5. H.G. Wells and South Africa

> The spirit of the plantation broods over all these lands. The Negro in America differs only from his subjugated brother in South Africa or Kenya Colony in the fact that he also, like his white master, is an immigrant. The situation in Africa and America adjusts itself therefore towards parallel conditions, the chief variation being in the relative proportions of the two races and the details of the methods by which black labour is made to serve white ends.
>
> —H.G. Wells, *The Open Conspiracy: What are We to Do with Our Lives?*

H.G. Wells's exploration of the idea of alien invasion and world government was influenced by his analysis of colonial South Africa. What Wells termed 'the chastening experience of the Boer War' (1914: 23) coupled with the inevitable 'black revolt in South Africa' (1933a: 156) prefigured the coming global conflict.

Wells's brother, Fred, served in South Africa during the Second Boer War (1899–1902) and subsequently opened Wells's Drapery Store in Johannesburg. His daughter and her husband also visited South Africa, Anna Jane lecturing in economic history at the University of the Witwatersrand. Criticising the bullying imperialism of Kipling, Wells compared the machinations that produced the Boer War with the mismanagement of Ireland, the 'two open sores of irreconcilable wrong' (1920: 424; see 467; xiv). His interest in South Africa included both Boer Wars (see Wells 1894a: 22) and informed his understanding of spirit of British imperialism:

> If the continually irritated sore of the Majuba defeat permitted the country to be rushed into the needless, toilsome and costly conquest of the Boer republics in South Africa, the strain of that adventure produced a sufficient reaction towards decency and justice to reinstate the Liberal Party in power, and to undo the worst of that mischief by the creation of a South African confederation. (1920: 464; and see 1904: 87: 1919)[1]

South Africa remained symptomatic of the inter-imperial competitive scramble for industrial and economic advantage—a cryptogram of the past and a

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warning about the likely future. As the narrator of *The New Machiavelli* puts it: 'The end of the Boer War was so recent that that blessed word "efficiency" echoed still in people's minds and thoughts' (1910: 54).[2]

The importance of South Africa for Wells has been noted see (Magubane 1996, x–xi; and Parry 2004: 150).[3] Less explored is Wells's vision of world government as an attempt to escape the bloody history epitomised by South Africa: '"We want no more hate in South Africa"' (Wells 1917: 193). Revisiting Wells's texts sheds light on contemporary arguments about global apartheid and the prospect of the enslavement of humanity. Is South Africa an image of the past or of the future?

In particular, his fictional texts, and the masks of authority that mark his non-fictional texts, provide a dialectical distillation of the debate about world government. This has an intimate connection with a model and narrative of development that will find its confirmation in the colonies. In turn, this template will include colonialism as alien invasion and planetary domination.

World State

> We are waking up to the fact that a planned world-state governing the complex of human activities for the common good, however difficult to attain, has become imperative, and that until it is achieved, the history of the race must be now inevitably a record of catastrophic convulsions shot with mere glimpses and phases of temporary good luck. We are, as a species, caught in an irreversible process.
>
> —H.G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*

Wells's *Experiment in Autobiography* argues for 'the inevitability of a comprehensive world-state, overriding the sovereign governments of the present time' (1934: 209; and see 214–215). Only the world-state is able to protect human rights from the predations of capitalism the authoritarian state, and effectively contain the destructive tendencies of human nature.

His 1940 publication *The Rights of Man, or What Are We Fighting For?* anticipated the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and influenced Jan Smuts's preamble to that document.[4] In his activism, with all its grandiose grousing, Wells saw himself as doggedly realistic, determined not to fall into the fatal idealism of conservatism and radicalism alike, nor into the trough of self-congratulatory but ineffectual reformism.

As explained in *The Outline of History,* before the 'modern World State' can begin there may be

> tragic economic struggles, grim grapplings, of race with race and class with class. It may be that private enterprise will refuse to learn the lesson of service without some quite catastrophic revolution, and that a phase of confiscation and amateurish socialistic government lies before us. (1920: 14, 504; and see 435–437).[5]

What was clear to Wells was that the two-hundred year age of sovereign nation states was at an end.

A World State must emerge from the infrastructure of the declining British Empire. In 1914 he concluded that the new empire must be held together by 'unity of language and purpose and outlook' (1914: 39) rather than financial entanglements or more open coercion of the present system. Independence within a family of nations will utilise the interconnections formed on the basis of entrepreneurial adventurism and power politics.[6] In 1921, looking back on the dystopian vision of *The Sleeper Awakes*, written in a 'remote and comparatively happy year, 1898,' Wells concluded that such a world could never exist. He believed that 'the class of rich financiers and industrial organisers' were 'quite incapable of world-wide constructive plans or generous combined action:'

> The great city of this story is no more than a nightmare of Capitalism triumphant, a nightmare that was dreamt nearly a quarter of a century ago. It is a fantastic possibility no longer possible. Much evil may be in store for mankind, but to this immense, grim organisation of servitude, our race will never come. (1921a: np.)

The new century called for a new world order.

Socialism based on 'a resentful consciousness in the appropriated masses of social disintegration' (Wells 1920: 114) provoked by the uncontrolled concentration of property in a few hands correctly identified the problem, but not the solution. Global Marxist revolution cannot be the answer.[7] Indeed Bolshevism has brought the logical and sensible idea of socialism into disrepute. *The Shape of Things to Come* diagnosed Marx's chief fault as 'his insane hatred of the middle classes (bourgeoisie)' (Wells 1933a: 140).[8]

Existing socialism represents the sacrifice of socialism's 'constructive power for militant intensity' in 'the chill of Bolshevik presumption and Bolshevik failure … this open bankruptcy of a great creative impulse … a victory for reaction' (Wells 1923a: 368). Although that project has failed, there is still hope because 'the Phoenix of Revolution flames down to ashes only to be born again' (368). The ideal lives on in what Wells touts as the Open

Conspiracy which begins as a movement of discussion, explanation and propaganda and is 'not so much a socialism as a more comprehensive offspring that has eaten and assimilated whatever was digestible of its socialist forbears [sic]' (Wells 1933b: 172).

What is to be avoided, according to *The Open Conspiracy*, is socialism's demonisation of private ownership and the simplification of economic processes 'to the crudity of nursery toys, and the intricate interplay of will and desire in enterprise, normal employment and direction, in questions of ownership, wages, credit, and money … reduced to a childish fable of surplus value wickedly appropriated' (1933b: 72). Although bound to be described as a continuation of imperialism and regarded as criminal—'and may have to take grotesque and dangerous forms under the now decaying traditions of national competition'—, '[a]ll the weight of the Open Conspiracy will be on the side of world order and against that sort of local independence which holds back its subject people from citizenship of the world' (86).[9]

Initially, Wells envisioned the Open Conspiracy as propelled by education rather than revolution and centred on

> the question whether the social revolution is, in its extremity, necessary, whether it is necessary to overthrow one economic system completely before the new one can begin. I believe that through a vast sustained educational campaign the existing Capitalist system can be *civilised* into a Collectivist world system; Lenin on the other hand tied himself years ago to the Marxist dogmas of the inevitable class war, the downfall of Capitalist order as a prelude to reconstruction, the proletarian dictatorship, and so forth. (1920: 163)[10]

In his 1934 interview with Stalin, Wells argued for reformism along the lines of Roosevelt's new deal that (he hoped) would eventually abolish the financial oligarchy. Stalin pointed out that concessions privileging Rockefeller (an organiser) over Morgan (a parasite) merely guaranteed the preservation of the economic basis of capitalism. In this interview Wells the reformist deprecates the achievements of the Chartists while Stalin the dictator defends the democratic advances of nineteenth century liberalism.[11]

Still, for Wells the 'socialist world-state' meant 'an adequately implemented Liberal Socialism' (1934: 667–668). Neither violent revolution nor ineffective reform, but revolutionary reform is the answer. However, 1940 saw Wells, under the heading "Socialism Unavoidable," arguing against reform of the current capitalist system: 'We have to confront Eastern-spirited collectivism with Western-spirited collectivism ... That full and open-eyed collectivisation

which … is the only alternative to the complete degeneration of our species' (1940a: 45, 106).

Like other proposals for world peace, Wells's analysis provoked disdain. Christopher Caudwell (1938: 22) criticised Wells's '*petit bourgeois* reverence for the big bourgeois—the Roosevelt, the far-seeing capitalist visualised as a *Samurai*,' and his utopian dream of the imminent redeemer who will arrive after the complete collapse of the system. Caudwell argued that because Wells lacked necessary faith in the redemptive historical role of the proletariat the change he desired could only come from within the bourgeois class. George Orwell identified the essence of the problem:

> All sensible men for decades past have been substantially in agreement with what Mr. Wells says; but the sensible men have no power and, in too many cases, no disposition to sacrifice themselves. Hitler is a criminal lunatic, and Hitler has an army of millions of men, aeroplanes in thousands, tanks in tens of thousands. For his sake a great nation has been willing to overwork itself for six years and then to fight for two years more, whereas for the common-sense, essentially hedonistic world-view which Mr. Wells puts forward, hardly a human creature is willing to shed a pint of blood. (1941: 93)[12]

Campaigning for international human rights, Wells was derided by the British Foreign Office in 1940 as "'a somewhat senile, half-extinct prophet … much better kept at home'" (quoted in Lauren 2011: 155–156; see also Forster in Trilling 1965: 173).

However, the criticism of Wells was not simply a by-product of *realpolitik* and World War II. In "Mr Wells and the Giants," G.K. Chesterton observed that 'Mr Wells exists at present in a gay and exhilarating progress of conservatism,' and pointed to the Boer War as evidence against the identification of world government with perpetual peace:

> For this defiance of the status quo, this constant effort to alter the existing balance, this premature challenge to the powerful, is the whole nature and inmost secret of the psychological adventure that is called man. It is his strength to disdain strength ... [it] is "the policy of Majuba." (Chesterton 1905: 76, 91)[13]

The human tendency to thwart any imperious, over-arching authority will militate against world government. As Chesterton put it in "Wells and the World State," the proposition that 'men must abandon patriotism or they will be murdered by science' (1922a: 230) will always be resisted. Wells's advocacy of world government is a symptom of his turn to conservatism, for the global government will in reality be nothing other than the United States of the World.[14] The argument that the world state will be more benign than other

states is wishful thinking at best, historically ignorant, and illogical: 'This argument amounts to saying, first that the World State will be needed because it is strong, and then that it may safely be weak because it will not be needed' (233).

For Chesterton, South Africa provided evidence against the World State.[15] However, one can also argue that what Chesterton calls Wells's turn to conservatism and world government—what we would now call, among other things, globalisation—was constructed on a sustained interpretation of events at the southern peninsula of Africa.

Reconstruction and Development

> "Africa," said some visitors, but others, less travelled or more imaginative, said, "This might be in some other planet, in Mars or in the Moon."
>
> —H.G. Wells, *Meanwhile (The Picture of a Lady)*

The Passionate Friends recounts the adventures of Stratton, one of Milner's Kindergarten tasked with reconstructing South Africa after the Anglo-Boer War. Having 'won Milner's good opinion … he was anxious for me to go on working in relation to the labor difficulty that rose now more and more into prominence behind the agricultural re-settlement' (1913: 119).

Stratton sees through to the heart of reconstruction: '[for] the first time in my life I was really looking at the social fundamental of Labor:'

> There were, I began to recognize, two sides to civilization; one traditional, immemorial, universal, the side of the homestead, the side I had been seeing and restoring; and there was another, ancient, too, but never universal, as old at least as the mines of Syracuse and the building of the pyramids, the side that came into view when I emerged from the dusty station and sighted the squat shanties and slender chimneys of Johannesburg, that uprooted side of social life, that accumulation of toilers divorced from the soil, which is Industrialism and Labor and which carries such people as ourselves, and whatever significance and possibilities we have, as an elephant carries its rider. (1913: 120)

By 1913 South Africa was the largest producer of gold in the world and it revealed a profound truth:

> It was all so nakedly plain there. On the one hand was the primordial, on the other the rankly new. The farm on the veld stood on the veld, a thing of the veld,

> a thing rooted and established there and nowhere else. The dusty, crude, brick-field desolation of the Rand on the other hand did not really belong with any particularity to South Africa at all. It was one with our camps and armies. It was part of something else, something still bigger: a monstrous shadowy arm had thrust out from Europe and torn open this country, erected these chimneys, piled these heaps—and sent the ration-tins and cartridge-cases to follow them. It was gigantic kindred with that ancient predecessor which had built the walls of Zimbabwe. And this hungry, impatient demand for myriads of toilers, this threatening inundation of black or brown or yellow bond-serfs was just the natural voice of this colossal system to which I belonged, which had brought me hither, and which I now perceived I did not even begin to understand. (122–123)[16]

The key question was economic development that would ultimately benefit all, and those best able to move the economy along that path were white (and British).[17] For the present, black or brown or yellow bond-serfs were to supply the labour. For the liberal imperialist '[h]ere in the great ugly mine-scarred basin of the Rand' (120) the traditional, immemorial, universal homestead and the ancient accumulation of toilers divorced from the soil are the two sides of civilisation. Progress and development are shot through with primitive times.

What Stratton sees in South Africa is a variation of what Wells in *The Outline of History* calls 'this new wealth of industrial capital,' 'the small cultivators and peasants, ruined and dislodged by the Enclosure Act' (1920: 378), indicative of English development. This narrative of development away from the primordial homestead is part of a global process concerning

> the type of household which has prevailed in human communities since Neolithic days, which still prevails to-day in India, China, and the Far East, but which in the west is rapidly giving ground before a state and municipal organization of education and a large-scale industrialism within which an amount of individual detachment and freedom is possible, such as these great households never knew. (1920: 181)

The narrator of *The Passionate Friends* also glimpses the connection between the primordial homestead and the rankly new industry. The natural voice of this colossal system is labour, today as it was for that ancient predecessor who had built the walls of Zimbabwe. The primordial and the rankly new are not simply antithetical.

According to South African historians, the homestead conceived as a stable (universal) social reality, the basic unit of economic production and social reproduction anchored outside of modernisation, is a myth (see Morris

1976 and 1987; and Marks and Trapido 1979). An important myth of settler ideology for the primordial right of the household society presupposes nothing less than the ownership of land as the basis of independence and freedom.[18] This conceit is shared by Wells's Milnerite narrator.

By the end of the year that saw the publication of *The Passionate Friends*, the piece of social South African engineering that was the 1913 Native Land Act attempted to reduce, in the name of development, competition by African peasant producers and extrude labour onto the market. South African primitive accumulation and agricultural development took place within a context shaped by industrial capital that was already finance capital (see Keegan 1990: 207). There is no agricultural production beyond the reach of the market, and development can take the form of internal colonialism.

The idea of the primordial farm distinct from rankly new industry was itself an ideological secretion of the system that enabled the criticism of industrial finance capitalism from within its shelter; part of the broader movement of the world system.[19] Wells shows the New Imperialists of the British Empire as old fashioned colonists imposing an alien and alienating global power on both the colonists and their victims.[20] Only they cannot see their plans for improvement for what they truly are. Given that such experts are the elite who guide primordial progress, how can World Government possibly overcome the ills of the past?[21] Is the future to be the repetition of the past?

The importance of South Africa to the criticism of liberal imperialism comes into sharp focus in *The Research Magnificent*. Omniscient narrator, White, tells the story of William Porphyry Benham who ends his intellectual world tour in South Africa contemplating prejudice, including race-hatred, national suspicion, religious sectarianism, and class hatred. The novel concludes with Benham in Johannesburg during the strike of 1913.

Once taken up with the dream of a world state—'Imperialism without noble imagination, it seemed to him, was simply nationalism with megalomania.' (1915: 347)—Benham recalls his cosmopolitans travels. His journey has included Russia in 1906 (preferable to the discipline of Berlin), and defence of the victims of a pogrom in Kiev (and their eventual attack upon him), increasing interest in race that drew him to India and the Swadeshi movement (where he challenges caste sensitivities), then to China ("'mix Chinese culture with American enterprise and you will have made a new lead for mankind'" (489)), and America where he visited

Tuskeegee and Atlanta. Researching race and racial cultures led him to Haiti, drawn by his reading of Hesketh Pritchard's *Where Black Rules White*, where he is attacked for defending a youth from being beaten by a policeman.[22]

Although Benham came to South Africa to meet his friend White and to see into the question of Indian immigration, the labour trouble on the Rand envelops him. Initially as a spectator ensconced in smoking room of the Sherborough Hotel the disturbance is of little interest, and according to the newspapers it is a technical matter of the recognition of Trade Union officials. His elevated idealism concerning an open conspiracy proclaiming the Republic of Mankind keeps the white miners' struggle in the street at a distance until the tempo of violence increases. Following the protesters from Market Square, Benham comments on the futility of the struggle before him:

> "It's such a plain job they have here, too—a new city, the simplest industries, freedom from war, everything to make a good life for men, prosperity, glorious sunshine, a kind of happiness in the air. And mismanagement, fear, indulgence, jealousy, prejudice, stupidity, poison it all. A squabble about working on a Saturday afternoon, a squabble embittered by this universal shadow of miner's phthisis that the masters were too incapable or too mean to prevent." (1915a: 498)

The mouthpiece of the mine owners, the *Star* newspaper office, is set alight. Benham embraces detachment and resigns himself to not seeing any significant change in his own lifetime.

The next day the attack on the Rand Club commences while Benham and White are at lunch in the dining-room of the Sherborough, debating the faults on both side of the labour dispute. A disdainful but fascinated Benham joins the crowd that faces the soldiers. After firing once in the air the troops shoot the strike leader. A disbelieving Benham is shot in the second volley. The spectator lamenting stupidity and inefficiency becomes a victim.[23] Benham's *The Research Magnificent*, 'was just, White decided, a proliferation. A vast proliferation' (266). There can be no bystander in the vortex of history.

If colonialism and reconstruction afford a distillation of development what shape must global development take? What will break the cycle of conflict and complacency? What might the future look like?

Men Like Gods

> "These are panic measures. The pestilence is only in its opening stage. Everything is just beginning. Trust me."
>
> —H.G. Wells, *Men Like Gods*

The liberal protagonist of *Men Like Gods* has lost faith in the League of Nations and fears 'some sort of financial and economic crisis' (1923a: 193). Transported from 1921 into a parallel dimension, he and his companions find themselves in an advanced civilisation that has overcome the problems that beset us. The place the visitors name Utopia has come from the same dark place that mires earthlings. They learn that the prerequisite of escaping the Age of Confusion was 'the beginnings of world-wide political unity,' for only then could 'world resources and world production' (349) be known and organised.

The disorders and indignities of the Age of Confusion included '[a]n overwhelming system of debt, a swarm of creditors, morally incapable of helpful renunciation, crushed out all fresh initiative' (229–230). Politics was the bridge 'towards international charity and the liberation of their economic life from a network of pretences, dishonesties and impostures' (368). Politics has led the way out of politics, but only by way of the criminalisation of lying, and commitment to 'Free Discussion and Criticism' (348).[24] In Utopia reason rules: '*Our education is our government*' (235).

Utopia's transformative agenda has produced one planetary state, decentralised and dispersed to the point of invisibility, rather than a free union of states. Our government is our education. The end result is a high-tech Spartan Utopia run along anarchistic socialist lines, reaping the fruits of discriminating eugenics (directive breeding): 'There had not been even a general admixture of races. On Utopia as on earth there had been dusky and brown people and they remained distinct. The various races mingled socially but did not interbreed very much' (341). As separate as the fingers, and yet as united the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

With money abolished and production organised, technocracy and 'no central government' (225) combine economic efficiency with economic dependency: 'The transmission is wireless' and '[e]very one was indexed and noted' (345). All is well until visitors from earth arrive:

> For more than twenty centuries the Utopians had had the completest freedom from infectious and contagious disease of all sorts. Not only had the graver

> epidemic fevers and all sorts of skin diseases gone out of the lives of animals and men, but all the minor infections of colds, coughs, influenzas and the like had also been mastered and ended. By isolation, by the control of carriers, and so forth, the fatal germs had been cornered and obliged to die out ... Utopia was even less prepared for the coming of these disease germs than for the coming of the Earthlings who brought them. (283–284)[25]

Amidst the epidemic some of the earthlings see the possibility of utilising their immunity to subjugate Utopia: "'we must consider ourselves a colony, a garrison'" (299).

Not all of the potential colonists agree, primarily because of the perceived asymmetry of power: "'We are like a handful of Hottentots in a showman's van at Earl's Court, planning the conquest of London'" (295).[26] But it seems that for us humans every crisis is an opportunity in disguise.[27]

The small farms epitomised by South Africa under reconstruction that featured so prominently in *The Passionate Friends* are gone. Now it is 'as if the whole place were a garden' (213). Significantly, the only view of Utopian agriculture is from a distance, an elevated 'parapet' (367), and there is no mention of colonisation in Utopian history. If colonisation ever happened, it has been forgotten, and is not even a footnote to history. It arrives, as it were, in the minds of the earthlings.

It would seem at first sight as if the history condensed in South Africa is erased, buried in the Great Confusion, and superseded by politico-technological progress. Utopian labour is invisible and rendered frictionless in the mist of 'universal gracious amenity' (369) facilitated by the substitution of large-scale business.[28] The economic system that facilitated industrial progress has given birth to 'a perfected landscape' (366): 'The ages of economic disputes and experiments had come to an end; the right way to do things had been found' (287).[29]

A heavy price was paid for Utopia and it is maintained by vigilant defences. Guarded by Utopians 'in gas masks' (291), in '[t]he shadow of the great epidemic' (283) the earthlings are flown to their isolation at Quarantine Crag:

> They crossed a rather thickly inhabited, very delightful-looking coastal belt and came over what was evidently a rainless desert country, given over to mining and to vast engineering operations ... For a time the Earthlings were flying over enormous heaps of slaggy accumulations, great mountains of them, that seemed to be derived from a huge well-like excavation that went down into the earth to an unknown depth. A tremendous thunder of machinery came out of this pit and much smoke. Here there were crowds of workers and they seemed to be living in

> camps among the debris. Evidently the workers came to this place merely for spells of work; there were no signs of homes. (291)

Through Wells's focaliser, Barnstaple, the liberal news-paper editor, we see that 'people could work and struggle for loveliness' (286): 'He had always thought of Utopia as a tranquillity with everything settled for good.' (287). The possibility that Utopia is built on exploitative labour is glimpsed fleetingly by the well-meaning liberal. It is after all, the earthlings who name the place Utopia.

The Wellsian gravedigger of the old world order does not remain totally invisible, submerged in a mixture of processes and proclivities, veiled under the final result of an administered anarchistic society with privacy without private property 'in all but very personal things' (226).[30] The rankly new has not shed its primordial origin. The Utopians explain the violence necessary transcend violence:

> The old order gave small rewards to the schoolmaster, but its dominant types were too busy with the struggle for wealth and power to take much heed of teaching: it was left to any man or woman who would give thought and labour without much hope of tangible rewards, to shape the world anew in the minds of the young. And they did so shape it. In a world ruled ostensibly by adventurer politicians, in a world where men came to power through floundering business enterprises and financial cunning, it was presently being taught and understood that extensive private property was socially a nuisance, and that the state could not do its work properly nor education produce its proper results, side by side with a class of irresponsible rich people. For, by their very nature, they assailed, they corrupted, they undermined every state undertaking; their flaunting existences distorted and disguised all the values of life. They had to go, for the good of the race. (233–234)

Education is the key.[31] And so is depopulation. In the Last Age of Confusion the population of Utopia reached two billion but was reduced to two hundred and fifty million (88% reduction): 'the maximum population that could live a fully developed life upon the surface of Utopia. But now with increasing resources the population was being increased' (229). In time, without proper organisation, and lacking any fatal diseases, Utopia might have to administer another culling in the name of sustainability.

The problem with overpopulation was that people 'swamped every effort the intelligent minority could do to educate a significant proportion of them to meet the demands of the new and still rapidly changing conditions of life' (229):

> Upon this festering, excessive mass of population disasters descended at last like wasps upon a heap of rotting fruit. It was its natural, inevitable destiny. A war that affected nearly the whole planet dislocated its flimsy financial system and most of its economic machinery beyond any possibility of repair. Civil wars and clumsily conceived attempts at social revolution continued the disorganization. A series of years of bad weather accentuated the general shortage. The exploiting adventurers, too stupid to realize what had happened, continued to cheat and hoodwink the commonalty and burke any rally of honest men, as wasps will continue to eat even after their bodies have been cut away. The effort to make passed out of Utopian life, triumphantly superseded by the effort to get. Production dwindled down towards the vanishing point. Accumulated wealth vanished. An overwhelming system of debt, a swarm of creditors, morally incapable of helpful renunciation, crushed out all fresh initiative. (230)

We earthlings recognise the story of our own present told as history. After the attempted coup, the earthlings are ejected from Utopia: "'We might end by exterminating you'" (359), they are told. Clearly the world is not to be set right by debate or education alone.

Although the liberal Barnstaple feels like 'a totally illiterate Gold Coast negro trying to master thermo-electricity' (1923a: 338), he draws the lesson from the history of Utopia that confusion and conflict facilitate progress. Wells's fiction suggests the inevitability of general human suffering: "'Yours are Age of Confusion Minds, trained to conflict, trained to insecurity and secret self-seeking'" (252). This 'view-point' (366) of transcendence, the leap into the future, with its calculus of necessary suffering, with its 'tanks and terraces' (369),[32] is the inner core of the progressive perspective:

> The jewel on the reptile's head that had brought Utopia out of the confusions of human life, was curiosity, the play impulse, prolonged and expanded in adult life into an insatiable appetite for knowledge and an habitual creative urgency. (342)

Wells provides an internal critique of liberalism's mixture of idealism and ruthless self-interest.[33]

When Barnstaple returns to earth he muses on the time it will take for the recognisably human values exemplified on Utopia to be realised here. He does not register, or does not care about, the recognisable forms of domination he has seen on Utopia. The blueprint for the transformation of human society involves unity, acculturation, centralisation under the wise gaze of an elite willing to bring about 'the high austere Utopian life that lies before us' (286). Meanwhile, here amid 'the tormented atmosphere of earth' (365) with psychological manipulation based on fear, Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik

conspiracies lurking in every shadow, newspapers peddle '[o]bvious lies about the Chinese' (375) and others. The murder of innocents continues, in the wake of Bloody Sunday Ireland's civil war festers, labour strikes rage, and the great drought of 1921 augments the mood of financial despondency. Accusations of scaremongering and complacency fly, and the central problem intensifies: 'the increased dreadfulness of modern weapons was making the separate sovereignty of nations too dangerous to endure' (232). How will earthlings overcome their Age of Chaos?

Conclusion

In *The Common Sense of War and Peace: World Revolution or War Unending*, with his foreboding of regressive teleology confirmed, Wells reflected on his preoccupations from *The Time Machine* onwards. The sense of imminent catastrophe has only intensified and 'we are in the presence of one single world system which is breaking down' (Wells 1940b: 26).[34] Our world system is rudderless and the impetus towards the necessary world government is diverted into the familiar channels of national domination and imperial rivalry. Wells is careful to settle scores with those who have caricatured him as an alarmist and censored him for advocating transformation. Invariably, he recalls, his adversaries have been wealthy and connected, proponents of 'downward class hatred' (39). They use their influence over the media to stifle freedom of speech, often indirectly through well-meaning intermediaries: 'The real and dangerous discontent was from above' (37).

It is, he warns, a situation that is unlikely to change when the media of enlightenment and education remain captured. In the midst of war, Wells sends a message to the future: 'You see what happened to the hopes of my generation and you see what may happen to yours' (123).

Notes

[1] "'Our States and Empires are still the rawest sketches of what order will some day be," I said, and so I came to tell him the story of earthly War ... of invasions and massacres ... I went on to describe a Maxim gun in action and what I could imagine of the battle of Colenso.' (Wells 1901: 246-248) The British defeat by the Boers, led by Louis Botha, on 15th December 1899, was part of the British Black Week (Magersfontein, Stormberg and Colenso). Casualties at Colenso were: British 143 killed, 756 wounded and 220 captured; Boers eight killed and 30

wounded.

[2] According to Dutton, the efficiency in the air after the Boer War 'smacked of organisational autocracy' (1981: 875). See Searle (2202).

[3] See Wells (1896) on Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*; Goldberg (2009); Toye (2008); and Somos (2011). According to Hankins, Wells constructed 'a position beyond the liberal imperialism of his day' (2019: 70) See also Cole (2020); and Semmel (1960: 76-82).

[4] Wells thought that Smuts was partly responsible for the imposition of dangerously intolerable reparation demands upon Germany after World War I (see Van der Poel 1973a: 94; and Parsons, 1983). For his part, writing in 1937, Smuts saw Wells as an impractical idealist with little understanding of the constraints under which politicians make decisions (see Van der Poel 1973b: 67). See also Burgers (1992: 464–468); Dubow (2008); and Gravett (2015). 'Smuts is one of the best-read men I have met. He seems to know something about everything. He ranges from Joseph Conrad to Kant, from Booker Washington to Tolstoi.' (Marcosson 1921: 41)

[5] 'The idea of the world state, the universal kingdom of righteousness of which every living soul shall be a citizen, was already in the world two thousand years ago never more to leave it.' (Wells 1920: 366) See Bell (2018); and Wagar (1961). According to Olivier (1918: 5), the cause of the current trouble was the breakdown of a central authority.

[6] Rider Haggard noted in his diary of November 19, 1921: 'Yesterday I went to town to be the principal guest at the dinner of the Delphian Coterie, where the subject for consideration was "Quo Vadis—or the Empire a century hence?". There was a large and enthusiastic audience of a very intelligent order, gathered to welcome my fellow guest, Dean Inge, and myself. Before I spoke the Secretary read out the following remarkable and to my mind most mischievous letter from Mr. H.G. Wells: 'I regret very much that I cannot attend your gathering tonight. I hope and believe that one hundred years hence there will be no British Empire. Either it will have played its part in the development of civilisation and have changed into and given place to a much larger union of free states, or it will have become a danger and a nuisance to mankind, and have followed German Imperialism and Roman Imperialism to the dust heap' (1980: 231-232). 'The age of "expansion," the age of European "empires" is near its end.' (Wells 1916: 239) Compare Condorcet (1795: 128–129); and see Konda (2019: 149–160) on the role of Cecil Rhodes and the Round Table.

[7] 'Marx seems never to have distinguished clearly between restrictive and productive possessions, which nowadays we recognize as a difference of fundamental importance. Exploitation for profit and strangulation for dominance, the radical son and the conservative father, were all one to him ... he betrayed no conception whatever of the real psychology of economic activities, and he had no sense of the intricate organization of motives needed if the coarse incentive of profit was to be superseded.' (Wells 1933a: 47)

[8] *The World of William Clissold* accuses Marx of being the prime mover in the destruction of Socialism, turning it into 'an outlet of passionate expression for the inferiority complex of the disinherited' (Wells 1926a: 158; and see Hyde 1956). Marx moved away from the 'the simple, essential idea of socialism, which is the abolition of private property in anything but what a man has earned or made' (Wells 1908a: 53). And nationalisation? 'While private adventurers control the political life of the state, it is ridiculous to think of the state taking over collective economic interests from private adventurers' (Wells 1920: 436). Wells described himself as a

moderate socialist who looks 'not so much to the abolition of property as to the abolition of inheritance' (Wells 1904: 400).

[9] 'The attempt of Mr. Wells to make America a sort of model for the federation of all the free nations of the earth, though it is international in intention, is really as narrowly national, in the bad sense, as the desire of Mr. Kipling to cover the world with British Imperialism, or of Professor Treitshke to cover it with Prussian Pan-Germanism' (Chesterton 1922b: 234) Claude McKay: 'I said I always thought of Kipling as the bugler of empire, and that perhaps Wells was the sub-officer' (1937: 125).

[10] '"My country Right or Wrong, the Church, the Party, the Masses, the Proletariat. Our imaginations hang on some such Big Brother idea almost to the end.'" (Wells 1937: 174) See Wells (1910: 83). On the disciples of Marx: 'His [Marx's] proclaimed "social jehad" [sic], the class war … simplified the psychology of the immense variety of people, from master-engineers to stock-jobbers and company promoters whom he lumped together as Capitalists, by supposing it to be purely acquisitive. He made his "Capitalists" all of one sort and his "Workers" all of one sort' (Wells 1926a: 188, 169–170). Wells describes his character Clissold as 'a specimen of modern liberalism, using liberalism in its broadest sense' (i). Clissold's father has 'a place in Durban' (224). 'The International of the Workers, in spite of its more explicit organisation, is even now an altogether less substantial affair than the Business-International.' (1926b: 623)

[11] See Stalin (1934: 29–31, 41–42); and Wells (1939: 205–206; and 88). 'It is not that Marx was profoundly wise, but that our economic system has been stupid, selfish, wasteful, and anarchistic.' (Wells 1921b: 86). Wells (1941) compared the Communist Party to the Catholic Church, and argued that Marx imposed an orthodoxy upon the socialist impulse, infecting it with his own conceit, jealousy and arrogance. See Diment (2019).

[12] On the other side of the political spectrum, in 1941 antisemite Ezra Pound lambasted '"those who listen to H.G. chubby Wells and the liberal stooges'" (Pound 1978: 20; and see 185).

[13] My friend Wouter Jordaan reminds me that the First Boer War's Battle of Majuba Hill, February 27, 1881, yielded the following result: British 92 killed, 134 wounded, 59 captured; Boers 1 killed, 5 wounded. Wells writes that the British also '"remembered Majuba'" (Wells 1940a: 12).

[14] *The World Brain* (1938) has Wells arguing for reconstruction and the steady development of a loyal civil service to his American audience. Wells came to reject the idea of international federalism based on the model of the USA: 'The "democracies" of the world are to get together upon a sort of enlargement of the Federal Constitution of the United States (which produced one of the bloodiest civil wars in all history) and then all will be well with us' (Wells 1940a: 89). Are we to incorporate all Western aligned states, even those undemocratic ones? For example, 'the Union of South Africa is a particularly bad and dangerous case of race tyranny' (92).

[15] As for Chesterton's own monsters: 'When I was a child I have stared at the darkness until the whole black bulk of it turned into one negro giant taller than heaven' (Chesterton 1909a: 313). And on South Africa: 'What could be better than to have all the fun of discovering South Africa without the disgusting necessity of landing there?' (1909b: 13).

[16] Milner promised that there was "'no question of the black population ever becoming a danger to the supremacy of the whites'" (quoted in Marlowe 1976: 187). It seems that the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa was considered by the Chamber of Mines as early as 1898. Post Boer-war plans were shaped by the experience of the USA, Canada, and Australia but the main local consideration was the attitude of the Transvaal whites to the Indians in their midst and the determination of Milner to prevent the emergence of a white proletariat in the Transvaal. 'On March 21 [1904], Henry Campbell-Bannerman moved a vote of censure on Mr. Balfour's government. The subsequent debate was vigorous. The government had promised smiling homes for British families in the Transvaal as soon as the "semi-barbarous civilization and effete government of the Boers" had been swept away. They were now faced with the fiasco of having conquered a country which they could not colonize.' (Campbell 1932: 182). Conservative Balfour replied to the jibe that he was in favour of importing servile labour by pointing out that it was Liberal Ministers who had been responsible for the introduction of Indian laborers into the West Indies.

[17] For the troubled Mr Brumley in *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* the 'acute disillusionments that arose out of the Boer War' meant that '[t]he first decade of the twentieth century was for the English a decade of badly sprained optimism. Our Empire was nearly beaten by a handful of farmers amidst the jeering contempt of the whole world—and we felt it acutely for several years' (Wells 1915b: 292–293).

[18] Lenin on the theory of non-capitalist agriculture in a capitalist society: 'It is no exaggeration to say that this theory is an illusion, a dream, under which the whole of bourgeois society is labouring' (Lenin 1964: 18). In his conversations with Lenin, Wells concurs that '[t]he peasant method of life was to be fought and beaten in detail, first here and then there' (Wells 1932: 180). The peasant 'is the basis of the old order and a misfit and anachronism in the new ... Essentially the modernization of food production means the supersession of this small localized self-directing cultivator, peasant or peasant-like' (177, 179).

[19] 'In breaking down the pre-capitalist framework of society, capitalism thus broke not only barriers that impeded its progress but also flying buttresses that prevented its collapse. That process, impressive in its relentless necessity, was not merely a matter of removing institutional deadwood, but of removing partners of the capitalist stratum, symbiosis with whom was an essential element of the capitalist schema.' (Schumpeter 1942: 139) See Wallerstein (2000: 244); Schwarz (2011); and Johnson (2012).

[20] See Wells (1930: 76–77; and 1908b: 28). 'The British Empire in his [Lord Edensoke's] eyes was a fine machine for utilising the racial instincts of the serviceable British peoples for the enforcement of contracts and the protection of invested capital throughout the world. If they did not, as a general rule, get very much out of it in spite of their serviceableness that was their affair.' (Wells 1927: 245–246)

[21] 'The first most obvious danger of Africa is the militarization of the black. General Smuts has pointed this out plainly. The negro makes a good soldier; he is hardy, he stands the sea, and he stands cold. (There was a negro [Mathew Henson] in the little party which reached the North Pole.) It is absolutely essential to the peace of the world that there should be no arming of the negroes beyond the minimum necessary for the policing of Africa.' (Wells 1918a: 42) 'A bacterium that may kill you or me in some novel and disgusting way may even now be developing in some Congo muck-heap. So here is the need for another Commission to look

after the Health of Africa.' (44). This is part of Wells's case for the League of Nations Health Organisation which was set up in 1923 and incorporated into the World Health Organization in 1948 (see Borowy 2009).

[22] "'[T]he Boers are, undoubtedly, white. They came from Europe in the first place, and took the land from the Africans. Now the English are taking the land from the Boers.'" (Hesketh 1900: 69

[23] Others in the real world were more perceptive: 'Thus in the early part of 1922, this "white South Africa" was put to a test … The forces of the state and those of the white workers were in battle, wounding and killing each other, while the latter insisted on a brutal slaughter of the innocent black men and women who had shown no hostile attitude to the white miners' (Kadalie 1924: 40)

[24] *The New World Order*: '(a) outright world-socialism scientifically planned and directed, plus (b) a sustained insistence upon law, law based on a fuller, more jealously conceived restatement of the personal Rights of Man, plus (c) the completest freedom of speech, criticism and publication, and a sedulous expansion of the education organisation to the demands of the new order' (1940a: 119).

[25] 'Animals may survive by devastation. They may also survive by carrying some disease in a mitigated form that will exterminate other species. No need to outshine or defeat a more energetic race. They may waste or stink out of existence.' (Wells 1923b: 171) For the classic and all too familiar imagery of disease see Book 2 of Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (1954: 123–127). In *The Outline of History* Wells refers to the plague of Athens in the context of the death of Pericles.

[26] Wells's racism is often interwoven with that of his narrating dramatis personae: 'Hundreds of deeply preoccupied Negroes pranced and flung themselves about in the Southern Sunshine in search of a real Martian Newstep' (Wells 1937: 137). Compare "The Lord of the Dynamos" (1894) with Kafka's "In the Penal Colony" (1919): 'Then the black grasped him again, putting a curly head against his chest, and they swayed and panted as it seemed for an age or so. Then the scientific manager was impelled to catch a black ear in his teeth and bite furiously. The black yelled hideously' (Wells 1894b: 211). Later Wells declared: 'Suppose we drop that old cant about politically immature peoples' (1940a: 95).

[27] Mr Rupert Catskill, the would-be colonial putschist of Utopia, was identified as Winston Churchill, of whom Wells wrote in December 1944: 'The British Prime Minister's mind is dull only in its phases of relaxation, but it is now plainly in a phase of extreme reaction, entirely preoccupied with the petty enterprises of his own antiquated career. His ideology, picked up in the garrison life of India, on the reefs of South Africa, the maternal home and the conversation of wealthy Conservative households, is a pitiful jumble of incoherent nonsense' (quoted in Wagar 1964: 366).

[28] 'The development both of extensive proprietary companies and of government departments with economic functions has been a matter of the last few centuries, the development, that is to say, of communal, more or less impersonal ownership, and it is only through these developments that the idea of organized collectivity of proprietorship has become credible.' (Wells 1933b: 34)

[29] "'I must confess," he [Mr. Cecil Burleigh the great Conservative leader] said, "that I am most interested in the peculiar form of Anarchism which seems to prevail here. Unless I

misunderstand you completely every man attends to his own business as the servant of the state. I take it you have—you must correct me if I am wrong—a great number of people concerned in the production and distribution and preparation of food; they inquire, I assume, into the needs of the world, they satisfy them and they are a law unto themselves in their way of doing it".' (Wells 1923a: 227)

[30] 'There was hope and dismay everywhere in the world in 1919 ... There might actually be a world government which wouldn't so much "broaden out" from existing governments, as push them aside and eat them up ... And equally there might really be a new sort of economic life coming into existence. We might find ourselves positive, participating shareholders in a one world business, and all our individualism gone ... Population might really be stanched and controlled. It was no dream. It was hard for most people to decide whether this was to be treated as a mighty dawn or the glare of the last conflagration … We were living in a period of panic and short views both ways.' (Wells 1927: 304–306)

[31] Wells has one of his pro-imperialist characters claim that colonial education provides a model of what can be achieved: "'What is education in England up to, anyhow? In Uganda we knew what we were doing. The Old native tradition was breaking up'" (Wells 1918b: 218). 'The British Empire, I said, had to be the precursor of a world-state or nothing … Its essential unity must be a unity of great ideas embodied in English speech and literature.' (Wells 1934: 652) See Leonard Woolf (1920: 101).

[32] Wells means water tanks as in 'great tanks of gleaming water' (1923a: 333) as seen from the 'parapet' (367) above, but the slippage from irrigation of fortification is revealing.

[33] Wells was well aware of the weakness in his own plan for world government: 'Mr. Sempack left his politics and economics; the sure hope of the One World State and the One World Business floating benevolently in their mental skies … "'We have got clear to the conception of a possible world peace, a world economic system, a common currency, and unparalleled freedoms, growths and liberties'" (1927: 38, 191). This meta-fictional aspect makes the fictions self-critical analyses of real politics, just as real politics is riddled with imagination and fictional scenarios.

[34] In the midst of war Wells concluded: '*It is not necessary to destroy existing governments as such*. The idea of a federal world does not involve the creation of a common world government resembling the sovereign governments of the present time, pushing them aside and taking their place like a conqueror. It does not threaten in the least the racial and cultural distinctions of mankind' (Wells 1940b: 99).

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Alien Invasion

According to H.G. Wells, the original idea for *The War of the Worlds* (1898) was suggested by his youngest brother Frank during a walk in the peaceful Surrey countryside:

> "Suppose some beings from another planet were to drop out of the sky suddenly," said Frank, "and began laying about them here!" Perhaps we had been talking of the discovery of Tasmania by the Europeans—a frightful disaster for the native Tasmanians! I forget. But that was the point of departure. (quoted in Clarke 1992: 84)[1]

The influence of *The War of the Worlds*, serialised April-December 1897, on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is evident in Marlow's claim that he believed in the myth of Kurtz "'in the same way one of you might imagine there are

inhabitants on the planet Mars'" (1902: 29).[2] The theme of reversed colonialism also features in Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes* where a populist dictator uses African police to oppress the English masses: "'They are useful," said Ostrog. "They are fine loyal brutes, with no wash of ideas in their heads—such as our rabble has'" (1921: 136). The brutality of colonialism returns home. *The First Men in the Moon* (1901) recounts the failed attempt to subjugate the aliens on the moon.

The connection between colonialism and alien invasion has an identifiable literary bloodline that includes Edgar Rice Burroughs's visitors from Mars.[3] The John Carter of Mars series (1912-1964) includes a visit to Jupiter, and on Mars the hero of pioneer stock and former Confederate soldier encounters warring groups battling over scarce resources on an environmentally hostile "'dying planet'" (Burroughs 1917: n.p.).

In this literary genealogy race is definitive, as when Alexander Bogdanov has Martians weigh up the options regarding Earth and the problem with colonisation: "'Deep racial hatred and fear that we would seize more territory would unite all the people of Earth in wars against us'" (1908: 112). The alternative is to exterminate the humans. Alexei Tolstoi has humans landing on Mars where they find traces of Africa:

> Los burned half his matches examining the curious mask. Shortly before his departure from the Earth, he had seen photographs of similar masks, discovered among ruins of giant cities on the Niger, in the part of Africa where signs of an extinct culture suggested a race mysteriously vanished. (1923: 42)

It seems that Mars was colonised by terrestrial Atlantians who enslaved the indigenes and built the canals visible from Earth (see Husserl 1901/2: 184). Back on earth, Tolstoi credits Africans with founding civilisation.[4]

Mathatha Tsedu's South African short story "Forced Landing" enters this tradition by rewriting both *The War of the Worlds* and *Heart of Darkness* in terms of colonialism and apartheid. It begins:

> It was in the year 2561 that a cruising missile from Mars on its way to Saturnus was forced to make an emergency landing on Jupiter because of food shortages aboard. Contrary to popular belief that Martians are intelligent, on that specific journey—which was their first on that route—they had made a fatal mistake. (Tsedu 1980: 69)

Tsedu's story of an attempted Martian invasion relays how in the recent past the Anazian population of Jupiter read a book found on the moon recounting the colonisation of a place called Azania by visitors who renamed the country

Safrika. The Anazians 'believed the book was a warning to them not to extend their hospitality to strangers of colour' (71). Safrika as metonym of global take-over.

The visitors from Mars, 'aliens' (69), are welcomed in good faith but soon reveal themselves to be 'conspiring to colonise the whole country and subject it to the unjust philosophy of capitalism' (71). The Martians are promptly executed and colonisation thwarted. The Anazian people celebrate the rescue of their country 'from being clawed by the mercenaries of capitalism and cosmic neo-colonialism' (72).[5] The visitors were after all on their way to Saturn (♄), named after the Roman god of agriculture and wealth.[6] The colonial process of land annexation, labour exploitation and resource extraction was avoided, at least on Jupiter, home to 'the most sublime classes of sensible creatures,' according to Kant (1755: 138).

Tsedu's colonising Martians miscalculated the resistance of those slated to be exploited—'they had made a fatal mistake' (69)—for the Anazians were on their guard against strangers 'of colour' (71). The horror of colonial warfare is nipped in the bud because of a text from the past. As with *The War of the Worlds*, humanity (represented by the Jovians) survives to live another day.[7]

Wells has one of his characters say that the weakness of *The War of the Worlds* was overestimating the enemy: "'The only impossible thing in the story was to imagine that the Martians would be fools enough to try anything of the sort'" (Wells 1937: 62). In *Last and first Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future* (1930) Olaf Stapledon foresaw the return of wiser Martians over-running South Africa.

Tsedu's hopeful anti-colonial rewriting is built on the conceit of alien foolishness, and the arrogance of those presuming to control the situation. "Forced Landing" emphasises the presence of collaborators—proxies for Bantustan leaders—willing to participate in the destruction of their own people. The normal colonialist perspective as expressed in *The Time Machine*—"'Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Africa, would take back to his tribe!'" (1895: 41)—is reconceived as the tale of colonisation told by its (potential) victims. Colonialism teaches the lesson of vigilant self-defence and world coordination.

The anti-apartheid "Forced Landing" overwrites the alibi of the developmental state with the narrative of colonial domination and resource extraction. There is something mechanical about this propensity for domination, a necessity that calls for vigilance since the suspension of morality

in the interest of self-interest is sadly predictable. As Wells wrote in *The War of the Worlds*:

> And before we judge of them [the Martians] too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit? (1898: 5)[8]

Colonialism as alien invasion, alien invasion as colonialism: this popular culture formula captures more than the fear of retribution as the principle of survival of the fittest is turned on its adherents. How does it feel to be right?

"Forced Landing" drives home the point of an irrefutable history: self-defence is obligatory and violence its own justification for enforced counter-measures are a matter of self-preservation. World government makes possible concerted, unanimous reaction to the colonisers. Written at the high-point of the struggle against apartheid, the pre-condition of repelling colonialism is the world state. Centralised, coordinated executive power in the right hands is necessary to counter a global, existential threat. 'Jupiter, the custodian of violence [*Gewalt*],' as Kant (1795: 116) reminds us. The anti-colonial world order must, like its original colonising model, involve internal coercion without which there is no internal order and no capacity to resist:

> "We've been barking up the wrong tree. These reds—Moscow—Bernard Shaw—New Dealers—Atheists—Protocols of Zion, all of that—mere agents. It's Mars that is after us. Listen to him. Mars! What are we to do about it? What are we to do?" … "Let the Reds fade out. *Martians!* People will hate them from the word Go!" (Wells 1937: 143–144, 150)

At the planetary level, decolonisation requires internal as well as external enemies.

In *Star-Begotten. A Biological Fantasia*, Wells has his characters discuss more than the weakness of *The War of the Worlds* (stupid Martians and/or stupid author), and the merits of Stapledon's *Last and First Men*. The concern is that this time the Martians "'have been experimenting in human genetics. Suppose they have been trying to alter mankind in some way, through the human genes'" (75). The alien colonists and their collaborators are already among us, experimenting with human augmentation for their own ends. Some hapless humans do not even know that they working towards their own enslavement.

Notes

[1] See Rieder on '[t]he Wellsian strategy [of] reversal of positions [coloniser-colonised] that stays entirely within the framework of the colonial gaze and the anachronism of anthropological difference, but also highlights their critical potential' (2008: 10).

[2] Colonialist conspiracy theory: "'I knew once a Scotch sailmaker who was certain, dead sure, there were people in Mars. If you asked him for some idea how they looked and behaved, he would get shy and mutter something about 'walking on all fours.' If you as much as smiled, he would—though a man of sixty—offer to fight you'" (Conrad 1902: 29).

[3] "'Its [Martian] commander in his heroic fight against the pull of the sun had managed to fall within the grip of Jupiter and was, when last heard from, far out in the great void between that planet and Mars".' (Burroughs 1923: 32)

[4] "'The original founders of the [Earth] City of a Hundred Golden Gates were African Negroes of the Zemze tribe. They deemed themselves to be the junior branch of a black race which in the dimmest antiquity populated the gigantic continent of Gwandan, now lying at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. Its survivors had broken up into numerous tribes. Many of them had become savages. But the memory of their great past was treasured by the Negroes.'" (Tolstoi 1923: 69)

[5] 'The evil of capitalism consists in its alienation of the fruit of labour from those who with the toil of their body and the sweat of their brow produce this fruit. This aspect of capitalism makes it irreconcilable with those basic principles which animate the traditional African society. Capitalism is unjust; in our newly independent countries it is not only too complicated to be workable, it is also alien.' (Nkrumah 1970: 76)

[6] 'Think of the Roman Empire! A little circle of light surrounded by vague infinitudes of menacing darkness. There we had a spirited experiment toward a world-order, which failed for several good reasons, but mainly for lack of isolation. The position of the Orbis Romanus was like that which we should now occupy if we had every reason to anticipate being "snowed under" by swarms of Martian, Saturnian, and Uranian invaders.' (Archer 1912: 53-54)

[7] 'These germs of disease have taken toll of humanity since the beginning of things—taken toll of our prehumen ancestors since life began here. But by virtue of this natural selection of our kind we have developed resisting-power; to no germs do we succumb without a struggle ... But there are no bacteria on Mars, and directly these invaders arrived, directly they drank and fed, our microscopic allies began to work their overthrow ... It was inevitable. By the toll of a million deaths man has bought his birthright of the earth, and it is his against all comers; it would still be his were the Martians ten times as mighty as they are. For neither do men live nor die in vain.' (Wells 2012: 176–177) See Robert Potter (1892). Ray Bradbury's "—And the moon be still as bright" (1948) has the Martians destroyed by disease brought by human colonists.

[8] In the sequel to *The War of the Worlds*, Stephen Baxter's *The Massacre of Mankind* (2015), the Martians target Durban. See also Byrne (2004/5: 522–525); Weaver (2010: 99–114) on indigenous Australian use of the apocalyptic to register colonialism; and Smith on 'the very vibrant tradition of Bengali SF that precedes even the novels of H.G. Wells' (2012: 700).

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