival of as many as possible and direct its own evolutionary course. 'Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process; the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be fittest [...] but of those who are ethically the best', he writes.[39]

The dystopian future of the subterranean Morlocks and surface-dwelling Eloi is explicitly related to the social divisions and exploitation of the protagonist's own era. Thus, the Time Traveller identifies 'the gradual widening of the present merely temporary and social difference between the Capitalist and the Labourer' as 'the key to the whole position' (48). The Time Traveller theorises that 'a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science' had worked 'to a logical conclusion the industrial system of today' (49). This real aristocracy had exploited those of a lower class in order to effect 'a triumph over Nature and the fellow man' (49). Yet the too-perfect security attained by this aristocracy leads to their decay. The type of non-interventionist liberalism advocated by Spencer has, in *The Time Machine*, merely accelerated the division of humanity.[40] Since he was lectured by Huxley at the Normal School of Science, it is unsurprising that Wells adheres to the biologist's collectivism. That the Eloi and the Morlocks are subject to

[38] Herbert Spencer, 'The Sins of Legislators', *Contemporary Review* 45 (1884), 766.
[39] T. H. Huxley, 'Evolution and Ethics', in T. H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1903), 81.
[40] For more on Wells's response to Spencer in *The Time Machine*, see my article: 'The Countdown to Extinction: *The Time Machine* and Herbert Spencer's Developmental Hypothesis', *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society* 35 (2012), 16-24.

the same automatic evolutionary processes as plants and animals might be seen as a call for humanity to implement ethical evolution and control its evolutionary path.[41] The Time Traveller expresses sympathy for the working classes: 'Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?' (48). For Wells, as for Dickens, the welfare of humankind is everyone's business.

The ghastly fate of those who are indifferent or unsympathetic towards the plight of the poor is similar in each text. In *A Christmas Carol*, Marley's ghost retreats into the 'air filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went' (52). Like Marley's ghost, '[e]very one of them wore chains' forged in life, and 'none were free' (52). The misery of these spirits is 'that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever' (52). Hence, those who take no interest in the conditions of the poor in life are condemned to wonder the earth in the afterlife, making 'incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret' and 'wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory' (50). The incessant remorse of these creatures and their unwillingness to use their earthly wealth for the common good are emphasised, as one old ghost who Scrooge had known, 'with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle [...] cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step' (52). Though it is not as openly scathing of the socially irresponsible wealthy, *The Time Machine* foresees a grim destiny for those who live in excessive comfort while others struggle. The Time Traveller's guests are 'embraced and caressed' by the protagonist's chairs and listen with scepticism to his story in a 'luxurious after-dinner atmosphere' (3). Yet the cost for such ease of comfort is to become the Eloi in future and to be cannibalistically fed upon by the monstrous Morlocks.[42]

Interestingly, the Time Traveller initially mistakes the Morlocks for ghosts and refers to 'a queer notion of Grant Allen's': 'If each generation die and leave ghosts, he argued, the world at last will get overcrowded with

[41] See also my *The Early Fiction of H. G. Wells: Fantasies of Science* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 11-40.
[42] Hughes refers to the Time Traveller's guests as 'Eloi in gestation' (278).

them' (44).[43] The Time Traveller's 'ghosts', which, like Scrooge's, only come out at night, become all too real, of course. Yet a key difference is that the import of the ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* is immediately evident. In *The Time Machine*, conversely, the significance of the Time Traveller's 'ghosts' is not immediately apparent. Whereas the three Spirits guide Scrooge through his journey of redemption, the Time Traveller is alone on his voyage to the future: 'I had no convenient cicerone in the pattern of the Utopian books' (49).[44] The Time Traveller must solve the riddle posed by the Sphinx that dominates the landscape of 802,701 in order to ascertain how the 'spectral' Morlocks fit into the future scheme of things. The ghosts of the Time Traveller's past haunt him in a more sinister way than Scrooge's. The answer to the classical riddle of the Sphinx solved by Oedipus is, of course, man; in *The Time Machine*, it is man's destiny. The Time Traveller discovers that humanity is destined to split into two degenerate species, unless immediate social reform is implemented and the condition of the poor improved.

There is a clear difference between how Dickens and Wells envision the improvement of the collective good that emerges from the gap of more than fifty years separating the publication of their respective works. In Dickens, the enhancement of the collective good emerges from individual redemption. As Scrooge's heart warms, he acts to thaw the cold hardship faced by others. Perhaps the reason why, unlike the Time Traveller, Scrooge cannot interact with the shadows of his past or future, is that his redemption depends on his passively witnessing his cold behaviour towards others. Dickens encourages people to open up their hearts freely to the plight of

[43] The significance of this allusion to Allen's 'Pallinghurst Barrow' and the probable influence of his ghost story on Wells's scientific romance are examined throughout Hughes's article.

[44] For a discussion of *The Time Machine*'s relationship to near contemporary utopian texts, see, for example, Fernando Porta, 'One Text, Many Utopias: Some Examples of intertextuality in *The Time Machine*', *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society* 20 (1997), 10-20. Time travel, or the intervention of the ghosts, or apparent ghosts, has a similarly exhausting effect on both protagonists. Thus, after he is visited by Marley's ghost, Scrooge, 'from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day [...] or the dull conversation of the Ghost [...] went straight to bed, and fell asleep upon the instant' (52). Similarly, the Time Traveller, already slightly unnerved by his voyage through time, works himself up into an exhausting frenzy after the Morlocks steal his time machine, before sleeping away his misery (36).

others throughout the year and offer whatever assistance they can. In *A Christmas Carol*, collective improvement is accomplished by acts of individual benevolence. In *The Time Machine*, however, Wells's adherence to late-Victorian collectivism implies the need for state intervention to improve the lives of the poor. Wells's adherence to the importance of the State in alleviating poverty becomes explicit in *Mankind in the Making* (1903) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905). *The Time Machine*'s future is not one man's future, but the future of Victorian society, meaning that the whole of society must redeem itself.

Dickensian class division through an evolutionary lens

The degree of the representation of the contemporary poor is different in each text. True to form, as he had already taken his reader into the impoverished areas of London in *Oliver Twist*, Dickens transports Scrooge to the homes of the poor and to the dirty parts of London:

> They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery. (98)

Scrooge's prior knowledge of this obscure part of town, and of 'its bad repute', emphasises the apathy of wealthy people like him towards the plight of the poor. Recognising the humanity of the poor in such areas is pivotal to Scrooge's redemption. Indeed, Scrooge's penitence as the Ghost of Christmas Present reminds him of his cruel dismissal of the 'surplus population' and is entwined with a key message of the narrative:

> 'Man', said the Ghost, 'if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, and what men shall die? It may be that, in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust'. (82)

Scrooge's new interest in Tiny Tim's welfare is emblematic of the sympathy Dickens wants to arouse in his readers for those less fortunate than themselves. Despite his reference to the East End worker, Wells does not represent the living conditions of the contemporary poor, since he is more concerned with the future consequence of class division. Dickens represents class division, while Wells projects it into the remote future.

In many ways, *The Time Machine* might be read as a continuation of *A Christmas Carol*, or even as a transformation of Dickens's tale made possible by Wells's understanding of evolutionary theory. In this reading, *The Time Machine* warns of what will happen if the conditions depicted in *A Christmas Carol* are not improved. The Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge to a 'place where Miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth' (85). These mines prefigure the Morlocks' caverns, which emerge after industry 'had gone deeper and deeper into larger and ever larger underground factories, spending a still-increasing amount of its time therein' (48). More pertinently, the perversions of humanity that are Want and Ignorance pave the way for Wells's post-human monstrosities. Scrooge is confronted by two children, Ignorance and Want, who emerge from the Ghost of Christmas Present's robe:

> They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked; and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread. (92)

If Dickens shows the most perverse degradation caused by the poverty in contemporary society, then Wells warns of the post-human monstrosities that will emerge after present-day class distinctions have caused the end of the human race itself: 'Man as I knew him, had been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who had forgotten their high ancestry, and the white Things of which I went in terror' (61). The original illustration that accompanied the above scene in *A Christmas Carol* strengthens the connection between Ignorance and Want and the Morlocks. Davies notes that 'in the illustration the confrontation takes place against a background of

Victorian factory-buildings with their smoking stacks'.[45] Hence, the illustration makes explicit that 'the "yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish" children of the text, the existence of ignorance and want, are the dreadful products of unrestrained industrialism, of which the nineteenth-century factory system, in particular its use of child labour, is a dreadful manifestation'.[46] If Ignorance and Want are the terrible consequences of the working conditions of the Victorian present, then the Morlocks and their stuffy and oppressive workshop-like caverns warn of what will happen once industry has 'gradually lost its birthright in the sky' (48). The Time Traveller observes 'a tendency to utilize underground space for the less ornamental purposes of civilization; there is the Metropolitan Railway in London, for instance, there are new electric railways, there are subways, there are underground workrooms and restaurants, and they increase and multiply' (48). The 'nauseatingly inhuman' Morlocks are the post-human descendants of Ignorance and Want. The Morlocks' 'pale, chinless faces', and their 'great, lidless, pinkish-grey eyes' (55), are a consequence of their having evolved (or rather, degenerated) in their industrialised environment.

In each of these texts, the reader might detect an apparent contradiction between the author's sympathy towards the poor and their depiction of the poor as perverse degradations of humanity, or even as inhuman and threatening towards the middle-class protagonist. In *A Christmas Carol*, this contradiction is resolved as Dickens implicates wealthy people like Scrooge in the creation of Ignorance and Want: 'They are Man's' responsibility (94), as the Ghost of Christmas Present makes explicit.[47] In *The Time Machine*, however, the protagonist's attitude towards the poor is truly conflicting. Prior to expressing sympathy for the East End worker, the protagonist is involved in a savage struggle with the descendants of the urban working poor. He instinctively loathes the Morlocks and invades their darkened burrows in an evident declaration of war. For Bernard Bergonzi, the Morlocks 'represent an exaggerated fear of the nineteenth-century proletariat'.[48] For John Huntington, the conflicting attitude of the Time Traveller reflects Wells's feelings of unease about his own sudden rise

[45] Davies, 76.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Bernard Bergonzi, *The Early H. G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances* [1961] (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 53.

in class position.[49] Despite its protagonist's contradictory attitudes, *The Time Machine* implicates the Time Traveller's guests in the emergence of the Morlocks. These 'white, ape-like creature[s]' (44) are the outcome of his wealthy guests' refusal to take heed of the protagonist's story, just as much as Ignorance and Want result from the indifference of prosperous people like Scrooge. The Morlocks' whiteness confirms they are the descendants of the British urban poor, as well as explaining why the Time Traveller mistakes them for ghosts.

The moral message and changing the future

There is a difference in the reception of the moral message conveyed in each of these texts. In *A Christmas Carol*, the Ghost of Christmas Past projects a 'clear jet of light' (55). Scrooge very quickly sees the light of the ghosts' message; his redemption starts very early, with a tear as he confronts his past. Even as the Ghost of Christmas Present begins its work, he is receptive to the message: 'I learnt a lesson which is working now' (74). By the end of the story, Scrooge has fully embraced the Spirit(s) of Christmas: 'I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach' (110). His newfound Christian paternalism saves Tiny Tim's life ('to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father' (116)), and he 'became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world' (116).[50] Scrooge's commitment to improving the collective good is confirmed as he pledges a substantial donation towards provisions for the poor, with a 'great many back-payments' (114) included to one of the very gentlemen he had snubbed in his office in this regard. In *The Time Machine*, by contrast, the Time Traveller's message is dismissed by his audience. The Editor, for example, thinks 'the tale [is] a "gaudy lie"' (89). With his 'ghastly pale' face (13), the Time Traveller is like the Ghost of Innumerable Christmases Yet to Come, except no transformation or epiphany occurs in his listeners as a result of hearing his story. Even the more sympathetic narrator is not enlightened by the protagonist's tale: 'to me the future is still black and blank – is a vast

[49] John Huntington, '*The Time Machine* and Wells's Social Trajectory', *Foundation* 65 (1995), 6-10.

[50] For a discussion of the significance of paternalism elsewhere in Dickens, see Patrick McDonagh, '*Barnaby Rudge*, "Idiocy" and Paternalism: Assisting the "Poor Idiot"', *Disability & Society* 21 (2006), 411-23.

ignorance, lit at a few casual places by the memory of his story' (91).[51] Rather than act in the present to alter the dire shadows of things yet to come, the narrator chooses wilful ignorance: 'it remains for us to live as though it were not so' (91). In a moment that echoes Fred's reference to people opening up their hearts freely at Christmas, he takes comfort from the 'two strange white flowers' that prove 'even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man' (91). It is left to the reader of *The Time Machine* to extrapolate the meaning of the Time Traveller's message: 'mutual tenderness' is required in the present, and should be directed towards the implementation of meaningful reform for the collective good.

While both authors emphasise the need for mutual tenderness in the Victorian present, Dickens suggests the future is easier to change. From his personal perspective, Scrooge glimpses a future that is as dystopian as that witnessed by the Time Traveller. Thus, he witnesses the calculated gain and joy others derive from his death, and, kneeling next to his own grave, implores the Spirit: 'Oh, tell me that I may sponge away the writing on this stone!' (110). The essence of Dickens's attitude to the future is encapsulated as Scrooge pleads for a second chance: '"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead", said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!"' (108). For Dickens, Scrooge may dispel the shadows of a dire future by living 'an altered life' (110). Thus, Scrooge is indeed able to sponge away the writing on the gravestone as he experiences something of a rebirth: 'I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby' (112). Wells, however, implies that it is much more difficult to avert the nightmarish future encountered by the Time Traveller. The central contradiction of *The Time Machine* is that widespread social reform might

[51] This passage recalls a frequently cited part of Wells's article 'The Rediscovery of the Unique' (1891), where he writes that 'Science is a match that man has just got alight. He thought he was in a room – in moments of devotion, a temple – and that his would be reflected from and display walls inscribed with wonderful secrets and pillars carved with philosophical systems wrought in harmony. It is a curious sensation, now that the preliminary splutter is over and the flame burns up clear, to see his hands lit and just a glimpse of himself and the patch he stands on visible, and around him, in place of all that human comfort and beauty he anticipated – darkness still'. (H. G. Wells, 'The Rediscovery of the Unique', *Fortnightly Review* 50 (1891), 111.)

lead to the 'too perfect security' of the Eloi (49), while non-interventionist individualism will cause the type of split in humanity Wells depicts.[52] For all its emphasis on the collective good, *The Time Machine* implies that an element of evolutionary competition is essential to social progress: 'What, unless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human intelligence and vigour? Hardship and freedom [...]. For countless years I judged there had been no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from wild beasts, no wasting disease to require strength of constitution, no need of toil' (32-3).[53] Wells would attempt to resolve the contradiction between collective improvement and evolutionary competition in *A Modern Utopia*.

Furthermore, in contrast to Scrooge's journey of redemption, the end of the Time Traveller's voyage through time does not resolve the question of social reform. Instead, the Time Traveller witnesses the dying sun, an image which undercuts *The Time Machine*'s emphasis on social reform.[54] Reminiscent of the visitation of Scrooge by the three Ghosts, the Time Traveller's journey into the future has a dream-like quality: 'Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a model of a Time Machine? Or is it all only a dream? They say life is a dream, a poor precious dream at times – but I can't stand another that won't fit' (78). Unlike Scrooge's journey, however, the Time Traveller's is not one of self-enlightenment: 'I came to the same seat of yellow metal from which I had viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon that evening and could not refrain from laughing bitterly at my confidence' (88). Whereas Scrooge's contact with the Spirits results in a new-found paternalism and fervent desire to make amends, the Time Traveller's experience in the future does not inspire him to remain in the present to alter the dire shadows he has seen. Rather, he vanishes like a ghost after relating his tale. Scrooge's glimpse of the future is pivotal in dispelling any lingering trace of his cold cynicism. Conversely, the Time Traveller's discovery that the present-day divide

[52] See Kathryn Hume, 'Eat or Be Eaten: H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine*', *Philological Quarterly* 69 (1990): 233-51.

[53] See McLean, *The Early Fiction of H. G. Wells*, 25-30.

[54] Interestingly, Scrooge at first thinks something 'has happened to the sun' (53), after he awakes from the deep sleep he had fallen into after he is visited by Marley's ghost. For more on the Victorians and the death of the sun, see Darryl Jones, '"Gone Into Mourning ... for the Death of the Sun": Victorians at the End of Time', in *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes*, edited by Trish Ferguson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 178-95.

between rich and poor causes the end of the human race by 802,701, and his guests' subsequent refusal to heed his warning, lead to his exasperated final departure and seem to affirm his existing pessimism about the prospect of social improvement, since Wells's protagonist 'thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind' (91).

Conclusion

For all their outward differences, then, there are definite affinities between *A Christmas Carol* and *The Time Machine*. Both texts connect time travel with the emphasis on social reform that persists throughout the Victorian era, especially the concern that Britain is increasingly divided into the two nations of the rich and the poor. Dickens and Wells glimpse the future to warn against the potentially ghastly consequences of individualism. Both authors highlight the need to enhance the common good by improving the lives of the poor. In accordance with his emphasis on Christian paternalism, Dickens's journey through time foretells the dire fate of a single wealthy individual, Scrooge, should he continue his solitary disregard for the welfare of others. Wells's late-century collectivism, on the other hand, implicates the whole of Victorian society in the nightmarish future of 802,701. While Wells creates a scientific rationale for time travel that is entirely absent in Dickens, *The Time Machine* contains definite echoes of the supernatural elements found in *A Christmas Carol*, as is apparent in the story's use of ghostly metaphors. Indeed, the evidence suggests that, like 'Pallinghurst Barrow', Dickens's ghost story was a key influence on *The Time Machine*, and that Wells reworks the principal themes and literary devices of *A Christmas Carol* in the light of his understanding of evolutionary theory, a conclusion supported by the fact that both 'The Plattner Story' and 'The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost' also contain definite echoes of Dickens's celebrated festive tale. Given Wells's preoccupation with evolutionary time, *The Time Machine* might be read as a continuation of *A Christmas Carol*. Hence, *The Time Machine* warns that class division will cause the end of the human race itself, unless the conditions of the poor depicted in *A Christmas Carol* are improved substantially. Of the two authors, Dickens suggests that the future is easier to change. Thus, Scrooge is able to avert the future he glimpses by living an altered life. In *The Time Machine*, however, the prospect of reform is beset by a glaring contradiction: ameliorating social conditions may result in excessive comfort of the Eloi, while continued non-interventionist competition leads to a split in humanity. Dickens is able to portray a satisfactory improvement in the lives of the poor and thus an enhancement

of the common welfare, through Scrooge's redemption and adoption of benevolent paternalism. Wells, on the other hand, does not depict a solution to the question of social reform in his first scientific romance. He was yet to resolve *The Time Machine*'s central contradiction, between the need for collective improvement and the imperative of evolutionary competition, in his own thought, a contradiction Wells must resolve before he can imagine how to avert the shadows of a dire future.

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'THE TASTE OF BLOOD': SANGUINARY ECONOMICS IN *THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU*

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Abstract. H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) has long been recognised as a particularly bloody romance. Yet criticism has yet to explore this blood's functions. This article argues against early reviewers' objections that Wells's use of the motif of blood in *Moreau* is excessive and artless. Rather, it contends that Wells's deployment of the substance is carefully planned. Wells's romance engages contemporary debates about free trade and protectionism, juxtaposing the pro-free trade motif of free trade as the circulation of blood against the competing protectionist motif of free trade as vampirism. Wells interrogates the problematics and justifications of both discourses, while simultaneously suggesting the impossibility of economic healthiness under either system.

In an early review of H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), the reviewer for the *Saturday Review*, Peter Chalmers Mitchell, criticised the text as seeking 'out revolting details with the zeal of a sanitary inspector probing a crowded graveyard'.[1] One of Chalmers Mitchell's main objections to the romance was what he viewed as Wells's excessive and artless deployment of the Gothic motif of blood. 'It is the blood that Mr. Wells insists upon forcing on us', he bemoans, denouncing Wells's treatment of the substance as 'unworthy of restrained art' and in violation of 'scientific *vraisemblance*'.[2] By dousing his romance in blood, Chalmers Mitchell concludes, 'Mr. Wells has spoiled a fine conception by greed of cheap horrors'.[3]

The Island of Doctor Moreau is certainly a very bloody romance, but the question of whether its bloodiness 'spoil[s]' it is something that this article intends to debate.[4] In contrast to the indiscriminating blood bath posited by Chalmers Mitchell, it shall argue that blood in the romance

[1] Peter Chalmers Mitchell, 'Review in *Saturday Review*, April 1896', in *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, second edition, edited by Patrick Parrinder (London: Routledge, 1997), 44.
[2] Ibid., 44, 45.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

actually comprises a carefully patterned matrix, which is derived from contemporary economic discourse and, more specifically, debates about free trade. Contemporary free trade discourse revolved around two main figures: the pro-free trade motif of free trade as the benign circulation of blood in the body and the countervailing, protectionist motif of free trade as vampirism. The argument that follows shows that blood in *Moreau* correlates with these two motifs, which are juxtaposed and combined in the romance. Manipulating images of blood, circulation, and vampirism, Wells interrogates the limits of free trade and protectionism, laissez-faire capitalism and state socialism, ultimately suggesting that economic healthiness may be impossible under either system.

By emphasising the economic overtones of *Moreau*'s blood and the bodies it moves between, this article diverges from most criticism. Not only has modern criticism tended to overlook blood in the romance, but, when it has noted it, it has also interpreted it literally. Peter Kemp relates it to Wells's acknowledgement of humanity's animality, which is seconded by Cyndy Hendershot, while Nick Redfern emphasises its materiality, reading it through Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject.[5] This literal emphasis extends to *Moreau*'s bodies, which are typically explained (as is the wider romance) in the light of contemporary scientific discourses, such as debates about vivisection, Darwinian and Lamarckian theories of evolution, and fears about degeneration. Recent criticism has expanded to include questions of imperialism.[6] However, the emphasis remains scientific and material.

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[5] Peter Kemp, *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape: Biological Themes and Imaginative Obsessions* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Cyndy Hendershot, *The Animal Within: Masculinity and the Gothic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); Nick Redfern, 'Abjection and Evolution in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society* 27 (2004): 37-47.

[6] Classic studies of science in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* include Roger Bowen, 'Science, Myth, and Fiction in H. G. Wells's *Island of Doctor Moreau*', *Studies in the Novel* 8.3 (1976): 318-335; Roslynn D. Haynes, 'The Unholy Alliance of Science in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society* 11 (1988): 13-24.

For the romance in the context of vivisection debates, see Lucy Bending, *The Representation of Bodily Pain in Late Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 167-76. For vivisection and language, see Christine Ferguson, *Language, Science and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle: The Brutal Tongue* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 105-30; Kimberley Jackson, 'Vivisected Language in H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *The Wellsian: The*

By exploring *Moreau*'s blood's symbolism, this article also engages critical accounts of Wells's politics, especially the research of Simon J. James, Patrick Brantlinger, Richard Higgins, and Paul A. Cantor, which traces his antipathy to Victorian consumer culture.[7] Whereas these critics emphasise Wells's state socialism, and his ostensible rejection of the free market, this article argues for, at least in *Moreau*, an ambivalence. A tension between circulation and enclosure, free trade and protectionism, and laissez-faire capitalism and state socialism, lies at the heart of *Moreau* and of Wells's wider thought.

I

In the late-nineteenth century, Britain was dominated by debates about 'free trade'. As defined in the liberal economist Millicent Fawcett's bestselling economic textbook, *Political Economy for Beginners* (1870), free trade is 'the policy of removing restrictive duties on imports and allowing commerce to take its natural course'.[8] By contrast, 'protectionism' is the opposite: imposing duties or tariffs on imports, or even banning them altogether, to protect domestic industry. While the debates between free traders and protectionists turned on logical argument, both parties also used rhetoric,

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Journal of the H. G. Wells Society 29 (2006), 20-35. For degeneration, see Steven McLean, *The Early Fiction of H. G. Wells: Fantasies of Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 41-61.

For imperialist readings of *Moreau* see, in particular, Gustavo Generani, '*The Island of Doctor Moreau* by H. G. Wells: A Pre-Freudian Reply to Darwinian Imperialism', *English: Journal of the English Association* 67.258 (2018): 235-261; Michael Parrish Lee, 'Reading Meat in H. G. Wells', *Studies in the Novel* 42.3 (2010): 249-68; Jennifer DeVere Brody, *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity and Victorian Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

[7] Simon J. James, 'Pathological Consumption: Commodities and the End of Culture in H. G. Wells's *Tono Bungay*', in *Consuming for Pleasure: Selected Essays on Popular Fiction*, edited by Julia Hallam and Nickianne Moody (Liverpool: Liverpool John Moores University Press, 2000), 44-61; Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Higgins, 'Waste and Value: Thorstein Veblen and H. G. Wells', *Criticism* 48.4 (2006), 453-75; Paul A. Cantor, '*The Invisible Man* and the Invisible Hand: H. G. Wells's Critique of Capitalism', in *Literature and the Economics of Liberty: Spontaneous Order in Culture*, edited by Paul A. Cantor and Stephen Cox (Auburn: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2009), 293-322.

[8] Millicent Fawcett, *Political Economy for Beginners*, tenth edition (London: Macmillan, 1911), 3-4.

particularly metaphors, to convey their positions. One of the most popular was the comparison between the circulation of blood in the human body and the circulation of money and/or commodities in and across national borders. Blood was associated with currency since at least the mid-seventeenth century, when Thomas Hobbes, after William Harvey's discovery of the circulatory system, drew an analogy between the circulation of blood in the body and the circulation of money in the body politic.[9] Hobbes was widely read by Victorians and his analogy was commonly adopted.[10] In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith likened trade barriers between Britain's colonies and non-British nations to a 'small stop in that great blood-vessel, which has been artificially swelled beyond its natural dimensions, and through which an unnatural proportion of the industry and commerce of the country has been forced to circulate'.[11] The analogy was also taken up by contemporary free traders, who used it to bolster their arguments for laissez faire. Railing against tariff monopolies in 1884, for example, E. J. Donnell wrote:

> Productive industry is the palpitating heart [of the economy]; trade and commerce are the veins and arteries. The veins and arteries must be free from all forms and degrees of obstruction, or the heart will become gorged and helpless. It will struggle, and the pulse will beat rapidly, using all the vital forces to release the vital fluid – that is to obtain some degree of liberty – free exchange.[12]

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[9] For the influence of Harvey on Hobbes's account of money, see Christoffer Basse Eriksen, 'Circulation of Blood and Money in *Leviathan* – Hobbes on the Economy of the Body', in *History of Economic Rationalities: Economic Reasoning as Knowledge and Practice Authority*, edited by Jakob Bek-Thomsen, Christian Olaf Christiansen, Stefan Gaarsmand Jacobsen, and Mikkel Thorup (Cham: Springer, 2017), 31-41.

[10] For the reception of Hobbes in the nineteenth century, see Jose Harris, 'Victorian Interpretations of Thomas Hobbes', in *Politics and Culture in Victorian Britain: Essays in Memory of Colin Matthew*, edited by Peter Ghosh and Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 237-60.

[11] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, edited by Anthony Uyl (Woodstock: Devoted Publishing, 2016), 269.

[12] E. J. Donnell, *The True Issue: Industrial Depression and Political Corruption Caused by Tariff Monopolies: Reform Demanded in the Interest of Manufacturers, Farmers, and Workingmen* (London: Putnam's Sons, 1884), 22-3.

Similarly, an anonymous 'Disciple of Richard Cobden' (a famous free trader) compared tariffs 'between any two countries' to a 'ligature' which 'impede[s] the entire circulation' of the world economy's 'arteries [...] veins', and 'valves'.[13] The analogy was famously adapted by Herbert Spencer, whose well-known essay 'The Social Organism' (1860) devoted a whole section to elaborating an 'analogy [...] between the blood of a living body and the circulating mass of commodities in the body-politic'.[14] Free traders often used the circulatory metaphor to refer to the body of the world. However, they commonly prioritised the health of individual nations. Imagined as part of the same, seamlessly connected circulatory system, free trade between nations was conceived as a natural and frictionless process, mutually beneficial and productive for all involved, while national differences were downplayed in the connotation that all commodities comprised the same blood stream.

Not all Victorians, however, shared this vision. After a series of real (or imagined) depressions between 1873 and 1896, when Germany and America challenged Britain as the 'workshop of the world', protectionism became more popular.[15] Drawing on Karl Marx's famous phrase that 'capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks', these protectionists figured free trade and foreign producers as bloodthirsty vampires, hovering their fangs over the British economy, and emphasised the predatory and destructive elements of unfettered exchange.[16] An 1886 protectionist pamphleteer, for instance, accused 'foreign competition' of 'fasten[ing] on [Britain's producers] like a vampire, and drain[ing their] very life's blood, the capital

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[13] A Disciple of Richard Cobden, *Commercial Treaties: Free Trade and Internationalism. Four Letters, Reprinted from the 'Manchester Examiner and Times'* (London: Macmillan, 1870), 42.

[14] Money, in Spencer's formula, was the blood corpuscles. Herbert Spencer, 'The Social Organism', in *The Man Versus the State: With Six Essays on Government, Society, and Freedom*, edited by Eric Mack (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981), 383-434.

[15] For changing responses to free trade, see Anthony Howe, 'Free Trade and the Victorians', in *Freedom and Trade: Free Trade and Its Reception, 1815-1960*, edited by Andrew Marrison (London: Routledge, 1998), 164-83.

[16] Quoted in Christopher Bundrick, '"Covered in Blood and Dirt": Industrial, Capital, and Cultural Crisis in *Red Rock* and *Dracula*', *The Southern Literary Journal* 47.1 (2014): 21-34.

on which the consumer lives'.[17] Likewise, the popular Walter Crane illustration, 'Britannia's Best Defence' (in the socialist magazine *Justice*, 1898), depicted an armoured woman wielding a shield labelled 'Wheat Reserve' and 'Home Supply', beating off a vampire whose wings say 'Dependence on Foreign Supply'.[18]

The free trade as vampirism motif was also exploited by fiction writers, most famously by Bram Stoker in *Dracula* (1897).[19] This novel turns on a parallel between the foreign count's hoarding of blood and his equally fanatical appetite for capital, which almost certainly owes something to free trade debates. Franco Moretti has famously glossed Dracula as a 'monopolist', an embodiment of 'monopoly capital'.[20] Further, Gail Turley Houston argues that the novel depicts 'two incorporated entities (Dracula and his vampires and Van Helsing and his followers), competing to the death for a complete monopoly on circulation and consumption'.[21] Robert Smart opines: 'In [*Dracula*] blood is money, the "life substance" of a free economy'.[22] These readings, however, downplay Dracula's foreignness. The fact that the vampire hails from 'Transylvania [where] there are four distinct nationalities' (8) imbues his sanguinary-economic battles with the 'Crew of Light' with an international flavour. This element gives his vampirism a protectionist resonance.

II

As a socialist and political commentator, Wells was invested in these debates and it should be emphasised, before we turn to *Moreau*, just how much he engaged with them. A few examples will illustrate this point. In *Anticipations*

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[17] A. Williamson, *Free Trade So Called Tested by Facts* (Edinburgh: Morrison & Gibb, 1886), 7.

[18] Quoted in Jane Ford, 'Vampiric Enterprise: Metaphors of Economic Exploitation in the Literature and Culture of the *Fin de Siecle*', unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Portsmouth, 2013), 30.

[19] All page references will be to Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, edited by Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

[20] Franco Moretti, 'Dialectic of Fear,' in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*, translated by Susan Fischer, David Forgacs, and David Miller (London: Verso, 2005), 92.

[21] Gail Turley Houston, *From Dickens to Dracula: Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 117.

[22] Quoted in C. M. Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 141.

(1901), Wells attacked the protectionist 'ideal of trading enormously with absolutely ruined and tradeless foreigners, exporting everything and importing nothing' as 'quite insane'.[23] Later, he argued that tariffs are 'a means of looting the general public and impoverishing the country' (although he also condemned free trade as a 'superstition') and reiterated this view in a series of polemics between 1914 and 1916 which bore titles, such as 'Free Trade is Peace: Tariffs are War' (1916).[24] It will be noticed that there is a tension here: tariffs are 'War', but free trade is a 'superstition'. Wells was sceptical about both systems, a position which is clarified in *Moreau*.

Wells was also familiar with free trade rhetoric and often deployed circulation and vampire imagery to clinch his arguments. The fact that Wells was well-versed in the writings of Hobbes, Smith, and Spencer makes it likely that he knew their circulation metaphor.[25] Indeed, he demonstrates a clear knowledge of the figure in 'Will the Empire Live?' (1911), which uses a variant of the circulation analogy to emphasise the importance of free trade:

> conceivably, you may shut off the east and half the west by impossible tariffs, and narrow its trade to one artificial duct to England, but only at the price of a hampered development. It will be like nourishing the growing body of a man with the heart and arteries of a mouse.[26]

There is equally strong evidence that Wells knew the protectionist vampire motif. For example, in 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' (1894), he depicts an encounter between an English orchid collector and a vampiric foreign plant, using the vampire metaphor to highlight the dangers of imports. The protagonist, Wedderburn, consumes many exotic commodities,

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[23] H. G. Wells, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought*, second edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1902), 167.

[24] H. G. Wells, *The Elements of Reconstruction* (London: Nisbet, 1916), retrieved from http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1303611h.html, accessed on 7 March 2020.

[25] For Wells's familiarity with Hobbes, see Harris. For Spencer, see Steven McLean, 'The Countdown to Extinction: *The Time Machine* and Herbert Spencer's Developmental Hypothesis', *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society* 35 (2012): 16-24. For Smith, see Cantor.

[26] H. G. Wells, *An Englishman Looks at the World: Being a Series of Unrestrained Remarks upon Contemporary Matters* (London: Cassell, 1914), retrieved from https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11502/11502-h/11502-h.htm#link2H_4_0006, accessed on 7 March 2020.

such as his 'alpaca jacket' and 'coffee',[27] a habit which is exemplified by his obsession with the 'strange orchid'. Wells emphasises its status as a foreign good. First, the narrative meditates on the orchid market in which 'pride, beauty, and profit' may 'blossom together on one delicate green spike', and references the auction where Wedderburn obtains the plant. Then, the orchid is depicted as foreign. Its epithet, 'strange', for example, meant 'unusual' but also 'alien', while its faraway origin is explicitly foregrounded: the orchid comes 'from the Andamans and the Indies'.[28]

When the orchid is revealed as a vampire, then, it resonates with the foreign competition as vampire motif. Fittingly, as Wedderburn pours away his money on foreign commodities, the narrative's foreign commodity par excellence, the orchid, sucks away at his blood. A similar exchange occurs in *The Time Machine* (1895), where the Morlocks create clothing and build houses for the Eloi and take payment in 'freshly shed blood',[29] although since both species are, presumably, descended from the English and based in a future England, the nationalistic element in 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' is absent here.

In *The War of the Worlds* (1898), foreign competition is represented by the Martians. Like the 'strange orchid', these aliens are vampiric: they do 'not eat, much less digest. Instead, they t[ake] the fresh, living blood of other creatures, and *injec[t]* it into their own veins'.[30] In addition, they are defined as producers, the narrator being as astonished by their 'machines' as by their 'monstrous' looks.[31] The Martian's invasion of Britain is thus partly economic: they dominate Britain with foreign commodities like their 'handling-machines' and 'war-machines'.[32] Indeed, the text depicts Britain as being in the thrall of several foreign producers. A street near the narrator's house is 'Oriental Terrace', while his own house is decked with 'French windows'.[33] Then, when England is decimated, its citizens must import bread

[27] H. G. Wells, 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' (1894), in *The Complete Short Stories of H. G. Wells*, edited by J. R. Hammond (London: Phoenix, 2000), 10.
[28] Ibid., 9.
[29] H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*, edited by Patrick Parrinder (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), 58, 54.
[30] H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1898), edited by Patrick Parrinder (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), 125.
[31] Ibid., 37, 22.
[32] Ibid., 123, 168.
[33] Ibid., 32, 13.

from France. Ostensibly, this act is innocent, but Wells suggests the danger it poses to Britain's economy by comparing the French with the Martians: a character imagines the two 'might prove very similar'.[34] Further, this prediction is delivered beside various 'Scotch, French, Dutch, and Swedish' ships which are hinted to be using the Martian invasion as an excuse to charge 'exorbitant prices'.[35] Wells draws an implicit link between this predatory behaviour and the alien's attack: literally and figuratively, the Martians and foreign competitors are leeching Britain's blood.

III

The Island of Doctor Moreau juxtaposes the circulation and vampire motifs to analyse free trade.[36] Published in the same year and by the same publisher as E. E. Williams's infamous protectionist broadside *Made in Germany* (1896), *Moreau* develops the vampire imagery of 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid', *The Time Machine*, and *The War of the Worlds* to express contemporary anxieties about laissez-faire economics.[37] However, it also criticises systems, namely protectionism and state socialism, which restrict free trade. Wells juxtaposes the circulation and vampirism motifs to depict free trade as a circuit of mutual vampirism. In doing so, he suggests that free trade is ethically questionable: it comprises vampirism. Yet it is also economically necessary, while at the same time being economically flawed. Protectionism is associated with harmful blockage. Thus, Wells suggests that economic healthiness may be impossible under either system.

In *Moreau*, the blood flows as early as the first scene. The text opens with the narrator, Edward Prendick, trapped on a dinghy with two other castaways, who, having exhausted their water supply, agree to resort to vampirism. Critics typically describe this proposed, though not completed, vampirism as cannibalism;[38] however, it must be emphasised that the focus

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[34] Ibid., 108.
[35] Ibid., 107, 108.
[36] All page references will be provided in parenthesis to H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, edited by Patrick Parrinder (London: Penguin Classics, 2005).
[37] For the history and reception of Williams's book, see Walter E. Minchinton, 'E. E. Williams: *Made in Germany* and After', *VSWG: Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 62.2 (1975): 229-42.
[38] For instance, John Glendening, '"Green Confusion": Evolution and Entanglement in H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30.2 (2002): 571-97.

of the castaway's 'proposal' (8) is on blood, not general flesh. Prendick says that 'were [the proposal] accepted, we should have something to drink' (8) and, although the narrator mentions hunger, he is mainly 'tormented by an intolerable thirst' (8). This emphasis on blood, and, consequently, vampirism, is supported by the name of the castaway's boat: the dinghy of the *Lady Vain*. As well as an attack on the aristocracy, the name *Lady Vain* evokes 'Lady's veins', whose vampiric tones would have been obvious to Victorian readers grown up on vampire tales.[39] These vampiric implications are highlighted when Prendick later consumes a blood-like 'dose of scarlet stuff, iced' (10), enacting the vampirism that he avoids on the dinghy.

Thus, Moreau's opening scene depicts proposed mutual vampirism. Yet it is not just a Gothic shock fest; the castaway's proposed bloody transgression also comprises a complicated (and critical) allegory of free trade. This economic meaning is underlined by the language Wells uses to describe the scene, which is saturated with connotations of exchange. When the cannibalism is floated, for instance, it is referred to as a business-like 'proposal' (8), and Prendick describes it in similarly economic terms when remembering it aboard the *Ipecacuanha*: '[A]ll the business of the boat came back to me' (10). Furthermore, Prendick compares his hand to a 'dirty skin purse' (10). This image alludes to Adam Smith's metaphor of the 'invisible hand' (of market forces), which Smith used to argue for the efficacy of laissez-faire economics and individualism in allocating resources.[40] Indeed, the castaways even enact a symbolic transaction, passing a pecuniary 'halfpence' (8) between them to decide who will give up his body.

Wells's allegory, however, does not endorse Smith's faith in the invisible hand. When the sailor is picked, he revolts: 'he was the strongest of us and would not abide by it, and attacked Helmar with his hands' (8). The sailor is unable to sacrifice his individual welfare for the collective good. The detail that he attacks Helmar 'with his *hands*'[41] is also significant, for, in the light of Prendick's later comparison of his hand to a 'dirty skin purse', and

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[39] The association between the name *Lady Vain* and the aristocracy is Margaret Atwood's: 'The ship is called the *Lady Vain*, surely a comment on the snooty aristocracy'. (Margaret Atwood, 'Introduction', in H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, edited by Patrick Parrinder (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), xv. For Victorian vampire literature, see Carol A. Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

[40] For a fuller explanation of Adam Smith's doctrine, see Cantor.

[41] Italics added.

two other economically-inflected references to hands in the preceding two lines ('clasp-knife in my hand' (8); 'we handed halfpence' (8)), this is almost certainly another, ironic nod to Smith's metaphor. Here, though, all-against-all competition only causes two of the three castaways to fall overboard, as if pushed, perhaps, by an invisible hand. Insofar as the scene is an allegory of business in a free market, the episode rewrites Smith's humane competition as vampirism, or, as Wells would put it in *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), 'economic cannibalism'.[42] In 'Administrative Nihilism' (1871), Wells's mentor, T. H. Huxley, observed that 'if individuality breaks out of all bounds, society perishes'.[43] One implication of *Moreau*'s opening scene is that free markets give too much rein to individualism, which, in turn, threatens the social body – a stark rejoinder to Smithian economics.

By allegorising free trade in this way, Wells therefore imagines free trade as a circuit of mutual vampirism. The juxtaposition of the circulation of the 'halfpence' with the proposed circulation of blood draws a parallel between the two currents (and between blood and commodities, for, literally speaking, blood is also what the castaways are wagering their blood to obtain), which is especially resonant in the context of free trade rhetoric. Money and commodities are imagined as flowing between economic agents like blood between mutual vampires as Wells combines the circulation and vampire motifs; because free trade comprises the exchange of money and commodities, which are blood, for Wells, everyone, not just foreign competition, is at least a potential vampire. The free trade as a circuit of vampirism analogy also emphasises free trade's predatory elements and thus suggests an ethical criticism of such exchange. Politically, the emphasis of this episode is protectionist: its imagery is vampiric, rather than circulatory, and the free trade of blood on the raft is predatory and mutually destructive. However, there is also a hint of another perspective. It is important to note, for instance, that Wells never suggests the castaways intend their vampirism to be fatal and without literal and economic consumption, a human body cannot survive: the castaways will starve if they do not drink blood. As the romance progresses, this alternative view gains prominence. The emphasis shifts from free trade as vampirism to free trade as circulation, from the

[42] H. G. Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come: The Ultimate Revolution* (London: White Lion, 1973), 399.
[43] T. H. Huxley, 'Administrative Nihilism', in T. H. Huxley, *Collected Essays, Volume 1: Methods and Results* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 277.

health of the individual body to the health of the social one. Free trade may be predatory and ethically dubious; however, it is also circulation, a block in which is fatal for the social body.

IV

The next significant episode involving blood and free trade in *Moreau* occurs on Moreau's island. In contrast to the dinghy of the *Lady Vain*, Moreau's island is a place of sanguinary protectionism where Moreau, who deems vampirism a 'mark of the beast' (74), prevents blood from circulating. Montgomery and Moreau 'displa[y] particular solicitude to keep [the Beast People] ignorant of the taste of blood. They feared the inevitable suggestions of that flavour' (81), while the blood ban is foregrounded in *Moreau*'s chapter headings: Chapter 16 is entitled, in many versions of the romance, not 'How the Beast Folk Tasted Flesh', but, specifically, 'How the Beast Folk Tasted Blood'.[44] Moreau is a sanguinary protectionist, who, like the narrator of *The Shape of Things to Come* and, one suspects, a part of Wells himself, recoils from 'economic cannibalism'.

Further, Moreau's island is a kind of socialist state, even though Wells makes little distinction between socialism and protectionism in the romance. Moreau not only suppresses the free exchange of blood, that is, vampirism, but he also distributes the fluid himself via blood transfusions. Thus, Moreau has a monopoly on blood. Also like a socialist state, Moreau has a planned economy and, moreover, owns all property on his island: '"*His* is the House of Pain. *His* is the Hand that makes. *His* is the Hand that wounds. *His* is the Hand that heals." [...] "*His* is the deep, salt sea" [...] "*His* are the stars in the sky"' (59). The emphasis on Moreau's 'Hand' is especially resonant: rather than the invisible hand of market forces, Moreau's economy of blood is governed by the visible hand of the state, which suppresses free trade and individual economic enterprise, individualism.

Given the unethical connotations of free trade vampirism, we might expect Wells to support Moreau's blood ban. Critics emphasise the influence on Wells of T. H. Huxley, whose support of collectivism over what Huxley called 'administrative nihilism' (laissez faire) in such works as 'Evolution and Ethics' (1894) is said to inform Wells's socialism.[45] Leon Stover sees

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[44] See Robert M. Philmus, 'Textual Authority: The Strange Case of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *Science Fiction Studies* 17.1 (1990): 64-70.

[45] See, for example, Roslynn D. Haynes, *H. G. Wells, Discoverer of the Future: The Influence of Science on His Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

Moreau as a precursor to Wells's ideal socialist state.[46] Similarly, Paul A. Cantor claims, with reference to *The Invisible Man* (1897), that Wells's 'vision is profoundly totalitarian; hostility to the Invisible Man easily passes over into hostility to ordinary commerce, and indeed to the free and spontaneous movement of any individual.'[47] Despite Wells's suspicion of free trade's vampirism, however, his presentation of Moreau's planned sanguinary economy is bleak. Wells introduces prominent imagery of circulation, foregrounding the importance of keeping trade free, as he replaces the dinghy of the *Lady Vain* scene's ethical criticism of free trade with an economic criticism of protectionism and state socialism. Free trade may be vampiric, but it is also, simultaneously, circulation, a block in which is fatal to the social body.

Wells associates Moreau's regime with congested circulation. The window of the room Moreau puts Prendick in is 'defended by an iron bar' (32), suggesting a prison, while the suggestions of entrapment are amplified by the rest of Moreau's compound. Aptly named the 'enclosure' (31), this is always being locked and locked up. For example, Prendick notes that '[M'ling's] keys and the elaborate locking up of the place, even while it was still under his eye, struck me as peculiar' (32). It even has a literal prisoner, in the form of the puma on which Moreau experiments. As well as being 'bound painfully upon a framework' (50), she wears 'fetters' (105), manifesting her imprisonment beyond doubt. Yet she does not remain a prisoner for long. Both Prendick (a metaphorical convict, if not a literal one) and the puma break free of their restraints, the former breaking into Moreau's laboratory (50) and the latter breaking out of the enclosure altogether (98). Such invasions and escapes suggest that quenching circulation is impossible, that suppressing individualistic free trade is a false goal. The inevitability of free trade is reiterated by Moreau's inability to stop the Beast People, particularly the Leopard Man, from 'tast[ing] blood' (88).

A more explicit example of blocked circulation is Moreau's island's waterways. Moreau's island is like a body. Moreau's enclosure, as a place of intellect and authority, is its head, and the ravine where the Beast People live is its bowels and/or nether-region: a reeking slit, it resembles a vagina or an

[46] See Leon Stover, 'Introduction', in H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau: A Critical Text of the 1896 London First Edition, with an Introduction and Appendices*, edited by Leon Stover (London: McFarland, 1996), 1-54.
[47] Cantor, 310.

anus.[48] By extension, the 'hot spring' (85) that irrigates the island's water supply is its heart, while the streams are its arteries and veins. The water comprises its blood. This association between the streams and blood vessels is supported by the fact that, as Kirstie Blair notes, a wide variety of Victorian discourses, from poetry to physiological texts, likened the circulation of blood to a river or stream.[49]

The state of these waterways reflects and condemns Moreau's blood ban: just as Moreau restricts the flow of blood, so the circulation of water is restricted, with significantly unpleasant effects. John Ruskin writes: 'the circulation of wealth [around an economy] ought to be soft, steady, strong, far-sweeping, and full of warmth, like the Gulf Stream'.[50] In contrast, the flow of water around Moreau's island is congested. The streams are 'narrow streamlet[s]' (63) and 'rivulet[s]' (39), connoting a restricted current. Although Prendick mistakes them for healthily 'glittering' (39), the presence of a 'sulphurous scum drifting upon' the water (63) suggests the weak flow is making them diseased. The water is further described as 'coiling' (63), suggesting stasis and implying that the water is spiralling upwards and wastefully evaporating. Moreover, the verb connotes predation – it evokes one of the Beast People 'coiling' up its body for a predatory strike (63) and thus anticipates the all-against-all blood bath which will ensue when Moreau dies. Further overtones of building pressure even hint that this breakout is inevitable. The streams resemble the negative circulation, which Ruskin describes as 'narrowed into an eddy, and concentrated on a point, [...] the alternate suction and surrender of Charybdis', spelling danger for the social body.[51]

Wells therefore associates protectionism with disease and destruction. Like a body, an economy needs a steady current of blood-money and blood-commodities flowing between individuals and nations to remain healthy, something which protectionism invariably frustrates. Yet Wells was not a free trader; indeed, he denounces free trade as vampiric and mutually destructive. Thus, Wells explicates a paradox: on the one hand, free trade is

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[48] Margaret Atwood notes that 'Moreau's island is both semi-alive and female, but not in a pleasant way. It's volcanic, and emits from time to time a sulphurous reek'. (Atwood, 'Introduction', xxi.)

[49] Kirstie Blair, *Victorian Poetry and the Culture of the Heart* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006), 173.

[50] John Ruskin, *Munera Pulveris* (London: George Allen, 1894), 97.

[51] Ibid.

ethically dubious and tends towards economic disaster; however, restricting free trade is equally deleterious for a healthy economy and not necessarily any morally better. Wells juxtaposes the free trade as vampirism and free trade as circulation motifs, combining them to present free trade as a circuit of mutual vampirism. He links an emphasis on the bodies of the individuals and their countries which comprise the social body, encompassed by free trade as vampirism, with a contradictory emphasis on that wider, corporate body of whole, encompassed by free trade as circulation. The latter requires a steady flow of blood to stay healthy. Yet this circuit depends on vampirism among the individuals and nations that make up this body's parts and which, as we shall see, possess an unlimited appetite for blood-money and consumption, thus making balanced circulation impossible, at least under laissez faire. As Robert MacIver observes, '[a] state consists of persons, and that fact alone makes it impossible to represent its unity as that of a person. A grove of trees is not a tree, nor a colony of animals itself an animal'.[52] There appears to be no escape from this economic and ethical bind.

V

This paradox is explored in a further strand of imagery of blood: overflow. The free trade as circulation metaphor implies a self-regulating economic system: a person does not make blood flow evenly around the body, it just does this automatically. This metaphor is the sanguinary equivalent of Adam Smith's invisible hand, expressing a faith in the market as self-governing. However, during the late-nineteenth century, Victorians challenged this assumption, fearing that laissez faire was unsustainable. Without intervention, many were coming to believe, circulation could not be maintained for the long term. Whereas early nineteenth-century classical economists, such as David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill, emphasised the labour theory of value and equated economic growth with increasing production, the rise of the marginal utility school, spearheaded by William Stanley Jevons, Leon Waldras, and Carl Menger, reconceptualised value as determined by consumer demand and correspondingly recalibrated growth, as determined by consumption.[53] Further, while Mill and Ricardo also

[52] Quoted in Stover, 'Introduction', 30.

[53] For a history of this shift, see Lawrence Birken, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 22-39; Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants:*

assumed that consumer demand would keep pace with supply, what Deanna Kreisel calls the 'demand function economists', which included Thomas Malthus and John Ruskin, as well as the marginal utility school, pessimistically assumed the opposite. According to Kreisel, the later part of the nineteenth century was hence dominated by concerns about ensuring an appropriate level of aggregate consumption: on the one hand, there was a need to ensure that consumer demand did not outstrip the economy's productive capacity, yet, at the same time, demand needed to remain robust enough to keep up with supply and stave off what Malthus referred to as 'general glut'.[54] Wells was a great admirer of Malthus: in *Anticipations*, he refers to him as 'one of those cardinal figures in intellectual history who state definitely for all time, things apparent enough after their formulation, but never effectively conceded before'.[55] These late nineteenth-century concerns about the vulnerability of capitalism to excessive and inadequate spending patterns are reflected in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

To convey capitalism's unsustainability, Wells once again relies on imagery of blood. David Trotter notes that 'circulation is threatened as much by overflow as by blockage'.[56] Drawing from medicine and biology, Victorian discourse identified two threats to ideal circulation: blockage and haemorrhage, the former linked with hoarding and under-consumption, and the latter with prodigality and consuming too much. This distinction is exemplified in the popular *Dictate Book* (1831), which says that 'Both [the miser and the prodigal are] unprofitable members of society; the one occasioning a stoppage in the circulation, and the other a haemorrhage'.[57] As Trotter has elucidated, these two aspects of circulation were a powerful

Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[54] For a more detailed explanation of Victorian fears of underconsumption, see Deanna Kreisel, *Economic Woman: Demand, Gender, and Narrative Closure in Eliot and Hardy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 25-80. For overconsumption, see Kreisel, 'Demand and Desire in *Dracula*', in *Economic Women: Essays on Desire and Dispossession in Nineteenth-Century British Culture*, edited by Lana L. Dalley and Jill Rappoport (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013), 110-123.

[55] Wells, *Anticipations*, 287-8.

[56] David Trotter, *Circulation: Defoe, Dickens, and the Economies of the Novel* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), 89.

[57] George Hall, *The Dictate Book; Being Lessons on Life, Men, and Manners* (London: John Souter, 1831), 224.

influence on the writings of Dickens. For example, the overconsumption-haemorrhage pairing probably underpins the demise of *Bleak House*'s famous spendthrift Richard Carstone, who fittingly dies from a blood haemorrhage.

Like *Bleak House*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is saturated with blockages and overflows. Until now, we have concentrated on blockage, when blood-sucking and free trade are suppressed. Yet, Wells depicts overflows, when these same appetites spiral out of control, as equally dangerous. Wells explores the dangers of overflow through three groups of characters with insatiable appetites: Montgomery, Doctor Moreau, and their Beast People. Whether it expresses itself as hoarding or prodigality, humanity, for Wells, is inexorably orientated towards excess. Humans are creatures of appetite, and the romance's insistence on this appetite's destructiveness and its endurance is the reason for *Moreau*'s ultimate economic and political pessimism.

The first economic deviant is Montgomery, whose voraciousness manifests itself as alcoholism. Throughout the romance, Montgomery displays a 'passion for drink' (96), which increases as the narrative goes on, while his prodigious appetite for liquor connects him to *Moreau*'s economy of vampirism: it functions as a visual parallel to drinking blood. Wells's original readers would have noticed this, since the comparison between alcoholism and vampirism was commonplace in Victorian culture. For example, an anonymous temperance tract, *The Vampyre, By the Wife of a Medical Man* (1858), aligns drinkers with vampires and, implicitly, the alcoholic target of their obsession with blood.

Montgomery's vampiric credentials and drive to consume are further suggested by his passion for red meat. To satisfy his appetite for the 'taste of blood' (87), a phrase which he repeats wistfully, suggesting addiction, he imports and consumes rabbits both in an economic and a literal sense. Like his consumption of alcohol, however, this habit is defined as excessive. First, it aligns Montgomery with the transgressive vampirism of the Leopard Man, who also feasts on the animals. Second, Wells criticises Montgomery's consumption through imagery of overflow. Just as he shared blood with Prendick on the *Ipecacuanha* (10), Montgomery shares alcohol with the Beast People (108), a transgressive expenditure that gets out of control. Montgomery's body is juxtaposed with M'ling's: 'Near by lay M'ling on his face, and quite still, his neck bitten open and the upper part of the smashed brandy bottle in his hand' (110) The visual correlation between the ruptured brandy bottle and M'ling's ruptured neck links brandy and blood, while

implicating Montgomery's alcoholism with a vampiric rupture in the circulation. Montgomery's excessive spending of alcohol produces a similarly excessive expenditure of blood. He is killed in a literal and symbolic overflow.

The second economic deviant is Doctor Moreau. Like Montgomery, Moreau's economic deviancy manifests itself in two overflows – one literal, and one metaphorical. First, his literal economic transactions in the romance are unbalanced. While he does not share Montgomery's 'passion for drink' (96), Moreau harbours an equally dangerous 'passion for research' (96), which is also, importantly, a passion for consumption. Payal Taneja notes that Wells draws a subtle 'link' between Moreau's 'scientific project and imperial commerce'.[58] For example, the animals which Moreau experiments on are imported; he buys them from a trader in 'Arica' (83), then pays the captain of the *Ipecacuanha* to transport them to his island (17).

However, Moreau does not balance this with any exports; therefore his trade flows are dangerously one-sided. Like the animals he forges them from, Moreau's Beast People are commodities. Yet the doctor does not trade them or allow them to circulate. He leaves them, instead, to rot in the ravine (78), which, as previously noted, resembles a bowel: it is even littered with 'decaying' food and emits a 'disagreeable stench' (57). In another image of frustrated circulation (here, specifically, constipation), the Beast People build up like faeces and infect Moreau's island's social and economic body to the extent that Prendick likens them to a 'contagion' (59) and even Moreau must ultimately admit that they 'sicken him' (78). Through such imagery of decay, Wells condemns Moreau's excessive appetite for both hoarding (the Beast People) and consumption (the commodities he forges them from).

Moreau's excessive appetites are reinforced by his experiment's science, particularly, blood transfusions. The importance of transfusions for Moreau's operations has been overlooked by critics, who often reduce his research to just vivisection; however, blood transfusions are equally important.[59] Rather than as a skilled vivisector, for instance, the doctor is first

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[58] Payal Taneja, 'The Tropical Empire: Exotic Animals and Beastly Men in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 39.2-3 (2013), 141.

[59] For discussions of *Moreau* in relation to vivisection, see Bending and Jackson. There is, to my knowledge, only one critic who has written about transfusions. In *Transfusion: Blood and Sympathy in the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), Ann Louise Kibbie reads *Moreau*'s transfusions as 'reflect[ing] nineteenth-century anxieties regarding the

identified as 'ha[ving] published some very astonishing facts in connection with the transfusion of blood' (34) and alludes to this expertise himself when he explains that, with reference to vivisection, a 'similar operation is the transfusion of blood, with which subject indeed I began' (72). Furthermore, it is by blood transfusions that Prendick first imagines that Moreau has turned men into animals:

> All the time since I had heard his name I had been trying to link in my mind in some way the grotesque animalism of the islanders with his abominations; and now I thought I saw it all. The memory of his works in the transfusion of blood recurred to me. These creatures I had seen were the victims of some hideous experiment. (52)

Wells never elucidates the science behind these transfusions, but he appears to be following the belief, popular in the Victorian period, that blood corpuscles contained the characteristics of their owners. Thus, transfusing someone's blood into another person's body was thought to give the recipient the traits of the donor.[60] Transfusing animal blood into humans, in a similar way, was believed to transform them into hybridised beast-people.[61] Wells implies that Moreau is humanising his animals by transfusing them with human blood. Indeed, Moreau's oft-remarked on whiteness, which critics usually connect to the romance's critique of imperialism, may denote the pallor of a serial blood donor.[62]

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female body as the subject of experimental surgery' (93), but misses their economic overtones and excessiveness.

[60] Catherine Oakley, 'Towards Cultural Materialism in the Medical Humanities: The Case of Blood Rejuvenation', *Medical Humanities* 44.1 (2018): 5-14.

[61] In the short story 'Lauth' (1893) by the American journalist and novelist Frank Norris, for example, the eponymous protagonist degenerates into a savage after being injected with the blood of a sheep: '[His] hair grew out long and coarse, and fell matted over [his] eyes. [His] nails became claws, [his] teeth fangs, and one morning upon entering the room assigned to Lauth, Chavannes and Anselm found him quite stripped, grovelling on all fours in one corner of the room, making a low, monotonous growling sound, his teeth rattling and snapping together'. (Frank Norris, 'Lauth', *Overland Monthly* 21.123 (1893), 258.) This is also the logic that underpins the late nineteenth-century genre of 'rejuvenation stories'. For these, see Oakley.

[62] References to Moreau's whiteness abound in the romance, in particular, his white face and white hair. For this as evocative of white imperialism, see Hendershot, 126.

However, another connotation of paleness is vampirism, and Moreau's 'awful white face' (62) also echoes the stereotypical white face of Victorian vampires, such as Thomas Preskett Prest's 'perfectly white – perfectly bloodless' Varney and Bram Stoker's 'deathly pale' Dracula (46).[63] Thus, Wells underscores Moreau's complicity in *Moreau*'s economy of mutual vampirism. Moreau's vampirism is reinforced by his connection with blood through his transfusions, while his name, which resembles the word 'more', emphasises his monstrous drive to consume.

Moreau's vampirism is enacted through blood transfusions, which parallel Montgomery's illicit flows of alcohol and are similarly excessive. The romance's first transfusion scene illustrates this excessiveness clearly; for it is positively awash with blood. There is 'blood [...] in the sink, brown and some scarlet' (50), Moreau's hand is 'smeared red' (50), and the puma whom he is operating on is 'scarred, red, and bandaged' (50). The animal is even 'blott[ed] out' of Prendick's vision by Moreau's 'white' face (50), as though she were a pool of blood absorbed by a bandage. Like Montgomery, the connotations of excessiveness suggest condemnation.

The excessiveness of Moreau's transfusions is reiterated when the puma escapes. Here, again, blood is emphasised, in particular, haemorrhaging. Narratively, the puma's escape is a physical overflow: she bursts out of Moreau's compound like a stream of blood from a ruptured body. She is 'seamed with red branching scars' and has 'red drops starting out upon' her face. Moreover, she is swathed in 'red-stained bandages'. The repetition of 'red' here, combined with the expansive suggestions of words like 'starting', underlines her haemorrhaging bloodiness, as does Wells's juxtaposing her with the image of 'blood [...] trickl[ing] from [Moreau's] forehead' (98), which enacts her bloody break-out in miniature. In his zeal to humanise the animal, Moreau fills the puma with too much blood. The inevitable result is haemorrhage and Moreau's death.

The haemorrhaging of the puma from Moreau's compound foreshadows the break-out of blood-drinking upon his island. After Moreau dies, fittingly at the hands of the puma, blood floods the island and its society descends into 'one big *al fresco* buffet'.[64] This occurs as the puma 'almost sever[s]' (105) Moreau's hand and Prendick claims that Moreau 'has

[63] See Thomas Preskett Prest, *Varney the Vampire* (London: E. Lloyd, 1847), retrieved from www.gutenberg.org/files/14833/14833-h/14833-h.htm, accessed on 7 March 2020.
[64] Kemp, 22.

changed his shape [...]. You cannot see him' (103). Thus, the visible hand of the state is replaced by the invisible hand of the free market as the blockage in the circulation is lifted, blood once again flowing between the Beast People. However, it must be emphasised that this circulation is a far cry from the benign and frictionless process imagined by laissez-faire supporters and free traders. As well as comprising a nightmarish circuit of vampirism, the circulation quickly becomes dangerously one-sided, although the island for a while maintains a 'state of equilibrium' (124). In a 'natural' human body, each organ 'naturally' receives an adequate amount of blood-money and blood-commodities: organs do not steal sanguinary capital from others or pervert the flow. Humans (and Beast People), however, are not seamlessly connected body parts, however much the circulatory metaphor imagines them to be. 'A state consists of persons, and that fact alone makes it impossible to represent its unity as that of a person. A grove of trees is not a tree, nor a colony of animals itself an animal'.[65] Wells's metaphor of free trade as a circuit of mutual vampirism registers a tension between individuals and nations who seek to hoard blood or excessively consume, and the welfare of the social body which requires blood-money and blood-commodities to circulate. In a distinctly Malthusian turn of events, the Beast People literally eat themselves to death, as the carnivores turn on each other, each vying for a Moreau-like monopoly on the island's blood. The fictional introduction to *Moreau* states that the island was 'visited in 1891 by H. M. S. *Scorpion*. A party of sailors then landed, but found nothing living thereon except certain curious white moths, some hogs and rabbits, and some rather peculiar rats' (5). The island is declared 'uninhabited' (5), implying that the Beast People and their society have died out. The sanguinary free trade and the relationship between individualism and collectivism became inevitably unbalanced, resulting in the equally inevitable destruction of the social body.

Moreau does not contain a single example of healthy, sustainable circulation. While there is presumably a middle ground between severe protectionism and destructive free trade, the romance does not depict this and thus suggests that such a balance between collectivism and individualism may be impossible to achieve. *Moreau*'s pessimism is re-inscribed in its final chapter, which makes explicit the parallel between the Beast People and Victorians, Moreau's island and late-nineteenth-century Britain and the world. Recalling the ending of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Prendick returns to England and cannot distinguish between humans and

[65] MacIver, 452.

beasts: he feels 'as though the animal [were] surging up through [his fellow Victorians]' (130) and, in a clear allusion to late-Victorian theories of degeneration, such as Max Nordau's and Cesare Lombroso's, expresses a fear that 'the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale' (130).[66] Most notably, 'weary pale workers go coughing by [him] with tired eyes and eager paces like wounded deer dripping blood' (131). This description draws on the conventional Marxist motif of the capitalist as a vampire, while the mention of 'dripping blood' (131) recalls the bloodbaths on Moreau's island and the bloody escape of the puma. However, the detail that the workers' faces are 'pale' (131) complicates a Marxist interpretation: like the 'white face' of Moreau (62), the white faces of the workers may evoke the whiteness of the conventional vampire, thus suggesting their own cannibalistic potential.[67] Unlike Marx, who restricted his accusations of vampirism to the upper classes, Wells presents an image of society in which everyone is a would-be blood-sucker. The 'pale workers' also symbolise Britain's social body: blood-drained and deathly, *Moreau*'s ending predicts for Britain, and perhaps the world, the same bloody fate as that of Moreau and his island.

The tension between circulation and enclosure, free trade and protectionism, and laissez-faire capitalism and state socialism, was one which Wells consistently returned to throughout his career. In *Moreau*, this conflict is dramatised through the medium of blood, registering the tension between individual vampirism and corporate circulation in a visceral way. An examination of Wells's full corpus is obviously beyond the scope of this article. However, future criticism might fruitfully compare the use of circulatory imagery in *Moreau* with texts such as *A Modern Utopia* (1905), which John S. Partington sees as reconciling the tension between individualism and collectivism, roughly equivalent to the tension between circulation and enclosure, in a way Wells appears to have been unable to do in the earlier romance.[68] Rather than as a cheap Gothic device, Wells uses blood as a vehicle for complex analysis, interrogating the economic discourses of his day. It is not artless, but carefully patterned; not gratuitous, but central to *Moreau*'s, and to Wells's, economic and political thought.

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[66] Haynes, 24.

[67] They also, of course, have parallels with the 'white, ape-like' Morlocks in *The Time Machine* (44).

[68] John S. Partington, '*The Time Machine* and *A Modern Utopia*: The Static and Kinetic Utopias of the Early H. G. Wells', *Utopian Studies* 13.1 (2002), 63.

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'Indiscriminate and Universal Destruction'? Warfare and Nature in H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*

Jeremy Withers and Brenda Tyrrell

Abstract. This article focuses on H. G. Wells's portrayal in *The War of the Worlds* (1898) of the adverse environmental effects of warfare. It also analyses a second provocative way in which the novel depicts human wars: as insignificant when viewed from the perspective of species not directly affected by our military conflicts. This article concludes by examining how the novel further attacks anthropocentrism by depicting the ecologically sophisticated idea that military violence might even be good for some forms of nonhuman life. In short, we examine *The War of the Worlds* as a work demonstrating Wells's consciousness that war, an event seemingly unique to humans, is always enmeshed in the living environment that surrounds it.

Introduction

One constant thread across many of the works of H. G. Wells is his interest in war. In *The War in the Air* (1908), he imagines the catastrophic destruction that the invention of powered flight could unleash on the world. In 'The Land Ironclads' (1903) and *The World Set Free* (1914), Wells anticipates how other technological innovations – armoured tanks and atomic weapons, respectively – threaten to amplify warfare's perniciousness. However, in *The World Set Free* (and in his screenplay for *Things to Come* (1936)), he presents the idea that war can be redemptive, that it can help liberate humanity from its stagnant mental habits and rigid political institutions. Wells shifts his focus in *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (1916) from the battlefield to the home front to examine war's effects on the nation's spirit and the psyche of civilian noncombatants. *Joan and Peter* (1918), like *Mr. Britling*, is a study of the impact of the Great War on British society. And during both World Wars, Wells published numerous journalistic pieces that profiled leading figures, analysed military strategy, discussed new weapons, and so forth. This prolific writer even made brief forays into wargaming with his books *Floor Games* (1911) and *Little Wars* (1913).

Wells's lifelong concern with warfare begins with *The War of the Worlds* (1898). This novel depicts the apocalyptic invasion of England by Martians and the British military's attempt to halt the alien incursion. The

Martians arrive in cylinders that crash into the countryside outside London, and quickly emerge to unleash horrific new weaponry on the population. Eventually, the Martians become mobile in formidable tripod machines that sow death and destruction by means of a heat-ray and poisonous gas. These weapons devastate all living beings who encounter them.

This article focuses on the adverse environmental effects of war in Wells's *The War of the Worlds*. Although other texts from the 'invasion literature' genre also reference war's effects on the environment (more on this below), *The War of the Worlds* stands apart due to its more emphatic attention to the ways in which warfare and military technology never remain a threat to humans only.[1] For Wells, outbreaks of war almost always mean a vast increase in harm and destruction for entities like plants and animals.[2] In focusing on war's negative effects on nonhuman life, we extend and build on Christina Alt's observations about how *The War of the Worlds* is 'underpinned by an idealization of sympathy' and its 'evolutionary pessimism is tempered by the emergence of a new experience of empathy across species boundaries'.[3]

However, the discussion below also analyses a second provocative way in which *The War of the Worlds* depicts human wars (one whose origins can be traced back at least to Voltaire's proto-scientific fictional work *Micromégas* (1752)), as being insignificant when viewed from the perspective of species not directly affected by our military conflicts.[4] That

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[1] Originating with George Tomkyns Chesney's novella *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), this subgenre flourished until WWI and drew on British fears of political and military degeneration, that the country was weakening into a vulnerable state that made it ripe for catastrophic invasion.

[2] The novel also anticipates the lack of any movement away from a reliance on animals by militaries in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Hediger points out that modern militaries continue to rely on conventional animals of war, such as dogs, while also introducing new types of animals into military roles, such as sea lions, dolphins, and insects. See Ryan Hediger, 'Animals and War: Introduction', in *Animals and War: Studies in Europe and North America*, edited by Ryan Hediger (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 7 (sea lions, dolphins, insects), 11 (dogs).

[3] Christina Alt, 'Extinction, Extermination, and the Ecological Optimism of H. G. Wells', in *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction*, edited by Gerry Canavan and Kim Stanley Robinson (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 29-30.

[4] *Micromégas* is about two extraterrestrial beings (one from a planet around the star Sirius, another from Saturn) who visit Earth. At one point, when discussing a particular human war currently underway, the 'Sirian [...] begged to know the cause

is, while the novel showcases warfare's grandiose powers of destruction, it also punctures human pride by depicting war as inconsequential to some forms of nonhuman life. Published some ten years before *The War of the Worlds*, Richard Jefferies's *After London* (1885) gave Wells insight for his alien invasion novel, as it asserted that an apocalyptic event for humans might not be one for many species that surround humanity.[5] Thus, this article contributes to Steven McLean's argument that '*The War of the Worlds* constitutes perhaps [Wells's] most sustained critique of anthropocentrism'.[6]

This article concludes by examining how the novel even gestures towards the ecologically sophisticated idea that military bloodshed might be *good* for some forms of nonhuman life.[7] Such an idea contributes further to the novel's attack on anthropocentrism by showing how, when suffering and death engulf humans during times of war, some forms of plant, animal, and microbial life are far from sympathetic, for they directly benefit from human disempowerment. Throughout this article, then, *The War of the Worlds* is examined as a work demonstrating Wells's consciousness that war, an event seemingly unique to humans, is always enmeshed in the living environment that surrounds it.

The effects of 'total war' on plants

Near the beginning of *The War of the Worlds*, the unnamed narrator, looking out a window to the countryside that surrounds Woking, describes a war of unprecedented scope and brutality:

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of those horrible quarrels among such a puny race; and was given to understand, that the subject of the dispute was some pitiful mole-hill no bigger than his heel'. (Voltaire, *Micromégas*, in *Romances, Tales, and Smaller Pieces of M. De Voltaire, Volume the First* (London: Dodsley, 1794), 142. Like Wells in *The War of the Worlds*, Voltaire shows human conflict to be trivial, when viewed from certain nonhuman perspectives.

[5] The apocalyptic event in *After London* is left unspecified. The narrator conjectures, however, that it might have been caused by some environmental change not affected by humans, such as the sea 'silting up' the ports, the rise or fall of sea levels, or the earth tilting on its axis. (Richard Jefferies, *After London; or Wild London*, edited by Mark Frost (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 5.)

[6] Steven McLean, *The Early Fiction of H. G. Wells: Fantasies of Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 94.

[7] In his official sequel to *The War of the Worlds*, *The Massacre of Mankind* (2017), Stephen Baxter clearly notes many of the details regarding war and nature in Wells's original novel analysed here. Further, Baxter creates new versions of them.

> In one night the valley had become a valley of ashes. The fires had dwindled now. Where flames had been there were now streamers of smoke; but the countless ruins of shattered and gutted houses and blasted and blackened trees that the night had hidden stood out now gaunt and terrible in the pitiless light of dawn. [...] *Never before in the history of warfare had destruction been so indiscriminate and so universal*.[8]

It appears, in short, like 'total war' unfolding out the window. Military historian Jeremy Black has argued that, rather than being a distinctively modern phenomenon, the criteria used to define total war, such as destruction of cities and violence against noncombatants, are evident in every time period.[9] However, scholars like Beckett argue that warfare became increasingly more total in its impact during the course of the nineteenth century through such changes as the introduction of universal male conscription by some European armies, and an increase in the tendency to attack civilian and industrial targets as exemplified by an event like Sherman's infamous 'March to the Sea' during the American Civil War.[10]

Even if the late-Victorian era of *The War of the Worlds* is not the origin of total war, Wells clearly suggests that those experiencing this new form of warfare unleashed by the Martians perceive it as unprecedented in its scale and impact. Because of the transitional nature of warfare at the time, Wells's dramatic representations of war in his novel are unsurprising. He was writing at a time when military technologies with astonishing new capabilities for devastation had already been developed (such as rapid-fire artillery and machine guns) and about to be introduced in the next century's military conflicts (such as aeroplanes, tanks, poison gas, and atomic weapons).[11] Thus, the Martians – who, the novel makes clear, are just humans projected

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[8] H. G. Wells, *A Critical Edition of The War of the Worlds*, edited by Harry M. Geduld and David Y. Hughes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 91 (emphasis added).

[9] Jeremy Black, *The Age of Total War, 1860-1945* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), 1-11.

[10] See Ian F. W. Beckett, 'Total War', in *Warfare in the Twentieth Century: Theory and Practice*, edited by Colin McInnes and G. D. Sheffield (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 3-7.

[11] For more on Wells's prophecies of future warfare, see Harry Wood, 'Competing Prophets: H. G. Wells, George Griffith, and Visions of Future War, 1893-1914', *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society* 38 (2015): 5-23.

into the future – possess advanced weapons that Wells feared humanity would soon, or already did, possess versions of.[12]

Given Wells's immersion in Darwinian theories of evolutionary biology throughout the 1880s and 1890s, it is not surprising that his *The War of the Worlds* portrays the catastrophic war initiated by the Martians as rippling across the ecosystem, affecting many species simultaneously. Near the end of *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Charles Darwin articulates how the notion of 'entanglement' defines ecosystems:

> It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, *and dependent on each other in so complex a manner*, have all been produced by laws acting around us.[13]

Wells clearly knew this passage well because, as John Glendening argues, Wells references it in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896). In the above passage, we see how closely intertwined the lives of various species are with one another in part of an ecosystem, such as a bank. Further, Darwin's emphasis on different species being 'dependent on each other' highlights how a species' ability to flourish is absolutely contingent on the behaviour of other species around it. Glendening argues that the '*Origin* deploys the entangled bank as an image of unity and order so as to resist the negative implications of chaos and disorder inherent in the process of natural selection'.[14] But in *The War of the Worlds* (and in *Doctor Moreau*), Wells subverts this emphasis on 'unity and order' to highlight the ways in which humans, through warfare (or in *Doctor Moreau*, through meddling in

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[12] For example, the narrator hints at humans being on the same evolutionary path as the Martians when he ruminates on the differences between various human and Martian technologies: 'We men, with our bicycles and road-skates, our Lilienthal soaring-machines, our guns and sticks and so forth, are just in the beginning of the evolution that the Martians have worked out'. (Wells, *War*, 152.)

[13] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859), 489 (emphasis added).

[14] John Glendening, "'Green Confusion': Evolution and Entanglement in H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*", *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30.2 (2002), 572.

evolutionary processes), inject a significant amount of chaos and disorder into an ecosystem. Besides human suffering and death resulting from such disruptions, *The War of the Worlds* explores how vegetal destruction and animal pain and death are abhorrent effects, too.

When the first Martian cylinder crashes into the commons between Horsell, Ottershaw, and Woking, readers catch their first glimpse of how nonhuman nature is often a passive victim caught up in the alien invasion of Earth and the human defence of the planet. After the first cylinder's impact, '[t]he heather', the narrator informs us, 'was on fire' and the cylinder lay 'amidst the scattered splinters of a fir-tree it had shivered to fragments in its descent'.[15] A steady parade of scenes follows this one that also references plant life being harmed or destroyed during the Martian invasion. For example, after the Martians unleash the devastating heat-ray, we are told not only about humans 'flash[ing] into white flame' and being 'turned to fire' after being struck by the weapon, but also about how 'pine-trees burst into fire, and every dry furze-bush became with one dull thud a mass of flames'.[16]

Concern over the wanton destruction of plants might seem too modern of a sentiment for Wells to exhibit, but other Victorians also lamented the devastation of vegetal life. For example, in Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem 'Binsey Poplars' (1879), the speaker decries the cutting down of a row of poplar trees near Oxford, England, by describing them as 'All felled, felled, are all felled;/ Of a fresh and following folded rank/ Not spared, not one' (lines 3-5).[17] Here, Hopkins imagines the cutting down of the trees as a 'rank' that is 'all felled', as a close formation of soldiers being obliterated on the battlefield. Similarly, when Victorian poet and designer William Morris writes about how the trees in his neighbourhood were cut down, he describes them as 'wantonly murdered'.[18] Although Hopkins and Morris refer to peacetime cutting of trees, not the wartime destruction of them that *The War*

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[15] Wells, *War*, 56.

[16] Ibid., 67.

[17] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'Binsey Poplars', in *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 156-7. In his notes to this poem, MacKenzie defines a 'folded rank' as a formation of soldiers 'in two rows, a zig-zag line (cf. the Roman battle line, in which spaces left in the front rank were covered by men in the second)'. He also goes on to note that Hopkins might be inverting a line from Homer's *Iliad* in which a warrior is described as being felled 'like a poplar' (401-2).

[18] William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1882), 103.

of the Worlds does, all of these texts demonstrate that a sense of unease or outrage over humanity's killing of plant life was not unfamiliar to the Victorians, and that violence against vegetal life could be perceived as comparable to violence against humans.[19]

Another striking point of similarity between Hopkins's 'Binsey Poplars' and *The War of the Worlds* is that they both use specific references to describe the destruction. In other words, Wells resists describing the military violence on plant life in a hazy, general sense. Instead, he describes human guns and Martian heat-rays destroying specific types of flowering plants, such as heather or furze, and specific types of trees, such as pine, fir, and beech. Such specificity supports John Hammond's claim that Wells was 'in reality a regional novelist' and Peter J. Beck's observation that Wells possessed a 'strong sense of place and landscape, a point reflected by the readily identifiable topographical detail featured in *The War of the Worlds*'.[20] For another example of this specificity, when describing the destruction wrought by the Martians, Wells refers to 'blackened and smoking arcades that had been but a day ago pine spinneys'.[21] Here, he makes an ecologically specific reference to a pine spinney, a small thicket or copse of pine trees, that has been violently reduced to a mere smouldering 'arcade', an ironically poetic and more ecologically vague term than 'pine spinney'.[22] Wells's use

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[19] Today, many environmentalists track the origin of the idea that plant life might have rights that can be violated by humans to legal scholar Christopher D. Stone's ground-breaking article 'Should Trees Have Standing: Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects' (1972). Although not engaging in any kind of rights discourse, Victorian writers like Hopkins, Morris, and Wells provide important precursors to later writers like Stone who argued that vegetal life is not just a resource available for humanity to do whatever it wants with.

[20] John Hammond, *An H. G. Wells Companion: A Guide to the Novels, Romances and Short Stories* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 27; Peter J. Beck, *The War of the Worlds: From H. G. Wells to Orson Welles, Jeff Wayne, Steven Spielberg and Beyond* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 309.

[21] Wells, *War*, 101.

[22] Mariaconcetta Costantini perceives a similar trajectory at work in Hopkins's 'Binsey Poplars', arguing that the poem moves from a first stanza with specific references to a second stanza with an 'indefinite quality' and 'dimness' of phrases, such as the 'sweet especial rural scene'. This movement from linguistic specificity to vagueness, according to Costantini, allows Hopkins to '[lay] stress on the ecological and ontological loss caused by the spoliation of landscape'. (Mariaconcetta Costantini, '"Strokes of Havoc": Tree-Felling and the Poetic

of specific, colloquial genus names (for example, furze) and intimate, informed names for landscape features (for example, pine spinney) is similar to the specificity Hopkins uses in his poem. As one scholar notes, Hopkins 'introduces the unambiguous topographical reference to Binsey' in the poem's title and '[e]qually precise is the indication of the date of the poplar-felling' in the poem's subtitle.[23] Both Wells's and Hopkins's texts, then, manifest what the ecocritic Lawrence Buell calls 'environmental literacy', the ability to train one's mind and senses to notice the minute details of the natural world. Those who possess such literacy can appreciate the singularity of different animals, plants, and landscapes, and not just conceptualise them according to broader, more vague categories (as in all flowers as just 'flowers', or all birds as just 'birds').[24] Thus, for both Wells and Hopkins, human violence does not attack a generic or nondescript nature; it always attacks specific ecological configurations and types of plants.[25]

The War of the Worlds is not the only work in which Wells displays an appreciation of plants and flowers. In *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), Hoopdriver, a clear stand-in for Wells, enjoys spending some of his time 'botanising flowers' while touring the south of England with his female companion.[26] Wells also exhibits strong feelings concerning the destruction by humans of flowers and plants in *The Wonderful Visit* (1895). Here, he condemns late-Victorian 'collectors' of nonhuman entities. 'If it were not for collectors', Wells writes, 'England would be full, so to speak, of rare birds and wonderful butterflies, strange flowers and a thousand interesting

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Tradition of Ecocriticism in Manley Hopkins and Gerard Manley Hopkins', *Victorian Poetry* 46.4 (2008), 503.)

[23] Costantini, 498.

[24] See Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 103-14. As a famous American naturalist once said about the value of knowing the proper names for things, 'without the name, any flower is more or less a stranger to you'. (John Burroughs, *Riverby* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1894), 353.)

[25] Here again, the possible influence of Jefferies's *After London* can be seen on *The War of the Worlds*. Jefferies also displays botanical specificity by referencing plants like charlock, furze, fir, beech, and hawthorn. However, Jefferies's work does not focus on the destruction of this specific vegetation during an apocalypse, but on its flourishing, as Wells does with the red weed, discussed below.

[26] H. G. Wells, *The Wheels of Chance*, edited with an introduction and notes by Jeremy Withers (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2018), 105.

things'.[27] In his *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934), Wells informs us that flowers had a healing effect on him. After experiencing four-and-a-half months of near-fatal illness in 1887, Wells sneaks outside (against his doctor's orders) 'to a little patch of surviving woodland amidst the industrialized country' where there had been 'a great outbreak of wild hyacinths that year'.[28] As he lay among the hyacinths, he realised that he 'had died long enough'.[29] For both Wells and some of his characters, plant life fascinates and comforts; it is something that enriches our world by merely existing.

The effects of 'total war' on animals

Not only plant life, of course, is threatened by human military conflict. *The War of the Worlds* also portrays various forms of animal life as experiencing increased discomfort, suffering, and death during the cataclysmic battle between humans and Martians. For instance, a domestic dog, previously dependent on humans for food and care, is left to its own devices once the war with the Martians begins in earnest. This disruption of the dog's formerly comfortable life first manifests itself during the 'Exodus from London' chapter, when panicked flight envelops the citizens of England's capital. Among this pandemonium is a 'lost retriever dog, with hanging tongue, [who] circled dubiously round [three humans], scared and wretched'.[30] Later in the novel, the unnamed narrator encounters 'a couple of hungry-looking dogs' and, later still, 'a pack of starving mongrels' in pursuit of another dog with some 'putrescent red meat' hanging from its mouth.[31] These dogs, now reduced to living on the brink of death from starvation, or attack by other starving animals, have been deprived of their comfortable existence by the war.[32]

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[27] H. G. Wells, *The Wonderful Visit* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 11.

[28] H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866)*, in 2 vols. (London: Victor Gollancz and The Cresset Press, 1934), I, 254.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Wells, *War*, 126.

[31] Ibid., 182.

[32] Jefferies's *After London* also features dogs 'forced by starvation into the fields, where they perished in incredible numbers' (7). Whereas *After London* suggests the apocalypse was caused by some freak environmental change, Wells assigns more blame to humans by connecting his apocalypse to warfare.

These images of distressed and suffering dogs recall how, leading up to *The War of the Worlds*, Wells pondered on the extent to which animals experience anguish and pain. His interest in Darwinian evolutionary theory would have prepared him for considering such questions, for Darwin frequently pondered on the mental states and pain of animals. In *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), for example, Darwin declares that 'there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties' and that even 'the lower animals, like man, manifestly feel pleasure and pain, happiness and misery'.[33] In *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), Darwin repeatedly affirms his belief that animals, from cows to horses to rhinoceroses to birds, possess the capacity to experience pain. 'Great pain', Darwin states, 'urges all animals, and has urged them during endless generations, to make the most violent and diversified efforts to escape from the cause of suffering'.[34]

In 'The Province of Pain' (1894), Wells calls the question of whether animals feel pain as 'speculation almost at its purest'.[35] Yet, like Darwin, he nonetheless conjectures that the 'higher animals [...] approach [humans] in feeling pain' and that '[i]n such an animal as a dog we may conceive there is [...] a keen sense of pain'.[36] This keen sense of pain, Wells speculates, is because many animals rely on physical reactions to negative stimuli instead of on 'mental aversions', as humans do, to protect them from harm. Unlike the anti-vivisectionists he openly mocked at times, Wells accepted the suffering of animals, including dogs, when such experimentation expanded our knowledge in ways that helped diminish 'human suffering' and the overall 'pain of the world'. However, he did not condone inflicting pain on animals without some kind of sound scientific or medical goal.[37] Thus, the intensification of animal pain during the Martian invasion is redolent of the

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[33] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1922), 99, 104.
[34] Charles Darwin, *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (New York: Appleton, 1873), 72.
[35] H. G. Wells, 'The Province of Pain', in *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, edited by Robert M. Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 194.
[36] Wells, 'The Province of Pain', 198. Darwin talks about canine suffering in relation to vivisection in *Descent of Man*, 106.
[37] H. G. Wells, 'Popular Feeling and the Advancement of Science. Anti-Vivisection', in *The Way the World is Going* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1929), 243.

experiments of Doctor Moreau: neither that war nor Moreau's experiments that both involve 'dip[ping]' animals in a 'bath of burning pain' contribute to a project of minimizing misery in the world.[38] For Wells, some kind of loftier catalyst than colonialist military ambition (in the Martians' case) or a self-aggrandising God-complex (in Moreau's case) is necessary to justify pain being inflicted on animals, a pain that Wells believed higher animals like dogs were capable of experiencing.

Yet it is not just canines that suffer during this conflict. Even more than dogs, the war impacts horses. Our first indication that a great number of horses will be lost in this war is when the Martians unleash their potent heat-ray, and the narrator tells us that, besides seeing 'the flashes of trees and hedges' as they are set alight, he also heard 'the crackle of fire in the sand-pits and the sudden squeal of a horse that was as suddenly stilled'.[39] And when he first glimpses one of the mighty tripods that the Martians move around in, he panics and too abruptly steers the horse and cart he is driving in another direction. The cart overturns and, as a result, the 'horse lay motionless (his neck was broken, poor brute!)'.[40]

Once the Martians unleash their second powerful weapon – poisonous gas – we are again reminded that the weapons of war rarely discriminate between humans and nonhumans. The narrator observes 'men and horses, near [the spreading gas] seen dimly, running, shrieking, falling headlong, shouts of dismay [...] nothing but a silent mass of impenetrable vapour hiding its dead'.[41] One particularly grisly description of equine death occurs when the artilleryman tells the narrator about how his unit's artillery gun and all of its ammunition detonated during an attack by a Martian tripod. The explosion led to the artilleryman finding 'himself lying under a heap of charred dead men and dead horses' and with the 'forequarter of a horse atop' him.[42] Repeatedly, we hear of similar scenes of horses dying during the Martians' attack, the soldiers' defence, and the civilians' flight. Wells highlights how

[38] H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, edited by Mason Harris (Peterborough: Broadview, 2009), 130. Of course, another more obvious connection exists between *The War of the Worlds* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*: from the Martian perspective, humans are inconsequential animals akin to the animals on which Moreau unconcernedly experiments.
[39] Wells, *War*, 67.
[40] Ibid., 84.
[41] Ibid., 120.
[42] Ibid., 89.

horses, as the most frequently used form of transport at the time, are subjected to the full brunt of military violence.

In connection with these scenes of equine injury and death, we should recall that in the 'Province of Pain' essay, Wells speculates that the 'higher animals [...] approach [humans] in feeling pain'.[43] Although Wells does not specifically mention horses in that essay, we can assume he would likely include equines in his 'higher animals' category and put them on an equal level with canines in their capacity to feel pain. In his essay 'Of Horses' (1894), however, Wells does link horses with a capacity for pain when one of the speakers in this imagined dialogue between four people declares: '[the horse] says nothing when you are hurting it or riding it to death, or offending it in any way'.[44] Here, even in the alleged absence of any screams or wails, the speaker asserts that horses experience pain. Thus, given these discussions within Wells's works, we can affirm that he wants readers to understand that the horses who were injured or killed in *The War of the Worlds* suffered considerably.

Additionally, evidence exists of growing public concern over the suffering and death of specifically military horses in the late-Victorian era. This concern became most apparent immediately after *The War of the Worlds* came out. In a British conflict occurring just after this novel's appearance, the Second Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902), military horse casualties were so abundant that the number of deaths was 'described as a "holocaust" by an eye-witness'.[45] These numerous horse deaths led to the first ever permanent military veterinary corps being created after the Second Boer War ended. Also, memorials to the horses killed were erected in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, as well as in Surrey and Winchester in England.[46] Although *The War of the Worlds* precedes the Second Boer War by a few years, people's reactions to the mass death of horses in that conflict point to the

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[43] Wells, 'Province of Pain', 198.

[44] H. G. Wells, 'Of Horses: An Idle Conversation', *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 December 1894, 3.

[45] Sandra Swart, 'Horses in the South African War, c. 1899-1902', *Society and Animals* 18 (2010), 349.

[46] On the lack of military veterinary care available during the Second Boer War, see Jilly Cooper, *Animals in War* (London: Corgi Books, 1983), 27. On the memorials, see John M. Kistler, *Animals in the Military: From Hannibal's Elephants to the Dolphins of the U.S. Navy* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 191; Swart, 'South African War', 361-2; and Cooper, *Animals in War*, 162-3.

zeitgeist that Wells's novel participates in: a time of shifting attitudes towards human violence against the nonhuman world.

Invasion literature and the expansion of sympathy

Other texts within the subgenre of 'invasion literature', which includes *The War of the Worlds*, also drew attention to the harmful effects of military violence on the natural world. For example, in George Griffith's *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893), we hear how 'vast hordes of [soldiers] spread themselves again over fertile lands, like locusts over green fields of young corn. And where those hordes swept forward, a long line of fire and smoke went in front them, and where they passed the earth was a blackened wilderness.'[47] Similarly, in George Tomkyns Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), the narrator informs us that he and his fellow volunteer soldiers 'had been told in the morning to cut down the bushes to make the space clear for firing'.[48]

Alongside plants, military violence also afflicts animals in this invasion literature. William Le Queux's *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894) references war-induced starvation expanding beyond humans to affect animals, when it describes how '[s]o great was the distress already [among civilians], that domestic pets were killed and eaten, dogs and cats being no uncommon dish'.[49] Also, in *The War of the Worlds*, horses are often a focal point for calling attention to war's threat to nonhuman life. *The Great War in England in 1897* offers gruesome descriptions, such as one of roads 'strewn with horses and men dead and dying'.[50] Likewise, *The Angel of the Revolution* presents the fierce weaponry of war as causing 'men and horses' to be 'rent into fragments and hurled into the air like dead leaves before a hurricane'.[51]

Yet *The War of the Worlds* surpasses this other invasion literature in terms of the sustained and emphatic attention it draws to war's deleterious effects on the living environment. What makes Wells's text more notable is

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[47] George Griffith, *The Angel of the Revolution: A Tale of the Coming Terror* (London: Tower Publishing, 1894), 148-9.
[48] George Tomkyns Chesney, *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (London: Grant Richards, 1914), 62.
[49] William Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower Publishing, 1895), 110.
[50] Ibid., 321.
[51] Griffith, 97.

how, as argued above, he introduces much more specificity when referencing the nonhuman casualties of war. Within the larger invasion literature tradition, we frequently encounter vague descriptions, such as one in *The Great War in England in 1897* about how the French and Russians 'devastated the land with fire and sword'.[52] Here, no mention occurs of specific trees, plants, or flowers as in *The War of the Worlds*; instead, war merely attacks generic 'land'. Further, even though some invasion literature mentions suffering and death being meted out to animals like dogs and horses, such references within individual works are meagre compared to the wealth of references in Wells. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Wells, in a manoeuvre unique to the invasion literature tradition, is interested in modelling through the experiences of his unnamed narrator how an awareness of war's catastrophic toll on nonhuman nature should lead to an expansion of ethical concern beyond the human sphere.

Put another way, what Wells's novel attempts to do through its repeated references to war's negative impact on nature is activate in its readers the expansion of sympathy across the species boundary that the narrator himself experiences. Initially, the narrator does not possess such sympathy. Even as he becomes more animal-like during the war, he does not immediately identify and empathise with those animals he himself starts to resemble. For example, when the narrator is forced to go without food for several days, he, like a dog, starts 'gnaw[ing] parts' of the bones of some dead animals he finds.[53] But at this stage, he still displays no sympathy for other starving animals because he contemplates catching and eating a dog that has wandered into his hiding place.

However, soon after he has this impulse to kill and consume a dog, he experiences 'an emotion beyond the common range of men, yet one that the poor brutes we dominate know only too well. I felt as a rabbit might feel returning to his burrow and suddenly confronted by the work of a dozen busy navvies digging the foundations of a house'.[54] Later, when he leaves the demolished house he has been hiding in, he feels like a 'rat leaving its hiding-place'. He then remarks: 'Surely, if we have learned nothing else, this war has taught us pity – pity for those witless souls that suffer our dominion'.[55] As Alt has argued, these passages represent stark moments in which 'the

[52] Le Queux, 143.
[53] Wells, *War*, 167.
[54] Ibid., 165.
[55] Ibid., 169.

narrator's experience of being treated as an expendable or exploitable creature causes him to accord new value' to nonhuman life.[56] Just as war helps the narrator to achieve 'identification and sympathy' with the animals that experience human violence in diverse ways, so too does *The War of the Worlds* invite its readers to 'accord new value' to the plants and animals that often become helplessly ensnared in our military conflicts.

Nonhuman aloofness and indifference

Despite how much *The War of the Worlds* shows the war between humans and Martians as being a 'total war' that inflicts immense destruction on humans and nonhumans alike, and despite how much the unnamed narrator comes to deplore the nonhuman suffering caused by humanity's actions, the novel shows much of the natural world as being strikingly untouched and unconcerned by our wars. As Black contends, total war is always more about perception than reality, for 'totality is in the eyes of the beholder.'[57] In other words, even though Wells clearly reminds readers that our military conflicts threaten, harm, and kill many other life forms than just humans, he also reminds us that even an 'apocalyptic' invasion that threatens to exterminate the human race, or at least the British Empire, goes unnoticed by many nonhumans. Such an idea supports the novel's overall goal to deflate human pride and undermine anthropocentrism.

For example, in a paragraph from the chapter 'The Destruction of Weybridge and Shepperton' that starts with '[t]he fighting was beginning', we read further down of how '[n]othing was to be seen save flat meadows, cows feeding *unconcernedly* for the most part, and silvery pollard willows motionless in the warm sunlight'.[58] This is a strikingly placid, pastoral scene amid this chapter's other references to human fugitives frantically fleeing the Martians and to batteries of guns 'firing heavily one after the other'.[59] Even though the fighting intensifies between the humans and Martians, and the towns of Weybridge and Shepperton are eventually destroyed, we still find the narrator, amid his many descriptions of destruction, referring to an indifferent nature: 'A cockchafer came droning over the hedge and past us.

[56] Alt, 36.
[57] Black, 1.
[58] Wells, *War*, 96 (emphasis added).
[59] Ibid.

High in the west the crescent moon hung faint and pale above the smoke of Weybridge and Shepperton and the hot, still splendour of the sunset'.[60]

This fighting between humans and Martians eventually gives way to an outright rout of humanity. In Book Two, Chapter III, as the alien invaders calmly work on building their machines in a pit, the narrator chillingly reveals that he personally witnessed the Martians killing and drinking the blood of a man, while '[o]ver and through it all went the bats, *heeding it not at all*'.[61] The novel also references crows and a 'number of other birds' flitting about 'among the ruins' of houses destroyed by the war, in places where now 'traces of men there were none'.[62] As war rages around them, cockchafer beetles, bats, and crows are depicted as still going about their normal lives, and the moon and sun are depicted as traveling across the sky and giving off their light as they have for millions of years.

In sum, despite the plants blasted to ashes, the starving dogs, and the horses incinerated or gassed to death, *The War of the Worlds* depicts much of the natural world as aloof from humanity's actions and indifferent to the human experience of war. Hence, we use the question mark in our article's title, for *The War of the Worlds* provocatively subverts its own suggestion of total war unfolding and ironises the narrator's reference to the 'universal destruction' caused by this war. The descriptions of detached and unsympathetic bats, birds, cows, and cockchafers serve as harsh rebukes to the egotism of humans that sees ourselves as existing at the centre of the universe. Wells's novel, then, offers a stern reminder of what minimal concern, if any, the natural world displays for the military conflicts that so often literally and figuratively consume humans.

War can be good for nature

The War of the Worlds achieves its most emphatic subversion of the idea of the 'universal destruction' of war when it shows that war's chaotic conditions can be a boon to some species. Given the intricate relationships between the many different species that make up our world, it is not surprising that most types of warfare can be at once beneficial and detrimental to nature. Wells's attention to war's positive impact on nonhuman nature furthers the novel's attack on humanity's sense of itself as the centre of the universe, as so grand that all of nature should be captivated by its suffering and mourn its downfall.

[60] Ibid., 105.
[61] Ibid., 156 (emphasis added).
[62] Ibid., 164.

As mentioned earlier, Jefferies's *After London* possibly served as an inspiration for Wells of how an apocalyptic event might have a beneficial effect on plant and animal life. From his novel's first lines, Jefferies makes clear the advantages that some unspecified apocalyptic event had on the nonhuman world: 'The old men say their fathers told them that soon after the fields were left to themselves a change began to be visible. It became green everywhere in the first spring, after London ended, so that all the country looked alike'.[63] Vegetation reclaims human footpaths and roadways; some animals (like some types of pigs and cows) escape domestication, become feral, and thrive in the wild. Throughout Part I of *After London*, Jefferies meticulously details the flourishing that some plants and animals experience after the 'great physical change', just as Wells does over a decade later in his portrayal of an apocalyptic war.[64]

In *The War of the Worlds*, war's ability to be advantageous to some species is most apparent with the red weed transplanted from Mars that quickly covers the terrestrial landscape in days. This invasive plant for a time 'grew tumultuously in [the] roofless rooms' of smashed houses and turned bridges into 'a tangle of this weed'.[65] By the time the narrator emerges from this 'Ruined House' in Book Two, the red weed had 'covered every scrap of unoccupied ground'.[66] Its initial riotous growth during the time of war – a time when humans are too preoccupied with fighting the Martians to control the rapidly spreading alien plant – speaks to this idea that some species do not merely survive in times of cataclysmic war; they expand and flourish. The red weed is a stand-in for the many forms of plant life that humans, in their agricultural practices and other forms of landscape management, diligently control in times of peace. But the chaos and destruction of war can allow this same vegetation to be liberated from human influence. So the red weed freely spreads until, like the Martians, it eventually falls victim to an earthly influence: bacteria.

The bacteria in *The War of the Worlds*, which play such a vital role in any environment, can also be read as an organism, like the red weed, that thrives under the conditions of war. As Máire A. Connolly and David L. Heymann note, 'Throughout history, the deadly comrades of war and disease have accounted for a major proportion of human suffering and death.

[63] Jefferies, 3.
[64] Ibid., 6.
[65] Wells, *War*, 164, 166.
[66] Ibid., 164.

Infectious diseases ruthlessly exploit the conditions created by war, affecting both armies and civilians'.[67] Those 'conditions created by war' include malnourishment and famine that weaken immune systems, unsanitary conditions, many potential vectors (soldiers, refugees, animals) to spread the disease, and so forth. Speaking of one major military conflict of the nineteenth century – the American Civil War (1861-1865) – Jeffrey S. Sartin explains that the flourishing of disease-causing microorganisms led to 'Pneumonia, typhoid, diarrhea/dysentery, and malaria [being] predominant illnesses' and that 'two-thirds of the approximately 660,000 deaths of soldiers were caused by uncontrolled infectious diseases'.[68] Connolly and Heymann sum up the effect of disease on warfare by reminding us that, historically, it was called the 'third army'.[69] Because neither the Martians nor the Martian weeds possess any immunity to terrestrial bacteria, the Martian invasion helped some forms of bacteria to expand and flourish.

However, the bacteria infecting the Martian creatures and Martian weeds fail to reproduce and expand into new habitats because they proves too virulent for the Martian life forms that have no defences against them. Overall, though, *The War of the Worlds* shows that often war can be good for some forms of life. Even the flying cockchafers and the grazing cows might benefit from the disruption of war. Cockchafer beetles were deemed agricultural 'pests' in the Victorian era. People tried to control their numbers by 'trampl[ing] on the [adult] Chafers' and by 'destruction of the grubs' via traps made in the ground.[70] Additionally, the cows (assuming they are beef, not dairy, cows) might escape the unenviable fate of slaughter and consumption, were the war to continue.[71] If one purpose of Wells's scientific romances is to puncture human pride and deflate humanity's sense of importance, then surely Wells would not want to portray our wars as looming

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[67] Máire A. Connolly and David L. Heymann, 'Deadly Comrades: War and Infectious Disease', *The Lancet Supplement* 360 (2002), 23.

[68] Jeffrey S. Sartin, 'Infectious Diseases During the Civil War: The Triumph of the "The Third Army"', *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 16.4 (1993), 580.

[69] Connolly and Heymann, 23.

[70] Eleanor Anne Ormerod and Robert Newstead, *Reports of Observations of Injurious Insects and Common Farm Pests* (London: T. P. Newman, 1897), 121, 122.

[71] In his post-apocalyptic world, Jefferies imagines 'great numbers of [...] cattle perish[ing]' due to exposure after their human caretakers have disappeared. Yet, he also imagines some cows surviving, for the 'hardiest that remained became perfectly wild' (10).

too largely or impressively in the planetary scale of things. By repeatedly emphasising in *The War of the Worlds* not only the calm continuation of some animal's lives (cows, bats), but also the flourishing of some other forms of life (weeds, bacteria) amid this war, Wells undermines ideas about human centrality and grandiosity. Put another way, he reminds us that, from a biological perspective, one species' apocalypse is just a mundane day – even a favourable day – for other species in the same ecosystem.

Conclusion

Although *The War of the Worlds* was Wells's first work in his life-long interest in war, this text is unique in the Wellsian corpus for its interest in and concern for the effects of warfare on nature. In subsequent war-focused novels, such as *The War in the Air*, Wells gives little attention to war's effects on nonhuman life, certainly nothing equal to what we see in *The War of the Worlds*. In *The World Set Free*, even though this novel depicts the arrival of atomic bombs, weapons that increased exponentially the capabilities of war to harm the natural world, only a few fleeting references to war's effects on nature appear. For example, after Holland is bombed, the description of a dyke destroyed by atomic bombs contains brief mentions of 'the tops of trees' and 'a dead cow' floating in the rushing water.[72] We also hear how amid one group of survivors of this same bombing, the 'only continuing sound was the persistent mewing of a cat one of the men had rescued from a floating hayrick'.[73] Moreover, Alt argues that later works like *Men Like Gods* (1923) not focused on war but still interested in the relationship between humans and nature show Wells moving away from 'the sense of identification and sympathy with other species suggested in' *The War of the Worlds* to 'a hierarchical attitude that aims to elevate human beings above the natural world and results in a program of calculated control and extermination'.[74]

Yet *The War of the Worlds* invites readers to experience not only a new cross-species empathy for the nonhumans who become entangled in military conflicts, but also a vital humbling at the lack of concern that the nonhuman world shows for human affairs. Further contributing to this decentring of humanity, the novel shows how some species that surround us even benefit from and flourish during war. It is here that we see Wells at his

[72] H. G. Wells, *The World Set Free* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1914), 142.
[73] Wells, *World Set Free*, 145.
[74] Alt, 35.

most critical of anthropocentrism and most emphatically drawing on his Darwinian education to make sense of the complex network of human and nonhuman beings involved in any military conflict.

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The literary H. G. Wells in *The New Age* between 1907 and 1916: *Tono-Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, *The New Machiavelli*, and *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*

Judith Hendra

Abstract. In 1907 H. G. Wells welcomed the publication of the revitalised *The New Age* with a congratulatory note. Six months later, he made a further gesture by entrusting the paper with his 'Personal Statement', defending himself against charges of sexual immorality. By 1908 the relationship had changed, and Wells found himself the object of *The New Age*'s provocative arts coverage. This article singles out four social novels published by Wells between 1908 and 1916: *Tono-Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, *The New Machiavelli*, and *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*; and examines the *New Age*'s coverage in detail, taking into account straight reviews, critical essays, pastiches, and satires. Philosophically, the paper and Wells had differences of opinion that widened over the years. While Wells could not depend on *The New Age* for approbation, he saw himself frequently featured in the pages of a general interest journal that hefted considerable weight, considering its modest appearance and circulation.

Two youngish Socialist journalists Alfred Richard Orage (A. R. Orage) and George Holbrook Jackson bought a failing weekly called *The New Age* in the early months of 1907. The managing editors added 'An Independent Socialist Review of Politics, Literature, and Art' to the paper's vaguely theosophical title and gratefully borrowed H. G. Wells's phrase 'men of good intent' to illustrate their ideal community of readers ('The Future of the New Age'). The inaugural issue also published a transcript of Wells's remarks to the New Reform Group ('First Public Conference on Mr. H. G. Wells' "Samurai"'). Wells himself wrote a few congratulatory lines. 'You are going to make a most valuable, interesting, difficult, and, I think I may venture to add, successful experiment', he told the fledgling editors. 'Particularly attractive, I think, should be your handling of contemporary literature and art, not, as in the ordinary Press, from vague, unspecified standpoints, but from a definitely Socialist position'. *The New Age*'s 'freedom and vigour of irresponsibility' was just what was needed to bring young people to the Fabian Society', Wells added.[1]

[1] 'Letters from the Front', *The New Age* 1.1 (2 May 1907), 3.

In October, Wells made the controversial decision to publish an apologia in the form of an open letter 'Mr. Wells and Free Love: A Personal Statement'. Wells was aware of his reputation as a polygamist after the publication of his fantasy novel *In the Days of the Comet* (1906) and could not have been clearer:

> I have never advocated 'free love', nor the destruction of the family. [...] There is nothing anywhere to support these statements [...] and there is a mass of my writing to prove the contrary. [...] [*In the Days of the Comet*] is intended to be a beautiful dream, and it ends with an epilogue that makes that intention perfectly clear. If the book is immoral and indecent, then the New Testament is equally so.[2]

It is interesting *The New Age*'s managing editors felt the need to preface the article with a call to calm, 'a little ice would be an advantage'. Wells was attracted to the paper's politics or lack thereof and probably was not aware that the editors had still to make up their minds about the 'independent' in 'Independent Socialist Review'. Jackson departed in December, leaving Orage a free hand. Jackson's departure is one incident among many that the historian Wallace Martin covers in his invaluable account of the paper from its founding to the point Orage left it in 1922.[3]

Wells's close association with the paper lasted for about nine months. Thereafter it faded to a couple of letters written over the space of several years, a nasty spat about a copyright issue, and a mass of references to Wells's published work. Wells published over a dozen works of fiction from 1908 to 1916. The four novels featured in this article were published in trade editions between 1909 and 1916: *Tono-Bungay* (1909), *Ann Veronica* (1909), *The New Machiavelli* (1911), and *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (1916). Wells followed his common practice at the time and wrote *Tono-Bungay* and *The New Machiavelli* from the points of view of George Pondevero and Dick Remington, respectively. His heroes are 'not lovable' but 'may be admirable', to anticipate Arnold Bennett writing about George

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[2] H. G. Wells 'Mr. Wells and Free Love: A Personal Statement', *The New Age* 1.25 (17 October 1907), 392.

[3] See Wallace Martin, *The New Age under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967). Since he was writing in the nineteen-sixties, Martin was in the fortunate position of being able to interview survivors of the Orage era.

Pondevero. *Ann Veronica* stands out because the central character is a young woman who is as hungry for new experiences as any of Wells's young male heroes. *Mr. Britling* is narrated in the third person and features a middle-aged writer who may look familiar but has a shattering experience Wells knows he is fortunate enough not to have to share with his creation.

The novels' common features include their contemporary settings, their preoccupation with social and political issues, and their emphasis on the changing relationships of men and women. As a group they may fairly be characterised as 'social novels'. The identifier 'social novels' reminds us that Wells was still interested in 'scientific romances' and wrote several from 1908 to 1916, including his futuristic novels *The War in the Air* (1908) and *The World Set Free* (1914). Add to that a quantity of nonfiction that includes *Floor Games* (1911), the philosophical *First and Last Things* (1908), and Wells's revelatory treatise from 1916, *The Elements of Reconstruction*. Wells's biographer David Smith has tallied his subject's phenomenal output between 1895 and 1914 and attributes Wells's transformation into a 'veritable writing machine' to, in part, 'ridding himself of material generated in his youth and by his education'.[4] One may add that in three of the novels under consideration, Wells was dealing with his affair with Amber Reeves, or trying to find closure after it ended. The fourth, *Britling*, has a strong external focus in the form of a national tragedy.

The New Age's coverage was in line with its eclectic attitude to reviewing under Orage's management. A prominent contributor writing an occasional critical column under a pseudonym hailed *Tono-Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, and *The New Machiavelli*. However, Arnold Bennett was simply another contributor, even though he was as famous as his friend Wells, and *Ann Veronica* and *The New Machiavelli* came in for some rough treatment from other writers. On the other hand, the paper greeted Wells's war novel *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* by acknowledging that the author deserved his critical and commercial success. Wells was arguably the most successful novelist working in Britain and his personal life was a gift to critics that only became more valuable after Wells had his adulterous affair with Amber Reeves. Wells himself helped matters along by having married men fall in love with younger women in *Tono-Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, and *The New Machiavelli*, and giving Mr. Britling a mistress. *The New Age* was unlikely

[4] David C. Smith, *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1986), 58.

to pass up the opportunities afforded it for unconventional and challenging coverage of a writer and public figure as famous as Wells.

At this point in its history, *The New Age* was a general interest magazine with a circulation of several thousand; the number fluctuated over a decade and a half between 20,000 and 2,000. Orage wanted the paper to appeal to the aspirational middle class and, if possible, the working class; he remembered how hungry he was for intelligent journalism when he was living in Leeds and taught at a Board school. The paper featured writers of all types and persuasions and generally avoided the omniscient editorial voice.[5] Its broad arts coverage included popular literature, original fiction, literary and cultural criticism, and the visual arts. A book column appeared weekly, and for a while the paper ran regular literary supplements. At one point, it featured no less than three critical columns an issue, including one from Orage and one from a salaried contributor called Alfred Randall. (Bennett gave up his 'Books and Persons' column in 1911.) Guest writers freely gave their opinions. In line with Orage aiming to engage readers, the paper had plenty of room for pastiches and satires. The whole was a remarkably lively scene that had the 'buzz' to attract writers even when they were not paid.[6]

One may get an idea of Wells and the paper's potential differences of opinion from two statements written by Wells and Orage in 1911. That year Wells gave a talk to the Times Book Club in which he made some far-reaching statements about the purpose of writing fiction. Reading from his discourse 'The Contemporary Novel', Wells said the following about his fiction and fiction in general: 'you see now the scope of the claims I am making for the novel; it is to be the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding. [...] [T]he novelist is going to be the most potent of artists because he is going to present conduct'.[7] Orage was thinking on completely

[5] See Ann L. Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Ardis points out that the dominant voices at *The New Age* included traditionalists and rebels and that neither side prevailed overall.

[6] Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey, *Modernism's Print Cultures (New Modernisms)* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 251. Hammill and Hussey examine *The New Age* in the light of contemporary periodicals and conclude that the paper's cultural criticism influenced critics writing for mainstream papers. Orage paid three writers mentioned in this essay: Arnold Bennett, Alfred E. Randall, and John M. Kennedy.

[7] Quoted in Smith, 169.

different lines when he wrote in one of his critical columns: 'An exposure of a social evil is [...] necessary and useful. [...] So too are expositions of science. But what have these to do with beauty? The sole object of a work of art is to reveal beauty'.[8] Orage realised that he spoke for himself, and that other writers at the paper might not agree with him. Nonetheless, it was easy for Orage and other *New Age* writers to characterise Wells as a philistine on the basis of his passionately held beliefs. Wells also lost out once the paper began using 'modernism' as a criterion for judging literature, or the arts in general. *The New Age* went back and forth on the issue without quite making up its mind whether it was on the side of tradition or the modernists were right, and a revolution really was underfoot. Nonetheless Wells's fiction had begun looking old-fashioned before the shift in the nineteen-twenties to writers like Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence.

Orage and his colleagues

The paper's managing editor A. R. Orage was thirty-four in 1907. (Wells was then in his early forties.) Orage scrambled up from the lower middle class thanks to journalism, though, unlike Wells, he stuck to journalism exclusively. Unlike Wells he did not have a university degree, and had he realised his dream of going to Oxford, he would have taken a BA not a BSc. For a while, he was a practising theosophist. Orage, too, left the Fabian Society and in general shared Wells's distrust of organised politics. Wells borrowed him for a fleeting character in *Ann Veronica*: the unnamed 'roughish looking young man, with reddish hair, an orange tie, and a fluffy tweed suit', who attends Mr and Mrs Goopes's vegetarian dinner party with the heroine. Wells gently spoofs Orage's rarefied allusions to Hegel, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy ('everyone seemed greatly concerned about the sincerity of Tolstoy'), and alludes obliquely to Orage's marital situation: 'the young man in the orange tie succeeded in giving the whole discussion a daring and exotic flavour by questioning if anyone could be perfectly sincere in love'.[9]

Orage deserted his wife when he settled in London in 1905 and lived openly with Beatrice Hastings. 'Mrs Beatrice Hastings', as the former Beatrice Thomson née Haig called herself, had left two husbands and was

[8] R. H. C., 'Some Errors of Modern Writers', *The New Age* 9.9 (5 October 1911), 539.

[9] H. G. Wells, *Ann Veronica*, edited by Sita Schutt, introduction by Margaret Drabble (London: Penguin, 2005), 113-16.

still married to her second. Hastings was a genuinely talented and somewhat erratic writer and a surprisingly hard-working editor who boasted nothing 'literary' got into the paper without her approval. She used pseudonyms as freely as another writer used parentheses and wrote literary essays, poems, pastiches, and satires practically to order. It was common to see four or five pieces written by Hastings in a single issue, from a polemic about the latest escapades of the suffragettes to a raging satire about some author to whom she took a dislike. Hastings saw Wells at a social gathering at the home of David Eder (Dr Montague David Eder). Writing twenty years or more after the event, Hastings suggests she was not introduced to Wells and confesses she was impressed in spite of herself: she expected Wells to monopolise the evening yet he hardly said a word, 'none to be remembered and yet managing to be present'.[10] Eder was a prominent member of the Fabian Society and was married to the divorced wife of another prominent member, Leslie Haden-Guest. Hastings resigned in 1909 and wrote a wry retrospective, pointedly called 'The Fabian Fantasia', about her experiences. She recalled fervent arguments over nothing at all, uproarious coffee parties and vegetarian dinners, and (daringly) Fabian country weekends where bed hopping was de rigueur. Twice-married Hastings was amused to find the Fabians tying themselves in knots over the marriage question. 'You, in your views, might be a professed polygamist (and the marriage question was highly important!), while I was a monogamist, a polyandrist or a free-lover – but which form was essential to the well-being of society?' Perhaps none of it mattered as long as the parties were vegetarians. Hastings had briefly organised 'ladies' lunches to promote Orage and knew Beatrice Webb was a lacto-vegetarian.[11]

Arnold Bennett joined the paper at Orage's invitation in 1908. Bennett's contribution was a fairly regular column called 'Books and Persons', written by 'Jacob Tonson'. Martin quotes Bennett saying in a letter to his sister that he knew Orage was underpaying him, but he was not worried about undervaluing his services because he was writing 'for the amusement of self and a few others'.[12] The idea that the column was a hobby was disingenuous because Bennett took it seriously. He wrote from the points of view of an insider critiquing an industry he cared about and the cosmopolitan Bennett who paraphrased articles from French journals and told readers he

[10] Beatrice Hastings, [untitled], *The Straight-Thinker* 19 March 1932, 49.
[11] Hastings, 'The Fabian Fantasia', *The New Age* 14.20 (19 March 1914), 627.
[12] Martin, 57, quoting a letter printed in Reginald Pound's *Arnold Bennett* (1952).

had just seen Diaghilev's latest ballet in Paris. People at the paper had varying opinions about Bennett. Hastings always thought he was second-rate, 'at first sight, I took [him] for the gas-man [the man who read the gas meter] and was nearly right'. [13] Bennett consciously promoted and defended his friend Wells, loyally called out prurient journalists and hostile library committees, and dealt with Wells's critics inside the paper by the simple tactic of ignoring them.

That meant, principally, a *New Age* regular Alfred E. Randall. Randall was almost Bennett's direct competitor inasmuch as he wrote an influential weekly column called 'Views and Reviews'. It was still running in 1916 when Randall wrote a long review of *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*. Randall was an unusually versatile writer who struggled earlier in his career and had contracted tuberculosis. A colleague, Carl Bechhofer, thought that the tuberculosis was the reason why Randall never looked well. He managed, however, to turn out article after article and his reviews reveal his wide knowledge of literature and politics.[14] The fact that Randall was a committed Socialist with a disdainful nose for rich Socialists like George Bernard Shaw may have influenced his attitude to Wells. Randall not only kept his distance, but he was also hostile to the point it was hard to see why Wells deserved it. The surprise is Randall's unusually thoughtful review of *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*.

Tono-Bungay and *Ann Veronica*

The first mention of *Tono-Bungay* was an advertisement for the inaugural issue of *The English Review*. The *Review*'s editor Ford Madox Hueffer alerted readers to 'H. G. Wells' *Tono-Bungay* to be completed in the next four issues'.[15] Hueffer ran a follow-up advertisement on 4 March, featuring his star writers: Wells, Joseph Conrad, and G. K. Chesterton. Wells may have made a mistake by agreeing to Hueffer serialising the novel, as it meant he had to wait to publish the trade edition. (The delay was caused by Hueffer taking an unconscionably long time launching the *Review*.)[16] Macmillan &

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[13] Hastings, 49.

[14] Carl Eric Bechhofer wrote for *The New Age*, beginning in 1910 at the age of 17. As Bechhofer Roberts he published an autobiographical novel featuring a fictional version of *The New Age* in *Let's Begin Again* published in 1941. See also Martin, 50.

[15] *The New Age*, 4.4 (19 November 1908), 69.

[16] Smith, 174-5. Wells was one of Hueffer's investors.

Co. finally published it in February 1909. Bennett as Jacob Tonson devoted an entire column to reviewing the book. He shifted the focus from the rise and fall of Edward Ponderevo and his patent-medicine empire to Wells's narrator:

> [George Ponderevo] transgresses most of the current codes, but he also shatters them. The entire system of sanctions tumbles down with a clatter like the fall of a corrugated iron church. I do not know what is left standing, unless it be George Ponderevo. I would not call him a lovable, but he is an admirable man [...].[17]

Bennett mildly criticised the author for a 'slight yielding to the temptation of caricature, out of place in a realistic book'. The column featured Bennett's faux dialogue with the editor and columnist William Robertson Nicoll. Nicoll happened to be a former Nonconformist minister, though his paper *The British Weekly* had no religious affiliation. Nicoll, using the pseudonym 'Claudius Clear', wrote an unfavourable review and Bennett pleasurably exploited Nicoll's religiosity by imagining 'Claudius Clear' calling on God as he considered the sins committed by George Ponderevo: 'Wells, why did you not bring down the wrath of God, or at least make the adulterer fail in the problems of flight?' Bennett cited Nicoll's line protesting he could not decently 'reproduce or describe' Wells's hero's love affairs and happily quoted him again, featuring the phrase 'orgy of lust' that Nicoll used to characterise George and Beatrice Normandy consummating their affair. Daringly – this was after all 1909 – Bennett finished up: 'The most correct honeymoon is an orgy of lust, and if it isn't, it ought to be'.[18]

A Socialist friend of Wells's, the writer G. R. S. Taylor, mentioned *Tono-Bungay* in an unrelated essay published in *The New Age* in May. The essay was called 'H. G. Wells – Early Victorian Politician', and Taylor fully lived up to his entertaining and provocative title in a series of observations about the celebrated Socialist writer Mr. Wells having virtually no idea what socialism meant. In the midst of making his argument, Taylor broke off to talk about Wells's latest novel. Taylor's subtext was that Wells should stick to what he knew best, or he would find himself in the situation that he barely got out of in 1908:

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[17] Jacob Tonson, 'Books and Persons', *The New Age* 4.19 (4 March 1909), 384.
[18] Ibid.

> His [Wells's] 'Tono-Bungay' is sufficient proof that his delicate touch can pack more subtle Socialist aims, ready for future infection, into his romances than any other first-class literary man of to-day. He is, in other words, a great force in Socialist propaganda. He is converting the middle classes to Socialism more quickly than any other of our agents.
>
> But, I am sure, he will be the first to agree that every man must keep to his own province [...]. When he ventures into the rough and tumble world of political strife he is the veriest child; continually in danger of being run over by the first callous motor man who comes hooting along the road.[19]

Taylor was familiar with the problems Wells had with the Fabians from executive committee meetings where he covered for Wells whenever the latter happened to be absent.[20] Wells firmly believed *Tono-Bungay* was a success from a literary standpoint, although he had qualms before he published it about the public's reception. 'What damned fools these people are [...]. [A]lways there is this silly fencing because the things aren't an evident repetition of the previous pattern', he said in a letter to his agent.[21] A year after the novel was published, Edwin Pugh cited *Tono-Bungay* in his essay 'Style in Modern Literature'. Pugh may have felt free to disparage Wells because Pugh had a reputation as a Cockney novelist and because other critics were beginning to say that Wells was not the writer he had been. Pugh spoke aggressively about Wells squandering his talent and his addiction to 'tiresome clichés and colloquialisms', unaware of spelling mistakes ('Tony Bungay' for *Tono-Bungay*), and annoying obscurities in his own essay: at one point, he compared Wells's writing to the 'crypticisms of the Ormulum'.[22] Pugh turned out book after book and died in poverty at the age of fifty-six.

T. Fisher Unwin published *Ann Veronica* in October 1909. (Wells's daughter by Amber Blanco White née Reeves was born in December.) An unsigned review promptly appeared in *The New Age*. Hastings assigned the

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[19] G. R. S. Taylor, 'H. G. Wells – Early Victorian Politician', *The New Age* 4.4 (20 May 1909), 68.
[20] Smith, 108.
[21] Ibid., 203.
[22] Edwin Pugh, 'Style in Modern Literature', *The New Age* 4.25 (21 April 1910), 588.

review and may have written it herself. The review went out of its way to reveal the ending. Hastings (assuming it was Hastings) made the oddly-phrased comment: 'we are afraid that women will praise this volume as another proof that men can only write of women from the outside', and compared Ann Veronica Stanley to the heroine of Shaw's *Man and Superman* (1905):

> Ann Veronica is a rather more vulgar huntress of man than even Ann Whitfield. Like Ann Whitfield she mistakes her desires for maternal pretensions. Instead of 'A Father for the Superman!' this heroine cries 'Children! Lots of 'em?' It is a surprisingly poor book, although the practical touch of Mr. Wells is often evident and there is a good deal of the grinning-kind of humour of which he is a master.[23]

Wells decided that the review was an aberration. When Orage asked him for his opinion of the way the paper was progressing, Wells was determined not to be upset and came up with:

> THE NEW AGE is wild, THE NEW AGE is young; it is harsh and high-spirited and as persistently advanced as a jib-boom. Against nature it didn't like 'Ann Veronica', but I forgive it and wish it well. Signed, H. G. Wells[24]

Ann Veronica was featured the same week in the cartoonist Littlejohn's broadly drawn cover illustration called 'The Censorship'. Littlejohn draws the scene outside a building marked Free Library, where an *auto-da-fé* is in progress. Watched at a safe distance by a handful of locals, a crabbed, primly disgusted clergyman throws a copy of *The New Age* onto a pyre of unwholesome popular literature. A copy of *Ann Veronica* lies in the foreground, awaiting the lighting of the bonfire. Bennett waited until late February to mention *Ann Veronica* in 'Books and Persons'. He picked up the goings-on at Hull and identified one of the would-be censors as a Canon

[23] 'Ann Veronica', *The New Age* 5.25 (14 October 1909), 447.

[24] H. G. Wells, 'Appreciations of the New Age', *The New Age* 4.14 (3 February 1910). Wells was using a nautical term to characterise the paper. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a jib boom is a spar run out forward as an extension of the bowsprit.

Lambert. Bennett knew that readers shared his distaste for the reverend gentleman's antics:

> At the last meeting of the Hull Libraries Committee, when 'Ann Veronica' was under discussion, Canon Lambert procured for the name of Lambert a free advertisement throughout the length and breadth of the country by saying: 'I would just as soon send a daughter of mine to a house infected with diphtheria or typhoid fever as put that book into her hands'. [...] Canons who give expression to this kind of pernicious and offensive babblement must expect what they get in the way of responses.[25]

After the Hull Free Libraries banned *Ann Veronica*, a Hull bookseller had enjoyed scores of orders, Bennett reported. He concluded: 'A Canon Lambert in every town would demolish the censorship in less time than it took the Hebrew deity to create the world and the fig tree'.[26] Bennett's witty riff on the Bible was a temporary distraction from the pressing problem that he faced once again, a year later, when Wells published *The New Machiavelli*. As Jacob Tonson he had an obligation to his readers, which in all fairness led to a discussion of the Capes-Ann Veronica love affair. Yet as a close friend of the Wellses it was easier for him to say nothing than risk getting into what were very deep waters, considering the parallels between the older married Wells and the older married Capes having (consensual) relationships with young women.

Frank Swinnerton's essay 'Modern Realism' appeared in March. An occasional contributor to *The New Age*, Swinnerton was twenty-six, the author of two novels, and an editor at the publishing house of Chatto & Windus. Wells himself was about to publish another social novel *The History of Mr. Polly*. Wells must have felt his depictions of British lower-middle-class life in *Kipps* and *Tono-Bungay* and his analysis of middle-class marriages in *Ann Veronica* gave him the right to be called a realist. Swinnerton, however, took a definitely unorthodox view of the subject. Enjoying his role as a literary upstart while showing due respect for the older man's accomplishments, Swinnerton talked about it being something of a misnomer that Wells's novels bore the 'realistic label'. Looked at critically,

[25] Tonson, 'Books and Persons', *The New Age* 4.17 (24 February 1910), 398.
[26] Ibid.

none of them could properly be called realistic.[27] Swinnerton grouped *Ann Veronica* with *Kipps* and *Tono-Bungay*, compared the novels to one another, and set them beside works by Bennett, John Galsworthy, and Harley Granville-Barker. His conclusion was that, while Wells's contemporary subject matter might appear to qualify the three novels as realistic, collectively they were characterised by 'an extremely naturalistic treatment of the abnormal'. The same was true of Bennett, Galsworthy, Granville-Barker, and others:

> [Wells] in his brilliant journalistic works about 'Kipps', and 'Tono-Bungay', and 'Ann Veronica', makes up incidents as he goes along, and gets an extraordinary patchwork of things which are excellently true, things which are amazingly unsubtle, and things which are the merest caricature and improvisation [...].[28]

Ann Veronica was a particular example of Wells excluding realism for caricature. 'Mr. Wells ought to convince us more completely than he does of the inevitability of the events', said Swinnerton. Bennett may have been thinking along the same lines when he suggested that Wells might find reading the French realists a useful exercise. The novelist and critic Margaret Drabble believes that Wells played to his strengths and disregarded the rest. In her introduction to *Ann Veronica*, she writes: 'He [Wells] had little regard for genre, no respect for rules and no respect for persons'.[29] Interestingly, Swinnerton conceded that any author had 'a rather uphill fight' getting realistic fiction in front of the public, and intelligently pointed out that Wells gained his audience 'by means of other works'.[30] A couple of years later, Swinnerton heard Wells give his lecture at a meeting of the Times Book Club. The men had a long history from that point on: Swinnerton became 'one of Wells's good friends and most vocal supporters', records David Smith, and remained close friends until Wells's death.[31]

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[27] Frank A. Swinnerton, 'Modern Realism', *The New Age* 4.22 (31 March 1910), 517.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Margaret Drabble, 'Introduction', in H. G. Wells, *Ann Veronica* (London: Penguin, 2005), xxvii.
[30] Swinnerton, 517.
[31] Smith, 154.

Beatrice Hastings provided two postscripts to the *Ann Veronica* controversy. One was a biting little satire Orage published in *The New Age* in May 1911 signed by K. M. and B. H. Katherine Mansfield (K. M.) was a fairly frequent weekend guest at one or other of Orage and Hastings's country cottages. Supposedly, the women were bored: it was an unusually wet weekend with nothing else to do, and they started writing pastiches of popular authors to pass the time. Readers did not have to believe the details to enjoy Mansfield and Hastings's deliberately unkind send-ups of 'Mr. Arnold Bennett's "Pottinghame" novels – "To be continued until 1950"'; 'Mr. G. K. Chesterton – Catholicism, addiction to mixed metaphors, and the author's weight'; and 'Mr. H. G. Wells':

> So we stowed Biology and got to business.
> 'Why not?' she asked.
> 'Affairs', I replied, laconically. She understood, and my heart-strings creaked – a man's heart – moaned a little.
> 'Damn!' I burst out. 'Do what you want with me'.
> So we stowed Biology and got to business.
> 'England!' I snarled. 'Pah-England will have to do the best she can without me. You're my England now, curse you, bless you'.
> She fell at my knees, clinging, weeping, smiling: 'God!' The epithet seemed to be torn out of her. I wondered . . .
> 'You won't expect too much, Anthelesia?'
> 'Only three girls and three boys'.
> 'Curse the expense', I said.
> So we stowed Biology and got to business.[32]

Although Hastings did not identify herself as the author of this twisted bow to the unnamed *Ann Veronica*, it fitted with Hastings's general attitude that Wells was one of Orage's 'big names' it was her job to debunk. The author managed a decent pastiche of Wells's habit of writing short, abrupt sentences without necessarily identifying the speaker. She wittily foreshortened Capes and Ann Veronica's proposal scene to the point where the dialogue became ludicrous and pointedly introduced the first person. In her introduction to *Ann Veronica*, Drabble underscores that Wells departed from his usual practice because he wanted to tell the story from the heroine's point of

[32] K. M. and B. H., 'A Pleasant Sunday Afternoon', *The New Age* 9.4 (25 May 1911), 11.

view.[33] The parody's implication that Capes was Wells's alter ego indicated two things: first, that the only honest way Wells could have written the book was admitting that it was autobiographical, and second, that Wells was involved in a scandal at the time he was writing about one.

Wells's name came up the following year during a weekend at another of Hastings and Orage's country cottages. The dinner chat inspired a piece of doggerel Mansfield wrote down in her journal:

> I was a draper in my time
> And now I am all the rage
> My name is Mr. H. G. Wells
> And Kipps is on the stage.[34]

Hastings was still mulling over *Ann Veronica*. In January 1911, she started again, this time as the anonymous critic behind the regular column 'Present-Day Criticism'. She pulled out three controversial novels: *Ann Veronica*, Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895), and Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900); declared none of them met her approval; and proceeded to lay into *Ann Veronica*:

> The atmosphere, as hectic [as Hardy's and Conrad's novels?] was less sustained. Mr. Wells cannot be, even in imaginative moods, a melancholy man. He should not attempt to create a hectic atmosphere, related as that is to melancholy. Perhaps he meant to produce an air the reverse of hectic, something very vital, momentous. What he intended no two people agree about.[35]

Hastings accused Wells of producing for all of his efforts 'an irritable and rampageous young lunatic whose actions [...] depend upon the last remark addressed to her, or the last "advanced" platitude' she has read. Her creator was right to marry her off; his mistake was that Wells 'scarcely seized that solution in the way parents seize it, as a relief from and for a temporarily deranged young female'. When Hastings patronised the author's choice of heroines, she was really trivialising Ann Veronica's *cri de coeur*: 'She

[33] Drabble, xv.
[34] *Katherine Mansfield: Notebooks*, edited by Margaret Scott, notebook 8, 226.
[35] 'Present-Day Criticism', *The New Age* 10.12 (18 January 1912), 277.

wanted to live'.[36] Hastings felt she had the upper hand over Wells's New Woman heroine because she struck out on her own when she was nineteen.[37] Interestingly, she stopped at mentioning Wells's savage caricature of the militant suffragette Netti Miniver and the heroine's participation in the 'Trojan Horse' assault on Parliament.[38] She was thoroughly predisposed to treating the likes of Miniver as a malign joke; however, Wells missed the point when he dismissed the raid as an exercise in futility. After initially calling herself a 'reluctant suffragette', Hastings turned on the Women's Social and Political Union, when the union adopted militant tactics in 1909 and accused the leadership of poisoning the movement for their own ends. Her position was that women had a moral obligation to avoid violence, and that women who instigated violent acts or participated in them were as compromised as their male counterparts.

The New Machiavelli

The English Review took out an advertisement in March 1910, announcing it was serialising *The New Machiavelli* from May onwards.[39] *The New Age* promptly published an elaborate spoof called 'Anticipatory Reviews' by Eric Dexter. It was placed in the issue of 7 April, safely ahead of *The English Review*. Dexter appeared to have inside information about Wells's new novel, since the 'plot' features the progress of a young woman called Anatolica Rivers as she escapes the clutches of her industrialist family. Anatolica rhymes with Veronica and Rivers is the name of the young woman who captures Dick Remington's heart in *The New Machiavelli*. Her father Varwal Rivers is a pottery magnate, like Dick Remington's uncle, and mimics Edward Ponderevo in *Tono-Bungay* by inventing a patented china product that saves him from bankruptcy, and that fatally poisons most of his workforce.[40] Anatolica takes matters into her own hands and joins the

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[36] Wells, *Ann Veronica* (London: Penguin, 2005), 7.

[37] The author's research has established Hastings married twice, roamed South Africa, joined a musical hall act, and lost a baby daughter. At twenty-seven, she began living with Alfred Orage.

[38] See Wells, *Ann Veronica* (London: Penguin, 2005), 181-207.

[39] 'Advertisement for *The English Review*', *The New Age* 4.18 (3 March 1910), 429.

[40] Eric Dexter, 'Anticipatory Reviews II', *The New Age* 4.23 (7 April 1910), 541. Dexter had written for the paper before including a piece in January 1909 called 'A Prophecy of Merlin', spoofing 'treasure narratives' and the vogue for Celtic languages.

'Suabian Society'. This gives Dexter the opportunity to direct the reader to Wells's 'Mr. and Mrs. Bailey'. He creates a bearded character who is obviously modelled on Sidney Webb, called 'Spider'. Spider suggests that Anatolica amuse herself with 'The Binarity Report of the Royal Commission on the Sewer Law', and when Anatolica confesses that it is too big to hold comfortably, Spider recommends a smaller edition in seven volumes. Thereafter Anatolica falls in love with 'Avoirdupois'. Dexter's elaborate pastiche of Ann Veronica and Capes discussing their affair suggests that the author deliberately confused heroines, as it neatly foreshadows Remington and Isabel's protracted dialogue in 'Chapter the Second' of *The New Machiavelli*:

> 'We'll have lots of children', Anatolica whispered, after a moment's silence. 'I know a man', Avoirdupois interjected, 'who had twenty three'. 'How jolly!' said Anatolica. 'Twenty-one are dead, though'. [...] 'Jollier still', said Anatolica.[41]

'Jolly' anticipates Remington describing his intellectual coupling with Isabel – the 'jolly march of our minds together'.[42] Dexter deprecates Wells's style and implies that his so-called modern heroines Isabel Rivers and Ann Veronica Stanley are a throwback to the vogue for New Woman novels in the eighteen-eighties and eighteen-nineties, the kind of girls who say 'jolly' when they win at mixed doubles tennis.

Bennett stepped in to defend *The New Machiavelli* the moment when the trade edition appeared. Bennett-as-Tonson was glad to say that the rumours booksellers and libraries banned the book turned out to be completely wrong. '"The New Machiavelli" has been received with the respect and with the enthusiasm which its tremendous qualities deserve. It is a great success'.[43] Bennett commented it was unusual for reviewers to be as enthusiastic as they were in this instance and protested that he had no idea why Wells was consistently undervalued:

> To me the welcome accorded to his best books has always seemed to lack spontaneity [...]. And yet if there is a novelist writing to-day who

[41].Ibid.
[42] H. G. Wells, *The New Machiavelli* (London: Penguin, 1946), 322.
[43] Tonson, 'Books and Persons in London and Paris', *The New Age* 8.14 (2 February 1911), 325.

> by generosity has deserved generosity, that novelist is H. G. Wells. Astounding width of observation; a marvellously true perspective; an extraordinary grasp of the real significance of innumerable phenomena utterly diverse; profound emotional power; dazzling verbal skill; these are qualities which Mr. Wells indubitably has. But the qualities which consecrate these other qualities are his priceless and total sincerity, and the splendid human generosity which colours that sincerity.[44]

Bennett's panegyric continued with an obeisance to Wells the truth-teller: 'he has combined a disconcerting and entrancing candour with a warmth of generosity towards mankind and an inspiring faith in mankind such as no other living writer, not even the most sentimental, has surpassed'. Earlier, Bennett made a roundabout reference to the issue of the novel as autobiography by citing the author of a review that appeared in the *Daily News* on 17 January 1911. The critic Rolfe Arnold Scott-James used 'photographic' rather than 'autobiographical' to describe a novel where the hero bore a startling resemblance to his creator. Bennett said 'Scott James' 'for all his gifts' forgot a novel was a novel and added that he spoke from experience. 'I have suffered myself from this very provincial mania for chemically testing novels for traces of autobiography'. Once Bennett got around this touchy subject, he made the substantive criticism that he found the hero's change of political parties unconvincing. He concluded by calling Wells's handling of Remington's final catastrophe 'a masterpiece of unforced poignant tragedy and unsentimental tenderness'.[45]

It was Alfred Randall's turn a week later. His extensive critique 'The Two Machiavellis: A Comparison and a Contrast' was more ambitious than Bennett's review and much more caustic.[46] 'Mr. Wells demands so much sympathy for his hero that the book is really a plea for him rather than a criticism of him'.[47] Randall noted that any resemblance between Remington and Niccolo Machiavelli was purely superficial and implicitly shamed Wells by offering the reader an authoritative-sounding overview of the Italian's

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Alfred E. Randall, 'The Two Machiavellis: A Comparison and a Contrast', *The New Age* 8.15 (9 February 1911), 353-5. The contents page gives the title as 'H. G. Wells's New Machiavelli'.
[47] Ibid.

ideas about government. Wells understood so little about practical politics (the sphere where Machiavelli excelled) that he reduced Remington to ineffectual babble about changing the human race. 'Very good intentions, but they have no more relation to politics than the chemical formula H2O has to water'. Randall turned to 'the unravelling of the "strand" of sex':

> [Machiavelli] would have thrown over the whole female sex had it been necessary to the realisation of his dream [...]. But what is Remington's wonderful discovery of women? He fell from politics into love; and, forced to choose between his career and a woman, chose the woman. He discovered the woman in the politician, and imagined that he had discovered sex in politics.[48]

Randall calls Remington's dilemma a 'simple story of white passions struggling against the red'.[49] He wants to be a politician and becomes a lover. His ignorance of political history leads to his fatal confusion about the place of women and sex in high affairs of state. He fails to follow Machiavelli's example, and instead of separating sex and politics, attempts to interweave them. The result is Remington's abject failure as a politician. Wells's hero validates the timeworn truth that a man may not serve two masters and so must accept he is Isabel Rivers's lover. not Niccolo Machiavelli's compeer.

Bennett ignored Randall's review and turned readers' attentions to the aberration that neither *The Spectator* nor *The Westminster Gazette* reviewed *The New Machiavelli*. 'Books and Persons' for 16 February devoted a paragraph to recalling that *The Spectator* was thoroughly defeated over *Ann Veronica*. Bennett assumed that this explained the paper's present 'august and frowning silence' and pointed out that *Ann Veronica* had already sold 15,000 copies. Far from libraries banning it, the 'sixpenny maiden aunts', as Bennett mockingly called the middle-class reading public, rushed to the libraries and 'demanded it with one coughing, apologetic voice'.[50] *The Westminster Gazette* happily ran a paid advertisement for *The New Machiavelli* and yet neglected to review the book.[51] A column in April mentioned that the Manchester and Birmingham public libraries acted to ban

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] For the full text of *The Spectator* article and Wells's reply, see Wells, *Ann Veronica*, edited by Carey J. Snyder (Peterborough: Broadview, 2016), Appendix A.
[51] Tonson, 'Books and Persons, *The New Age* 8.16 (16 February 1911), 373.

Wells's latest novel. Bennett did not feel as if their actions meant anything. He got amusement out of the goings-on at Wallasey, a suburb of Liverpool, where the library committee refused to name the book and banned it anyway. Bennett said that they were afraid of Wells bringing a libel action: 'I have several times predicted that some day one of England's ten thousand municipal censors will let himself in for a good expensive libel action, and I shall be charmed to see that day'.[52]

Randall's second review, dated 23 February, adopted the tactic of clobbering Wells with the author's pretentions to scholarship.[53] He said that it was obvious that Remington was vain enough to think he understood *The Prince* and obvious, too, that Remington, was utterly mistaken.[54] Randall took advantage of the moment to lecture readers about British politics from Hobbes to modern organised political parties. Randall's position was that he knew more about current political parties than Wells. He said that he did not see how Remington could imagine his precious scheme for state support for mothers was likely to make anyone's agenda, let alone interest the Conservatives. The Endowment of Motherhood scheme offered a bunch of plutocratic politicians 'no more efficient and amenable wage-slaves than they have at present'. Those who had power were unlikely to give it up for Remington's vague Utopia:

> Remington's suggestions (for plan or ideal, he has not) offer no one anything but the bare satisfaction of being an idealist. To touch the subject of education in Parliament is to set a number of fanatics at work diverting public funds to the use of sectarian interests; and his other suggestions do not concern the politicians. And this is the beggarly result of all his boasting: a few vague suggestions that somehow we all ought to become more learned, more loving, and make life more beautiful, and that the endowment of motherhood should be an easy means of raising a private member to Cabinet rank. Niccolo Machiavelli did leave us 'The Prince'; but babies and bunkum seems to be the legacy of his successor.[55]

[52] Tonson, 'Books and Persons', *The New Age* 8.21 (13 April 1911), 566.
[53] Randall, 399-401.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

Upton Sinclair wrote to *The New Age* from the United States, looking to redefine the argument. 'There is one kind of love which is sterile self-indulgence – and there is another kind of love which leads to the perfecting of future generations of the race. It is the latter kind with which Wells has to deal'.[56] Sinclair made a thinly veiled attack on Winston Churchill's record as Home Secretary and asked whether Remington's devotion to Isabel was not worth more than any current politician's time in office?[57] Randall defended himself in a follow-up letter.[58] He saw nothing in the novel to back up Sinclair's analysis. Men for whom sex was of paramount importance were fornicators, to use the biblical term. Sex was not a substitute for statecraft. The remark about fornicators referred to Remington, but was aimed at Wells. Implying once again that Wells did not understand his own work, Randall made the separate point that there was one neo-Machiavellian character, Remington's friend Britten. Try as his distinguished American colleague could, he did not salvage Wells's novel, given its all-too-evident flaws. The historian Mark Somos has offered an alternative view. In an article published in 2011, Somos traces Remington's progress as he moves from one stage to the next in his search for the ideal in politics. He believes that the novel has a logical trajectory and that at the end Wells's hero arrives at the 'formulation of a private and political method for the necessary pursuit of Machiavellian principles under the disguise of anti-Machiavellism'.[59]

Wells and *The New Age*'s relationship moved into another phase in July. The paper's foreign correspondent John M. Kennedy saw an article of Wells's in the Paris journal *Le Temps* and wrote a long essay attacking him. Among other insults, Kennedy called Wells a cynical populariser:

> Among those novelists whose minds appear to be concentrated upon their circulations as much as upon their art, and who take full advantage of the advertising facilities offered by Press interviews, newspaper puffs, and the numerous little ways and means of appealing

[56] Upton Sinclair, 'The New Machiavelli', *The New Age* 8.21 (13 April 1911), 574.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Randall, 'The New Machiavelli', *The New Age* 9.22 (20 April 1911), 598-9.
[59] Mark Somos, 'A Century of "Hate and Coarse Thinking": Anti-Machiavellian Machiavellism in H. G. Wells' *The New Machiavelli*', *History of European Ideas* 37 (2011), 137.

> to the public directly and indirectly, the name of Mr. H. G. Wells naturally occupies a prominent place.[60]

Kennedy did further damage by implying that Wells wrote the short biography accompanying the *Le Temps* article and made the snide comment that 'some of these details are what might be vulgarly called the limit'. As if he had not said enough to anger Wells, Kennedy potentially violated Wells's copyright by translating long sections of the *Le Temps* article and adding them to his own.[61] A week later, Jacob Tonson mildly pointed out that *Le Temps* bought a transcription of the lecture Wells gave to the Times Book Club and translated it for a French audience. Moreover, Wells neither wrote nor edited his biography. 'This I know from inquiries made in Paris'.[62] With no apology in sight, Wells angrily instructed his solicitors to ask for one and demanded fifty pounds to settle a case of copyright infringement. Their letter pointed out the gratuitous tone of Kennedy's article. Orage published it under the contemptuous heading 'A Preposterous Demand' and went full out to defend Kennedy and the paper. Orage was so far from conciliatory that he called Wells's claims 'preposterous and vindictive' and accused Wells of hypocrisy, using Wells's words against Wells: had not Wells openly called for writers and creators to be free to 'create and sustain an enormous free criticism'?[63] Orage dismissed the copyright issue as a simple misunderstanding, remarking that Kennedy acted innocently. After all this noise, the matter ended in the proverbial whimper: Wells dropped the case, implicitly conceding to Orage's point that Kennedy had no way of knowing the article was in copyright and did not renew his demand for an apology.

Bennett gave up his column shortly after the fracas under ambiguous circumstances that may have reflected a loss of confidence in Orage's judgement. In 1913 Orage joined the chorus in his literary column 'Readers and Writers', lambasting Bennett and Wells for 'doing stunts' for the London tabloids. Orage said that it offended him 'physiologically' to find the author of *Mr. Polly* and *The Wheels of Chance* abasing himself.[64] He assumed that

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[60] J. M. Kennedy, 'The Last Straw: H. G. Wells on the Novel', *The New Age* 9.10 (6 July 1911), 232-4.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Tonson, 'Books and Persons', *The New Age* 9.11 (13 July 1911), 255.
[63] H. G. Wells, 'A Preposterous Demand', letter from Hunter & Haynes, solicitors, response by Ed. N. A. [Orage], *The New Age* 9.13 (27 July 1911), 311.
[64] R. H. C., 'Readers and Writers', *The New Age* 8.7 (12 June 1913), 178.

Wells had instructed his publishers not to send the usual review copies to the paper. Randall facetiously suggested that Wells had 'a hand-illuminated copy [of *Marriage* (1912)] prepared for us, bound in rich leather and elaborately tooled', which the porter had stolen on the way to the *New Age* offices.[65] When Orage intimated that Wells boycotted the paper over a review copy of *The Passionate Friends* (1913), Wells responded with a furious letter:

> Sir. Your vanity and folly passes [sic] belief. Do you really think I run about my publisher's offices, bothering about the distribution of Press copies? Anyhow, I've told them to send you one. H. G. WELLS. [Yes. – ED. N. A.][66]

Orage couldn't resist adding that contemptuous 'sic'. A couple of weeks later, he acknowledged that he received the book and among other insults said that the novel disgusted him.[67] Randall, too, could not leave Wells alone. In May 1914, he dismissed Wells's futuristic novel *The World Set Free.* He said that Wells was incapable of writing anything but the most inconsequential sketch and called Wells an 'ass':

> [He is] so egregiously an ass that one nearly forgets his asinity in wonder at his egregiousness. What other man, having set the world free by blowing up with atomic bombs most of the capital cities of the world, would introduce his fad of proportional representation into the Utopia that he imagines would follow the catastrophe?[68]

Mr. Britling Sees It Through

In 1916 Wells published his war novel *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*. The novel surprised Alfred Randall into writing an extensive review that took a completely different tone from anything he had previously written about Wells.[69] Randall's critique appeared in an issue full of war news and first-

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[65] A. E. R., 'Views and Reviews', *The New Age* 12.21 (27 March 1913), 505.
[66] H. G. Wells, '"The Passionate Friends"', *The New Age* 13.23 (2 October 1913), 679.
[67] 'Readers and Writers', *The New Age* 13.25 (16 October 1913), 730.
[68] A. E. R., 'Views and Reviews, Bombardier H. G. Wells v. The World', *The New Age* 15.3 (21 May 1914), 66.
[69] A. E. R. 'Views and Reviews, Mr. Wells' New Novel', *The New Age* 19.24 (12 October 1916), 570.

hand accounts of life at the Front. Appropriately, considering the contents of Wells's novel, the issue featured letters from rank-and-file German infantrymen describing their experiences during a recent battle ('Home Letters from German Soldiers translated by P. Selver'). The poet Edwin Muir wrote a standard criticism of Wells's style. He ended with a flourish: 'Fate has dealt ironically with Mr. Wells. It has turned his volumes of fictions into prophesies, and his volumes of prophesies into fiction'.[70] Randall ignored clichés and seriously engaged a book that he found many reasons to admire. He conceded that the author brilliantly captured the popular mood during a cataclysm:

> [Wells's novel] is not only a vivid personal study, it is, in some sense, 'an intellectual and emotional history of England during the period of the war'. The statement needs qualification; Mr. Britling does not interpret or represent the spirit of England, but the spirit that tries to understand and express the spirit of England. How much of Mr. Wells there may be in Mr. Britling I need not inquire.[71]

Randall thought the title was misleading. 'Mr. Britling neither sees it through, nor sees through it, he really only sees through himself'; and 'while the book is a most remarkable achievement [...] it conveys the impression that it is not the book that Mr. Wells intended to write'. Randall did not engage with the former, which virtually required a separate essay, and saw the latter as one of the novel's strengths. As Christopher Priest writes in his introduction to the Hogarth edition, 'The novel is unstructured, in the modern sense, and it does not continue in the way it begins. The mood changes, inevitably, never to be retrieved, but because Wells was actually writing during the war he obviously planned this'.[72] Randall approved of the tight focus once the Britling family is caught up in the conflict, saying that 'the fact of war brings Mr. Britling from the universal to the particular'. It is then, says Randall,

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[70] Edward Moore, 'Odd Notes', *The New Age* 19.24 (12 October 1916), 569. Edwin Muir contributed a number of essays in 1916 and 1917, using the pseudonym Edward Moore.
[71] A. E. R., 570.
[72] Christopher Priest, 'Introduction', in H. G. Wells, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1985), n.p.

> the narrative becomes personal; it is only as the war affects Mr. Britling that we read of it. And it affects him not only as a world-calamity but as a vital torture; he multiplies his storms of indignation, his still worries, his fierce alarms, his elations, his despondencies, by millions, by the millions of fathers throughout the world whose boys have met in battle. In the first book of the story, Mr. Wells devotes an amazingly clever chapter to 'Mr. Britling in Soliloquy': but that analysis seems feeble indeed beside the passionate stress of these passages in the second book. And always with masterly skill, Mr. Wells makes Mr. Britling do his work of criticism; in an agony of fear because he has not heard from his boy for twenty-three days, he turns upon Mr. Direck in a fury of exasperation, and tears the American case for neutrality to pieces.[73]

Randall praised the first book 'Matching's Easy at Ease': 'it is a most vivid recollection of a state that most of us can only vaguely recall'; Britling's prewar circle knows everything but 'what they wanted to do. They were happy, intolerably happy; and they were beginning to yearn for an earthquake, or anything that would vary the heavenly routine of their days'. Randall was less satisfied with 'The Testament of Matching's Easy'. Without reverting to his former savage fault-finding, Randall said that he was genuinely disappointed with the way the novel ended. It may be in keeping with the character that Britling devises schemes for altruistic postwar institutions, 'but it does not meet the criticism of the book'.[74] Randall went back to Book 11 to retrieve the passage beginning 'I saw this war as so many French have seen it', and ending 'mere incoherent fighting and destruction, a demonstration in vast and tragic forms of the stupidity and ineffectiveness of our species'.[75] According to Randall, the Britling who has not yet lost his son vents his disappointment; the bereaved father tries to find consolation where there is none:

> Satisfy legitimate national aspirations, and still there is no end to war; the desire for change, for aggrandisement, for mere danger and adventure, would soon re-draw the map of the world [...]. Mr. Wells has not yet recognised that Nietzsche was right when he said: 'Man

[73] A. E. R., 570.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Wells, *Britling*, 351.

> does not desire happiness; only the Englishman does that'. He still clings to his hope that, at last, war will cease; his Mr. Britling believes in a God Who is finite, and struggles against Necessity for a principle of good, and whom we can help to prevail. But this God Who struggles and fights is still a God of War, He may make war holy, but He cannot make it peace. But however we may quarrel with Mr. Wells' ideas, we have to read his works; and 'Mr. Britling' is one of his most vital, most passionately sincere, works.[76]

Saying 'we have to read his works', Randall extended the gesture into a near panegyric. Perhaps, if Wells had been able to anticipate Randall's review, he might have softened his critique of the journal in *Boon* (1915): 'Literary carbolic acid – with an occasional substitution of vitriol'.[77]

Writers at *The New Age* had different points of view about the four 'social novels' discussed in this article, which depended in part on their personalities and also on their personal relationships with Wells. Bennett gave Wells his steady support for as long as he kept his column; Randall had wildly different responses to *Mr. Britling* and *The New Machiavelli* and made no attempt to reconcile them; and Hastings spoofed *Ann Veronica* and then went back and critiqued it. Wells got it right when he called the paper 'young' and 'harsh and high-spirited', and visualised Orage at the helm riding a wave of success and taking on more risk: 'as persistently advanced as a jib-boom'.

Briefly, *The New Age* stumbled through the war years, had a revival after 1918, and lost Orage in 1922 when he sold the paper to a new owner. By 1922 Wells had published the first version of his *Outline of History*, visited Russia for a second time, and stood unsuccessfully for Parliament. His was a different world after the war and Orage's also, who after much soul-searching gave up journalism to join a mystical community in France.

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[76] A. E. R., 570.

[77] Wells, H. G. *Boon, the Mind of the Race, the Wild Asses of the Devil, and the Last Trump* (New York: George H. Doran, 1915), 159.

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Book reviews

Adam Roberts, *H. G. Wells: A Literary Life* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) ISBN 978-3-030-26420-8 (PB) €21.39, ISBN 978-3-030-26421-5 (ePUB) €16.04 [Genie Babb]

H. G. Wells: A Literary Life by Adam Roberts is a rich and provocative feast for students of Wells, novice and specialist alike. It is an addition to the Palgrave Literary Lives series, whose purpose is to present literary biographies in an 'accessible and engaging way', and Roberts's book certainly fulfils that remit. It is first and foremost concerned with Wells's literary output, and it includes enough biographical information to provide context, but not so much as would overshadow the central focus on Wells's writings. Indeed, in the 'Preface', Roberts states that he 'make[s] no claims to have uncovered any new [biographical] material' (v). A prolific author of science fiction and of literary criticism, Roberts has produced a lively and readable work of deep erudition. At over 400 pages, the book is a marathon read, but it is one that compels unflagging attention – if not always agreement – all the way through.

Roberts sets himself the task of covering the full span of Wells's literary output. While he does not neglect the early work, one of his central aims is to 'open up awareness of the novels Wells wrote in the 1920s and after' and to argue that 'many – though I concede, not all – of the later novels are fascinating and brilliant' (vi). Roberts succeeds admirably here, which is one of the most significant achievements of the book. Not only that, Roberts wants to instate Wells in the pantheon of literary giants: 'Wells was a literary artist of immense, underappreciated talent, a writer whose literary genius [...] deserves to be resurrected in a much broader cultural context too' (430). To bring about this revaluation, Roberts employs several strategies. One is to place Wells in conversation with other literary greats. Another is to focus on formal elements in Wells's writing, emphasising universal, ahistorical themes, particularly sex. A third is to downplay Wells's social and political ideas in the fiction and to critique them head-on in the nonfiction.

Organised around individual works or clusters of related works, the chapters constitute a confederation of related essays, in the classical sense of that term. Chapter titles suggest multiple organising foci, whether genre

('Short Fiction', 'Science Fiction'), theme ('War', 'Sex', 'Education'), historical time period ('League of Nations'), or, interestingly enough, long-term love interests, such as Rebecca West and Odette Keun. This eclectic approach gives the book the feel of serendipitous discovery. It also enables Roberts to demonstrate the many strands that integrate Wells's writing into the web of literary tradition. In the chapter devoted to *Kipps* (1905), for example, Roberts compares the eponym to Pierre Bezukhov in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*: 'What is Kipps, after all, except a lower-class Pierre?' (132). In the chapter on *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900), Roberts turns to Dickens to draw a fascinating comparison of the women in *David Copperfield* and *Lewisham*. In his analysis of *The Time Machine* (1895), he brings in the Oedipus myth. Roberts picks up 'a Dantean thread that connects' *Tono-Bungay* (1909) and *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910). *Men Like Gods* (1923) and *The Dream* (1924) '[play] intertextual games with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*' (317). Besides establishing the impressive erudition of Roberts himself, this kaleidoscope of references establishes Wells's place in the literary tradition of the West.

Beyond these intertextual reference points, Roberts focuses on 'the literary and aesthetic calibre of Wells's achievement [...] determined to challenge the widespread but erroneous belief that Wells's novels are formless or baggy' (ix). Though clearly cognizant of the past half-century of literary theory (Lacan and Žižek make appearances, among many others), Roberts's analysis centres on form and theme, style and characterisation, and thus bears more resemblance to mid-twentieth-century New Criticism than to current modes of analysis, such as Cultural Criticism. Indeed, Roberts tends to strip out political and ideological elements to highlight universals, often flouting the scholarly consensus on these texts in the process. *The Time Machine* does not satirise 'nineteenth-century class relations so much as our [...] habits of judging by appearances, our assumption that evil must coordinate with our sense of ugliness and virtue with our apprehension of pulchritude' (45). *Ann Veronica* (1909) is not political or feminist; rather, it is an 'exercise in characterisation', it is 'a novel about a fundamentally selfish if attractive young woman who finds her life constricted in a sequence of ways but who ultimately frees herself through sexual ecstasy' (174-5). By shifting the focus from the historical fight for women's rights to Ann Veronica's individual sexual experience, Roberts suggests that Wells can be read for his universal, transcendent themes.

Sex is the most prominent of universal themes that Roberts addresses. It allows him to connect formal and thematic elements to their psychosexual

origins in Wells's life, of course, which is appropriate for a literary biography, and in the realist novels, the examination of sex is *comme il faut*. In *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), 'Sex doesn't happen, and yet sex is immanent in everything' (61). The Chaffery subplot in *Love and Mr. Lewisham* is a 'discretely veiled' reference to the 'spurting, ectoplasmic' story of sex in the novel. In *Apropos of Dolores* (1938), Wells realises the 'radical' idea that 'genuinely good sex is only really possible with somebody who makes you miserable' (402). But Roberts also sees sex as generative in the speculative fiction. That the Time Traveller has sex with Weena is obvious, according to Roberts, as is the way this relationship inverts the Oedipus myth: 'The Traveller's adventure, in other words, is to hop over time, encounter his own children, sleep with his daughter [Weena] and murder his sons [the Morlocks]' (47). *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is about sexual love; Moreau is 'in the business of making a mate for himself' by vivisecting the puma, whose 'unleased female potency is the force to destroy Moreau's garden Eden' (57). In *The Holy Terror* (1939), the transformation of the world from war to utopia occurs because the protagonist, Rud, 'has never had a sexual partner, having sublimated all his erotic impulses into his political career' (406). Though some of these latter readings fail fully to convince, they are provocative and engaging, and they open up new perspectives on these texts.

One other aspect of Roberts's treatment of Wells's fiction must be mentioned. Roberts is careful to point out the many passages tainted with racist, sexist, and homophobic assumptions, though usually this is done in passing, not as part of his literary analysis. In dealing with Wells's non-fiction, however, consideration of these assumptions becomes a focal point of analysis. Roberts states his obligation both to 'summarise and understand' Wells's ideas within 'the context of the era that produced them', and to 'engage with those ideas as living quantities' in the light of our own times with the 'resurgence [of] nationalism and nativism, of anti-Semitism and "race purity", of the viability of socialism and the pressures of fascism' (ix-x). Throughout his discussions of Wells's non-fiction, Roberts situates Wells's thought within that trajectory of resurgence. He contends that Wells had a lifelong commitment to social planning and eugenics, waving away the argument advanced by many Wells scholars that in *Mankind in the Making* (1903) Wells renounced eugenics. He lambasts 'Wells's crudely social-Darwinist racism', going so far as to suggest that it invalidates any claim to progressivism in the case of *New Worlds for Old* (1908), for example: 'We must doubt the progressive bona fides of any book that indulges in such

hoogah-boogah racist arm-waving' (156). Discussing anti-Semitic remarks in that work, Roberts admits he is walking a fine line between acknowledging these unsavoury moments and making too much of them by 'suggest[ing] that *New Worlds for Old* is primarily anti-Semitic in the thrust of its argument. It isn't' (156). Rather, Wells's unexamined racist assumptions are indicative of 'the ways in which the society and culture [...] had internalised so comprehensive an ideological animus against the Semite that it could be invoked with the merest nod' (156). This passage gets at the heart of the problem with Roberts's analysis of Wells's ideas. Roberts does us a service in pointing out the repeated instances of Wells's casual espousal of such views because it reminds us that Wells did not escape the prejudices of his time. For this reviewer, however, the question is not whether Wells reflected the racism of his cultural moment, but whether that racism is integral to his social vision. I believe it is not. Moreover, Roberts neglects to look at other more inspiring through lines that connect Wells's ideas directly to contemporary movements of social and environmental justice. *Ann Veronica* belongs to the feminist tradition that has questioned traditional women's roles. The questions still hold up, even if the solution for Ann Veronica herself does not. Indeed, Wells's ideals in *The Rights of Man* (1940) are precursors to Roberts's own critique of Wells's racism. Agree or disagree with Roberts on individual readings or broad trends, his book represents a significant contribution to our understanding of Wells's genius.

Sarah Cole, *Inventing Tomorrow: H. G. Wells and the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020) ISBN 978-0-231-19312-2 (HB) $35.00, ISBN 978-0-231-55016-1 (ePUB) $34.99 [Ryan John Edwards]

Inventing Tomorrow posits H. G. Wells as an essential contributor to the emergence of what has become canonical literary modernism. Sarah Cole goes far beyond the well-trodden ground of Wells's break with Henry James, interactions with James Joyce, and friendship with Joseph Conrad, instead emphasising how Wells's works speak to the overriding concerns of modernism: the impact of total war, fluid temporalities, literary innovation and avant-garde politics, and a preoccupation with modernity's disorientating flux. In doing so, Cole wants us to read Wells as a vital contributor to the development of modernism and beyond. Cole is thorough

and erudite, and her vivacious prose sustains interest across the vast terrain of Wells's work, spanning the scientific romances and *Mind at the End of Its Tether* (1945), and boring down selectively for productive, exploratory readings. Her aim is commendable and welcome: to parachute Wells into critical discussions about twentieth-century literature, force him into the modernist debate after decades of near-total exclusion, and insist upon overlooked works' value.

Inventing Tomorrow is organised into three large chapters. The first deals with Wells's mercurial style, or styles: his habits of 'self-textualizing' (62); literalisation of metaphoric language; use of specialist or technical vocabulary, as in the opening paragraph of *The War of The Worlds* (1898); a tension between pessimism, often violent and cataclysmic, and bold utopian confidence; and the visuality of his imagination. Most important for Cole, and perhaps most egregious by modernist standards, is Wells's development of the essay-cum-discussion novel, a form which exemplifies his willingness to tell not show, and explicate, self-interrogate, and debate. Wells openly and critically examines the contingencies of his moment – economic, social, political – according to different temporal scales and within what Cole calls a 'textual agora' (68), reflecting a mind developing through time, one always reacting to polyvalent stimuli. Wells abjures any Eliotic notion of a slowly changing, but almost constant, European mind. In Cole's reading, Wells's discursive habits might irritate academics used to modernist obliquity, but the text has already served its function: they are intended to provoke. Wells's texts are both didactic and 'instrument[s] of self-examination' (68); they are interventions in the world.

In her strongest chapter, Cole analyses Wells's prescient understanding of total war's implications for civilian life and civilisation. The incursion of the First World War into ordinary life takes Wells beyond modernism's indirect encounters with the conflict in *The Waste Land* (1922) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and into 'the excessively violent tumult of war when it yawns towards totality' (112). Wells's acute sense of war's insidious presence, drawn out by Cole's nuanced account of Mr Britling's concerted and difficult attempts to imagine various, tangible iterations of the war, provides a dialectical possibility, though. If Wells can make his readers – encompassing the porous categories of civilian and combatant – aware of their own precarity, as much as the visceral violence of modern warfare, such shared vulnerability can serve as a predicate for a utopian futurity: the War could, perhaps will, end war.

In her third chapter, Cole examines Wells as 'a kind of philosopher of time' (154), one who counterbalanced the deep time of the Earth's cosmic history and evolution with his belief in the legibility of a near future. The ambition is startling. Unlike the modernists, whose sense that the 'truly ancient persisting here and now' presents 'a grave threat' because 'it means taking stock of one's own potential barbarity' (200), Wells posited a shared history as grounds for global collectivity. The Wellsian effort towards totality stands against modernism's insistence on the limitations of subjective experience, consilience, parallax, and multiplicity. Cole notes that Wells's sense of history was underwritten by a principle of perpetual change: there 'are no origins, no beginnings, only what came before and what follows' (209). Cole's nuanced reading of *The Outline of History* (1920), which she considers Wells's 'greatest work' (231), draws out the dialectical tension between the functioning reality of fluid, impersonal forces and an underlying or emergent opportunity for a future Wells envisaged and sought to precipitate: a world beyond petty nationalism, internecine conflict, and wasteful, competitive capitalism.

Even though Cole notes that Wells followed T. H. Huxley's lead in acknowledging the constancy of evolutionary change measured 'against human ethical community' (242), she overlooks Huxley's stipulation in 'Evolution and Ethics' (1893) that evolution's influence is offset by civilisational advance. 'Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process', Huxley argued, going on to state that the human capacity to intervene in 'non-human nature' is 'greater than that once attributed to magicians'.[1] Perhaps Cole's insistence on finding dialectical tension led her to posit one between Huxley and Wells where there was continuity. A more acute question, complicating the interplay of ethics and evolution, challenges Wells's sense of agency amidst the roiling tides of history, evolution, and extinction. This was asked nearly a century ago by Christopher Caudwell, but not as pointedly by Cole.[2]

Wells's destabilisation of normative temporality, making huge leaps forward and backward, is an obvious counterpoint to modernism's evocation of subjective temporal experience, one in which the present is penetrated by possible futurities and the depths of memory and history, whether planetary,

[1] T. H. Huxley, 'Evolution and Ethics', in T. H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 81, 83-4.
[2] Christopher Caudwell, *Studies in a Dying Culture* (London: John Lane, 1938).

human, lithic, or microbial. While modernists, such as Joyce, restrict the future 'to tight spaces' (171), Cole argues that Wells sought to interpret the future, and mediate his personal vision of utopian potentialities against bewildering temporal scales and the near irrelevance of individuals in the history of the human race. He was a clairvoyant of the possible, prognosticating about the shape of an incipient future in which the reader was invited to engage and participate. Interestingly, Cole suggests that the scale of the histories and futures Wells invokes undermines modernism's claims to the faithful articulation of lived reality because the actuality of that lived reality, the salient facts of human existence elucidated within a cosmic timescale and girded by biological life's inescapable materiality, is clearly laid out.

Inventing Tomorrow's next chapter argues for the pervasive influence of Wells's biological training and its exploration of the lowest reaches, as well as the smallest components, of human commonality. Cole identifies further dialectical tensions here, too: between species existence and the ephemerality of individuals in biological time; between science's understanding of 'the raw facts of biological existence' (279) as they grate against social mores; between autonomy and impersonal, biological imperatives, forcefully demonstrated by Cole's analysis of *Ann Veronica* (1909); between ameliorative, meaningful human intervention and the irrefutable unfoldings of cosmic change; between law and the heterogeneous individual instances which substantiate law; between waste and productivity, convincingly argued for in a perceptive reading of *Tono-Bungay* (1909). Cole addresses Wells's relationship with eugenics: she notes his disagreements with Francis Galton and also that, as early as 1895, he argued for species improvement via education rather than interventionist eugenic pseudoscience. There are sections of 1901's *Anticipations* and 1905's *A Modern Utopia*, however, that make for difficult reading within Cole's chronology.[3]

Cole's insistent characterisation of Wells's thinking as dialectical, however, can usefully enfold these difficult complications. The guiding synthesis, rising above various fraught and fractious theses and antitheses, is

[3] See, for instance, Adam Roberts: http://wellsattheworldsend.blogspot.com/2017/04/anticipations-1901.html. See also John Sutherland's 1995 essay on Wells's relationship with eugenics, and the responses from Michael Foot and Patrick Parrinder: https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v17/n24/john-sutherland/devil-take-the-hindmost.

Wells's 'dream of a unified world' (307). Cole's lodestar, hoisted above all of Wells's work, is a World State, realised by an Open Conspiracy, composed of members of the species rather than citizens of states or nations. Of course, 'the saving value of unity' (315) that *Inventing Tomorrow* relies on is composed of teeming multitudes always vulnerable to exogenous shocks, biological pressures, and the depredations of a disorganised world. Not that historical and contemporary iterations of human organisation, however imperfect, are to be wholly overlooked. Wells's interrogation of imperial violence in *The War of the Worlds* is not a simple repudiation of global unity. Cole argues that Wells saw the empire providing 'the grounds on which his world state would be built, only to fall away once the new structure is in place' (320) and explains *Tono-Bungay*'s anti-Semitism in terms of substitution and seriality. Though Cole acknowledges discomfort (ours and hers) when coming across such passages in her analysis of Wells, the examples are precisely what we find rebarbative about Wells's involvement, however iconoclastic, in his historical milieu. For a writer capable of imaginative leaps through dimensions and billenia, there is something disarmingly settled, even terrene, about some of his ideation. All of this is thrown into the dialectical alembic from which Cole rescues Wells's dream of a peaceful, rational global order. Cole's efforts produce a delicate conclusion, composed of antagonistic energies, but perhaps no less so than Wells's ambitions.

In Cole's account, Wells's writing is invariably dialectical but this is rarely brought into contact with similar tendencies in modernist literature. In *Inventing Tomorrow*, canonical modernists feature to remind us of Wells's overlooked contributions to their intellectual and aesthetic preoccupations, and Cole certainly limns potential avenues of further comparative study. There are hazards attendant to this approach, however. By opening Wells's work up to intertextual encounters, Cole risks reifying the very standards she wishes to challenge. The approach is certainly understandable, even as it betrays its own weakness: she asks us to read Wells because of numerous intersections with modernism, the entrenched metric of value *Inventing Tomorrow* seeks to, at the very least, complicate. Wells is drawn into the orbit of planets Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, and Co., the pull of their gravity seemingly irresistible.

Moreover, Cole's framing belies what she sees as Wells's biological conception of literature: 'nothing is forever. Each agent has a place in ensuring the longevity and well-being of the species' (29). Modernism looms above this evolutionary unrest, a figure securely abstracted above the very

interacting, material currents Cole argues for in Wells – those energies that engender change. Perhaps there is potential for a meaningful engagement between these two bodies of work. There is a lingering doubt, though, that revisionist projects such as Cole's are enthralled to the legible future they occlude. The rude health and hegemonic position of modernist studies, its abiding influence in the humanities, is always anterior to Cole's reading of Wells, however nuanced and searching.

Nonetheless, this study is deeply impressive. The problem of modernist predominance lingers, but it is not Cole's to solve. In *Inventing Tomorrow*, Wells's colossal intellectual efforts remain in the foreground, towering amongst the pillars of early twentieth-century literature. On her own terms, Cole's text succeeds.

Maxim Shadurski, *The Nationality of Utopia: H. G. Wells, England, and the World State* (London: Routledge, 2020) ISBN 978-0-367-33049-1 (HB) £120.00, ISBN 978-0-429-31774-3 (ePUB) £40.49 [Adam Roberts]

It might seem utopia is out of fashion at the moment. Today's vogue, if bestseller lists are anything to go by, is for dystopia, from the high-art despair of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* down to the extraordinary profusion of Young Adult fantasies, all the many *Hunger Games*, *Divergents*, and *Maze Runners* so avidly read by younger readers. It is not immediately obvious why such stories are so very popular nowadays, although the reason is presumably related to the question of what happened to utopian storytelling. After all, 'dystopia' is a Johnny-come-lately in terms of imagined orderings of society. The word was coined by John Stuart Mill in a Parliamentary Speech in 1868, whereas – as Maxim Shadurski notes in this compelling and closely-argued study – 'utopia' goes all the way back to Thomas More in 1516, and has been in continuous action ever since.

Given how popular the utopian mode once was, we might ask: when did it pass? Setting out a timescale might give us clues as to why we seem so enamoured of its dark-mirror version today. And as far as that goes, it can be plausibly argued that the last major writer to advance an unironic utopian agenda, consistently over many decades and to an audience of millions, was H. G. Wells. Shadurski's study addresses Wellsian utopianism from two, we might think, opposite angles: nationalism, on the one hand, and Wells's lifelong proselytising for a World State, on the other. It proves an

illuminating pincer movement and facilitates a series of original and penetrating readings of several key Wellsian works.

'Much of Wells's writing', Shadurski argues, 'from scientific romances through social realist novels and utopian fictions to pamphlets and human rights campaigns, performs a distinctive set of operations': 'reformulating the concept of utopia' and 'revisiting the discourse of England', so as to 'reinvest some of its select features in the proposal for the World State' (4). Shadurski's first chapter sketches a complex but lucidly set-out body of assumptions about 'England' as the, as it were, germ of the Wellsian World State. He theorises 'utopia' via Bloch and others, deftly maps out a particular 1890s discourse of Englishness and uses it to interrogate how far Wells's own beliefs were shaped by a sense of Englishness as connoting a particular, valorised set of geographies, character traits, liberties and idiosyncrasies, continuities and disjunctions. As 'England' expanded first to dominate the island of Britain, then Ireland, and so on to world-spanning Empire – this latter a structure Wells sometimes proposed as a possible stepping-stone to the World State – these disjunctions became more marked: a commitment to a fundamentally pastoral, local, small-scale ideal of England in high tension with the increasingly urban, industrial, and international reality. This discussion leads into Shadurski's second chapter, an exploration of what Wells wrote about the World State itself. This is likely to be more familiar ground for Wellsians: his belief that evolution rather than revolution was the path to the World State, that it would depend upon a comprehensive global system of education and of new large-scale energies of mobility and surveillance.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 broaden the discussion, looking at various other writers from the first decades of the twentieth century and setting their work alongside a number of Wells's utopian fictions. Some of these writers are less well-known – Robert Hugh Benson's *The Dawn of All* (1911), set in a utopian Catholic England of 1970, was new to me, I must confess – and some more. Chapter 5, for instance, includes a detailed reading of *Brave New World*. Wells and Huxley's fractious relationship, as writers and people, is well known of course, but Shadurski's larger argument enables him to say interesting and original things about Huxley's most famous novel. Along the way are intelligent accounts of *Men Like Gods* (1923) and *The Dream* (1924), and a final chapter examines a group of postwar novels: Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) – although I wondered if Burgess's overpopulation science-fiction novel *The Wanting Seed*, published the same year, would have fitted more closely with

the English specificities of Shadurski's argument – Ballard's *Concrete Island* (1974) and Julian Barnes's *England, England* (1998).

A distinctiveness of Shadurski's approach is his clear refusal to accede in the pigeonholing vocabulary of 'utopia, dystopia, and anti-utopia' on the grounds that 'such taxonomies lead back to a widespread view' – the one with which this review opens, in fact – 'that the crisis of modernity has sent utopia into decline, which engenders an ascertainable proliferation of dystopian and anti-utopian scripts' (7). Instead of this, Shadurski proposes 'conceptualizing utopia as a form of imagination which produces visions of alterity' (7). I wondered about this. There are, certainly, strengths to such an approach, but there are dangers, too. The classic More-ian notion of utopia as a hermetic space, an island of perfection self-isolated from the contagion of the social imperfections of the rest of the world – Jameson's 'Of Islands and Trenches' essay – becomes, as Shadurski notes, simply unsustainable in globalised modernity. In its place, he offers a nuanced, sensitive, and subtle reading of how the Wellsian conception of the high-tech World State retains within itself paradoxical revenants of locality, pastoral seclusion, and particularity. But this clever, even sinuous attentiveness to the mutual interpenetration of utopia by dystopia and vice versa – of the present by the future, of waking life by dreams, the dialectic by which a liberating mobility that eliminates distance and class and a deracinated homelessness and modern anomie define one another – seems to me to entail some problems. In such a reading 'alterity' runs the risk of becoming everything and nothing; everything is othered by *something*, after all, and all that is solid runs the risk of melting into dysutopian air. That does not seem to me quite right, though; or at least, does not seem to me quite common-sensical. Most of us, surely, have quite definite ideas as to whether we would rather live in a utopia or a dystopia. Which is to say, we would prefer to live in Middle Earth than Westeros, surely; would rather travel the roads of Wells's *A Modern Utopia* than walk McCarthy's *The Road*. Shadurski is manifestly correct that elements from both utopia and dystopia tend not only to co-exist in the texts he covers, but also to be implicated with one another. We might say that some of the high-tech bells and whistles of *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), or the worry-free idyll of the Eloi, cannot be wholly separated out from the dystopian textures of those two novels. *The Nationality of Utopia* is not as interested in Wells's occasional dystopian forays as it is in his longer-term commitment to fictional and nonfictional utopian writing.

Still, there is no doubt that this book is a major intervention into both the study of Wells as a writer and thinker, and into utopian theory more

broadly. Anyone interested in either field will want to seek it out, and future critical debate on both topics will need to take it into account. Quite apart from anything else, reading this dense but clearly laid-out and absorbing book gave me a new perspective on another contemporaneous event: Brexit, which you may consider, depending on your priors, either a utopian or a dystopian moment. Whatever your thoughts on this contentious matter, it is hard to deny that it manifests precisely what Shadurski anatomises here: it is simultaneously a retreat into a smaller, more localised 'Englishness' of parish traditions, common-sense and individuality, and a promise of an expansion into 'Global Britain', a nation so huge that even the largeness of Europe is too small to contain it. These questions have not gone away.

***H. G. Wells and All Things Russian*, edited by Galya Diment (London: Anthem, 2019) ISBN 978-1-78308-991-8 (HB) £80.00 [Alexandra Smith]**

Herbert George Wells, the subject of Galya Diment's very informative and rich study, was a prolific British writer whose science fiction works had a considerable impact on science fiction in Russia, China, and Japan. By examining Wells closely, this collection of articles effectively tells two different stories, one Russian, the other one British. As Diment argues in her Introduction, the 'Wells effect' in Russia and the Soviet Union was long-lasting: 'The Russian and Soviet fascination with Wells, facilitated by a very large number of his translations, was, for a long time, one of the most powerful collectively felt for a foreign author' (1). The volume comprises illuminating discussion of Wells's personal and literary relationships with Russian and Soviet authors and thinkers; the literary influence of Wells on several writers, including Yevgeny Zamyatin, Mikhail Bulgakov, Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky, Vladimir Nabokov, and the Brothers Strugatsky; the representation of Wells on the Russian stage and screen; and Wells's own vision of Russia and its culture shaped, to some extent, by his encounters with Gorky and his friendship with Odette Keun. The book incorporates new archival materials and offers several articles in English translation, including Yuly Kagarlitsky's piece 'In a Race against Time'. The latter supplements well Patrick Parrinder's Chapter 5 on Kagarlitsky's biography of Wells, published in Moscow in 2007.

The book's main strength is the wealth of features it presents. In mosaic-like manner, it unfolds many important details about Wells's life and

his fascination with Russian culture. It also provides a colourful account of the appropriation of Wells's utopian and dystopian ideas by Soviet writers. The volume is divided into three parts: 'Wells in Russia. Pre-World War II', 'Wells in Russia. Post-World War II', and 'Russia in Wells'. Part 1 offers a wide range of articles that examine the fruitful engagement with Wells's works undertaken by various writers. Maxim Shadurski's well-balanced and sensitive analysis of Zamyatin's interpretation of Wells's works and ideas underpins some differences in their vision of evolutionary and revolutionary change. 'Wells, unlike Zamyatin', affirms Shadurski, 'sees change as a necessary purposeful act contributing to the prospect of a much larger and later transformation, called revolution' (26). Shadurski rightly links Zamyatin's vision of revolution as an embodiment of dynamism to the writer's anxiety about the stagnation of Soviet Russia in the 1920s: 'The fact that Zamyatin denies Wells the makings of a social reformer and cultural critic speaks less about Wells's footings in a national bourgeois mentality than about Zamyatin's own uncertainties in post-revolutionary Russia' (26). Muireann Maguire's insightful chapter surveys the influence of Wells's science fiction novels, which were steadily translated into Russian from 1899, on such writers as Bulgakov and Krzhizhanovsky. Maguire describes both writers as fantastic realists whose narratives 'explore contemporary political, social or scientific discourses' (31). The chapter focuses on how Bulgakov and Krzhizhanovsky appropriate the Wellsian tropes of time travel and metamorphosis. It suggests that in Stalin's Russia the notion of time travel became synonymous with the displacement of those writers who did not conform to ideological demands of the Soviet government. According to Maguire, 'in early Soviet fantastic realism an impossible technology – time travel – became the perfect allegory for the impossibility of either writing or surviving as a creatively sincere artist' (46).

Zoran Kuzmanovich's chapter uncovers further links between Russian modernism and Wells. Kuzmanovich presents Vladimir Nabokov's 1931 story 'Terra Incognita' as a text inspired by Wells. In Kuzmanovich's opinion, in this story Nabokov treats ideas shaped by memory and imagination as being just as real as ideas informed by the empirical observation of reality. Kuzmanovich also finds a strong resemblance between 'Wellsian and Nabokovian modes of extraordinary perception of fictional simultaneity' (64). The chapter highlights the fact that both Wells and Nabokov 'declared themselves monists', 'rejected conventional measures of time', and 'felt that genuine emotions give us access to other worlds' (65). Kuzmanovich's chapter appropriately pays attention to the fact

that Wells was Nabokov's favourite writer during Nabokov's boyhood. As Nabokov puts it, Wells's 'sociological cogitations can be safely ignored, of course, but his romances and fantasies are superb' (52). Kuzmanovich's fruitful analysis of Wells's influence on Nabokov provides an additional tool for understanding Nabokov's obsession with the construction of 'alternate realities' and 'suprarational transcendence' found in his fiction.

The volume stretches beyond literary issues. In Part 2, it contains a highly innovative article by Olga Sobolev and Angus Wrenn that examines Soviet films featuring Wells and including such examples as *Light Upon Russia* (1947) and *The Chimes of Kremlin* (1970), in which Wells was configured 'as a liberal supporter of the Soviet system' (122). Additionally, the article by Sobolev and Wrenn examines Yulia Mavrina's 2013 documentary about Wells produced as part of a series *Geniuses and Villains*, in which the 'paradoxical duality of Wells's imagination' was portrayed in a sympathetic manner.

In Part 3, Diment's thought-provoking chapter on Wells's ongoing dialogue with Odette Keun also maps a new direction in Wells's scholarship. It portrays both Wells and Keun in a nuanced manner by suggesting that, despite 'the messiness of their personal relationship', Keun's first-hand knowledge of Stalin's Russia and her published works comprising references to Russia should be taken seriously in order to understand 'her possible influence on Wells's evolving views on the Soviet Union' (168).

Ira Nadel's perceptive chapter on Wells and Gorky reveals Wells's admiration for Gorky's radicalism and open-mindedness. In Wells's view, Gorky was 'a master of Russian thought' (151). Nadel detects some influence of Virginia Woolf and Moura Budberg (the lover of both Gorky and Wells) on Wells's understanding of the Russian point of view. Wells's depiction of Budberg as a person who 'thinks copiously, windingly and with that flavour of philosophical pretentiousness of Russian discourse' (150) exemplifies the alluring power of the Russian myth held by British intellectuals. In 1915, Rebecca West asserted that 'Russia is to the young intellectuals of to-day what Italy was to the Victorians'.[1]

Likewise, the image of Wells as a daring thinker with boundless imagination appealed to Russian intellectuals in the Soviet period. It continues to affect the social imagination of the Russian intelligentsia in Putin's Russia, too. As Sobolev puts it, 'At a time of ideological conservatism, emerging nationalism and reaction, the reference to one of the

[1] Rebecca West, 'The Barbarians', *New Republic* 9 January 1915, 20.

most daring dreamers of his age – the writer who did not cease to project a powerful impulse of faith into the future – is seen among the present-day Russian intelligentsia [...] as an inspiring example of keeping one's thoughts alive during the bleakest periods in the ebb and flow of the history of social transformations' (125).

Given the overall high quality of all contributions and their stimulating analyses, this volume will be welcome by Wells scholars and students alike. It will be also of interest to everyone studying comparative literature, science fiction, and twentieth-century British-Russian cultural encounters.

Jacob Jewusiak, *Aging, Duration, and the English Novel: Growing Old from Dickens to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) ISBN 978-1-108-49917-0 (HB) £75.00 [Emelyne Godfrey]

The irony of this book's subject became particularly apparent during the coronavirus lockdown of 2020. This volume, with its dust jacket image of a woman with swirling 'salt-and-pepper' curls, was lodged on my staircase during the entire lockdown phase. I dipped into it at points whilst home-schooling, tending to fledgling tomato plants, and raising the tadpoles which eventually became the frogs we released into the local pond. Throughout lockdown, hours and days can be more intensively experienced and we had the space to observe these markers of the passage of time, perceptible daily changes which might have passed us by during busier times. It is these slight developments in time and their influence on character that Jewusiak skilfully draws our attention to when considering the novel from the 1850s to the early twentieth century and discussing how writers were shaped by their awareness of changing times and growing old.

Aging in Victorian literature, he demonstrates, was often represented as a completed process. A clichéd grey hair or a wrinkle appear seemingly out of nowhere, usually metonymic of a character's transformation, shock, or disappointment in love. Growing old itself occurs outside the main thrust of the story. The general lack of care, as Jewusiak's book shows, taken to depict *aging* bodies is representative of a Victorian aversion to aging and its perceived drain on the economy and the workforce. There were anxieties over how long older men were financially and physically able to support the domestic family life so extolled in the nineteenth century while employers were reluctant to hire new domestic staff over the age of forty-five. Fears

which linked senescence and economic peril were reflected in stark images in literature. Jewusiak turns to the image of Dracula as a symbol of a force which leeches the youthful economy of its vitality, a grotesque fusion of aged, energetic greed. As he argues, the transformation of Dr Jekyll into Mr Hyde is really a comment on the fear of growing old, revealing all the usually hidden processes that occur beneath the skin over time. But, as he emphasises, the prevalence in literature of these completed processes of aging is also down to the lack of imaginative ways of representing the body gradually growing older. The book also puts forward the case that rather than thinking in terms of age categories such as childhood, youth, middle age, and old age, we should be considering the spaces in between these identified phases as sites of development, creativity and possibly also subversion.

Jewusiak begins with an analysis of selected Dickens novels, making the point that it is the old men in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) who steer the plot utilising their restless energy. Even after the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Grandfather Trent is shown hovering around her grave, 'stubbornly and pointlessly' continuing to exist. Jewusiak's reading of *A Christmas Carol* (1843) makes the point that a particular kind of Dickensian hell is reserved for the likes of Jacob Marley who linger on, floating on the fringes of existence, powerless to make a mark on the world. By contrast, Scrooge, after having been visited by the spirits, is freed from the pressure to make money. His proximity to death liberates him from social and capitalist norms and leaves him free to act. For Jewusiak, Dickens's elderly men are frequently depicted being left behind by the onward march of modernity: there is an old man in Charles Dickens's 'Scotland-yard' story in *Sketches by Boz* (1836) who observes the bustling world pass him by. By contrast, his female characters appear to embrace stasis. Indeed, for Mrs Clenham in *Little Dorrit* (1857), all seasons are the same. Most famously, the clocks belonging to Miss Havisham, a victim of the marriage plot going awry, are stuck at twenty to nine. Given Jewusiak's compelling discussion of the alternative ways in which Dickens's still enterprising older men exercise power over the young through, for instance, the exchange of secrets as opposed to bodily strength or wealth, I would like his observations to have been related to a discussion of the way in which Miss Havisham uses her aging body and indeed the withered objects around her as a weapon with which to overawe her young guests and shift the plot along, despite herself being forgotten by time.

Gaskell's *Cranford* is a comment on the forces of modernity and the marriage plot, showing life and friendship circles revolving at a different

pace with conventional modes of consumption and reading material being not only challenged but appropriated to cement societal ties. Jewusiak illustrates how, for instance, the recycling of old newspapers becomes symbolic of 'a new model for old age in the nineteenth century – [...] as an age that takes on significance precisely by its ability to discover meaning in what has been cast away by the society at large' (85).

Jewusiak argues that '[a]ging is, after all, time travel at a constant rate' (5). Hence, he shows that the tragedy for Edward Eden in 'The Story of the Late Mr. Elvesham' (1896) is that through the body swap with Mr Elvesham, whose concoction he consumed, he has been cheated out of experiencing the slow passage of growing older. Jewusiak cites *The Science of Life* (1930), in which Wells, G. P. Wells, and Julian Huxley describe the surprises that the daily routine reveals: the new white hair on the head or the inability to bend down to the floor quite as dextrously to pick up a stray comb. Without the everyday and the grounding this gives to our understanding of ourselves and the world around us, Jewusiak argues, time travel does not make sense. (Imagine those tomato plants jerking spasmodically to life rather than being viewed in a time-lapse film.) This account of 'Mr. Elvesham' is, however, incomplete because it misses the central point that Edward Eden, now a rich old man, has also been cheated out of the opportunity to experience the daily routine with all its incremental revelations and grow older in his *own* skin. He has been alienated from time, estranged from his body. Although he does not explicitly state this, the story raises numerous questions about the disconnection of generations to one another – a youthful generation who cannot imagine themselves as the future aging population – and feeds into a later point Jewusiak makes about the implications which this has on the imagination required to envisage and build a socialist future that has opportunities for the young and offers provisions for the older generation.

For Jewusiak, *The Time Machine* (1895), 'The New Accelerator' and *The Sleeper Awakes* (1910) invite readers to flex their imaginative muscles and offer ways of considering aging outside of normal parameters of understanding, namely the two-hundred-year-old man in middle age or the Time Traveller who experiences eight days in the course of four hours. The Eloi of *The Time Machine* are considered here to be both juvenile intellectually but senescent and unproductive, an expression of fears surrounding an aging, unproductive society and a world in decline as exemplified in Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892). The 'war of generations' in which one generation must dominate is further reflected in *In the Days of the Comet* (1906) and *The Food of the Gods* (1904) and for Jewusiak

particularly so in *The War of the Worlds* (1898). Jewusiak argues that while Wells emphasises mankind's distance from the creatures under the microscope, this comparison is mirrored in the image of mankind and the ancient worlds of space as represented by the Martians (symbolic of an older, vampiric generation) and their dispassionate gaze. Importantly, as Jewusiak notes, the inhabitants of Earth and Mars are only separated by time. Eventually, the humans in the novel, boosted by leftover Martian technology, will start to resemble the Martians and risk becoming a doomed and ancient species.

Admittedly, the relevance of some of the ancillary points to the larger argument of this book were unclear to me. It was at times as if points were obstructed by frond-like academic theory which needed careful unpicking, and the book may have benefitted from a more prominent overarching argument. However, Jewusiak's analyses of the finer points were interesting in and for themselves. His ideas on Wells do not perhaps offer a radically new vision of Wells's writing, but they do draw our attention to the lesser acknowledged tensions responsible for making Wells's warnings so poignant.

Chris Danta, *Animal Fables after Darwin: Literature, Speciesism, and Metaphor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) ISBN 978-1-10855-239-4 (HB) £75.00 [Siv Frøydis Berg]

As a literary genre, the fable generally holds a diminished status. It is an ancient form of storytelling, which is closely connected to children's literature. Fables are short stories, often supplied with a clear moral message, and playfully furnished with speaking animals that have human attributes. In the time of the Anthropocene, the question of the relationship between human beings, the environment, and other sentient beings is more relevant than ever. Chris Danta asks precisely that: how do fables conceptualise the boundaries between animals and humans? In which ways do they offer alternative perspectives to the widespread and deep-rooted ideas of human superiority over other species and human exceptionalism? Danta focuses on these questions by finding a tool to investigate them: the ancient literary form of animal fables. Danta shows that fables deserve far broader attention. He broadens the concept of the fable by including scientific romances written by Darwin's contemporaries: R. L. Stevenson and H. G. Wells, as he does

with twentieth-century writers, such as Theodore Francis Powys, Franz Kafka, Angela Carter, and J. M. Coetzee. Danta argues and shows through close analysis that his caucus of fictions provides new material for the fable. These texts explore different views of the human-animal relationship after Darwin. As 'new Aesopists' the selected writers examine the human species from a nonhuman perspective. They also express a view that the human belongs in the ape-house and that the metamorphosis of human animality is final. They criticise the idea of human exceptionalism by anthropomorphically adopting the perspective of the so-called lower animals. They explore what it means to be an animal and what it takes to be a human animal.

In the prologue of the book, Danta presents the possibility of animal uplifting, an idea first entertained in science fiction, about how scientific knowledge may be deployed to enhance the cognitive capacity of other animals to rival our own. Danta takes a stand against the illusion that we might somehow reproduce Aesop's talking animals in the laboratory, and presents the fable – and, in particular, the post-Darwinian fable – as an antidote to the speciest utopianism of animal uplifting.

In Chapter 1, which is both an introduction and a guide to reading the following chapters, Danta narrows his argument by paying attention to some of the basic ingredients of the fable. One of his fundamental observations is that the human relationship to nonhuman animals is often portrayed through vertical metaphors. We describe ourselves as higher animals, above other species. We walk upright, on two feet; direct our gaze upwards, to God and the stars. The four-legged animals look down, to earth. The 'great chain of being' is one of the most elaborate height metaphors in Western thought. The vertical metaphor distinguishes and empowers the human over the animal, and expresses the idea that uprightness and vertical orientation define the human. In the fable, the essential vertical movement is down, not up, which thus creates a possibility to seek the essence of the human in the act of looking down, not up. The fable plays with the vertical order of things, and makes it possible to imagine both the similarities and differences between a human and a nonhuman perspective. Danta also focuses on transformation as a significant hallmark of the fable: the reshaping of the human into the animal, but also the animal into the human. The first chapter also contains the only two illustrations in the book, dated 450 and 570 BCE. They present visual images of the ancient fable: Aesop, probably, in conversation with a fox and Oedipus in conversation with the Sphinx. They show the most essential hallmark of what Danta recognises as the fable: animals and

nonhumans acquire the power of speech and reason, thus making oral communication between human and nonhuman an imagined possibility.

The link between animal and human is the mouth. In the highly intriguing passages of Chapter 2, Danta discusses the 'grotesque mouth' in Aesop's fables and elaborates on the concept. He leans on philosophers, such as Roger Scruton, Louis Marin, and Jacques Derrida, and draws attention to the double character of the mouth. Danta's argument in this chapter is that the fable consciously exploits the tension between the higher, more human function of the mouth – logos and speech – and the lower, more animal function of the mouth – eating or devouring. He shows how Aesop uses the grotesque mouth to challenge the tradition of sophia from below. Going the whole orang means to accept evolution fully, view human as an animal among animals, and finally let go of the idea that God created the human in His image. Danta labels his newly oriented fables 'the theological grotesque' after Wells, using Wells's own term in describing *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, where the eponymous character plays God by transforming animals into humans by means of vivisection.

In Chapters 3 and 4 respectively, Danta contextualises his reading of Stevenson and Wells more closely alongside scientific literature, also discussing the role of scientific romances. In Chapter 3, he explores how Stevenson connects the individual present to the evolutionary path. Stevenson wrote fables himself and was, according to Danta, perhaps the first to realise the significance of evolution for the literary form of the fable. In an 1874 review, printed in *Essays Literary and Critical* (1928), the young Stevenson sets out not only to define some of the 'proper aims and methods' of the fable, but also to describe the shift in the form of the fable that occurred after Darwin. As he phrased it, 'a comical story of an ape touches us quite differently after the proposition of Mr. Darwin's theory' (84-5). Danta highlights Stevenson's perspectivism and discusses how the latter criticises anthropocentrism from below, from the viewpoint of ants and apes, as if they were the aim of life. Stevenson's contribution to the form of the fable, argues Danta, is to make temporal instability the subject of the fable.

In Chapter 4, Danta foregrounds Wells's particular contribution to the tradition of the fable after Darwin, namely the animalising of the present and its connection to the thought of the future. He discusses several of Wells's early romances: *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898), as well as essays and lectures: 'On Extinction' (1893), 'The Discovery of the Future' (1902), and 'The Future in America' (1906). Danta highlights how the first-person narrators

in these fictions get a glimpse of the highly disturbing knowledge of the fact that human is not final, and suggests that the critical target in Wells's fabulous thought experiments is precisely the anthropocentric mind-set that cannot imagine the future without humans. He is particularly interested in the new timescale Wells effects in his fiction, away from an anthropocentric view. The rediscovery of the past, emerging in the works of figures of Wells's age, such as geologist Charles Lyell and biologist Charles Darwin, provided Wells with concrete and scientifically validated images of the Earth before the humans, and enabled him to imagine a posthuman future. Danta argues how the metamorphosis of human into animal in Wells's fiction signifies the evolutionary and historical contingency of the human, the fragility of the human domination of the Earth. Danta holds this as an account of the fragility of the orientational metaphor that the human is up, and the animal is down. He shows how Wells uses the animal to figure the narrator's emotional response to the untethering of the present from the historical past, as well as from the imagined future. Danta quotes the first-person narrator in *The War of the Worlds*, who, after the Martian invasion describes the present as a 'sense of dethronement' (100). The 'ontological claustrophobia' Prendick experiences when returning to London after escaping the nightmares of the Island of Doctor Moreau is precisely the sense of fear the human feels on discovering their biological proximity to the ape, and the fear of a sudden cultural degeneration.

In Chapters 5 and 6, Danta's analysis of Kafka and Coetzee expands the perspectives he recognises in both Stevenson and Wells: the sense of otherness, claustrophobia, dethronement, and loneliness. He investigates figures like Gregor in *The Metamorphosis* and the ape Red Peter in 'A Report to an Academy', and explores muteness and entrapment in animal bodies in existential terms. He narrows his analysis by exploring the narrative animal and investigating the literary themes he identifies as 'Animal Bachelors and Animal Brides', and the figure of the Scapegoat.

Each chapter, with Danta's analysis of his selected works, is focused, tight, disturbing, and thought-provoking. The sum total of these chapters provides more than the pieces. As a contribution to animal studies, Danta's work offers new insight. This intriguing book also opens up new ways to understanding the fable. By recognising the form of the fable, and then following the adaptation and re-adaptation of the fable by nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors, Danta also demonstrates that the fable has potential as a tool for reading major ontological changes in the history of ideas. Ontological changes are often closely connected to the new science

and technology, and the new possibilities and consequences of science are often explored through familiar metaphors, 'habits of thought', and established forms of storytelling. This reader could wish for a few more concluding pages, where Danta would have discussed, with much more clarity, both the potential of the fable and how his own analysis pertains to it. Yet Danta has written a book that provides a highly recommendable read for everyone interested in each of his selected authors, and for those interested in tools for understanding cultural history.

Maxim Shadurski, *Utopia as a World Model: The Boundaries and Borderlands of a Literary Phenomenon* [*Utopiia kak model mira: granitsy i pogranichiia literaturnogo iavleniia*.] (Siedlce: Wydawnictwo IKR[i]BL, 2016) ISBN 978-8-36488-457-3 (PB) PLN35.00 [Oksana Blashkiv]

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union is often regarded as a utopian project, Utopian Studies kept a very low profile both in the USSR and its satellite states. Only recently, after Svetlana Alexievich completed her pentateuch *The Voices of Utopia* (1985-2013) and received a Nobel Prize for it in 2015, did serious academic interest in utopia begin to shape.[1] This realignment of research energies overlapped with the 500th anniversary of Thomas More's *Utopia* and 150th anniversary of H. G. Wells's birth, finding its notable embodiment in the volume under review, Maxim Shadurski's *Utopia as a World Model: The Boundaries and Borderlands of a Literary Phenomenon* (*Utopiia kak model mira: granitsy i pogranichiia literaturnogo iavleniia*).

The book captures the reader's attention with its choice of cover images. The front cover carries Jonathan Nackstrand's 2011 photo 'Occupy Stockholm'; the back reproduces the iconic 1968 slogan 'Soyez réalistes, demandez l'impossible', written on a stone bridge balustrade, with Paris tenements in the background. Both images trigger anticipation, which the

[1] See, particularly, Irina Kaspe, *V soiuze s utopiiei. Smyslovyie rubezhi pozdnesovetskoi kultury* (Moscow: Novoie literaturnoie obozreniie, 2018); *Istinnost i lozhnost utopii: voprosy utopicheskikh diskursov*, edited by Ewa Kozak and Ludmiła Mnich (Siedlce: Wydawnictwo IKR[i]BL, 2016). The latter volume offers a collection of essays about utopian theory and its literary and cultural manifestations by leading academics of Russian Studies from Europe and Russia.

book fully grants. Shadurski situates himself in relation to the emancipatory work of utopia, deriving his impulses from Wells's utopianism and building on its more recent inflections in the scholarship of Tom Moylan and Simon J. James. Albeit written in Russian, the book caters to a broader readership by providing a substantial preface in English and a summary in Polish. In the preface, the author both contextualises and fleshes out the key points of his study, as well as explaining his personal research trajectory, which he traces back to his doctoral programme in Minsk (Belarus). What is no less important is that Shadurski invites us to take *Utopia as a World Model* as a 'contrapuntal reading companion' (xix) to his previous monograph, *Literary Utopias from More to Huxley: The Issues of Genre Poetics and Semiosphere. Finding an Island* (Moscow: URSS, 2007), which is highly acclaimed and widely cited by Russian academics.[2]

Utopia as a World Model opens with a brief but highly informative survey of major interventions in Utopian Studies, with their provenance in German philosophy (Friedrich Engels, Arthur von Kirchenheim, Andreas Voigt, Karl Mannheim, Ernst Bloch) and later ramifications in the Anglo-American context (Arthur L. Morton, Robert C. Elliott, Lyman T. Sargent, Tom Moylan, Ruth Levitas). These landmark studies are juxtaposed to their Soviet, Russian, and Russophone counterparts, particularly the work of V. V. Svyatlovsky, Vyacheslav Shestakov, Eduard Batalov, Boris Lanin, Natalia Kovtun). For historical, political, and linguistic reasons, said traditions have remained in isolation, and it is the undoubtable merit of Shadurski's book to map out their convergences, without ignoring the crucially different emancipatory orientations that govern them.

The book's first chapter, 'Genesis of Utopia as a Genre and a World Model', focuses on two features: the notion of the world model and its subsequent realisation in utopia (19-27), and the genre theory of utopia (27-35). Shadurski maintains that the myth of the Golden Age and the image of Paradise on earth constitute the utopia's generic code which in time, due to the secularisation and rationalisation of mythological and religious sensibility, evolves into a world model. In the author's analysis, the study of utopia as a world model presupposes answering a set of questions: 'What kind of world becomes the object of its representation, and how is this world portrayed in or perceived by utopia?' Since utopia is characterised by its aspiration to seek out new models in lieu of an existing socioeconomic order,

[2] Maxim Shadurski, *Literaturnaia utopiia ot Mora do Khaksli*: *problemy zhanrovoi poetiki i semiosfery*. *Obreteniie ostrova* (Moscow: URSS, 2007).

its content remains dynamic on every morphological level, which is equally true of both classical and post-Wellsian, modern utopias (36).

The second chapter, 'Morphology of Classical Utopia', uses Aristotle's theory of organic being to develop the structure of utopia. Shadurski maintains that this unity comprises the organisation of space (*toposphere*), system of morals (*ethosphere*), and socio-political relations (*teleosphere*). In analysing utopia on these three morphological levels, the author commits himself to mythopoetic and structuralist categories. Thus, being a rich and abundant place, distant in time and/or space, the utopian topos absorbs the archetypal symbols of the centre (snake, tree, temple), which supply a premiss for utopia's geographical position between East and West, land and sea, heaven and hell (42). The utopian ethos equally marks the 'sacralisation of the world of "one's own" (humane and fair) and profanation of the world of the "other" (inhumane and unfair), which undergirds the correlation of military strategies and morals' (57). Central to Shadurski's discussion of the utopian telos is the dichotomy of life and death, playing itself out in the drama of perfecting the fabric of human society in the here and now or leaving that enterprise to eternity. Weaving his seamless exploration through the remarkable close readings of Plato, Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Henry Neville, James Harrington, and Daniel Defoe, Shadurski registers utopia's emancipatory potential in historical perspective. This chapter concludes with the definition of utopia as 'a literary phenomenon which involves the imagination of world models seeking to reconstitute the present economic order by way of depicting a different organisation of space (*topos*), system of morals (*ethos*), and socio-political relations (*telos*) that will define the newness of imaginary communities' (xvi). Shadurski's emphasis on 'the revision and overcoming of an extant and frequently dissatisfying condition of the world' holds the key to utopia's dynamism (67).

The Wellsian utopia takes centre stage in the book's third and final chapter, 'The Expansion and Reduction of Utopia in the Work of Samuel Butler and Aldous Huxley'. Shadurski deploys Wells's 'modern utopia' as a linchpin against which he measures the utopian potentialities of Butler's *Erewhon* (1872) and *Erewhon Revisited* (1901), on the one hand, and Huxley's *Island* (1962), on the other. The chapter succeeds on several counts. It records in minute detail utopia's main developments before and after Wells; it also gives the reader solid insight into a hereto neglected intellectual dialogue between Butler and Huxley, including their efforts to revise utopia as a genre and their arguable failure to probe it, in Wellsian

mode, as a world model. Throughout, Shadurski relies on the morphology of utopia he proposes in the second chapter, which sustains the logic and consistency of his discussion. The book demonstrates that the trialectics of toposphere, ethosphere, and teleosphere may serve as a very useful analytical protocol in the study of both utopias and dystopias.

In the conclusion, Shadurski contextualises his findings alongside the continuing history of utopia. He stresses utopia's 'borderline' character, its openness to other narrative genres, and aspiration to challenge an extant order. Most important, though, is that utopia's emancipatory potential consists in prefiguring 'a fair society with equal opportunity and transparent governance' (126). These words refer the attentive reader back to the book's cover images, compelling her to ponder on the role of utopia in the world we inhabit. *Utopia as a World Model* is a remarkable and yet to be appreciated contribution to our understanding of the complex relationship between a literary genre and the world. In my opinion, it should also be read alongside Shadurski's more recent monograph, *The Nationality of Utopia: H. G. Wells, England and the World State* (2020).

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(compiled by Maxim Shadurski)

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Aims and Functions of the H. G. Wells Society

The H. G. Wells Society was founded by the late Dr John Hammond in 1960. It has an international membership, and aims to promote a widespread interest in the life, work, and thought of Herbert George Wells. Anyone can become a member of the Society by subscribing to these aims and/or pursuing a Wells-related interest, be it academic or any other. The Society organises a weekend conference each year where aspects of Wells's life and work are discussed in a congenial atmosphere.

Covid-19 has had an impact on the Society's activities in 2020. The Society has organised three events via the Zoom video-conferencing app. Feedback from members has been good and similar events via Zoom will be arranged.

As well as this journal, the Society issues a biannual newsletter. It has published a comprehensive bibliography of Wells's work, and other publications, including a number of works by Wells which have been out of print for many years.

Should you wish to acquire any of the past numbers of *The Wellsian*, the *Newsletter*, or other Society publications, get in touch with our Treasurer and Publications Officer, Eric Jukes at treasurer@hgwellssociety.co.uk, who also deals with membership applications.

Membership fees are as follows:

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For any other enquiries please contact our Hon. Secretary, Brian Jukes. His email is secretaryhgwellssociety@hotmail.com and the postal address of Eric and Brian is:

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