

English literature in past times

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Abstract: *In general, literature can function as the mirror that reflects the society. The world has been a subject to a large number of wars and battles. Specifically, the Second World War was a major destructive conflict that has left its effects on the international level. Since war existed, there have been many writers trying creatively to explore it in a way of turning the battlegrounds into influential narratives. In this regard, numerous British authors of post- WWII era have been attracted to respond to the Second World War in their post-war fiction in order to portray its barbarism and devastation.*

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Introduction

In fact, in the aftermath of World War the British society witnessed a series of social changes that dramatically lead to general feeling of disillusionment and uncertainty. Consequently, post-World War British writers took it upon themselves to create narratives that investigate in sometimes a philosophical manner the damages of war and its impact on individuals. Among the writers of post-World war era is Herbert George Wells who is one the greatest contemporary authors.

Undoubtedly, war and literature are inseparable. Numerous literary texts were written in order to respond to the wars and to trace its impacts on the individual's sense of existence. Most importantly, the British literature after World War II was not only for the aim of portraying the brutality and the devastation of the war, However, it came to declare the collapse of civilization and the triumph of evil over good. In addition, the present study will rely on a set of approaches.

In the main discussion, the socio-historical approach will be used in order to explore the impact of World War on the British literature and the literary response to it. In the analysis, the novel will be read as an allegory of World War II focusing on how the writer associates fictional characters and events with actual people and incidents. In addition, this study will focus on analyzing the impact of World War II on Herbert George Wells and his view of the end of civilization.

This research will be divide into three main chapters. The first chapter will discuss some information and general background of Herbert George Wells and his life. The second chapter explore a great many peculiarities of the writer, as well as, reflecting the masterpiece in literature during that time. The third chapter will conclude all information in literature, some basic characters of The war of the worlds and settings.

Methods

The masterpiece influenced hugely to increase the quality and manner of the writing styles. All impacts had key role in English literature. It will be the best school for modern life to appreciate it.

Herbert George Wells (21 September 1866 – 13 August 1946) was an English writer. Prolific in many genres, he wrote dozens of novels, short stories, and works of social commentary, history, satire, biography and autobiography. His work also included two books on recreational war games. Wells is now best remembered for his science fiction novels and is often called the "father of science fiction", along with Jules Verne and the publisher Hugo Gernsback.

During his own lifetime, however, he was most prominent as a forward-looking, even prophetic social critic who devoted his literary talents to the development of a progressive vision on a global scale. A futurist, he wrote a number of utopian works and foresaw the advent of aircraft, tanks, space travel, nuclear weapons, satellite television and something resembling the World Wide Web.^[7] His science fiction imagined time travel, alien invasion, invisibility, and biological engineering. Brian Aldiss referred to Wells as the "Shakespeare of science fiction".^[8] Wells rendered his works convincing by instilling commonplace detail alongside a single extraordinary assumption – dubbed “Wells's law” – leading Joseph Conrad to hail him in 1898 as "O Realist of the Fantastic!"^[9] His most notable science fiction works include *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and the military science fiction *The War in the Air* (1907). Wells was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature four times.^[10]

Wells's earliest specialised training was in biology, and his thinking on ethical matters took place in a specifically and fundamentally Darwinian context.^[11] He was also from an early date an outspoken socialist, often (but not always, as at the beginning of the First World War) sympathising with pacifist views. His later works became increasingly political and didactic, and he wrote little science fiction, while he sometimes indicated on official documents that his profession was that of journalist.^[12] Novels such as *Kipps* and *The History of Mr Polly*, which describe lower-middle-class life, led to the suggestion that he was a worthy successor to Charles Dickens,^[13] but Wells described a range of social strata and even attempted, in *Tono-Bungay* (1909), a diagnosis of English society as a whole. Wells was a diabetic and co-founded the charity *The Diabetic Association* (known today as *Diabetes UK*) in 1934.^[14]

Personal life

In 1891, Wells married his cousin Isabel Mary Wells (1865–1931; from 1902 Isabel Mary Smith). The couple agreed to separate in 1894, when he had fallen in love with one of his students, Amy Catherine Robbins (1872–1927; later known as Jane), with whom he moved to Woking, Surrey in May 1895. They lived in a rented house, 'Lynton', Maybury Road in the town centre for just under 18 months and married at St Pancras register office in October 1895. His short period in Woking was perhaps

the most creative and productive of his whole writing career, for while there he planned and wrote *The War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine*, completed *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, wrote and published *The Wonderful Visit* and *The Wheels of Chance*, and began writing two other early books, *When the Sleeper Wakes* and *Love and Mr Lewisham*.

In late summer 1896, Wells and Jane moved to a larger house in Worcester Park, near Kingston upon Thames, for two years; this lasted until his poor health took them to Sandgate, near Folkestone, where he constructed a large family home, *Spade House*, in 1901. He had two sons with Jane: George Philip (known as "Gip"; 1901–1985) and Frank Richard (1903–1982).^[38] Jane died on 6 October 1927, in Dunmow, at the age of 55.

Results and Discussion

Wells had affairs with a significant number of women. In December 1909, he had a daughter, Anna-Jane, with the writer Amber Reeves, whose parents, William and Maud Pember Reeves, he had met through the Fabian Society. Amber had married the barrister G. R. Blanco White in July of that year, as co-arranged by Wells. After Beatrice Webb voiced disapproval of Wells' "sordid intrigue" with Amber, he responded by lampooning Beatrice Webb and her husband Sidney Webb in his 1911 novel *The New Machiavelli* as 'Altiora and Oscar Bailey', a pair of short-sighted, bourgeois manipulators. Between 1910–1913, novelist Elizabeth von Arnim was one of his mistresses.^[41] In 1914, he had a son, Anthony West (1914–1987), by the novelist and feminist Rebecca West, 26 years his junior.^[42] In 1920–21, and intermittently until his death, he had a love affair with the American birth control activist Margaret Sanger.^[43] Between 1924 and 1933 he partnered with the 22-year younger Dutch adventurer and writer Odette Keun, with whom he lived in Lou Pidou, a house they built together in Grasse, France. Wells dedicated his longest book to her (*The World of William Clissold*, 1926). When visiting Maxim Gorky in Russia 1920, he had slept with Gorky's mistress Moura Budberg, then still Countess Benckendorf and 27 years his junior. In 1933, when she left Gorky and emigrated to London, their relationship renewed and she cared for him through his final illness. Wells asked her to marry him repeatedly, but Budberg strongly rejected his proposals.^{[45][46]}

In *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934), Wells wrote: "I was never a great amorist, though I have loved several people very deeply". David Lodge's novel *A Man of Parts* (2011)—a 'narrative based on factual sources' (author's note)—gives a convincing and generally sympathetic account of Wells's relations with the women mentioned above, and others.^[48]

Director Simon Wells (born 1961), the author's great-grandson, was a consultant on the future scenes in *Back to the Future Part II* (1989).

In October 1879, Wells's mother arranged through a distant relative, Arthur Williams, for him to join the National School at Wookey in Somerset as a pupil–teacher, a senior pupil who acted as a teacher of younger children.^[20] In December that year, however, Williams was dismissed for irregularities in his qualifications and Wells was returned to Uppark. After a short apprenticeship at a chemist in nearby Midhurst and an even shorter stay as a boarder at Midhurst Grammar School, he signed his apprenticeship papers at Hyde's. In 1883, Wells persuaded his parents to release him from the apprenticeship, taking an opportunity offered by Midhurst Grammar School again to become a pupil–teacher; his proficiency in Latin and science during his earlier short stay had been remembered.^[16]

The years he spent in Southsea had been the most miserable of his life to that point, but his good fortune at securing a position at Midhurst Grammar School meant that Wells could continue his self-education in earnest.^[16] The following year, Wells won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science (later the Royal College of Science in South Kensington, now part of Imperial College London) in London, studying biology under Thomas Henry Huxley.^[23] As an alumnus, he later helped to set up the Royal College of Science Association, of which he became the first president in 1909. Wells studied in his new school until 1887, with a weekly allowance of 21 shillings (a guinea) thanks to his scholarship. This ought to have been a comfortable sum of money (at the time many working class families had "round about a pound a week" as their entire household income)^[24] yet in his *Experiment in Autobiography*, Wells speaks of constantly being hungry, and indeed photographs of him at the time show a youth who is very thin and malnourished.^[25]

He soon entered the Debating Society of the school. These years mark the beginning of his interest in a possible reformation of society. At first approaching the subject through Plato's *Republic*, he soon turned to contemporary ideas of socialism as expressed by the recently formed Fabian Society and free lectures delivered at Kelmescott House, the home of William Morris. He was also among the founders of *The Science School Journal*, a school magazine that allowed him to express his views on literature and society, as well as trying his hand at fiction; a precursor to his novel *The Time Machine* was published in the journal under the title *The Chronic Argonauts*. The school year 1886–87 was the last year of his studies.^[23]

During 1888, Wells stayed in Stoke-on-Trent, living in Basford. The unique environment of *The Potteries* was certainly an inspiration. He wrote in a letter to a friend from the area that "the district made an immense impression on me." The inspiration for some of his descriptions in *The War of the Worlds* is thought to have come from his short time spent here, seeing the iron foundry furnaces burn over the city, shooting huge red light into the skies. His stay in *The Potteries* also resulted in the macabre short story "The Cone" (1895, contemporaneous with his famous *The Time Machine*), set in the north of the city.

After teaching for some time, he was briefly on the staff of Holt Academy in Wales – Wells found it necessary to supplement his knowledge relating to educational principles and methodology and entered the College of Preceptors (College of Teachers). He later received his Licentiate and Fellowship FCP diplomas from the College. It was not until 1890 that Wells earned a Bachelor of Science degree in zoology from the University of London External Programme. In 1889–90, he managed to find a post as a teacher at Henley House School in London, where he taught A. A. Milne (whose father ran the school).^[28] His first published work was a Text-Book of Biology in two volumes (1893).^[30]

Upon leaving the Normal School of Science, Wells was left without a source of income. His aunt Mary—his father's sister-in-law—invited him to stay with her for a while, which solved his immediate problem of accommodation. During his stay at his aunt's residence, he grew increasingly interested in her daughter, Isabel, whom he later courted. To earn money, he began writing short humorous articles for journals such as *The Pall Mall Gazette*, later collecting these in volume form as *Select Conversations with an Uncle* (1895) and *Certain Personal Matters* (1897). So prolific did Wells become at this mode of journalism that many of his early pieces remain unidentified. According to David C Smith, "Most of Wells's occasional pieces have not been collected, and many have not even been identified as his. Wells did not automatically receive the byline his reputation demanded until after 1896 or so ... As a result, many of his early pieces are unknown. It is obvious that many early Wells items have been lost."^[31] His success with these shorter pieces encouraged him to write book-length work, and he published his first novel, *The Time Machine*, in 1895.

Artist

One of the ways that Wells expressed himself was through his drawings and sketches. One common location for these was the endpapers and title pages of his own diaries, and they covered a wide variety of topics, from political commentary to his feelings toward his literary contemporaries and his current romantic interests. During his marriage to Amy Catherine, whom he nicknamed Jane, he drew a considerable number of pictures, many of them being overt comments on their marriage. During this period, he called these pictures "picshuas". These picshuas have been the topic of study by Wells scholars for many years, and in 2006, a book was published on the subject.^[51]

From quite early in Wells's career, he sought a better way to organise society and wrote a number of Utopian novels. The first of these was *A Modern Utopia* (1905), which shows a worldwide utopia with "no imports but meteorites, and no exports at all";^[69] two travellers from our world fall into its alternate history. The others usually begin with the world rushing to catastrophe, until people realise a better way of living: whether by mysterious gases from a comet causing people to behave rationally and abandoning a European war (*In the Days of the Comet* (1906)), or a world council of scientists taking over, as in *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933, which he later adapted for the 1936 Alexander Korda film, *Things to Come*). This depicted, all too accurately, the impending World War, with cities being destroyed by aerial bombs. He also portrayed the rise of fascist dictators in *The Autocracy of Mr Parham* (1930) and *The Holy Terror* (1939). *Men Like Gods* (1923) is also a utopian novel. Wells in this period was regarded as an enormously influential figure; the critic Malcolm Cowley stated: "by the time he was forty, his influence was wider than any other living English writer".

While Invasion literature had provided an imaginative foundation for the idea of the heart of the British Empire being invaded by foreign forces, it was not until *The War of the Worlds* that the reading public was presented with an enemy completely superior to themselves. A significant motivating force behind the success of the British Empire was its use of sophisticated technology; the Martians, also attempting to establish an empire on Earth, have technology superior to their British adversaries. In *The War of the Worlds*, Wells depicted an imperial power as the victim of imperial aggression, perhaps encouraging the reader to consider imperialism itself.

Conclusion

This also challenged the Victorian notion that the British Empire had a right to rule by its own superiority over subject races. Consequently, such conditions greatly increased their feelings of disappointment and uncertainty about their destiny. Evidently, World War is a major destructive conflict that casts a shadow at the artistic level. In the aftermath of war, the majority of British writers attempted to explore the horrors and the cruelty of World War. Besides, the effect of the war has given rise to diverse forms of literary expressions including the appearance of different genres of post-war fiction that reflect the results of war upon societies and individuals.

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