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# Article

Call #:

Location:

Book/Journal Title:

**HG Wells's Literary Criticism**

Book Author:

## Other Info:

Year: **1980**

Pages: **222-251**

Article Author: **various**

Article Title: **Chapter 6 On Science Fiction, Utopian Fiction, and Fantasy**

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## 6 On Science Fiction, Utopian Fiction, and Fantasy

Those books of his that Wells refers to sometimes as 'scientific romances', sometimes as 'fantasies', comprise almost a third of his total fictional output, and more than two-thirds of that output to the end of 1910. By them he first made his reputation as a writer. In them what Arnold Bennett spoke of as the 'philosophic quality'<sup>1</sup> that individuates his work manifests itself unmistakably. Yet his critical utterances reveal him to be of two minds concerning fiction of this sort, including—indeed, particularly—his own.

The ambivalence, especially prominent in his pronouncements of the 1930s, attains fullest expression in the preface to his *Scientific Romances*. As a statement of his guiding principles, and also for its insights about the nature of science fiction generally, this preface remains indispensable. It cannot, however, be regarded as a straightforward defence of its author's practice. While he insists upon the radical differences between his science fiction and Jules Verne's, and aligns himself with a tradition going back to Lucian and Apuleius, he continually resorts to a rhetoric of self-deprecation in arguing his case.

His opening remarks about Verne, together with his subsequent comparison of *The First Men in the Moon* (1900–1) to *De la terre à la lune . . .* (1865) and *Autour de la lune* (1870), suggest that he may be thinking of the Frenchman's accusation of thirty years earlier, that Wells's stories 'do not repose on very scientific bases'. 'There is no rapport between his work and mine', Verne had told a reporter for *T.P.'s Weekly* (in 1903):

I go to the moon in a cannon-ball, discharged from a cannon. Here there is no invention. He goes to Mars in an airship, which he constructs of a metal which does away with the law of gravitation. 'Ça c'est très joli,' cried Monsieur Verne in an animated way, 'but show me this metal. Let him produce it'.<sup>2</sup>

Wells, in his 1933 preface, substantially agrees with Verne's point. As he puts it, Verne 'dealt almost always with actual possibilities of invention and discovery'; whereas such 'exercises of the imagination' as *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds* 'do not aim to project a serious possibility'. Their object is not to arrive at scientifically plausible 'forecasts' of things to come, but to render the 'fantastic' situation 'human and real'. 'The invention' in them 'is nothing in itself': it has the status of a pure 'hypothesis', which, if rigorously adhered to, allows the writer to acquire a 'new angle' for 'looking at human feelings and human ways'.

Wells's emphasis on the 'new angle' that his 'scientific fantasies' bring to the portrayal of human affairs may be said to look forward to recent theories about the 'speculative' and 'cognitively estranged' nature of science fiction.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, his call for rigour and realism in working out the consequences of the hypothetical 'invention' reaffirms principles that he had espoused as a reviewer of fiction for Frank Harris. In those days, he had demanded that writers of fantasy master 'the necessary trick of commonplace detail that renders horrors'—or anything else quite out of the ordinary—'convincing' (see 'The Three Impostors'). 'Fantasy', he had warned, is not a license for the arbitrary; it does not mean 'anyhow': 'granted the fantastic assumption, the most strenuous consistency must be observed in its development'.<sup>4</sup> What made *Lilith*, in his view, 'fantastic to wildness and well-nigh past believing' was George MacDonald's refusal to abide by that 'elementary rule'. He nevertheless conceived of MacDonald's 'metaphysical fiction' as having a basic premise and overall intent rather like *The Time Machine*'s. Certainly he found *Lilith* far more congenial than Max Pemberton's *The Impregnable City* or any other book by Verne's imitators—or by Verne himself. Although a passage of 'realistic description' might count as a redeeming quality in a story like Pemberton's, the technological 'novelties' 'invented, . . . but unhappily not patented by Jules Verne' did not.

The 1933 preface, however, is not merely a systematic restatement of principles that Wells had been endorsing all along. He himself had written a number of books which he

categorized, in his 1921 preface to *The Sleeper Awakes*, as 'fantasias of possibility'. These 'fantasias', which he usually thought of as forming a distinct group, are not represented in the volume of *Scientific Romances*. But this does not mean that he was invariably willing to concede the 'impossibility' of all the works in that collection. At one time, for instance, he had defended Moreau's experiments with 'the limits of individual plasticity' as practicable, at least in theory.<sup>5</sup> On occasion, he refers to *The Time Machine* as an example of the 'fiction of prophecy' (as in 'Fiction about the Future'). And in the 1933 preface itself, he implies that he considers *Food of the Gods* to be a kind of prophetic allegory.

By defining 'the anticipatory inventions of the great Frenchman' in opposition to 'fantasies' such as these, Wells strictly delimits the territory that he assigns to Verne. If Wells's 'scientific romances' have nothing to do with it, then the realm of 'practical possibility' over which he allows Verne dominion must consist only of 'forecasts' of 'things' that may come to be, not of their human—and social—consequences. In other words, it comprises what C. S. Lewis would later call 'the fiction of Engineers'.<sup>6</sup> It seems likely that Wells's intention here is to dissociate his own fiction not only from Verne's, but from that of the most recent group of Verne's disciples: the writers for the new science-fiction magazines, of whose existence he had recently become aware. For three years after the launching of *Amazing Stories* in 1926, he and his agents had been engaged in a querulous correspondence with Hugo Gernsback, the magazine's editor, over the fees for reprinting a large proportion of his early stories.<sup>7</sup> It is clear from the correspondence that Wells viewed Gernsback's whole operation with distaste; and Gernsback was an outspoken advocate of the type of 'anticipation' that Wells associates with Verne. Wells's discussion of the contrast between himself and 'the great Frenchman' is therefore rather more topical than it might at first appear to be.

Apart from its polemical features, the 1933 preface reflects Wells's disenchantment with his own 'inventions'. He had some time ago become convinced that at least one of his books presented 'a fantastic possibility no longer possible'

(see the 'Preface to *The Sleeper Awakes*'). He in effect takes that conclusion as the starting point for his argument about the 'fantasies' collected as his *Scientific Romances*. Admitting at the outset their 'impossibility', he goes on to downplay the philosophical and scientific aspects of his work.

The scientific component of his 'scientific romances' is far from incidental to the kind of integrity that he demands of 'fantasy'. Indeed, their cognitive or 'prophetic' intent derives from the way in which they incorporate and take over scientific theories and modes of thought. Arnold Bennett, perhaps at his friend's instigation and certainly with his approval, wrote in his essay on 'Herbert George Wells and his Work' of the 'philosophic quality' that separates Wells's stories from Verneian or 'pseudo-scientific romances'. Wells in his younger days inclined to stress that same quality. Though he publicly objected to *The British Barbarians* for being 'neither philosophy nor fiction' (see 'Mr Grant Allen's New Novel'), in a private letter he confided to its author: 'I believe that this field of scientific romance with a philosophical element which I am trying to cultivate, belongs properly to you'.<sup>8</sup> But in his 1933 preface, Wells slighted that 'philosophical element'. He likewise minimizes the significance of the explanatory scientific content of his 'fantasies', deeming it nothing more than 'an ingenious use of scientific patter', an 'up to date' means for creating an air of plausibility that is no longer obtainable by recourse to the 'fetish stuff' of magic. His 'scientific romances', he now argues, 'are appeals for human sympathy quite as much as any "sympathetic" novel'; and are accordingly to be assessed by the standards of novelistic excellence, not those of philosophical or scientific insight. At the same time, he shows few signs of sharing the confident artistic estimate of his romances that is to be found in the pioneering essays of Bennett, Yevgeny Zamyatin, and others.<sup>9</sup> Although he notes the kinship of his stories to Swift's, Wells tends to play down their seriousness and their continuing interest. It is as if these 'fantasies' based upon an 'impossible hypothesis' had turned out—in their author's view—to be as ephemeral as Verneian science fiction after all. While they may not have the immediacy of his deliberately topical 'fantasias of possibility', their thema-

tic content, he suggests, has been similarly determined by the historical moment in which each was written. On the other hand, dealing as they do with 'life in the mass and life in general as distinguished from life in the individual experience', they fall short of those standards by which he gauges the enduring interest of a realistic novel. Nor is Wells able to take refuge, in the 1933 preface, in any broad defiance of the idea of literary permanence. Rather, the self-deprecation of this essay reflects his brooding sense of failure both as a novelist and as a prophet.

In fiction, 'fantasy', and journalism Wells had done more than any other writer in the first third of the twentieth century to warn his contemporaries of the destructiveness that could be unleashed by modern civilization. His distress at the onset of the First World War had been succeeded by the conviction that its termination would present a unique opportunity for constructing a better and safer world. Yet by 1933 he had become convinced of the inevitability of the second major conflict in a generation. It is with the bitterness of a prophet who has been turned into a court jester that he now professes to be weary of 'talking in playful parables' and 'doing imaginative books that do not touch imaginations'.

Throughout his years of journalism and prophecy, Wells continued to hold to his hierarchical preference for the novel over any other kind of fiction. That preference is as evident in his pronouncements of the 1930s as it had been in the 1890s. In his autobiography he describes his bent as a young writer towards 'fantasy' as 'a sign of growing intelligence that I was realizing my exceptional ignorance of the contemporary world' (*ExA* 6:2). This would imply that the writing of 'fantasy' was a mere stage in his literary apprenticeship, rather than the discovery of a legitimate mode of social criticism and imaginative exploration in its own right.

Strange as it must seem, the author most responsible for defining the direction of science fiction in the twentieth century always regarded his 'scientific romances' as substitutes for the novel—and as inadequate substitutes at that. He never called any of them 'science fiction'. Nor did he otherwise differentiate them categorically from 'fantasy' or

'romance'. With or without the qualifying word 'scientific', he often employed the latter terms interchangeably: to his way of thinking, they were equivalent in being names for any fiction outside the strictly realistic mode. The 'scientific romance' or 'fantasy' might serve for embodying sociological 'criticism of life' and for discussing matters of social importance. But to do more than approximate 'the highest form of literary art' in those respects was, in his view, beyond the scope of romance or fantasy. Only the novelist could give life to ideas by incorporating them in fiction as 'living, breathing individuals' (see 'The Novel of Types').

Yet, despite his declared intention of abandoning 'the possibilities of fantasy', Wells as an artist remained as committed to them as he had ever been. Peculiarly enough, the most grandiose of his prophecies, *The Shape of Things to Come*, was published in the very year when he was gloomily announcing: 'The world in the presence of cataclysmal realities has no need for fresh cataclysmal fantasies'. In fact, every one of his dozen or so books of fiction from the 1930s and 40s could be placed under the heading of 'fantasy'; and if his two film-scripts be numbered among them, the majority must also be classed as science fiction. Even novels such as *The Bulpington of Blup* (1932), *Apropos of Dolores* (1938), and *Babes in the Darkling Wood* (1940) deal in various ways with the clash between the fantasizing mind and reality.

While he thus continued to preoccupy himself with 'fantasy' in one sense or another, Wells repeatedly expressed reservations concerning it. 'Fiction about the Future' indicates that he was conscious of, and troubled by, the discrepancy, but does nothing to resolve it. In this talk, broadcast over Australian radio in 1938, he claims that he has never succeeded in writing a novel about the future; he has confined himself to 'romances and pseudo-histories', which can be 'manage[d] with broad generalizations'. Once again he extols the novel over any other kind of fiction. And once again, but now with a poignancy not wholly disguised by his air of self-deprecating whimsy, he voices his misgivings as to the value of much of his work: no one 'who dreams of writing for posterity . . . will ever think twice of engaging in this ephemeral but amusing art, the fiction of prophecy—on which I have spent so much of my time'.

The key to Wells's final sense of his own achievement might be found at the beginning of his very much earlier essay, 'About Sir Thomas More' (1908). 'There are some writers who are chiefly interesting in themselves', he says, 'and some whom chance and the agreement of men have picked out as symbols and convenient indications of some particular group or temperament of opinions'. In his early and middle years, neither Wells nor his critics doubted that he was one of those who are 'chiefly interesting in themselves'. His confidence on this point reaches its high-water mark in *Tono-Bungay*, written at a time when he was expressing his desire 'to get on to the work that has always attracted me most, and render some aspects of this great spectacle of life and feeling in which I find myself in terms of individual experience and character'.<sup>10</sup> Yet he would subsequently look back on *Tono-Bungay* as the nearest he had come to a 'deliberate attempt upon The Novel' (*ExA* 5:5). As he approached his seventieth year, he succumbed more and more to the conviction that his life's work was merely the symbol of 'some particular group or temperament of opinions'. Whether it proceeded from belated modesty, or world-weariness, or a sense of defeat, self-deprecation typifies Wells's utterances of his later years. In keeping with that attitude, he subtitled his autobiography 'Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain—Since 1866', and regularly treated his most original and characteristic writings as if they too were rather ordinary. Thus, while his essays on science fiction, utopian fiction, and fantasy are without doubt classic statements on their subjects, his estimate in them of the value of his own work should not be (and, in the event, has not been) taken as definitive.

## NOTES

- 1 Bennett, 'Herbert George Wells and his Work', *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, 33 (August 1902), pp 465–71; reprinted in Wilson, pp 260–76.
- 2 'Jules Verne Revisited', by Robert H. Sherard, *T.P.'s Weekly*, 2 (9 October 1903), 589; reprinted in CH, pp 101–2. Ironically enough, Verne confuses *The First Men in the Moon* with Robert Cromie's *A Plunge into Space*, for the second (1891) edition of which Verne supplied a preface

introducing readers to his 'English disciple'. Wells, however, does not mention this, even though he would have (again?) come across the text of the interview in Geoffrey West's biography (see West, p 153n). It is also instructive to compare Wells's 1933 preface with Bennett's 1902 essay (see n 1 above).

- 3 See Damon Knight, *In Search of Wonder* (Advent Publishers, Chicago, 1967), pp 1–2; and Darko Suvin, 'On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre', *College English*, 34 (1972), pp 373–82, revised as pp 3–15 of *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1979).
- 4 Wells enunciates this 'elementary rule' of the fantastic in a review of John Davidson's *The Pilgrimage of Strongsoul; and Other Stories* ('The Immature Fantastic', SR 82: 7 November 1896, p 500).
- 5 See 'Correspondence: "The Island of Dr Moreau"', SR 82: 7 November 1896, p 497, as well as 'The Limits of Individual Plasticity', SR 79: 19 January 1895, pp 89–90.
- 6 C. S. Lewis, 'On Science Fiction', in *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper (Harcourt, Brace, and World, New York, 1967), pp 59–73.
- 7 Gernsback's unpublished letters to Wells, with Wells's marginalia, are in the Wells Collection at the University of Illinois.
- 8 This undated reply to a letter from Allen (11 June 1895) is quoted by David Y. Hughes (see 'Mr Grant Allen's New Novel', n 1).
- 9 For Bennett's illuminating but too-often-neglected essay, see n 1 above; Zamyatin's 1922 tribute to Wells as the writer who established science fiction as a mode of social criticism appears in CH, pp 258–74; *A Soviet Heretic: Essays* by Yevgeny Zamyatin, ed. and trans. Mirra Ginsburg (University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1970), pp 259–70, contains a later (1924) version of the same essay.
- 10 'Mr Wells Explains Himself', *loc. cit.*, p 342.

## ON MAX PEMBERTON

*Sir Max Pemberton (1863–1950) wrote more than three dozen works of fiction, most of them adventure stories. The Impregnable City is an early example, replete with science-fictional gadgets. Wells (SR 80: 3 August 1895, p 150) thought it inferior to The Little Huguenot, a conventional tale of adventure by the same author.*

Mr Max Pemberton and Mr William Le Queux have presented the world with their portraits in the forefront of their volumes,<sup>1</sup> a pretty fancy, intimating a sense of the personal interest their work has aroused, which wins upon the humour of the reviewer. Mr Max Pemberton is not, as we had rashly anticipated, a composite photograph, there is not the faintest touch of either Stevenson, Jules Verne, Mr Rider Haggard, Mr Griffiths [*sic*],<sup>2</sup> or Mr Stanley Weyman<sup>3</sup> in his face. For these one must search his works. His city is that impossible place in the South Pacific inhabited by philosophical Anarchists, and fitted with electric bells, submarine ships, and every modern convenience, to which Mr Griffiths has recently made an excursion. It was invented, we believe, but unhappily not patented, by Jules Verne. This time the coast of it is precipitous like a wall, and one reaches it by Mr Rider Haggard's rocky tunnel. Having arrived and refreshed oneself, one turns round with a confident air for the young woman of surpassing beauty, and the swift dart strikes home without the slightest delay. One Adam Monk gradually develops, as the story proceeds, into our dear departed friend, that mighty Alan of the whistling sword whom David Balfour knew, the resemblance completing itself when he and Max Pemberton stand side by side and fight a multitude of insurgent ruffians. But this tone is perhaps ungrateful. Mr Max Pemberton writes for boys and not for reviewers, and if he deals in a mixed pickle of incident rather than a dish of fresh invention, he may plead the narrow reading of the average boy. In that case the average boy may console him for the unappreciative reviewer. One thing at least we have found new and good in

the book, and that is the description of the cavernous valley in which the island stored its malcontents. It was suggested beyond doubt by the accounts of the stockades in which the Confederate States of America kept their prisoners of war, but none the less it is an exceedingly effective piece of description. But it does not to our mind redeem the offence of those conventional Anarchists warring on society with all the latest novelties and quite regardless of expense. Surely even the schoolboy is sick of them by this time. Mr Max Pemberton can do better things than that, as his other book, *The Little Huguenot*, witnesses. It is in quite a different vein altogether; Mr Stanley Weyman might reasonably claim the inspiration of it, but the sentiment of it is original, and honestly, well, and delicately done.

## NOTES

1 This segment of Wells's 'Fiction' column includes a notice of *Stolen Souls* by the prolific William Le Queux (1864–1927).

2 A few weeks before this notice appeared, Wells had panned George Chetwyn Griffith's *The Outlaws of the Air*, which he recommended for 'those who can endure Mr Verne at his worst' (SR 79: 22 June 1895, p 839).

3 On Weyman, see 'On Lang and Buchan', n 7. See also 'The Lost Stevenson' and the two reviews of books by Haggard.

## ON GEORGE MACDONALD

George MacDonald (1824–1905) took up fiction as a means of publicizing those religious views of his that had got him dismissed from the Congregationalist ministry (in 1853) for heresy. Though he wrote a number of novels, he is chiefly remembered for his fantasies, which had a profound influence on C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and others. Even Wells (SR 80: 19 October 1895, p 513) saw in—or rather, read into—*Lilith* something with which he could sympathize.

For wealth of fanciful imaginings few contemporary novelists can compare with Dr MacDonald. In *Lilith* he has returned to the vein of his delightful *Phantasies*,<sup>1</sup> and the book is a perfect jungle of exuberant extravagance, complicated with metaphysics, whilst allegory runs in and out of the tangle, and unexpected gay-coloured flowers of digression are seen amidst the thicket of story. The leading idea, a mathematical conception full of romantic possibilities that no one has cared to touch, has been lying unused for years, but to-day is the day of metaphysical fiction, and Dr MacDonald has been lucky to secure the first handling of it. Briefly the idea is this. Assuming there are more than three spatial dimensions, then in a space of four or more dimensions any number of three dimensional universes can be packed, just as in a space of three dimensions there is room for any number of plane or two dimensional universes. And one such three dimensional universe might be almost touching another at every point, just as one plane universe might be at an infinitesimal distance from another throughout its extent. Clearly once your born romancer has realized this infinite series of universes, his one desire is to invent a way into some of them. Once there you may do what you like, create such animals and plants as please you, and in all things follow the desire of your heart. In *Lilith* this long-sought way is attained ingeniously enough, and it is needless to say that the universe into which Dr MacDonald takes his readers is fantastic to wildness and well-nigh past believing. In fact, to be frankly just, it is altogether too fantastic. Dr

MacDonald's critical and constructive faculties are relatively too weak for his fertile imagination, and, as a consequence, he wastes to a large extent his unique opportunity of a realistic wonderland. His book passes into the insanity of dreams, declines to the symbolic and cryptic, ends in an allegorical tangle. Lilith, we humbly submit, had no business in it, nor Adam; the spots of the spotted panther and its war with the white confuse us, the lisping imperfections of the Little Ones irritate. There is imagination enough in this one book to last a common respectable author a lifetime. But for lack of pruning and restraint it seems, beside such work as Poe's like the many-breasted, many-armed Diana of Ephesus beside the Venus of Milo, an image that is depraved to the hieroglyphic level. Or we may take another view of it, and compare it to a confused theological discussion in carnival dress.

## NOTES

1 This is either a misprint or a literary pun on the title of MacDonald's first book in the manner of *Lilith, Phantastes* (1858).

'ABOUT SIR THOMAS MORE'

*This little essay, reprinted in An Englishman Looks at the World (pp 183-7), originally served as the preface to a 1908 edition of More's Utopia (1516), in Ralph Robinson's 'classic' English rendition (1551). Perhaps surprisingly, Wells ignores the social satire in the first part of More's fiction, and thus overlooks the dialectical structure of the work as a whole. Yet he shows himself sensitive to the paradox of Utopia's 'incidental scepticism', and presents a persuasive and sensible argument for More's capacity 'of conceiving a non-Christian community excelling all Christendom in wisdom and virtue'.*

There are some writers who are chiefly interesting in themselves, and some whom chance and the agreement of men have picked out as symbols and convenient indications of some particular group or temperament of opinions. To the latter it is that Sir Thomas More belongs. An age and a type of mind have found in him and his *Utopia* a figurehead and a token; and pleasant and honourable as his personality and household present themselves to the modern reader, it is doubtful if they would by this time have retained any peculiar distinction among the many other contemporaries of whom we have chance glimpses in letters and suchlike documents, were it not that he happened to be the first man of affairs in England to imitate the *Republic* of Plato. By that chance it fell to him to give the world a noun and an adjective of abuse, 'Utopian', and to record how under the stimulus of Plato's releasing influence the opening problems of our modern world presented themselves to the English mind<sup>1</sup> of his time. For the most part the problems that exercised him are the problems that exercise us to-day; some of them, it may be, have grown up and intermarried, new ones have joined their company, but few, if any, have disappeared, and it is alike in his resemblances to and differences from the modern speculative mind that his essential interest lies.

The portrait presented by contemporary mention and his own intentional and unintentional admissions, is of an

active-minded and agreeable-mannered man, a hard worker, very markedly prone to quips and whimsical sayings and plays upon words, and aware of a double reputation as a man of erudition and a wit. This latter quality it was that won him advancement at court, and it may have been his too clearly confessed reluctance to play the part of an informal table jester to his king that laid the grounds of that deepening royal resentment that ended only with his execution. But he was also valued by the king for more solid merits, he was needed by the king, and it was more than a table scorned or a clash of opinion upon the validity of divorce; it was a more general estrangement and avoidance of service that caused that fit of regal petulance by which he died.<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that he began and ended his career in the orthodox religion and a general acquiescence in the ideas and customs of his time, and he played an honourable and acceptable part in that time; but his permanent interest lies not in his general conformity but in his incidental scepticism, in the fact that underlying the observances and recognized rules and limitations that give the texture of his life were the profoundest doubts, and that, stirred and disturbed by Plato, he saw fit to write them down. One may question,<sup>3</sup> if such scepticism is in itself unusual, whether any large proportion of great statesmen, great ecclesiastics and administrators have escaped phases of destructive self-criticism, of destructive criticism of the principles upon which their general careers were framed. But few have made so public an admission as Sir Thomas More. A good Catholic undoubtedly he was, and yet we find him capable of conceiving a non-Christian community excelling all Christendom in wisdom and virtue; in practice his sense of conformity and orthodoxy was manifest enough, but in his *Utopia* he ventures to contemplate, and that not merely wistfully, but with some confidence, the possibility of an absolute religious toleration.

The *Utopia* is none the less interesting because it is one of the most inconsistent<sup>4</sup> of books. Never were the forms of Socialism and Communism animated by so entirely an Individualist soul. The hands are the hands of Plato, the wide-thinking Greek, but the voice is the voice of a humane,

public-spirited, but limited and very practical English gentleman who takes the inferiority of his inferiors for granted, dislikes friars and tramps and loafers and all undisciplined and unproductive people, and is ruler in his own household. He abounds in sound practical ideas, for the migration of harvesters, for the universality of gardens and the artificial incubation of eggs, and he sweeps aside all Plato's suggestion of the citizen woman as though it had never entered his mind. He had indeed the Whig temperament, and it manifested itself down even to the practice of reading aloud in company, which still prevails among the more representative survivors of the Whig tradition. He argues ably against private property, but no thought of any such radicalism as the admission of those poor peons of his, with head half-shaved and glaring uniform against escape, to participation in ownership, appears in his proposals. His communism is all for the convenience of his Syphogrants and Tranibores,<sup>5</sup> those gentlemen of gravity and experience, lest one should swell up above the others. So too is the essential Whiggery of the limitation of the Prince's revenues. It is the very spirit of eighteenth-century Constitutionalism. And his Whiggery bears Utilitarianism instead of the vanity of a flower. Among his cities, all of a size, so that 'he that knoweth one knoweth all' (p 89), the Benthamite would have revised his sceptical theology and admitted the possibility of heaven.<sup>6</sup>

Like any Whig, More exalted reason above the imagination at every point, and so he fails to understand the magic prestige of gold, making that beautiful metal into vessels of dishonour to urge his case against it, nor had he any perception of the charm of extravagance, for example, or the desirability of various clothing. The Utopians went all in coarse linen and undyed wool—why should the world be coloured?—and all the economy of labour and shortening of the working day was to no other end than to prolong the years of study and the joys of reading aloud, the simple satisfactions of the good boy at his lessons, to the very end of life. 'In the institution of that weal publique this end is only and chiefly pretended and minded, that what time may possibly be spared from the necessary occupations and affairs of the commonwealth, all that the citizens should

withdraw from the bodily service to the free liberty of the mind and garnishing of the same. For herein they suppose the felicity of this life to consist' (p 105).

Indeed, it is no paradox to say that *Utopia*,<sup>7</sup> which has by a conspiracy of accidents become a proverb for undisciplined fancifulness in social and political matters, is in reality a very unimaginative work. In that, next to the accident of its priority, lies the secret of its continuing interest. In some respects it is like one of those precious and delightful scrapbooks people disinter in old country houses; its very poverty of synthetic power leaves its ingredients, the cuttings from and imitations of Plato, the recipe for the hatching of eggs, the stern resolutions against scoundrels and rough fellows, all the sharper and brighter. There will always be found people to read in it, over and above the countless multitudes who will continue ignorantly to use its name for everything most alien to More's essential quality.

## NOTES

1 1908: 'the opening English mind'.

2 More (1478–1535) became Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor in 1529, but was later imprisoned and subsequently beheaded after his falling out with Henry on the matter of the king's divorce and break with Rome. By 'more general estrangement', Wells may have in mind the argument against serving the State that More has Raphael Hythloday put forward in Book I of *Utopia*.

3 1908: 'one may doubt'.

4 1908: 'one of the most profoundly inconsistent of books'.

5 The 200 syphogrants and twenty tranibores are officials elected annually to exercise the power and responsibility of decision-making in *Utopia*.

6 See Jeremy Bentham's *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), chapter 2, section 18.

7 1908: 'the *Utopia*'.

## PREFACE TO THE SLEEPER AWAKES

Wells's revaluation of the book originally published under the title *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) and here described as 'a nightmare of Capitalism triumphant' appeared as the 'Author's Preface' to a 1921 paperback issued by Collins.

This book, *The Sleeper Awakes*, was written in that remote and comparatively happy year, 1898. It is the first of a series of books which I have written at intervals since that time; *The World Set Free* [1914] is the latest; they are all 'fantasias of possibility'; each one takes some great creative tendency, or group of tendencies, and develops its possible consequences in the future. *The War in the Air* [1908] did that for example with aviation, and is perhaps, as a forecast, the most successful of them all. The present volume takes up certain ideas already very much discussed in the concluding years of the last century, the idea of the growth of the towns and the depopulation of the country-side and the degradation of labour through the higher organization of industrial production. 'Suppose these forces to go on', that is the fundamental hypothesis of the story.

The 'Sleeper' is of course the average man, who owns everything—did he but choose to take hold of his possessions—and who neglects everything. He wakes up to find himself the puppet of a conspiracy of highly intellectual men in a world which is a practical realization of Mr Belloc's nightmare of the Servile States.<sup>1</sup> And the book resolves itself into as vigorous an imagination as the writer's quality permitted of this world of base servitude in hypertrophied cities.

Will such a world ever exist?

I will confess I doubt it. At the time when I wrote this story I had a considerable belief in its possibility, but later on, in *Anticipations* (1900), I made a very careful analysis of the causes of town aggregation and showed that a period of town dispersal was already beginning.<sup>2</sup> And the thesis of a gradual systematic enslavement of organized labour, presupposes an intelligence, a power of combination, and a

wickedness in the class of rich financiers and industrial organisers, such as this class certainly does not possess, and probably cannot possess. A body of men who had the character and the largeness of imagination necessary to combine and overcome the natural insubordination of the worker would have a character and largeness of imagination too fine and great for any such plot against humanity. I was young in those days, I was thirty-two, I had met few big business men, and I still thought of them as wicked, able men. It was only later that I realized that on the contrary they were, for the most part, rather foolish plungers, fortunate and energetic rather than capable, vulgar rather than wicked, and quite incapable of world-wide constructive plans or generous combined action. 'Ostrog' in *The Sleeper Awakes*, gave way to reality when I drew Uncle Ponderevo in *Tono-Bungay* [1909]. 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 organization of servitude, our race will never come.

## NOTES

1 An allusion to *The Servile State* (1912) by Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953).

2 See 'The Probable Diffusion of Great Cities', chapter 2 of *Anticipations* (published in book form in 1901).

## PREFACE TO THE SCIENTIFIC ROMANCES

*The following text appeared as the introduction to The Scientific Romances of H. G. Wells (1933; published in the United States as Seven Famous Novels by H. G. Wells, 1934). It presents Wells's fullest critical statement about the nature and method of his science fiction.*

Mr Gollancz<sup>1</sup> has asked me to write a preface to this collection of my fantastic stories. They are put in chronological order, but let me say here right at the beginning of the book, that for anyone who does not as yet know anything of my work it will probably be more agreeable to begin with *The Invisible Man* [1897] or *The War of the Worlds* [1898]. *The Time Machine* [1895] is a little bit stiff about the fourth dimension and *The Island of Dr Moreau* [1896] rather painful.<sup>2</sup>

These tales have been compared with the work of Jules Verne and there was a disposition on the part of literary journalists at one time to call me the English Jules Verne.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact there is no literary resemblance whatever between the anticipatory inventions of the great Frenchman and these fantasies.<sup>4</sup> His work dealt almost always with actual possibilities of invention and discovery, and he made some remarkable forecasts. The interest he invoked was a practical one; he wrote and believed and told that this or that thing could be done, which was not at that time done. He helped his reader to imagine it done and to realize what fun, excitement or mischief would ensue. Many of his inventions have 'come true'. But these stories of mine collected here do not pretend to deal with possible things; they are exercises of the imagination in a quite different field. They belong to a class of writing which includes the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, the *True Histories* of Lucian, *Peter Schlemil* and the story of *Frankenstein*.<sup>5</sup> It includes too some admirable inventions by Mr David Garnett, *Lady into Fox* [1922] for instance. They are all fantasies; they do not aim to project a serious possibility; they aim indeed only at the same amount of conviction as one gets in a good gripping dream. They have to hold the reader to the end by art and illusion and not by

proof and argument, and the moment he closes the cover and reflects he wakes up to their impossibility.

In all this type of story the living interest lies in their non-fantastic elements and not in the invention itself. They are appeals for human sympathy quite as much as any 'sympathetic' novel, and the fantastic element, the strange property or the strange world, is used only to throw up and intensify our natural reactions of wonder, fear or perplexity. The invention is nothing in itself and when this kind of thing is attempted by clumsy writers who do not understand this elementary principle nothing could be conceived more silly and extravagant. Anyone can invent human beings inside out or worlds like dumb-bells or a gravitation that repels. The thing that makes such imaginations interesting is their translation into commonplace terms and a rigid exclusion of other marvels from the story. Then it becomes human. 'How would you feel and what might not happen to you', is the typical question, if for instance pigs could fly and one came rocketing over a hedge at you? How would you feel and what might not happen to you if suddenly you were changed into an ass and couldn't tell anyone about it? Or if you became invisible? But no one would think twice about the answer if hedges and houses also began to fly, or if people changed into lions, tigers, cats and dogs left and right, or if everyone could vanish anyhow. Nothing remains interesting where anything may happen.

For the writer of fantastic stories to help the reader to play the game properly, he must help him in every possible unobtrusive way to *domesticate* the impossible hypothesis. He must trick him into an unwary concession to some plausible assumption and get on with his story while the illusion holds. And that is where there was a certain slight novelty in my stories when first they appeared. Hitherto, except in exploration fantasies, the fantastic element was brought in by magic. *Frankenstein* even, used some jiggery-pokery magic to animate his artificial monster. There was trouble about the thing's soul. But by the end of last century it had become difficult to squeeze even a momentary<sup>6</sup> belief out of magic any longer. It occurred to me that instead of the usual interview with the devil or a magician, an ingenious

use of scientific patter might with advantage be substituted. That was no great discovery. I simply brought the fetish stuff up to date, and made it as near actual theory as possible.

As soon as the magic trick has been done the whole business of the fantasy writer is to keep everything else human and real. Touches of prosaic detail are imperative and a rigorous adherence to the hypothesis. Any *extra* fantasy outside the cardinal assumption immediately gives a touch of irresponsible silliness to the invention. So soon as the hypothesis is launched the whole interest becomes the interest of looking at human feelings and human ways, from the new angle that has been acquired. One can keep the story within the bounds of a few individual experiences as Chamisso does in *Peter Schlemil*, or one can expand it to a broad criticism of human institutions and limitations as in *Gulliver's Travels* [1726-27]. My early, profound and lifelong admiration for Swift, appears again and again in this collection, and it is particularly evident in a predisposition to make the stories reflect upon contemporary political and social discussions. It is an incurable habit with literary critics to lament some lost artistry and innocence in my early work and to accuse me of having become polemical in my later years. That habit is of such old standing that the late Mr Zangwill in a review in 1895 complained that my first book, *The Time Machine*, concerned itself with 'our present discontents'.<sup>7</sup> *The Time Machine* is indeed quite as philosophical and polemical and critical of life and so forth, as *Men like Gods* written twenty-eight years later. No more and no less. I have never been able to get away from life in the mass and life in general as distinguished from life in the individual experience, in any book I have ever written. I differ from contemporary criticism in finding them inseparable.

For some years I produced one or more of these 'scientific fantasies', as they were called, every year. In my student days we were much exercised by talk about a possible fourth dimension of space; the fairly obvious idea that events could be presented in a rigid four dimensional space time framework had occurred to me, and this is used as the magic trick for a glimpse of the future that ran counter to the placid assumption of that time that Evolution was a pro-human

force making things better and better for mankind. *The Island of Dr Moreau* is an exercise in youthful blasphemy. Now and then, though I rarely admit it, the universe projects itself towards me in a hideous grimace. It grimaced that time, and I did my best to express my vision of the aimless torture in creation. *The War of the Worlds* like *The Time Machine* was another assault on human self-satisfaction.

All these three books are consciously grim, under the influence of Swift's tradition. But I am neither a pessimist nor an optimist at bottom. This is an entirely indifferent world in which wilful wisdom seems to have a perfectly fair chance. It is after all rather cheap to get force of presentation by loading the scales on the sinister side. Horror stories are easier to write than gay and exalting stories. In *The First Men in the Moon* I tried an improvement on Jules Verne's shot, in order to look at mankind from a distance and burlesque the effects of specialization. Verne never landed on the moon because he never knew of radio and of the possibility of sending back a message. So it was his shot that came back.<sup>8</sup> But equipped with radio, which had just come out then, I was able to land and even see something of the planet.

The three later books<sup>9</sup> are distinctly on the optimistic side. *The Food of the Gods* is a fantasia on the change of scale in human affairs. Everybody nowadays realizes that change of scale; we see the whole world in disorder through it; but in 1904 it was not a very prevalent idea. I had hit upon it while working out the possibilities of the near future in a book of speculations called *Anticipations* (1901).

The last two stories are Utopian.<sup>10</sup> The world is gassed and cleaned up morally by the benevolent tail of a comet in one, and the reader is taken through a dimensional trap door with a weekend party of politicians, into a world of naked truth and deliberate beauty in the other. *Men like Gods* is almost the last of my scientific fantasies. It did not horrify or frighten, was not much of a success, and by that time I had tired of talking in playful parables to a world engaged in destroying itself. I was becoming too convinced of the strong probability of very strenuous and painful human experiences in the near future to play about with them much more. But I did two other sarcastic fantasies, not included

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here, *Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* [1928] and *The Autocracy of Mr Parham* [1930], in which there is I think a certain gay bitterness, before I desisted altogether.

*The Autocracy of Mr Parham* is all about dictators, and dictators are all about us, but it has never struggled through to a really cheap edition. Work of this sort gets so stupidly reviewed nowadays that it has little chance of being properly read. People are simply warned that there are ideas in my books and advised not to read them, and so a fatal suspicion has wrapped about the later ones. 'Ware stimulants!' It is no good my saying that they are quite as easy to read as the earlier ones and much more timely.

It becomes a bore doing imaginative books that do not touch imaginations, and at length one stops even planning them. I think I am better employed now nearer reality, trying to make a working analysis of our deepening social perplexities in such labours as *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* [1932] and *After Democracy* [1932]. The world in the presence of cataclysmal realities has no need for fresh cataclysmal fantasies. That game is over. Who wants the invented humours of Mr Parham in Whitehall, when day by day we can watch Mr Hitler in Germany? What human invention can pit itself against the fantastic fun of the Fates? I am wrong in grumbling at reviewers. Reality has taken a leaf from my book and set itself to supersede me.

### NOTES

1 Victor Gollancz was the English publisher of the anthology; the preface to the American edition substitutes 'Mr Knopf'.

2 In addition to these four titles, the Gollancz volume contains four others (mentioned later on by Wells): *The First Men in the Moon* (1900–01), *The Food of the Gods* (1904), *In the Days of the Comet* (1907), and *Men like Gods* (1923). The Knopf edition excludes the latter title (which accounts for the textual differences—noted below—between the English and the American prefaces).

3 In a letter that Wells sent to Bennett in 1902, he complained of American reviewers to whom "'English Jules Verne' is my utmost glory' (Wilson, p 73).

### On Science Fiction, Utopian Fiction, and Fantasy

- 4 Bennett makes a similar point in his 1902 essay on Wells; see Wilson, pp 261ff.
- 5 Apuleius's *Golden Ass* and Lucian of Samosata's *True History* (or *Histories*) both date from the second century A.D. Apuleius's satiric fantasy, like the book by David Garnett that Wells alludes to next, concerns the metamorphosis of a human being into an animal. *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (1814), by Adalbert von Chamisso (1781–1838), relates the adventures of a man who sells his shadow to the devil. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818; rev. ed., 1831) is frequently discussed in histories of science fiction, as is Lucian's prose satire.
- 6 This reading is from the Knopf text; the Gollancz has 'monetary'.
- 7 Israel Zangwill (1864–1926) used this phrase in his column 'Without Prejudice', *Pall Mall Magazine*, 7 (September 1895), 153; reprinted in CH, pp 40–2.
- 8 In *Autour de la lune* (1870), the sequel to *De la terre à la lune . . .* (1865), three members of the Baltimore Gun Club circle the moon in a cannonball before returning to Earth (see above, pp 222–3).
- 9 Knopf: 'The two later books . . .'
- 10 At the end of the preceding paragraph, the Knopf edition has: 'The last story is Utopian'. The new paragraph in the Knopf text begins, 'Men like Gods', written seventeen years after *In the Days of the Comet*, and not included in this volume, was almost the last of my scientific fantasies'.

'FICTION ABOUT THE FUTURE'

Wells broadcast these remarks on writing 'prophetic' fiction over Australian radio on 29 December 1938. The Sydney Daily Telegraph and the Adelaide Advertiser reported the event on the following day, and the Melbourne Leader a week later. But the full text, based on a typescript in the University of Illinois Wells Collection, is here printed for the first time.

I have been asked to give a talk on the Australian air on some subject connected with literature. It has occurred to me that you might be interested in a few things I have thought and observed about one peculiar sort of book-writing in which I have had some experience. This is *Fiction about the Future*. Almost my first published book<sup>1</sup> was *The Time Machine*, which went millions of years ahead, and since then I have made repeated excursions into the unknown, from *The Sleeper Awakes* in 1898 to *The Shape of Things to Come* in 1933, and it is still going on. The last one, the *Holy Terror* is due to wind up about twenty years from now.<sup>2</sup>

I doubt whether one can call anything of this sort literature in the sense that it aims to be something perfect and enduring. Maybe no literature is perfect and enduring, but there is something specially and incurably topical about all these prophetic books; the more you go ahead, the more you seem to get entangled with the burning questions of your own time. And all the while events are overtaking you. You may cast your tale a century or so ahead, and even then something may happen next week that will knock your most plausible reasoning crooked. For instance, who would have thought in 1900 of the possibility of mankind burrowing underground to escape from air raids? In that book of 1898<sup>3</sup> I put all my populations into vast towering cities and left the countryside desolate. Would any young man starting to write a futurist story now dare to do that in the face of the bomber aeroplane? When I wrote *Anticipations* in 1900, I was already giving up the idea of these crowded cities,<sup>4</sup> and by the time I wrote *The War in the Air* in 1908 and *The World Set Free* in 1914, I had completely reversed that concentra-

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tion. You might even think there was something malicious about the future, as though it didn't like to be prophesied and dodged me about. I thought that anyhow I was pretty safe to take my *Time Machine* some millions of years ahead and show the sun cooled down to a red ball and the earth dried up and frozen. That was what science made of the outlook in 1893. But since then all sorts of mitigating considerations have arisen, and there is no reason, they tell us now, to suppose there will not be humanity, or the descendants of humanity, living in comfort and sunshine on this planet, for millions of years yet<sup>5</sup>—provided always they do not blow it to pieces in some great war-climax. You see you never can tell. So—since it has no permanent quality—I should be disposed to class *all* this futuristic stuff as journalism, less ephemeral only in degree than the news in the daily papers. We read and discuss it in our own time, because for the time being and in face of our problems it is interesting, and there's an end to it. If posterity reads it at all it will probably be to marvel at our want of knowledge, imagination and hope. And no doubt our posterity too will write their own futuristic stories and no doubt they too will be just as transitory as ours.

I think myself that the best sort of futurist story should be one that sets out to give you the illusion of reality. It ought to produce the effect of an historical novel, the other way round. It ought to read like fact. But alas, do any of us futurist writers ever get in sight of that much conviction? I'm afraid I must admit that none of us have ever succeeded in producing anything like the convincingness of hundreds of historical novels. No reader has ever *lived* in a futurist novel as we have all lived in the London of Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge* [1841] or the Paris of Hugo's *Notre Dame* [1831] or the Russia of Tolstoi's *War and Peace* [1863–9]. But then the historical romancer has a whole mass of history, ruins, old costumes, museum pieces, to work upon and confirm him; your minds are all ready furnished for him; the futurist writer has at most the bare germs of things to come and all your prejudices to surmount. He has to throw himself on your willingness to believe. You have to help him. He invites you to embark upon a collaboration in make-believe,

or the whole thing fails. That is why so much *Fiction of the Future* degenerates into a rather silly admission of insincerity before the tale is half-way through. The writer's imagination gives out, he ceases to feel you can possibly believe in him, and so he begins to grimace and pretend that all along he was only making fun. He was being sarcastic, you must understand. That is the case, for example, in that incredibly dismal book, Mr Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* [1932]. It becomes at last a sour grimace at human hope. Never was any pretence of making fun less funny. Every developing tendency to which a young man might devote himself is distorted and guyed. You had better not start out living constructively; you will only make things worse for yourself and everyone; you had better achieve detachment by the simple process of hanging yourself at once, and *that's that*.

But a lot of fiction about the future starts as a joke from the outset and does not attempt to be anything more. There is a shock of laughter in nearly every discovery. Every new discovery is necessarily *strange* to begin with, and if a writer keeps at the level of that first laugh, he will save himself a lot of trouble. Here, for example, is an idea from which it would be easy to produce a comic futurist story. Suppose—which is probably quite within the range of biological possibility—that a means is discovered for producing children—and feminine children only—without actual fathers. Most doctors and biologists now will tell you that that is at least a conceivable thing. Very well, take that. Don't ask whether people would avail themselves of that discovery, don't probe into the immensely interesting problems of individual or mass psychology that it would open up, but just suppose it done. Then you have the possibility of a comic, manless world. In order to be really and easily funny about it, you must ignore the fact that it would change the resultant human being into a creature mentally and emotionally different from ourselves. That would complicate things too much. You must carry over every current gibe at womanhood, jokes about throwing stones, not keeping secrets, lip-stick and vanity bags, into the story, and there you are. That's the Futurist Story at the lowest level.

But suppose now you chose to complicate things by

carrying out your hypothesis to the extent of trying to imagine how such a possibility would really work. Suppose you were psychologist enough to speculate how a girl would grow up to womanhood in a manless world, a girl for whom the marriage market did not exist, what sort of emotional releases would she discover, how would women tackle the complicated mechanisms of life, how would they hunt and drive the plough, what modification of political life would they make, would they care less for beauty than they do now or more, and so on. Well, you'd have to write a far graver story; you'd giggle less but you'd find a lot more interest and complication. That would be a much more difficult book to write; it would probably lose itself in dissertations and unrealities, but it would be a much finer thing to bring off if you could bring it off. And now suppose humanity refused to accept the great change without vast disputation and struggle. Then you'd come still nearer to living possibility. You'd probably have to narrow the story down to a small group of people—and see the rest of the world out of the window. You'd have then what I should call a futurist novel, the highest and most difficult form of futurist literature.

Now I will confess that in spite of my constant preoccupation with the future I have never attempted a novel, set in times to come. I could never satisfy myself with the first chapter. All I have written has been romances and pseudo-histories, or books of pure speculation like *Anticipations*. For that you can manage with broad generalizations. You can write of mighty embankments of thousands of feet high, stupendous aeroplanes, you can hint at great palaces of crystal and beautiful robes and adornments. It passes muster. But directly you come down to real persons seen close-up, you meet what is the final and conclusive defeat of futuristic imagination and that is—the small material details. That was brought home to me when we made a film that had a certain vogue some years ago, called *Things to Come*.<sup>6</sup> It was easy to write of a Dictator, splendidly clothed, seated at the head of his council, and then go on with the speeches. But when it came to the screen, you have to show him from top to toe. And how was he going to dress his hair? Would he be

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clean-shaven? We consulted a number of hairdressers but none of them had any clear views about the hairdressing of the year 2035. And what sort of clothes would he be wearing? That opened up endless trouble. We invoked dress-designers by the dozen; we went into the problem of novel materials. More new dress materials have been introduced into the world in the past thirty years, than in the previous three thousand, and still the novelties come. We couldn't even decide whether his garments would be held together by buckles or buttons or zips or safety-pins. In my lifetime I have seen the practical disappearance of the tape and the pin and hooks and eyes. Probably no man under 40 among my hearers has ever had to hook up his wife's dress. And was our Dictator going to sit down to a wooden table with a wooden chair? No. But all we could think of were slightly modernistic metal chairs and a glass table. We did our best, but in fact we could never get beyond contemporary modernism. As I remember that film, it began in the present time with an intense realism. At the end it culminated in scenes of the intensest detailed improbability. You see we had been trying to anticipate the inventions, discoveries, freaks and fancies of scores of millions of our descendants; obviously we could not have our scene right; but what we discovered was that we could not even make it plausible. No one would believe it was so. And also we realized something else. Suppose one of us or all of us had had a real prophetic vision—exact and full of detail—of the buildings, rooms, garments of a hundred years hence—and suppose we had actually put that on the screen, would it have been even as convincing as the stuff we contrived?

And there you have the reason why no sensible writer who dreams of writing for posterity, will ever think twice of engaging in this ephemeral but amusing art, the fiction of prophecy—on which I have spent so much of my time.

### NOTES

1 Preceding *The Time Machine* (1895) were a *Text-Book of Biology* and *Honours Physiography* (both of which appeared in 1893).

### *On Science Fiction, Utopian Fiction, and Fantasy*

- 2 Wells has deleted the words: 'Just before I left England I was finishing the proofs of a book about the Last of all the Dictators, who, you will probably like to hear, [is due to wind up about twenty years from now].'
- 3 *When the Sleeper Wakes*, published in book form in 1899 and later (1910) retitled *The Sleeper Awakes*.
- 4 See the 'Preface to *The Sleeper Awakes*', n 2.
- 5 These remarks pertain especially to the penultimate chapter of *The Time Machine*, and imply (somewhat misleadingly—see EW, pp 89 and 112) that its apocalyptic vision derives primarily from the Second Law of Thermodynamics. In his foreword to an edition of *The Time Machine* issued in 1931 (Random House, New York; illus. W. A. Dwiggins), Wells claimed that he had predicated his cosmic pessimism on calculations (by Lord Kelvin) now recognized to be invalid.
- 6 This film, directed by William Cameron Menzies and starring Raymond Massey, was released in 1936.

# H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism

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THE HARVESTER PRESS · SUSSEX  
BARNES & NOBLE BOOKS · NEW JERSEY

First published in Great Britain in 1980 by  
THE HARVESTER PRESS LIMITED  
Publishers: John Spiers and Margaret A. Boden  
16, Ship Street, Brighton, Sussex

and in the USA by  
BARNES & NOBLE BOOKS  
81 Adams Drive, Totowa, New Jersey 07512

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Philmus

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*  
Wells, Herbert George

H. G. Wells's literary criticism.  
1. English literature—History and criticism  
I. Parrinder, Patrick  
II. Philmus, Robert Michael  
820'.9 PR401  
ISBN 0-85527-768-8

Barnes & Noble Books  
ISBN 0-389-20035-2

Text set in 11/12 pt Linotron 202 Bembo, printed and bound  
in Great Britain at The Pitman Press, Bath

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Smith

PR  
5578  
LAW  
120