Invading Modernism
Empire, Plasticity, and the Invasion Novel

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Abstract

"Make it new!" The modernist mantra widely—and perhaps apocryphally--attributed to Ezra Pound connotes iconoclasm: a destruction of old structures and modes, and the reconstruction of unimagined, unfamiliar ones that shock, excite, and mark a departure into a new future which has yet to be formed. To effect this change, certain walls and barriers had to be built between the modernists and their past. Modernism could only be new by virtue of being separate from their Edwardian and late-Victorian forebears. I argue, however, that despite the best efforts of the moderns to seal themselves off from their artistic past, these earlier writers succeeded in *invading modernism*. These late-Victorian and Edwardian artists came of age at the very height of the British Empire and sought to represent a world in which they saw constant and transformative border transgressions taking place all around them. These changes threatened to break apart and explode the last vestiges of English traditionalism and national culture that had grown up under Victoria. Reading the event of late-stage British Imperialism as a traumatic cultural crisis for England, I suggest that the cultural productions which resulted in the wake of these events—namely the phenomenon of late-Victorian and Edwardian invasion novels--constitute a form of Malabouian plasticity which yielded new and unfamiliar forms and contexts in the literary world. Before Eliot's Unreal City burned in the pages of *The Waste Land*, indeed before London burned in the Blitz, the Edwardians were already engaged in imaging an unfamiliar England which had been blown apart and made unfamiliar by the advent of so many border transgressions at the dawn of the twentieth century. The Edwardians were, above all, preoccupied with border-making and border-breaking, and indeed the very modernist impulse to wall-out their Edwardian predecessors speaks to the extent to which they themselves were unable to escape this same obsession.

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Introduction

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Modernism has long been the site of an aesthetic elitism that restricts its canon to a constellation of towering intellectual figures seated in imperial metropolises across Europe. Recent developments in the field, however, have prompted a re-mapping of these disciplinary borders. Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz have called on scholars of "new modernism" to begin reading modernism alongside and against "less evidently experimental texts…such as erotic novels, popular films, spy thrillers, melodrama, [and] ethnography" (Mao and Walkowitz 2). More recently, Paul Saint-Amour has articulated a methodology of "weak" modernism, which eschews the muscular, dominating, and exclusive border-making of modernism's past, encouraging instead an examination of modernist art through the lens of previously unconsidered time periods, cultures, media, and geographies.[1] As "new modernist" scholars work to read beyond the field's often self-imposed, strictures and definitions, a myriad of cultural productions from different literary and historical moments are beginning to reshape our conception of who, and what, is modern. To some extent, this inclusivity has extended to the writers of the Edwardian era, but only insofar as scholars have argued for an inclusion of earlier writers within the modernist cannon from the epistemological vantage point of a field assured of its own definitions and its ability to expand or contract at will. I argue instead that it was not the Edwardians who were modern, but the moderns who were Edwardian, and that the middlebrow, popular-fiction writers of the previous generation succeeded in *invading* the modernist project. I will show that even modernism's very preoccupation with border-making, and iconoclastic

[1] See: Saint-Amour, Paul. "Weak Theory, Weak Modernism." *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2018, pp. 1–40.

border-breaking, registers as a deeply Edwardian *idée fixe*. This dissertation project argues that the invasion novel—perhaps *the* definitive genre of *fin de siècle* and Edwardian literature--has been historically overlooked as a source of insight into modernism's various formal obsessions and idiosyncrasies. While some Edwardian literature has been subsumed under modernism's umbrella, the invasion novel—often treated as an obscure footnote in literary history--has resisted modernism's annexations of other genres and has instead mounted its own siege against modernism's well-guarded gates.

Between 1870 and 1900, Britain added nearly five million square miles to its dominion, subjugating an estimated eighty-eight million people, thereby bringing the total size of the island empire to thirteen million square miles, inhabited by some four hundred million people. Of these four hundred million, fifty million were of "British race and speech" (Hobson 18-19). In the span of a single generation, Britain increased the size of its empire by a third, reducing the number of native-born, or colonial Britons, to a fraction of the total population. The rapidity with which Britain expanded its imperial holdings cannot be overstated, nor can the effect it had on the national imaginary. Three decades of militaristic invasion, subjugation, and annexation, were brought home to England through new media technologies that allowed the British reading public to observe these imperial machinations in real time, while absorbing the concomitant changes to national domestic life.[2] The literary market responded in kind, capitalizing on a newly minted cultural obsession with these international, and domestic, border transgressions which were reshaping the empire. As Britain expanded at a seemingly exponential rate, the invasion

[2] In his book *The Great Edwardian Emporium* (2017), Jonathan Wilde argues that the era of the Boer War was the first time in English history when people began to "watch" the news, an achievement in real-time reporting facilitated by technologies such as the telegraph wire and mass print media. Additionally, Jed Etsy's *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (2003) offers excellent insight into what he terms the "hallowing and hollowing" of English national culture whereby the very exportation of Englishness to the colonies de-essentialized English national culture.

novel imagined worlds, in the not-so-distant future, where England's borders could be broken open, and its own cultural heritage forever changed, or even stamped out.

The genre was born in 1871 when George Tomkyns Chesney published *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer*. The short story, printed in *Blackwood's Magazine*, anticipated, in its imagination of a dystopian future, much of the scientific romance which would become so popular at the turn of the century. It retrospectively traces the fall of the British Empire to an unspecified--but suspiciously Teutonic--invading force, and the novella caused such a stir, that the Prime Minister denounced it as harmful sensationalism (Clarke 1). Despite official criticism, however, *The Battle of Dorking* sparked something in the English reading public, and future-war stories would flood the publishing market for the better part of the next half-century. On the surface, the invasion novel is the antithesis of modernist writing. Where, as Raymond Williams argues of modernism that it aspired to an artistic "sacred realm above money and commerce" (*Politics* 34), the invasion novel was a huge source of publishing revenue. Where the modernist project was iconoclastic, the invasion novel was painfully formulaic. Where modernism was fragmentary and anti-totalitarian, the invasion novel often celebrated imperialism and nationalism. Where modernism drew on cosmopolitanism as an aesthetic strength, the invasion novel imagined it as a threat to national culture and traditionalism. Where modernism privileges a unique, and individual aesthetic experience which can only ever be obliquely political, the invasion novel is often didactic and parabolic, instructing the citizens of the empire. The genre stands in opposition to the principles of modern aestheticism. And yet, despite modernism's attempts to keep such sensationalist, pulp-literature *out*, the invasion novel invades modernism. Indeed, the very energy that animated the modernist manifestos, its gatekeeping tendencies, and its need to delineate bounds of old/new, commercial/aesthetic,

Edwardian/Georgian speaks to the ways in which the invasion novel's obsession with borders, succeeded in penetrating modernist thinking.

The invasion novel is many things, but above all it represents a historical moment of crisis, in which border making and crossing became wildly fetishized. Thinking about modern representations of the metropolis, Williams argues that "It is important to emphasize how relatively old some of these apparently modern themes are. For that is the inherent history of themes at first contained within 'pre-modern' forms of art which then in certain conditions led to actual and radical changes of form" (*Politics* 39). Here Williams points to a continuity of themes of loneliness, and unknowableness surrounding London and industrial urban spaces, which have persisted and changed in shape and intensity from Wordsworth to our present moment. He goes on to argue that it is not only the breaks in form these themes engendered that constituted "newness" and "modernity" but "rather the new and specific location of the artists and intellectuals of this movement within the changing cultural milieu of the metropolis" (*Politics* 44). Williams sees a continuity between romanticist experiences of disorientation in London all the way through Eliot's "Unreal City," which not only challenges the dominating and exclusionary borders of the modern movement, but also registers modernism's famous iconoclasm as the result of specific historical and social conditions, which I locate primarily in late-nineteenth-century imperialism.

Likewise, obsession with invasion is not a uniquely *fin de siècle* theme. Rather, the invasion novel is the crescendo of literary responses to an imperial expansion that was so pronounced, and represented such a recognizable departure from previous policy, that it came to be known as "New Imperialism."[3] But the fetishization of border-crossing and border-creating,

[3] It is often easy to think of British Imperialism as a monolithic, self-propelled juggernaut, which spread implacably across the globe. J.A. Hobson's 1902 polemic *Imperialism: A Study* offers dramatic insight into the fierce resistance

and the fear of violent "others" in our midst--and at our peripheries-- who must be pacified, subdued, or expelled, can be traced back to earlier periods of English literary history. We see these themes plainly throughout the nineteenth century in the dark Heathcliff, and his power to infiltrate and pervert English families and property rights; in the ghostly Bertha, whose colonial otherness haunts the attics and corridors of England's country-estates; and in Molly, the "gipsy-blooded" woman in *Great Expectations*, who represents a concomitant threat of racial otherness, female strength, and radical and violent class mobility which is barely contained by England's judiciary (Mr. Jaggers). If the Victorian Novel succeeds in identifying, containing, or expelling these invasive others, in order to restore some semblance of English stability to the story, the invasion novel, written at the height of a blood-soaked era of British Imperialism, invites its readers to imagine a world wherein the English "other" is far from expelled or subdued, but is overpowering, violent in its own right, and irresistible.

In her 1934 lecture "What is English Literature," Gertrude Stein inadvertently speaks to modernism's preoccupation with imperial border making and breaking, even as she repudiates the generation and genres which first explored, in earnest, the ramifications of a world in which boundaries were exploding. In the wake of Victoria's death, Stein claims that "There were a great many writing, but the writing was not so good… The other writing of that period was the second class writing of the last generation, the young generation were doing the second class writing of the past generation, Wells, Galsworthy, Bennett etc." (46-47). Included in this "not so good" writing is the phenomenon of the invasion novel which, much like Stein, was invested in

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mounted against *fin de siècle* expansionism. Similarly, Richard Shannon's *The Crisis of Imperialism* (1974), provides an exhaustive account of the complex interplay of different imperial policies, championed by different parties and politicians over the years, which resulted in such a rapid and unsustainable increase of the Empire. Throughout this project, I will use the term New Imperialism as shorthand to refer to the myriad of political changes and policies that lead to Britain's dramatic expansion in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

thinking about boundaries of identity and what might happen were they to be breached. For Stein (as for Woolf in 1924 her essay "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown"), construction of a border between the moderns and their *fin de siècle* predecessors allowed them to "make it new." But even as Stein erects this wall, between her own literary moment and the literary moment of a few decades before, she lays the groundwork for my argument that modernism could only ever be a continuation of the initial literary responses to late-nineteenth-century imperialism. In this dissertation project I argue that the policy of New Imperialism was such a cultural catastrophe that it would register as a traumatic event to which English literature would spend much of the early twentieth century responding. While Stein attributes the decline of English literature to the national confusion caused by an empire which grew so large as to no longer know itself, she also acknowledges the continued impact of this phenomenon on the modernist movement. Speaking of English national culture as it was affected by empire, she says "In the first place did it change quickly. And then there is something you must always remember about wars that is about catastrophes, they make a change which is a change which is about to be a change go faster as much faster as a war can go, and even a slow war or a slow catastrophe goes quite fast." If Stein recognizes the "slow catastrophe" of imperialism as a cultural catalyst at the turn of the century, she also recognizes the legacy of that imperialism, and the literary responses to it, in her own moment as she says, "we are still in the shadow of this thing" (36). The shadow of imperialism produced a body of "not so good" popular writing which was obsessed with border-crossing. But when Stein speaks from "the shadow of this thing" she refers to a historical moment, a generation later, in which the explosion of borders is still being fetishized, in which she herself has done away with so many grammatical and lexical borders, opening new possibilities of meaning-making. She is speaking of a shadow cast by a New Imperialism which invaded and

violated countries and cultures the world over, and it is under this shadow that Eliot's poetry, that Pound's poetry, is invaded by the language of the colonies.[4] It is a historical moment in which the "shadow of this thing" resonates with the shadow of an airplane flying over London in *Mrs. Dalloway*, that, as Paul Saint-Amour argues, has the power to stop the action of the novel in its tracks as everyone tries to decipher the meaning of this machine which has previously signified explosive border-crossings (*Tense Future* 113-115). It is in the shadow of New Imperialism, that English industrialism in the form of the Wilcox's, can invade the English countryside and penetrate the aristocratic sphere of the Schlegel's. It is also in the shadow of this thing, and the fetishization of border violations, that Helen Schlegel is impregnated by a member of the "lower orders" --Leonard Bast--who is then cast violently from the novel with the flat of a German sword, a climax which triangulates the collisions between class, culture, and nationality which percolate throughout the novel.

Raymond Williams attributes much of modernism's "visual and linguistic strangeness," unfamiliarity, and sense of placelessness, and homelessness to a pre-war obsession with "border-crossing at a time when frontiers were starting to become much more strictly policed and when, with the First World War, the passport was instituted" (*Politics* 34). Much of modernism's aesthetic is predicated on the transgression of borders, as well as the creation of divides between what is, and is not, modern. As such, we cannot understand the development of modernism without fully exploring the Edwardian writers who wrote so anxiously and urgently about borders and crossings. If we look at the invasion novel as a cultural response to a historical moment in which border policing and crossing were bringing the global politics of New

[4] Sarah Cole, in *Inventing Tomorrow* (92), describes the ways in which the language of the colonies "infuses" (I would say "invades") into modernist, poetry defamiliarizing the language of the work to the reader. She argues that the highly specialized, scientific, and technical language that Wells peppers throughout his writing has a similarly disruptive effect.

Imperialism to a head, we can see the influence of this genre in modernism's attempt to remake and deploy new cultural and aesthetic boundaries, even as it destroyed old ones, in the wake of world war.

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Methodological Frame: Empire and Plasticity

Even as Britain tried to shape the world, it was being shaped by the places and peoples it was colonizing, demonstrating a porousness and instability in the process of border-making. Similarly, any attempt made by the modernists to wall-out and define themselves in opposition to their Edwardian predecessors would result in a border which was contoured and shaped by the Edwardians, and prone to effraction. In thinking about building, breaking, and shaping borders, I deploy Catherine Malabou's theory of "plasticity." Malabou's formulation involves a "threefold movement of reception, donation, and annihilation of form," a schema which speaks to the way in which both the British Empire and modernism where shaped by the very things in opposition to which they were striving to define themselves (*New Wounded* XIV). Malabou suggests that this third, annihilative movement is, in many ways, plasticity's most creative function; in this system of thinking, trauma creates a wounding, a rift, which must be understood as simultaneously destructive *and* creative. The moment of destruction is concomitant with a moment of creation, a before and an after, which are, subjectively, completely separated from one another. Having first observed permanent psychic changes in patients suffering from physical cerebral traumas, Malabou developed the term "new wounded" to refer to any patient suffering from cerebral damage as well as any patient "in a *state of shock* who, without having suffered brain lesions, has seen his or her neuronal organization and psychic equilibrium permanently changed by trauma." This permanent change goes hand in hand with the

(trans)formative power of annihilation and extends to victims of trauma sustained during mistreatment, war, terrorist attacks, captivity, or sexual abuse (*New Wounded* 10). Malabou terms these "sociopolitical traumas" and notes that "under this generic term, one should group all damage caused by extreme relational violence," and that "the border that separates organic trauma and sociopolitical trauma is increasingly porous" (*New Wounded* 11). Thinking on the level of the individual subject, Malabou reiterates what Stein had observed on a social scale on the eve of the Second World War, that catastrophes, even "slow" catastrophes, "make a change which is a change which is about to be a change go faster." Whatever the nature of the catastrophe, whatever the timeline in which it unfolds, the event, for Malabou, registers as a "perfectly, and definitely aleatory traumatic effraction" which expresses itself as an *"absence of sense*" (*New Wounded* 8-9) which can have dramatically transformative power.

I am interested in the way in which this "effraction," this breaking of protective barriers creates a new protective barrier, a cycle which results in a new individual or cultural subject born in the "rift" caused by this invasion. This new subject represents a departure from a former, pre-trauma, self, but the central paradox of this traumatic invasion is that, even as it gives birth to a new subjectivity, this newness represents a continuation in the wake of annihilation. A house which sustains a bomb blast is still a house, even as it represents a departure from the house that it once was. As such, we can locate a porousness of borders even in Malabou's thinking of destructive plasticity, whereby traces of an old self destroyed by trauma persist and invade the new subjectivity which would rather wall itself off from its traumatized past. I locate here a continuous process of border-breaking and border-making which produces a myriad of fractured, but interconnected identities which become increasingly difficult to disentangle, even as they seem to bear no relation to one another.

Malabou terms this "creation through the destruction of form," as an "adventure of form" (*New Wounded* 17). Thinking about the birth of the invasion novel, I suggest that the simultaneity of New Imperialism's destructive and creative capacities was mirrored in cultural productions which we can also think of as adventures of form. The invasion novel literalizes this adventure of form contextually as the genre depicts England destroyed, invaded, bombed, and fractured. Later, modernism would sublimate these themes and transpose them into adventures in formal experimentation and innovation. Where the Victorian novel repudiated the colonial other and shored up its borders, the invasion novel articulated visions for an unknown, open-ended world that could never return to the way it had been. Significantly, the invasion novel's contextual adventures in form would constitute a radically invasive newness that modernism would both subtly internalize while simultaneously violently repudiating. Britain's sudden expansion constituted a culturally traumatic event, a shock that upset the delicate balance between English essentialism and British Imperialism, and—in its capacity to destroy—created new cultural forms out of that annihilative potential. In Malabou's thinking, transformative trauma can never be given full shape or articulation, because it always happened to a departed subject, one that has been replaced in the wake of annihilation, by a new subject or form. At best, Malabou writes, it can be "approached but avoided, glimpsed often enough in fantasy literature but never connected to reality" (*Ontology* 6). The writers coming of age at the turn of the twentieth century had, over the course of a few decades, witnessed the largest, and most violent imperial expansion of the British Empire in history and they were just beginning to live through the subsequent domestic ramifications. The invasion novel (and the ways in which that genre overlapped with speculative fiction, scientific-romance, spy stories, detective thrillers, and adventure tales) constitutes a Malabouian "glimpse" of the cultural trauma which England had

undergone as a result of imperialism, an attempt to imagine the unrepresentable changes taking place via fantastical literature. The content of these stories depicted an England which was completely unfamiliar, and it is precisely this task of representing a strange, uncanny, fragmented England which modernism would take up formally in the next decades.

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The Chapters

Late-Victorian and Edwardian popular writers were attempting to write into existence the unimaginable futures which might exist in the wake of New Imperialism. This was an event for which they had no vocabulary, and one reason why such cultural (r)evolutions[5] were imagined in fantastic terms. As such, Chapter One will deal explicitly with stories of scientific romance, an important corollary to the invasion novel genre. Attempting to imagine the world in new forms as shaped by the "slow catastrophe" of history is a hallmark of scientific romance, an often troubling and even controversial representation that, at the turn of the century, would come to haunt modernism. The three texts I have chosen are stories of invasion and violence which fantasize about the downfall and destruction of England as it was then known. I read broadly across H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* (1898), E.M. Forster's short story *The Machine Stops* (1909), and Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad's novella *The Inheritors* (1901), in order to draw out major themes which will inform my thinking throughout the rest of the project. Examining the nature of imperial identity formation, annihilation of cultural spaces, and the

[5] One of the things which makes plasticity such an interesting lens through which to view the phenomenon of New imperialism is the way in which it is able to hold two seemingly oppositional concepts to be true at the same time. Thus, deformation and reformation are two sides of the same coin, as are destruction and construction. Many of the writers I examine in this work imagined an "evolved" version of England and the British Empire. Others imagined the Empire in revolt. These, again, are two sides of the same coin.

traumatized subject, I articulate an invasive and destructive plasticity inherent in the very genre of scientific romance and fantasy writing.

In Chapter Two, I continue my examination of imperialism, plasticity, and trauma through a broad lens, as I explore the destruction of London as a compelling and prevalent theme for writers in the first decade of the twentieth century. Reading H.G. Wells' *The War in the Air* (1907) and William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), I look at the ways in which these invasion novels fetishize and sensationalize depictions of London's downfall. Then I turn to Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) and E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), to think about how these more canonically modern authors are invaded by a similar obsession with representing London destroyed, and just as invested in imagining England traumatically transformed as were their popular-fiction counterparts. Despite belonging to very different genres of writing, each of these texts bear a family resemblance in their need to speak to a deep-seated sense of fragility and imminent fragmentation which would sever the future from anything that looked like Victorian sensibility and stability.

The remainder of this project tightens its focus and considers imperially fueled plastic de/re-formations of English society as these changes registered interpersonally and subjectively in contemporary fiction. In Chapter Three, I explore the crisis of masculinity, which was precipitated by an overlarge empire, an undersized army, and an increasingly unhealthy lower-class. This section focuses on classic espionage and detective thrillers which hinge on two "buddies" foiling plots to invade England. Beginning with the most famous dynamic duo in detective fiction, I deploy Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories as a blueprint for thinking about the way in which emasculated men might still be mobilized in service of the empire. From there I think about these themes as they play out in William Le Queux's *Spies of*

the Kaiser: Plotting the Downfall of England (1909) and Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903). I argue that these imperialist authors respond to the crisis of "where to get men" by articulating a new ideal of masculinity founded in unorthodox male-friendship which could repatriate and repurpose "unfit" men.

Finally, pivoting from the crisis of masculinity to the coextensive "Woman Question," my fourth and final chapter argues that viewing the contemporaneous New Woman novel through the lens of the invasion novel genre offers unique insight into the ways in which suffragism and the New Women movement leveraged many of the same themes and tropes to encompass its visions for a changed future. As the empire expanded, Britain attempted to maintain the distinction between center and periphery by constructing a mythic and inviolable Englishness. At the center of this English essentialism was the Victorian "Angel in the House" and the cult of domesticity which served as the backbone of British society and, by extension, imperial expansion. As the borders between colonies and England became increasingly porous, so too did the borders which barred women not only from the public sphere, but from colonial spaces as well. The dissolution of these boundaries signaled a destruction of English traditionalism which yielded new social formations which were bound up with the same anxieties surrounding imagined invasion and the stamping out of English national culture. In this chapter, I read Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915) alongside H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887). This unlikely pairing of texts highlights the ways in which both Haggard and Woolf saw the Woman Question and the New Woman as threats to the social order which would be met with absolute repudiation by social or Natural laws. I then make another unlikely pairing and read H.G. Wells' *Ann Veronica* (1909) and Victoria Cross's *Anna Lombard* (1901) side by side in order to think about how these two authors (whether knowingly or not) imagined worlds in

which a female capacity for violence might destabilize and reshape traditional gender relations, as the borders between center and periphery, and public and private became increasingly blown apart.

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We Other Edwardians

In "We Other Victorians," the introduction to Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault questions the tidy historical narrative which suggests that sexual repression coincided with the birth of the bourgeoisie, persisted as a tool of social productivity throughout the nineteenth century, and became a subject of reactionary discourse in the twentieth. The attempt to hermetically seal off the different periods of classical sexual freedom, Victorian repression, and modern reactionism from one another necessarily results in elisions and overlooks slippages, and complications. I began this project because I was attracted to the sense of ambivalence I detected surrounding the *fin de siècle* and the Edwardian era specifically. Neither properly Victorian, nor properly modern, the era seemed a "no man's land," an eddy of cross-cultural currents which resisted clean mappings into literary curricula and scholarship. Some Victorianists have attempted to claim it as part of the "long-nineteenth century." And while the modernists may have attempted to separate themselves from it initially, modern scholars are now attempting to claim the Edwardian era as belonging under modernism's umbrella. Just as Foucault argues for a more complex historical understanding of sexual expression/repression, I argue that the Edwardian era was defined by the trauma of New Imperialism, a trauma which began to be felt acutely in the last decades of the nineteenth century and extended well into the twentieth. As such, I was compelled in this project—in a very Edwardian way—to map and remap some of my own borders and definitions. The reader will

note that, on occasion, I redraw the borders of Edwardian literature to include late-Victorian texts that I see as operating on the same plane as the early-twentieth-century invasion story. Of course, my borders will prove to be porous, unstable, and transgressive in their own right, but I am compelled to see any English literature preoccupied with the late empire and its (r)evolutions as a product of New Imperialism and of a piece with Edwardian literature.

Typically, the Edwardian era is generally conceived of as a strange, calm interlude which existed between the two monumental cultural phenomena of Victoria and the First World War. Marked by unprecedented prosperity and technological innovation, history and post-war literature have often portrayed the years before the First World War in England as the calm, halcyon days before global catastrophe.[6] However, I push back against this tidy sandwiching between historical benchmarks; the popular literature of this time, speaks to anything but calm and stability. Rather, the invasion novel and all the sub-genres and corollary genres which bear a family resemblance, speak to deep-seated cultural anxieties and a nation which saw its own historical moment as deeply fragmented and on the brink of an explosive transformation which would make England completely unfamiliar. Even as the British Empire invaded the world, England found itself also invaded by the world. And if the turn-of-the-century writers treated in this dissertation fetishized and obsessed over border-makings, breakings, and invasions, their writing also invaded and (in)formed modernism, despite modernism's best efforts to map out their own, new, aesthetic empire. I argue that the very premise of the invasion novel as it works to imagine, ward-off, or bring on impossible new futures, is the bedrock upon which any modern text necessarily had to respond to the surreality of the British Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. Understanding the invasion novel as it functioned at the height of New

[6] See, for instance, Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918) in which the shell-shocked protagonist suffers an amnesiac episode wherein he becomes psychologically stuck in the simpler, happier, pre-war Edwardian era.

Imperialism is critical to understanding modernism, as both bodies of literature responded in their own way to the traumatic border crossings and creations of New Imperialism. And over a hundred years later, during a global pandemic which has seen unprecedented migrant crises, border closures, the advent of immunity passports, the remapping of transnational corporate empires, and the tectonic shifting of world powers, we other Edwardians might do well to re-consider these urtexts of border-making, and border-breaking.

Chapter I
The Great Disillusionment

This chapter looks to three texts of scientific romance. These "glimpses" of imagined futures offer insight into how the Edwardians and late Victorians, attempted to articulate unknown, and uncertain, futuristic adventures of form that could only be conceived of in terms of the fantastic. The texts I have chosen are stories of invasion and violence which fantasize about the downfall and destruction of an England as it was then known. Reading Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, Forster's short story *The Machine Stops*, and Ford Madox Ford and Conrad's novella *The Inheritors*, I articulate a plasticity inherent in the very genre of scientific romance and fantasy writing. In my analysis, I toggle between the texts in order to privilege and draw out the common themes which each of the authors tries to articulate in their vision for the future. In this first section, I read Wells, Conrad, and Ford in relation to a future in which they saw a world where the lines between colonizer and colonized would become increasingly blurred, and those roles might be inverted. If scientific romance was, for Wells, the literalization of today's mental habits, projected into the future, these texts show the inherent fallacy of imperial logic and English exceptionalism, and imagine ways in which the weight of this ideology would collapse upon itself. In my second section, I explore the way in which all three texts are fundamentally

concerned with the annihilation of national cultural spaces, and in particular, the way in which the mythic green spaces of England will come to be reformed and reshaped by new imperial technologies and medias in such a way as to engender the total collapse between the *outer* empire and the *inner*, English nation. The final section of this chapter will explore the way in which the "great disillusionment of the twentieth-century," that phrase with which Wells famously begins *The War of the Worlds*, contributes, in these texts, to a vision of the future populated by Malabou's "new wounded," individuals who have suffered a radical subjective transformation in the wake of sustained trauma. Forster, Conrad, Ford, and Wells each imagine a cultural "death in life" in the wake of New Imperialism's annihilative capacity, that will forever change the face of English national life.

As Britain's borders expanded, more and more peoples who were not English became subjects of the empire. This had profound effects on the national consciousness as the notion of who and what constituted Britain became an increasingly complicated prospect. What Jed Esty has called the simultaneous "hallowing" and "hollowing" of Englishness entailed exporting English culture, ideals, economies, and technologies abroad to Greater Britain, an imperial project which, by its very nature required the dilution of traditional Englishness (26). Citing Stein's belief that the ability to articulate a daily island living was tantamount to artistic achievement, Esty further argues that this daily island living became increasingly elusive as those conditions came to be determined by events and economies transpiring in colonial spaces. Taking this logic a step further, I argue that the determination of domestic life by centripetal forces from the edges of the empire figures plastically as an invasion by an unseen "other" who, despite being absent, plays a radically important role in English national life. Literalizing the backwardness of this imperialist logic, these texts by Ford, Conrad, Wells, and Forster, examined

here, all imagine what this growing confusion between colonizer and colonist might look like in the future.

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Plastic Formations of Imperial Identity

Conrad and Ford's, *The Inheritors*, opens on Arthur Granger mid-conversation with an alien invader. Things are not going well. "In conversations of any length," he reflects "one of the parties assumes the superiority—superiority of rank, intellectual or social. In this conversation she… seemed at least to claim it, to have no doubt as to its ultimate according. I was unused to this. I was a talker, proud of my conversational powers" (5). Arthur's anxiety surrounding this conversation is precipitated by more than the challenge this woman presents to his masculine discourse. He immediately recognizes himself at a disadvantage, in some way, in relation to this woman. This is a role inversion that irritates him, because, as he fumes, "After all, I was somebody" (6).

The invading antagonist in Conrad and Forster's novella represents a departure from typical invader tropes. The villain is neither tentacled, nor jack-booted, and is, in fact, a very beautiful young woman. As the story's hero, Arthur, attempts to take stock of his new acquaintance, he remarks first upon her beauty and his attraction to her, and then that "she was familiar till it occurred to you that she was strange" (5). He is unable to place her nationality, but he eventually concludes that she must belong to "one of the new nations" because she has "such a fine contempt" for England (7).

While the invaders in *The Inheritors*—beings from the Fourth Dimension—are technically alien, they differ very much from Wells' Martians. The only thing that separates them from the people of Earth is their scruples. They are a race "clear-sighted, eminently practical,

incredible; with no ideals, prejudices or remorse; with no feeling for art and no reverence for life; free from any ethical tradition; callous to pain, weakness, suffering and death, as if they had been invulnerable and immortal" (9-10). This young woman from the Fourth Dimension will use Arthur as a tool in her plot to destabilize England's global power. Her continual refrain throughout the story, as she endeavors to explain Arthur's position to him is that "you are the past—the passing. We could never meet. You are…for me… only the portrait of a man—of a man who has been dead—oh, a long time; and I, for you, only a possibility…a conception…You work to bring me on—to make me possible" (14). Arthur is made to feel a vestige of a bygone culture, who survives to witness the death of an era and the oncoming of a new, disillusioned age. The Fourth-Dimensionists are entirely alike their victims save for the fact that they have sloughed off the cumbersome values of the Victorians and live instead by a code of amorality and will-to-power. The metaphor that Ford and Conrad are developing here speaks to a future "inherited" by a new "modern" generation that is familiar, but strange, and that will supplant the Victorians who "worked to bring them on;" an imperial progeny in a new century that will ultimately spell England's downfall.

As Arthur's rival cajoles, and manipulates him throughout the story, he becomes in turns frightened, shocked, incredulous, and at one point, enraged. Frustrated by what Arthur terms her "insolent modernity," he notes that

> She had something—not only quickness of wit, not only ruthless determination but a something quite different and quite indefinably more impressive. Perhaps it was only the confidence of the supersede, the essential quality that makes for the empire of the Occidental. But I was not a negro—not even relatively a Hindoo. I was somebody, confound it, I was somebody" (2)

When Arthur first meets this woman, she takes the upper hand in their conversation with a temperamental superiority which requires that Arthur reaffirm he is in fact, "somebody." As his

Fourth-Dimensionist counterpart grows in power, she presents an even more formidable threat as she wields the "confidence of the supersede," and the empire building power of "the Occidental," against him. This precipitates a sort of psychological crisis for Arthur who is now desperately trying to stake out his "somebody-hood" by articulating new borders. He is somebody because he is not a negro, nor relatively a Hindoo, and as such he resents this imperious, Occidental energy being directed against him. In the first instance, Arthur claims that he is "somebody" because he dislikes the conversational position in which he has been placed by this woman. In the second, he claims that he is "somebody" because he is *not* a colonial "other." Arthur is trying desperately to shore up the borders of his English masculinity, and the securities that designation entails. Ford and Conrad's invasion story is ingenious insofar as it figures English masculinity as the landing site and point of attack for these extra-dimensional invaders. No national landmarks are destroyed, no English towns or cities are sacked. Rather, the Fourth-Dimensionists, whose only goal is to rise to power in this world they have inherited, realize their ambitions by destabilizing the very nationalist and patriarchal borders upon which the empires of the nineteenth century have been founded. The panic Arthur feels in relation to this perverse/reverse imperialism is engendered by his alignment with the subjugated peoples of the British Empire. If the woman from the Fourth Dimension is his natural successor, she succeeds Arthur by employing the very machines of imperialism and domination which he and his generation have used to inevitably "bring her on" and "make her possible." In this way, Ford and Conrad's story very literally explores the fear that British expansion and invasion forges the tools by which England will be diminished and dismantled.

The plasticity with which the colonizer simultaneously shapes, and is shaped by, the colonized subject, is not a new idea. Resonant with Hegel's dialectic of the master and slave,

thinking this relationship in terms of Malabou's plasticity makes sense, given that her theory is born of Hegelian phenomenology. But for our purposes, this formulation is particularly fruitful because it helps us to realize that Britain cannot invade without simultaneously being invaded, and that the imperialist becomes increasingly colonized and dependent upon his subject, thereby diminishing his own claim to power, autonomy, and superiority. The opening lines of Wells' *The War of the Worlds* articulate this vulnerability inherent in the plasticity of empire building. The text begins

> No one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own…With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter…It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days…And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment (3-4).

These departed mental habits, now belonging to the past, speak to a psychic rupture at the turn of the century, when came "the great disillusionment." Wells' narrative frames for the reader an ominous suggestion of an unrecognizable future shaped by the plasticity of Britain's empire, each new colonial annexation, reshaping and remolding England in the name of imperialism.

J.A. Hobson, in his 1902 polemic, *Imperialism*, was also attuned to the precarious position in which imperial aspirations had put England. Many quarters of English society feared the possibility of radical destabilization in the wake of imperial expansion due to colonial unrest in the over-extended empire, or the invasion of England's shores as military resources were spread increasingly thin. Hobson suggests that "nothing short of the fear of an early invasion of these islands" (144) could cause Britons to rethink reckless expansion at the expense of home defense, and that "the two most potent checks of militarism and of war are the obligation of the entire body of citizens to undergo military service and the experience of an invasion" (277). Wells' novel imagines (albeit in fantastical terms) the type of chaos and social discord that the

experience of an invasion—precipitated by imperial over-extension—might look like. Moreover, Wells' novel imagines the phenomenon of the world's greatest colonial power, subject to colonization by a "superior" race.

Much work has been done on Wells' Martians and their function in critiquing empire. "Before we judge them too harshly" writes Wells' narrator of the aliens,

> we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit? (9)

The genius of Wells' Martians lies in their ability to align his readers with both the alien invaders *and* their own colonial subjects. In the space of fifty years, Wells claims that Europeans exterminated the Tasmanian community in its entirety, a community which—like England—was probably equally assured of its own "empire over matter." The fall, suggests Wells, was swift and unexpected, "sweeping" them out of existence. Malabou would describe this event as a completely aleatory, sociopolitical trauma for the Tasmanians, a wounding devoid of sense, for which there is no language or meaning. If subjugation and extermination could befall an entire people at the hands of a superior race—from a purely theoretical standpoint—there was no reason to believe that it could not happen to England. The Tasmanians were as unprepared for European invaders as England was for Wells' Martians. And while the probability of Martian invasion was low, invasion by competing imperial powers, challenged and angered—as Hobson notes—by England's colonial aggression was entirely possible.[7] Such an attack, Wells points out, would be "warred in the same spirit" as Britain's imperialism.

[7] Pulling the curtain back on the economic incentives driving imperial expansion, Hobson notes that "The increased hostility of foreign nations towards us may be regarded as entirely due to the aggressive Imperialism of the last

Significant, in Wells' story, is the plastic relationship he articulates between colonizer and colonized. Wells' narrator—an Englishman at the peak of Britain's imperial power—is able to recognize himself, in the form of the colonized other. The narrator's first description of the Martians seems to draw on several Orientalist stereotypes. The narrator refers to the aliens as "inhuman, crippled and monstrous" with "oily brown skin" and then, as if performing some sort of phrenological exam (in keeping with the "science" used to justify imperialism), he fixates on the "peculiar V-shaped mouth," the "absence of brow ridges" and the "wedge-like lower lip." The "strange horror of its appearance" speaks to English exceptionalism and the racial othering upon which much of the imperial project was founded. But there is also, imbedded in this first encounter, an identification with the position of the subjugated other. The narrator had "expected to see a man emerge—possibly something a little unlike us terrestrial men, but in all essentials a man" (21-22). Just as horrifying as the aliens' unearthly appearance is the realization that their invaders are of a completely different, superior race, and that the Englishman has come to occupy the position of the lower orders. Throughout the entirety of the story, Wells' narrator imagines, and empathizes with, the final moments of different species brought to extinction by invaders. After witnessing the initial Martian landing, he returns home to his wife and dinner, just as "some respectable dodo in the Mauritius might have lorded it in his nest, and discussed the arrival of that ship full of pitiless sailors in want of animal food" (34). Again, when he realizes the Martians are carnivorous and have come to earth for food, he implores his reader to "remember how repulsive our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit" (125). Finally, when he sees their machines of war he realizes "for the first time in my life how an

thirty years, and the increased expenditure of armaments may, therefore, reasonably rank in a business balance-sheet as a cost of that policy" (70).

ironclad or a steam-engine would seem to an intelligent lower animal" (52). While the narrator's reflections focus on man's dominion over animals, we must note that, frequently in his list of crimes perpetrated by mankind, Wells' character focuses on animal extinctions *before* human genocide. The Tasmanians and other "inferior races" are only mentioned after the destruction of the bison and the dodo. Implicitly, especially as he tries to imagine what war machines of empire—the ironclad and the steam engine—would look like to "lower animals," the narrator is putting himself in the place of the colonized, imagining the world from the perspective of the subjugated "other," seeing these new technologies of conquest for the first time, with no vocabulary to describe them. Moreover, from this new vantage, the narrator is also able to recognize himself in the Martians, as well as that same "warring spirit" (now directed at him), that has been the engine of the British Empire.

This dual recognition is an uncomfortable position for the narrator and for the English reader, stressing and stretching their self-conception of what it means to be British. In his study of nineteenth-century British suburbia, Todd Kuchta, makes a compelling argument for one possible way of thinking through the Martians as simultaneously imperial and colonial figures. Reading the alien invasion as a critique of late-Victorian suburban growth, Kuchta formulates a structure which positions the English citizen as concurrently rejecting, and recognizing himself in, the alien other. Kuchta argues that "suburb dwellers were imagined both as pioneers whose settlement of new worlds could regenerate a race in decline and as degenerate savages colonizing Britain" (39). As the tenant farming system of earlier generations declined in inverse proportion to the growth of urban markets and cheap industrial labor, the loss of an agricultural past became an increasing concern in late Victorian England. The suburb, it was thought, would revive a race in decline, offering alternatives to squalid living conditions in the city and rejuvenating

abandoned and impoverished tracts of surrounding countryside. But the spread of suburban sprawl, and the cheap, shabby living that attended it, quickly became an invasive threat, further diminishing the traditional green spaces of England's past. Importantly, Kuchta notes that in many ways, the English suburb was born of the settlements that British citizens would establish on the outskirts of colonial capitals. These English colonists were considered pioneers of the empire, responsible for exporting, and maintaining English culture in greater Britain. And insofar as English cities had become colonial hubs which were not only being overrun by the lower classes, but which were increasingly becoming landing spots for colonial subjects of the "lower races," the English city at home began to mirror the British city abroad. Suburban expansion offered the promise of English regeneration outside of increasingly cosmopolitan city-spaces. And yet, the development of the suburb, the bungalow adopted from oversees, the retiring colonial official, and the proliferation of cheap architecture, quickly became a point of resentment, figured as an invasion of that mythic pastoral Englishness upon which the very idea of Great Britain laid its foundations.

Kuchta's reading of British suburbia speaks to my argument about the relationship between England and the British Empire. Here I recognize his distinction between Britishness and Englishness insofar as the former "conjoins nation and empire" but simultaneously "distances them from an essentialized England" (16). Empire and England then, operate on two separate registers, but necessarily give form to, and take form from, one another. In Kuchta's argument, British expansion opens the door for English suburban expansion. But this is also the same mechanism which Wells has identified in *The War of the Worlds*. Focused on his minute affairs, man has concerned himself with creating his own petty empire, completely oblivious to

the fact that in doing so, he has only made himself vulnerable, jeopardizing his entire way of life, and putting himself at risk of swapping his status of colonizer for that of colonized.

The fear of reverse-colonization—not only colonial revolt, but also infiltration and assimilation—is, as I will argue in later chapters, a preoccupation in much Edwardian literature. However, the specter of an all-powerful invader who appears as alien to England as Britain must have appeared to its colonists, is the purview of scientific romance and fantasy novels. Wells encapsulates this impossible force in the form of the Martians, and Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad create a similar figure in that of the Fourth-Dimensionist.

By contrast, there are no colonial "others" in Forster's *The Machine Stops*. Instead, Forster offers a much more nuanced articulation of the relationship between the individual citizen and the empire. In *The Machine Stops*, Forster has imagined a unified world in which the imperial habit of mind has been pushed to its logical conclusion; an empire which proceeds unchecked would expand until the differences between outside and inside the empire were completely abolished: a totalitarian world government and a single, universal citizenship. This is the nature of the Machine in Forster's story, and even though society has progressed to a point of universalism, this mechanical world has still produced a condition in which the boundary between autonomous citizen and the unknown elements of the imperial domain become increasingly blurred and porous, constituting an inversion and comingling of man and the Machine. As the inhabitants of the Machine grow more and more dependent upon the mechanical empire, Kuno, the story's protagonist, has a "blasphemous" argument with his mother, Vashti. "Cannot you see," he implores her,

> Cannot all you lecturers see, that it is we that are dying, and that down here the only thing that really lives is the Machine? We created the Machine, to do our will, but we cannot make it do our will now. It has robbed us of the sense of space and the sense of touch, it has blurred every human relation and narrowed down love to a carnal act, it has paralysed

> our bodies and our wills, and now it compels us to worship it. The Machine develops—but not on our lines. The Machine proceeds—but not to our goal. We only exist as the blood corpuscles that course through its arteries, and if it could work without us, it would let us die (110).

The Machine, complains Kuno, has blurred human relations. Interpersonal relationships have become completely indecipherable when not mediated by the Machine. Indeed, every condition of human life has been sublimated to the higher purpose of the Machine to the point that citizens of the world are nothing more than "blood corpuscles" that course through this mechanical body, allowing it to function. While Forster's story does not figure an inversion of the colonizer/colonist dynamic explicitly, he imagines a world in which the imperial subject has been enslaved by the very imperial machinations that he set into motion, a citizenry drained of a national and cultural life blood. Forster's retooling of this theme and imagery amplifies, in many ways, the insidiousness with which New Imperialism threatens individual autonomy and cultural tradition. While the evils of empire are figured in *The War of the Worlds* as an identifiable enemy, there is no cold-blooded stand-in for colonialism in Forster's story. Rather, it is the slow progression of the Machine over millennia that drains nations and cultures into one, homogenous totality, turning the individual into a cog and simultaneously robbing him of his humanity and identity. Though much more nuanced than Wells' interpenetration and inversion of colonizers and colonists, Forster articulates in no less unsettling terms the ways in which the imperial project explodes the boundaries between the imperial citizen and the larger empire until it becomes impossible to tell where one stops and the other begins.

The plasticity which begins to evolve between empire/individual, colonizer/colonist, and periphery/center creates a slipperiness in hierarchical positionality in which Wells is also interested. In *The War of the Worlds*. as the narrator struggles to avoid the Martians and stay alive, he takes shelter in a ruined house. While in hiding, he surveils the aliens, and learns about

some of the invaders' habits and activities. "They did not eat," reports Wells' narrator, "much less digest. Instead they took the fresh, living blood of other creatures, and *injected* it into their own veins. I have myself seen this being done, as I shall mention in its place" (125). When the narrator does see one of these creatures chosen for ingestion, it is a curious specimen. He recalls,

> something—something struggling violently—was lifted high against the sky, a black, vague enigma against the starlight; and as this black object came down again, I saw by the green brightness that it was a man. For an instant he was clearly visible. He was a stout, ruddy, middle-aged man, well dressed; three days before he must have been walking the world, a man of considerable consequence. I could see his staring eyes and gleams of light on his studs and watch chain (134).

This is a startling scene for several reasons. The violence itself—the draining of human blood, preceded by the image of uncomprehending "staring" eyes, contrasted against starlight, blackness, and the green brightness of the alien mechanisms—is arresting. But it also dramatically complicates the difference between colonizer and colonist. It literalizes the "hollowing" of Englishness into the colonial other (figured in the alien other) as the lifeblood is quite literally drained from England and injected into the colonies. The result, of course, is an inversion of power positions wherein the wealthy man of considerable consequence who has grown fat by virtue of imperial decadence, is now being consumed and exploited himself. The complexity of the scene highlights the difficulty inherent in constructing boundaries between an imperial center which profits by exporting culture and extracting resources, and a colonial periphery which upholds the center and makes it possible. The plasticity in the relationship reveals an increasingly unstable structure, the further this logic is pursued. Wells' Martians feeding on English capitalists dramatizes the strangeness of the situation perfectly.

This type of border-exploding and border-crossing represents a real threat to imperial power, as the loss of English essentialism, exceptionalism, and cultural meaning became central anxieties surrounding the overextension of empire. Inextricably linked to English cultural

meaning are the traditional cultural spaces of the island nation, and its mythic green spaces specifically. As the lines between colonizer and colonized became increasingly hard to identify, so did the geographic borders and spaces which existed between England and Britain. As Britain grew, and newly minted Britons moved within these new borders, the very landscape of England began to change and reform in response to these new pressures.

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Annihilated Spaces

"A curious blindness," writes Hobson, "seems to beset the mind of the average educated Briton when he is asked to picture to himself our colonial Empire" (131). This blindness, Hobson argues, does not extend to Canada, Australia, or "white man's Africa" where he may have friends or relatives. It sets in only when he attempts to think beyond these places on the map, to tropical colonies, and to far eastern holdings. Hobson's assertion of blindness is powerful because it suggests that the borders of the empire are not only unseen, but they are unknowable, and as such, subject to transformation. And yet, these unimaginable places of the earth are vitally important in shaping ideals of Englishness. England must, in some way, form an identity which is projected onto, and in opposition to, colonial spaces. In *Heart of Darkness* (1899), when Conrad's Marlow as a "little chap," with a "passion for maps," sees a chart of the empire, he is concerned by "the many blank spaces on the earth." He is driven to fill them in, to write his own story in the ink of empire until, at last, he can declare that those blank spaces have "become a place of darkness" (52). Significantly, as Marlow tells this story, looking out over the primordial waters that have come to be called the Thames, he notes that England also, "has been one of the dark places of the earth" before the Romans conquered it (48). Darkness then, takes on two meanings in empire building. It is simultaneously a place to which the light of empire has not yet

spread, and it is also the inked areas of the map, which are owned but obscure, which the imagination cannot penetrate. And so, when Marlow comments that England has been a dark place, it situates the island in a deep history of invading, and being invaded, and gestures towards an imperial economy of light and dark, whereby the light of empire cannot expand without darkening the places it touches and making them more obscure.

Places of light and dark are also of paramount importance in Forster's *The Machine Stops*, where everything in the mechanical empire is illuminated. Significantly, Forster's protagonist, Kuno, claims that the Machine has "annihilated not space, but the sense thereof" (105). This sense of annihilation resonates with Malabou's destructive plasticity, but it also harkens back to Hobson's blindness. Annihilated senses of space change our relationships to borders, boundaries, and distance. New Imperialism annihilated sense of space via violent and rapid annexation of unseen and unimaginable new territories. But it also perverted senses of distance and geography via the employment of new technologies including new, rapid forms of transit, as well as new forms of high-speed information dissemination. Each of the authors in this section attempts to think about these annihilated and exploded borders in ways that anticipate Modernism's formal sublimation of this theme, some decades later. Tellingly, the destruction and confusion of borders in each of these stories is precipitated by invasive and imperialistic events which either illuminate, or obfuscate and darken, thereby annihilating traditional senses of place and space. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* pictures an invaded England that results in the "liquefaction" of the social body, even as he articulates the terms of invasion in a sort of reverse-imperial cartography wherein England is being remapped with an invasive ink. Forster and Conrad are also in tune to the power of print and ink to reform and deform English spaces, and as Arthur Granger begins to work at a political organ dedicated to disseminating false information,

his familiar England becomes warped and perverted as the unstoppable thrum of the printing press hums in his ears. Finally, in Forster's *The Machine Stops*, Kuno searches for the "exception" of darkness in an empire where light is the rule and anticipates the way in which a world entirely made of light will eventually collapse in upon itself.

H.G. Wells depicts the destruction of the English Home Counties at the hands of a technologically advanced alien race in vivid detail. If, as Raymond Williams argues, every historical moment propagates the "idea of a happier past set against the disturbance and disorder of the present," Wells sets the sleepy bucolic green spaces of English cultural tradition against the disturbance and disorder of an annihilative future (*Country* 45). Kuchta's argument regarding reverse colonization in Wells' alien novel pays close attention to Wells' treatment of the English countryside. "Woking," writes Kuchta of the English town which becomes a Martian landing site, "must have offered an odd juxtaposition of rural tranquility and unprecedented development. Wells virtually organizes *The War of the Worlds* around this juxtaposition, as the alien emissaries of the future invade the rural environs of London's Home Counties" (39). Centering the alien attack in the English countryside, "emphasizes the horrific proximity of two opposed orders—peace and chaos, silence and uproar, life and death"—or in other words, the juxtaposition between an insular English island life and the aggressive imperialism of the British Empire (39-40). As the Martians conquer more and more of England, a red weed begins to spread across the English countryside. Compellingly, Kuchta reads the spread of this parasite as allegorical of the British Empire's effect on English pastoralism. The color red, spreading across England's green spaces, quickly calls to mind the cheap red of the shoddily built brick suburban houses that were sprawling outwards from major cities and into the countryside, the same "red rust" that the Wilcox's can see creeping from London in *Howard's End*. But, "it is also worth

recalling here that the color red, signifier of suburbia, was likewise the color used to designate Britain's colonial possessions of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century maps…the red weeds suggest suburbia results not in the healthy spread of British civilization, but in the transformation of Britain itself into colonized territory" (52).

Kuchta's argument brings us to an intersection of cultural transformation and "map-making" that I want to further interrogate. The red weed in *The War of the Worlds* is not the only index of imperial map-making which re-writes itself upon the Home Counties. The aliens bring with them strange weapons: long tubes that discharge canisters filled with inky vapor. Everything this gas touches dies. This new technology, brought to bear upon Woking and the surrounding towns, functions as giant, lethal, fountain pens. Seeming to embody the very idea of destructive plasticity, the alien payloads

> smashed on striking the ground—they did not explode—and incontinently disengaged an enormous volume of heavy, inky vapour, coiling and pouring upward in a huge and ebony cumulous cloud, a gaseous hill that sank and spread itself slowly over the surrounding country. And the touch of that vapour, the inhaling of its pungent wisps, was death to all that breathes (88).

This deadly plastic substance takes form from the ground across which it creeps, even as it changes the form (kills) everything it touches. It does not "diffuse as a true gas would do. It hung together in banks, flowing sluggishly down the slope of the land and driving reluctantly before the wind, and very slowly it combined with the mist and moisture of the air, and sank to the earth in the form of dust…" (88-89). This inky weapon creates a new topography, blurring the lines between what is alive and what is dead, creating new forms in the wake of the countryside's destruction. Here again, Wells invokes an imperialist cartography, aligning the Martians with empire and, consequently, positioning the empire as that which will destroy, and subsequently

transform, England. Wells' narrator zooms out suddenly, offering his reader a bird's eye perspective of the cartographic catastrophe. "Directly below him," muses the narrator,

> the balloonist would have seen the network of streets far and wide, houses, churches, squares, crescents, gardens—already derelict—spread out like a huge map, and the southward *blotted*…it would have seemed as if some monstrous pen had flung ink upon the chart. Steadily, incessantly, each black splash grew and spread, shooting out ramifications this way and that…exactly as a gout of ink would spread itself upon blotting paper (104-105).

The imaginary moment is startling and Wells' choice of a balloon as a vantage point from which to survey the destruction of the scene is significant. The full implications of balloons in modern warfare were just being realized at this time, and the possibility of their militarization was a terrifying thought. At the first Hague Conference of 1899, one of the only universal resolutions passed for rules of engagement was the banning of explosives launched from hot air balloons (Tuchman 292). While aerial warfare would eventually become one of the hallmarks of the world wars, the terror it would invoke in a vulnerable citizenry was already being guessed at by Wells. In his 1908 novel, *The War in the Air*, which imagines more fully the ramifications of global aerial warfare, the story begins with a trip in a hot air balloon and ends with the destruction of modern civilization. This new technology was unpredictable, and this is mirrored in the unpredictable activity of the blotting ink upon the map of England spread out below the balloon. The balloon, and aerial war, would come to produce a new gaze which would be able to look down upon the world from an advantaged position. The threat of this surveillance and imminent attack without warning would, as Paul Saint-Amour argues in *Tense Future*, become a deeply traumatic anxiety in the interwar years. But this same surveillance was also a crucial tool for the policing of colonies (73). The constant patrolling of aircraft over a colonial state could create an almost Benthamite Panopticon floating above the map of the British Empire (80-81). As Wells' imaginary balloon surveys the destruction below, the blots of alien ink spread as if

flung from a "monstrous pen." While the balloon can see everything unfolding from above, the blotting suggests a certain obfuscation and blindness to what is really transpiring under the ink, and the spread of this ink shoots out "ramifications this way and that" over the map, suggesting that the results of this type of imperial marking and inking are often unknown, and the true effect of the transformative mapping is blotted from vision.

As the ink from the Martians' monstrous pen spreads across the pages of Wells' story, it brings us back to Conrad's Marlow, and his desire to write his biography in the ink of empire, filling in the blank places of the world. But the cartographic documentation of imperial growth simultaneously stains English countryside and culture. Even as Marlow attempts to write his story in imperial ink, he finds that it is vanishing ink, that he loses himself in the act, is alienated from his sense of place and home when, looking out across the Thames he registers England as one of the dark places, one of the inked places, as well. This vanishing ink which is put down on one part of the map and reappears in another, on England, seems to be the same ink with which Wells' narrator loaded his pen at the beginning of *The War of the Worlds*. "'In about two hundred years,'" he had written, "'we may expect—' The sentence ended abruptly" (176). Attempting, in the days before the invasion, to write the future of the empire, Wells' philosopher-narrator finds that his ink has run out, his writing had ended abruptly, and left in its place, are the great alien ink stains that have forever changed his island life. The abruptness with which this Englishman's writing about the empire ends, and is replaced by ink, literally *on* England, is suggestive of the unexpected nature of this development, the unknowability of the invasive event, and the subsequent, re-formative trauma.

Implicitly, Wells' inky weapons that re-write England's story, and redraw its borders, anticipate the weapons of mass destruction that would transform both geographic and political

landscapes at the outbreak of the world wars. Alien gas and atomizing lasers--these fantasy weapons of mass transformation forecast in fiction the very real chemical, mechanical aerial, and atomic warfare of the future. These devices have the power to re-form entire social bodies. As the ink of the empire seeps and stains the maps of England, and the Martians spread their black gas and red weed across the country, the populace undergoes a change. "By ten o'clock," recalls the narrator, "the police organization, and by midday even the railway organizations, were losing coherency, losing shape and efficiency, guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body" (92). The very presence of the Martians, let alone the power of their transformative machinery, forces a plastic re-formation of a formerly rigid and structured social body. Hierarchies melt and run freely, organizations of law and order lose their shape and formal authority, even the hallowed railway systems, exemplars of English efficiency and regularity, lose coherence. The narrator's language reflects this change in form. The softening and deforming of the social system eventually result in a mass movement of refugees, turning the highways into "a boiling stream of people, a torrent of human beings rushing northward…A great bank of dust, white and luminous in the blaze of the sun…the crowd roared like a fire" (97-98). The effect of the Martians is such that, even those who do not come into direct contact with the invaders take on the new forms that their weaponry creates. They are liquefied, made into great vaporous "banks of dust," and set ablaze, roaring like a fire, boiling away in a new and constantly mutable form.

Ink, and the machinery that produces and disseminates it, also has a powerfully transformative function in *The Inheritors*. The rapidity with which new technologies could create and distribute mass print media, brought the farthest reaches of the British Empire into English homes. The development of new communications technologies which facilitated the transmission

of news and the production of newspapers meant that the British public could consume stories from all over the world in what was effectively "real time." For the first time in English history the phrase "watching the news" emerged, conveying a previously unknown immediacy in engagement with world events (Wilde 16). As the British Empire took the spotlight on the world stage, the drama of imperialism increasingly became the stuff of public consumption, flooding the reading market with tabloid news stories and fantasy novels about invasion. Jonathan Wilde suggests that "What these invasion stories suggest more generally is the rapidly changing relationship between news events and fiction publication" (27). Newsprint consumption began to blur the lines between information gathering and entertainment. Alongside the red weed in *The War of the Worlds* that chronicles the alien progress, and the inky weapons that rewrite the maps of the British Empire onto England's countryside, Wells' narrator recalls "the abundance and enterprise of our nineteenth-century papers" (12) and the way in which excited reporters ran to the station to "telegraph the news [of the Martian landing] to London" because "the newspaper articles had prepared men's minds for the reception of the idea" (16). Wells' treatment of mass media articulates the way in which print had the power to shape reality. The alien invasion—much like the outbreak of war in 1914—did not come as a shock in the first instance because the newspaper articles had prepared men's minds for such an eventuality. In Ford and Conrad's, *The Inheritors*, the invading Fourth-Dimensionists leverage the power of mass media to rewrite British politics, and re-ink the maps of empire.

Significantly in *The Inheritors*, the protagonist Arthur is an out-of-work writer. His writerliness is precisely why the Fourth-Dimensionists have chosen him as a pawn in their scheme. When he is contracted by a paper called the *Hour* to write profiles of prominent persons, he is initially grateful for the steady income. The paper, however, turns out to be an organ for the

invaders, founded in order to drive up speculation about an imperial scheme in Greenland. The exact machinations of this colonial project are obscure to Arthur. The plan, to the best of his knowledge, involves the

> 'All Round the World Cable Company' that united hearts and hands, and a 'Pan-European Railway, Exploration and Civilisation Company' that let in light in dark places, and an 'International Housing of the Poor Company'…and the *Hour* certainly contained periodically complimentary allusion to their higher philanthropy…but that was as much as I knew (58).

Ultimately, the Fourth-Dimensionists use the *Hour* to create press surrounding a "benevolent" and missionizing colonial project, before toppling it and implicating British officials, thereby sewing discord and instability. But Arthur's early analysis of the vested interests in this project is important. A globally connected cable company, a "pan-European" railway with a civilizing mission, and an international conglomeration to ameliorate poverty are all being marshalled in order to "let in light in dark places." Like Marlow, Arthur has inadvertently found himself in the midst of a map-making, border-crossing project, fueled by new technologies in international communication, transportation, and capitalism. Breaking with his past, abandoning his ideals, Arthur enters a world in which truth is fragmented, and national culture, and public opinion are shaped by greed, deceit, tabloid journalism, and false claims. Lies, it turns out, are the motor which power the great modern "engine of disintegration" which, like Wells' Martians, "has crushed out a whole social fabric" (152).

Prior to accepting the job at the *Hour*, Arthur considered himself a writer, who had "kept out of this sort of thing because I had thought it below me" (21). Once he accepts the job, however, he is thrust into the sphere of political machinations, covert revolutions, yellow journalism, and fifth columnist cabals. As Arthur realizes for the first time that his writing has become nothing more than a political tool to raise or topple power structures, he has "the sudden

perception that all the traditional ideals of honour, glory, conscience, had been committed to the upholding of a gigantic and atrocious fraud" (136). Interestingly, even though Arthur is portrayed as adhering to late Victorian ideals and decidedly stuck in the past, he is—at every turn—disgusted by the politicization of his writing, and the abandonment of his aesthetic values, sentiments that would resonate with modernism as a movement, a generation which sought to make his writing "of the past" and "passing." Arthur struggles with a feeling of authorial displacement—the truth of his writing is immaterial—and this displacement becomes mirrored in his relationship to the modern cityscapes in which he finds himself. Feeling the first pangs of guilt and doubt after abandoning his ideals and selling out, Arthur ventures off to see his old editor, "a little ashamed to tell him" about his new post (36). As he goes into town, he experiences a new type of isolation, as he is plunged into

> an immense blackness. People—thousands of people hurried past me, had errands, had aims, had others to talk to, to trifle with. But I had nobody. This immense city, this immense blackness, had no interiors for me. There were house fronts, staring windows, closed doors, but nothing within; no rooms, no hollow places (35).

Unable to connect, cut-off from other people, the thousands of city-dwellers in all their urban busyness constitute a blackness which erases Arthur. More disturbingly, this is a city in which there are no interiors, no hollow places to receive him. The city is façade only, and the lack of interior forecloses the existence of an exterior; where there are no hollow places, there can only exist a collapsed flatness of indifference, and as such, no refuge from the outside or from the "other." Arthur's experience in the city on this night--a city from which Victorian domesticity has been banished and the outside world has become indistinguishable from daily domestic life—maps onto the problem of an empire which blurs the distinctions between English national culture and British colonial life. There is a violence in the scenes of this night which makes Arthur feel, stumbling through a city with no interiors, as if he was "at the mercy of any

nightmare" (40). This sensation of being trapped in a nightmare of no interiors resonates with Malabou's theory of the traumatic moment. For Malabou, the moment of annihilative plasticity, which gives birth to a new form in a moment of transformative violence, takes place precisely at the collapse between outside and inside. "Post-traumatic subjectivity," writes Malabou involves "experiencing a lack of exteriority, which is as much an absence of interiority, hence the impossible flight, the on the spot transformation. There is neither an inside nor an outside world" (*Ontology* 14). The feeling that Arthur experiences, of having nowhere to escape to, is bound up in his decision to abandon his old ideals and plunge into a world where truth is irrelevant, and the old value systems no longer governs daily life. When he first encounters his Fourth-Dimensionist tormentor, she matter-of-factly informs him that she is of the future, arrived to take Arthur's place. Standing upon a hillside, looking down over the town, she tells Arthur to look out over the city and the countryside. Arthur looks.

> Below our feet, beneath a sky that the wind had swept clean of clouds, was the valley; a broad bowl, shallow, filled with the purple of smoke-wreaths. And above the mass of red roofs there soared the golden stonework of the cathedral tower. It was a vision, the last word, of a great art (8).

He sees the glorious cathedral tower, symbol of the Church of England. Unlike the house-fronts in the city on that dark night, these country roofs connote homes with interiors, and happy hearths billowing purple smoke-wreaths. The scene brings together, in a glance, the peaceful prosperity of English town life, the sublimity of English faith, and the culturally restorative nature of the surrounding greenspaces in which this daily island living is nestled. This vision, this last word of a great art, is an expression of the "complete" island life which Stein claims made English literature so glorious before the collapse of "outside" and "inside" England. The vision of this imminent collapse is precisely what the Fourth-Dimensionist provides Arthur in the

next moment. Uttering some words in her own language, Arthur glimpses the future—he is completely thrown.

> "What had happened? I don't know. It all looked contemptible. One seemed to see something beyond, something vaster—vaster than cathedrals, vaster than the conception of the gods to whom cathedrals were raised. The tower reeled out of the perpendicular. One saw beyond it, not roofs, or smoke, or hills, but an unrealized, an unrealizable infinity of space" (8).

As Arthur stands upon this hillside looking out over a new and incomprehensible world, Ford and Conrad's readership stands behind him trying to peer into a New Imperialist future which is unimaginable, impossible, and, above all, contemptible. The effect, the actual violence which takes place, is hard to pinpoint. All that is clear is that the complete, and insular picture of English life is completely flattened—the tower "reeled out of the perpendicular"—by the existence of a *beyond*. In this moment, the beyond, which we can read as the unrealizable and seemingly infinite space and peoples of the British Empire, comes rushing in creating something vast, unidentifiable, and decidedly not English. Arthur cannot fathom this world beyond the valleys and hills and cheery rooftops of the English town and countryside, even as this outside world increasingly informs, and transforms, the daily shape of that life. The violence of this realization is immediate for Arthur who is "physically and mentally shaken" (8-9). The moment of trauma in an event of destructive plasticity is, according to Malabou, incomprehensible. It cannot be felt by the post-traumatic subject because the violence has always happened to an annihilated subject. Witnessing the collapse between internal English culture and external imperial culture becomes such a moment for Arthur who can only "deceive [himself] as to the cause" of his distress (9). And yet, he is forever changed as from this point forward, almost all of Arthur's experiences in the city reproduce this isolating collapse which leave him in limbo.

By the end of the story, Arthur realizes that "the falsehood" the *Hour* is responsible for propagating, "had spread stealthily, had eaten into the very heart of the creeds and convictions that we lean upon on our passage between the past and the future. The old order of things had to live or perish with a lie," a lie, which Arthur, as a newspaperman, becomes instrumental in spreading. As Arthur becomes increasingly embroiled in the production of political pablum, his authorial agency dwindles until he finally finds himself in the heart of a giant literary machine which he is powerless to control.

Like the Machine in Forster's novel, the news industry ends up evolving beyond its human components, reducing the author to a mere cog in a great mechanical body which has taken on a life of its own. In the final scenes of the story, Arthur finds himself responsible for printing an article that will crumble the existing social order, due to the manufactured political scandal it unveils. As he contemplates whether he should stop the presses, he is quickly, and physically, overwhelmed by the inertia of the machinery all around him. As he thinks, he notes that "the boom of the great presses was rattling the window frames" (135). Then again, "the drone of the presses continued to make itself felt like the quiver of a suppressed emotion" (136). Rattling and quivering Arthur's external and internal world, the rumble of modern media aches in Arthur's head. His very perception of reality seems to grow plastic. Finally, "the drone of the presses made the floor under [his] feet quiver, and the whole building vibrated as if the earth itself had trembled" (136). Vibrating, and thus deforming, the buildings and earth upon which Arthur stands, the printing presses recall the transformative power of Wells' great alien machines lumbering across the countryside with strange weapons, producing ink at a volume that is only matched by the destruction left in their wake.

The *Hour* calls on global capitalism and technology to bring light to the dark places of

the earth. This paper has the power to reshape global borders, transcend international boundaries, and reshape the political landscape, and as it does so the printing machinery invades Arthur's person, even as it distorts and deforms the physical space around him, vibrating the very building in which he is standing. In Forster's *The Machine Stops*, the mechanical rule of light and the abolition of darkness has, as I discussed in the first section, dissolved the borders between human and mechanical bodies in this dystopian society. As the story follows Kuno's struggle to reclaim his annihilated sense of space, however, the invasion of the Machine into the human body amplifies Arthur's experience of the omnipresent printing presses humming in his ears and vibrating in his body.

The Machine is a place of indistinction. Describing Vashti's living quarters, the narrator notes that "above her, beneath her, and around her…hummed eternally." But the narrator points out, "she did not notice the noise, for she had been born with it in her ears" (96). Vashti is surrounded by the hum of a mechanical life-support system, but she does not notice, because she was born with it *in* her ears. She is in the Machine, of the Machine, and the Machine is in her and of her as well. The noise of the Machine that Vashti cannot hear begs the question of how one escapes a system into which they are born, the machinations of which have become cultural commonplaces. Furthermore, any engagement with life outside of this system is strictly regulated by the "Central Committee" of the Machine. When Vashti's son tells her that he ventured outside the Machine she replies "It is perfectly legal, perfectly mechanical, to visit the surface of the earth…there is no objection to that; one simply summons a respirator and gets an egression-permit. It is not the kind of thing that spiritually-minded people do…but there is no legal objection to it" (104). Contact with the outside world is discouraged. It is not something that "spiritually-minded people do." But more insidiously, it is a regulated experience which requires

permitting. It is impossible then, to engage with the world outside of this techno-imperial space in a way which is not mediated in terms of center to periphery. The epistemological vantage point from which the Machine forces its citizens to consider the outside world is one which suggests there is *nothing* outside of the Machine. This structure of thinking becomes so embedded in the cultural consciousness that when Vashti, forced to travel by airship over the earth's surface to visit her son, sees the Himalayan Mountains, she instructs her flight attendant to "Cover the window, please. These mountains give me no ideas" (102). She repeats this refrain upon seeing the Caucasus mountains and when they pass over "a golden sea, in which lay many small islands and one peninsula… she repeated, 'No ideas here,' and hid Greece," the birthplace of Western civilization, "behind a metal blind" (103). Eventually, respirators and egress permits are banned altogether and "those who still wanted to know what earth was like had after all only to listen to some gramophone, or to look into some cinematophote" (114).

Vashti's son Kuno is consumed by an obsession to break free from this omnipotent technocracy. Above all, he wants to find an exit, and engage with that which is *exterior* to the Machine from a non-hegemonic vantage point. When he first tries to break out from this city which is all interiors, he starts by exploring the tunnels. "The tunnels," he says, "of course, were lighted. Everything is light, artificial light; darkness is the exception. So, when I saw a black gap in the tiles, I knew that it was the exception, and rejoiced" (106). The Machine has spread light to all parts of the world inhabited by civilization. If darkness is the exception, light is the *rule*, and the rule of light reads like the missionizing rhetoric of empire which, as I have argued, ascribes places of light and places of darkness to different parts of the global map, and Britain's empire. The Machine represents an empire in which the spread of light has all but abolished the "dark places" of the world. When Kuno discovers a black gap in the tiles, he says that "I knew

that it was an exception, and rejoiced. I put in my arm—I could put in no more at first, and waved it round and round in ecstasy" (106). The lose tile in the machine is *proof* of an exterior world, and figures as a black gap in a world of light. Exteriority is completely incomprehensible, a "symbolic gap" in this omnipresent technocracy which epistemologically refuses the existence of a world beyond the Machine.

Railing against the confines of the Machine, the lack of culture, and the epistemological stagnation, Kuno ventures to the surface, in an "unmechanical" act of defiance. Blaspheming the Machine, Kuno tries to explain to his mother what exactly has been lost during human evolution. "We created the Machine" he explains, "to do our will, but we cannot make it do our will now. It has robbed us of the sense of space of the sense of touch, it has blurred every human relation and narrowed down love to a carnal act, it has paralyzed our bodies and our wills…" (110). The hyper-connectivity of the Machine has not only flattened difference, but also removed the need to overcome physical distance. Earlier in the story Kuno succeeds in "recapturing the meaning of 'Near' and 'Far'" by walking the corridors of the Machine. The Machine, he realizes, has "annihilated not space, but the sense thereof" and this in turn has annihilated "a part of ourselves." "Man," Kuno declares, "is the measure" of distance (105). Without the physical embodiment of this measure, social relations become, "blurred" and "narrowed" and people lose their sense of place, radically crippling cultural development. When Kuno ventures outside of the Machine he sees hills, nature, and green space. Returning to the subterranean city, his hard-won research informs him that he has "seen the hills of Wessex as Aelfrid saw them when he overthrew the Danes" (110). Kuno invokes a past for which mankind has no memory and can never return, and yet he resolves to "tell men again and again that I have seen the hills" (110). Absent a culturally referential past, this deficit can only be fought with myth, and in this

instance, the mythic hills of Wessex. It is no coincidence the history Kuno tells is a history of early attempts at English culture-creation in those mythic green spaces. Writing a thousand years after Alfred expelled the Danes from England, Forster's invocation of that history/myth in relation to an unfeeling mechanical empire which threatens the very pastoral landscapes upon which the daily island living of England had been founded is significant. In Forster's time, the expansion of the British Empire and the ways in which it invaded the English countryside via suburban sprawl, immigrating colonists, and increasing industrialization, constituted a cultural existential threat of the same magnitude that Viking invaders had posed a millennium before.

Eventually, the Machine expands beyond humanity's ability to sustain it. "In all the world, there was not one who understood the monster as a whole" says the narrator, and when the Machine can no longer maintain its radical inclusivity which denies the existence of an outside, the outside comes rushing in, destroying the entire imperial structure (116). First the light, the *rule* of mechanical existence, grows dim and finally fails. In the wake of this catastrophe, champions of the Machine cry "Courage! Courage! What matter so long as the Machine goes on? To it, the darkness and the light are one" (120). This collapse between light and dark, is the first inescapable trauma which cannot be fled, a reverse invasion wherein the dark places of the world roll back the mechanical imperial light. If the light and dark are as one to the Machine, it is only insofar as any attempt to let light into the dark places of the world, only succeeds in darkening the imperial seat, redeploying that colonizing ink of empire. The next catastrophe is much more severe, "an unexpected terror—silence. [Vashti] had never known silence, and the coming of it nearly killed her—it did many thousands of people outright. Ever since her birth she had been surrounded by the steady hum" (121). The radical interiority of the city which attempted to collapse the difference between outside and inside into one mechanical

interior of light and sound eventually implodes, invaded by darkness and silence. The Machine's downfall is brought on by a series of violent reversals that mirror fears of reverse-colonization and invasion in the wake of New Imperialism. The final blow that ends civilization is dealt by airships, in a scene which recalls Wells' balloon monitoring blind destruction from above. The Machine maintains the use of airships to facilitate the empire's growth and inclusivity. The airships are expelled from the Machine via vomitories. When the colonizing force of these vomitories and their ships is reversed,

> the whole city was broken like a honeycomb. An air-ship had sailed in through the vomitory into a ruined wharf. It crashed downwards, exploding as it went, rending gallery after gallery with its wings of steel. For a moment they saw the nations of the dead, and, before they joined them, scraps of the untainted sky (123).

This scene highlights the ways in which Forster's thinking furthers that of Ford and Conrad. If Arthur's cities without interiors, and the golden towers which get reeled out of the perpendicular, have suffered a flattening collapse because of the "infinite beyond" which has started rushing in, Forster's Machine imagines the logical extension of Arthur's world, one in which there are no *exteriors*, all the outside has become owned, and the infinite beyond has become completely contained and touched by the light of empire. The result is a cultural death, and an oppressive regime which cannot sustain itself. Ultimately, it is the attempt to own everything, to create a singular and complete world that encompasses everything, that becomes the Machine's undoing. The untainted sky, that infinite beyond, is once again the last word as this mechanical empire comes crashing down upon itself.

New Imperialism changed Britain's landscape. But more significantly, it changed England's *sense* of that landscape. Imperial capitalism and industrialization indelibly altered the mythic pastoralism of England's countryside and diminished the Victorian domesticity that had previously been a cultural haven from a growing and overwhelming cosmopolitan metropolis.

But the development of international cable companies, new technologies of global transportation, and the modern printing press, brought the farthest reaches of the empire into close contact, even as these newly demarcated zones of Britain remained obfuscated and culturally unassimilated. Each of these stories explores the role of imperial and militaristic policies in the radical annihilation of England's cultural spaces, and the new forms these spaces take in the wake of such destruction. The action that drives each of these stories of scientific romance literalizes the experience of an insular island nation undergoing radical cosmopolitan changes and losing cultural cohesion.

The two sections above have dealt with themes of annihilative collapse between colonizers and colonists, empires and subjects, as well as deformations between interiors and exteriors, borders and boundaries. The final section of this chapter will examine the figure of the survivor of these sociopolitical traumas, the "new wounded," who remains in the wake of an absolute trauma, alive in death and, as I argue, representative of a cultural death in life which was felt in England at the *fin de siècle*. In 1898, Wells announces the end of the nineteenth century by heralding the twentieth: "And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment" (*War of the Worlds* 7). In her study of survivors of sociopolitical and brain traumas, Malabou notes that "To differing degrees, they [the new wounded] all display permanent or temporary behaviors of *indifference or disaffection*" (*New Wounded* 7). This modern century, brought on by New Imperialism, will be one of disillusionment, indifference, and disaffection, characterized by people who are untethered from their past, and unsure, and ambivalent, about their future.

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The New Imperial Wounded

Imperial expansion in the late nineteenth-century stretched English national culture beyond its ability to assimilate—or even conceive of—the totality of British colonial life. New Imperialism precipitated rapid economic change and radically shifting social relations which affected class systems, urban and suburban development, relationships to the land, and domestic markets. In short, all aspects of daily life grew unstable due to colonial interests which, as Hobson writes, constituted "huge mouthfuls of Africa and Asia which are not yet chewed digested or assimilated" (235). The result was a dissolution of the distinctions between what was, and what was not, English culture, a collapse of the outside world, into the insular national life. Each of the texts studied in this chapter deals with the anxiety surrounding the subsequent confusion and trauma engendered by cultural de/restructurings. This trauma, in a Malabouian sense, manifests itself in instances of "death in life," or "living death." I argue that each of these textual examples, in which a character experiences a sensation of being amongst the dead, or experiencing a sort of death-in-life, is a symptomatic response to sociopolitical trauma that maps onto a greater concern for the beginnings of a cultural necrosis taking place at the turn of the century. Just like Arthur Granger in *The Inheritors*, English national culture began to feel as if it was already dead, already of the past, even as it participated in this modern conversation.

"The form of death", writes Malabou,

> rushes. Often, this rush, in the figure, contour, shape adopted by the person about to die, is too fleeting to be noticed. Yet, among those who appear to us as living dead, those whose subjectivity left before time and who take on the new form of their end, for the people I discuss here, the form of death is visible, it has time, it leaps out at you (*New Wounded* 69).

Malabou argues here that trauma can occur in such a way that a subjectivity, a personality, a character, is banished from the psyche even as that person lives on. The result is

the birth of a new person in its place, a new person into the place of a departed subjecthood. This is a living death, one in which death is visible in the traces of that which is left behind. I want to read the characters of these texts, who survive sociopolitical trauma at the turn of the century as visible forms of death in life, forms which, as they represent facets of English society, speak to the transpiration of this trauma on a cultural level in the wake of New Imperialism.

The final sentence of Wells' *The War of the Worlds* sums up the phenomenon well. "And strangest of all," writes the narrator, "is to hold my wife's hand again, and to think that I have counted her, and that she has counted me, among the dead" (180). The narrator and the survivors of the attack are left with a sense of strangeness. He does not say that he thought his wife was dead and now he knows better. He does not reverse the death sentence once they are reunited. No, they have both *already* been counted among the dead and yet here they are, holding hands. This intimacy with strangeness, in which the narrator and his wife are strangers to themselves and each other, crystalizes the cultural death-in-life that I identify at the height of New Imperialism.

The final two chapters of *The War of the Worlds* are entitled "Dead London" and "Wreckage." Near the end of the story, the narrator stops running and, submitting to the invaders, accepts his death. He plunges into the heart of London to see "what the Martians and my fellow-men were doing" (162). The first thing he notices is the black dust everywhere. "There was black dust along the roadway" he recalls. "There was black powder in the streets and upon dead bodies…the black powder covered them over, and softened their outlines." Where there is no dust, the houses burn. In other parts, the city is "curiously like a Sunday in the city, with the closed shops, the houses locked up and the blinds drawn." Everywhere though, is "desertion" and "stillness" (163). The black dust is the residue of the inky vapor the Martians

spilled out across England, forever re-writing its history. And where this residue is not present, London seems eerily alive, "like a Sunday in the city," even amidst all this death. Even the outlines of the dead bodies are "softened" by this black powder, suggesting mutability even in death. The scene signifies the complete destruction and separation from everything that the narrator has known and, exhausted, he submits himself to this new world in whatever form it takes in the wake of this annihilation. It is a death in and of itself, a crystalline destruction which calls the narrator on, as he penetrates further and further into the dead city, the sole inhabitant of a new necropolis. Walking through London, the narrator hears one of the aliens and declares that "an insane resolve possessed me. I would die and end it. And I would save myself the trouble of killing myself. I marched on recklessly towards the Titan…" (167). The narrator's march towards death signals the impossibility of coexistence with this invasive force. This trauma is absolute; it cannot be assimilated by the psyche or bound and discharged by any Freudian pleasure principle. It will rewrite the narrator's existence completely—he must depart from himself. Perhaps the most shocking part of the narrator's decision is that—to the extent that he is capable of psychologically grasping his submission to this impossible force—it does not result in his organic death as a return to the matter from which he came. The Martians harvest, and consume, human blood. His death will not be a return, but a departure, a new, impossible existence in which he becomes the very stuff which fuels the Martian expansion. This is a plasticity of death. A destruction which does not simply figure as a deforming return, or the figuration of Zero, but annihilation which *creates* new form in death. Eventually, the narrator approaches the Martian and finds it sick and weak, having succumbed to Earth's biological defenses. The narrator is spared, but survival is not an escape. The plasticity of the narrator's subjective destruction is already complete; his old self has fled, and everything is changed. "With

overwhelming force" he recalls of the first realization of his survival "came the thought of myself, of my wife, and the old life of hope and tender helpfulness *that had ceased forever*" (171, italics mine). This second chance at life is a living death, one which is preceded by a cessation of the "old life of hope and tender helpfulness" that he had known before this invasion.

But this status of new wounded extends beyond the narrator. Wells develops two more characters in his story which allegorize traditional pillars of English society, while also displaying characteristics symptomatic of someone who has recently survived sociopolitical trauma. Over the course of his narrative, Wells' protagonist has two travelling companions with whom he attempts to survive. The curate, whom the narrator meets half-way through the story, is driven to "the very verge of his reason" by "the tremendous tragedy in which he had been involved" (70). As the story progresses, the curate begins to demonstrate increasingly reckless, detached, even suicidal behavior. When the two survivors observe a Martian invader eating his human captives, the curate becomes so far detached from himself as to lose his humanity. "The curate" says the narrator, "I found was quite incapable of discussion; this new atrocity had robbed him of all vestiges of reason or forethought. Practically he had already sunk to the level of an animal" (134). Eventually, the narrator realizes the man has suffered "the complete overthrow of his intelligence…that my sole companion in this close and sickly darkness was a man insane" (137). The curate is eventually dragged off by a probing Martian tentacle and presumably consumed by the harbingers of this new world order. As the social body and the structure of English society is reduced to a mutable new chaos of form, the curate suffers a traumatic shock, one which—in a moment of destructive plasticity—separates him completely from his former position at the heart of a socio-politico-religious organization: The Church of England. The curate devolves, suffers the complete overthrow of his own intelligence, and sinks

to the level of the animal in the wake of this traumatic event. If we read the curate as one of the new wounded, and we read his position as emblematic of the Church of England, we can begin to articulate a Wellsian argument about the inability of the Church to survive, let alone arbitrate national cultural life, in this new imperial era of disillusionment and trauma. As English society undergoes a radical metamorphosis in the wake of New Imperialism, it is not only unlikely that Christianity can minister to this new, mutable society, but that—just as the curate is carried off by the Martians who will eventually consume him—the machinations of empire will carry the Church farther abroad, away from England, to further the imperial agenda in the dark places of the world.

The narrator's other companion is an artilleryman, a soldier tasked with defending England against this invader. At first, it seems that the transformative power of the invasion has hardened the artilleryman into a new and resilient species, made to survive in this new world. "Life is real again," says the artilleryman, "and the useless and cumbersome and mischievous have to die. They ought to die. They ought to be willing to die" (157). The artilleryman proposes to find a place where he can "invent a sort of life where men can live and breed, and be sufficiently secure to bring children up…You see, how I mean to live is underground" (156-157). The narrator is compelled by this plan, especially when the artilleryman suggests that one day, they might succeed in overthrowing the Martians. The narrator resolves to help, but as they begin work on the project, the soldier insists on taking frequent breaks and drinking to the new future. While the narrator is initially impressed with the artilleryman's rationality, his willingness to embrace this Darwinian disaster quickly reveals itself to be nothing more than a radical indifference towards life. "When a trauma occurs," writes Malabou, "the entire affective potential is influenced, sorrow is not even possible anymore; the patient falls, beyond sorrow,

into a state of apathy that is no longer joyful or despairing. They become indifferent to their own survival and to the survival of others" (*Ontology* 27). The artilleryman, in response to the attack on England, has actually become apathetic, disinterested, and disillusioned. "In a flash," recalls the narrator, "I saw the man plain (159) …and resolved to leave this strange undisciplined dreamer of great things to his drink and gluttony" (162). Reading the artilleryman alongside the curate, we see two bastions of English cultural defense, the Church and soldiery, crumbling in the wake of this collapse between outside and inside. If the Church is powerless to restore religious meaning to this new and mutable culture, England's military is powerless to defend it against foreign invaders. "Every enlargement of Great Britain in the tropics," writes Hobson "is a distinct enfeeblement of true British nationalism" and those responsible for the protection of that nationalism have become indifferent and detached in the face of these social and cultural de/restructurings (338).

The conclusion of *The Machine Stops* echoes the same sort of "death-in-life" which characterizes the end of Wells' narrative. Forster's narrator remarks that mankind had become

> strangled in the garments that he had woven… [they] had seemed heavenly at first, shot through with the colours of culture, sewn with the threads of self-denial. And heavenly it had been so long as it was a garment and no more, so long as man could shed it at will (122-123).

Forster's image of a heavenly garment speaks to an institution which has grown beyond and exceeded the culture which set it into motion. Sustained by its own inertia, and for the sake of itself, the Machine—and by extension the British Empire—carries on at the expense of national culture which has become powerless to control it. As Kuno reminds his mother, mankind exists only "as the blood corpuscles that course through [the Machine's] arteries, and if it could work without us, it would let us die." When this "garment," can no longer be shed, it begins to choke and strangle. And while the process of strangulation differs from the Martians draining the blood

from their victims, this choking still represents the slow ebbing and draining of national domestic culture which will be used to fuel a monstrous, totalizing, colonizing force. Furthermore, the image of culture being strangled and choked is an excellent illustration of Malabou's formulation of "death in life." It is a slow dying which allows death and life to occupy a strange, and proximal position, to be visible side by side.

In many ways, Vashti herself is the physical embodiment of death in life, brought on by this slow cultural death. Forster describes her as "a swaddled lump of flesh—a woman, about five feet high, with a face as white as a fungus (92) …think of her as without teeth or hair" (96). The entirety of her appearance speaks to a literalized image of the new wounded. Bald, toothless, and swaddled, Vashti seems infantile even as she approaches her old age, allegorizing the ability of destructive plasticity to engender, simultaneously, the birth of a disaffected individual in the wake of death. Even the comparison to fungi connotes life amid darkness and decay. Above all, Vashti is largely indifferent to life. She even puts in requests for euthanasia (which are denied by the Central Committee) on more than one occasion in response to minor inconveniences. As the mechanical empire tightens its hold on humanity, strangling out the last vestiges of culture, the inhabitants of the Machine become suspended between life and death, indifferent to everything but the progress of the Machine, the former physicality of the human form reduced to swaddled lumps of toothless, hairless, flesh. When the Machine finally implodes in the final pages of Forster's story, this death in life is thrown into stark relief. As Kuno and Vashti watch the city burn, they can see the upward galleries, and the millions of people living there, crashing down upon them "exploding as it went, rending gallery after gallery." As they watch, "For a moment they saw the nations of the dead, and, before they joined them, scraps of the untainted sky" (123). The image of "nations of the dead" signifies a strange new world wherein the border

between life and death is increasingly porous. Forster's final scene, wherein this mechanical empire grows so large as to collapse upon itself and kill all of mankind, literalizes the idea of an ever-expanding Britain which was tolling the death knell for English national culture, even as the empire itself grew and flourished.

"As a result of serious trauma" writes Malabou, "or sometimes for no reason at all, the path splits and a new, unprecedented persona comes to live with the former person, and eventually takes up all the room" (*Ontology* 1). If the Fourth-Dimensionist with whom Arthur wrangles is his colonizer, the power that will come to supersede him, she is also, in some ways, an extension of himself. When he first meets her, he notes that, she seemed "familiar till it occurred to you that she was strange" (5). This unrecognizable persona that develops in the wake of a trauma, continues Malabou, is an absolute "existential improvisation," a "funny breed," a "monster whose apparition cannot be explained as any genetic anomaly," a "new being…come into the world for a second time, out of a deep cut that opens in a biography" (*Ontology* 2). As Arthur walks with this woman, she explains calmly that she is from the Fourth Dimension, and that she is the future. The people of the earth are the past. "Don't you see" she says near the end of the book, "you are the past—the passing. We could never meet. You are…for me… only the portrait of a man—of a man who has been dead—oh, a long time..." (14). Arthur's appraisal of her, early on in the story, as belonging to a "new nation" beginning to find itself is not wrong. She represents an unknown England, born into the future in the wake of catastrophe. Her appearance heralds the advent of that future as it displaces the past, leaving Arthur experiencing a sort of death-in-life existence as "a portrait" of a dead man. This sort of damnation-in-life, straddling the line between the living and the dead, seems to be the condition in which the generation who will inherit the twentieth century and its grand disillusionment are forced to

exist. In the wake of "natural or political catastrophes" writes Malabou, "We must all of us recognize that we might, one day, become someone else, an absolute other, someone who will never be reconciled with themselves again, someone who will be this form of us without redemption or atonement, without last wishes, this damned form, outside of time" (*Ontology* 2-3). Damned, and outside of time, Arthur is plagued by this woman who represents the deep cut in his biography, the "absolute other" who will supersede him in this new century. Indeed, the Fourth-Dimensionist invader even begins to refer to herself as Arthur's sister for facility of moving through society. The absolute other that Malabou imagines being born in the wake of tragedy represents a "mode of being without genealogy" and Arthur's extra-dimensional sister represents just such a parthenogenic continuation of his line in this new death-in-life (*Ontology* 3). When, at the end of the story her plan has succeeded and she announces that she has rent the old fabric of society and ushered in a new order, Arthur recalls "I seemed for a moment to see myself a tenuous, bodiless thing, like a ghost in a bottomless cleft between the past and the to come. And I was to be that forever" (19).

For Wells, the advent of the twentieth century as brought on by New Imperialism marks the cessation of a life of "hope and tender helpfulness;" a strange new life of "being counted among the dead." Forster predicts a slow, and visible death in life, as national culture is strangled by its own imperial and technological achievements. Ford and Conrad's *The Inheritors* grapples with an unseen "force" which is dragging England "forward over the edge of a glacier into a crevasse…struggling, panting even—as a nation pants—to get back by their own way what they understood" (15). Arthur is already at the bottom of that crevasse, ghostly in body and spirit, a portrait of a dead man, whose place has already been taken by the other of himself, his successor who was split from him and superseded him in the wake of this tragedy. *This* is the great

disillusionment of the twentieth century, that each of these texts is gesturing towards, a generation of the New Imperial Wounded "whose fate" as Malabou writes "is to live a worn-out future" (*Ontology* 49).

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Modernism was hardly monolithic in its aesthetic aspirations. Characterized by competing manifestos, subversive forms, and the construction of new artistic and intellectual gates in need of keeping, different groups and artists all struggled to make something new in this "worn out future," muscling out the artistic values of the previous generation. Central to all these modernist projects is an infatuation with borders and boundaries. Often exploded and transgressed, and just as often constructed and maintained, borders in modernism became formally, linguistically, and aesthetically deconstructed, even as different writers and artists attempted to reinforce artificial boundaries between what, and what was not, modern.

Aesthetically, even politically, the invasion novel reads antithetically to the modernist project. The formulaic, plot-heavy novels—especially those aspiring to realism which I will explore in later chapters--plod and lumber along the well-trod road to England's destruction like so many of Wells' cumbersome Martian's in their great-mechanical tripods. Nevertheless, these authors and their stories were willing and eager to engage with the realities and eventualities of transgressed borders and an invaded England in ways in which their Victorian counterparts were not. The literal explosions and destructions of Edwardian invasion fiction ultimately invaded modernism as that movement formalized these themes, even as it attempted to keep the Edwardians out.

While I begin this project with stories of scientific romance in order to interrogate the way in which the seemingly impossible futures of New Imperialism could only be seen at slant,

in terms of the fantastic, the following chapter will drill down on the relationship between the invasion novel's literal representations of destruction and annihilation, and modernism's formal adoption of these things. Significantly, I locate this intersection in representations of London in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The hub of the empire, the nexus between traditional English culture and the rest of the world, this sprawling, unknowable, radically English, radically cosmopolitan monstrosity of a city was charged with huge amounts of political and aesthetic energy for both the writers of invasion fiction and their modernist counterparts. Before modernist writers reimagined London in novel representations of the metropolis and its citizenry, the trope of bombarding and sacking London had become so commonplace and cliché in the invasion novel, that in 1909, P.G. Wodehouse satirized the genre in *The Swoop!*, a story wherein all the great powers of the world embarrassingly descend upon England at the same time, having failed to coordinate their attacks. As a nonplussed English citizenry observes the destruction from the pub or the golf course, the great empires of the world draw straws to see who gets to bombard London first. The following chapter explores the ways in which this iconic trope of destroying London informs modernism's iconoclastic representations of London destroyed.

Chapter II
Destroying London

The epilogue to H.G. Wells' *The War in the Air* (1907) opens on an unrecognizable England. In the wake of a world war which has ended modern civilization, nomadic communities eke out an existence from the desiccated home counties surrounding the ruins of London. Tom Smallways, one of the survivors of the war and now an old man, describes London to his young nephew. The houses, he says, "used to be full of people…and then came a time when they was full of corpses and you couldn't go a mile that way before the stink of 'em drove you back" (176). Wells' novel imagines a twentieth century in which London has reached a height of imperial and cosmopolitan power, only to descend into total chaos and destruction. This transformation from megapolis to necropolis is one of the most dramatic representations of the imagined changes to London that would result from the intensification of British Imperialism. For Wells, a city of the damned with houses filled with corpses and streets populated with ghosts was one possible outcome of British expansionism. And yet, while Wells' London is extreme in its transformation into a city of the dead, he was not alone in attempting to articulate the destructive transformations which gripped the great English city. This chapter examines the destruction of London as a powerful and compelling subject for writers in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Edwardians have typically been seen as inheritors of a period of tranquil prosperity, the logical conclusion of Victorian progress, defined by social and technological advancement. Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson argue that most critics have characterized the culture which preceded the First World War as "an idyllic interval for a mindless British populace" (viii). Economic expansion, growing materialism, British exceptionalism, and naïve optimism all worked to paint a picture of the future as a bright continuation of the empire's trajectory. This chapter argues that many writers of this era were anything but optimistic and

were deeply in tune to the fragility of their moment, and the impossibility of a future which looked anything like a continuation of late-Victorian and Edwardian progress. Reading Conrad, Le Queux, and Forster against the backdrop of Wells' necropolis, I show that these authors represent Edwardian London as a ticking time-bomb, rather than an enduring paragon of Imperial might and prosperity. The annihilation of London in these texts makes space for a future which would mark a radical departure from the status quo.

In Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907), London and its inhabitants seem to be under immense deformative pressure as the city shape-shifts and characters swell to impossible proportions. Formally and thematically, this novel promises an explosive future which, while always imminent, is never quite delivered. Turning to William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), I show that this urtext of the invasion genre delivers on the promise of London's explosive potential, but only after Le Queux has prepared the reader's imagination for such an unthinkable destruction by conferring upon London's great immutable architecture the fragility of textual objects and their ability to be burned, torn, and ripped apart. Finally, I argue that Forster's *Howards End* (1910) represents the arrival of Conrad's explosive future and the sublimation of Le Queux's burning city, as all this destructive energy becomes the internal combustion within the novel which powers the radical growth of London which has already begun to overwhelm England. Each of these texts, written at the peak of empire, imagines London as a radically transformative space which forecloses the possibility of a recognizable future.

Here, I once again mobilize Malabou's language of plasticity in order to better articulate the way in which these authors not only envisioned London's radical transformations in the wake of trauma and catastrophe, but also informed the writing of the 1920's and 1930's which—as

Leo Mellor has argued--was also "filled with ruins and fragments" (5). These Edwardian texts insist on the volatility of their historical moment by anticipating and imagining the very real ruination of the future from which writers of the "long weekend" would come to create new forms, new meaning, and new aesthetics. Malabou notes that "plasticity will be envisioned as the 'instance' which gives *form* to the future…" (*Future of Hegel* 5). I understand each of these texts as such "instances" of plasticity. It is only by representing the annihilation of London that the city can take on new forms in the future. The writers I examine here attempted to represent London as a radically unstable space at the height of Imperialism, in the years before the First World War. So doing they swept away conventional conceptions of the city, de/reforming it into something fragmented and unrecognizable. Before a modern aesthetics of ruination could be born, the city first had to be ruined, and these authors gave shape to that exploded future.

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Bursting Bodies and the Melting Metropolis

Conrad's London in *The Secret Agent* overflows with unstable and transformative imagery. The content of the novel, which depicts a plastic, amorphous metropolis, is so catalytic that the narrative structure itself cannot help but take on the experimental and unfamiliar forms of the city that it tries to contain and represent. The action of the novel is set into motion when a shady foreign minister wishes that "one could throw a bomb into mathematics," as an act of pure chaos, in order to disrupt English life. Since this is impossible, he encourages his secret agent—Adolf Verloc--to consider "having a go at astronomy" by blowing up the Greenwich observatory (27). The Greenwich observatory sets the standard for Greenwich Mean Time, which was adopted across England in 1880, and as such, this is a novel about attempting to blow up time, a feat which might be almost as ambitious as blowing up mathematics. But Conrad does not

completely blow-up time in his novel. Indeed, the temporality of the text is stretched and deformed, sometimes to the point of bewilderment, but it is never rendered completely fragmentary, incomplete, or unknowable. As the novel progresses, the events of the story unfold out of order, and out of time, but they eventually overlay on one another in palimpsest until the entire picture and sequence of events is made clear. By gathering together all the fragments of the story, the reader can reconstitute the entirety of the narrative. Conrad's withholding of complete temporal obliteration is mirrored in the events of Verloc's attack on Greenwich Park. Verloc fails to blow up the observatory, but he does manage to blow up his brother-in-law, Stevie. But even Stevie does not suffer complete annihilation. When the police recover his body, the constable states "Well, here he is—all of him I could see. Fair. Slight—slight enough. Look at that foot there. I picked up the. legs first, one after another. He was that scattered you didn't know where to begin" (71). Stevie isn't gone. The constable states confidently "here he is—all of him I could see." The entire man is present, but like the narrative itself, "scattered." A cataloguing of his parts has already begun, and indeed by putting together all of these scraps and fragments, including tell-tale pieces of his clothing, the constabulary will, by the end of the story, succeed in putting this man back together, identifying his name, appearance, place of residence, and persons of association. And what's more, as the narrative moves chaotically backwards, forwards, and laterally in time, the reader will encounter an unfragmented, whole Stevie once again, even after he has already been blown up. As if to drive home the relationship between this bodily plasticity and the distorted narrative sequence, time – even in this scene—comes under immense deformative pressure. Judging by the level of bodily destruction the Chief Inspector observes, he concludes that the death must have been instantaneous. And yet, this notion of instantaneity suddenly bothers him when presented with the incomprehensibility of this violence,

and he endeavors to think beyond the "vulgar conception of time." The Chief Inspector is incredulous about the possibility of a quick death. "Instantaneous!" he muses. "The inexplicable mysteries of conscious existence beset Chief Inspector Heat till he evolved a horrible notion that ages of atrocious pain and mental torture could be contained between two successive winks of an eye" (70). But even here, although the notion of "ages" of pain and torture is frightening, it is still "contained." The monstrous scale of this moment still exists between an identifiable past and an identifiable future—two blinks of an eye. Vulgar conceptions of time are challenged, but they are not exploded completely.

These deformations of textual form, temporal distortion, and bodily fragmentation are horrifying and confusing, but they are not—as of yet—absolute. A return to some unified whole is, in each case, possible. What Conrad's novel achieves, in place of the radical fragmentation of destructive plasticity, is the promise of a future of transformative destruction which will brook no return. Plasticity, in *The Secret Agent*, demonstrates London's potential for transformation. By showing that textual form, temporality, and bodies are mutable, Conrad gestures towards a future in which these plastic figures take on completely new and unrecognizable forms in the wake of some destructive action. Formally, he gestures to a future in which Eliot and Woolf develop disunified narratives, fraught with blind-spots, elisions, silences, and temporal black holes. Thematically, he gestures towards a literature in which the plasticity of bodies and buildings will take on unrecognizable new forms which cannot be reversed or reconstituted in the wake of destructive violence. Conrad's London is plastic insofar as it shows the ways in which the city and its inhabitants are "ripe" for (de)formation which will give form to a future shaped by destruction.

The Professor, in Conrad's *The Secret Agent* represents that force of pure destructive plasticity which will reshape London and Londoners. When comrade Ossipon first hears of the attempted attack on the Greenwich Observatory, he heads into a bar to read about the news in the paper, where he encounters the Professor who has given Verloc the bomb for his failed attack. When Ossipon accuses the Professor of being too liberal with his distribution of explosives, the Professor reveals that his only allegiance is to radical and explosive change. "That is what is you ought to aim at" says the Professor to his companion.

> But you revolutionaries will never understand that. You plan the future, you lose yourselves in reveries of economical systems derived from what is; whereas what's wanted is a clean sweep and a clear start for a new conception of life. That sort of future will take care of itself if you will only make room for it. Therefore I would shovel my stuff in heaps at the corners of the streets if I had enough for that; and as I haven't, I do my best by perfecting a really dependable detonator (55).

I quote the Professor at length here because his lecture is remarkable in the way that it develops the relationship between destructive plasticity and the problems of futurity. Ossipon is an anarchist, but even anarchy is too schematic in its aims for the Professor who rejects systematicity entirely. "Reveries of economical systems derived from what is" only serve to replace the current system with another iteration of that same system. What is needed is a "clean sweep" which will "make room" for a new future. Any attempt to plan for this future is not revolutionary enough and will only result in a continuation of the present. True and radical transformation, according to the Professor, must come in the wake of utter annihilation; a completely transformed future can have no relationship to its past, and the trauma, the shock which brings it about, must be completely unforeseen, and unplanned for. This is the language of destructive plasticity and Malabou echoes the Professor in this moment when she argues that radical and traumatic shock "creates new form as it sweeps away the original" (*New Wounded* 63).

As Ossipon listens to the man speak he cannot help but speculate what the barroom might look like in a future where the Professor had detonated one of his bombs. Looking around the room he felt that "all became still. For a moment Ossipon imagined the overlighted place changed into a dreadful black hole belching horrible fumes choked with ghastly rubbish of smashed brickwork and mutilated corpses. He had such a distinct perception of ruin and death that he shuddered again" (54). In this moment, the Professor succeeds in giving Ossipon the same glimpse at an exploded future, that Conrad delivers his readers in this novel. As the Professor speaks of a future transformed by explosivity, as well as a "more perfect" detonating technology, the "overlighted" and prosperously busy late-Victorian barroom becomes dark and still. The Professor shows Ossipon a future that figures as a "black hole." While the astronomical concept of a black hole is anachronistic with Conrad's novel, the idea of a future which has explosively collapsed from the accretion of too much mass, a future from which nothing can escape, is still a compelling image in this moment. Importantly, as Ossipon looks around this black hole, he sees it filled with "ghastly rubbish," "smashed brickwork" and "mutilated corpses." The violent confusion of rubbish, brickwork, and bodies horrifies Ossipon who sees no design, and only destruction in this imagery. This is the Professor's promise of a "clean sweep" which will make room for an unrecognizable future, but it never comes to pass within the novel. Instead, this destructive plasticity haunts the future, forecasting the possibility of a London which will receive new form in the wake of explosive transformation. Indeed, as the story progresses, all the buildings and bodies within Conrad's London *become* plastic. While these figures never outright explode, their plasticity potentiates the fulfillment of the Professor's promise.

Some of the most remarkable imagery of urban plasticity within the novel derives from the Assistant Police Commissioner's impressions of London as he attempts to solve the case of the Greenwich bombing. The Assistant Police Commissioner is an interesting figure, because he is a representative of the colonial police force, recently returned to the heart of the empire. After working abroad, he finds London positively oppressive. Of his backstory, the narrator notes that

> The police work he had been engaged on in a distant part of the globe had the saving character of an irregular sort of warfare or at least the risk and excitement of open-air sport. His real abilities, which were mainly of an administrative order, were combined with an adventurous disposition. Chained to a desk in the thick of four millions of men, he considered himself the victim of an ironic fate… (90).

There is a stark contrast between the police work he undertook at the periphery and the police work he is forced to do at the center of the empire. Ironically, the urban growth under which he is currently being buried is the direct result of his colonial policing. The "irregular warfare" of his former job, and all of the violence that entails, generated excitement and a sense of freedom in the "open air" of the colonies. By contrast, London is oppressive, chaining him to a desk in the suffocating thick of four millions of men. Transported back to the very center of this huge imperial machine, he can feel the inward pressure of the outward expansion as Britain accretes more and more people, territory, and trade. It is, however, this very pressure which makes London plastic, and as more people and more goods flow from the outer reaches of the colonies, back into the heart of London, the city begins to take on new forms, exhibiting—much to the Assistant Police Commissioner's relief—potential for transformation.

The city begins to move and change as soon as the Assistant Police Commissioner leaves his office after taking on the bombing case.

> His descent into the street was like the descent into a slimy aquarium from which the water had been run off. A murky, gloomy dampness enveloped him. The walls of the houses were wet, the mud of the roadway glistened with an effect of phosphorescence, and when he emerged into the Strand out of a narrow street by the side of Charing Cross

> Station the genius of the locality assimilated him. He might have been but one more of the queer foreign fish that can be seen of an evening about there, flitting round the dark corners (117).

The cityscape becomes liquid and mutable. The sliminess of the streets inherently makes them hard to grasp as a solid concept. The murk and gloom obscure the architectural characteristics of the buildings which are describe as "wet" rather than stone or sturdy. Interestingly, the muddy roads are "phosphorescent." Phosphorescence occurs when energy is absorbed by a substance, only to be re-emitted as a luminous glow very slowly over a longer period of time. Even as the city is described in the language of malleability and liquidity, the phosphorescence of the mud – the malleable muck which characterizes London's streets--highlights the process of absorption and re-emission of energy in this scene. London's glow in this gloom speaks to its plastic ability to absorb and take on new forms from transformative external energy. As the Assistant Police Commissioner moves about the aquatic streets, he sees everywhere the instances of this type of plasticity. The "queer foreign fish," --brought to the heart of the London through Charing Cross Station and the great lines of transportation which stretch between the center of the empire and its outer reaches--flit around corners imbuing London with the glow of transformation.

Later, when the Assistant Police Commissioner is leaving a restaurant, he steps out of the dining establishment and "into an immensity of greasy slime and damp plaster interspersed with lamps, and enveloped, oppressed, penetrated, choked, and suffocated by the blackness of a wet London night, which is composed of soot and drops of water." And yet, despite the language used here, this oppressive, choking, and suffocating environment is anything but offensive to the Assistant Police Commissioner. Rather, these images of violence promise a deathly transformation of London which will liberate the Assistant Police Commissioner from his desk, by changing the city which oppresses him. And indeed, as the policeman heads out into the

night, the greasy slime and damp plaster congeal into a new form, and the man "felt light-hearted, as though he had been ambushed all alone in a jungle many thousands of miles away from department desks and official inkstands" (119). Even as the Imperial center sends men like the Assistant Police Commissioner to the colonial peripheries in order to shape the world in the image of the British Empire, the way in which London becomes plastic--here turning into a jungle—highlights the way in which London forms, and is formed by, its colonies. Moreover, it highlights the possibility of an explosive transformation. Rather than the muddy phosphorescent glow London exhibits as it continues to absorb Imperial energy, the threat of combustive energy-- an "annihilating metamorphic power" (*New Wounded* 201-202) -- which cannot be slowly absorbed and re-emitted, remains. Even though this particular transformation into a jungle is contained—the case is cracked, the agitating foreign agent is expelled from the text and London returns to "normal"—the explosive potential is still there and is particularly evident in the swelling and imminent detonation, of the human bodies in Conrad's novel.

Ossipon's vision of the future presented by the Professor contains "smashed brickwork." The possibility of this architectural plasticity is highlighted by the Assistant Police Commissioner's perception of London as undergoing a violent, melting, choking transformation into a jungle. But the "mutilated corpses" of Ossipon's vision also go hand in hand with the possibility of London's destructive transformation. If London's plasticity allows the Assistant Police Commissioner to imagine the city's transformation into a colonial space wherein he feels more comfortable, it also allows him to break down the boundaries that separate the citizens at the center of the empire, and his subjugates at the edges of the empire. When talking to his Chief Inspector in his office, a man named Heat, the Assistant Police Commissioner's "memory evoked a certain old fat and wealthy native chief in the distant colony" (94). Suddenly, the

Assistant Commissioner cannot seem to distinguish between the man in front of him and the native in the distant colony. He notes that like Heat, the native "was physically a big man too, and (allowing for the difference of colour, of course) Chief Inspector Heat's appearance recalled him to the memory of his superior. It was not the eyes nor yet the lips exactly. It was bizarre" (94). The Chief Inspector's form here seems to become plastic. The Assistant Commissioner's memory of this native chief is giving form to, and receiving form from, his perception of this London policeman, until the two seem hard to tell apart. Indeed, even the Chief Inspector's surname allows for a transformative reading. Heat is a big man and heat expands. Heat is a catalyst, and causes things to lose their rigidity, change shape, and take on new forms. Significantly, heat is a precursor of explosion and too much of it can cause combustion or conflagration. Heat is the potential for a radically destructive transformation. Chief Inspector Heat, however, never affects change in the novel—he is deflated by the Assistant Police Commissioner who steals the case out from under him. But in this moment, as the Assistant Police Commissioner is reminded of the colonial native, Heat (as a subject of study) allows for the melting together of his superior's colonial memories and his current perceptions of London.

Heat is one of the first bodies in the novel that seems subject to this sort of expansive plasticity which transforms the very borders of the English body in London. While Stevie is the only person to actually explode in the story, the rest of Conrad's characters are emphatically embodied, to the point that the very organic material of their existence seems to defy containment. More sinister, and more ominous than Stevie's death is the way in which almost all of London's inhabitants seem always on the verge of blowing apart. The novel is positively shot through with bodies and body parts. Like the constabulary trying to gather together a fragmented Stevie, the narrative attempts to contain all of these bodies by rigorously cataloging all of their

parts and characteristics. But the language used to describe them forecloses the possibility of an indefinite containment. These bodies are expanding, floating, distending, swelling, spreading, flaming, and "rattling with ungovernable violence" (151). It is precisely this ungovernable violence of animation which threatens explosive potential. While the narrative can catalog and account for these bodies now, their exhibited plasticity promises a future in which they will explode.

Early in the novel, Mr. Verloc's mother-in-law is identified primarily by her legs which "became of an enormous size" once she moves in with her daughter and her husband (7). Later the narrator refers to her "triple chin" and the "floating ampleness of her ancient form" (121). When Verloc gathers his anarchist group together at his shop, the meeting is defined by a constant expansion and contraction of deformed bodies, punctuated with brief soundbites of anarchist dogma. The criminal Michaelis, when released from prison, is described as having emerged "round like a tub, with an enormous stomach and distended cheeks of a pale, semi-transparent complexion, as though for fifteen years the servants of an outraged society had made a point of stuffing him with fattening foods in a damp and lightless cellar" (33). The old terrorist Karl Yundt is "deformed by gouty swellings" (34), and his skinny old body is wracked by constant quivering and trembling. Ossipon is characterized by his "robust legs" which he must stretch out before the group while speaking (35). The entire scene is presided over by Verloc who is "spread largely on the sofa" (37). Later in the novel, when Verloc returns to the shop in the wake of Stevie's death, the big spy seems to be animated by a force as explosive as the one that broke Stevie. "His teeth rattled with an ungovernable violence, causing his whole enormous back to tremble at the same time" (151). Later, when the Assistant Commissioner, seeking permission to put himself on the case goes to see a prominent politician, Lord Ethelred, this man

is described as "Vast in bulk and stature…a big double chin…the great personage seemed an expanding man." The statesman's shapeshifting extends to his wardrobe as well, for "a shiny silk hat and a pair of worn gloves lying ready on the end of a long table looked expanded too, enormous" (108). Perhaps one of the more remarkable descriptions of an expanding, mutating character is the cabby who transports Winnie and Stevie, as they escort their mother to the alms-house early in the novel. He is deeply disturbing to Stevie and has an "enormous and unwashed countenance" which "flamed red" (124). His "bloated" face of "many colors" has "big lips" with a "violet tint," "little red eyes" which "glistened with moisture," and an "enormous chin" (125). Individually, each of these bodies challenges characterization as they expand, contract, and move violently. Taken collectively, they mirror the same difficulties presented to the police officer charged with collecting Stevie's parts--the novel is scattered with bodies and parts which the narrative struggles to gather together.

And yet, none of these deformations mark a true annihilative metamorphosis. While there is violence inherent in the cataloguing of rogue bodies and scattered parts, there is still a systematization involved in the cataloguing process, a systematization which the Professor would recognize as antithetical to real radical change and destructive transformation. Rather, these deformations of city and city-dwellers show that the ground is prepared for such an event, that the potential for a "clean sweep" of total, unprecedented, and chaotic destruction, is present. And while this deforming violence is still catalogable, it does suggest—as does Stevie's explosion—that there will come a time when the Professor's vision for an uncontainable black hole of mutilated bodies, smashed brickwork, and rubbish will be realized.

At the end of the novel, the narrative closes on "the incorruptible Professor" who "had no future. He disdained it. He was a force. His thoughts caressed the images of ruin and

destruction…He passed on unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men" (246). The Professor represents a force of pure destructive plasticity that has not yet come to pass. He disdains the idea of a future which can be anticipated or planned for. In the wake of a truly unprecedented and traumatic effraction, the future will have no bearing on what is, or what was, it will suffer a complete break from its past and "take care of itself". This is the "clean sweep" the professor yearns for. London is plastic, but it is not yet exploded—it has only the potential to take on a radically new form. As the Professor passes through the streets "unexpected and deadly," we can begin to see the machinations of plasticity and futurity at work. His thoughts caress images of ruin and destruction that have not yet come to pass, but which give form to a new future which he cannot fathom. And since the Professor is not able to hand out explosives at every corner in order to encompass this destruction, he works tirelessly on a "perfect detonator." "I always walk" the Professor tells Ossipon "with my right hand closed round the India-rubber ball which I have in my trouser pocket. The pressing of this ball actuates a detonator inside the flask I carry in my pocket," at which point "a full twenty seconds must elapse from the moment I press the ball till the explosion takes place." Once the plastic ball is compressed and deformed by the Professor, there is still a time-lag between actuation and annihilative metamorphosis. The plastic deformation of the detonator is a precursor to annihilative transformation, and as London deforms, it becomes clear that it is only a matter of time before the Professor's vision is realized, and the destroyed barroom of smashed brickwork, mutilated bodies, and belching smoke that Ossipon glimpsed at the beginning of the novel, is made manifest.

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Paper Buildings

Conrad's London threatens explosion, but Le Queux's London in *The Invasion of 1910* delivers a vision of the Professor's barroom writ large across the city. Bodies in this city are atomized, and buildings transformed into rubble—the violence is indescribable, shocking, and uncontainable. But before a single shot is fired in the novel, London becomes the battleground for a textual clash between the English and their would-be German invaders. As the German army lands in England and moves through the various towns of the home counties, it pastes official proclamations and announcements from the Kaiser and his commanding staff all over the walls and buildings of public spaces. These postings convey Germany's belligerent intentions, as well as the imposition of German rule, to the English public. Not to be outmaneuvered, the British government responds in kind by plastering London up and down with messages "from King to people… to the highest and to the lowest" (22). As more and more posters coalesce on the buildings in London and the surrounding towns, the architecture begins to undergo a transformation, turning into textual material. City edifices are transformed into pages full of writing, and this transformation confers upon these structures the fragility of paper.

The first of these proclamations "had been found pasted by some unknown hand upon a barn door near the town of Billericay, and had been detached and brought to London in a motor-car by a correspondent" (21). The proclamation "showed plain that the German intention was to deal a hard and crushing blow, and it struck terror into the heart of London…" (22). Before long, all the city has access to the text as "shortly after three o'clock the 'Daily Mail' issued a special edition containing a copy of a German proclamation which it was said, was now posted everywhere in East Norfolk, East Suffolk, and in Malden in Essex, already occupied by the

enemy" (21). Before Londoners have even seen a German, the invading army has plastered over all the walls of English houses, barns, and buildings a textual declaration of war.

The British government wastes no time in responding and soon

> Upon the walls of the Mansion House, the Guildhall, outside the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange, upon the various public buildings within the city wards, and westward upon Temple Bar, proclamations were being posted. Indeed, upon all the hoardings in Greater London appeared various broadsheets side by side; One by the Chief Commissioner of Police…and a Royal Proclamation, brief but noble, urging every Briton to do his duty…" (22).

Le Queux catalogues in detail all the official and notable public and government buildings in London, holding them up as images of London's imperial might. And then, dramatically, he obscures these images with "broadsheets side by side," and proclamations and posters which completely cover them over. By the end of the same day "yet another poster made its appearance in every city, town, and village in the country, a poster issued by military and police officers, and naval officers in charge of the dockyards—the order for mobilization" (22). Le Queux's process of turning buildings into text does the double work of preparing both the inhabitants of his fictional London, and the readers of his novel, for the immanent destruction which is about to take place. Within the text, this literary volley between the Germans and the British government must occur before the two nations can come to blows. Once their world is papered over with martial texts and mobilization orders, the English public is essentially forced to read the truth of their vulnerability, the forthcoming invasion, and the necessity for defense. The English public becomes mentally prepared for the possibility of destruction via reading, demonstrating the way in which Le Queux is attempting to minimize the distance between the textual world he has created in London and the "real" world. Within the object of the book, the proclamations and official announcements with which Le Queux papers over London are reproduced on facing pages within the text, disrupting the reading experience and forcing a close examination of these

paper declarations of war. As the reader brings the book closer to make out the fine print, Le Queux succeeds in literally minimizing the distance between the reader's world and his text. As the reader imagines buildings covered over with these belligerent printings, the possibility of London being made vulnerable to this type of destruction seems very real. Foregrounding the importance of reading these proclamations, Le Queux makes explicit both to his fictional British public and his very real reading public, that there is a direct link between reading about futures of destruction and the coming-to-pass of that destruction. Just like Le Queux's fictional Londoners, reading the textualized buildings allows his audience to become mentally prepared for futures of destruction.

When the bombardment of London by the German army finally begins, and the narrator declares that "The rain of death had opened! London was surrounded by a semicircle of fire," the destruction of the city is initially figured as so much destroyed waste-paper (180). As Joseph Rosenburg argues, "There is, of course, a long literary tradition of portraying London as a metropolis suffocated with print—a city where, as T. S. Eliot puts it in 'Burnt Norton,' 'men and bits of paper' are 'whirled by the cold wind'" (476). And, as I have already pointed out, Leo Mellor in *Reading the Ruins* has noted that "Throughout the 1920s and 1930s British writing was filled with ruins and fragments. They appeared in novels, plays and poems as content: with visions of tottering towers and scraps of paper; and also in the mise en page shapes of broken poetics and recovered objets trouvés phrase shards" (5). For writers and thinkers during the Blitz years, argues Rosenburg, it seemed that Eliot's *The Waste Land* had been "bombed into existence" (476). I would argue, however, that Le Queux's conversion of London into a city of print—before the fragmenting and shattering realities of the First World War came to inform Eliot and other modernist writers—operates in a similar, but importantly different way. Turning

buildings into books—rather than bombing a vision of a destroyed London *into* existence--prepares the imagination for the possibility of a London which could be bombed *out* of existence in the near future, in which the city becomes burnt, torn, crumpled, and shredded like so much paper waste, undergoing a true annihilative metamorphosis. In short, Le Queux's textualizing of London reduces the city to fragments, before Eliot and his contemporaries could make something from those fragments. Where Conrad gestured towards the possibility of a "clean sweep" of destructive plasticity, Le Queux engages directly with this vision. The buildings in Le Queux's London, once the bombing starts, are completely and irrevocably transformed, turned inside out, and made unrecognizable. Similarly, Le Queux's exploded bodies, unlike Stevie's, are impossible to reconstitute. There is no fragmentation which can be collected together into some semblance of a former whole. The atomization of bodies--as fragile as paper--by new technologies of warfare which have never before been seen, assure complete annihilation and the impossibility of identifying victims of the disaster. If total destruction in Conrad's London was only a matter of time, Le Queux imagines a paper city wherein time is up.

Describing the scenes of destruction, Le Queux imagines that a shell "bursting in a street would wreck the rows of houses on either side and tear a great hole in the ground at the same moment. The fronts of the houses were torn out like paper, the iron railings twisted as though they were wire, and paving-stones hurled into the air like straws" (180). Le Queux's description of the city up until this point has figured London's buildings as covered over in text. From here, it is an easy leap to imagine the fronts of these buildings, which bear these broadsheets, "torn out like paper." The other building materials like iron railings, and paving stones are similarly converted into fragile and malleable materials like wire and straw. Having articulated the plasticity of London's structures in terms of paper, wire, and straw, Le Queux is then able to take

his logic a step further and describe the unthinkable reality of discrete and specific parts of London as annihilated and completely unrecognizable in the wake of this destruction. The "quiet squares of Bloomsbury, were in some cases great yawning ruins—houses with their fronts torn out revealing the shattered furniture within. Streets were indeed, filled with tiles, chimney pots, fallen telegraph wires, and *débris* of furniture, stone steps, paving stones, and fallen masonry" (182). Houses split in half confound boundaries of exteriority and interiority. The "yawning ruins" of formerly familiar and recognizable edifices, figure as great gaps in signification, defying meaning. The contents of people's lives are strewn about the streets making for a surreal and defamiliarized vision of English domesticity. This is a radical vision of London's future, made completely unfamiliar in the wake a hugely traumatic shock.

The type of violence Le Queux describes speaks to a destructive plasticity that is not only transformative for London, but for British culture as well. As if to drive the point home that this violence will mark an end of one cultural age, and the beginning of a new one, a shell lands on the British Museum. Then "as though all the guns of that particular battery had converged in order to destroy our treasure-house of art and antiquity, shell after shell crashed into the place in rapid succession." Soon "the finest collection of books, manuscripts, Greek and Roman and Egyptian antiques, coins, medals, and prehistoric relics, lay at the mercy of the flames" (186). Significantly, this is the targeted shelling of books and manuscripts. The symbolic history of all the achievements of British civilization is, in this moment, swept away in the fires of an absolute destructive plasticity. Just like the city itself, the books and manuscripts which serve as the collective memory of civilization are unthinkably destroyed. In the wake of this destruction, not only will new structures need to be built, but new ways of thinking and new languages for describing the conditions of this new world in which these events are possible. The destruction of

the British museum constitutes the sort of Malabouian trauma that "consists in cutting the subject away from its accumulated memories" (*New Wounded* 213). The Britain that exists in the wake of this attack will be unrecognizable because it will have no relation to its past.

This violence extends beyond Le Queux's buildings and to the bodies which inhabit his besieged city. Where Conrad's characters seemed about to explode, Le Queux imagines the full transformative power of destructive plasticity acted out on the citizenry of London. "The scenes within that zone of terror" notes the narrator "were indescribable" (180). And yet the inability to describe these scenes is due in part to the fact that the language for this type of destruction does not yet exist. This is a type of violence which is unrecognizable, and which makes the people it destroys unrecognizable. "A terrified woman was dashing across the street to seek shelter with a neighbor, when a shell burst right in front of her, blowing her to fragments…" (181). Again, "the most awful sights were to be witnessed in the open streets; men and women blown out of recognition, with their clothes singed and torn to shreds and helpless innocent children lying white and dead, their limbs torn away and missing." (181). And later, "hundreds of people were blown to pieces in the open but hundreds more were buried beneath the *débris* of their own cherished homes, now being so ruthlessly destroyed and demolished" (182). While Stevie is the only one of Conrad's characters to actually explode, he is collected back together—albeit in a confused and incoherent way. Unlike Stevie, however, the fragmentation of Le Queux's bomb victims is absolute. Limbs are torn, clothes are shredded, and men, women, and children are blown out of recognition. If Le Queux's violence seems to fulfill the promised violence of Conrad's novel, the destruction of London in this text figures as Conrad's most fragmented character writ larger across the entirety of the city populace. There is no one "together" enough

in this text to scoop into some gruesome pile by which they can be recognized. Everything is "blown out of recognition."

Significantly, as the rain of destruction moves across the city blowing people and buildings alike "to pieces" a new sort of structure begins to take shape. As "hundreds more were buried beneath the *débris* of their own cherished homes, now being so ruthlessly destroyed and demolished" bodies and buildings come together in piles of ruin wherein organic and inorganic matter are now indistinguishable. Le Queux envisions a type of plasticity in which English bodies in an English city are completely swept away, and in their place there come new urban forms which recall both Wells' necropolis and the Professor's barroom insofar as they are constructed, literally, of mutilated corpses and smashed brickwork. Le Queux destroys London by first textualizing it, making it fragile, mutable, and combustible. As his fictional public is made aware of their vulnerability to German invasion, so too is Le Queux's reading public made aware of the potential for radical and destructive change in their own reality and in their own time by their engagement with this speculative text. Reducing buildings to text, and reducing the distance between text and reality, Le Queux calls attention to the fragility of his historical moment, a fragility which his own speculative fiction contributes to in no small part.

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Internal Combustion

Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910* both challenge conceptions of Edwardian idyllicism by exploring images of destructive plasticity in London as they imagine the city exploding or threatening to explode. Conrad's text is an experimental work of detective fiction, bordering on satire of contemporary invasion and espionage novels. Le Queux's work of speculative fiction is one such invasion and espionage

novel. Both authors are concerned with radically unfamiliar depictions of the city and its future. By contrast E.M. Forster's *Howards End* falls solidly within the realm of literary realism. There are no fantastic terrorist attacks, no foreign cabals within London, no earth-shattering bombardments. In fact, much like the London of 1910 (the year the novel was published), Forster's London is thriving, growing rapidly, expanding, and reaching to ever greater heights of imperial achievement. And yet, it is critical to understand that Edwardian London, in all its prosperity and growth, is changing in a way that is engendered by a continual cycle of destruction and generation. *Howards End* offers a much more nuanced vision of London transformed by imperialism's plasticity, because Forster's London represents these "destructive" transformations *in medias res*, so to speak, even as the city grows and prospers. Forster's liberalism has typically been read as a struggle to reconcile class difference and tensions between industrialism and pastoralism. Advocating some middle way, and frequently relying on a degree of mysticism (embodied in characters like Mrs. Wilcox in *Howards End* or Mrs. Moore in *A Passage to India* (1924) to effect human connectivity, much of his work attempts a balancing act between the need for social cohesion and the rights of men, as well as a recognition of the necessity of progress, tempered by a deep-seated belief that the countryside was a wellspring of English culturalism. Indeed, Forster strikes all these poses in the famous closing scenes of *Howards End*. Margaret Schlegel's constant refrain, and the epigraph to the novel, — "only connect…"—has united the industrialist Wilcox's, the quasi-aristocratic and hopelessly romantic Schlegel's, as well as the helpless underclass Basts. The most classist impulses of the Wilcox's industrialism have been expelled from the novel in the form of the imprisoned son, and this new and unconventional family which has connected across social strictures retreats from London to the English countryside from which they will draw strength to forge a new path forward in the

modern world. And yet, even as Margaret looks out over the fields surrounding Howards End, she sees in the distance, famously, "London's creeping." London's expansion is inexorable, and it shows the limits of Forster's liberalism to effect any sort of reformative compromise. The city creeps across England, and it is not only the urban space itself which is undergoing continual transformative destruction and re-creation, but also the surrounding countryside which is being subsumed. As London moves and expands, it becomes clear that Forster's balancing act is untenable and that this tripartite connection in the English countryside will not stand in the face of this type of destructive plasticity, precisely because it represents an impossible "way forward," and a reschematization of "what is" into the hopes of what will be; as we have seen, the future cannot be planned for.

Rather, Forster's novel highlights the instability of this moment, undercutting its own liberal plan for a way forward by representing the forces of destructive plasticity as a sort of internal combustion engine which drives London's constant expansion and development. While the transformations in this text are harnessed and bent towards "productive" change, they still necessitate an annihilation of the past and promise an unpredictable future. Modern transportation is Forster's leitmotif of radical change in London. The first section of this examination of *Howards End* explores how the train and the car manipulate space and time within the text by making the countryside "heave and merge" plastically as they move through it, and by imposing a timetable on the text which synchronizes plot development with advancements in motor car technology. After showing that Forster links urban development directly to motorcar development, I look at the way in which city buildings rise and fall in succession like so many pistons pumping, turning London itself into a violent engine of transformation. Finally, I argue that the smoke and smog which chokes the London streets in this

text figures as so much exhaust from this engine which is stoked by the fires of imperialism. Forster's vision of London's destructive plasticity is the most insidious, because his "creeping" city which invades the English countryside is not a speculative vision of London's future, but rather a realistic depiction of Edwardian London in a moment of radical instability and transformative destruction.

Jonathan Wilde, in his study of the motorcar in Edwardian literature writes that it is hard to recreate the wonder engendered by this machine's "apparent capacity to manipulate time and space" in the beginning of the twentieth century (127). This phenomenon is figured prominently in Forster's novel. As characters are moved about the text by means of modern transportation, not only does time become disorienting for them, but the very countryside through which they move seems to become plastic, changing form, and taking shape from the vehicles that emanate outwards from the city. The narrator of *Howards End* confesses that "To Margaret—I hope that it will not set the reader against her—the station of King's Cross had always suggested Infinity" (7). If the station suggests Infinity to Margaret, it does so—like the image of Charing Cross Station in *The Secret Agent* which imports all the "queer foreign fish" into London--as an artery within the heart of the great imperial city. Trains and automobiles radiate outwards from the megalopolis, exporting Englishness to all corners of the British Empire, and importing the deforming power of cosmopolitanism. At this point in the narrative, however, the passenger at King's Cross is Margaret's Aunt Juley, on her way to save Helen from an ill-advised attachment. As her train traverses the English countryside, Forster explores for the first time in this novel the power of rapid transit to pulverize time and space.

> The train sped northward, under innumerable tunnels. It was only an hour's journey, but Mrs. Munt had to raise and lower the window again and again. She passed through the South Welwyn Tunnel, saw light for a moment, and entered the North Welwyn Tunnel, of tragic fame. She traversed the immense viaduct, whose arches span untroubled

> meadows and the dreamy flow of Tewin Water. She skirted the parks of politicians. At times the Great North Road accompanied her, more suggestive of infinity than any railway, awakening, after a nap of a hundred years, to such life as is conferred by the stench of motor-cars, and to such culture as is implied by the advertisements of antibilious pills. To history, to the past, to the future, Mrs. Munt remained equally indifferent; hers but to concentrate on the end of her journey, and to rescue poor Helen from this dreadful mess (9).

The journey is one that plunges the passenger underground, into darkness, before casting her high over meadows and rivers, illuminated in brief flashes of light. She passes through the North Welwyn tunnel which, in 1866 was the site of a three-train crash between a coal train, and two trains carrying domestic products. The catastrophic collision of engine fuel and English home goods is an apt representation of the pulverization of English cultural production by rapid industrial expansion. The collision burned for days, casting a smoky pall over the surrounding countryside (Rich). A generation later, as Aunt Juley races through these same tunnels, the pollution from this industrial capitalist conflagration seems to persist as the "untroubled meadows" become quite troubled by trains, and "dreamy rivers" are juxtaposed with the awakening of the Great North Road to the stench of cars and the inundation of advertisements for antibillious pills, a product which was most likely requisite for this type of travel. While these scenes of confusion and disorientation take place outside of London as Aunt Juley's train races over the meadows, Forster's representation of modern transportation in this instance speaks to London's osmotic expansion, as it creeps and seeps out over the surrounding English green spaces, obscuring and suburbanizing everything with which it comes into contact. The train, in this instance, becomes an engine of plasticity, facilitating the giving and taking of form between city and country.

Tellingly, when Aunt Juley arrives at Hilton Station, she notes that this part of the country has not suffered "rural decay"[8] due to its proximity to London. But the station does pose a problem for her. "Like the scenery" it strikes "an indeterminate note. Into which country will it lead, England or Suburbia?" (9) This juxtaposition between England and its suburbs, positioning them as two distinct geographies, highlights the role of modern transportation in connecting different worlds while also calling attention to the otherworldliness of the English suburbs as a distinctly imperial phenomenon. The suburbs are the result of unchecked urban expansion- a plastic flow of metropolis into countryside--and, as the suburbs are not English, they belong to the transformative effects of the empire which have facilitated the growth of that imperial city. The infinity brought about by the railway then is a source of connectivity, but it is also a site of vulnerability, a valve which can allow for the reverse flow of empire, the smothering and suffocating of Englishness in the fumes of progress, and the influx of *other worlds*.

The train that takes Aunt Juley from London to Hilton Station represents a clash of "history, the past, and the future," brought to point of crisis by modern transportation. In short, Aunt Juley's train ride speaks to the arrival of a plasticity which plunges the present moment into confusion and chaos. Time and space have become unfamiliar and boundaries between country, city, and other worlds have become indistinguishable. And while the train facilitates London's overflow into the countryside, the "motor" positively invades Forster's story (appearing as a noun or verb sixty-one times throughout the text) and links directly to the forces of modernization which are transforming London at breakneck speed. Margaret detests driving by

[8] Facilitated, in part, by the development of train systems to move people, as more and more of the working class left the countryside and moved to cities in search of work, rural economies which had relied on tenant farming to prosper began to suffer. In this way, modern transportation not only facilitates the movement of people from the country to the city, but it also facilitates the expansion of the city into the country in the form of suburbs; a plastic movement between town and country, of taking and receiving form.

car, and when she visits Howards End after her engagement to Henry Wilcox, she is forced to experience the English countryside as the Wilcox's see it. She is unimpressed by the view from the car and meditates that "Perhaps Hertfordshire is scarcely intended for motorists. Did not a gentleman once motor so quickly through Westmoreland that he missed it?" (141). As the car speeds along, Margaret worries about wayward children and chickens. Her future son-in-law suggests that she look out at the scenery rather than the road if she is worried and reassures her that "The motor's come to stay…One must get about." Pointing out the window, he exclaims "There's a pretty church—oh, you aren't sharp enough" (141). If the motor car is here to stay, it is at the price of the departure of the English countryside, as well as the past and the history contained therein. The country, and its pretty churches, literally disappears as Margaret and her chaperone speed down the English roads. "If Drayton" muses the narrator, "were with us again to write a new edition of his incomparable poem, he would sing the nymphs of Hertfordshire as indeterminate of feature, with hair obfuscated by London smoke" (141).

This mode of travel seems to obscure the very cultural legacy of England's great poetic achievements as made possible by a close relationship to the land; Elizabethan nymphs lose their features and become lost in the smoke. Looking sulkily out at the scenery Margaret notes that "it heaved and merged like porridge." When "presently it congealed," she is startled and cries "What's happened?" But the car has merely come to a stand-still and they have arrived, leaving Margaret disoriented, out of time, and out of place as she wonders "Well, I never! In years ago it seemed so far away" (142). Margaret's surprise in this moment is a direct result of witnessing the transformation of the countryside. The motor, speeding along the roads from the city to the country, imbues the immemorial countryside with all the movement and impermanence of the city from which the car has come. The fact that the landscape comes to resemble porridge speaks

to the plasticity of this moment. Not only does the process of making porridge involve such actions as boiling, grinding, crushing, milling, and chopping, but the merger of all its constituent ingredients yield up something unrecognizable from the component parts. Furthermore, porridge itself is an exceedingly plastic substance, neither quite solid, nor quite liquid, and able to take on new forms when external pressure is applied. The "heaving" which the landscape undergoes speaks to the huge amount of physical energy that is required from the motorcar to transform this beautiful and complex countryside into something malleable and indeterminate of form and aspect. The familiar becomes unfamiliar as the engine of change turns over and roars, and Margaret's reaction to this change is one of incomprehensibility. With no point of reference for this new future into which the motorcar will take her, once she arrives at her destination, she can only cry "What's happened?"

The transformations of London, as well as the transpiration of events in this novel, are inextricably related to advancements in motor technology. Explicitly linking the development of the combustion engine to the development of London real estate, Forster's narrator notes that the construction of large modern flats does not make the landlord "spiritually the richer"; only "his motor-cars grow swifter" (107). Emotionally and imaginatively impoverished by the constant transformations London and England are undergoing, the real estate mogul is, however, able to acquire cars with better engines, which in turn fuel more change, and more transportation, further deforming time and space in London and the surrounding areas. As Margaret admires the newest addition to the Wilcox's collection of motorcars, it becomes clear that the car has not only become a mythical object—even as it drains England's countryside of its mythical past—but that the development of the motor seems to govern the timetable within the novel.

The first trip by a member of the Schlegel clan in a Wilcox motorcar is taken by Aunt Juley, when she is picked up by Charles at the train station during that fateful visit at the beginning of the novel. Three years later, when Margaret takes the trip to Howards End by car, the technology has developed drastically. Margaret "lingered to admire the motor, which was new, and a fairer creature than the vermillion giant that had borne Aunt Juley to her doom three years before" (114). The motor car becomes a "creature" in Margaret's eyes and the red vermillion giant that carried Aunt Juley away at the beginning of the story, has, in the space of three years, become a "fairer creature." If the motorcar has given form to the countryside by causing it to heave and merge and by crisscrossing it with roads and filling it with pollution, the vehicle has also taken form from the countryside to some degree, as it adopts the adjectival properties of myth and fairy tale from English pastoralism. Furthermore, the timeframe in which the transformation of the "red giant" into a "fairer creature" takes place seems to function as a timetable for the book. While the car itself radically distorts time, the three-year span in which transportation technology changes so dramatically also becomes the chronometer that governs the major plot developments within the book. While the Schlegels have lived in Wickham Place their whole lives, they will be forced to give it up "in two or three years when the lease expires" (58) so that some landlord can pull it down, turn it into flats and, undoubtedly, turn those profits into a swifter motorcar. Again, when Margaret decides to accept the offer of marriage from Henry Wilcox she muses that she "has known and liked him steadily for nearly three years" (124). Hamar Bryce, the tenant to whom Henry Wilcox has leased Howard's End (instead of giving it to Margaret like Mrs. Wilcox had asked) has a three-year agreement for the house, and even Leonard Bast, the clerk whom the Schlegels take under their wing, has been married to his wife Jacky for three years. Finally, when Charles Wilcox kills Leonard with the flat of a sword,

he is sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Major revolutions of the plot take place on three year-centers, and suddenly family histories, estate legacies, and city topographies change radically over the span of one thousand days rather than one thousand years. The motor car so radically transforms perceptions of time in this novel, that its development comes to determine the very structure of the narrative itself.

Indeed, as motor technology within the story grows more advanced, London itself begins to operate as one great combustion engine, driving expansion and transformation. When, at the end of the novel, Margaret has succeeded in descending from all motor cars onto solid ground and established a somewhat more staid existence for the new Wilcox-Schlegel family at Howards End, she hopes that the calm will be permanent. "All the same," her sister Helen says ominously, gesturing over the fields, "London's creeping." And as Margaret looks out "over eight or nine meadows," she sees "at the end of them was a red rust" (243). The creeping red rust--that implacable harbinger of motor and rail technology--promises of a time in the not-so-distant-future when the city will spill forth on a tide of petrol pollution, and London smog, obscuring and obliterating the countryside in the name of progress and development. Margaret, looking at infinite London and the finite space of the countryside in between her and the monster-city notes that "This craze for motion has only set in during the last hundred years" (243). And while she hopes that it may burn itself out, this obsession with traveling speed, construction, expansion, and development anticipates, not only Vorticism, but the modernist endeavor generally to represent a society in flux and fracture, to capture a cultural aesthetic in which science and industry has annihilated, disfigured, and made unfamiliar, traditional senses of time and space.

The combustion of Forster's London imagines a mania of urban development which, in the final analysis, may be just as violent and transformative as the bombs that Le Queux drops on the city. The trauma that Forster attempts to render in these moments of urban mutability stems from the phenomenon of a London which, between 1861 and 1911—the same span of time during which Britain radically increased its imperial holdings--saw its city center population increase from 3 million to more than 4½ million. The "creep" of London's red rust speaks of a city whose suburban reaches constituted 3.3 million in 1861 and *doubled* by 1901. 1861 also marked the first year in English history that the urban population came to outnumber the rural population, and by 1901 this disparity had grown to a ratio of three to one (Shannon 15). This is the London, in which Leonard Bast finds himself adrift in *Howards End*. It is a city that has grown and expanded monstrously in an impossibly short period of time. It is a city which represents a future of urban industrialism and imperial technocracy, as well as the death of English pastoral traditionalism. As Leonard moves through the city at night, the town itself resembles a giant engine, full of tunnels, and valves. Passing through one such underpass "he paused and listened to the roar of trains. A sharp pain darted through his head, and he was conscious of the exact form of his eye sockets" (32). The violent cacophony of this urban engine disorients him as it drives transformation and forces his consciousness to concentrate on the shape of his skull. This momentary skeletonization of Leonard foreshadows his own transformation unto death which will happen at the end of the novel, due in no small part to the violence of London's metamorphosis. Indeed, everything about London's development seems to threaten violence to Leonard. Buildings and flats, rise and fall like pistons and cylinders in this urban engine. "Constructed with extreme cheapness" the tottering structures "towered on either hand," seeming to threaten collapse as they loom over him.

> Further down the road two more blocks were being built, and beyond these an old house was being demolished to accommodate another pair. It was the kind of scene that may be observed all over London, whatever the locality—bricks and mortar rising and falling with the restlessness of the water in a fountain as the city receives more and more men upon her soil. Camelia Road would soon stand out like a fortress, and command, for a little, an extensive view. Only for a little. Plans were out for the erection of flats in Magnolia Road also. And again a few years, and all the flats in either road might be pulled down, and new buildings, of a vastness at present unimaginable, might arise where they had fallen (32).

As Leonard looks down the road, he sees simultaneous destruction and construction. If the internal combustion engine destroys a fuel source, transforming it into heat, energy, and movement, this scene exemplifies the cycles of destruction and creation that Forster's internalization of destructive plasticity engenders. Indeed, even as Leonard stands in the midst of this great engine for change, bricks and motor—entire buildings—rise and fall in succession on either side of him like great pistons, turning the city over in a great cycle of destruction and creation. This explosive transformation is the internalized form of the destruction envisioned and imagined by Conrad and Le Queux, and as such, this engine of transformation contains an inherent violence. Camelia Road soon looks like a fortress and if the bricks and mortar rising and falling resembles pistons pumping up and down, they also recall the way in which the "smashed brickwork" of Conrad's exploded barroom, and the destroyed houses from Le Queux's siege, rise and fall in the wake of bomb blasts. Above all, the present construction portends future destruction to make way for a "vastness at present unimaginable." Even though this radical transformative power has been internalized and bent towards "productive" transformation in London and the surrounding countryside, the language of "unimaginable vastness" speaks to a destructive power which is currently contained, but just barely, and which will soon be ungovernable.

The machinations of this great urban engine are not without exhaust. Indeed, even Margaret Schlegel becomes oppressed by the obfuscating gaseous waste which chokes the city streets. When out Christmas shopping with Mrs. Wilcox, the fog and smog becomes absolutely suffocating. As they drive through the smoke, Margaret feels that "the city seemed Satanic, the narrower streets oppressing like the galleries of a mine" (60). The soot and smoke that transforms London's streets into mine shafts is another instance of plasticity which, as Margaret unwittingly illustrates a few chapters later, has direct links to the empire. Talking to Tibby about the youngest Wilcox's work abroad, she explains "he doesn't want the money, it is work he wants, though it is beastly work—dull country, dishonest natives, an eternal fidget over fresh water and food…A nation [England] that can produce men of that sort may well be proud. No wonder England has become an Empire." When Tibby scoffs at her acceptance of imperialism, she rejoins "I can't bother over results…They are too difficult for me. I can only look at the men. An Empire bores me, so far, but I can appreciate the heroism that builds it up. London bores me, but what thousands of splendid people are labouring to make London—" (79). While empire may bore Margaret, she is fascinated by the men who labor within its engines. But Margaret knows not how truly she speaks when she remarks "thousands of splendid people are labouring to make London." While she clearly means men like the Wilcox's, the real labor being done is by the people who England has subjugated. London is made in the mine shafts of West Africa, and on the backs of thousands of people, working under men like the Wilcox's. On the occasions when Margaret goes to Henry's offices, she sees the old industrialist "leant back, laughing" behind his desk "while the fire flickered over the map of Africa" (201) which looked "like a whale marked out for blubber" (140). The "blubber," typically used for lamp fuel, metaphorizes the way in which the burning of Africa fuels growth and transformation in London. The fire

flickers over the map as Henry Wilcox laughs, and the smoke from Africa burning clogs the streets of London as the imperial engine pumps away, expanding the city and causing buildings to rise and fall. Through the smoke and exhaust, the crowded city streets begin to recall the colonial mines from which the wealth to build London has been ripped.

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Necropolis London

Sarah Cole has argued that "the more massively devastating an event, it seems, the more it calls forth the forces of generativity; ugliness demands beauty, destruction invites transformation, old wrecks become wonders." She reads "violence and culture in a relation of mutual creativity" (*Violet Hour* 81). Cole's language invites a Malabouian reading of cultural production as a process of destructive plasticity. But destruction does not just invite transformation, it is transformation. Violence and generativity inform one another as new types of violence destroy old ways of thinking and demand new ones. I argue that the sociopolitical trauma of late-nineteenth century imperialism gave rise to a generation of writers who were concerned with representing London as a plastic place capable of taking on new and unrecognizable forms, or even of suffering complete fragmentation and destruction. This work not only responded to concerns about an England which was changing at a pace that was almost impossible to articulate; it also spoke to a radical instability within the Edwardian moment which anticipated futures made unrecognizable by violence. Modernism is often credited with iconoclastic, fragmenting, antiauthoritarian, or defamiliarizing representations of urban life. But writers of the Edwardian period were already blowing up London well before the 1920's and 1930's. The texts examined in this chapter imagine exploded icons of English life, bodies that break in unfamiliar ways, and cities that move and fall down, and that are choked with smoke.

These Edwardian authors, responding to "New Imperialism" and a radically changing world at the turn of the century, engaged in the early rounds of formal experimentation while exploring themes of social destruction and disintegration.

Wells' city of the damned illustrates the point well. Tom Smallways, after telling his nephew the tale of London's collapse, and how all those houses that used to be full of people are now empty, or simply full of bones, admits that he has heard stories that London isn't always empty. He goes on to recount the tale of one man who got lost in the abandoned city at night. The man was all alone, until suddenly:

> A sound of carts and 'orses there was, and a sound of cabs and omnibuses, and then a lot of whistling, shrill whistles, whistles that froze 'is marrer. And directly the whistles began things begun to show, people in the streets 'urrying, people in the 'ouses and shops busying themselves, moty cars in the streets, a sort of moonlight in the 'ouses and winders…They was the ghosts of them that was overtook, the ghosts of them that used to crowd those streets…And as 'e looked, they all went evil—evil in the face…And it seemed to 'im SUDDENLY THEY SAW 'IM, and the women began to look at 'im and say things to 'im—'orrible—wicked things. One come very near 'im…and looked into 'is face—close. And she 'adn't got a face to look with, only a painted skull (177-178).

Wells' ghost-city is melodramatic, but it serves as an interesting representation of the ways in which London's transformations come to form a sort of "death-in-life." The haunting of this city is split in two. At first, the man sees a freeze-frame of London before the War in the Air, and the subsequent famine and plague which destroyed civilization. This freeze-frame of London life is characterized by the capitalist busyness of an imperial city, and all the motorcars, omnibuses, and fast paced economies which dominated and transformed London life before the collapse. Then suddenly, as he looks "they all went evil—evil in the face" and as one ghost gets closer, he sees that it does not even have a face "only a painted skull." This sudden transformation into a deathly countenance represents that traumatic break with a past which brought about London's own destruction. The ghosts which inhabit this city aren't even shades of former Londoners, they

are completely transformed into something new. Indeed, even the artificiality of the "painted skull" speaks to the constructedness of this ghost town. Where haunting is traditionally characterized by an inability to keep the past in the past, to contain it, these ghosts are of Wells' own making, inhabitants of a city which are not the ghosts of London's past, but a new generation, born in the wake of a traumatic transformative destruction.

Most startling in this passage, is the moment of recognition when the ghosts see the lost man. For the living to be recognized by the dead suggests an affinity, that this man—although he feels alive—is one more among the ranks of the ghostly Londoners. While Wells' necropolis is a melodramatic and cliché vision of London's destruction, this moment suggests that even the living might be trapped in a ghostly existence without even realizing it, that Edwardian London might be populated with an unrecognizable citizenry, unmoored from their cultural past and hurtling towards a deathly future.

In the final analysis, that destruction which renders the familiar unrecognizable is what all the texts examined in this chapter are striving to represent. Responding to the dramatic pressures of late-nineteenth-century imperialism and writing under the looming shadow of imminent world war, Conrad, Le Queux, Forster, and Wells each explore the ways in which any familiar concept of London could be blown apart by these cultural transformations, forever changing the future of the city. Before Eliot and his contemporaries collected up the fragments of broken cityscapes to create something new and beautiful, London first had to be destroyed, and it was the generation of writers working in the decade before the First World War who began the deconstruction of this seat of imperial power.

Chapter III
Where to Get Men?

With my health irretrievably ruined… I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained.
-Dr. John Watson, from A Study in Scarlet

This chapter will explore late-Victorian and Edwardian anxiety about English emasculation at the turn of the century, a phenomenon which was often categorized as "unfitness." In particular, I am interested in the ways that national cultural forces mobilized an expansive model of male companionship as a redemptive structure to shore up a flagging English masculinity increasingly characterized as sickly, degenerate, and ineffective. Reading Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Sign of Four* (1890), as well as William Le Queux's *Spies of the Kaiser: Plotting the Downfall of* England (1909), and Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1907), I show that these imperialist writers advocated for a supple, and perhaps unorthodox, notion of male friendship which would not only "repatriate" un-English masculinity, but bolster and support the functions of the very state institutions these writers felt were failing in their imperial duties. Reading these classic "buddy" texts in this way reveals not only that the imperial plasticity discussed in the above chapters engendered a crisis of masculine identity at the height of the British Empire, but also that these conservative imperialist texts actually engage in a sort of iconoclastic anti-authoritarianism in their promotion of personal patriotic male friendships in the defense of the empire, over bumbling and inept institutions which had grown sleepy and complacent at the turn of the century. This championing of non-traditional conceptions of masculinity and male friendship as an alternative, or remedy, to failing authoritarian institutions insists on a consideration of Late-Victorian and Edwardian England as a cultural space in which new possibilities for masculinity and male friendship were being imagined, even under the auspices of a hyper-Anglo-masculine imperialism. While a growing

empire produced socio-economic conditions in England which yielded unfit men, the need to make these men useful in the service of empire challenged traditional conceptions of masculinity as well as the Imperialist government which had deemed these men degenerate and "other." Thus, British Imperialism—in order to sustain itself—created iconoclastic spaces in which English masculinity could be de-essentialized, in the name of English essentialism.

First, I must lay out some definitions. I will begin with the term masculinity as it functions in this chapter. I approach masculinity from the historical perspective of imperialism, and the demands that the British Empire placed on the male body and psychology in its national imperative to maintain that empire. While masculinity obviously operates differently across historical issues of class, I am concerned with the spectrum of masculinity as it cuts across these boundaries in service of the imperial project. This is a masculinity which was coded as a sort of racial virility which was in constant comparison to that of other European powers. It is a masculinity that required the intellectual ability to be educated or trained in such a way as to contribute to the growth and maintenance of empire in both administrative and soldiering roles. And finally, it is a masculinity that both produced, and adhered to, the social codifications of male relationships as they bolstered the empire via structures of hierarchy and comradeship.

The antithesis of English masculinity is "unfitness." Borrowed directly from the language used to describe the state of men in England at the turn of the twentieth century, "unfitness" umbrellas the related terms degeneracy, inefficiency, sterility, infirmity, sickness, addiction, and effeminacy. Consequently, unfitness threatens to unravel notions of accepted masculinity at any number of points, and my reading of the term understands that it rarely expresses in a singular instance. In other words, physical degeneracy, an inability to contribute to imperial society, and a

difficulty in establishing appropriate male relationships are all coextensive in one way or another.

What then, is the role of friendship in redeeming men who might otherwise be considered "unfit"? And to what extent does the homo-erotic play a role and/or pose a risk to this model of friendship I am trying to articulate? Indeed, the line between the desire for male companionship and the romantic desire for other men is a thin one which becomes frequently blurred within these texts. While male comradeship, and particularly the schoolboy cult of athleticism and teammates, was deployed as a hierarchical organizing force in service of the empire, I argue that male friendship, in the context of these texts, allowed for the annulment of "difference" between men in such a way that their individual degeneracy or unfitness could be overlooked. As such, we must also consider the ways in which inclusion—even if it is an unorthodox or progressive inclusivity—also neutralizes difference by bringing the outsider and the other "into the fold." Structures of companionship were based on a desire for sameness in other men, but an "improved sameness" which addresses a subject's own deficiencies and consolidates state power by marshalling otherwise unfit men in the service of empire building. In other words, a brave man with physical "deficiencies," for instance, might find masculine redemption in a relationship with a strong man in need of patriotic direction, and so on and so forth.[9] But this system also creates an inherent tension and instability wherein a stabilizing desire for homogeneity buttresses up against a degenerating homosexual desire.

[9] For an exhaustive history and theory of friendship's function in politics and philosophy throughout the ages, see Jaques Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship* (1994). Of interest to me here, is a reading he performs of Cicero which informs my thinking. Cicero contends that friendship poses "numerous advantages" because "the true friend…is [the] ideal double, [the] other self, the same as self but improved…" (4). He goes on to explain how such friendships which mutually strengthen two individual men are always in the public's best interest. The political deployment and structuring of male friendship are obviously thousands of years old but expresses differently across ages and cultures. In my reading of Late-Victorian and Edwardian era comradeships, the stabilizing desire for "same…but improved" which Cicero outlines, is also what makes these formations simultaneously unstable and limited in their capacity to truly serve imperial projects.

To think about this tension, I refer to the Major General Sir John Frederick Maurice, writing in *The Contemporary Review* in 1902 in the wake of the catastrophic Second Boer War. In his essay, wonderfully entitled "Where to Get Men?" the Major complains that "out of every five men who are willing to enlist, only two are fit to become effective soldiers." Of those who do end up enlisting, many, "shortly after they have joined and as soon as they are tested by the most moderate marching or other physical work, go into hospital" (79). The solution, according to Maurice, is to revitalize the classroom:

> Primarily, in my judgment, it is an educational question. We have already a compulsory system. We use it to teach the three R's. Is it quite impossible to apply the term in the old Greek sense? Can we not regard education as a Roman did, as the means of providing a sound mind in a sound body? One great step has been lately taken by the Education Department, by ordering in all schools the adoption of Colonel Fox's most admirable system of gymnastics (85).

Rather than the compulsory mass-educational system which teaches the three R's (reading, [w]riting, and 'rithmetic), Maurice advocates for an expansion of the Hellenic philosophy of the elite public schools. These institutions served as training grounds for the imperial and military officer classes via their operation as "sites of male community and identity" which "worked to hallow masculine bonds and the male body through an idealization of friendship" ensuring a "smooth succession along the loyalty spectrum from team, to house, to school, to nation" (Cole, *Modernism* 23 and 32). The public school system trained boys to become the type of English men who could build an empire. If the apocryphal statement attributed to the Duke of Wellington is true, and "the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," Maurice's concern about an education which ensures a "sound body" in the wake of the South African War operates in a similar vein and underscores the belief that in the intervening seventy-five years since Waterloo, English fighting men were being increasingly sidelined from the great imperial game.

Central to this virilized education, according to the Major General, is the ability to apply it in the "Greek sense," expanding this philosophy to the education of the working classes. So doing, the male body would become as much a point of study and development as the male body of knowledge. As Eve Sedgwick notes, the "rediscovery of ancient Greece cleared out—as much as recreated—for the nineteenth century a prestigious, historically underfurnished imaginative space in which relations to and among human bodies might be newly a subject of utopian speculation" (*Epistemology* 136). Indeed, not only did this newfound appreciation for classicism prove liberatory for an appreciation of the aesthetics of the human body, "Hellenism impressed many Victorian intellectuals as a viable idea to help combat a sense of cultural deterioration and to compete with dominant values surrounding Christianity, capitalism, and the middle-class values" (*Modernism* 24). But A "Greek" model of education was not only necessary for combating cultural and physical decay in the male population. Sarah Cole argues that it also operated in the following registers: "a desire to escape the allegedly feminized world created and disseminated by domestic ideology; a cult of male friendship; and a tendency to idealize the youthful male body as object of desire, pathos, and, at times, national sentiment" (*Modernism* 25). This cult of male friendship which allowed men to become their best selves via desire of an exemplary other who "completes" them, and in which the virile male body is an object of idealization, served a regenerative function which benefited the nation state. Indeed, on some level it would seem that British Hellenism does not entirely foreclose the homosexual as a tool in homosocial bond making. As Sedgwick notes, in the "Greek pederastic or initiation model" the man who excluded the feminine from his sexual activity was "virilized…by his choice of object" (*Epistemology* 134). This would seem to be the logical extension of a consolidating desire of male sameness. In her reading of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Sedgwick identifies an

ambivalence in Wilde's writing about "the *homo*-nature of this sexuality" which she says is "no less open to question than the self-identicalness of the national borders of the domestic" (*Epistemology* 175). Even if Wilde does complicate a monolithic notion of the "homo" in homosexuality as well as the domestic homogeneity undergirding British essentialism, Sedgwick recognizes that both are coextensive registers operating on the premise of a desire for sameness. And indeed, she acknowledges that "it is difficult (Wilde seems to want to make it difficult) to resist seeing the desired English body as simply the domestic Same" (*Epistemology* 175).

To certain extents then, we must conclude that desire for sameness as a consolidatory structure of English essentialism and masculinity necessarily relies on a degree of homosexual desire in order to accomplish its revitalizing structuring. That is not to say, however, that these texts which showcase male friendship in ways that frequently spill over into the homoerotic condone sexual liberalism. On the contrary when the homoerotic does appear within these stories it is heavily policed, channeled, and regulated in such a way to reap the consolidatory benefits without risking lapsing into the degeneracy of "gross indecency." Acting on, or satisfying this desire, exposes the explosive risk inherent in this model of masculine relationality and it must be—quite literally—policed by the appropriate authorities.

Each of the texts considered in this chapter focuses on two men who, through a carefully managed comradeship, are able to preserve the British Empire and revitalize their compromised masculinity in the service of England--at least for a time. Failure to manage these relationships properly can have consequences that threaten both body and nation. My discussion of these relationships will be influenced by Eve Sedgwick's seminal work *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) as well as, and perhaps more obviously, by Sarah Cole's study, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and The First World War* (2003), to which this

chapter is deeply indebted. While I intend to build on this body of work, rather than critique it, my particular intervention in this chapter is peculiar to the nature of the texts I will be exploring here. While my analyses in Chapters One and Two explored the relationship between plasticity and imperialism in the work of decidedly imperialist authors such as Le Queux, as well as authors critiquing empire, such as Wells or Forster, the texts in this chapter are exclusively imperialist, and deeply concerned with the fragility of the empire. Therefore, where Sedgwick's and Cole's work is interested in the institutional deployment of structures of homosocial desire, or the extra-institutional organization of homosocial desire as a destabilizing or subversive force, I am interested in the mobilization of male friendship as an alternative—but not necessarily subversive--counterpoint to state institutions. Indeed, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, William Le Queux, and Erskine Childers all develop plots of unlikely friendships which not only redeem men who have been deemed "unfit" by the empire, but which arise out of a need to fill the vacuum left by the ineptitude of such governing bodies as the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, or Scotland Yard. As a result, we end up with texts in which these conservative imperialists advocate for a more elastic and inclusive definition of "fit" English masculinity as a way to bolster the very institutions which are not only responsible for producing England's vulnerable state of plasticity, but also for expelling the "unfit" men in these stories from imperial service.

I begin with the private detective Sherlock Holmes and his inseparable companion Dr. John Watson. Reading *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*, I argue that, despite their individual shortcomings, the two men are not only able to serve the empire through their friendship but are uniquely positioned to do so by virtue of the damaging contact each of them has had with Britain's colonies and enemies. Nevertheless, despite the work they do on behalf of the empire, the "queer" and irregular nature of the two men and their partnership is ultimately

sublimated into a false narrative of institutional policing efficiency. In the second section, I turn to *Spies of the Kaiser* as an illustration of the dangers which manifest when male companionship is not carefully managed. Because Jacox's admiration for the best qualities in his friend Raymond is not reciprocated, the lopsided desire in this friendship does little to elevate the "unfit" Jacox and leaves his body vulnerable to attack. As a result, much of the narrative is concerned with protecting the English male body from foreign invaders. Indeed, Jacox's unproductive infatuation with Raymond threatens to undermine their entire spy-fighting operation as well as English national security. Finally, I suggest that *The Riddle of the Sands* offers something of a solution to Holmes and Watson's queerness, and Jacox's unrequited admiration, by routing the male-male desire at the center of the story through a third female character in a classic Sedgwickian instance of triangulation. The powerful charge of homoeroticism which undergirds the relationship of the two main characters, Davies and Carruthers, must be made productive via the introduction of a female love interest through which this desire can be channeled into productive homosociality. Once Davies admits his love for the heroine, the intimacy of his friendship with Carruthers is simultaneously consummated while its homosexuality is defused; it is only at this point in the novel that they are able to foil an invasion plot against England. Ironically, British Imperial consciousness at the turn of the nineteenth century was beginning to open up new space for unorthodox and non-traditional definitions of productive masculinity facilitated through male desire, and it is precisely the utility and limitations of this newly repatriated masculinity which is under-examination in these texts.

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Holmes and Watson: Queer Loungers and Idlers of Empire

In the last hundred years, the stories of Sherlock Holmes have been immortalized in pastiche, spawned numerous filmic adaptations, and given birth to new generations of detective fiction, while popularizing the convention of the less talented, but scrupulous and stout-hearted, sidekick. Recent criticism has placed Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes canon of four novels and fifty-six short stories squarely within the genre of imperial literature. Many critics have also paid particular attention to Holmes' numerous vices and peculiarities, as well as Watson's Army record and war-time injuries. My argument thinks about the intersection of these two facets of the Holmes-Watson dynamic: the work they do on behalf of the imperial project, and their respective moral, psychic, or bodily failings. Reading the opening pages of *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four* I argue that each of these excerpts figures as the necessary confession of damage and vulnerability that allows the two characters to establish a comradeship which will be greater than the sum of its parts. I further propose that, even as the empire makes the bodies of the two men vulnerable (by penetrating them with bullets, opium, and other foreign elements), it is precisely this vulnerability and mutability which allows them to protect England from the foreign influences of empire. However, we will also see that this unorthodox crime fighting relationship has its limits. The *pro forma* conclusion of every Sherlock Holmes adventure requires that Scotland Yard take official credit for solving all crimes. While the violence that Holmes and Watson's bodies have suffered as a result of contact with Britain's enemies and colonies makes them uniquely suited to combating such deleterious influences at large in English society, they can never be the public face of the empire. Instead, their exploits are contained within the private memoirs of John Watson, while the government maintains a

public façade of institutional propriety, relegating the infamous crime fighting duo to a cog in the state machinery.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes saga spans a forty-year writing career beginning with *A Study in Scarlet* in 1887 and ending with the publication of the short stories contained in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* in 1927. Significantly, *A Study in Scarlet* begins, not at the famous Baker Street apartments in London, but in Bombay at the outbreak of the second Afghan war in 1878. It is imperial conflict then which sets the entirety of the adventures of Holmes and Watson in motion over the next half-century and these opening pages catalogue the various ways in which Watson's body has been invaded by England's colonies and adversaries. Watson is a newly minted army doctor in the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers when his regiment, stationed in India, is deployed for the Afghan war. "The campaign" notes Watson, "brought honours and promotion to many, but for me it had nothing but misfortune and disaster. I was removed from my brigade and attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served at the fatal battle of Maiwand. There I was struck in the shoulder by a Jezail bullet, which shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian artery" (*Study* 3). Dragged from the field and saved in hospital, Watson is then "struck down by enteric fever, that curse of our Indian possessions. For months my life was despaired of, and when at last I came to myself and became convalescent, I was so weak and emaciated that a medical board determined that not a day should be lost in sending me back to England." Finally, he arrives back home with his "health irretrievably ruined, but with permission from a paternal government to spend the next nine months in attempting to improve it" (*Study* 4). The sickness and injury that Watson sustains in the course of his imperial service are defining traits of his character. Furthermore, the ways in which his body was invaded by foreign elements situates him uniquely in relation to the empire. His shoulder is broken by the

bullet from an enemy combatant's weapon, but more serious and more insidious is the way in which his body is corrupted by British colonial possessions. It is the enteric fever which comes very close to killing him, and it is the enteric fever that he refers to as the "curse" of Britain's Indian possessions. This corruption which "irretrievably" ruins the health of Englishmen, is figured as an associated cost of colonialism. Watson's situation reflects starkly the condition of English men at the turn of the century who are unfit to defend the empire, as a result of the very imperial expansions which requires their defense. Indeed, Watson's infirmity transcends the specific moments of his wounding and affliction. Watson's contact with the outer edges of the empire and that confusing space between colonies and enemies, has had an incredibly plasticizing effect on his body. As some critics have noted, Watson's wounds are a site of inconsistency throughout the Holmes stories. Indeed, in *The Sign of Four*, Holmes commends Watson's pursuit of a wanted person, describing it as "a six-mile limp for a half-pay officer with a damaged tendo Achilles" (*Sign* 175). In this instance, Watson's bullet wound moves to his leg, instead of his shoulder. Even if this is merely authorial inconsistency, Watson's body is no longer stable in the wake of his contact with the empire, and its wounding and sickening takes on different faces and forms long after the fact of his imperial service, testifying to the persistent and pernicious effect of the empire on the English male body *in* England. Weak and emaciated, when Watson does return to England it is with the blessings of a "paternal" government to try to improve his health. Despite the fact that England was ruled by Victoria in 1878, this injunction is handed down from a paternal organization, a patriarchal structure of power based on male relationships that require the health, energy, and virility of English men.

Unfortunately, Watson has "neither kith nor kin" and as a result "naturally gravitates to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the empire are irresistibly

drained" (*Study* 4). London is figured here simultaneously as the heart of the British Empire, and also as a dangerous breeding ground in which unwanted aliens and foreign influences can sew corruption and degeneracy. Watson's description of London as a "cesspool" is markedly charged. If the loungers and idlers of empire are "drained" into this corrupt place like so much wastewater or sewage, that very drainage would suggest that the empire is being purged of impurity, that the *outside* places are healthy while England and London become receptacles for so much infected discharge. Watson, both infected, and discharged from the army, drains himself into London and finds himself utterly alone in an evil place. Devoid of any fraternal or familial bonds, Watson backslides into unsustainable and unhealthy behavior until he determines to "make a complete alteration in my style of living" (*Study* 4). It is at this point, when he becomes sick of his own degeneracy and determined to lift himself out of it, that Watson meets Sherlock Holmes.

The two are a match for one another. Holmes is also in possession of a number of physical and habitual failings which are directly connected to contact with colonial spaces. It is for this reason, despite their effectiveness as detectives, that the pair can never be deployed by England in any official capacity. Upon their first meeting, Holmes excitedly confesses to Watson his own shortcomings. "I dabble with poisons a good deal" he informs him and "I get in the dumps at times, and don't open my mouth for days on end" (*Study* 9). But Holmes' greatest vice is not revealed until later in *The Sign of Four* when the novel opens thus:

> Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantelpiece, and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he adjusted the delicate needle and rolled back his left shirtcuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist, all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally, he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velvet-lined armchair with a long sigh of satisfaction. (*Sign* 123)

Watson, who by this time in the Sherlock Holmes universe has become the inseparable companion of his new flat mate, is suitably disgusted. "Three times a day for many months I had witnessed this performance, but custom had not reconciled my mind to it." After months of witnessing this, and months of silence, Watson finally demands: "which is it to-day…morphine or cocaine?" When Holmes informs him that it is cocaine and goes so far as to offer Watson a dose, Watson protests "No indeed…my constitution has not got over the Afghan campaign yet" (*Sign* 123).

Holmes' drug use is presented as the counterpoint to his efficiency as a detective and the service which he is able to render England. "Give me problems, give me work" he explains, "give me the most abstruse cryptogram, or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants" (*Sign* 124). But in the absence of these diversions, and without the proper projects to channel his energies, Holmes tends towards dissipation, indolence, and artificial stimulation. Watson implores him to "count the cost" and consider that "it is a pathological and morbid process which involves increased tissue change and may at least leave a permanent weakness" (*Sign* 124) And indeed the effects of prolonged use can already be seen on Holmes' body in his nervous fingers and dotted and scarred arms, covered in puncture marks. Although Holmes indulges in this vice within the privacy of his own home, the forces which penetrate and scar his body, increasing tissue change, and causing permanent weakness, are anything but domestic. Indeed, he retrieves the hypodermic needle from a morocco case and his choice of drug is either cocaine or morphine, which would have originated in South America and the Far East respectively. Not only do foreign narcotics effect a very real and literal change in the English body, but their presence in England—especially in the form of the infamous opium den—opens up a radically unstable

space which can operate like a revolving door between, not only class strata, but the Far East and England.[10] This vulnerability adds new weight to Watson's worry that Holmes' drug habit could cause "increased tissue change." Not only is Holmes in danger of developing pathological addictions and becoming a degenerate drug user, but he is also in danger of becoming *less* English as a result of the violent penetration (scars and punctures) of (mind)altering foreign substances into his body. Indeed, Watson's refusal when Holmes offers him cocaine reaffirms the link between drug use, bodily infirmity, and the Far East. On top of his other objections to the drug as a physician, his body is still recovering from his last encounter with the East, and he brusquely states that he cannot take cocaine because his "constitution has not got over the Afghan campaign yet."

Holmes refuses to stir himself from his inebriated state without work. Without Holmes, Watson is neither a physician-detective, nor a writer of true-crime, but merely a half-pay, retired army doctor with a phantom bullet hole moving around his body. Out of sorts, out of work, and at odds with one another, the two men are merely "loungers and idlers of the Empire" drained into the great cesspool of London. Quite plainly, our heroes require a case, some threat to the order of English society, in order to emulsify their otherwise incompatible personalities into a crime-fighting companionship.

Fortunately, as hundreds of pages of stories and over a century of fan-readership attest, the two men have their work cut out for them and are widely regarded as the most effective detective duo in literary history. The *proviso*, of course, is that their "effectiveness" is unofficial. Because their respective vices and weaknesses (which also make them uniquely suited to crime-

[10] For more on England's complicated relationship with foreign narcotics imported from the Empire, see Barry Milligan's *Pleasures and Pains* (1995). Milligan traces not only the historical conditions which lead to the prevalence of opium in England, but also the profound social, political, literary, and philosophical ramifications of introducing a mind-altering substance from the Far East to the English national consciousness.

fighting at the heart of the empire) constitute forms of compromised masculinity, their unlikely friendship which allows them to mobilize in service of England can never be the "official" story. Indeed, in almost every instance Holmes and Watson are only allowed to do their work provided that Scotland Yard gets the credit. While Doyle posits that the type of friendship and *savoir-faire* embodied by Holmes and Watson is of paramount importance to national security (no one can protect England the way Holmes and Watson can), their friendship and the work they do, are an "open secret" which suffers erasure by governmental institutions.

"He knows that I am his superior" says Holmes of Scotland Yard detective Gregson, "and he acknowledges it to me; but he would cut his tongue out before he would own it to any third person." Indeed the "quick and energetic, but conventional" Scotland Yard detectives Gregson and Lestrade act the foils to the strange doctor and detective duo. Hyper-masculine and bull-doggishly English, these bumbling and incompetent officers of the law have an uneasy relationship with Holmes and Watson in which they allow the strange pair to work cases in exchange for public credit (*Study* 22). When The Yard calls in Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet*, Gregson confesses to the private detective that "It's a queer case, though, and I knew your taste for such things" (*Study* 24). Thus, in the eyes of the government, Holmes and Watson are aligned with the queer, the complex, and the uncomfortable. The wounded doctor and the reclusive addict do the dirty work in private until such a time as Scotland Yard can put a proper face on an inexplicable crime. Even though, taken together, Holmes and Watson are the two most potent agents in defending England against unwanted alien bodies and influences, the "queer" tastes, vicious habits, and infirmities which mark their friendship—even as they make that friendship possible--preclude them from official recognition, thereby tracing the limit of this particular relationship as a tool of imperial maintenance.

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The Back-Door of England

If Holmes and Watson's queer friendship symbiotically allows them to function as a crime-fighting unit, William Le Queux's *Spies of the Kaiser: Plotting the Downfall of England* highlights—in the character of Jack Jacox--the attendant danger inherent in desiring the best qualities in another man without offering anything in return. The majority of imaginary war tales "leave the reader with strong feelings of the quaint, almost archaic, and often unreadable" (Clarke 107). While we might also call attention to the notes of chauvinism, racism, and war-mongering dancing across the modern reader's palate, it is safe to say that William Le Queux's *Spies of the Kaiser* falls squarely within the "unreadable" category. The episodic, formulaic nature of *Spies* frustrates in its refusal to develop or progress the plotline into anything more than varied repetitions of the same sensationalist vignettes which lend themselves readily to serialization and cheap mass print production. And yet, Le Queux was an author who knew exactly what his audience wanted and how to sell stories. Just like Sherlock Holmes and *The Riddle of the Sands, Spies* follows the formula of two friends engaged in the business of protecting the empire from invasion. Unlike the friendships outlined in the Sherlock Holmes stories and *Riddle* however, the unidirectional relationship in *Spies* walks a knife's edge, teetering dangerously towards unrequited homosexual desire, rather than a mutual and productive homosocial desire. For Le Queux, male companionship is a powerful tool in protecting British national interests, but without proper policing, the consequences of unchecked male desire can be explosive and destabilizing, putting the English male body at considerable risk.

Spies tells the story of two barristers, Ray Raymond and Jack Jacox, who read at Oxford together. Along with Ray's fiancé Vera Vallance, the daughter of a prominent admiral, they take

it upon themselves to root out German spies in England, driven by the idea that it is their patriotic duty to do so, given that "under our existing law it seems that a foreign spy is free to go hither and thither, and plot the downfall of England, while we, ostrich-like, bury our head in the sand at the sign of approaching danger" (8). The fourteen chapters proceed largely along the same lines and operate relatively independently of one another. The scene opens (most often) on the two friends, Ray Raymond and Jack Jacox recreating together, at which point Ray will divulge that he has uncovered information of a German plot. For purposes of creating a suspenseful type of detective fiction, Raymond rarely gives Jacox all the information, insisting instead that he must trust him and follow his lead, allowing the reader to unravel the plot as it is slowly revealed to Jacox. Each chapter culminates in a scene of high drama and violence full of patriotic declarations in the name of the King, at which point the climax will be cut short when Jacox is inevitably bludgeoned, poisoned, or otherwise attacked and left unconscious. The stories end with Jacox waking up in hospital to a smiling Raymond and Vera who reveal the circumstances of the resolution of the plot and offer an ominous and pensive thought about the future of England. The book resists plot development at every turn, and even manages to withstand the pressure of the marriage plot presented by Raymond and Vera's engagement. Indeed, the story is so inconclusive that the text ends on the lines "What will happen? When will Germany strike? WHO KNOWS?" (287). To the extent that any development does happen, we can locate it in the character of Jacox as he slowly gains more agency and begins to investigate "cases" –albeit unsuccessfully--on his own.

My analysis, however, is concerned primarily with the way in which Jacox largely struggles to be redeemed by his relationship with Raymond, precisely because he plays the spaniel. While his admiration and infatuation for his friend's best qualities does often allow him

to foil nefarious plots, he is utterly helpless in protecting his own body against foreign invaders, and a failure to protect the British male body is tantamount to a failure to protect Britain. In absence of any mutual acknowledgement of vulnerability, Jacox's status as degenerate and unfit is constantly teetering on the brink of catastrophe, particularly in the way in which his relationship to Raymond figures as homosexual, rather than productive homosocial, attachment. Indeed, Jacox's body is made increasingly violable throughout the text, and the final scene of the novel reaches a crescendo of homoerotic tension between the two friends before the police burst in and avert disaster.

The story opens on the men in their barrister's chambers. "I was standing with my back to the fire facing my friend," recalls Jacox, "who, a barrister like myself, shared with me a set of rather dismal chambers in New Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, though he had never had occasion to practice, as I unfortunately had" (12). Already the contours of their asymmetrical relationship are becoming clear. The dingy chambers speak to the disdainful nature of their practice which Jacox has been "unfortunately" minding while Raymond has been otherwise engaged. We later learn that While Raymond "shared those dingy London chambers, he resided in a prettily furnished flat in Bruton street, while [Jacox] lived in rooms round Guilford Street, Bloomsbury, in [his] lonely bachelordom" (12). There is a difference in class between the friends as Raymond is the "Eldest son of Sir Archibald Raymond, Bart., the well-known Cardiff coal-owner who sat for East Carmarthen" (12). While both men are members of the professional class, Raymond's family is landed gentry with political influence and Ray Raymond himself has been "adopted as candidate for West Rutland at the next election" (12). Socially then, Raymond has Jacox at an advantage, but as Jacox describes his friend and partner, it becomes clear that Raymond is not just a wealthy, aspiring politician, but a veritable archetype of English

masculinity. "As he sat" notes Jacox, "his long legs outstretched towards the fire, he presented the appearance of the typical athletic young Englishman, aged about thirty, clean-shaven, clean-limbed, with an intelligent and slightly aquiline face, a pair of merry grey eyes, and light brown hair closely cropped. He was an all-round good fellow, even though his life had been cast in pleasant places" (12). Jacox's use of the word "typical" here seems aspirational given the health crisis facing England and the identity crisis facing its men. Nevertheless, the qualities of athleticism, cleanliness, and intelligence are held up as just the type of characteristics required for service to the empire, and Jacox is quick to note that despite the fact that his life has been "cast in pleasant places" he hasn't suffered any moral or physical decay as a result of decadence and luxury and is, in fact, a "good fellow." The plot is driven by Raymond's energy and as Jacox bumbles his way through the story, we begin to see the consequences of this lopsided friendship. While Jacox is able to prove useful in some capacities as Raymond's confidante and sidekick, he receives much from his association with Raymond and contributes rather little. Dependent on his talented friend and laying no claim to any personal characteristics Raymond might desire or be lacking, Jacox is terribly unable to protect his own body, even as he strives to protect England. In other words, part of redeeming one's masculinity requires helping another unfit man find redemption, and since he cannot offer Raymond anything he is not already in possession of, Jacox cannot be fully redeemed.

The two friends have been discussing stolen naval plans when Jacox notes that

> In the investigations upon which Ray Raymond had embarked with such enthusiasm, and which I am now permitted to chronicle in these pages, he had taken only two persons into his confidence—myself and Vera, the pretty, fair-haired daughter of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Vallance, the Admiral-Superintendent of Portsmouth Dockyard, to whom he was engaged. Indeed, from the first I suspected that it had been her influence that had roused him to action; she who had promised him her assistance, and who had pointed out how, by

> watching and unmasking the spies, he might render his King and country signal service (14).

The introduction of Vera Vallance establishes the triangular relationship of his spy-fighting team. Vera, born into the same social class as Raymond, is here figured as a conduit and channel for Raymond's best qualities. Despite Raymond's clean-limbed athleticism, intelligence, and all-round good fellowship, he requires the influence of this admiral's daughter in order to prod him into service of King and country. Having mobilized her man, this formidable fiancée submits to Raymond's direction in the business of rooting out German spies, but it is Jacox who requires a stiffening of resolve.

When Raymond informs Jacox that the naval plans have been stolen, Jacox complains "but if the new plans for our naval base at Rosyth have already been secured by Germany, I don't see what we can do…What's the use of closing the stable-door after the horse has been stolen?" (11). This type of resigned attitude is exactly what Raymond will not stand for; moreover, Raymond attributes the crisis of the Boer War and the emasculation therewith to just such apathy. "That's just what we generally do in England, my dear old Jack" rejoins Raymond. "We still think, as in the days of Wellington, that one Englishman is worth ten foreigners. But remember the Boer War, and what shameful ignorance cost us in men and money" (11). Jacox's comment, and Raymond's condescending and moralistic response, establish Jacox in subordination to Raymond, but also show him in possession of the type of sentiment responsible for English degeneration. Because an Englishman is no longer "worth ten foreigners," and because England, her government, and the admiralty, "ostrich-like, bury [their] head in the sand at the sign of approaching danger" (8), it is incumbent upon gifted men like Raymond to do the work that needs to be done and, by mobilizing his friend Jacox in the endeavor, he lifts him up out of the "shameful ignorance" and physical

degeneracy that has characterized their generation. And yet, even as Jacox attempts to rise to the occasion, his body suffers the blows and invasions that threaten England herself, as he struggles throughout the story to make himself equal to the task set out before him by the athletic and intelligent Raymond.

The principal threat to England is an invasion of the east coast, that stretch of shoreline which the two spy-hunters refer to as "the back-door of England—the place neglected by those responsible for our defences, and by the public alike" (67). All the uncovered plots in the series of episodes consist of so many preparations for this invasion. Figuring England's vulnerability as an undefended and neglected back door which is neither talked about nor acknowledged, connotes an emasculating attack from behind, charged with sexual violence. Driving Jacox to Weybourne to show him this site of vulnerability, Raymond explains that "because of the confidence we have in our fleet and our wonderful diplomacy this place is no longer watched" and that "in days gone by, by reason of the facilities which nature has provided for the landing of hostile forces, it was carefully guarded whenever the invasion of England was believed to be immanent" (67). As Raymond explains this, Jacox, casually turns away from the water and "with my back to the long rolling breakers I gazed away landward at the long line of hills stretching in each direction" (67). The image of Jacox's back turned on the backdoor of England stresses the way in which the map of England—and all its vulnerable spots—gets mapped onto Jacox's body. Furthermore, the carelessness which has resulted in this place not being guarded, positioned alongside Jacox's inability to guard his own backdoor as he literally turns away from the threat, draws parallels between national security and the requirement that men be able to guard their own bodies against foreign invaders, and especially against invaders who approach, unbeknownst, from behind. While Jacox's admiration for Raymond's best characteristics seems

to be a productive marshalling of male desire, this particular moment, in which a vulnerability in the domestic border is exposed, is accompanied by a certain amount of homosexual panic. Both Jacox and England are open to penetrative foreigners and "others," threatening an intimacy of difference, rather than a consolidating intimacy of sameness. As the various foiled invasion plots within the story get played out on Jacox's body, it becomes clear that the principal threat to national security is intimacy between English and foreign men, those "undesirable aliens" which Raymond and Jacox are intent on casting out of their country.

If we can read the preliminary pangs of homosexual anxiety into the vulnerability of Jacox's "back door," the issue becomes a positive crisis of masculinity when the friends come into contact with some Italian spies. In this episode, Raymond and Jacox, are staking out the house of a scientist who has developed a new metal alloy, which must not fall into enemy hands. "I had noticed from Ray's manner," recalls Jacox "that he had become very suspicious. He somehow scented the presence of spies at times when, I confess, I felt calm and reassured" (141). Raymond's naturally suspicious and guarded nature protects him against attack while Jacox's calm reassurance is precisely the sort of negligence which makes England vulnerable and leaves him open to emasculating attack. When the two friends finally witness spies (who happen to be Italians in Berlin's employment) attempting to break into the house, they follow them in, revolvers drawn. "In an instant" says Jacox "we were in total darkness.

> Deep curses in Italian sounded, and I heard a desperate struggle taking place. Somebody grabbed at me, but it was our friend the constable. Then, by the red flash of a revolver which somebody fired, I distinguished the flying form of one of the intruders through the doorway.
>
> Next second, in darkness, I felt a man brush past me, and instantly I closed with him. We fell together, and as I gripped the fellow's throat he ejaculated a loud imprecation in Italian. Then we rolled over in desperate embrace, but as I forced him beneath me, shouting to the constable, whose lantern had been knocked from his hand and broken, I

> suddenly felt a crushing blow upon the skull. I saw a thousand stars, and then the blackness of unconsciousness fell upon me (143).

Despite the phallic primacy of the revolver with which Jacox arms himself before grappling with the spies, his mistaken sense of calm and reassurance when he ought to have been guarded and vigilant, leads to confusion and violence. Immediately, the group is plunged into darkness and in this shadowy space, Jacox loses the ability to distinguish not only between bodies, but between friend and foe. Indeed, Jacox himself is mistaken for an enemy as his friend the constable mistakenly grabs him. He gains lucidity for a moment when a revolver, most likely Raymond's, is discharged, but Jacox is rendered impotent and unable to make use of his own weapon. Things go from bad to worse, and when he feels a man brush him, "instantly I closed with him." As the two fight, the distinctions between Jacox's own body, and the other man's body are dissolved as they "fell together" and "…rolled over in desperate embrace." The violence here becomes sexualized precisely because Jacox is unable to maintain the borders of his person as distinct and separate from those of the foreign man. Jacox "grips the fellow's throat" causing him to ejaculate in Italian, but this same grappling also elicits an ejaculation from Jacox as he shouts for the constable. This mutual ejaculation is problematic. For the Italian spy, this climactic event is, in some ways, exactly what he has hoped to accomplish. The confusion between domestic and foreign bodies represents the destabilization of English essentialism and national security which Berlin is trying to achieve. But Jacox misreads the entire situation; it is entirely possible that the Italian's cry is one of pleasure rather than pain. As he attempts to press his advantage by forcing the foreigner into submission "beneath" him, he calls out in triumph for the constable, thinking that he has reestablished the spatial distinction and bodily separation of top and bottom. But this attempt to regain control in the struggle is misguided, and his triumphal cry once he is on top simply opens him up further to violation. Essentially announcing himself to his enemies behind him, he feels a "crushing blow

upon the skull." Harkening back to the moment when Jacox turned his back on England's vulnerable back door, he has failed to watch his own back, and suffered, as a result, a castrating and emasculating blow to the head which renders him limp and unconscious. Jacox's collapse is the flaccid, post-coital, denouement of a scene in which he has radically misunderstood the role of male intimacy in the protection of domestic borders. While a desire for, and intimacy with, the typical athletic young Englishman, Raymond, is precisely what propels Jacox into spy hunting, coming into such close and confusing physical contact with the foreign male other (however violent that intercourse might be) has a catastrophically destabilizing effect on English masculinity.

When Jacox finally comes round three days later he is greeted by Ray and Vera who inform him that all is relatively well. Ray informs Jacox that

> 'Yours was a bit of hard luck, old fellow. The blackguards all got away—all three of them. But we were just in time, for in that safe were the memoranda of the Professor's experiments which, together with the specimens of the new metal that could have been analysed, would have undoubtedly placed the secret of the new steel in the hands of the German admiralty!'
>
> 'Then we really prevented them?'" rejoins Jacox "feeling the bandages about [his] head."
>
> "'Just in the very nick of time, old man'" (143).

The arrival of Ray and Vera in the hospital ensure that the climatic fracas has been cleaned up. The plastic commingling of foreign and domestic bodies has been repulsed and each entity has been made separate and intractable once again. The Italians have fled, Jacox has been divorced from that desperate, identity-draining embrace, and England is safe. And yet, as Jacox asks "Then we really prevented them?" his question might ring somewhat skeptical as he feels the marks of foreign invasion on his own head, and fingers the bandages now covering new ruptures in his body. While the blow hasn't fallen on England, it has certainly fallen on Jacox.

Jacox is knocked unconscious from behind once more in the novel, only to once again wake up days later to a smiling Raymond who fills him in on the events which transpired to put him there. But these severe blows to the head are perhaps less devastating to Jacox's body than the frequent bouts of poisoning he is subjected to in defense of England. In one such instance, Jacox finds himself invited to dinner by a charming young man, precisely at a time when he happens to be entrusted with the transportation of some confidential military maps. His host's name is Charles Sandford, and Jacox is quite drawn to the man. Dinner passes enjoyably until he is given a digestif of cognac, after which point "I took a cigarette from the big silver box he handed me, and I stretched out my hand for the matches…Beyond that, curiously enough, I recollect nothing else" (220). Jacox wakes up to find himself completely out of place and out of time. "When I recovered I was amazed to find myself in bed…For some time—how long I know not—I lay there staring at the diamond-paned window straight before me wondering what had occurred" (221). Then later, "I realized for the first time that I was still dressed. Only my boots and collar and tie had been removed" (221). Jacox has again lost control over his own body. Not only was he moved, but he was partially undressed without his knowledge. This invasion by poison, and the loss of control over his body, is the result of his inability to manage and traverse the treacheries of establishing personal relationships. When his host comes to check on him and escort him out of the house, a bewildered Jacox wonders "was the man standing before me a friend, or was he an enemy?" (221) Unable to tell the difference, his own masculine body has been compromised, as has been England's national security. Weeks later it comes to light that the confidential maps Jacox had been transporting on his person, even at the time of his dinner with Sandford, have been copied and procured by German intelligence officials. Fortunately, Scotland Yard recovers the photographs before any damage can be done and eventually, Sandford—who had been a German

spy all along--turns up dead. And yet, Jacox recalls Sandford as "the man with whom I shall ever remember partaking of that particularly seductive glass of 1815 cognac" (227). The seductiveness of the digestif Jacox shares with Sandford recalls the shared space of the desperate grapple he engages in with the Italian agents. In both cases, Jacox enters into a time and space of plasticity in which he loses himself completely. In grappling with the Italian, their bodies merge, becoming impossible to tell one from the other. In sharing the seductive brandy, Jacox yields control of his body to Sandford, who does with it what he will, leaving Jacox bemused and strange to himself the next day. Both situations are brought about by engaging in the wrong type of relations with men and failing to operate within a homosocial hierarchy in which British male interests are elevated and promoted and British male bodies are kept separate and inviolable. Time and again Jacox fails to uphold these paradigms, and while English national security is always ensured, just in the nick of time, it is his body that inevitably suffers the invasion the country has avoided.

For Le Queux, male friendship is ultimately limited as an extra-institutional tool for protecting and promoting empire. While their work is inspiring and patriotic, the two men have only ever been accumulating enough evidence of espionage in England to force the government to issue new prohibitive legislation regarding foreign agents. Similar to the way in which Scotland Yard eventually takes credit for Holmes and Watson's work, the patriotic "buddy" model for Le Queux can only operate as a temporary expedient until such a time as governmental institutions can be moved to take appropriate action. Male friendship in Le Queux's world is, as Jacox demonstrates, far too fragile a system on which to base the sanctity of English masculinity let alone national security. In the final chapter of the novel, Jacox and Raymond run into a former German acquaintance named Otto Engler who invites them to Christmas Dinner with some of his countrymen at the home of one Herr Griesbach. At the end of a very merry dinner,

Christmas party crackers are passed around the table, and all the guests take turns pulling the parcels and discovering their prizes. Finally, the host hands the two remaining party-favors to the Englishmen and informs them that "you have each a final bon-bon. In one of them there will be found a twenty-mark piece—our German custom…you two gentleman must settle between yourselves. It lies between you," at which point their host departs the dining room, followed by his other guests (286). Predictably, the "bon-bon" is actually a bomb. But the German hosts' language here is explosive for other reasons. While the threat is clearly posed by the German outsiders, the combustive danger which will terminate their friendship and imperil England "must be settled between yourselves," and again, "lies between you." English masculinity is under attack from outside the empire, but it is also threatened by the very bonds *between* men which have the capacity to both strengthen male structures of power, and also bring them toppling down should they cross into the homosexual. Significantly, it was the foreign influence of Otto Engler which brought Raymond and Jacox into this dangerous association that marks a distinct shift in the nature of their intimacy. "I laughed to Ray when we were alone," says Jacox, and then "we both gripped the long green-and-gold cracker" (287). The moment of intimacy is brief and the charged language which describes the two men gripping the phallic party favor is rather subtle. And yet this is the only scene in which the two men are alone together outside of their place of business. In all their other social dealings, Vera is almost invariably present. Furthermore, whenever the two men embark on a mission together, a third—often official—person is present, acting in a supportive capacity, but in a way in which confers some institutional sanction upon their friendship. In this moment, in the dining room of these "thorough-going cosmopolitans, cheery, easy-going men of the world," Ray and Jacox are alone together, laughing and holding an explosively phallic object (282).

"At that instant, however, we were both startled by a loud smashing of glass in the next room, curses in German and loud shouts in English followed by the dull report of a revolver. We both sprang to the room, and there, to our surprise, found that six men had entered through the broken French window and were struggling fiercely with our host and his friends" (287). As the two friends stare on dumbfounded, a man named Inspector Pelham, from Scotland Yard informs them that "both these bon-bons contain powerful bombs, and had you pulled either of them you'd both have been blown to atoms. That was their dastardly intention. But fortunately we got wind of it, and were in time to watch and prevent it" (288). The French-window smashing, German-arresting men are stout English detectives from Scotland Yard, here to rescue the two friends from the foreigners, but also from whatever dangerous and volatile thing might lie between them; in this case, a bon-bon. The final scene of this strange novel stresses that even the good patriotic work of two friends committed to one another and committed to England cannot protect fully against the corrupting and eruptive forces which want to dismantle the empire and its men. Such friendship must be backed and bolstered by some structured institutional might in which male desire can be harnessed and made productive by the state.

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Two men cannot discuss a woman freely without a deep foundation of intimacy.
-*Carruthers*, The Riddle of the Sands

If the Sherlock Holmes stories are concerned with removing the "queer" work of the detective duo off stage and behind Scotland Yard, and *Spies* is concerned primarily with the protection/penetration of the vulnerable English male body, *The Riddle of the Sands* works to resolve these issues by routing the unlikely male companionship at the center of the story through a third, female figure. I.F. Clarke lists Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* as one of those rare invasion stories, much like the *War of the Worlds*, which have remained popular

into the present day due to their "high narrative qualities and the Leonardo-like capacity of [their] authors to surprise by describing what could happen" (107). Equal parts invasion novel, detective fiction, spy thriller, and high-seas adventure, *Riddle* stands out in the genre of future-war tales as a complex and compelling read. The story focuses on Arthur Davies, an Oxford graduate who has failed out of the Indian Civil Service and the Navy. Dejected, he spends all of his time pursuing his passion of sailing. While in Germany, he uncovers a plot masterminded by a man named Dollman, who is an English traitor turned German spy. He plans to amass an invading armada behind the shifting sands of the northern German coastline, where it will be undetectable by British forces. These amorphous stretches of coast are not represented properly on any map, and only Davies' peculiar skills as a sailor allow him to navigate the treacherous waterways and uncover the truth. Determined to foil the plot and save Dollman's innocent English daughter by returning her to England, Davies enlists the help of his savvy college pal Carruthers to help him go about the thing properly. Similarly to Holmes and Watson, each of the two men must base their friendship on a desire for the admirable qualities possessed by the other. Specific to *Riddle*, however, is the way in which Childers marshals this desire for the other man productively, by routing it through Fräulein Dollman, structuring the mutual desire of the two men in such a way that it is sublimated by Davies' desire to win and repatriate this lost English woman. Only once Caruthers and Davies are able to engage in the intimate activity of discussing a woman are they able to transform their bond into a "fit" male companionship which can serve the empire.

The novel opens on the protagonist Carruthers, a lonely young official in the Foreign Office, dressing for dinner. "I have read of men" the narrative begins

> who, when forced by their calling to live for long periods in utter solitude—save for a few black faces—have made it a rule to dress regularly for dinner in order to maintain their self-respect and prevent a relapse into barbarism. It was in some such spirit, with an added touch of self-consciousness, that, at seven o'clock in the evening of 23rd September in a recent year, I was making my evening toilet in my chambers in Pall Mall (1).

In this preamble to the espionage thriller, Carruthers, who is friendless in London during the "dead" season, figures his solitude and loneliness as a threat not only to his personal "civility," but as a position of precarity on par with that of the lonely Imperial official, tasked with maintaining order abroad. Despite the fact that Carruthers is dining at the very heart of the empire on the evening of September 23rd, as he is bereft of companionship, his evening toilet becomes an act of imperial consolidation and a last line of defense against his own personal backslide into barbarism and degeneracy. Carruthers describes himself as "a young man of condition and fashion, who knows the right people, belongs to the right clubs, has a safe, possibly a brilliant, future in the Foreign Office" (1). A graduate of Oxford and the elite schooling systems which have prepared him to be a minister of empire, he moves back and forth between the twin masculine spheres of the office and the club. And yet, even in the heart of London, protected by these well-established institutions of male comradery, Carruthers is at risk. Due in part to duties at the office and in part to a certain delight in martyrdom, he has turned down all of his social invitations to flee the city and found himself abandoned in London with an empty social calendar. Friendless and alone save for the staff at his club and the various waitpersons with whom he must interact, he compares himself to some colonial official—an "obscure Burmese administrator" (1) to be exact—who must go through the motions of civility in order to avoid going native and relapsing into barbarism.

Fortunately, right before he heads off to dinner, he receives a letter from his old Oxford friend Davies who has invited him to come yachting and shooting in the Baltic Sea. "My pals,"

writes Davies "have had to leave me, and I'm badly in want of another" (4). This invitation to go to the Baltic Sea at the end of the summer, unappealing and bizarre as it sounds, has a profound effect on Carruthers. "All these evils" he muses, looking around London and the "dead" society with which he is forced to interact "oppressed me tonight. And yet I was puzzled to find that somewhere within me there was a faint lightening of the spirits" (5).

While Carruthers is reluctant to accept the invitation at first, the letter causes him to reminisce on his relationship to this man.

> I had known him at Oxford—not as one of my immediate set; but we were a sociable college, and I had seen a good deal of him, liking him for his physical energy combined with a certain simplicity and modesty, though, indeed, he had nothing to be conceited about; liked him, in fact, in the way that at that receptive period one likes many men whom one never keeps up with later. We had both gone down in the same year—three years ago now. I had gone to France and Germany for two years to learn the languages; he had failed for the Indian Civil, and then had gone into a solicitor's office. I had only seen him since at rare intervals, though I admitted to myself that for his part he had clung loyally to what ties of friendship there were between us (6).

Davies is catalogued and classified in this passage based on Carruthers' experience at Oxford, which institution is responsible not only for shaping the type of men who will go on to serve in the Foreign Office, but also for putting these men in relation with one another by providing that "receptive period" in which "one likes many men." The word "receptive" is important here. Despite the rigid patriarchal structures imposed by schools like Oxford, the institution also offers a particularly exploratory space in which different relationships and meetings between men are made possible in a way that they are not in the outside world. Carruthers experiences a "lightening of the spirits" while reading this letter, and he is swept up in a nostalgia for collegiate, school-boy friendships, immersed in reflections which now pulse with homoerotic overtones as he pores over the message. Keeping in mind the advantages which friendship can provide a man, the "receptive period in which one likes many men" takes on new meaning. In

looking for companionship in college, Carruthers was open to receiving men who displayed qualities he himself lacked, qualities that he admired in other men. Carruthers admired Davies' physical energy, which speaks not only to a lack of physicality on Carruthers' part, but an appreciation for the male form as embodied by Davies. This becomes increasingly apparent as Carruthers calls attention to Davies' tanned musculature on many occasions throughout their voyage together. However, where Carruthers has ascended in British society, he recognizes that Davies has been deficient in this area. While he "passed brilliantly into [his] profession and made [his] triumphant *début* in society," Davies had "nothing to be conceited about" having failed for the Indian Civil and later, we find out, for the Navy (6). Davies's has an abundance of physical energy and nowhere to channel it, but Carruthers has a political and social acumen which, the reader comes to realize, is in need of revitalization, as he spends most of his time smoking in his office and going to the club. Early on in the novel, Carruthers is forced to admit that "the plain truth was my work was neither interesting nor important and consisted chiefly at present in smoking cigarettes, in saying that Mr So-and-So was away and would be back about October 1, in being absent for lunch from twelve till two, and in my spare moments making *précis* of—let us say—the less confidential consular reports, and squeezing the results into cast-iron schedules" (2).

Thinking over the letter and the invitation, Carruthers finally condemns Davies as "an eccentric nonentity who bored me!" (6). And yet as he turns the pages of the letter over again, he is lifted by "a gust of fresh air, high spirits, and good fellowship" (7). We might read "eccentricity" here as a type of unfitness or degeneracy in Davies which interpolates and calls upon Carruthers' own latent "eccentricity" which he has not quite recognized as of yet. He finally decides to accept the invitation because "it was a good-natured piece of unselfishness to

join Davies; for he had spoken of the want of a pal, and seemed honestly to be in need of me. I almost clutched at this consideration" (8). One of the good old-boys brought up in the cult of male friendship, Carruthers cannot ignore a man in "want of a pal." And even as he condescends to meet Davies' needs, he confesses that he himself "clutches" almost desperately--practically romantically--at the consideration of this rekindled mutual desire between two old school chums. Both men see in the other something which they themselves are lacking, a first step on the path to the type of mutual confession of vulnerability which will allow each of them to become better men by desiring the best qualities in the other. While Carruthers condescends to be Davies' pal, he is just as much in need of an alternative and extra-institutional structure of companionship which will let him serve the empire outside the bounds of ineffectual institutions.

Each desiring the other man who can "fill" their respective deficiencies if they are willing to "receive" the advantages of this friendship, Davies and Carruthers are on good, but treacherous footing to channel their desire into a redeemed and effective masculinity. The risk they run, of course, is failing to channel this desire in service of the empire and socially productive purposes. Any other exploration of this eccentricity and lightening of spirits will have the opposite effect, ruining both men even further and imperiling English masculinity. The prospect of being stuck aboard a yacht in the Baltic in the middle of winter with a single male travelling companion gives Carruthers pause for reasons beyond inclement weather and sub-standard dinner fare.

Once their journey is underway, however, it occurs to Carruthers that Davies is driven by "a devotion to the sea, wedded to a fire of pent-up patriotism struggling incessantly for an outlet in strenuous physical expression" and yet, he has an "acute sensitiveness to his own limitations, only adding fuel to the flame" (103) Sailing is all he knows, and as Davies himself says, 'I can't

settle down to anything else…I read no end about it, and yet I am a useless outsider. All I've been able to do is to potter about in small boats" (103). Davies' status as an outsider as well as his own knowledge of his "limitations" frustrates his patriotic desire to serve the empire, but it is also what has drawn him to call upon his old pal for help.

Davies, however, does not want to take his expulsion lying down. In fact, he sees his exclusion from service, as a fatal mistake in governmental policy. Instead, he would have Britain turn "outsiders" like him to her advantage. "There must be hundreds of chaps like me" complains Davies

> —I know a good many myself—who know our coasts like a book—shoals, creeks, tides, rocks; there's nothing in it, it's only practice. They ought to make some use of us as a naval reserve…Using every man of what reserves we've got, there's about enough to man the fleet on a war footing, and no more. They've tinkered with fishermen, and merchant sailors, and yachting hands, but every one of them ought to be got hold of; and the colonies, too. Is there the ghost of a doubt that if war broke out there'd be wild appeals for volunteers, aimless cadging, hurry, confusion, waste? (103)

Imagining the scramble to assemble a standing body of fighting men in the event of war, Davies essentially describes the debacle of raising troops for the South African War less than a decade earlier. The problem, in Davies' mind, however, is that the admiralty cannot seem to make use of the men it *does* have at its disposal. In short, Davies's exclusion from the service, and the exclusion of others like him, is a fatal mistake that must be rectified by redeeming these emasculated men and allowing them to function in an irregular capacity—such as a coast guard who is intimately familiar with shifting shores around England—in order to bolster the flagship institutions of the empire. What he is also suggesting here, however, is an alternative state-sanctioned comradeship for irregular men, for "chaps like me." Davies is an outsider not only because he is unfit to serve, but also because he has been expelled from institutional structures of

male comradery. He goes on to blame his exile and this oversight on the decadence and complacency engendered by imperial growth, saying that

> we've been safe so long, and grown so rich, that we've forgot what we owe it to. But there's no excuse for those blockheads of statesmen, as they call themselves, who are paid to see things as they are…it's only when kicked and punched by civilian agitators, a mere handful of men who get sneered at for their pains, that they wake up, do some work, point proudly to it, and go to sleep again, till they get another kick (103).

While Carruthers is the beneficiary of a bright future in the Foreign Office, and a promising young socialite, he too is in need of redemption. On top of the fact that his solitude in London in the dead season is a threat to his English masculinity, he belongs to the class of blockheaded statesmen in need of waking up. Even though Davies is an "outsider" deemed unfit to serve the empire, Carruthers' status as recognized insider within the great machine of empire has not rendered him more useful to Britain. Davies' physical energy being wasted off the coasts of England contrasts sharply with Carruthers' smoking and loafing in the Foreign Office. Both men, then, require redemption through the forging of a friendship which is supple enough to accommodate both social insider and outsider, while organizing their combined energy in such a way as to circumvent the very institutions that simultaneously render Carruthers--and deem Davies—impotent.

But if the two men are to save England from invasion they must first address the problem of Davies' infatuation with the damsel in distress, Fräulein Dollman. Carruthers, socially intelligent animal that he is, recognizes this difficulty immediately, and the obstacle that it will form in carrying out their plans. He asks Davies "How did the daughter strike you? Did she look English too?" And as Davies begins to fumble and flush, Carruthers muses that

> Two men cannot discuss a woman freely without a deep foundation of intimacy, and, until this day, the subject had never arisen between us in any form. It was the last that was likely to, for I could have divined that Davies would have met it with an armour of reserve. He was busy putting on his armour now; yet I could not help feeling a little

> brutal as I saw how badly he jointed his clumsy suit of mail. Our ages were the same, but I laugh now to think how old and *blasé* I felt as the flush warmed his brown skin, and he slowly propounded the verdict, 'Yes, I think she did.' (81)

The language Carruthers uses here is charged with a certain homoeroticism, even as he pushes Davies to admit his desire for this young woman. Admission of this desire, is the only way the two men can develop a "deep foundation of intimacy." Davies' resistance and reservation to this intimacy is met with martial language on Carruthers' part who scoffs at his armor and feels "brutal" as he sees how badly it is jointed, identifying points where he might penetrate his friend's defenses. Engaging Davies in this way, Carruthers again turns his attention to his friend's body and the "flush" which "warmed his brown skin." While Davies certainly was in need of a pal when he wrote the letter, it is Carruthers who pushes hard on this trip to solidify their desire for one another into a foundation of intimacy. However, it is precisely the channeling and displacement of this desire into the figure of Fräulein Dollman which allows them to not only solidify their friendship, but make their desire productive. In a classic Sedgwickian structuring of homosociality, the two men must route their intimacy via traffic in women in order to solidify their position within masculine social structures. In this instance, the confession of Davies' desire for this woman—a desire which, in and of itself, threatens to emasculate by positioning Davies not only in pursuit of Fräulein Dollman, but perhaps unequal to the task of winning her—is necessary for the solidification of Carruthers' and Davies' bond. Introducing her into conversation is the first step towards structuring a relationship in which the two men can work together to restore the Fräulein's English maidenhood, and further solidify Davies' masculinity by facilitating their romantic partnership. But Davies, so adept at navigating uncertain waters, is out of his depth here and the level of intimacy required to secure Carruthers' help in winning the fräulein over is something which he wants to fend off. If Davies wants to

redeem his masculinity and save this woman, his desire to do so must be organized within a structure of male intimacy and a hierarchy of mentorship to which he must give in.

It is not until Carruthers meets Fräulein Dollman and Davies introduces him as "meiner Freund" [sic] that they can overcome this obstacle to their intimacy.

> 'There he is,' said Davies. Never did his 'meiner Freund, Carruthers,' sound so pleasantly in my ears; never so discordantly the 'Fräulein Dollman' that followed it. Every syllable of the four was a lie. Two honest English eyes were looking up into mine; an honest English hand—is this insular nonsense? Perhaps so, but I stick to it-a brown firm hand—no, not so very small, my sentimental reader—was clasping mine. Of course I had strong reasons, apart from the racial instinct, for thinking her to be English, but I believe that if I had none at all I should at any rate have congratulated Germany on a clever bit of plagiarism" (194).

Only once Carruthers gets Davies to articulate this triangular relationship ("freund—fräulein—freund") does he agree that not only is the fräulein innocent in the plot, but that she is racially pure and romantically suitable for Davies. Davies' desire for the "same" but better in Carruthers has now been routed through a desire for the same as manifested in the fräulein's latent Englishness. While the homoerotic desire between the two men and Davies' desire for a pseudo-German woman threaten his Englishness, the revelation of domestic sameness in both objects of desire allow this triangle to actually consolidate his English masculinity. He desires the best of Carruthers' qualities that he himself lacks and he desires this German girl who is in possession of "two honest English eyes" and "an honest English hand." The link between the desire for domestic "sameness" and national security is made apparent when Carruthers declares that Davies "loved this girl and he loved his country, two simple passions which for the time absorbed his whole moral capacity" (214). Firmly grounded now on a patriarchal footing born of a male intimacy which has not only vetted, but been displaced and channeled through the suitably English female object of desire, Davies is now positioned to act on his love of country, despite his previous limitations.

As the two men develop their friendship and work outside the purview of the British Admiralty, their unique and unorthodox companionship allows them to be more effective together, providing each other with the qualities that they themselves lack. Carruthers provides a canny conduit through which Davies can exercise his patriotism and romantic fervor, and Davies lends Carruthers *esprit de corps* and knowledge of alien and unpredictable hydrography, lack of which have prevented him from doing real work in the Foreign Office. The story ends with Fräulein Dollman rescued, Herr Dollman dead (he tosses himself overboard on the way to England upon capture) and the two men *en route* to London with their tale. The text concludes with a note from a third party and self-proclaimed "unbiased" editor who, upon reviewing the documents of the case, confirms the Royal Navy's ignorance of such plots, and advocates for the adoption of a protocol which would allow chaps like Davies—i.e., men deemed "unfit" but who might yet still be of service to the empire—to form a reserve force to defend England. He concludes that "if by any mischance the British discovered what was afoot in good time, and were able to send over a swarm of light-draught boats" (such as Davies sails) "which could elude the German warships…the expedition [would be] doomed." The editor adds that such a revelation "might well make my two adventurers glow with triumph" (338).

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Towards a Less-Lonely Modernity

Fears of degeneracy, reverse colonization, and anxiety over the fate of the race were rampant in England at the end of the nineteenth century and ratcheted up to a fever pitch in the wake of the disasters in the South African Wars. A great deal of contemporary literature and modern criticism is explicitly concerned with these themes of regression and decay in late-Victorian and Edwardian England, and I argue that these changes must be recognized as the

transformations of an empire that was shaping, and being shaped by, increasingly large colonial spaces and groups of people. A fact that is central to this argument, and one that was recognized by late-Victorian and Edwardian cultural critics, is that there is no separation between the body of the individual and the body politic or the borders of empire. Mutations and transformations in one will inevitably trigger and respond to mutations and transformations in the other. Therefore, if national and imperial borders begin to shift, or become uncertain and unknowable, so do the very delimits of the individual English body. And just as national borders become subject to invasion by foreign bodies and influences, so do individual bodies suffer the same vulnerability. In the face of imperialist growth that challenged and reshaped the tenets of English national life, it quickly became evident that more and more English men, particularly those in the urban and suburban spaces which were undergoing the most radical transformations as a result of imperialism, were becoming "unfit," "inefficient," and "degenerate." The very structures of patriarchy which were responsible for expanding Greater Britain began to unravel themselves as England became decentered and Englishness de-essentialized. *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, *The Spies of the Kaiser*, and *The Riddle of the Sands* all respond to this cultural and bodily plasticity which challenged patriarchal precepts of English masculinity, by imagining a more elastic, expansive, and redemptive form of male friendship which might repatriate unfit men who had been cast as cultural outsiders. The male bonds in these stories meet the instability of their cultural moment with a flexibility of companionship which allows for characteristics traditionally deemed degenerate or "other" to be turned to the advantage of England and empire.

Despite the fact that Watson and Holmes have both been irreparably damaged by their contact with the empire and the foreign objects which have invaded their own bodies, their respective admiration for that which is best in their companion allows them not only to reimpose

control over the permeability and mutability of their physicality, but also able to function as gate-keepers of Englishness due to their experience with identifying and expelling foreign and corrupting influences. The caveat, however, is that the queerness of their work and interests must be hidden by the public face of Scotland Yard, which takes all the credit. In *Spies*, despite Jacox's social, physical, and intellectual inferiority to his friend Raymond, their friendship allows him to participate in the task of domestic security. The lopsided nature of this relationship however, wherein Raymond receives little or nothing in return from his friendship with Jacox, means that Jacox's body is vulnerable, and prone to effraction, and as such, assaults on England are continually displaced onto his own body. Finally, *Riddle* attempts to resolve some of the instabilities of these unlikely male friendship by routing the relationship through a female love interest. Even though Davies fails for the Indian Civil Service and the Navy, his status as "unfit" outsider allows him a peculiar knowledge of plastic national borders. While this is a space in which Carruthers is utterly inept, their friendship and alliance—made legitimate via Fräulein Dollman--allows Davies to mobilize his otherness in defense of England.

Each of these friendships functions differently and experiences its own set of limitations. Holmes and Watson are forced to work exclusively behind the scenes, allowing Scotland Yard to maintain a public façade of efficiency. Jacox and Raymond, under a cosmopolitan influence, fail to structure their homosocial desire appropriately and, left alone without the tempering presence of Vera, asymptotically approach a dangerous homoeroticism which is only diverted at the last moment by the men of Scotland Yard bursting through windows and saving the day. Davies and Carruthers' friendship requires a female object of desire in order to defuse the homoerotic tension between them. Even then, their companionship is eventually decentered in the text as the

narrative gives way to an authoritative editorial voice which attempts to transform the fruits of their partnership into institutional and governmental action against invasion from Germany.

Sarah Cole's dazzling work on male friendship and modernity covers the complexity of male intimacy in all its (im)possibilities, contradictions, and ideological deployments. In her readings of male bonds in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, she sees a teleological progression in which "an idealized, often utopian notion of male friendship that governed many literary and social conventions in the late nineteenth century" moves towards "an image of modernity as reflecting the wreckage of that very ideal" (*Modernism* 2). In short, modernity—and particularly a post-World War modernity—promised masculine alienation, male loneliness, and friendlessness. The previous chapters in this study look at how the Edwardians grappled with radical change and transformation in dramatically new ways which, I argue, informed modernist responses to similar issues. The texts I explore in this chapter, however, seem to adamantly resist, and move away from, the apparent inevitability of masculine alienation and male loneliness that modernity promises. Rather, *Study, Sign, Spies*, and *Riddle* attempt to deal with imperial forces which make national and bodily borders plastic, thereby undercutting the very patriarchal structures which facilitated both imperialism and cultural conceptions of masculinity. Regardless of the differences in these texts, and in the friendships presented therein, each of them shies away from the idea of leaving "unfit" men, who no longer meet nineteenth-century expectations of masculinity, out in the cold of modernity. Instead, the friendships imagined here attempt to achieve reform, compromise, and redemption by embracing expanded definitions of masculinity in which two unfit men can become whole by recognizing and addressing the needs and shortcomings of their respective companions. This structured desire for the "same-but-better-other" forges new and unconventional male bonds, instead of submitting to a cultural condition

in which huge swaths of the male population are considered degenerate and unfit. Rather than yielding to a future of alienation and friendless then, these texts attempt to imagine a different future--perhaps no less modern in scope--in which old models of masculinity become malleable and reformed in a national and cultural project of maintaining and promoting Englishness and empire.

Chapter IV
Domestic Violence

While the demands of an expanding empire were mounting an assault on English masculinity, the patriarchal institutions of British government and hallowed Victorian domesticity were also fighting a war on the home front. The suffragist movement had been picking up momentum throughout the nineteenth century, and many writers like Thomas Hardy, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot attempted to complicate, problematize, or reimagine the figure of "The Angel in the House." But the Edwardian era witnessed a distinct militarization of the movement for female enfranchisement, a violent precipitation of social change which, I argue, was buoyed along by the same plastic forces which yielded the invasion novel and its accompanying imperial saber-rattling. The foundation of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903 represented a marked change in tactics for the suffragists. The WSPU operated on a program based on "Deeds, not words," and began a campaign of arson attacks, marches, organized vandalism, and raids on government buildings which would last until the First World War. In 1931, in a speech given to The Women's Service League, Virginia Woolf declared that, as she had tried to invent herself as a writer, The Angel in the House "bothered me and wasted my time and so tormented me that at last I killed her… I turned upon her and caught her by the throat. I did my best to kill her… I took up the inkpot and flung it at her. She died hard." But the

war against the institution of Victorian domesticity began well before Woolf's own violent struggle with the oppressive angel. This chapter argues that the genre of "New Woman" fiction as it coincided with the radicalization of suffragism, ought to be considered as a parallel genre to invasion fiction which was equally popular, controversial, and sensational, and further, that the genre itself deployed and mobilized the same themes and tropes of instability, suspicion, violence, and border transgression which define the invasion novel. Indeed, a number of critics have already drawn the points of connection between a new and uncertain century, a faltering empire, and the revolutionary nature of "the Woman Question." Ann Ardis has argued that the New Woman "was accused of instigating the second fall of man" and suggested that the novels which accompanied the advent of the New Woman were, often times, positively apocalyptic (1-2). Elaine Showalter sees the violent backlash to the Woman Question as "typical of the *fin de siècle*. In periods of cultural insecurity, when there are fears of regression and degeneration, the longing for strict border controls around the definition of gender, as well as race, class, and nationality, becomes especially intense" (4). And, as Showalter also notes, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar adroitly draw parallels between colonial unrest and domestic female unrest which coincided at the very height of empire and were both seen as serious threats to Britain (36). While these critics are largely focused—as am I--on locating the role of the New Woman, and the New Woman novelist in relation to modernism, I want to do so by attending to the ways in which New Woman fiction interacts, overlays, and moves with the late-Victorian and Edwardian invasion novel. If we think about New Woman fiction as operating in the same register as the invasion novel, we are able to mobilize an invasive vocabulary which will allow us to think more critically about the ways in which suffragism as represented in these novels broke open borders, collapsed distinctions between center and periphery, and smuggled explosive change out of the

domestic sphere and into the public sphere. As we think about a movement which sought to destabilize the institutions of empire which were also at work in the oppression of the female class, framing the conversation in terms of the invasion novel will allow us greater insight into the types of violence and change these authors were grappling with at the turn of the century.

The New Woman novel, like the invasion novel, often deploys catastrophe as the backdrop for exploring invasive change, and the appearance of hostile women in the public sphere was as alien and apocalyptic for a *fin de siècle* reading public as were Wells' Martians--and equally enthralling. Where the invasion novel imagined fictitious armies assaulting England, the New Woman novel attempted to represent, and process, the real armies of organized women who were marching through English streets to the very doorstep of British Imperial Power. Just like future war stories, the New Woman novel is not a monolithic genre, and different schools of writers advocated varying degrees of reform, resistance, rejection, or revolution. Yet despite their differences, these texts reflected the fears, hopes, and anxieties of an English readership who saw the public sphere of patriarchal power under attack. No less was at stake than imagining a new English political and cultural reality on the other side of this very real invasion. Where Victorian suffragism and literature advocated a more tempered and measured reform, the advent of the Edwardian WSPU ushered in an era of plastic explosivity which very literally dealt in incendiaries in order to effect change. This chapter examines four texts ranging from Victorian adventure fiction to high-modern experimental writing, and each is concerned with the figure of the New Woman in the new century. Thinking through these stories in the language of invasive fiction, I show that the type of work being done in each novel is deeply concerned with violent and illicit border transgressions.

The first part of the chapter reads H.R. Haggard's *She* (1887) and Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915) side by side. While this pairing is unlikely for a multitude of reasons, I suggest that both novels see female enfranchisement as an invasive threat to the imperial status quo which results in the expulsion of the principal female characters from each of the texts. Of course, Haggard and Woolf approach this phenomenon from opposing angles, and where this expulsion is figured as a triumph of English male patriarchy in Haggard's writing, it reads as tragedy in Woolf's. Both stories explore the social logic by which women are instructed to stay inside or outside of specific spaces. When a woman threatens to move from the inside out, or the outside in, violence is sure to follow. In H.R. Haggard's *She,* the main character Horace Holland is a Cambridge fellow, famous among his peers for his misogyny, and entirely invested in the project of keeping women out of his house, out of his relationships with other men, and in the final analysis, keeping powerful and disruptive women out of England. Stationed on the ramparts of masculine influence, when Holland is finally forced to abandon his post due to the inexorable feminine forces he encounters, Nature herself steps in to return the world to order, banishing the powerful female antagonist, Ayesha, from the novel. Similarly, in Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, Rachel Vinrace's lover, Terrence Hewitt, is petrified by the idea that for most of history, hosts of women have been living interior lives, behind closed doors, thinking, feeling, and perhaps plotting, in secret. In horror, he realizes that, if he were a woman, he would become violent in protest. The prospect of all of these women leaving their homes and coming out into the world is deeply troubling to him, especially as he realizes that Rachel is one such woman who, out of the house (and out of England) insists on having thoughts and feelings which are threatening not only to him, but the institutions in which they live and love. Ultimately, Woolf's heroine is also expelled from the novel by Nature, but not because she cannot be tolerated by the world, but

because she, tragically, cannot be accommodated by it, and there is no place for her therein. Both writers develop powerful female characters who constitute a grave threat to patriarchal social structures. Where Haggard's literary universe is invested in eradicating this destabilizing force, Woolf's world interrogates the institutions which would hamper and harm Rachel Vinrace. In both instances however, a destabilizing, transformative femininity is ultimately expelled from the novel.

The second part of the chapter will engage in a similarly unlikely pairing, as I read H.G. Wells' attempt at New Woman fiction in *Ann Veronica* (1909), alongside Victoria Cross's *Anna Lombard* (1901). While both of these texts are complex and problematic in their own right, each of the female protagonists in these stories wages a mighty war against the status quo and carves out some way of living and making meaning in the ruins of the Victorian domestic sphere which they have blown apart into something new. While some critics have read *Ann Veronica* rather ungenerously as an ineffectual piece of New Woman literature, or even as an actively misogynistic comment on the Woman Question, Ann Veronica's character manages to develop a capacity for violence and willingness to die for her beliefs that destabilizes the pose she seems to adopt as the "submissive" wife at the end of the novel.

Similarly, Victoria Cross's Anna Lombard thoroughly dismantles the stability and acceptability of her own marriage by literalizing and manifesting the violence inherent in the traditional Victorian marriage contract. As Gerald Ethridge, Anna's suitor, fetishizes her independent spirit and fantasizes about having absolute control over it, Anna exposes the violence involved in the demand that she curbs her natural instincts and desires. When Gerald wishes Anna to override her maternal instinct at the end of the novel and direct her affections towards him rather than her illegitimate, mixed-race child, Anna responds by murdering the

baby. While the murder exposes the cruel logic by which Anna is supposed to smother her own motherly instincts, the child's murder also accomplishes Gerald's racist project of expelling the Oriental other from the novel, further intertwining the violence of imperialism with the domestic violence of weaponized matrimony. Unsettlingly, the novel does not cast judgement on Anna, and the story ends "happily ever after" with Gerald and Anna moving comfortably into their new life without the baby. The consummation of the traditional romance plot in the face of infanticide challenges the entire domestic novel genre as it literalizes the violence enacted when women are forced to kill their natural desires and instincts in order to adhere to social standard. Despite the preservation of some semblance of a traditional marriage contract at the end of each of these novels, both women succeed in smuggling some radical modes of resistance and revolution into the resolution of the plot, suggesting that even the seemingly impregnable institution of marriage offers a suitable beachhead on which the New Woman movement might mount an attack.

This project ends with an examination of New Woman fiction because, at the turn of the century, the genre carried the same potency and popular appeal as did the invasion story and operated along many of the same lines. Indeed, the explosive plasticity which propelled the militants of the suffragist movement had its roots in the same pressures and changes created by the expansion of the empire. As Greater Britain continued to grow and expand, the distinctions and boundaries between the imperial heart of England and the colonial outskirts became increasingly complex and porous, prompting an outpouring of literature anxious to explore and imagine the invasion of the center by the periphery. The New Woman novel was similarly invested in imagining invasive deconstructions of borders, and as Britain wrangled with a colonial sphere which was increasingly influencing and decentering English essentialism, the New Woman novel attempted to tear down the walls which separated the feminine/masculine,

private/public spheres, and attack the very institutions which attempted to maintain these binary social structures. It's no coincidence, that each of these novels exports some of its violence to the colonies and the Continent, capitalizing on colonial and imperial spaces outside of England as inherently culturally unstable locales in which the invasive forces of feminism might marshal, and train before mounting on all-out assault on England herself. The New Woman fiction that proliferated in the years before the First World War articulated a threat to English national culture which was no less radical and destructive than that posed by the traditional invasion novel.

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In the end, she would, I had little doubt, assume absolute rule over the British dominions.
–Horace Holland, She

The relationship between *She*, the Woman Question, and the advent of the New Woman figure has been well-established. Haggard's late-Victorian adventure fiction is infamous for its hyper-masculine championing of empire, fraternity, and misogyny and "She," the eponymous character whose real name is Ayesha, is widely regarded as a direct response to the empowerment of female otherness which Haggard deemed a threat to society and the empire generally. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar write, "Haggard's semidivine femme fatale… [was a symptom] of a complex of late Victorian anxieties that were exacerbated not just by the battle of the sexes…but also by a series of other key cultural changes, including the feared 'recessional' of the British empire" (7). While Gilbert, Gubar and others have gone on to show that Haggard's imperial adventure tale is bound up in many of the same projects of masculine bond-making and empire building that I discussed in the last chapter, this particular rendition of New Woman literature imagines a very literal battle between the sexes in which the British Empire only narrowly avoids being overthrown by an extraordinary woman from Africa. The

invasion novel proper turns on the anxiety that England and the empire could become subject to the same sort of penetration, conquest, and subjugation that Britain exercised over much of the rest of the world. And while the action of Haggard's *She* revolves around a group of men penetrating into the very heart of Africa in an attempt to subjugate or otherwise kill a threatening "otherness" in the form of the mythic Ayesha, Haggard is more concerned, at every turn within the story, of keeping women *out*; out of relationships between men, out of the house, and—in the final analysis of the story—out of England. Indeed, the three main characters Horace Holland, Leo Vincey, and Job are constantly involved in the project of keeping women from penetrating into their lives before they even leave Cambridge, England. The novel begins with Holland refusing to let a woman into his house to help him raise Leo, and ends with a realization that, if the all-powerful Ayesha is not stopped, she will sail to England and dismantle the empire. *She* is an invasion story in the vein of both a William Le Queux novel and Wells' *The War of the Worlds*. Like the insidious enemy in a Le Queux novel, Haggard's women are always plotting to infiltrate and dismantle the male institutions of power and must be found out and rebuffed at all costs. And like the alien invaders in Wells, the possibility that a woman could be the lord of men is so horrifying it can only be figured in terms of the supernatural, and only destroyed by a divine intervention which reaffirms English (and in this case English masculinity's) natural superiority over all things.

If the cult of domesticity and The Angel in the House were critical cultural buttresses of a private sphere that undergirded male structures of governance and empire in the public sphere, Haggard's novel is idiosyncratic in its attempt to expel women completely from the home-space. The novel opens on a pair of Cambridge students, Horace Holland and his dying friend Mr. Vincey. Before Vincey dies, he tells Holland an odd story and pairs it with an even stranger

request. He tells Holland that he has a young child, born of a Greek mother who passed away. He asks him to take guardianship over the boy and reveal to him the contents of a very old trunk on the boy's twenty-fifth birthday. Holland agrees, graduates from Cambridge, becomes a fellow of the college and begins to set up his newly-adopted family life.

Holland is exceedingly ugly and at one time was spurned by a woman who only showed him interest because she mistakenly thought him wealthy. As a result, he swears off women and becomes a famous misogynist who "was popularly supposed to be as much afraid of a woman as most people are of a mad dog" (12). As such, he refuses to bring a woman into his house to help raise Leo Vincey, his new ward. "I would have no woman" declares Holland "to lord it over me about the child, and steal his affections from me. The boy was old enough to do without female assistance, so I set to work to hunt up a suitable male attendant" (29). Holland refuses female care for the child on the basis that such a position would put her in a situation of power where she could "steal" his affections. The language here is important as it draws a contrast between Holland's vision for his entirely patriarchal family unit and one in which a woman is ceded power and can become a "lord" in his home. Holland wants an "attendant" for the boy, a word which figures the position within the household unit as more of a military rank than a nursemaid. Furthermore, while the phrase "hunt up" simply metaphorizes the hiring process, it also connotes the direct, forward, male activity of hunting which becomes the primary form of bonding for the three men during Leo's formative years and a sort of phallo-imperial-affirming activity which is described in excruciating detail during their African exploit. But if an "attendant" would serve in a system which raised the boy to do direct, manly things, such as hunting, the addition of a woman to Holland's household, he fears, would lay bare the boys "affections," a vulnerable and precious currency which, once exposed, might be stolen by the woman, and used against him.

The formulation here sets up a number of dichotomies (stealing/hunting, affecting/attending, suitability/lording) which begin to get to the heart of Holland's anxiety about women and their ability to destabilize and de-essentialize patriarchal power within the domestic sphere.

Recounting these years, Holland declares that "few sons have been loved as I love Leo, and few fathers know the deep and continuous affection that Leo bears to me" (30). Haggard's formulation of this strange family unit is remarkable. Including the trusty servant Job, who Holland takes on to help care for the boy, this is a completely masculine familial unit, controlled entirely be men and for the purposes of strengthening the bonds between men. Indeed, the father-son relationship between Holland and Leo is almost parthenogenic in its expulsion of the maternal from the familial structure. Practically excised from the narrative altogether, Leo's mother is relegated to a grave in Greece. Holland's fatherhood is born out of male companionship at college and manifests with the miraculous arrival of a fully formed child by the name of Leo Vincey who is instantly devoted to his new warden. Holland's intention here, and by extension Haggard's, is to articulate a domestic and familial life completely free from feminine influence in which the bonds of masculinity are tempered into something approaching the sacred, even going so far as to challenge the notion of the Angel in the House as a position which cedes the feminine too much power. This consolidation of masculinity, however, is always under threat of invasion and even Holland admits that "I had only one trouble about him, and that was that every young woman who came across him, or, if not every one, nearly so, would insist on falling in love with him" (31). Female desire then, and female sexuality, are positioned as direct threats to this domestic empire of masculinity. When Leo's twenty-fifth birthday finally arrives and Leo opens the box bequeathed him by his father, this small family of father-brother-

sons will discover that the late Vincey senior has tasked his son with a centuries-old mission to travel to Africa and kill the figure of feminine power and feminine desire *par excellence*.

The trunk is filled with letters and artifacts which broadly claim that the Vincey line is descended from an ancient race of Egyptian nobility. Millenia ago, a powerful sorceress in Africa fell in love with Kalikrates, the patriarch of Leo's noble lineage, and when he spurned the sorceress, she killed him. His offspring have been tasked for thousands of years with finding this woman and killing her, and that task has now fallen to Leo. If Holland was troubled by the uncontrollable desire of the young women who threaten to break up his domestic bliss in Cambridge, he will soon discover that this hyperbolic exemplar of female desire and power poses a similar threat on a scale of an infinitely larger magnitude. None of the men quite believe in the contents of the trunk, but Leo determines to go for the sake of adventure and Holland and Job accompany him. The trio travels to darkest Africa and undergoes the *pro forma* trials and tribulations of the adventure novel including storms at sea, life-threatening fevers, confrontations with hostile natives, and battles with strange beasts. The entire African scene, however, eventually morphs into a set-background wherein Haggard can meditate on the relationship between the sexes by introducing the Amahagger, a primitive, yet dystopian matriarchal society in which women have superior social positions and everyone is ruled by *She-who-must-be-obeyed* or simply, She.

Ultimately, Haggard is incapable of imagining a true matriarchal society with a female ruling class and articulates instead a social system in which women are privileged and empowered because men have allowed it to be so. In a strange, bastardized model of courtly love, the Amahagger worship and obey the women in their society, but only to a point. Explaining this system to Holland, one of the elders of the Amahagger says "In this country the

women do what they please. We worship them, and give them their way, because without them the world could not go on; they are the source of life" (118). The Amahagger's treatment of women exaggeratedly mirrors the cult of The Angel in the House and the Victorian maternal injunction which tasked English women with the propagation of the race. But it is in response to this power to create life that Haggard invents his purely-patriarchal household, and as the Amahagger elder continues his explanation, it takes a dark turn which also repudiates the possibility of actual female power in this social model. "We worship them" he continues "…till at last they get unbearable, which…they do about every second generation," at which point "we rise, and kill the old ones as an example to the young ones and to show them that we are the strongest. My poor wife was killed that way three years ago. It was very sad, but to tell thee the truth, my son, my life has been happier since…" (118). Written amidst public debate about the Woman Question and on the eve of the advent of the New Woman figure and the WSPU, Haggard's description of the Amahagger rebuffs the idea of social change in which women are "given their way." Ultimately, in Haggard's world, this matriarchal society figures as an unnatural perversion of human evolution. It is no accident that the phenomenon of a female-privileged social structure is introduced alongside such exotic and backwards customs as cannibalism, ritual sacrifice, and barbarous ceremonial executions. Locating female social power within this constellation of nineteenth-century abstractions of uncivilized and "savage" peoples prepares the reader for its eventual conquest and expulsion from the text. Significantly, however, even this primitive society, which evolution and history seems to have by-passed, is unable to fully invert the most basic and primordial of Universal and Natural truth—the superiority of man over all things. The bigenerational femicide figures as a recurring, return to balance, an affirmation of Natural Law which anticipates Ayesha's own demise at the end of the novel.

Ayesha sits atop this uncivilized and unnatural matriarchal social structure. She is a sorceress who holds the power of life, death, and immortality in her hands. After killing Kallikrates millennia ago when he spurned her, Ayesha has been waiting thousands of years for him to return to her once more, reincarnated in the form of Leo, so that she might attempt to win his love once more. The trouble Holland faced in fending off the young women who fell in love with Leo was nothing compared to this, and indeed, neither of them prove up to the task of killing Ayesha and avenging Leo's forefathers, precisely because they both fall under the power of her spell and become infatuated with her otherworldly beauty and power. "We could no more have left her than a moth can leave the light that destroys it" recounts Holland. "We were like confirmed opium-eaters: in our moments of reason we well knew the deadly nature of our pursuit, but we certainly were not prepared to abandon its terrible delights" (241). While a number of critics have thought about Ayesha's "primordial female otherness which may have been the real source of male anxieties about New Women" I want to focus on the ways in which she constitutes a literal threat of invasion which is only just narrowly avoided at the last minute (Gilbert and Gubar 7). Holland compares Ayesha's power over himself and his ward as the equivalent of an opium addiction, and as we have seen in the previous chapter, the deployment of this oriental drug denotes a destabilizing invasion which de-essentializes Englishness and threatens the security of the empire. But Ayesha represents a far more serious and immediate threat to England than the identity-draining narcotics of the Far-East.

Ayesha reveals that the source of her power and agelessness is an eternal flame in which she bathed before becoming immortal. She invites Leo to enter the flame as well and extends the privilege to Holland as Leo's guardian and her companion. They are both reluctant, but powerless to refuse and as they discuss the future, Ayesha calmly explains that they will travel

back to Leo's home-country together where she will ascend to power. With horror, Holland realizes that "in the end, she would, I had little doubt, assume absolute rule over the British dominions, and probably over the whole earth, and though I was sure that she would speedily make ours the most glorious and prosperous empire that the world has ever seen, it would be at the cost of a terrible sacrifice of life" (255). Haggard's novel reads as a series of invasion plots launched by women against the patriarchal order. Holland is able to defend against the maternal, domestic, and romantic incursions that women would otherwise make into his patriarchal sphere in England. The matriarchal power structure which Holland encounters in Africa is kept in check by the violence of recurring masculine revolt. But the threat that Ayesha poses to England, the empire, and the order of the Western world, both he and Leo are powerless to stop. Monstrous feminine desire wedded to supernatural powers of seduction are too much for mere mortal men to overcome, and Holland and Leo stand poised to let all of civilization crumble in the face of Ayesha's overpowering will. Haggard resolves this issue and foils her invasion plot by deploying a *deus ex machina* in the form of an active Universal or Natural Law. When Ayesha steps into the "flame of Life" in order to show Leo its safety, something horrible happens. Suddenly, as she calls to Leo, she ages thousands of years in the space of a few moments. "Smaller she grew, and smaller yet, till she was no larger than a baboon. Now the skin was puckered into a million wrinkles, and on the shapeless face was the stamp of unutterable age" (292). Her reduction, at the climax of the novel, into something ape-like reaffirms her place as an absolute other and sub-species in a social-Darwinist schematic wherein men are evolutionarily ordained to rule. Holland and Leo are overcome by horror and confusion and Job actually perishes from shock. In the end, Holland can only conclude that she "would have revolutionized society, and even perchance have changed the destiny of Mankind. Thus, she opposed herself against the eternal Law, and,

strong though she was, by it was swept back to nothingness—swept back with shame and hideous mockery!" (294). The relationship between the femicide of the Amahagger and Ayesha's own demise reaffirms the Haggardian assertion that male social superiority is a universally acknowledged biological and divine imperative. However, it also underscores the threat that disrupted gender relations pose to the empire. Ayesha exists for millennia in an obscure corner of the globe, beyond even the farthest reaches of the empire. It is not until she reveals her plan to sail to England and seize power that Nature intervenes and sweeps her out of existence. Thus, Haggard equates the rise of women into positions of power with the catastrophic collapse of outside and center. Significantly, this equation also elevates British dominion over the world to the status of Universal Law, a rule of Nature which is no less inviolable than the biological imperative that men rule society.

Haggard's novel addresses the Woman Question directly by casting female political power as an invasive force that threatens not only the empire and its dominions but promises to change the very fate of mankind. Haggard positions his fantasy of an all-male domestic unit against the strange matriarchal society of the Amahagger and Ayesha's terrible feminine power. The three men are able to penetrate the depths of Africa and even subdue the Amahagger, establishing common ground upon their preservation of absolute patriarchal power. Holland, Leo, and Job, however, are powerless against the consolidated force of female desire and power embodied by Ayesha. Like the micro-organisms which defeat Wells' Martians, where ordinary English men will fail, the very Laws of Nature will intervene to ensure British superiority. Such a figure as Ayesha, dangerous though she may be, is, in Haggard's estimation, an abomination to Nature and will be "swept back with shame and hideous mockery." Ayesha's shocking death

reaffirms British Imperial exceptionalism and right-to-rule, while serving as Haggard's final word in the novel on the Woman Question.

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If I were a woman I'd blow someone's brains out.
–Terence Hewitt, The Voyage Out

While Ayesha is burned to death by the eternal flame, the "dangerous" female protagonist of Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, is also expelled from the novel by (super)natural forces when she contracts a tropical fever and dies. And while there may be no stranger pairing of texts to read side by side than these two stories of adventure fiction and high-modern experimentation, I argue that the death of Rachel Vinrace in Woolf's first novel is precipitated by the same threat of violence and catastrophic transformation which Haggard embodied in the character of Ayesha. But while Haggard's expulsion of the feminine from *She* figures as a triumphant preservation of empire and masculine privilege, the violence that Rachel represents is a socially constructed fiction, and her demise is represented instead as the world's tragic inability to make space for a young woman who does not adhere to normative social standards.

At the beginning of this project, I referenced Virginia Woolf as one of the critical figures responsible for attempting to delineate a sharp contrast between her Edwardian predecessors and Georgian (read: modern) contemporaries. Singling out Wells, and by association a number of the popular writers mentioned in this dissertation who wrote for polemical, sensational, or purely financial reasons, Woolf threw up a wall, positioned about the year 1910, in order to barricade herself and her immediate set of intellectual elites against the incursions of the Edwardian writers into her own modern moment. If part of Woolf's metaphorical Künstlerroman involved a call to write which necessitated killing the Angel in the House, it also required a repudiation and erasure of any lineage to her Edwardian predecessors. The paternal rejection in "Mr. Bennet and Mrs.

Brown" is decidedly patriarchal. Wells, Galsworthy, and Bennet take the full bore of her salvo while the female writers of the Edwardian era who were engaged in the business of writing the New Woman into existence are largely left alone, even if they are also walled-out. The late-Victorian and Edwardian New Woman novel garnered a great deal of scholarly attention at the end of the twentieth-century and much ink has been spilled in the last thirty years making sound arguments—often anticipating more recent interventions made by Douglas Mao, Rebecca Walkowitz, and Paul Saint-Amour to embrace notions of 'bad' or 'weak' modernism—in favor of considering many works of Edwardian New Woman fiction as decidedly modern in terms of both form and content. More recently, Molly Hite has suggested that we must see the "feminist polemical novel as one of [Woolf's] early influences" which "affirms that insofar as modernist innovation is a continuation as well as a reaction, Woolf's novels took on themes and criticisms pioneered by female writers of the maternal generation" (543).

The same is true of Woolf's relationship to the turn-of-century themes and tropes which defined the invasion story genre. I think about Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*, alongside H.R. Haggard's *She*, not in order to draw a clunky parallel between Woolf and her popular-fiction predecessors, or to perform a "gotcha" moment by pointing out invasive imagery in her story. Rather, I seek only to build on the assertion that the modernists could never hermetically seal themselves off from their Edwardian forebears and that even the relatively obscure speculative fiction subgenre of invasion literature rumbles ominously in the background of the high modernist movement. Despite the distance between the modernists and their *fin de siècle* counterparts, both literary groups were responding to the same phenomenon of an empire expanding rapidly and unsustainably to the point of catastrophic change, collapsing, to some degree, the temporal distinctions that Woolf wanted to create before and after 1910.

Hite suggests Woolf's first novel was as much a continuation of polemical New Woman fiction as it was a reaction to it. To my point, the same deformative forces of destructive plasticity which animated not only New Woman fiction of the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras, but the speculative invasion novels which coincided with them, also bubbles under the surface of *The Voyage Out*. It takes the form of a transformative violence that is always just out of sight yet defamiliarizing and changing the world through which Rachel Vinrace passes. Unlike the conspicuous violence in *She,* or the other invasion stories discussed in this project, the violence in *The Voyage Out* exists below the surface of all of Rachel's social interactions, shaping her relationship to her world as an unwitting, outsider-invader.

Rachel's "voyage out" is at once her trip to the South American colonies as well as her passage from a sheltered suburban well-to-do English adolescence into social awareness and knowledge of the ways of the world. But there is a latent violence which exists in this transition, extending beyond Rachel's own experiences to the experience of the modern woman in general looking for a "way out" in the twentieth-century. Her initiation into the patriarchal value system comes aboard her father's ship when Richard Dalloway, a fellow passenger, kisses her without her permission. With no context for what has happened to her and no point of reference for how she is supposed to feel about it, the event causes her considerable confusion and an upwelling of emotion so powerful that it causes her physical pain. That night she dreams that she is trapped in a vault, "bricks meeting her wherever she turned, alone with a little deformed man who squatted on the floor gibbering, with long nails" (68).[11] Dalloway's kiss introduces and inducts her into

[11] Woolf further develops the motif of bricks and walls as something which hems in, forecloses, and contains female emotion and feeling in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Early on in the novel, Sally kisses Clarissa leaving her feeling as if "the whole world might have turned upside down" (35), a feeling described as "a present," "radiance," "infinitely precious," and "religious" (35-36). When Peter enters the scene and spoils the moment, however, "It was like running one's face against a granite wall in darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!" (36). Unwelcome

the brick vault in which the Angel of the House is kept, trapped with, and by, the deformity of male desire which, while terrifying, is a far cry from an immutable and consummate system of social ordering, but rather a small, base, animal thing. The brick chamber in which Rachel becomes trapped in her dream echoes in her conversation with Terence Hewitt who, deeply interested in Rachel, becomes fascinated by what it means to be a woman in England.

"I've often walked along the streets where people live all in a row, and one house is exactly like another house, and wondered what on earth the women were doing inside," says Terence. The streets of rowhouses that Terence wanders down constitute the type of depressing urban sprawl characterized by its red brick and made famous as London's "creeping red rust" in *Howards End*. But these red brick houses also implicitly recall Rachel's dream of being trapped in a brick vault as the outside world wonders "what on earth the women were doing inside." Rachel's dream and Terence's observation of domestic life set up a contrast between interior, unrepresented feminine lives and the public representation of those lives. The transition from one sphere to another will necessarily be accompanied by violence. "Just consider" continues Terence:

> it's the beginning of the twentieth century, and until a few years ago no woman had ever come out by herself and said things at all. There it was going on in the background, for all those thousands of years, this curious silent unrepresented life. Of course, we're always writing about women—abusing them, or jeering at them, or worshiping them; but it's never come from women themselves. I believe we still don't know in the least how they live, or what they feel, or what they do precisely…the lives of women of forty, of unmarried women, of working women, of women who keep shops and bring up children, of women like your aunts or Mrs. Thornbury or Miss Allan—one knows nothing whatever about them…It's the man's view that's represented, you see (201).

male intrusion which suppresses the full expression of female emotion is figured, in both novels, as brick walls and vaults which sequester women in the dark.

While Rachel's dream speaks to a captive interiority filled with fear and repression, her suitor sees something else—an unrepresentable, invasive force, amassing just beyond the walls of the masculine stronghold of public domain. He sees an undercurrent of potential energy, pulsing behind the façade of all these brick enclosures. This silent life of women of forty, working women, and women who do not adhere to the model of Victorian domesticity, is a menacing prospect and the "woman coming out" promises to destroy old conceptions of the public and private spaces and reshape society into something unrepresentable, something born new in the wake of the destruction that this turning-inside-out will surely yield. Terence has no illusions about the invasive violence this change will have on English society. "If I were a woman" he muses to himself, almost as if he realizes the full weight of the situation for the first time, "I'd blow someone's brains out" (201).

As the romance between Terence and Rachel develops, they struggle to organize their feelings for one another due in no small part to Rachel's reluctance to engage in a marriage contract which seems to have absolutely no basis in the lived experiences of real people and women in particular. During one such argument Terence, in frustration and perhaps in fear, accuses her of looking "as if you'd blow my brains out" and that he had noticed moments "when if we stood on a rock together, you'd throw me into the sea" (281). But any violence that Rachel manifests is only in her realization that

> It seemed to her now that what he was saying was perfectly true, and that she wanted many more things than the love of one human being—the sea, the sky. She turned again and looked at the distant blue, which was so smooth and serene where the sky met the sea; she could not possibly want only one human being (285).

Rachel chafes under the repressive constraints of a marriage contract which hems her in, mediates her relationship to the world, and dictates or erases her desires and agency. Her realization that she could never want only one human being is not a declaration of polyamory,

but rather an insistence that a life dictated solely by a woman's relationship to a man could never be a fulfilling life, and that she would always want to be more in the world. Significantly, Rachel thinks of "Nature" in the abstract, citing a desire for the sea and the sky. And while these elements don't exactly belong to the artificiality of the public sphere, they do exceed and exist beyond the domestic sphere. Articulating these desires not only gestures towards a vision of naturalism in which women might find a fuller range of modes of being and feeling, but it also begins to dismantle the binarism of public/domestic spaces as Rachel's desires turn towards a horizon (sea and sky) of new possibility. While Woolf never fully politicizes and articulates this point for her readers, this realization constitutes a part of Rachels' voyage out of a sheltered and captive feminine domestic sphere. It is this realization which, however sympathetic Terence might be to the Woman Question, prompts him to return to the image of men getting their brains blown out, and thrown off cliffs.

Rachel, however, is not an activist or a suffragette. She is simply a feeling young woman whose conception of life and her place in it expands beyond the confines of the brick vaults of Victorian domesticity. But even her insistence on the validity of her feelings and experiences constitutes an invasive threat to those who would preserve the status quo. The possibility of women expressing and representing themselves fully for the first time in "thousands of years" constitutes an intrusive incursion into the masculine world. For Rachel, however, her expansion beyond the confines of traditional female roles is a death sentence. Rachel dies from a tropical fever at the end of the novel. Even here, her love and desire for an impersonal Nature which might offer a way out from the binarism which would confine her to the domestic sphere gets circumscribed and bound up in the dangers of the colonies. The Nature she has access to is not

an impartial and abstracted space, but a colonized, imperial, masculine space which ultimately kills her for voyaging out and into it.

Shortly before Rachel's death, the group of traveling companions are seated at lunch when Terence's friend, St. John Hirst, receives a letter from home

> describing the suicide of the parlour-maid. She was called Susan Jane, and she came into the kitchen one afternoon, and said that she wanted cook to keep her money for her; she had twenty pounds in gold. Then she went out to buy herself a hat. She came in at half-past five and said that she had taken poison (289).

The suicide of this working-class woman thousands of miles away leaves the room in silence. St John shrugs his shoulders and offers the rhetorical question "why do the lower orders do any of the things they do do? Nobody knows," as an explanation before the conversation moves along and this woman, who was only brought into the story seemingly to be immediately cast from it, is forgotten (289). But this woman's death and Rachel's death, so close in proximity within the novel, suggests a similarity between the two characters which is strengthened by the statement made, once again by St. John upon the occasion of Rachel's death at the end of the novel, that "There was nothing to be done" (352). Just as the parlour-maid's suicide is explained away as the inexplicable activity of the lower orders, so is Rachel's passing from a world and a social order, beyond which she wanted to expand, explained as an inevitability which could not have been prevented. In concluding her first novel with the suicide of a working woman and the death of a young girl of illimitable feeling who insists on wanting more out of life than the pale reflection offered by the patriarchal social structure, Woolf unwittingly aligns herself with Haggard's absolutism, articulating a world in which the ungovernable woman cannot--or will not be allowed to--exist.

If Haggard saw the advent of the New Woman as a grave threat to empire which would—in the final instance—be beaten back by the Laws of Nature, Woolf counters with a dark vision

of modernity in which the agential, feeling woman, seen as an invasive threat, is simply removed entirely—sometimes by her own hand—from the suffocating hierarchy of English patriarchal society. In contrast to Haggard's model for female expulsion as masculinist reaffirmation however, Woolf's removal of the feminine from an oppressive power structure has a destabilizing effect. Indeed, the castrating power that this model potentiates is made manifest when, in the midst of Rachel's fever dream at the very end of her life, Terence kisses her on the lips. When she opens her eyes to look at him, however, her mind can only see an old woman cutting his head off. Even (or perhaps, especially) in her death, Rachel undercuts Terrance's position of superiority (and by extension Richard Dalloway's) as she is removed entirely from a system of power which only exists by virtue of her submission to its structure.

Woolf's modernist aspirations in *The Voyage Out* do not signal a departure from the destructive plasticity which energized the popular and sensationalist fiction of the previous generation, so much as they sublate this potential for radical and unrecognizable change into aesthetic movements and formal innovation. As the novel moves surreally from England across the ocean to the farthest reaches of the empire, the defamiliarization of the world as seen through Rachel's eyes represents a world, an empire, and a society that is artificial, all construct, and already showing threadbare at the seams. If this world will not change quickly enough to accommodate the full life of women, it will not hold them captive, and they will remove themselves or be removed by a higher power, from it.

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I shall do it…I'm a desperate young woman.
--Ann Veronica

This project has discussed H.G. Wells' contribution to the speculative future-war story genre through his impossible aliens and airplanes which demonstrated to his reading public "so exactly what the consequence or outcome would be if…habitual figures of thought and language were actualized" (Cole, *Inventing Tomorrow* 79). Predictably, *Ann Veronica*—Wells' foray in the New Woman novel as an attempt to imagine the outcomes of the New Woman movement--produced a complicated and multifaceted text. Some critics have claimed that Wells belongs amongst the "anti-feminist male writers" who "pressed New Woman fiction into service as a medium for conservative propaganda" (Heilmann, 57). In contrast, Sarah Cole, focuses on the biologism and notions of deep time embedded within this novel which she sees as almost essayistic, functioning to "work through ideas on a particular topic"—in this case the Woman Question (*Inventing Tomorrow* 79). She offers a much more generous reading of the text which she argues is "torn between taking its cues for women's emancipation from modern causes, and perhaps from the values associated with work in the science lab, where we as contemporary readers no doubt wish Ann Veronica to remain, and a wholly different premise, that it is culture that has always held women down" (*Inventing Tomorrow* 79). My reading of *Ann Veronica,* however, will not attempt to condemn or exonerate Wells from contemporary or retrospective accusations of misogyny and conservatism, or even to argue that Wells' intentions were truly progressive. Rather, I want to attend to the ways in which this novel's "circular structure" which "encloses the heroine in two male-dominated homes, those of father and husband" is nevertheless invaded by the deformative energy of its subject matter, and made radical despite itself, simply by handling the unstable and volatile subject matter of feminine revolt (Heilmann,

68). Enclosed within the circle of two male households, Ann Veronica demonstrates a willingness to engage in violence—and more importantly a willingness to die in struggle—which subverts the trope of the masterful husband and submissive wife on which the novel seems to close.

The narrative opens on a description of Ann Veronica as a young woman, with fine beautiful features, and an air of well-being. As the narrator attends to her appearance, he notes that "her lips came together with an expression of contentment and the faintest shadow of a smile, her manner was one of quiet reserve, and behind this mask she was wildly discontented and eager for freedom and life" (3). Continuing with the masking metaphor, Wells writes that "All the world about her seemed to be—how can one put it? —in wrappers…one could not tell what colors these gray swathings hid" (3). As Sarah Cole notes, this "wrappered" life is the "primary metaphor for the experience of young women stifled by middle-class respectability" (*Inventing Tomorrow* 187) and it becomes Ann Veronica's mission throughout the novel to cast off these wrappings and live a full life, a mission she seems to accomplish when, having scandalously eloped with a married man named Capes at the end of the story, her lover declares "that wrappered life as you call it—we've burned the confounded rags! Danced out of it! We're stark!" (223). I want to argue however, that Ann Veronica never truly sheds her mask, or her wrappings, mobilizing these coverings and disguises instead to strike a number of poses which allow her interior access to a various institutions without ever being defined or trapped by them. And while we must recognize the very real limits that these wrappings and masks impose upon Ann Veronica and women of her time, we can still identify the extent to which she works to subvert oppressive social structure behind whatever mask she dons, acknowledging her "wildly discontented" energy which destabilizes everything it touches. The frustration which the novel's

ambivalence towards the Woman Question produces can be mitigated when we read Ann Veronica's character not as a failed suffragette, nor as proponent of free-love, or a liberatory biologism, but rather as an *agent provocateur* who exposes and destabilizes all structures of both power and resistance. Reading Ann Veronica in this way liberates her not only from the closed circle of patriarchal households in which she finds herself, but also from reductive and limited ideas of feminine independence accessible via the suffragist movement. Instead, regardless of the situation she finds herself in—be it daughter, student, militant, bohemian, or wife, Ann Veronica is pure catalyst.

The first half of the novel deals with Ann Veronica's "radicalization" which promises to continue in the vein of progressive New Woman fiction before fizzling out in a satirization of suffragism and Ann Veronica's submission to Capes. While some of Ann Veronica's decisions and motivations up until the novel's climax seem rather adolescent (the break with her father is precipitated over his refusal to let her attend a fancy dress party unchaperoned, for instance), Ann Veronica undergoes some revolutionary experiences, not the least of which is her insistence and success in taking advanced biology classes at a university in London. As she struggles for independence and freedom, she lets her own apartment only to go into debt. When she makes friends with a successful businessman named Ramage, she thinks that she has established a progressive, platonic, even ground-breaking relationship with a member of the opposite sex, and gladly accepts financial assistance from the man on the basis of what she sees as a mutual respect between equals. Eventually Ramage reveals he has only been helping her financially in expectation of sexual favors. Having fled her father's house, she suddenly finds herself trapped instead in a seedy hotel room, with foreign waiters, and a man who leverages her own desire to be a modern woman against her: "Don't go back into Victorian respectability and pretend you

don't know and you can't think and all the rest of it. One comes at last to the step from dreams to reality. This is your moment" (132). But if Ann Veronica has left off her mask of Victorian respectability, beneath it Ramage will find a face of violent energy. As he attempts to make love to her, she resists mightily and "each became frightfully aware of the other as plastic energy," but "Perhaps it was Ramage who was the more astonished." When finally Ann Veronica connects a blow to his neck ("I believe you've crushed a gland or something!" cries Ramage), a dramatic shift in relations occurs as the two combatants eye one another, "in a universe that had changed its system of values with kaleidoscopic completeness" (129). Up until this point, Ann Veronica has made a number of decisions which put her in Ramage's power and set her up for the sort of predictable fall from respectability which takes place when women attempt to make it in the world outside the sphere of patriarchal protection. At the climactic moment, however, Ramage finds that he has not trapped a vulnerable young woman in a hotel room, but instead has managed to incense a force of "plastic energy" who can match his own vigor and anger. Indeed, this scene is positively castrating—Ann Veronica crushes his "gland" after all, and for the rest of the novel Ramage is a pathetic, quivering, shell of a man—and succeeds in achieving a "kaleidoscopic" shift in universal values. The violence that Ann Veronica smuggles into this scene of sexual vulnerability completely destabilizes and reframes the world for men like Ramage as he realizes that, perhaps she isn't trapped in the hotel room with him, but he is trapped in there with her.

Nevertheless, it is a distressing scene of sexual violence, and while Ann Veronica succeeds in meeting Ramage's violence with her own, it is a traumatic event which worsens her material conditions and mental state. Ann Veronica becomes more and more desperate until she eventually meets some terribly clichéd caricatures of the suffragist leadership who succeed in

radicalizing her. “Confound this slavery of sex!” declares Ann Veronica. “I am a man! I will get this under if I am killed in doing it!” (146). So declaring her manhood, Ann Veronica adopts a mask of militant femininity which she will wear as she infiltrates the inner sanctums of the suffragist movement. This section of the novel is widely regarded as a lampooning of the politics of female enfranchisement and the denouement of Ann Veronica’s revolutionary changes before she moves back to her father’s house, ultimately retreating into a domestic role of her own choosing with Capes. But the series of events which involve Ann Veronica declaring her masculinity, participating in a raid on parliament, getting arrested, and returning to a tempered acceptance of her feminine role, does not adhere to the logical continuum that Wells perhaps intended. Instead, each of the events that take place surrounding the raid on parliament are “infiltrated” by violent and volatile implications, even as Wells attempts to defuse suffragist violence and return Ann Veronica to a more stable and biologically acceptable path of development.

When Ann Veronica joins the suffragettes in their raid on parliament, Wells launches into mock-epic style which undercuts the seriousness of such an event. As all the women participating in the protest are unceremoniously bundled into furniture vans which will disgorge the angry protestors on the very steps of parliament, one woman declares in notes of “rapture” that the undertaking is “like Troy!...It’s exactly like Troy!” (152). And while Wells’ Trojan horse—furniture vans filled with misguided women who will ultimately achieve very little—is tongue in cheek, his description of the attack manages to undercut its own irony, smuggling its own invasive and terrifying imagery into Wells’ language, despite Wells’ attempt to downplay the danger of the moment. Perhaps appropriately for this suffragist attack on Troy, Wells’ description takes on an ekphrastic form. But I argue that Wells draws attention to his own

narration of this image precisely because the image itself is extremely dangerous and possessed of a terrible and transformative violence which must be tempered by Wells' own ironic and defusing commentary. "Were I a painter of subject pictures" begins Wells

> I would exhaust all my skill in proportion and perspective and atmosphere upon the august seat of empire, I would present it gray and dignified and immense and respectable beyond any mere verbal description, and then, in vivid black and very small, I would put in those valiantly impertinent vans, squatting at the base of its altitudes and pouring out a swift, straggling rush of ominous little black objects, minute figures of determined women at war with the universe. Ann Veronica was in their very forefront. (153)

Humorously Homeric, Wells must translate this "painting" and picture into written language in order to maintain any control over it. The written description is an absurd rendering of women described as "straggling," "little," "minute" figures whose war with Britain is as absurd as declaring war on the universe. If, however, we look at the painting without Wells' narrative commentary, we see a much more distressing picture of women who are meant to be confined to the home space, mobilized, organized, and disguised, smuggling themselves into the public sphere of empire and launching a violent invasion on the status quo. The raid on parliament is soundly routed by a group of disapproving and fatherly policeman and the only result is that some MPs are embarrassed and Ann Veronica winds up in jail. But while Wells' description of the event is meant to largely undercut the tactics of militant suffragism and chasten his protagonist, nevertheless the imagery Wells handles here speaks to a dramatic and invasive force capable of causing serious social instability, despite his narration of events.

Following the raid, Ann Veronica—locked in her cell and newly repentant—muses that "Violence won't do it…begin violence, and the woman goes under…" She goes on to realize that

> The real reason why I am out of place here…is because I like men. I can talk with them. I've never found them hostile…A woman wants a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself. She wants that and needs it more than anything else in the world. It may not be just, it may not be fair, but things are so. It isn't law, nor custom, nor masculine violence that settled that. It is just how things happen to be. She wants to be

> free—she wants to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man; but only God, who made the world, can alter things to prevent her being slave to the right one (162).

In a deft series of movements advocating compromise and reformation rather than revolution and the vilification of men, Wells presents a smart, beautiful young woman who is driven to radicalism by an independent spirit and a series of traumatic events, only to realize, on the failure of her personal crusade, that women only want legal and economic freedom to the extent that they are able to choose for themselves the man to whom they will submit completely. For Ann Veronica, this man takes the form of one Mr. Capes, a lecturer in biology at the university where she has been taking classes. But even here, when the reader is meant to believe that Ann Veronica has given up her gland-smashing, parliament-raiding ways in favor of a biological determinism in which she yearns for a primordial right to choose her own sexual and reproductive partner, Ann Veronica manages to adroitly maneuver a capacity for violence, and leverage over Capes, into her new life. Indeed, never truly showing her hand, she throws off her mask of respectability and wrappered life to become "stark" only to choose a man named Capes. Even if Wells wants to mobilize this progressive union between biology teacher and student, wherein the woman is free to choose the man to whom she submits and society be damned, Ann Veronica's submission to Capes still amounts to a willful covering, a "cape" which conceals a latent violence and transformative capacity which even her husband cannot fathom or comprehend. While Capes confesses himself shocked by her "capacity for blind obedience. She loved to be told things to do" (223), even her submissiveness is a carefully controlled mask behind which Ann Veronica remains agential via her ability to kill and willingness to die.

The two elope to the continent where Ann Veronica cuts about the mountains and fields in men's clothing: "she wore a leather belt and loose knickerbockers and puttees—a costume that

suited the fine, long lines of her limbs far better than any feminine walking-dress could do" (226). While Ann Veronica's capacity for blind obedience seems to deflate her development as a woman in control of her own life, Wells' formula in which the modern woman is free to choose the man to whom she submits may be more radical than he intended. Ann Veronica's relationship with Capes activates a complex relationship of submission and dominance in which Ann Veronica's "enslavement" to her lover is a curated façade. And while her adoption of a leather suit during her elopement may be anachronistic as a gesture towards BDSM notions of dominance and submission, Ann Veronica's cross-dressing does activate an inversion of power dynamics in which she is actually in control of the relationship, and submissive only to the extent to which she allows the charade to play out. As the two lovers swan about Switzerland declaring their love for one another, Capes' powerlessness in the situation becomes apparent in a strange moment of intense passion. "I say" Ann Veronica declares on one of their hikes in the alps, "you *are* rather the master, you know" (223). But Capes is only master because Ann Veronica allows for this to be the case, because she "says" he is the master and declares it. This reality is driven home a little later when, in a moment of revery, Capes suggests that they escape the world and jump off the side of a mountain together. Ann Veronica is silent for a moment before declaring soberly that "If you tempt me too much…I shall do it. I need only just jump up and throw myself upon you. I'm a desperate young woman." As she explains clearly how she would kill them both, the moment upsets the very master-slave dialectic she set up a few moments before. Further, her sudden sober willingness to kill or be killed recalls the moment earlier in the text when she confounds "this slavery of sex" and declares "I will get this under if I am killed in doing it!" Her willingness to die earlier in the novel was a response to her enslavement and a desire to establish herself atop the power structure. This declaration at the end of the novel that she could, and would, kill both herself and her husband, so

soon after she playfully calls him the master, upsets the notion that she is obedient or subservient, revealing it to be nothing more than a fantasy of submission in which she is in control. "You know you don't mean it" she pushes Capes, who responds sheepishly, "No, I don't" (226).

It is undeniable that the novel ends on an extremely conservative note in which Ann Veronica has given up her studies and affects a willingness to be chained to a life of domesticity with Capes. Indeed, a willingness to kill and be killed is an extremely far cry from anything resembling enfranchisement or social equality. What I am arguing is simply that this game of "chicken" on the mountain side reveals the extent to which Ann Veronica has retained a capacity for resistance in the face of social oppression and succeeded in smuggling a destabilizing violence through the borders of this seemingly limited relationship. Even at the very end of the novel when the pair returns to England, sets up house, reconciles with Ann Veronica's family, and prepares to have a baby, Ann Veronica's capacity for violence looms in the background of Wells' vision for modern domestic bliss. Staring down the dismal prospect of a dull domestic life and old age, Ann Veronica flings herself into her husband's arms and declares that even though things have changed "We won't forget the mountains, dear, ever. That shining slope of snow, and how we talked of death! We might have died!" (236). And while the scene ought to strike a tone of nostalgia for days gone by, as well as Ann Veronica's distress at a future of domesticity and submission to her husband, the refrain of death recalls her willingness to kill them both, a reminder to Capes that her submission cloaks that capacity for violence which he does not possess, and which will prevent Ann Veronica from ever truly occupying a submissive position. The novel ends with Capes responding to Ann Veronica's mention of death with the words "I understand." And if he is meant to understand Ann Veronica's distress at leaving her past freedom behind, the reader might see

that what Capes really understands is Ann Veronica's warning, and the true nature of power dynamics in this "modern" relationship.

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I killed it. –Anna Lombard

Ann Veronica's willingness to kill and be killed in defense of her own agency destabilizes the traditional marriage contract, resulting in a relationship to her husband which is only a fantasy of subordination. By contrast Victoria Cross's *Anna Lombard* explores a marriage plot wherein the story's suitor fantasizes about the heroine's ability to dominate others, only to suffer mightily when he attempts to police and corral her forceful, divergent nature. The novel, which hinges on Anna Lombard's unapologetic and illicit sexual affair with her Indian servant, and climaxes when she murders the mixed-race child which results, leaves the reader in shock and confusion, as Anna Lombard lays waste to every institution of Victorian respectability with which society attempts to entrap her. Significantly, Anna Lombard leverages the logic and violence of imperialist racism in order to resist and dismantle oppressive gender relations. And while the story explores the various acts of violence inherent in Victorian sexism, and shocks by virtue of the modes of resistance which Cross outlines, this battle between the sexes is waged on colonial ground and revolves around the desire for, and control of, non-white bodies. As Anna Lombard attempts to navigate and resist the world that men expect her to inhabit, the most powerful tool in her arsenal seems to be the position of superiority she holds over colonial subjects, and her ability to deploy them in a disruptive fashion within her relationship to Gerald. While it is deeply problematic that Anna's resistance as a white woman relies upon violence perpetrated against the colonized people of India, the fact that her own racist violence allows her

to invert gender relations and occupy a position of masculine desire and authority, speaks to the extent which the logic of imperial domination also works to accomplish sexist subjugation.

Gerald Etheridge first sees Ann Lombard, a local commander's daughter, at a military ball at his colonial outpost in India. Unlike the other young women in colonial society who seem to be only interested in dancing and flirtations with soldiers, Anna is aloof, intellectual, serious-minded, but extremely beautiful. Gerald is smitten upon his first encounter with her. The following day, however, he receives new orders to relocate to Burmah, where few of his predecessors have survived. Realizing that he cannot ask Anna to marry him after only just meeting her, he steals away without saying goodbye, leaving her only a letter of explanation and a ring as a token of affection. In his new posting, he is assailed on all sides by the hardships and temptations of living in a remote colonial outpost. Local politics, monsoons, snakes, insects, and fever all threaten to drive him mad while meanwhile he is constantly pressured by locals and colleagues to take a temporary native "wife" in order to pass the time and stay sane. Gerald, however, perseveres. He executes his duty to the best of his ability and rather than submitting to his baser desires, spends his days painting portraits of Anna from memory, day-dreaming about her, and writing her letters. When he suddenly receives an unexpected reprieve, and is reposted back to his original station, he proposes to Anna Lombard immediately, with the clarity of conscience that he has remained true to his love for her the entire time. Anna accepts his proposal.

Gerald's portrait painting in Burmah suggests a fantasy of constructing an image of Anna Lombard that he can possess. But when he does return and becomes engaged to her, he only grows more fascinated by something in her which defies containment. "I felt somehow a vague sensation" muses Gerald "that she was not entirely suited and fitted to this humdrum nineteenth

century, that her character and her mind belonged rather to some more stirring time, when personal courage was at a premium and excitement was every-day food for everyone" (72). That night, when reading through medieval history, Gerald comes across the biography and portrait of Catherine Sforza, an Italian noblewoman who led a riotous and violent life and was rumored to have poisoned a dozen people. Gerald is transfixed by the imperious, haughty, gaze of the murderous aristocrat and suddenly realizes he has not only seen such a look before in Anna, but that he wants to recreate it, to capture it. "Anna could look like that, I am sure she could" he thinks. And then "a strange fancy came to me that I would like to see her, just so, in this attitude, dress, and environment, and see whether, in reality, the resemblance was fulfilled" (73). As a young colonial official, Gerald is charged with providing much of the social entertainment and decides to host a series of *tableaux vivants* in order to bring his vision for Anna as the Sforza to life. Gerald is attracted by Anna's character, force of mind, and personal courage, but he wants to fetishize it, relegating it to a latent spirit of antiquity which he can create and contain in a living portrait. Indeed, Gerald's desire to cast Anna in a *tableau vivant* is generated by a need to neutralize and control her character which he rightly identifies as belonging to a different time period. What he fails to account for is that Anna's force of will and mind belongs to the future, rather than the past, and it will neither be contained nor fetishized. When told of this scheme, Anna is offended and declares "That woman murdered dozens of people. Now, I couldn't murder anybody." Eagerly Gerald responds "Yes, you could, my Anna, only with a good motive, I know; but if you had that, you would not hesitate, I am sure of it" (77). When she protests that she would not murder anyone even to save her own life, Gerald responds "I know all that; but to save another you would—me for instance" (77). Gerald's excitement is not only precipitated by the fact that he is sure that Anna has the capacity for violence and murder, but that he can control

it, and that the violence would somehow benefit him. Even as he horrifies Anna, insisting that she *could* murder, he uses the possessive term of endearment, "*my* Anna." And when the event is concluded, and Anna plays her part as the murderous woman, Gerald is driven mad by the thought of possessing and controlling this picture of female monstrosity. When he finds Anna backstage, still in costume he revels in the notion that

> When with me all her arrogance, coldness, and her contemptuous indolence of manner, with which she often treated her enemies or faced the world, disappeared. With me, whatever pride she might possess she put at my feet. To me she was always yielding, submissive, clinging, loving, and simple. This change, this distinction she made for me had in it a subtle and intoxicating flattery.
>
> I crushed her up to me and kissed her again and again…and she yielded herself passionately to me (84).

Almost immediately, however, Anna begins to reveal the extent to which her will cannot be governed. While caressing her, Gerald demands to know why Anna has postponed their wedding for so long, to which Anna responds "Let me go! Be patient with me a little while!" (84). Gerald's attempt to fulfill his fantasy wherein Anna's ungovernable spirit can be made his own, and brought under his influence, precipitates a turn in the story wherein Anna's independence, desire, and force of character will render Gerald completely powerless and bring every respectable institution and patriarchal structure in which he operates, crashing down around him.

Anna's assault on Victorian respectability is two-pronged. First, she reveals that, despite her engagement to Gerald, in his absence she took a lover, an Indian domestic servant named Gaida Khan, to whom she was married in a local ceremony. This illicit affair collapses and contorts borders and distinctions between race, class, and gender as Anna not only adopts the male practice—which Gerald forgoes-- of taking a native lover, but refuses to leave him or show remorse, insisting on the legitimacy of her physical desire over Gerald's sense of propriety. Secondly, when Gaida Khan is eventually expelled from the novel, clearing the path for Gerald

and Anna to be married, Anna discovers she is pregnant with a mixed-race child, a development which Gerald takes in stride by planning to give the child away, but which would have read contemporarily as a perversion of the biological imperative of British women to carry on the evolution of the British race. When it becomes clear that the child stands in the way of the novel's "proper" resolution wherein the colonial other has been fully eradicated from the English home-space and female desire has been made completely submissive to the English patriarch, Anna Lombard literalizes the violence demanded by society by actually murdering her child to satisfy Gerald. So doing, she aligns the horror of infanticide with a social value system which denies women freedom, agency, and expression of will and desire, countering the injunction to function as the Angel in the House with monstrous infanticide. The vehicle through which she accomplishes these things, however, is an appropriated imperial violence which allows her to declare ownership over Gaida, and "diffuse" some of the horror of her infanticide by filtering it through the horrific logic of racial purification.

When Gerald discovers that Anna has taken a lover, he is suitably scandalized and distraught, and demands an explanation. Anna acquits herself in terms of physical desire which she will have satisfied by her possession of this man. "He is a beautiful toy to me" she explains to Gerald. "He is like some pet, some lovely Persian kitten. Can't you imagine that? He is a possession that I value. I like to know he belongs to me; I like to feel I have the right to clasp my hands round his wonderful neck when and if I wish; but I do not care to be with him" (95). While her attraction to Gaida Khan is steeped in the fetishization of Orientalism, she—very seriously--describes her feeling for this man as purely physical and contrasts that desire with her love for Gerald which she feels is spiritual. It is for this reason that she agreed to be engaged to Gerald, despite her entanglement with Gaida. Taken aback, but grasping at possibility, Gerald demands

that she must cut this man out of her life if she wishes to remain engaged to him. Anna refuses: "Oh, don't ask me!" she cries "It would be like cutting my heart from me. Let me keep him too, for a little while—at first" (96). Despite the fact that it is Gerald who has been slighted, Anna retains the upper hand in these negotiations, arguing that her sexual liaison does not affect their engagement because it is purely passion. Furthermore, Anna is able to leverage her position as a white woman who has the ability to "possess" and own one of her Indian domestic servants as a means of inverting and subverting gender relations. The racist logic which allows her to possess Gaida as a sexual object only, reflects and mirrors the sexist logic of Victorian England, to which Anna herself is subject. Gerald, shell-shocked, marvels at this woman who has so thoroughly inverted gender roles and power structures, criticizing her thus: "Passion without love, Anna; even men are ashamed when they feel that" (93). But Anna will not be shamed, and Gerald is not willing to lose her, so he agrees to postpone the wedding until such a time as Anna's passion has run its course. The result, however, is a total destruction of Gerald's known reality.

"Were we really two ordinary, flesh-and-blood British mortals?" Gerald wonders. "Was this ordinary life, or were we shades acting in some grotesque farce?" (108). Anna's insistence on her own sexual liberation, and the way in which she succeeds in essentially holding her engagement to Gerald hostage, subverts the deepest foundations of Gerald's reality as a British man. The entire social system and his place within it has ceased to hold meaning. Moreover, Gerald is horrified by the way in which Anna is able to carry on this covert affair, subverting the very tenants of colonial British social rule, while maintaining a façade of maidenly composure. Suddenly, as he regards her, the realization that he could never contain that destructive energy which he sought to capture in the *tableau vivant* of the Sforza, comes crashing down upon him.

> And I looked at her, sitting not far from me, pale, calm, composed as a statue; and my eyes seemed to see, only through a mist of pain, a shade from those times of blood and

> lust and passion and crime; times when swift poisons were made by white fingers, and when women loved as men, as strongly, and often as briefly; when they laughed at the idea of one lover, yet were ready to die with, for, or by the hand of any one of the many; times when the very air they breathed seemed charged with treachery, cunning, and danger. From these a shade had returned and confounded itself with the clear white soul of an English girl, in a body beautiful and innocent to look upon as the sunlight of a summer day (109).

Anna Lombard's sexual desire, once established as outside of Gerald's control, is now figured as a total inversion of gender relations in which women who love as men are cast as a totally destabilizing and invasive force. Suddenly, the unassuming Anna Lombard is charged with blood, lust, crime, treachery, cunning, and danger, ready to kill and be killed. The threat this woman poses to Gerald and the British patriarchal order, however, extends beyond the perversion of gender roles and emasculation. It also poses a real threat to the empire insofar as it creates a porousness and instability in the most fundamental of imperial structures—the patriarchal marriage contract—through which foreign and colonial otherness can penetrate. In assuming power over Gerald, Anna also places Gaida Khan between them and above Gerald's influence. Gerald cannot have Khan arrested or killed because it will violate the terms by which he wishes to win Anna's affection. Anna leverages her own power over both Gaida and Gerald to reduce the British colonial official's influence over the native servant. This attack on Gerald becomes literalized when, after many sleepless nights and days of mental strain, Gerald succumbs to fever.

> When I reached the house I went straight to my room, undressed, and threw myself on the bed. I felt the round patch of burning fire, that foretells Indian fever, kindled in both palms, and I knew that in an hour or two I should be mercifully oblivious for a time of all surrounding things. My days and sleepless nights of suffering, capped by this terrible evening, the mental fever in which I had been living so long, had culminated at last in physical fever (135).

Just as Anna's desire and force of will has undermined conventional gender relations and allowed colonial influence to corrupt and infect Gerald's position of power, so too is his body

finally invaded by the foreign bodies of the Indian disease, rendering him physically powerless as well. Anna deploys Gaida Khan as a sort of pawn to destabilize traditional gender relations, using the very logic and reality of Orientalism and imperialism to unravel the hierarchy of the sexes, while also reaffirming the link between imperial and gendered violence.

Eventually Khan is killed by cholera and Gerald's patience is rewarded when Anna agrees to marry him. For an interlude of a few relatively happy--but sexless—pages, the two cohabitate in harmony, while Anna avoids her wedding bed, still working to quell the passion for her former lover. Gerald settles into his new life with Anna, and their relationship progresses as the memory of Khan fades. Just when Gerald becomes hopeful that he will be able to consummate his marriage, however, Anna realizes she is pregnant. "When all the passion that held me to Gaida is dead, at last" she complains, "It is something beyond words. I could tear myself to pieces. You understand don't you? …Good God! His child! What can I do? I feel I can not live and keep sane" (173). Here again, Anna echoes the capacity for violence represented by the Sforza. Her chief concern has been killing her passion for Khan, and her reaction to discovering her pregnancy is an instinct of self-destruction, graphically rendered as tearing herself to pieces.

The novel now comes to a crossroads. In order for Gerald's ideal of marriage to Anna to be fulfilled, a number of moves have had to take place. Anna's sexual desire has been brought to heel, and Gaida Khan has been cast from the text. The development of a mixed-race child, however, poses a unique problem. Stephanie Russo and Lee O'Brien argue that "Because both Indian father and biracial child are dead by the end of the novel, the 'wrong' ethnicity is vanquished. Infanticide is rendered subversively legible. It is, narratively speaking, a fitting act…" (97). While Russo and O'Brien rightly point out that the novel challenges readers by

constructing a logic which ensures racial purity within the novel by perversely accommodating the horror of infanticide, I argue that, more than that, the child's murder is a culminating act of violence and resistance which takes place as a result of the novel's repeated attempts to police, control, capture, and repress Anna's nature. Despite her initial horror at becoming pregnant, Anna quickly falls in love with the child when it is born, and it absorbs her entire being. As the baby takes over her life, and Anna's relationship with Gerald grows more strained, she accuses Gerald of being jealous of the child, an accusation which causes him to finally lose his patience and demand to know whether her "maternity has quite blinded and changed you and swept away your intellect entirely?" (205) When Anna Laments that she cannot help herself, that every fiber of her being is bent towards the baby's care and love, Gerald responds dejectedly that "it is another of those great, invisible, iron laws that we have stumbled against, that gird this life all round and make it what it is…It is natural for a mother to love her child; that is the law and it is not our fault that this terrible position has grown up" (207). This formulation positions Anna's relationship to Gerald in opposition to the laws of Nature. The marriage, and the resolution to this story that Gerald wants, have been hindered by these invisible iron laws. If Anna's natural maternal instinct is one of these laws, her desire and attraction to Gaida Khan must be another. Gerald's protestation to the baby then amounts to another attempt at suppressing Anna's nature, and bringing it under his control, a request that Anna responds to by ominously declaring "I will be above the law—for your sake" (207).

When Anna comes into Gerald's study one day and quietly informs him that "I have killed it" (210) Gerald is horrified. The moment recalls Gerald's earlier fantasy of Anna as Catherine Sforza, with a capacity for violence which he could control, and which would only be used in his best interest. Gerald's insistence that she could commit murder if she had to, to save

him for instance, comes back to haunt the story in this moment as the reader confronts the reality of Anna's violence. Consequently, the infanticide is made "subversively legible" not simply because it excises miscegenation and racial impurity from the text, but because the murder of the child represents the cost of Anna's submission and the fulfillment of Gerald's desires. At every turn then, Victoria Cross not only lays bare the inherent violence in systems of power which attempt to suppress female nature (i.e., desire, agency, will, and maternal instinct), but explores the catastrophic and destabilizing consequences of what happens when women meet this oppression with the full force of their will. The only thing as unnatural as infanticide, in this story, is the notion that a woman give up her child and maternal instinct for the sake of a racially pure marriage and a husband's insecurity.

Like Wells' *Ann Veronica,* Victoria Cross's *Anna Lombard* smuggles a violence into the conventional marriage plot which corrupts this patriarchal institution, even as the male figures in both these stories believe themselves to be in control of the situation. While Gerald is attracted by Anna Lombard's force of will, his mistaken belief that he can control it or contain it is met with Anna's insistence on the satisfaction of her physical desires, which not only forecloses the possibility of a consummated marriage plot, but introduces a disruptive racial otherness into their relationship which emasculates Gerald. Ultimately, Anna responds to Gerald and society's continued insistence that she curtail her natural instincts and submit herself entirely to her husband, by literalizing the violence being perpetrated against her via infanticide. Leveraging the violence of imperialism and racism to expose and destabilize the logic of sexism, Anna Lombard subverts, and undercuts the "resolved" romance plot which Gerald has been seeking for the entirety of the novel.

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As dramatic changes wrought by the expansion of the empire destroyed and dismantled the pillars of English traditionalism that upheld national and cultural identity, the reading public and the publishing market were avidly engaged in an economy of speculation about what the unrecognizable future of England might look like. Whether invaded by aliens, infiltrated by spies, or transformed into a machine, the destructive plasticity at work on England at the turn of the century promised a violent and dramatic transition into some unknown entity. The New Woman Novel was in no way sealed off from this violence, and the transformations it heralded were more often than not figured in invasive and violent terms. Each of the texts engaged in this chapter treat the Woman Question from a different angle. H.R. Haggard, working solidly in the fear-mongering vein of invasion fiction, imagines a world in which an all-powerful vision of the New Woman is a threat not only to English society, but the British empire, and mankind in general. Even before the advent of the WSPU, Haggard was deeply concerned about the politically active woman as an invasive force which would flout the very Laws of Nature. While Woolf makes plain the fact that the young modern woman coming out in society is only an invasive threat to those invested in keeping young women sequestered, Rachel's tragic expulsion from the novel strangely aligns her with Haggard in suggesting that society cannot contain such women at this point in history. In opposition to Haggard and Woolf, Wells and Cross suggest a vision for the New Woman which, if not liberatory, is at least destabilizing, shocking, and defamiliarizing in their ability to smuggle a subversive capacity for violence into their traditionally assigned gender relations.

Like the invasion novel, the New Woman novel anticipated radical transformation in England and the world, at a time of unprecedented domestic change and upheaval. While the two

genres are an unlikely pairing, reading the New Woman novel alongside the invasion novel highlights the ways in which the New Woman novel leveraged the same fears and anxieties about the recession of the empire in order to herald the advent of a new social order.

Conclusion
An Invasive Methodology

"And now the whole fabric of civilization was bending and giving, and dropping to pieces and melting…"
–H.G. Wells, The War in the Air

While Wells' language here is used to describe the downfall of civilization in the wake of world-wide airborne warfare, the plasticity with which he articulates this transformation crops up in every text considered in this dissertation project, almost as a period shorthand for articulating the strangeness of the historical *fin de siècle* moment. From scientific romance, to speculative future-war stories, to early modernist novels, terms like melting, bending, giving, taking, expanding, exploding, contracting, stretching, breaching, and breaking all come to be the watch-words of textual productions at the peak of British Imperialism. While this deforming language of strangeness and unfamiliarity fits comfortably within the modernist lexicon, I resist both modernist attempts to separate themselves from the Edwardians, as well as recent scholarly attempts to treat such texts as minor modernist works, or as obscures footnotes to that literary movement. Rather, I argue that the moderns were invaded by an Edwardian obsession with plastic and exploding borders which informed and shaped the movement.

Instead of arguing that the Edwardians were ahead of their time, that they did, in fact, have modernist tendencies and preoccupations, I contend that the modernists were Edwardian, and never successfully got out from under that shadow cast by late-stage British Imperialism. The distinction I'm drawing here is subtle and perhaps overly semantic but critical to my

understanding of the modernist phenomenon while also offering a new lens through which we might consider much of twentieth-century literature as well as our own cultural moment. If Modernism "made it new," it only succeeded in doing so insofar as it sublimated the themes, imagery, and content of Edwardian speculative fiction and invasion stories into formal experimentation. In this light, we can see a through-line of ideation between (for instance) Le Queux's attempt to reduce the distance between text and reality in *The Invasion of 1910* and Gertrude Stein's attempt in the widely lauded modernist text *Tender Buttons* (1914) to close the gap between the written word and the seen object. We can even establish smooth continuity between Edwardian invasion stories and seminal modernist paintings, as cubist, and surrealist artists represented formally the content of these types of novels. Picasso's 1937 *Guernica* is, for example, concerned with the policing and transgressing of borders, and the traumatic and surreal consequences which result when these borders become plastic and explosive. The resulting image could aptly represent urban destruction in a Le Queux novel, or H.G. Wells' surreal description of cities being destroyed from the air by unimaginable machines of war. Even Salvador Dalí's *Persistence of Memory* (1931), represents formally the melting, expanding, heating, and destabilizing nature of reality and time which Conrad had already grappled with contextually almost three decades earlier in *The Secret Agent*.

According to Gertrude Stein, the glory of English literature was achieved when "what was outside was outside and what was inside was inside" and English literature could remain primarily concerned with the daily happenings of daily island life (21). This type of English literature was, in Stein's mind, good because it was "complete." The literature deteriorated, and became fragmented, at points in history when "the outside coming to penetrate the inside and then having become inside became inside, or because the inside caused confusion in the inside or

because the decision of inside made all the inside as settled as if there never had been an outside" (28). As I quoted at the beginning of the project, this deterioration comes to a head for Stein at the height of Imperialism when "Victoria was over and the Boer war… [and] the daily island life was less daily and the owning everything outside was less owning and…there were a great many writing but the writing was not so good" (46). I continue to be drawn to Stein's formulation here for a number of reasons. The first is her concern with the numerous collapses and confusions between inside and outside English island life. This is an issue of assigning, defining, redrawing, and remapping borders which is precisely what I think about when I think about Edwardian literature and its preoccupations. The second reason is that Stein assigns a negative valuation to the literature which was produced in response to the plasticity of cultural and imperial borders at the height of British Imperialism. For Stein, this historical moment created a cultural confusion which yielded incomplete literary works focused on explaining the phenomenon of "owning" the outside world and how it related to English national culture. What Stein—and the academy generally—fails to see however, is the birth of a new movement at the very height of empire; a distinctly Edwardian movement which—in response to dramatic cultural changes engendered by explosive imperial growth and unprecedented technological advances—recasts all cultural productions in terms of a global ecosystem of plastic border productions, exchanges, effractions, mergers, and transgressions. This new invasive genre gives fuller expression to the ways in which the Far East penetrated the East End of London at the turn of the century. It traces and moves with the ever-changing contours and conflicts of town and country and casts that relationship in an imperial light. It reframes modernist cosmopolitanism as a plastic give-and-take born in the wake of an unprecedented period of imperial destruction, creation, and annexation. Edwardian preoccupations with invasion and border transgression anticipate the

events of multiple world wars and contextualizes modernist responses to those events. But perhaps it is also worth considering the fact that the turn of the twentieth century marked a distinct shift in the affairs of mankind and ushered in a modern era--characterized by a shrinking globe and increasing border conflicts--which represented an abrupt and drastic departure from the entirety of human history. As Stein would say "we are still in the shadow of this thing," and as such, the basic precepts and forms of the invasion novel have continued to lurk in the background of Western society's responses to so many of the events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Technological and geopolitical developments at the turn-of-the-century and the height of British Imperialism ushered in an obsession with borders and their plasticity which would come to define the Edwardian era, and which has persisted throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. And what are the preoccupations and concerns of our present moment if not updated obsessions surrounding global empires and ever-plasticizing borders. The cable telegram closed the distance between empire and England and brought colonial spaces into the English home. Today, we have reduced that distance even further as tweets and pop-ups bring us directly into contact, often with live-feed video, with global events and conflicts happening the world over in real time. The turn-of-the-century and the First World War ushered in the universal adoption of the passport, and just over a hundred years later we are on the verge of adopting a vaccination passport made necessary by a global pandemic which was—like the Spanish Flu of 1918—flamed and fueled by aggressive transnational border crossings. The British Empire and its recession brought about the greatest migration in human history in the twentieth century as transportation and movement between commonwealth, colonies, and England became increasingly facile. In the twenty-first century, we find ourselves in the midst of a positive crisis

of border crossings and transgressions. As the aftershocks of colonial empire, and the current atrocities of transglobal late-stage capitalist empire wreak havoc on the climate and the global south, different nations, cultures, and peoples are scrambling to build and break down walls, define, and redefine national culture, and maintain and penetrate borders of all kinds.

In many ways, Edwardian England was a progressive reaction to the stuffy conservatism of Victorian England. It was a period of hope, prosperity, and cosmopolitanism that promised—if nothing else—an unprecedented future. Of course, most of the literature engaged in this project, offers a deeply conservative response to these new possibilities. Radical change was imminent, and England's national culture was in flux. As such, many of these texts are racist, nationalist, and hawkish. And again, today we find ourselves in a moment of unprecedented progressiveness in Western history, but nationalism, racism, and exceptionalism are at the heart of so much of our current public discourse. Many of the texts I have examined here have fallen out of popular favor, gone out of print, and remain obscure to literary history. Much of it is the not-so-good cultural detritus from a brief moment in history which was quickly overshadowed by world war and epoch-defining cultural movements. And yet, the Edwardian era, and the invasion-story genre, persists and invades other eras and genres throughout history. Over a century later, we other Edwardians might do well to consider the ways in which our own obsessions, manias, and neuroses surrounding borders and their crossings are far from unique, but rather situated in a long tradition of invasive fantasizing.

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