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‘It Had to Come Back’: The Paris Commune and H.G. Wells’s *When the Sleeper Wakes*

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I

The Paris Commune, according to Eric Hobsbawm, provoked an “international outburst of hysteria among the rulers of Europe and among its terrified middle classes”.[1] Despite its eventual suppression and defeat, the Commune became a crucially important talisman for the emerging socialist movement in Britain at the fin de siècle. Annual celebrations provided occasions in which sectarian animosities between different groupings and organizations could be temporarily put aside. In the year following the inaugural London commemoration of the Commune, William Morris delivered a lecture on “The Hopes of Civilization” (1885) to the Hammersmith branch of the Socialist League in which he argued that the communards’ “heroic attempt” provides an example to “all Socialists” that “will give hope and ardour in the cause as long as it is to be won; we feel as though the Paris workman had striven to bring the day-dawn for us, and had lifted the sun’s rim over the horizon, never to set in utter darkness again.”[2] For Morris, the suppression the Commune acted as an impetus to commemorate its defeat, and to communicate the responsibility of the living to create a meaning for the otherwise futile sacrifice of some twenty-five thousand “brave and honest revolutionists” (CW, 23.74).[3]

In an article entitled “Why We Celebrate the Commune of Paris,” written for the Socialist League journal Commonweal in 1887, Morris similarly remarked that “[t]he Commune of Paris is but one link in the struggle which has gone on through all history of the oppressed against the oppressors; and without all the defeats of past times we should now have no hope of the final victory.”[4] Other socialists’ imaginative horizons were much narrower and more

temporally circumscribed. Henry Mayers Hyndman, the former Tory radical and leader of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) relied upon a provocative allusion to the Commune in order to elucidate his approbation for the achievements of the Metropolitan Board of Works. In his pamphlet A Commune for London (1887), Hyndman celebrates the "enormous changes … which have been made in well-to-do London in our own time," noting that the "modifications have gone on at an ever-increasing rate of progress," so much so that "[a] mere recital of what has been done in the last quarter of a century scarcely gives an idea, even to those who have witnessed it, of the transformation which has been wrought."[5] Hyndman's "mere recital" of the achievements of the Metropolitan Board of Works (constituted in 1855), including the completion of New Oxford Street and the Holborn Viaduct, the great Main Drainage Scheme and the laying out of Battersea, Victoria and Finsbury Parks, is particularly impressive as an example of London's "continuous process of demolition and reconstruction" described by Lynda Nead.[6] Hyndman's roll-call of achievements indicates that the response of fin-de-siècle socialists to the reality of metropolitan growth was not exclusively constrained within the discursive framework of Morris's romantic antiurbanism.

It is particularly noticeable that Hyndman had recourse to the Commune in sketching out his vision of a better-planned built environment, organized according to human need, rather than profit, not least because his reference cuts against mainstream invocations of the Commune as a synonym for chaotic conflagration. Hyndman elsewhere debunked reactionary misrepresentations of the Commune, writing in The Historical Basis of Socialism in England (1883) that "[w]hilst the middle class is content, as a rule, to think of the insurrection as an affair of petroleuses and dynamitards, the Socialist party constantly recalls that … Paris was never so peaceful nor were so few crimes ever committed within a like period as during the supremacy of the much abused Commune."[7] In A Commune for London, by contrast, a certain indeterminacy and semantic instability hovers around the very word 'Commune,' given that

Hyndman makes no direct reference to the Parisian events of 1871. Indeed, Hyndman's use of the indefinite article in his title suggests an older meaning of the word, associated with the smallest administrative division of French territorial organization, which belongs in the series: commune, canton, arrondissement, department, region. In France, the word's origins can be traced to the twelfth century, but the existence of the communes as territorial divisions of municipal governance began during the period following the French Revolution, which saw communes replace parishes (la paroisse) as the lowest level of newly secularized civic administration. Noting the political fervor that developed in Paris during the Prussian siege of 1870-71, Gareth Stedman Jones points out that some radical and red republicans "engendered a new language of revolutionary patriotism" which made explicit appeal to the revolutionary Commune of Paris of August 1792: "[t]he potency of the term 'Commune' derived from the fact that it concentrated within one word the idea of national defence, of local democracy and of revolution."[8] During the early 1880s, after the 'socialist revival' in Britain had begun to gather pace, British socialists commemorated the defeated Parisian Commune of 1871, but they did so in the absence of any homegrown revolutionary uprising, such that their focus sometimes shifted, as in Hyndman's case, to issues of local democracy.

As a mode of civic governance, the nearest English equivalent to a commune is the civil parish, although the comparison is partly misleading because some urban communes in France are closer in size to English districts, which tend to comprise several parishes. Morris played upon this apparent affinity in his utopian romance News from Nowhere (1890), in which William Guest learns that the future society's "units of management" operate at the level of "a commune, or a ward, or a parish (for we have all three names, indicating little real distinction between them now, though time was there was a good deal)" (CW, 16.88). Morris's projected conflation of commune and parish, as well as Hyndman's choice of title, is particularly significant because the word's meaning in English was also heavily overdetermined by the

historical events of 1871. The first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary offered three separate definitions, the first of which referred to the word's historical derivation from the Latin word communia, whilst the second referred to French territorial divisions governed by a maire and municipal council. The third definition offered the following: "the government on communalistic principles established in Paris by an insurrection for a short time in the spring of 1871" and "the revolutionary principles and practices embodied in the latter, and advocated by its adherents, the communards."[9] British socialists like Morris and Hyndman, whose ideological commitments involved a desire retroactively to valorize the communards' struggle, played upon this ambiguity, allowing the Commune of 1871 to figure both directly and indirectly in their rhetoric.

In this respect, Hyndman's pamphlet invoked the Commune's memory, without explicitly mentioning the events of 1871, in order to argue for various projects of urban redevelopment under municipal control, and thereby implicitly disassociated the Commune from its status as a byword for destruction. Scott McCracken similarly connects the history of the Commune to a longer-term and "gradual process where the particularity of the individual nineteenth-century city was displaced by a more abstract and international sense of the urban: not a city, but citiness."[10] This abstract and international sense of what a city could be underlies Hyndman's comparison of London with "such turbulent centres as Paris, Berlin, Vienna or Brussels," linking the reform-oriented politics of urban renewal to the revolutionary turmoil of urban insurrection.[11] At the national level, meanwhile, Hyndman also complained that the people of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds, Newcastle "have if anything rather an exaggerated notion of the importance of their respective cities," whereas "London alone is deficient in this characteristic of municipal pride."[12] In A Commune for London, Hyndman set out to address this perceived deficiency, whilst simultaneously preparing the ground for the SDF's electoral agenda on the London County Council (LCC).

Unlike the abstentionist Socialist League, Hyndman's SDF was more willing to engage in the practical politicking of the LCC. The LCC was an experiment in municipal government which was established in 1889, under the aegis of the 1888 Local Government Act. A former SDF member, John Burns, even met with some measure of success in this area. Burns, who had played a leading role in the London Dock Strike, was elected as an LCC councillor for Battersea in 1889, and sided with the Progressive majority on the new LCC. In elaborating the achievements of the LCC, Burns, like Hyndman, rhetorically invoked the Commune. Trumpeting the accomplishments of the LCC Progressives in an article published in The Nineteenth Century, entitled "The London County Council I. Towards A Commune".[13] The liberal Daily Chronicle also recounted the LCC's achievements in a special edition of the newspaper, which first appeared on 18 February 1895. The paper's special commissioners reprinted a booklet on New London: Her Parliament and its Works (1895), containing chapters on the LCC Works Committee, as well as the Council's contributions to municipal provision of sports facilities, educational opportunities, a fire service, improved dwellings and numerous amenities [INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]. The booklet is accompanied by a series of cartoons and drawings produced by, amongst others, Edward Burne-Jones, Walter Crane, Joseph Pennell and Herbert Railton. Crane's striking frontispiece, entitled "Unification of London: A Suggestion for the Lord Mayor's Show Under the London County Council" (see fig. 1), depicts a procession of men and women, dressed in loose-fitting, free-flowing garments, carrying banners celebrating "Municipal Progress," "Municipal Lighting," "Municipal Water Supply," "Municipal Markets," "Municipal Education," "No Slums," "Municipal Tramways," "Municipal Docks & Warehouses," "Municipal Work for Unemployed" and "Playgrounds and Opens Spaces".[14] The two stewards at the front of the procession are decked out in particoloured blouses, suggestive of the pseudo-medieval garb worn by the inhabitants of Morris's Nowhere, which, as Morris's utopian protagonist learns, lies "somewhat between that

of the ancient classical costume and the simpler forms of the fourteenth-century garments, though it was clearly not an imitation of either" (CW, 16.14).[15] At the same time, Crane's marching workers take forward the very cause of progress which he had earlier depicted in an allegorical representation of the "Angel of the Paris Commune (26 March-28 May 1871)," which appeared in the mainstream periodical Black and White in 1891, as well as in his memorial cartoon, "Vive la Commune," published in Morris's Commonweal journal during 1887. Hyndman celebrated municipal patriotism in A Commune for London, and Crane lent it a distinctly medievalist inflection, deploying a visual rhetoric familiar from his earlier commemorations of the Commune.

II

G.K. Chesterton responded to this climate of medieval municipalism in his antiutopian satire, The Napoleon of Notting Hill (1904), in which he imagines the disastrous consequences of a whimsical tilt towards municipal patriotism in a projected future, some eighty years hence, with consequences that call to mind the destructive violence of the Commune's last days. Chesterton was aware of Crane's "decorative curves," and once disclaimed socialists in general on the grounds that "a man of their sort will have a wife in pale green and Walter Crane's 'Triumph of Labour' hanging in the hall."[16] In Napoleon, Chesterton also satirizes the modern innovation of County Councils, putting the following words into the mouth of Juan del Fuego, the ex-President of Nicaragua, who contrasts the value of experiential understanding with the empty formalism of rationalizing state institutions: "[d]o you really mean to say that at the moment when the Esquimaux has learnt to vote for a County Council, you will have learnt to spear a walrus?" (41). Del Fuego speaks from a position of patriotic commitment to the particular, his own nation having recently been absorbed by a larger imperial federation, thus making his reference to "a County Council" as an example of such rationalizing, absorptive

tendencies particularly pointed in view of the various progressive defenses of the LCC quoted above. In Chesterton's novella, the bureaucrat Barker represents the statist position, who always professes to speak in the name of "the interests of the public" (47) and "the public good" (165) because of his position as a state functionary. Chesterton figures forth his response to Barker's doublespeak through the diptych of Adam Wayne and Auberon Quin, whose revanchist medievalism bears striking similarities to the Morrisian variety on display in Crane's celebration of the LCC.

In Chesterton's short (and first) novella, which reworks the trope of the fool-made-king-for-a-day, Auberon Quin becomes the country's quixotic monarch, after a kind of lottery, and proposes to "devote [his] remaining strength to bringing about a keener sense of local patriotism in the various municipalities of London".[17] Auberon announces his "Great Proclamation of the Charter of the Cities" at a meeting of The Society for the Recovery of London Antiquities—an irreverent tribute to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, which Morris had founded in 1877—whose members greet the king's proposal "in an indescribable state of vagueness" (80). To the consternation of London's mercantile class, whose business affairs are subject to significant disruption, each borough is bestowed with a Provost, a heraldic coat of arms and a uniformed corps of guardsmen—satirically realizing the state of affairs imagined in Crane's cartoon—and the city walls are rebuilt. Quin's antiquarian enthusiasms lead to a revival of the "arrogance of the old medieval cities applied to our glorious suburbs," replete with vestrymen in crowns and wreaths, uniformed halberdiers, banners and coats-of-arms (73). However, when Adam Wayne, the earnest young Provost of Notting Hill, decides to execute the king's whimsical inclination to revitalize "the neglected traditions of the London boroughs" with po-faced sincerity, the result is a bloody civil war, replete with barricades "nearly as high as houses," and vigorous bouts of street-fighting, evoking the very violence of the Commune's last days that Hyndman had sought to downplay

(218). The barricades themselves are composed of the "fragments" of the "vast machinery of modern life"—including omnibuses and chimney-pots—recalling the process of "bricolage" that Kristin Ross finds to be at work in the Communards' construction of their Parisian barricades (162).[18]

The concatenation of urban growth and urban insurrection similarly animated H.G. Wells's When the Sleeper Wakes, first serialized in The Graphic between 7 January and 6 May 1899, and illustrated predominantly by H. Lanos. In an essay on "Herbert George Wells and his Work" (1902), which first appeared in The Cosmopolitan Magazine, Wells's friend Arnold Bennett characterized When the Sleeper Wakes, together with The First Men in the Moon and "A Story of the Days to Come," as Wells's foremost examples of "prophecy in fiction".[19] Wells's adventure narrative When the Sleeper Wakes, in particular, offers parallels with The Napoleon of Notting Hill because it contains lengthy passages recounting a hard-fought urban insurrection, though Wells, unlike Chesterton, explicitly recalls the Commune. Wells's Preface to the 1921 edition, which he had retitled The Sleeper Awakes in 1910, makes clear the text's investment in issues of metropolitan expansion, informing readers that 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 towns and the depopulation of the countryside," adding that "[t]he great city of this story is no more … than a nightmare of Capitalism triumphant."[20] Wells's narrative thus responded to the "crisis of metropolitan experience," characterized by "chronic overcrowding and slum conditions," that Matthew Beaumont construes as a crucial influence on the "incipient anti-communist imaginary" which emerged at the fin de siècle in response to the "irruption of the Paris insurrection into middle-class consciousness."[21] When the eponymous sleeper, Graham, awakes from his "cataleptic trance" after an interval of two hundred years, he discovers a world—and a metropolis—transformed.[22] It is a world that Graham effectively owns, as Wells's adaptation of Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle

formula sees Graham's investments and savings steadily accrue during his two-hundred-year slumber to such an extent that he wakes to find himself in the position of sole Master and Owner of half the world. A greatly expanded London has become, along with Edinburgh, Portsmouth, Manchester and Shrewsbury, one of a few great conurbations that constitute the dominant centers of population in Britain, whilst similar conurbations exist abroad.

London's projected population of thirty-three million inhabitants is "beyond Graham's imagination," but very much in keeping with Wells's predilection speculatively to intensify the perceived contradictions and developing trends of the society he saw around him (148). As he put it in his Experiment in Autobiography (1934), When the Sleeper Wakes was "essentially an exaggeration of contemporary tendencies: higher buildings, bigger towns, wickeder capitalists and labour more downtrodden than ever".[23] During a flight in an aeropile (or monoplane) between London and Paris, Graham later surveys "the ruin of the houses that had once dotted the country," and notices "the vast treeless expanse of country from which all farms and villages had gone, save for crumbling ruins" (204). Graham's flight intimates the spatialized politics of the novel, as he is briefly informed by the aeronaut as they fly over Paris "about 'trouble in the underways,'" a remark that "Graham did not heed at the time" (206). Much as the underground race of Morlocks feature as a menacing presence in Wells's earlier novella The Time Machine (1895), as do the Vril-ya in Edward Bulwer Lytton's The Coming Race (1871), Graham later learns about the suffering slave class employed by the Labour Company only when he "penetrated downward, ever downward, towards the working places" (271).[24] From the magisterial and exhilarating height of his aeropile cockpit, Graham fails to perceive the existence of a subterranean undercurrent of popular discontent, the source of which emanates, appropriately enough, from Paris.

Remarkably, given that the narrative is set sometime around the year 2100, memories of the Commune persist in the future society, and offer a focal point of revolutionary optimism

against the plutocratic rule of the Council, an organization that came into being in order to manage Graham's affairs during his long slumber. The earliest reference to the Commune appears in the midst of the novel's first insurgency, during which forces aligned with Ostrog, an ostensibly revolutionary opponent of the Council, liberate Graham from the Council's imprisonment, only for Graham subsequently to get lost in the sprawling passageways of the metropolis. At this point in the narrative, the popular forces are seemingly aligned with Ostrog's revolt against the Council, but Graham later discovers the existence of a revolution within the revolution, which Ostrog attempts to suppress, and which he identifies with a memory of the Commune:

> Ostrog brought flattering reports [to Graham] of the development of affairs abroad. In Paris and Berlin, Graham perceived that he was saying, there has been trouble, not organised resistance indeed, but insubordinate proceedings. 'After all these years,' said Ostrog, when Graham pressed inquiries; 'the Commune has lifted its head again. That is the real nature of the struggle, to be explicit.' But order had been restored in these cities. (232)

The Commune emerges as a source of fear for the Bonapartist figure of Ostrog. It also provides a beacon of hope against the swift bureaucratic ossification of Ostrog's rebellion. Graham soon learns that Ostrog cynically attempted to overthrow the Council by means of a carefully manipulated popular uprising which he set on foot simply in order to secure power for himself.

According to Ostrog, the "social discontent" that gave rise to the Communard uprising stems from the Labour Company's autocratic organization of the forces of production, foregrounding class antagonism as a dominant cause of revolutionary sentiment. The Labour Company figures as a dystopian version of the industrial army imagined in Edward Bellamy's state-socialist utopia, Looking Backward (1888)—a book which is briefly invoked in Chapter

Two. Having thus identified the "real nature of the struggle," Ostrog becomes remarkably candid about his own will-to-power in overthrowing the Council:

> We had to stir up their discontent, we had to revive the old ideals of universal happiness—all men equal—all men happy—no luxury that everyone may not share—ideas that have slumbered for two hundred years. You know what? We had to revive these ideals, impossible as they are—in order to overthrow the Council. (233)

Much like Adam Wayne in the comparatively parochial setting of Notting Hill, Ostrog finds himself in the position of a demagogue in danger of being displaced by the very popular forces he has mobilized: "[t]here is trouble. Multitudes will not go back to work. There is a general strike. Half the factories are empty and the people are swarming the Ways. They are talking of a Commune" (233-34). Ostrog also declares the outmoded unfeasibility of collective revolutionary agency, asserting that "[t]he days when the People could make revolutions are past" (235). For Ostrog, this stance is linked to his Nietzschean propensities and aristocratic hauteur. As he puts it to Graham: "[t]he coming of the aristocrat is fatal and assured. The end will be the Over-man—for all the mad protests of humanity" (239). In a recreational dancehall, Graham later sees "marble busts of men whom that age esteemed great moral emancipators" (259), including Grant Allen, Richard Le Gallienne and Nietzsche.

Wells's elaboration of Ostrog's antiCommunard elitism anticipated the stance taken by the playwright (and Wells's fellow Fabian) George Bernard Shaw, whose four-act play, Man and Superman (written in 1903, and first performed in 1905) borrowed its title from Nietzsche.[25] Shaw similarly inserted some particularly disparaging remarks about the Commune into the 1907 German edition of The Perfect Wagnerite (1898). These remarks were incorporated into the third English edition of the text, published in 1913. In the context of a wider dismissal of the Impossibilist (or revolutionary) socialism of the First International, Shaw comments that "[t]he suppression of the Paris Commune, one of the most tragic examples in history of the

pitilessness with which capable practical administrators and soldiers are forced by the pressure of facts to destroy romantic amateurs and theatrical dreamers, made an end of melodramatic Socialism."[26] In belatedly seeking to write the Commune's obituary, Shaw attempted to carve out a position of hegemony for Fabian reformism and gradualism, casting a tendentious ideological modification within the socialist movement in terms of a passing generic fashion. Shaw anchored this exercise in apologetics for Adolphe Thiers's mass slaughter of the Communards in pragmatic commitment to "the pressure of facts," yet it is particularly noticeable that Shaw does not accompany this appeal with any specification of the particular "facts" he has in mind, such that his professed empiricism swiftly plunges into resolute abstraction.

Shaw expanded on his dismissal of the Commune in the Preface to the 1908 edition of Fabian Essays in Socialism, where he wrote:

> Anyone who looks at the portraits of the members of the Paris Commune can see at a glance that they compared very favourably in all the external signs of amiability and refinement with any governing body then or now in power in Europe. But they could not manage the business they took upon themselves; and Thiers could.[27]

Shaw's focus on the pragmatic management of "business" dovetails with his earlier critique of the revolutionary romanticism of the Communards, whom he dismissed as mere "amateurs" and "theatrical dreamers". In When the Sleepers Wakes, Wells repeatedly identifies Graham as the very embodiment of an idealist dreamer, so much so that he is described as a throwback to the outmoded ideals of the nineteenth century. After his mysterious lapse into slumber during the nineteenth century—a period during which he suffered with insomnia and suicidal thoughts—Graham is confusedly described by his solicitor and next of kin as "a fanatical Radical—a Socialist—or typical Liberal, as they used to call themselves, of the advanced school. Energetic—flighty—undisciplined" (19). On Shaw's terms, then, Graham's solidarity

with the novel's twenty-second-century Communards could be explained as a natural extenuation of these flighty and undisciplined tendencies.

In this regard, Graham also recalls the bohemian "best elements of the bourgeoisie" that, according to Walter Benjamin, sided with the Commune because of its "spontaneous energy and … enthusiasm".[28] Benjamin had in mind the poet Arthur Rimbaud and the painter Gustave Courbet. In a different sense, Graham, the imagined Master and Owner of the World, embodies an archetypal bourgeois who, by dint of an eccentric commitment to the ideal of universal equality, allies himself with the forces of revolution against tyranny, oppression and, crucially, his own global expanse of capital. Whereas Benjamin argues that "it was fatal for the workers' rebellions of old that no theory of revolution had directed their course"—even if this absence of theory made possible the "enthusiasm" and "energy" he celebrates—in Wells's narrative, Graham's very flightiness ultimately holds out a promise of victory at the revolution's crucial moment, as he takes to his aeropile to repel Ostrog's invading fleet of warplanes (A, 25). Graham's heroic act of self-sacrifice, which echoes Arthur Golding's suicidal downward plunge into the abyss of Niagara Falls at the end of George Gissing's Workers in the Dawn (1880), does not guarantee triumph, but leaves open the narrative's "horizon of possibility," to borrow a phrase that Phillip E. Wegner uses to characterize the similarly ambiguous ending of Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924).[29] The availability of this horizon in When the Sleeper Wakes, and its subsequent disappearance from Wells's comparable prophetic fictions, marks an important turning point in his development as a novelist, to which I will return in conclusion.

III

In "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century," included as the 1939 "Exposé" of the Arcades Project, Benjamin comments that:

> Just as the Communist Manifesto ends the age of professional conspirators, so the Commune puts an end to the phantasmagoria that dominates the earliest aspirations of the proletariat. It dispels the illusion that the task of the proletarian revolution is to complete the work of ’89 in close collaboration with the bourgeoisie. This illusion had marked the period 1831-1871, from the Lyons riots to the Commune. The bourgeoisie never shared in this error. Its battle against the social rights of the proletariat dates back to the great Revolution, and converges with the philanthropic movement that gives it cover and that was in its heyday under Napoleon III. (A, 24)

When the Sleeper Wakes dramatizes these conflicting interests, with Ostrog embodying bourgeois class consciousness in his readiness to suppress the insurgent workers, whom he describes as “swarming yelping fools in blue” (239). The final third of Wells’s narrative follows Graham’s realignment with and support for the popular forces, whose “blue canvas” uniforms recall the blue blouses of the Parisian working classes during the Commune of 1871. The stakes of Graham’s decision to ally himself with the revolt against Ostrog are made clear when his Japanese bodyguard, Asano, disclaims the prospect of “[a] commune!” by warning Graham: “[t]hey would rob you of your property. They would do away with property and give the world over to mob rule” (253). Wells’s novel clearly identifies the historical Commune with a potential reemergence of revolutionary and anti-capitalist sentiment, which appears as a destabilizing force against the Bonapartist authoritarianism personified in Ostrog’s Nietzschean will-to-power. Insofar as Wells’s speculative narrative concretizes contemporary anxieties, Ostrog appears as an embodiment of the bourgeois fear of working-class self-organization. It is thus hardly surprising that the Commune features as the focus of Ostrog’s apprehension, and as a channel for the expression of his disdain for the “common man,” whom he characterizes as a “helpless unit” (236).

The Parisian rising of 2100 is, like the Commune of 1871, "pacified": Graham learns in overhearing the propagandistic argot of the Babble Machines that "[a]ll resistance is over," and that the "black police," called in by Ostrog, and composed of soldiers from colonial territories in Senegal and the Consolidated African Companies, have taught "a lesson to the disorderly banderlog of this city" (251). Wells's allusive use of the Hindi portmanteau-word, Bandar-log, coined by Rudyard Kipling in The Jungle Book (1894) to describe the imaginary monkey-people of the Seeonee jungle, suggests that the Babble Machines' propaganda is designed to dehumanize the insurgent workers, much in the manner that the Communards of 1871 were portrayed by hostile caricaturists as simian-featured degenerates and drunkards.[30] The propaganda of Ostrog's regime thus closely resembles the antiCommunard rhetoric of some contemporary French commentators, such as Léon Daudet and Théophile Gautier, which, in Kristin Ross's words, "aimed at establishing a massive racially constituted category that would include in one breath animals, workers (particularly working-class women), barbarians, savages, and thieves".[31] But while the Parisian revolt in When the Sleeper Wakes is suppressed, the rebellion spreads to England, contradicting Asano's assertion that "[t]here will be no Commune here," and Ostrog's decision to call the "black police" to London is decisive in shifting Graham's allegiance to the revolutionary forces (253-54).

Wells's brief rendition of the Parisian revolt, however, is notable for its parallels with and departures from the events of 1871. Wells invokes the brutality of the Versaillais in the Babble Machines' reference to the fact that the black police "[o]nce or twice … got out of hand, and tortured and mutilated wounded and captured insurgents, men and women" (251). Yet Wells's radicalization of the Versaillais—displacing the source of the repressive violence onto the colonial 'other'—betrays reluctance, on his part, to confront the historical actuality of the Commune as a civil war between opposing classes. At the same time, the Babble Machines proclaim in telegraphic fashion: "[t]he Parisians exasperated by the black police to the pitch of

assassination. Dreadful reprisals. Savage times come again. Blood! Blood! Yaha! … Law and order must be maintained" (252). In this sense, the rising of 2100 follows a cyclical pattern established by the revolution of 1871, in which the Communards' assassination of the Archbishop of Paris and several other hostages was widely condemned in the English press for its apparent brutality, even as the surviving Communards explained and justified these actions with reference to the Versaillais's execution of Communard captives.[32] In this regard, it is noteworthy that the mediatization of atrocities, reprisals and counter-reprisals in Wells's narrative clearly identifies the insurgents' violence as a response to the torture and mutilation inflicted on their captured comrades. Wells's narrative thus obliquely confirms, or lends weight to, proCommunard historiography. Yet by setting this compressed rendition of Parisian events in a speculatively imagined future, Wells's narrative implicitly makes a wider claim about patterns of historical causation and agency, from which readers might draw inferences about the likelihood, or otherwise, that familiar and recurring modes of insurrectionary activity will produce predictably disappointing outcomes.

The novel's first reference to the Commune appears in the chapter "The Old Man Who Knew Everything," in which the old man encountered by Graham comments on the insurgency against the Council as follows:

> "Fighting and slaying, and weapons in hand, and fools bawling freedom and the like," said the old man. "Not in all my life has there been that. These are like the old days—for sure—when the Paris people broke out—three gross of years ago. That's what I mean hasn't been. But it's the world's way. It had to come back. I know. I know." (121-22)

He appears only briefly, and calls to mind the character of Old Hammond, the communist "sage of Bloomsbury" in Morris's News from Nowhere, who similarly acts as a bearer of historical consciousness in the narrative. Unlike Morris's articulate and expansive utopian host,

Wells's old man appears lugubrious and distracted by the march of events. He makes reference to the Commune as a phenomenon that has "come back," and suggests that it fits a wider pattern of recognizable activity colloquially described as "the world's way," identifying the revolutionary upheaval of 2100 with Nietzsche's concept of eternal return. Within the horizon of Wells's speculative narrative, the imagined uprising against the Council appears, at least to the old man, as a recurrence of the Commune of 1871. However, as many commentators pointed out, the Commune of 1871 itself appeared to contemporaries as a recurrence of the revolutionary sentiments that animated Paris's history as a city of revolution. As Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson comments, the "long shadow cast by the Commune over the Third Republic looked all the darker by virtue of insistent, inescapable parallels with 1793."[33] In The Psychology of Revolution, the French crowd psychologist Gustave Le Bon wrote in similar terms, characterizing every successful "popular revolution" as a "temporary return to barbarism," and speculating that "[i]f the Commune of 1871 had lasted, it would have repeated the Terror."[34]

By imagining the repetition of such events projected two hundred years into the future, Wells reinscribes Paris's status as a locus of revolutionary activity at the same time as he envisages a transversal process whereby the defeat of revolution in Paris acts as the spark for a potentially victorious workers' uprising in London. Wells himself had voiced the very same idea in a letter to Elizabeth Healey of 23 March 1888, where he commented that "[t]he Commune which sank at Paris will rise next in London. That is the star we wait for."[35] A decade before he came to write When the Sleeper Wakes, Wells identified the Commune as a symbol of hope in his own political constellation. During this period, Wells attended meetings of the Hammersmith branch of the Socialist League, which took place in the coach house of William Morris's Hammersmith residence, and which doubtless motivated his sympathetic attitude towards the Commune. As Wells's biographers, Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie, point

out, the “memory of the Paris Commune was still fresh” at such meetings, not least because there were “old Communards among the audiences at Kelmscott House as well as fugitives from Bismarck’s anti-socialist laws” in Germany.[36] In When the Sleeper Wakes, by contrast, the old man’s insertion of the Communard rebellion into a longer temporal sequence stretching back over “three gross of years” invokes the older, etymological meaning of the word ‘revolution,’ suggesting that the events of 2100 represent little more than the next phase in the turning of history’s wheel, according to a fatalistic Nietzschean cosmology of eternal return in which no revolutionary upheaval could ever introduce the prospect of genuine rupture and transformation.

IV

The concept of eternal return, or recurrence, featured prominently in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, and Karl Löwith regards it as the central organizing concept of Nietzsche’s heavily aphoristic philosophical system.[37] Nietzsche’s formulation of eternal return in The Gay Science (1882), Thus Spake Zarathustra (1883-91) and Ecce Homo (1888) was indebted to models of cyclical time derived from the writings of ancient Pythagoreans, Empedocles and Heraclitus. Nietzsche, in turn, was an important figure in Wells’s cultural milieu, and his ideas fed into the wider current of fin-de-siècle pessimism in which Bernard Bergonzi has situated Wells’s early romances.[38] Wells’s reliance on Nietzsche was also part of Nietzsche’s broader literary apotheosis in Britain and Ireland, which encompassed William Butler Yeats and George Bernard Shaw. Meanwhile, in the French context, Colette E. Wilson has persuasively shown how Nietzsche’s idea of active forgetfulness provides a useful “model for understanding the post-Commune universe inhabited by Zola, Maxime Du Camp and their contemporaries.”[39] It should already be clear that Nietzsche’s influence on Wells, detectable as it is in When the

Sleeper Wakes, makes him an equally important figure for critical understanding of English mediations of the Commune.

Alexander Tille's English translation of Thus Spake Zarathustra appeared in 1896, three years before the serialization of When the Sleeper Wakes commenced in the Graphic, and provoked several discussions of Nietzsche's thought in mainstream periodicals. In Thus Spake Zarahustra, the prophetic Zarathustra's animals instruct him that he is "the teacher of eternal recurrence," and that it is his duty to preach the "doctrine" that "all things recur eternally, ourselves included; and that we have been there infinite times before, and all things with us."[40] Several of Nietzsche's early reviewers concurred with Löwith about the importance of this concept. A. Seth Pringle Pattison proclaimed it to be "the central doctrine of his philosophy" in The Contemporary Review, while W. Wallace, in The Academy, characterized it as the "ultimate secret on which Nietzsche's system rests."[41] For Löwith, Nietzsche's iterations of eternal recurrence revolve around a crucial paradox, neatly formulated by Löwith's English translator J. Harvey Lomax, who comments that Nietzsche's "ostensibly unified allegory of eternal recurrence splits into two irreconcilable parts, one cosmological and the other anthropological—one portraying the goalless revolution of the universe, the other, a superhuman act of the human will that consummates the self-overcoming of nihilism."[42] On this understanding, recurrence manifests as both an "unwilled, physical fact," thereby replacing "ancient cosmology with modern physics," and as "the willing of an ideal [that] replaces Christian faith in the afterlife with the will to self-eternalization and a new way of life."[43] Given Nietzsche began to formulate the concept in the wake of the Commune, it takes on a particular resonance in its cosmological iteration as a way of containing the threat of political rupture embodied in the Commune, pitting the Communards' iconoclastic assertion of revolutionary agency against an all-engulfing prospect of eternity, and the endless reduplication of the same.

Walter Benjamin noted the appearance of a closely related "cosmological speculation" in L'Eternité par les astres (1872), the final book of the revolutionary and ex-Communard Louis-Auguste Blanqui, written during his last imprisonment (A, 112). And Ben Carver has pointed to the similarity between Blanqui's astral vision of infinite worlds and Wells's A Modern Utopia, which imagines a "parallel planet beyond Sirius" where "every man, woman and child alive has a Utopian parallel."[44] For Benjamin, however, Blanqui's acquiescence in this Nietzschean vision represents the very moment at which "[he] yields to bourgeois society" (A, 111). Benjamin argues that Blanqui's elaboration of the cosmology of eternal return, from which he quotes extensively, offers up an "infernal vision," and represents Blanqui's "unconditional surrender" to "a society that projects this image of the cosmos—understood as an image of itself—across the heavens" (A, 112). Benjamin suggests that the concept's emergence in Blanqui's thought after the Commune's defeat encapsulates his intellectual surrender to bourgeois society, and a retreat from his earlier revolutionary convictions.

Nietzsche's own hostility to the Commune bears out such an interpretation. In The Birth of Tragedy, published one year after the defeat of the Commune and first translated into English in 1909, Nietzsche obliquely responded to the Commune with the comment, ostensibly concerning Alexandrian culture, that "[t]here is nothing more terrible than a barbaric slave class, who have learned to regard their existence as an injustice, and now prepare to take vengeance, not only for themselves, but for all future generations."[45] Against this background, Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence appears as a cosmological complement to his more explicitly counterrevolutionary theory of ressentiment, which posits that a so-called slave class preserve themselves from harm through the pursuit of "imaginary vengeance" directed against their masters.[46] Fredric Jameson suggests that the theory of ressentiment plays a crucial role in Nietzsche's "historical master narrative," which revolves around the contention that the entire Judeo-Christian ethical tradition, as well as later developments such as socialism, or any form

of democratic egalitarianism, constitutes the slaves' revenge which simultaneously infects the masters with the same "slave mentality—an ethos of charity—in order to rob them of their natural vitality and aggressive, properly aristocratic insolence."[47] Jameson also observes that, in the work of the French historian, and contemporary of the Commune, Hippolyte Taine, the concept will "furnish the inner dynamic for a whole tradition of counter-revolutionary propaganda."[48] Ostrog, the Bonapartist Nietzschean overman, appears in Wells's novel as an exemplary diagnostician and opponent of proletarian ressentiment. Yet he is clearly presented as the story's villain, suggesting the confusion of Wells's ultimate stance in relation to the reality of class antagonism. Indeed, it is only when one reads When the Sleeper Wakes with reference both to the theory of ressentiment and the concept of eternal recurrence that it becomes possible to disclose Wells's true position in relation to the events he narrates.

In framing the projected Communard resurgence as a manifestation of eternal return ("it's the world way. It had to come back.") Wells flattens out the tremors and reverberations of that particular insurgency, along with the insurgents' claims to novelty, by extending the temporal horizon to such an extent that the insurgents' actions appear as little more than the latest incarnation of a timeless, fixed pattern. In doing so, he thereby forecloses in advance the prospect of social transformation with or without the intervention of the Bonapartist figure of Ostrog, whose actions Wells clearly does not celebrate. Such a view ran counter to Karl Marx's assertion of the Commune's novelty, as he argued that "this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle class—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—the wealthy capitalists alone excepted."[49] Yet Marx also observed that "[i]t is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterparts of older, and even defunct, forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness," hence the attempts of the Commune's opponents to depict it as a return of the medieval communes.[50]

Benjamin followed Marx in asserting that the Commune represented a break in the long nineteenth century's historical sequence of revolutions, dispelling "the illusion that the task of the proletarian revolution is to complete the work of '89 in close collaboration with the bourgeoisie." In "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," Benjamin argued that "the collapse of the Second Empire and the Commune of Paris" served as timely reminders that "the pomp and splendour with which commodity-producing society surrounds itself, as well as the illusory sense of security, are not immune to dangers" (A, 15). Indeed, for Benjamin, such disturbances fundamentally threatened the bourgeois "phantasmagorias" of the marketplace and civilization, identified with differing economic and technological determinations, including the Parisian arcades, the haphazard urban experiences of the flâneur and Haussmann's transformations of Paris. Benjamin's dissection of these phantasmagorias leads him to draw the Commune into a constellation with the Nietzschean vision of eternal recurrence, though, for Benjamin, Nietzsche's concept shares an affinity with the inner logic of equivalence that Marx had discovered in the commodity.[51] According to Benjamin, "[i]n the idea of eternal recurrence, the historicism of the nineteenth century capsizes," such that "every tradition, even the most recent, becomes the legacy of something that has already run its course in the immemorial night of the ages" (A, 116). Socialist attempts to memorialize the Commune's heroic defeat as the founding moment in an unprecedented tradition of proletarian revolution would thereby be negated at birth, according to the cosmological logic of the concept.

Benjamin certainly focused on the concept of eternal return, but this did not imply endorsement on his part, as he also offered a critical account of the reasons underlying its emergence in Nietzsche's post-1871 writings. In Convolute D of the Arcades Project, "Boredom, Eternal Return," Benjamin includes several extracts from Nietzsche's posthumously collected The Will to Power (1901), and comments that "[t]he notion of eternal return appeared at a time when the bourgeoisie no longer dared count on the impending

development of the system of production they had set going," not least because of the shock which had been delivered to bourgeois society by the sudden emergence of the Commune (A, 117). In Convolute J on "Baudelaire," Benjamin more explicitly draws out his view of the concept's status as an ideological reflex of economic forces:

> The idea of eternal recurrence transforms the historical event itself into a mass produced article. But this conception also displays, in another aspect—on its obverse side, one could say—a trace of the economic circumstances to which it owes its sudden topicality. This was manifest at the moment the security of the conditions of life was considerably diminished through an accelerated succession of crises. The idea of eternal recurrence derived its luster from the fact that it was no longer possible, in all circumstances, to expect a recurrence of conditions across any interval of time shorter than that provided by eternity. (A, 340)

The Commune was a particularly acute manifestation of crisis that threatened to undermine capitalist circuits of production and exchange, interrupting an economic dispensation that facilitates the accumulation of private property. In this context, Benjamin suggests, the idea of eternal recurrence offered antisocialists like Nietzsche a convenient metaphysical stabilization of this contingent set of social relations by reducing the possibility of historical transformation into yet another "mass produced article" for consumption, much as Wells's novel fulfilled a similar function in the literary marketplace. Benjamin captures the way in which the concept of eternal return commoditizes "the historical event," even as it denies any validity to the notion of historical "progress," at the same time as he identifies the conjunctural cause of its emergence in Nietzsche's thought as a response to a period of instability and capitalist crisis.

V

Benjamin's reading of Nietzsche's concept aptly reveals it, in Esther Leslie's words, as the necessary "complement of a crisis-ridden capitalism, in which what is true is truly the unconscious acknowledgement that there is nothing new to come, because no future can be imagined in the context of the current economic order."[52] Whilst Wells may not have read Nietzsche at first hand, Nietzsche's ideas certainly influenced a number of his novels—as John Batchelor and others have recognized—and discussion of eternal recurrence featured prominently in early reviews of Nietzsche's work when it first began to appear in English translation.[53] As such, the resurfacing of the concept of eternal recurrence in When the Sleeper Wakes, where it is explicitly invoked with reference to the Commune, helps clarify the ideological stakes of Wells's mobilization of "prophecy in fiction" (as Bennett put it). Wells's equivocation over Graham's role in the revolt demonstrates that he is ultimately unable to imagine a future beyond a moderately reformed version of the "current economic order," but his disavowal of the possibility of revolutionary rupture, as encapsulated in the Commune, entailed the relinquishment of his youthful enthusiasm for such politics. As he had put it in his 1888 letter to Elizabeth Healey, in which he praised the Commune: "I sympathise most, of all parties in the world, with Wm. Morris and the Revolutionary circle in London."[54] As Wells moved closer to the gradualist Fabian Society, which he eventually joined for a period of five years between 1903 and 1908, he necessarily left behind his earlier commitments, but the essential gesture of disavowal is already present in When the Sleeper Wakes, and is equally detectable in his subsequent comments on the book. Wells explicitly repudiated the novel's original ending in his Preface to the revised edition of 1910, where he wrote that, "with a few strokes of the pen," he had "eliminated certain dishonest and regrettable suggestions that the People beat Ostrog. My Graham dies, as all his kind must die, with no certainty of either victory or defeat."[55] Wells registered the Commune's posthumous impact, almost thirty years after the event, but ultimately disavowed the Communards' revolutionary and socialist

internationalism in the name of a more technocratic transnationalism on display in his later advocacy of a World State.

The narrative of class struggle and popular insurgency on display in When the Sleeper Wakes does not reach an affirmative conclusion, but meets only with ambivalence and irresolution, which partly suggests why Wells remained troubled by a nagging sense of the novel's artistic failure, which he associated with the "marks of haste not only in the writing of the latter part, but in the very construction of the story".[56] In particular, he rejected the "ill-conceived latter part" which "was pushed to its end," and pointed out that he "had in hand another book, Love and Mr. Lewisham, which had taken a very much stronger hold upon my affections than this present story".[57] In his 1910 Preface, Wells's expressed dissatisfaction with the narrative quality of this early romance potentially conceals a different, more political discomfort which he had made more explicit elsewhere. In September 1906, in a letter to the editor of the Daily Express refuting attacks on his novel In the Days of the Comet (1906), Wells identified himself as being "in no way a representative of any Socialist organization," but "merely a private, unorthodox, and rebellious member of the Fabian Society".[58] The following year, in a letter to the editor of the Magazine of Commerce, dated 5 August 1907, he explicitly repudiated revolution in his assertion that "the methods of transition from the limited individualism of our present to the scientifically organised State, which is the Socialist ideal, must be gradual, tentative and various," and reassured his readers that "[t]he advent of a strongly Socialistic Government to power would mean no immediate revolutionary changes at all".[59]

Wells's mobilization of the concept of eternal return in When the Sleeper Wakes offers an early signal of his gravitation in this reformist direction, and discloses the full extent of the paradox that Löwith identified in Nietzsche's idea. Much as the concept refuses to settle on either side of its cosmological and anthropological iterations, so does the indeterminacy of the

conclusion of When the Sleeper Wakes ultimately reveal the narrative's equivocation over the resurgence of the Commune, leaving readers unsure whether Wells depicts a tragic defeat—recapitulating the historical example of the 1871 rising—or an heroic gesture of self-sacrifice in which Graham's skill in the aeropile secures victory for the revolutionary forces. Even if the latter option were seen to be true, one might still entertain the possibility that the victorious revolution would ossify. In this sense, the conclusion of When the Sleeper Wakes dramatizes the paradox central to Nietzsche's concept. Graham's willful attempt to alter the course of events abides by Zarathustra's injunction to "save the past … and to change every 'It was' into a 'thus I would have it'" whilst acting out Wells's own youthful desire to see the Commune's "star" rise again in London.[60] In this regard, Graham enacts the anthropological iteration of Nietzsche's concept. The individualized scope of Graham's narrative is set against the much grander scale of revolutionary upheaval, encompassing the actions of multiple, unseen revolutionary committees organizing to repel Ostrog's invading air force, gesturing towards the possibility of collective revolutionary agency. Yet, at the conclusion of the narrative, Graham's heroic act of self-sacrifice in defense of the revolution leaves the novella open-ended and unresolved, suggesting a refusal, on Wells's part, to take any definitive stance on the wider question of revolutionary agency, even as Graham's sympathies are unambiguously delineated.

Graham's passionate and heroic devotion to the cause certainly manifests a recurrence of the Communards' revolutionary commitment. Yet Graham also faces the tangible prospect of defeat, and it is here that the second, cosmological iteration of Nietzsche's concept—as "physical metaphysics"—becomes relevant. Bernd Magnus indentifies this second sense with a suggestion that "a finite number of states of the world is destined to unfold in time—which is infinite, not finite. Hence, given the finite number of possible states of the world and the infinity of time, any single state of the world must recur. More than that, it must recur eternally: the eternal recurrence of the same."[61] According to this logic, the nonexistence in

world history of a successful revolutionary proto-type, and the historical fact of the Paris Commune's defeat in 1871, necessarily condemns Graham's revolt to the same fate as the defeated historical Communards, because the possibility of their final victory does not belong amongst "the finite number of possible states of the world," otherwise it would already have been witnessed. The logic appears circular, but there is enough evidence in When the Sleeper Wakes to suggest that Wells mobilized precisely this paradoxical circularity in order to contain and disavow the Commune's radical potential. If, as the old man comments, the Commune "had to come back," then the "world's way" immediately foredooms it to renewed defeat.

Wells's achievement in When the Sleeper Wakes was to imagine a scenario in which the entire world's stock of private property has been concentrated into the hands of a single individual, who, upon his inheritance of this worldwide monopoly, decides to disown it in the name of a resurgent Communard praxis. Yet the novella does not disclose its stance in relation to that praxis, illuminating the distance between Wells and the earlier generation of socialist revivalists, such as Morris and Crane, whose commemorations of the Commune were grounded in an unabashedly affirmative belief in the possibility—and the possibly imminent prospect—not only of the Commune's repetition, but of its successful vindication in victorious class struggle. Wells toyed with hopes of such a victory during his youthful visits to meetings of Morris's Socialist League, but he found himself unable to translate such hopes into his later experiments in fiction without considerable qualification. If, as the French historian George Haupt has commented, the Commune was both a symbol and an example for the emergent fin-de-siècle socialist movement, then for Wells, and his fellow Fabian, Bernard Shaw, it was a symbol which they had to disavow in order to establish their claim to mastery of the rhetorical terrain which had heretofore been occupied by an older generation of avowedly revolutionary socialists.[62] In an inversion of the more typical phenomenon whereby youthful rebels outflank their political predecessors to the left, Wells and Shaw instead gravitated steadily rightwards.

When the Sleeper Wakes thus occupies an important waypoint in Wells's development as a novelist and as a social thinker, insofar as none of his later scientific romances even entertain the possibility of class struggle and revolutionary insurrection as an agent of social change. In the Days of the Comet imagines a global "Awakening" precipitated by the "new gas" contained in a comet which enters the earth's atmosphere, thereby inaugurating an era of "peace on earth and good will to all men"—but the narrative function of the gas is to displace any prospect that human agency might precipitate such a transformation.[63] When the Sleeper Wakes, then, offers important insights about the particular trajectory of Wells's intellectual and political development, but it also presents an interesting modulation of the fin-de-siècle subgenre of prophetic fiction known as cacotopianism, which, as Matthew Beaumont has convincingly shown, was, unlike dystopian fiction, "concerned less with repudiating the literary expression of utopianism than with combating its practical embodiment in the proletariat" (U, 132). As Beaumont points out, the array of cacotopian narratives which he surveys in Utopia Ltd. (2005)—including Samuel Bracebridge Hemyng's The Commune in London (1871), E.H. Berens and I. Singer's The Story of My Dictatorship (1894) and Charles Gleig's When All Men Starve (1898)—explicitly respond to the anxieties engendered by the Commune, which "shaped the social imaginary of an entire generation" in Britain as well as France (U, 131). Such texts, Beaumont argues, "[wage] a fictional offensive by forging the rhetorical tools of an anti-revolutionism that, by filling their readers' imaginations with the spectral symbols of a fictional socialist menace, sought expressly to influence bourgeois class consciousness" (U, 147). The cacotopia also "incorporates a 'utopian function'" because the prophetic, anticipatory narrative structure, which depicts revolution as "an infernal state of social flux," simultaneously "conscripts reactionary political instincts in support of a utopian model of capitalism supposedly implicit in the present" (U, 163). Wells's response to the Commune in When the Sleeper Wakes modulates these features of the cacotopian genre, at the

same time as his engagement with the primal scene of bourgeois anxiety—namely, the possibility of proletarian self-organization and self-governance—speaks to concerns about labor and class antagonism that were far more widely distributed in the fiction of the period.[64]

Given his broadly reformist orientation, occupying the softer flank of the fin-de-siècle socialist movement, Wells was hardly in a position to offer a full-throated endorsement of the capitalist mode of production, and When the Sleeper Wakes in no way offers a 'utopian' or recuperative resolution to the class conflicts depicted in the novel, in the manner that Beaumont identifies with the cacotopian genre. Rather, pessimism is the keynote of Wells's text, a characteristic which it shares with many of Wells's other early romances, notably The Time Machine (1895) and The Island of Doctor Moreau (1896). For Beaumont, the "ideological force" of cacotopian texts "depends on their belief that capitalism can abolish class conflict, and that the working class can be rendered quiescent" (U, 165). One finds no such ideological self-assurance in Wells, yet neither can he bring himself to have any confidence in the proletariat as an agent of its own emancipation. Graham's death neatly symbolizes this dilemma: whilst his death represents the potential termination of the novel's revolutionary uprising, that uprising was, in part, a revolt prosecuted against Graham's very status as the Master and Owner of half the world. Graham's death is thus as much a crisis for the prevailing system of property relations that obtains within the novel as it is for the revolution which he leads, but Wells does not elaborate on the consequences of this contradiction. On the contrary, he abandons his narrative at the very moment that the projected revolution is about to enter its decisive phase: the precise point at which the novel's bourgeois protagonist vacates the stage, leaving it empty for the anonymous revolutionary masses to see through the revolt they had initiated to ultimate victory or final defeat. But if Wells's later texts offer any clue about the outcome of Graham's struggle, it might be assumed that the Communard recurrence in When the Sleeper Wakes ended in failure, as Wells never

subsequently proved willing or able to imagine the potential consequences of a Communard victory.

Wells's disavowal—or, one might say, avoidance—of collective revolutionary agency in fact ushers in the more properly utopian phase in his literary production, from which all traces of working-class self-organization mysteriously vanish. Publication of When the Sleeper Wakes (1899) was followed with Wells's most self-evidently programmatic utopias: Anticipations (1901), Mankind in the Making (1903) and A Modern Utopia (1905). One might also recall that A Modern Utopia, The World Set Free (1915) and The Shape of Things to Come (1933) all resort to some form of enlightened aristocracy or benevolent dictatorship, drawing on Wells's proposals for a World State, which he first outlined in Anticipations. In this respect, the qualified affinity of When the Sleeper Wakes with the cacotopian propensity for counterrevolutionary propaganda opens the way for Wells to enter all the more securely into a new period of literary and political activity, in which his Fabian reformism dovetails neatly with a commitment to the version of "compensatory" (U, 43) and "prophylactic" (U, 64) utopianism that Beaumont identifies with the state socialism of Edward Bellamy and the Fabians of the 1880s. Wells's narrative reenactment of Communard struggle thus paradoxically serves to occlude the possibility that such a revolutionary orientation might gather momentum as a practical, political current during the early twentieth century.

NOTES

[1] Eric Hobsbawm, The Age of Empire, 1875-1914, new edn (London: Abacus, 1994), 84.

[2] The Collected Works of William Morris, ed. May Morris, 24 vols (London: Longmans Green and Company, 1910-1915), 23.74. Hereafter abbreviated as CW and cited parenthetically by volume and page number.

[3] "There is no exact figure, but something in the order of 25,000 Parisians were killed, compared to the Versailles losses in the battle of 877 dead and 6,454 wounded." Stewart Edwards, The Paris Commune, 1871 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971), 346.

[4] William Morris, Political Writings: Contributions to 'Justice' and 'Commonweal', 1883-1890, ed. Nicholas Salmon (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1994), 232-33.

[5] H. M. Hyndman, A Commune for London (London: Justice Printery, 1887), 3. Lynda Nead has characterized the upheaval in the built environment of the nineteenth-century metropolis in the following terms, writing of the 1860s that: "[c]hange in London was happening so quickly that it seemed by enchantment rather than man-made. London was in the possession of surveyors and masons, and was undergoing a continuous process of demolition and reconstruction. Familiar landmarks and streets disappeared in clouds of dust, but the new London never seemed finally to emerge." Lynda Nead, Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 29.

[6] Hyndman, A Commune for London, 3-4; Nead, 29.

[7] Henry Mayers Hyndman, The Historical Basis of Socialism in England (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1883), 421.

[8] Gareth Stedman Jones, Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 492.

[9] A New English Dictionary on a Historical Basis, ed. James A.H. Murray, 10 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888-1928), 2.698. Volume Two, which covered the letter "C," was published in 1893.

[10] Scott McCracken, "The Commune in Exile: Urban Insurrection and the Production of International Space," in Joseph Bristow and Josephine McDonagh, eds, Nineteenth-Century Radical Traditions (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), 114. McCracken also argues "[t]he threat of insurrection embodied in the memory of the Commune persists as an idea of what the city might become, and, as an idea of the possible rather than the actual, this idea necessarily exceeds the reality of any one city" (127).

[11] Hyndman, A Commune for London, 7.

[12] Hyndman, A Commune for London, 1.

[13] Burns wrote in March 1892 that "[m]uch that was considered Utopian and impracticable three years ago is being secured, and much more on the verge of realisation." Burns's pejorative use of the word "Utopian" functions as a foil against which he extols the advantages of municipal control of roads and services. John Burns, "The London County Council I. Towards A Commune," The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review 31.181 (March 1892): 501-2.

[14] The Special Commissioners of The Daily Chronicle, New London: Her Parliament and Its Work, Reprinted from 'The Daily Chronicle' (London: Edward Lloyd, 1895).

[15] See Wanda Campbell, "Clothes from Nowhere: Costume as Social Symbol in the Work of William Morris," in Writing on the Image: Reading William Morris, ed. David Latham (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 107-18.

[16] G.K. Chesterton, The Common Man (London: Sheed and Ward, 1950), 231; G.K. Chesterton, A Miscellany of Men (London: Methuen, 1912), 117. Chesterton added a characteristically paradoxical observation that, despite protestations against "narrow dogma," a socialist is thus "a particular sort of person who is always the same" (ibid.). Manuscript evidence shows that Chesterton was working on Napoleon between 1897 and 1902, and there are also suggestions that he had been working on it from his schooldays. See William Oddie, Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy: The Making of GKC, 1874–1908 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 267

[17] G. K. Chesterton, The Napoleon of Notting Hill (London: John Lane, 1904), 75. Further references to this edition will appear, in parentheses, in the body of the text.

[18] Kristin Ross, The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune, 2nd edn (London: Verso, 2008), 36.

[19] Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells: A Record of a Personal and a Literary Friendship, ed. Harris Wilson (Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1960), 275. In contrast to Bennett's and Wells's friendship, the rivalry between Wells and Chesterton is well-known. Chesterton set out his disagreements with Wells's resolutely secular and Fabian-inspired version of Whig history in Heretics, which includes a chapter on Wells, and in The Everlasting Man (1925), where Chesterton outlines his own Christian philosophy of history.

[20] H.G. Wells, The Sleeper Awakes (London: Collins' Clear-Type Press, 1921), 5-6.

[21] Matthew Beaumont, Utopia Ltd.: Ideologies of Social Dreaming in England 1870-1900, 2nd edn (Chicago, IL: Haymarket, 2009), 154. Hereafter cited parenthetically by page number in the body of the text, and abbreviated as U. Beaumont relies upon Raymond Williams's elaboration of the "crisis of metropolitan experience" in The Country and the City (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), 272. See also Raymond Williams, "Metropolitan

Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism," in Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists, ed. Tony Pinkney, 2nd edn (London: Verso, 2007), 37-48.

[22] H.G. Wells, When the Sleeper Wakes (London: Harper and Brothers, 1899), 28. Further references to this edition are given, in parentheses, in the body of the text.

[23] H.G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (since 1866), 2 vols (London: Victor Gollancz and the Cresset Press, 1934), 2.645.

[24] For extended discussion of this topic as it bears upon Wells's early fiction, see Catherine Redford, "'Great Safe Places Deep Down': Subterranean Spaces in the Early Novels of H.G. Wells," in Utopias and Dystopias in the Fiction of H.G. Wells and William Morris: Landscape and Space, ed. Emelyne Godfrey (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), 123-38.

[25] In his article "Nietzsche contra Wagner," published in the Saturday Review in 1896, George Bernard Shaw described Nietzsche as a "champion of privilege, of power and of inequality". See George Bernard Shaw, "Nietzsche in English," Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art 81.2111 (11 April 1896): 373-74.

[26] George Bernard Shaw, The Perfect Wagnerite: A Commentary on the Niblung's Ring, 3rd edn (London: Constable, 1913), 100. The additional chapter "Why He Changed His Mind," where these remarks appear, was also included in the 1909 Brentano's edition published in New York.

[27] George Bernard Shaw, "Preface to the 1908 Edition," Fabian Essays in Socialism, ed. George Bernard Shaw (Boston: Ball, 1911), xii.

[28] Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), 25. Further references to this edition are included, in parentheses, in the body of the text, abbreviated as A.

[29] Philip E. Wegner, Imaginary Communities: Utopia, the Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 179.

[30] See James A. Leith, "The War of Images surrounding the Commune," in Images of the Commune/Images de la Commune, ed. James A. Leith (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 138-39. In a letter to his daughter, the French poet, novelist and critic Théophile Gautier described the Communards, in comparable terms, as "savages, a ring through their noses, tattooed in red, dancing a scalp dance on the smoking debris of society," quoted in Émile Tersen, Vive la Commune! (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1951), 25.

[31] Ross, The Emergence of Social Space, 149.

[32] See, for example, Pierre Vésinier, History of the Commune of Paris, trans. J.V. Weber (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872), 241-42; Lissagaray, History of the Commune of 1871, trans. Eleanor Marx Aveling (London: Reeves and Turner, 1886), 349-50.

[33] Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 153.

[34] Gustave Le Bon, The Psychology of Revolution, trans. Bernard Miall (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1913), 329.

[35] The Correspondence of H.G. Wells, ed. David Clayton Smith, 4 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998), 1.95-96.

[36] Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie, The Life of H.G. Wells: The Time Traveller, rev. edn (London: Hogarth Press, 1987), 62.

[37] See Karl Löwith, Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same, trans. J. Harvey Lomax, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

[38] See Bernard Bergonzi, The Early H.G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 9-11, 22.

[39] Colette E. Wilson, Paris and the Commune 1871-78: The Politics of Forgetting (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 11.

[40] The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, vol. VIII, Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None, trans. Alexander Tille (London: Macmillan, 1896), 320. As the publication of Nietzsche's Complete Works in English took shape under the editorship of Oscar Levy, this edition was retrospectively renumbered as volume 2.

[41] A. Seth Pringle Pattison, "The Opinions of Friedrich Nietzsche," The Contemporary Review, 73 (May 1898): 735; W. Wallace, "'The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche,'" The Academy, 1265 (1 August 1896): 77.

[42] Löwith, xxiv.

[43] Löwith, xxv.

[44] H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia (London: Chapman and Hall, 1905), 24; Ben Carver, "'All Good Earthly Things are in Utopia Also': Familiarity and Irony in the Better Worlds of Morris and Wells," in Godfrey, ed., Utopias and Dystopias in the Fiction of H.G. Wells and William Morris, 86-87.

[45] The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, vol. I, The Birth of Tragedy, or Hellenism and Pessimism, ed. Oscar Levy, 3rd edn (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1923), 138. For discussion of Nietzsche's aristocratic dread of the Commune, as expressed in The Birth of Tragedy, and his general hostility to the idea of working-class self-emancipation, see Marc Sautet, Nietzsche et la Commune (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1981) and Dominic

Losurdo, Nietzsche, il ribelle aristocratico: Biografia intellettuale e bilancio critico (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002).

[46] The Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol. X, A Genealogy of Morals, ed. Alexander Tille (London: Macmillan, 1897), 35. Nietzsche's English translator, William A. Hausemann, translates ressentiment and resentment.

[47] Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, new edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 188-89. One of Jameson's commentators, William C. Dowling, aptly comments that the ideologeme of "ressentiment is invoked by a nineteenth-century bourgeoisie and its intelligentsia as the mindless and destructive envy that the have-nots of society always and universally feel towards the haves, thus utterly denying the origins in economic exploitation of all discontent from below, of Peterloo and Chartism and the Paris commune." William C. Dowling, Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to the Political Unconscious (London: Methuen, 1984), 134.

[48] Jameson, 189. As Peter Starr comments, Taine's seven-volume history of France, Les Origines de la France contemporaine, published between 1875 and 1894, traces a process of "decomposition originating in the French Revolution" which "culminated in the events of the année terrible, most notably, the Franco-Prussian War and Paris Commune." Peter Starr, Commemorating Trauma: The Paris Commune and Its Cultural Aftermath (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 38.

[49] Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France: Address of the General Council," in The First International and After, Political Writings: Volume 3, ed. David Fernbach (London: Penguin, 1992), 214.

[50] Marx, 211. Marx also criticized those interpretations that mistook the Commune's "antagonism … against the state power" as an "exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralization" (ibid.).

[51] See Esther Leslie, Walter Benjamin: Overpowering Conformism (London: Pluto, 2000), 180-81.

[52] Leslie, 181.

[53] John Batchelor, H.G. Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 5.

[54] Wells, Correspondence, 1.95.

[55] H.G. Wells, The Sleeper Awakes: A Revised Edition of "When the Sleeper Wakes" ([London]: Thomas Nelson and Sons, [1910]), ii.

[56] Wells, *The Sleeper Awakes*, i.

[57] Wells, *The Sleeper Awakes*, i.

[58] Wells, Correspondence, 2.106.

[59] Wells, Correspondence, 2.155.

[60] Nietzsche, 198.

[61] Löwith, xv.

[62] See Georges Haupt, 'The Commune as Symbol and Example', in Aspects of International Socialism 1871-1941: Essays by Georges Haupt, trans. Peter Fawcett, with a Preface by Eric Hobsbawm, 2nd edn (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press & Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2010), 23-47.

[63] H.G. Wells, In the Days of the Comet (London: Macmillan, 1906), 202, 17.

[64] See, for example, David Trotter, The English Novel in History 1895-1920 (London: Routledge, 2001), 27-48.