



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

THE EDWARDIAN EVERYDAY:  
THE PROBLEM OF ESCAPE IN H.G. WELLS & ARNOLD BENNETT

RYAN EDWARDS

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
ENGLISH LITERATURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
2018



I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Ryan Edwards  
12<sup>th</sup> November 2018



## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the concept of escaping the everyday in the Edwardian novels of H.G. Wells and Arnold Bennett. Both are interested in the ordinary lives of overlooked individuals but differ profoundly on what constitutes the everyday; both presage subsequent important theoretical critiques of the everyday. The first chapter indicates theoretical problems with the everyday as articulated by various approaches to its potential significances, and the logics underpinning its apparent stability. The issue of escape is implicit in many of these approaches, particularly Marxist critiques of capitalism's colonisation of day-to-day routines. Rather than simply examine the everyday as it is represented by Wells and Bennett, the logic of exodic critiques, those that mandate escape, offers a lucid means of exposing their perhaps irreconcilable evaluations of the quotidian. Wells's approach is predicated upon the necessity and feasibility of escape. His Edwardian futurological speculations of post-everyday possibilities can be read in conjunction with the novels' itemisation of miserable everydays produced by the otiose structures of capitalism. The consolidation of this predicate means that escape appears as wholly necessary to agency and individuality, and the novels outline increasingly individuated, and implausible, escape attempts. The viability of these efforts reveals Wells's ideological misconception of *petit bourgeois* agency. However, Wells's failure to cogently outline what or where the post-everyday might be is also partly a problem of escape. In the final instance, he recognises that the escape attempts of his approach to the everyday involve a terminal and interminable problem: endless prospects of escape. Bennett dissents from Wells in three important ways. Firstly, he indicates that escape offers insufficient alterity: holidays involve massifying consumption, are superintended by capitalism, involve a return to wage-labour, and are invariably constituted by someone else's occluded everyday. For Bennett, everyday regularities provide a means of orientating oneself, consolidate identity, and provide meaning – traits which might be found in work. Secondly, the epistemic precarity which saturates Bennett's novels inhibits the confident projection of post-everyday felicity. Whereas Wells, confidently outlined an improved, if ductile, futurity, Bennett implicitly recognises that such speculations are ideologically conditioned and prone to the reinscription of anterior suppositions. Thirdly, Bennett posits that the everyday is axiomatically constituted by individuals whose agency is not coeval with escape. This is manifest in Bennett's conception of historical agency denied by critical accounts, such as Henri Lefebvre's, which pose the everyday as a hegemonic, disciplinary force. Bennett's conception of ordinary individuals' purposeful, meaningful praxis as the very fabric of the everyday undoes the necessity of escape. The everyday is not the denial of agency but the plane upon which history is immanent and constituted by ordinary people. The thesis concludes with a brief coda outlining a foundational tenet shared by Bennett and Wells that has implications beyond their Edwardian work.



## LAY SUMMARY

This thesis examines the concept of the everyday in the Edwardian novels of H.G. Wells and Arnold Bennett. Both writers were concerned with the ordinary lives of unremarkable individuals and were criticised by Virginia Woolf for their perceived preoccupation with the banal details of the material day-to-day. Woolf's charge of Edwardian "materialism" provides a means of exploring the everyday in Wells and Bennett. The everyday is a contested theoretical field, as the overlooked presents a substantial challenge to representation. However, one of its salient features involves escaping the stultifying rhythms of routine. The thesis highlights the theme of escape in Wells and Bennett in order to illuminate their perhaps irreconcilable conceptions of what the everyday constitutes, means, and might be. For Wells, whose personal experiences of boredom and misery inform his Edwardian novels, the familiar is a prison from which its inmates might escape and realise their individuality. Across the Edwardian period, Wells is increasingly concerned with the threat that the everyday poses to his protagonists. Consequently, the means of escape become more desperate and increasingly implausible but more insistent upon the repudiation of the everyday. This reading of Wells's Edwardian interest in the everyday is bolstered by his non-fiction, futurological works which look forward to a world free of wasteful everyday inhibiting the development of ordinary people. Bennett's sense of the ordinary, on the other hand, is not predicated upon the obligation to escape. This is formed by three interlocking arguments. Firstly, Bennett indicates that wherever one goes for reprieve from the daily grind (a questionable axiom to begin with, as he intimates) involves a trip to someone else's everyday, to the massifying logic of holidays and consumption, and occluded, unequal social relations. Secondly, Bennett's narration is predicated upon unreliability and misprisions, and he recognises that any articulation of escape risks projecting conceptual errors into the imagined, post-everyday future. Thirdly, Bennett fundamentally disagrees that escape is coeval with individual agency. He makes a clear case for the everyday as the unfolding space where history is constituted by overlooked individuals. Whereas Wells sees agency at the threshold of escape, Bennett recognises that the ordinary teems with the overlooked, purposeful, and meaningful actions of ordinary individuals interweaving histories within the everyday. Wells's and Bennett's different articulations of the everyday ask difficult questions of theoretical critiques of the everyday and intimate overlooked complexities of Edwardian literature.



=

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Firstly, I am grateful for the AHRC scholarship which has allowed me to pursue this research. I would like to thank Jonathan Wild for his generous, reliable support over the last three years. His advice has proven invaluable, as has the provision of rare Edwardian books. Randall Stevenson has provided illuminating thoughts on my inchoate work, and has been a patient interlocutor when discussing the obliquities of literary critique. Dominic Hale has provided unwavering reassurance, fierce erudition, and luminous criticism of my thinking and writing. Jessie Widner has been an unfailing and invaluable source of intelligent, perspicuous reflection and tireless generosity. Without their continued support and love, this thesis might not exist. Innumerable thanks to Sarah Sheard for her diligent, scrupulous corrections and singular patience with my grammatical infelicities.

I would like to thank Ste Myers, Danny Perez, and Phil Ross. Their longstanding encouragement has helped immeasurably over more than a decade of loving friendship.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their unwavering support, willingness to disabuse me of any self-aggrandisement, and boundless love. For these reasons, and the opportunities their care has fostered, I dedicate this work to them: to my sister, brother, mother, grandma, and grandpa – especially the latter's correspondence, which has provided a resolute and reliable challenge to any of my complacent ideas.

Primarily, this work is for my mother, the most extraordinary and loving person I have ever met, whose unremarkably remarkable everyday actions shaped the aftercourse of our lives. Thank you for everything.



=

CONTENTS



ABBREVIATIONS

– 17 –

INTRODUCTION

– 21 –

I: THE EVERYDAY

*i* – introduction

– 35 –

*ii* – the everyday

– 38 –

*iii* – Henri Lefebvre

– 51 –

*iv* – escape

– 67 –

II: THE EDWARDIANS

*i* – introduction

– 79 –

*ii* – Edwardian materialism: a halcyon afternoon

– 84 –

*iii* – ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’: Edwardian literature’s materialism & the everyday

– 95 –

*iv* – Edwardian everydays

– 109 –

III: H.G. WELLS

*i* – introduction

– 135 –

*ii* – entrapment

– 148 –

*iii* – escape

– 160 –

*iv* – gnomic endings

– 182 –

IV: ARNOLD BENNETT

*i* – introduction

– 197 –

*ii* – undoing exodus

– 203 –

*iii* – personal perspectivism

– 222 –

*iv* – everydays of individual distinction

– 236 –

CODA

– 255 –

BIBLIOGRAPHY

– 259 –



=

ABBREVIATIONS



Bennett:

*Anna of the Five Towns – Anna*

*The Author's Craft – TAC*

*Arnold Bennett: The Evening Standard Years: 'Books and Persons' 1926-1931 – Books and Persons*

*How to Live on 24 Hours a Day – How to Live*

*The Journal of Arnold Bennett – Journal*

*The Old Wives' Tale – TOWT*

Hepburn, ed.:

*Arnold Bennett: The Critical Heritage – Bennett's Critical Heritage*

*Sketches for Autobiography – Sketches*

Lefebvre:

*Critique of Everyday Life, Volume I – Vol. I*

*Critique of Everyday Life, Volume II – Vol. II*

*Everyday Life in the Modern World – Everyday Life*

Parrinder, ed.:

*H.G. Wells: The Critical Heritage – Wells's Critical Heritage*

Parrinder & Philmus, eds.:

*H.G. Wells's Literary Criticism – Wells's Criticism*

Wells:

*Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866), Volume I  
and Volume II – Autobiography<sup>1</sup>*

*The History of Mr Polly – Polly*

*Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul – Kipps*

*Love and Mr Lewisham – Lewisham*

*Mankind in the Making – Mankind*

*A Modern Utopia – Utopia*

*New Worlds for Old – New Worlds*

*The Wheels of Chance – Wheels*

Wilson, ed.:

*Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells: A Record of a Personal and a Literary Friendship – A Record*

Woolf:

*The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume 2, 1920-1924 – Diary, Vol. 2*

*The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume 4, 1931-1935 – Diary Vol. 4*

*The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 2: The Question of Things Happening, 1912-1922 – Letters Vol. 2*

*The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 3: A Change of Perspective, 1923-1929 – Letters Vol. 3*

*The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 4: A Reflection on the Other Person, 1929-1931 – Letters Vol. 4*

---

<sup>1</sup> The pagination continues across the two volumes, and the relevant volume this will be indicated when cited; e.g.: 'Never have I known anyone else so cheerfully objective as Bennett' (*Autobiography* 2.626).



=

## INTRODUCTION



A great deal of Edwardian literature and art is preoccupied with escape.

Simon J. James, 'Afterword' (261)

Following Virginia Woolf's 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' (1924), Edwardian literature, defined by the metonymic triumvirate of John Galsworthy, H.G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett, was framed as simply and irredeemably materialist. Apparently, this failing was due to an insipid preoccupation with the surface values of the material day-to-day. The evocation of banal details occludes luminous access to individual psychology; for Woolf, this is a damning flaw: 'I have formed my own opinion of what Mr Bennett is about – he is trying to make us imagine for him; he is trying to hypnotize us into the belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person living there' (330). Peter Keating (1989) notes that Woolf's condemnation of the Edwardians is a deliberate and provocative means of establishing discrete literary periods, despite the groups she cites overlapping (92-97). Whatever Woolf's methodological infelicities, tendentious examples, and considered motives, her judgement consigned the Edwardians to limited critical attention.

Nonetheless, this materialist complaint does provide, however indirectly, a cogent and illuminative means of thinking through Edwardian literature. This thesis charts a course through an apparent deficiency by posing the everyday as a critical interest in the work of Wells and Bennett, two writers 'committed to ordinariness' (Keating 319). Not only does focusing on the everyday gainsay a procrustean conception of Edwardian literature, this particular critical strategy exposes substantive differences between the two authors. Certainly, both are interested in everyday individuals but this ostensible similarity, between, say, Richard Larch in Bennett's *A Man from the North* (1898) and the eponymous *Lewisham* (1900), belies substantial differences. These impinge upon notions of individual agency, the granular texture and construction of history, the in-flexibility of prospective utopias, teleological critique, and perspicuous, self-reflexive questions of epistemic limitation. These issues are most apparent in their complex articulations of a neglected facet of the everyday: escaping the familiar's oppressive banality. In Wells's novels, quotidian misery is anathema to fulsome individuality. His protagonists evince the necessity of transcending the stultifying limitations of an imposed everyday; and, moreover, his futurological works can be read as a parallel attempt to delineate a post-everyday vision of preferable and possible futurity. Bennett, on the other hand, offers a searching critique of the imputed necessity of escape. Rather than positing the familiar as inimical to meaningful individuality, and implicitly an imposition of hegemonic disciplinarity organising day-to-day life, Bennett rejects the antagonistic logic of Wells's everyday which makes escape mandatory. In *TOWT* (1908), Bennett tacitly argues for an everyday constituted by active, discriminating, and purposeful individuals mutually constituting not just the routines of their imbricated everyday lives but the total fabric of history. The difference between Wells and Bennett, therefore,

broaches more expansive, theoretical questions of what the everyday might be in light of their discrepant attitudes towards the exodic.

Critical work of this kind focused on Bennett and Wells is notable for its rarity. Of course this is part of a relative dearth of Edwardian studies; while these exist there is a tendency to situate novels as benign examples of broader historical changes without undertaking close readings which would reveal the texts' complexities. Jefferson Hunter (1982), Keating, and Jonathan Rose (1986), for instance, delineate social and cultural changes in which texts are often pertinent examples within the broader sweep of their argument; John Batchelor (1982) simply provides outlines of nominally canonical texts. More recent work has been more judicious and intensified its focus; Jonathan Wild's *The Great Edwardian Emporium* (2017) and the edited collection *Edwardian Culture: Beyond the Garden Party* (2018) are notable examples. There are significant works devoted to Wells and Bennett that posit a cogent line of critical investigation. Simon J. James's *Maps of Utopia* (2012) and John S. Partington's *Building Cosmopolis* (2003) are intelligent, diligent analyses of Wells's subtle and protean political thinking which pay close attention to his works, and there are more synoptic monographs, by J.R. Hammond (1988), Brian Murray (1990), and Michael Draper (1987). Robert Squillace (1997) is the singular instance of a critic willing to subject Bennett's corpus to rigorous scrutiny and posit a lucid argument for the texts' developing preoccupation with modernity and modernism; more recent work has been ventured in two volumes of the *Arnold Bennett Companion* (2015, 2017). Both authors tend to receive univocal attention. Though John Carey (1992) does polarise Wells and Bennett somewhat crudely, there is a signal lack of theoretically informed studies which scrutinise these authors together. Their Edwardian works can be productively situated together as exemplifying salient differences of theoretical significance to the everyday and its exodic mandate. This thesis seeks to demonstrate the viability of reading Edwardian literature with a theoretical framework to which it is not normally subjected. Michael Sayeau (2013) and Laurie Langbauer (2001) do offer scrupulous, erudite readings of the period but neither is explicitly Edwardian. In order to avoid previous critical shortcomings, this thesis works closely with the authors' Edwardian texts, applies theoretical materials appropriate to their interest in the everyday, and demurs from offering a monologic conception of the period. The goal, simply, is to indicate the manifold potentials of a concerted, disinterested, and focused critical examination of Edwardian literature.

\*

The first chapter examines a variety of theoretical and critical texts preoccupied with the everyday, including sociology, feminism, Marxist critical theory, and history. The everyday presents a singular challenge to interrogative apprehension as it necessarily involves looking at that which one overlooks. The perplexing corollary of this axiom means that one cannot look at

the everyday: it remains that which one does not look at. To examine the familiar, to subject it to scrutiny, involves, in the first instance, a moment of defamiliarisation. Such inscrutability is compounded by the heterogeneity of everyday. An individual's everyday is utterly subjective and constituted by myriad physical contingencies and impalpable regularities: the experience and demands of clock time, the stability generated by routine, and the emotional associations of the most daily interactions. The everyday is the bus commute to work: its material facticity, the organisation of civic infrastructure, its unerring dailiness, its boredom: all components receding into insignificance due to the diminishing returns produced by the mellow reliability of the various, constant stimuli. Isolating discrete components of even this benign example discloses the intricate nexus of moving parts which constitute the overlooked everyday and frustrates such attempts. For example, detailing the driver's uniform undoes an everyday quiddity. The chapter's second section delineates this problem and indicates one potential solution. Theorists have posed the everyday as an immanent plenitude of intangible and material undercurrents which are radically ubiquitous even if they are outwith direct apprehension. Laurie Langbauer (1992) notes that the 'opacity of the everyday [...] is crucial' as

subjects cannot experience it unmediated and untransformed by expectation, by representation, or by their attention to it. In resisting definition, the everyday becomes a category that foregrounds those mediations and, in that sense, becomes a position or marker rather than a stable referent (49).

Other accounts of the everyday are not constrained by this entanglement. They rely upon a functional definition of the everyday as the material realities of day-to-day experience and pose these regularities as a potentially insidious force that obtunds perception leaving individuals inured to the structures of power at work in the perpetuation of stability. Such approaches contend with the latent significance of the everyday. Rita Felski's (2011) delineation of a "hermeneutics of suspicion" is instructive in analysing approaches such as Henri Lefebvre's. The chapter's third section analyses his approach: its centrality to everyday studies, remit, and limitations. Like Sigmund Freud's approach to parapraxes in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), Lefebvre perceives a deep logic beneath the stability of the day-to-day. In *Everyday Life* (1968), Lefebvre analyses capitalist powers, 'colossal and despicable, that swoop down on everyday life and pursue their prey in its evasions and departures, dreams and fantasies to crush it in their relentless grip' (55). Like Guy Debord and the Situationist International with whom he was associated, Lefebvre's approach consciously sought to reorient Marxist analysis to focus on capitalism's tentacular grasp of all facets of daily life as the repetitions of quotidian activities leaves them susceptible to the acquisitive, linear logic of capitalism. For example, leisure and recreation, which once might have constituted a respite from work, are posited as a crucial

component in, and evidence of, the everyday's subjugation by capitalism (*Vol. I* 39-40; *Everyday Life* 49-51).

Lefebvre is not enthralled by the everyday. His analysis of the everyday is totalising, certainly, but his critique is predicated upon the necessity of its supersession, and the tangible proximity of this possibility; McKenzie Wark (2011) insists that, 'even in his less ebullient moments, [Lefebvre] radiates a sense of possibility' (108). Lefebvre looks forward to an improved and emancipated futurity; he is 'a utopian, yes, a partisan of possibilities' (*Everyday Life* 163). In this regard, Lefebvre's work is redolent of Wells's conception of protean utopian prospects discernable through current material conditions, as outlined in *Anticipations* (1901), *Mankind* (1903), *Utopia* (1905), and *New Worlds* (1908). As critical accounts of their work have indicated, both Lefebvre's and Wells's critiques recapitulate gendered suppositions and reveal their contingent position within a nexus of encoded ideological norms and extant social relations. Unlike Bennett's acute sense of epistemic indeterminacy and limitation outlined in *TAC* (1914), Lefebvre and Wells overlook everyday suppositions girding their critical accounts.

Of course, there are everyday theorists suspicious of a simply injurious conception of the everyday. John Bargh (1997) argues that the ability of individuals to move about the world without conscious effort, often performing multiple complex tasks simultaneously, is an irreducible component of psychological development. Joseph A. Amato (2016) argues that the comparatively small amount of time now devoted to banal, everyday tasks, such as walking and washing, has allowed the 'conscious self' to become 'increasingly distinguished [...] from everyday life and sociality, as it valued itself for its individuality, privacy, intimacy and subjective transcendence' (199). Both Bargh and Amato indicate that the progressive expansion of that which one might think of as everyday, the tasks performed without conscious effort, enable individuals to undertake more complex, self-determined activities. The everyday is not capitalism's colonisation of daily routines, as Lefebvre insists: it is an irrefragable condition of existence outwith necessarily malign historical context.

The clearest means of elucidating the distinctive approaches to the everyday ventured by Wells and Bennett is offered by escape's central position within the everyday. This certainly implicates the optimistic and pessimistic (or suspicious) theoretical approaches, too: Lefebvre's project is explicitly predicated upon superseding the quotidian; Bargh and Amato imply that the everyday is already a platform of steady amelioration. The chapter's fourth section turns to Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor's *Escape Attempts: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Everyday Life* (1992), the most cogent exposition of the exodic as a structural component in thinking about the everyday. They argue that the everyday can be seen as the moment at which activities – work, hobbies, family life – are dissociated by self-consciousness; once they cross the threshold of everydayness, and are driven beneath the need for full conscious attention, a notional "real" self intercedes. The obligatory repetitions of the everyday mean that the inducements to escape are

pervasive; these forays bring novelty which inevitably hardens into routine and the subsequent desire to escape. The titular attempts are endlessly plural, and self-perpetuating. In this model, holidays are not an escape, but not because they are encircled by capitalism. Breaks from work do not constitute a meaningful reprieve from the everyday not least because they are packaged and familiar. Moreover, holidays are inherently temporary and depend upon the return to work for their imputed value. In the exodic framing posited by Cohen and Taylor, such momentary perforations in the over-familiar fabric of the day-to-day, though always already compromised by the ontological problem of self-consciousness, are, however obliquely, dependent upon the everyday for their desired *non*-everydayness. While Wells and Bennett do not elaborate a model of the everyday which poses the everyday in precisely these terms, the working paradigm of the familiar as oppressive normality and routine exposes a dichotomy and illuminates their discrepant conceptions of the everyday.

This section of the first chapter also indicates the shortcomings of extant literary studies dealing with the everyday and the period: none attends to the exodic in early twentieth-century literature and none is dedicated specifically to the Edwardians. Having posited the theoretical underpinnings of reading the everyday through its articulation of the exodic, the second chapter turns to establishing the Edwardian parameters within which the thesis works. The theoretical section precedes this literary historical groundwork as the chapter makes claims via materialism for an everyday critical framing for Bennett and Wells. It is important to state that the “Edwardian” is a fraught literary period; one might deem it a nugatory category: Keating indicates that any issues which might be putatively definitive were absolutely not ‘initiated by Edward’s accession’ (92). Even dating the beginning and end of what Raymond Williams (1958) called an ‘interregnum’, one notable for the dearth of ‘anything very new: a working out, rather, of unfinished lines; a tentative redirection’ (161-62), proves difficult. There are various potential markers: one might begin somewhere at the end of the nineteenth century, with Edward’s coronation, his mother’s death, the Boer War, with Oscar Wilde’s trial, or, simply, the turn of the century; the period might end with Edward’s death, George V’s coronation a year later, the beginning of the First World War, ‘the first issue of *Blasé*’ (Batchelor 2), or it might extend beyond the War towards the equally contentious “beginnings” of modernism. Given that this problem is well established, and critics such as Hunter are relatively sanguine about the flexible parameters of what one might deem Edwardian (vii), and that Bennett and Wells are on the wrong side of Woolf’s climacteric juncture of ‘about December, 1910’ (320), the thesis deals primarily with work produced during the first decade of the twentieth century. Of course, Bennett’s and Wells’s interest in the everyday is not neatly confined to these years, and pertinent materials are cited where appropriate; for instance Bennett’s *Hilda Lessways* (1911) and *These Twain* (1916) constitute a development of everyday thinking begun in *Clayhanger* (1910); and Wells’s

*Autobiography* (1934) and *Wheels* (1896) clarify the shifting conception of escape in *Lewisham*, *Kipp's* (1905), and *Polly* (1909).

The second chapter approaches the Edwardian everyday via its materialist associations. This is argued in two stages. The chapter's second section indicates the influence of Edward's symbolic function in the definition of the age as both gilded and peaceful; the putative 'Edwardian Garden Party' was, of course, 'not much fun for the vast majority of the uninvited' (Keating 93). This section of the chapter also indicates cultural and socio-political issues prompting literary responses which were certainly materialist, though anathema to the sybaritic monarch. Having complicated one prevalent set of associations, the third section of the chapter turns to Woolf's charge of materialism and its damaging critical legacy. Rather than operating directly *against* Woolf by arguing for the Edwardian interest in subjectivity, and therefore tacitly accepting the derogative implications of her position, this section argues *through* the charge of materialism which leads directly to the everyday in Bennett's and Wells's Edwardian novels. Working with Woolf's complaint demonstrates its shortcomings. Simply noting the shared cognisance of the everyday's materiality is, however, an insufficient means of exploring their manifestly distinct attitudes towards what these realities entail.

The final section of the second chapter offers an indicative survey of Edwardian literature's various evocations and interrogations of the everyday. This section outlines a range of Edwardian materials concerned with probing the surface and depth of the day-to-day. Interests ranged widely: from G.K. Chesterton's willingness to simply examine the everyday in *Tremendous Trifles* (1909); to Robert Tressell's use of everyday materiality as political critique in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914/1995); to the rousing defence of the putative banality of suburban routine proffered by W. Pett Ridge in *Outside the Radius* (1899) and *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road* (1908); to a prescient sense of its thoroughly gendered iterations detailed in Ivy Compton-Burnett's *Dolores* (1911), Cicely Hamilton's *Diana of Dobson's* (1908), and Elizabeth Baker's *Chains* (1911). This section is intended to demonstrate an Edwardian cognisance of the everyday, as various in their articulations as the familiar's manifestations, and the exciting possibilities this presented. In May Sinclair's *The Divine Fire* (1904), aspiring poet Savage Keith Rickman extols the inspiration provided by the contemporary everyday: "to be alive out there in the streets, on a sunny day, when the air's all fine watery gold [...it's] like dry champagne. [...] I got as drunk as a lord the other day going over Hampstead Heath" (292). The questions induced by thinking about the everyday prompted celebrations of its latent value and sober assessments of its demands, confines, and inducements to escape.

The second half of the thesis deals with Wells and Bennett in turn, examining their work in light of the exodic approach to the material everyday delineated in opening chapters. Each chapter is made up of close readings of the author's work, pertinent non-fictional materials, and secondary critical texts. Chapter three examines Wells's Edwardian interest in the demands placed

upon individuals which prompt escape; for Wells, this action is a manifestation of individuated agency that breaks out of the oppressive confines of banal routines such as Lewisham's teaching or Polly's and Kipps's drapery employment. The first section posits *Wheels* as an adumbration of the concerted attempts Wells sees as necessary to meaningful escape. As Cohen and Taylor indicate, and as Hoopdriver discovers in *Wheels*, the logic of holidays is invariably compromised by its dependence upon a return to work. Wells's Edwardian protagonists subsequently display an increasing animus against the everyday, concoct more improbable means of escape, and, ultimately, enjoin violent transgression. The introductory section also outlines the futurological works' parallel interests in overcoming the deleterious organisation of routine detailed in the novels. Read together, the non-fiction indicates possible futures denied to the novels' protagonists. Any utopia 'you dream of [...] has to be made of the sort of people you meet every day' (*New Worlds* 225): Kipps or Polly or Lewisham.

In order to tease out the developing logic in the three novels, the chapter's second section outlines Wells's excoriation of capitalism's otiose dis-organisation. In *Tono-Bungay* (1909), George Ponderevo castigates Edwardian capitalism as 'one spectacle of forces running to waste' (346). Wells's critique of capitalism includes its paradoxical iteration for ordinary individuals: if less spectacular, the misery of repetitious, inefficient employment is equally wasteful. In *Lewisham*, *Kipps*, and *Polly*, the protagonists revile their monotonous, torpid work. Wells posits the carceral threat as so severe that it might abrogate the individuality crucial to his conception of utopian possibility. Polly's reaction to work is compared to 'a newly arrived prisoner's backward glance at the trees and heather through the prison gates' (387). As a paradigm, this is strikingly similar to Cohen and Taylor's model of the everyday, which began as an investigation into the coping mechanisms developed by long-sentence prisoners (32-37). Posing the everyday as prison is fundamental to the exodic logic of Wells's everyday, and justifies – indeed demands – the transgressive efforts of his embattled protagonists to escape.

The third section of the chapter analyses the different means of escape detailed in the novels, and argues for the increasingly desperate, and implausible, means by which the protagonists exit their reviled, constraining everyday. Firstly, Lewisham assents to the ostensibly restrictive future of marriage, fatherhood, domesticity, and tutoring. However, this apparent capitulation accords with Wells's broadly meliorist teleology: 'each generation is a step, and [...] directly it grows clear that instead of being in an eddy merely, we are for all our eddying moving forward upon a wide voluminous current' (*Mankind* 19). Lewisham's conscious acceptance of species-wide improvement intimates a steady overcoming of the everyday rather than individual rupture. *Kipps's* formulation of escape implicates a more pressing need to transcend the routine misery of the drapery, and Kipps's release is expedited by an improbable inheritance and a subsequent, equally remarkable, intercession guaranteeing future solvency. Unlike *Lewisham*, the novel works harder to ensure Kipps enjoys a final, lasting reprieve from the everyday. *Polly* refines

*Kipps*'s insistence upon the pressing need for action. The threat to individuality is more extreme: Polly feels himself 'the faintest underdeveloped intimation of a man that had ever hovered on the verge of non-existence' (412). Escape becomes a prerogative and *Polly* endorses and enjoins direct, violent action on behalf of the self in order to transcend the miseries coterminous with the everyday.

The change from Lewisham's sense of individual will subsumed by collective endeavour, the very logic underpinning Wells's futurological optimism, is inimical to *Kipps*'s serendipitous conclusion and Polly's individual breaking out of quotidian misery. This problem is manifest in the two novels' comparably tranquil and luminous final scenes. Christopher Caudwell's *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938) argues that these can be explained by Wells's bourgeois misconception of agency conducive to a facile, ideological conception of meaningful autonomy. Though Caudwell's argument is predicated upon an excoriation of a very specific deficiency in Wells's political thinking, the chapter's final section poses the novels' strange endings as bound up in the intractable problem of escaping the everyday. Indeed, they implicate a tension between Wells's restive and constant preoccupation with escape and the tacit recognition of its impossible realisation. This concession to the ongoing problem of the everyday, if accepted as inimical to the autonomy Wells demonstrably values, is glimpsed in the final words of *Kipps* and *Polly*. Much like Cohen and Taylor, Wells's articulation of the everyday posits a terminal and interminable problem requiring constant redress. In the final instance, Polly and Kipps return to work, and, implicitly, to an ineluctable problem. Escape is only ever provisional, and the idyllic repose of the novels' gnomic conclusions intimate that final release from the everyday is manifestly incredible.

Having established the development of Wells's Edwardian conception of the exodic, the final chapter turns to Bennett. Whereas Wells and theorists like Lefebvre posit the everyday as a pervasive attenuation of human potential, Bennett's articulation of the everyday dissents from this anterior supposition. The chapter makes the case across three interlocking delineations of the everyday which preclude the absolute necessity of escape. The first section indicates that the bromidic conception of Bennett's 'obsession with ordinariness' (Keating 234) occludes a more profound sense of what, and who, constitutes the everyday. The second section outlines a foundational critique of escape: where does one go? Bennett was cognisant of the paradoxical imbrications of routine. When one leaves the familiar, one visits someone else's everyday. Under capitalism, the reprieve of holidaying is delusive and, like Lefebvre, Bennett is aware of the apertures in the everyday which disclose a tangle of hidden social relations: George Cannon's pristine 'white wristbands', for example, prompt Hilda Lessways to imagine 'a slatternly woman or two sighing and grumbling amid wreaths of steam' (*Hilda Lessways* 41). Bennett does not diminish the potentially political significance of these glimpses. However, the acuity of such instances, which pierce the stable 'hallucination' of the everyday (*Hilda Lessways* 325), is important to a critique of escape which recognises that a post-everyday future is liable to include further

instances of dissembled labour and iniquitous material social relations. A second pre-emptive interrogation of peremptory escape is implicit in Bennett's recognition that the everyday is not experienced uniformly. Consequently, and in line with feminist critics of Lefebvre, Bennett poses the everyday as stability and continuity wherein individuals find purpose, beauty, meaning, and comfort. Presumably to Wells's horror, *TOWT* goes as far as to indicate that an appropriate response to the everyday's banality is love.

The lucid recognition of material contingency implicates another component in Bennett's complication of obligatory escape. Though critics have almost uniformly labelled Bennett an author whose control over his narratives is absolute, the chapter's third section argues against this view and for the epistemic limitations deliberated in the novels *and* in Bennett's theory of fiction; this section serves as a redress of Squillace's concept of 'impersonal perspectivism' (184-187). Like Dorothy E. Smith's (1987) critique of nominally disinterested discursive practices, Bennett accepts the materially palpable limits of what is knowable of the everyday. Indeed, because he accepts an embeddedness within the everyday, Bennett presages Smith's sense of the everyday's vital position as the ground upon which refutations of ideological suppositions can be built. The cogent awareness of contingency and fallibility means that Bennett cannot honestly limn a utopic future which does not, invariably, inhere overlooked suppositions structuring an imagined alterity. Though Wells is certainly aware of the mutability of his futurological speculations and advocates protean utopianism, Bennett demurs from even this precept.

The final section of the chapter posits that Bennett's resistance to escape also depends upon his advocacy of an agency summarily denied by accounts of the everyday such as Lefebvre's. Against Wells's conception of volition as coeval with breaking out of the familiar, Bennett posits purposive, active, and autonomous individuals constituting their everyday. There is no clearer indicator of this provision of agency than Sophia Baines's wilful actions during the Siege of Paris in *TOWT*. Bennett's close attention to her formative role within the steady unspooling of history, and awareness of the novel's limitations, elucidates the activities of individuals who are not simply subjected to the hegemonic force of the everyday. Building upon Karel Kosík's argument in *Dialectics of the Concrete* (1963) that history is coextensive with the everyday, this section argues that *TOWT* recognises that history emerges within the everyday through ordinary, routine praxis: history occurs 'while one's head is turned' (*TOWT* 68) because of an improper recognition of significance. When Samuel and Constance Povey replace old shop window signs, they are 'making history' and constitute 'the forces of the future' (73). During the Siege, Sophia manages an apartment and sells provisions: she makes history. In Bennett's Edwardian work, the everyday is not imposed upon people by an im-material antagonist: it is the always unfolding interactivities of nominally unremarkable individuals constituting their worlds.

A final coda indicates antipathies, and important similarities, between Wells and Bennett and reaffirms the overlooked importance of Edwardian thinking about the everyday.



I

THE EVERYDAY



But apt the mind or fancy is to rove  
Unchecked, and of her roving is no end,  
Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn  
That to know at large of things remote  
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know  
That which before us lies in daily life,  
Is the prime wisdom: what is more is fume,  
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,  
And renders us in things that most concern  
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.

John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (8.188-197)

*Paradise Lost* (1667) might seem like an odd beginning for a chapter centred on the everyday. However, Milton's Adam, in conversation with Raphael, offers a remarkably lucid articulation of more recent theoretical conceptions of the everyday's dissembled significance. Despite the variety of sources this chapter will examine, Marxist, feminist, and sociological approaches to the everyday are still inveigled by '[t]hat which before us lies in daily life'; and, as Adam indicates, this is often freighted with a gendered component: errant female fancies must be disciplined by sedulous male study. Attention should be directed to that which is at hand and yet this is too mundane to kindle any interest. Hence, the everyday *lies*: it is apparently fixed (if by routine rather than total immobility) and duplicitous (movement and intrigue belie this stasis). Breaking through the indurations of the (over) familiar constitutes a 'prime wisdom'. 'Prime' implies highest and first, perhaps primitive. In the Liturgy of the Hours, Prime signifies the first hour of daylight designated for prayer, and the everyday has been conceived as the primary ground to be critically examined in order to establish a knowledge 'at large of things remote' cognisant of the quotidian upon which it is (uncritically) built and to which it inexorably returns. Adam's inquiry is bracketed by the desire for, and resistance to, the 'obscure and subtle.' In 'Perspectives for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life' (1961), Guy Debord posits that the "critique of everyday life" could and should also be understood in this reverse sense: as everyday life's sovereign critique of everything that is external or irrelevant to itself (95). One might think of Adam's 'prime wisdom' similarly. The 'fond impertinence' of reaching beyond the familiar still exerts a pull even as one attends to the overlooked. The indeterminacy of the everyday obliges one to look at the overlooked *and* resist more than ordinary elucidation. Consequently, as the breadth of work dedicated to understanding (even describing and locating) it indicates, the everyday retains a

primacy after which we 'are still to seek'. Raphael instructs Adam: 'be lowly wise; | Think only what concerns thee and thy being; | Dream not of other worlds' (8.173-175). The various responses of twentieth-century approaches to the everyday denied this injunction and sought, or dreamt, manifold variants of the possible beyond the limits of the familiar.

Adam loosely indicates the parameters of this chapter: the problem of attending to the everyday, the necessity of defamiliarising the ordinary, and its steady inducements to supersession and escape. This chapter will delineate the articulation of the everyday in salient twentieth century critical approaches, and indicate the problems of formulating a stable conceptual apparatus for the everyday. Beginning with Georg Simmel and Sigmund Freud, two central tenets are outlined: a particular overlooking which prevents proper attentiveness to the everyday, and a hermeneutics of suspicion able to expose the meanings lying beneath the threshold of attention. Quintessential overlooking and the inability to apperceive the insignificant present considerable problems; the problem of the everyday is coterminous with its definition. Maurice Blanchot (1959) intimates as much: 'the everyday has this essential trait: it allows no hold. It escapes. It belongs to insignificance, and the insignificant is without truth, without reality, without secret, but perhaps also the site of all possible significance. The everyday escapes' (14).

Despite these problems, conceptualisations of the everyday largely pivot, as Blanchot indirectly indicates, around the desire, necessity, and possibility of escape. This is most prominent in Henri Lefebvre's foundational Marxist critique of the everyday as a site and condition of alienation extending beyond the traditional loci of analysis. Lefebvre is important because he undertakes a concerted attempt to theorise the lineaments of the everyday, its relationship to capitalism, and proffers a teleological praxis for its supersession. Alongside Lefebvre's conceptual and personal affinities with the Situationist International, as outlined by McKenzie Wark (2011), there are accounts sympathetic to his work: Agnes Heller's *Everyday Life* (1970), Karel Kosík's *Dialectics of the Concrete* (1963), and John Roberts's *Philosophising the Everyday* (2006). Lefebvre's work has also prompted various criticisms. Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) insists upon the ubiquity of dissent easily elided by Lefebvre's more homogeneous sense of everyday uniformity. Rita Felski (2000), Claire Colebrook (2002), Laurie Langbauer (1999), and Dorothy E. Smith (1987) provide important feminist rejoinders to the presumptions of an everyday which is implicitly gendered; they return the critique of the everyday to its own situatedness, to the everyday from which it originates and overlooks. Felski, along with Michel Maffesoli (2004), Joseph A. Amato (2016) and Ben Highmore (2004), insists that the conception of the everyday misconstrues the familiar for the oppressive, and provides a nuanced account of its labile possibilities, even its extant merits.

While Lefebvre and the critics who constellate around his work elucidate contested approaches to the everyday, this chapter will insist upon an aspect of the quotidian that has been largely unexamined since Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor's *Escape Attempts: The Theory and Practice*

of *Resistance to Everyday Life* (1992). Their piercing analysis draws attention to the apodictic yearning for escape, or the related valorisation of resistance, that suffuse accounts of the everyday. Debord opens 'Perspectives for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life' with an explicit indication of his intent: '[to] study everyday life would be a completely absurd undertaking, unable to grasp anything of its object, if this study was not expressly for the purpose of transforming everyday life' (90). Such an approach involves an exodic impulse predicated upon a denigration of the familiar and the intimation of a viable and desired alternative. *Escape Attempts*, on the other hand, argues that the problem of the everyday is not sublated by historicism or reducible to historical contingency but instead presents an ontological challenge. Cohen and Taylor make clear that the everyday is bound to the notion (and paradox) of escape despite its absence from more recent critical discussions.

The everyday has provided a critical optic for literary studies of the everyday. Liesl Olson's *Modernism and the Ordinary* (2009) and Bryony Randall's *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (2007) are notable examples focusing on canonical modernist texts. More pertinent, given their periods of research, are Langbauer's *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930* (1999) and Michael Sayeau's *Against the Event: The Everyday and the Evolution of Modernist Narrative* (2013); though nominally modernist, Sayeau devotes a chapter each to Joseph Conrad and H.G. Wells. Langbauer and Sayeau examine Edwardian writers and texts via the everyday in their different, eponymous ways. However, none of these critics attend to the exodic. The final section of this chapter limns the critical apparatus for subsequent chapters on Wells and Arnold Bennett. It is insufficient to argue for a straightforward attentiveness to the ordinary. Wells and Bennett certainly exhibit a "prime wisdom" but their responsiveness to the everyday involves questions precipitated by this cognisance that impinge upon routine, agency, and divergent conceptions of the everyday as oppression or a multidimensional, protean site of meaningful autonomy. Once the everyday is viewed through its exodic criticism, the authors' preoccupations become conspicuous.

‘That which before us lies in daily life’ (8.193): Milton’s definition is succinct and reliable. ‘Lies’ is crucially ambivalent. Michael Foley (2012) notes that the ‘key quotidian experiences [of] anonymity, repetition, banality and an uneventfulness [...] can make everyday life appear dreary, trivial, meaningless, burdensome and unfulfilling’ (5). The ordinary is constituted as such by a banality imputed by familiarity: one devotes little conscious attention to routines because they appear to be of no interest or value. For Georges Perec (1989), this constitutes a life under ‘anaesthesia’ or ‘a dreamless sleep’ (210). Perec seeks to question the habitual: ‘[but] that’s just it, we’re habituated to it. We don’t question it’ (210). This section indicates some of the difficulties that orbit the ostensibly simple “problem” of the everyday. Rather than resolving these shifting, discordant approaches, this section limns the complex and interrelated attempts to think of, about, around, and, eventually, through the everyday. Given the intractability of the problem, it is useful to indicate the plenitude and conceptual difficulties before moving on to escape as *one* means of apprehending the everyday.

Conditions of habituation vary. Writing a thesis chapter may be relatively exciting to someone to whom it does not constitute a routine, and to someone writing a thesis chapter the idiosyncrasies of the car assembly line are beguilingly unfamiliar. Therefore, the problem is not one of inherent interest; the everyday seems to obviate such an idea and reduce intrigue to a question of exposure. Kosík notes that the everyday is not the ‘so-called profane as opposed to an exalted official world: both the scribe and the emperor live in the everyday’ (42). If attention is inured to the circumambient, the fault (if framed as a deficiency at all) is our own. Foley argues that ‘surprise is not in the novelty but in the familiarity’ (117). This is attendant to the ‘shameful revelation’ that ‘in the course of an average day we see hardly anything and understand almost nothing at all. But by making an enormous effort we can at least be conscious of this. The height of awareness is becoming aware of being aware of hardly anything’ (148). Though certain approaches present the ordinary as coeval with the dictates of late capitalism and the colonisation of social reproduction, it is important to stress that the everyday is pervasive. The adjectives and nouns most frequently appended to the everyday betray this ubiquity. Langbauer (1992) notes that *banal* in Medieval French was associated with the communal (63), though the word is also associated with the old English and Germanic ‘bannan’ meaning ‘proclamation commanding or forbidding under threat or penalty’ (*OED* 1a). Similarly, in Barry Sandywell’s (2004) synoptic account of categorising the everyday, he begins with “ordinary”:

from the Latin *ordinarius* (*ordo –dinis*, order, arrangement, system), *ordinary* implicates a cluster of significations indexing the habitual, customary, regular, usual or normal. [...] In

this respect, the “ordinary” prepares the way for ideological interpretations of the related idea of stable *tradition* (and thereby of traditional *communal*) (162 original emphasis).

Sandywell notes that “mundane” (from the ‘Latin *mundanus*, from *mundus*, the world’) similarly invokes the communal (163). To these one can add “trivial”: from the Latin *trivialis*, belonging to cross (three: *tri*) roads (*OED* 3) and hence shared, common but not uniform.

Yoking together the myriad varieties of everydays is the central component of overlooking. At the beginning of the twentieth century the German sociologist Simmel posited an explanation focused on the individual’s experience of urban rhythms blunting the discriminatory efficacy of human perception. In ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’ (1903), he avers that our attention to difference, and the stimulation provided by such difference, is inured in the modern metropolis by the profusion of stimuli which,

through the rapidity and contradictoriness of their shifts, force the nerves to make such violent responses, tear them about so brutally that they exhaust their last reserves of strength [...] This incapacity to react to new stimulations with the required amount of energy constitutes in fact the blasé attitude. [...] The essence of the blasé attitude is an indifference toward the distinction between things (329).

According to Richard Lehan (1998), Simmel is describing neurasthenia, a term coined by George M. Beard in *American Nervousness* (1881), a lassitude, fatigue or ‘mental instability’ induced by ‘the stress, the competitiveness, the intensity, the lack of community, the hostility, the anonymity, the mental stimuli, the distractions, the noise, of city life’ (183). This model provides a diagnosis of inattention predicated upon a particular set of material conditions. In ‘Culture is Ordinary’ (1958) Williams records the ‘mechanised vulgarity’ of ‘smart, busy, commercial’ London as so alien to his normal experiences that these trips induced ‘violent headaches whenever [he] passed through [...] and saw underground advertisements and evening newspapers’ (9). If Williams spent more time on the Tube and amidst the broil of urban stimuli then, according to Simmel, such tenderness would inevitably yield a callus and the phenomena would be driven below the threshold of attention. Simmel’s blasé model lingers in Ben Highmore’s *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (2001) in which the everyday is manifest for individuals as

those most repeated actions, those most travelled journeys, those most inhabited spaces that make up, literally, the day to day. This is the landscape closest to us, the world most immediately met. But with this quantifiable meaning creeps another, never far behind: the everyday as value and quality – everydayness (1).

These familiar facets of existence are conducive to a disposition inuring individuals to the very conditions that bring about the qualitative change Simmel describes as neurasthenia. Though his non-specific spatial and temporal starting point seems more pliable than Simmel's urban environment, Highmore hastily anchors his paradigm to 'the factory environment' as 'the generalised condition' of a recognisable everyday (8).

On the other hand, Simmel's paradigm is redolent of Sigmund Freud's trauma paradigm in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). In this essay, Freud conceives consciousness as the constant and attritional interaction of stimuli and subject. He deploys the image of 'an undifferentiated vesicle [...] susceptible to stimulation' that, in order to maintain coherence, develops a protective 'crust' that protects the 'deeper layers' of consciousness and simultaneously filters inchoate stimuli (20). For Freud, the development and operation of consciousness represents a process of healthy induration. Protection 'against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than *reception* of stimuli' (21 original emphasis). Freud's model is more capacious than Simmel's and, like Highmore, provides an explanation independent of historically specific sensory assault: the vesicle might appear anywhere, at any point. More recently, John Bargh's 'The Automaticity of Everyday Life' (1997) delineates the neuropsychological composition of the everyday in line with Freud's model; and, unlike Simmel, Bargh posits that the automaticity of behaviours and perceptual procedures is not specific to urban modernity. Bargh's position is relatively simple: he argues that the repetitive structures of the everyday produce cognitive and behavioural automaticity; that is, individual motivations, aims, and processes are preconscious and overlooked (3). These processes, once triggered, produce the 'psychological situation rather than the objective situation that then serves as the basis for further conscious responses to the situation' (7). The slow accrual of these norms produces a 'streamlined preconscious' (11) leaving active consciousness free to respond to fresh stimuli. Bargh claims that 'everything one encounters is preconsciously screened and classified as either good or bad within a fraction of a second' via an 'affective response mechanism, bypassing the cognitive processing mechanism entirely' (23). An obvious example of this process is driving a car; this involves complex actions that are progressively, through repetitions, less demanding of attention and, eventually, their execution is effectively preconscious. This optimistic account, of individuals becoming increasingly more adept at manoeuvring about their environment, is anticipated by Simmel's contemporary Wells in *Mankind* (1903): 'People who have dwelt for many generations in towns are not only more temperate and less explosive in the grosser indulgences, but more *urbane* altogether' (60 original emphasis).

This model provides an important tonal shift away from a sense of the everyday as an assault upon an implied ideal. In Simmel's case, this involves a distinction between the restorative calm of the rural and the frenetic pace of the urban ('The Metropolis and Mental Life' 325); though, as Williams demonstrates in *The Country and the City* (1975), the oppositions implicit in

such dichotomies are notional and involve ‘a magical recreation of history’ (45). For Bargh, the development of preconscious responses to environmental stimuli does not devalue conscious apprehension of the world; he argues for a distinction between ‘cognition and conscious cognition’ (50). Accepting this distinction, the everyday (automaticity) that Percey laments actually liberates consciousness. Bargh’s conclusion describes conscious cognition, moments of deliberate concentration, as the precursor to automaticity. As individuals incorporate more complex operations into the preconscious, the more time and space conscious cognition receives, allowing them to attend to more complex tasks. The everyday is not the deadening expansion of induration but an emancipatory platform. A.N. Whitehead recognised as much in *An Introduction to Mathematics* (1911): ‘It is a profoundly erroneous truism [...] that we should cultivate the habit of thinking what we are doing. The precise opposite is the case. Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking about them’ (41-42). More recently, Ian Burkitt (2004) has posited that ‘*the experience of everyday life is multidimensional*’ – and surely it must be – ‘even though it takes place on a single plane’ (213 original emphasis). For instance, the practiced motorist is able to converse, slow at a red light, and change radio station while performing the complex operation of driving. The multiplicities of the everyday do not reduce individuals to catatonia when faced with barrages of information and stimuli *because* of the automaticity Bargh describes. Burkitt argues that the ‘complex interweaving of social fields’ simply means ‘that reflexive consciousness [Bargh’s conscious cognition] is forced to play a greater role’ (223).

This crevice model of automaticity might prepare individuals for unexpected incidents and even the overstimulation of the modern city but these environs constitute familiarity and repetition, too. Even the cacophony of the urban and its heterogeneity incorporates the reliable cadences of public transport, the choreography of traffic lights, the constancy of work schedules, and the supermarket’s standardised closing times. Joseph A. Amato’s materialist history, *Everyday Life: How the Ordinary Became Extraordinary* (2016), argues that even if ‘people experience everyday life as a kaleidoscope’ (36), material regularities subsist throughout the post-Industrial Revolution, global north: ‘chairs, beds and mattresses, processed, canned and refrigerated food, refashioned clothes and footwear’, and these ‘technologies shape our movements, work and action, and they form our experience, emotions and their expression’ (152). Citing medieval northern Europeans’ material everyday, Amato argues that people have been gradually liberated from the material conditions of the past. Walking, for instance, was for centuries the dominant means of transport, and the dangers of travelling invariably meant a more limited existence ‘largely perceived and experienced by going on foot’ (41-43). Similarly, the exiguous provision of material comforts of warmth, shelter, and safety ‘suppressed tenderness and care; circumstances fostered harshness and indifference’; existence was comprised of ‘misery, hurt, hunger, illness, accident and death’ which forestalled meaningful emotional ties and curtailed individuality (84-88). Modernity

improved these material conditions, collapsed spatial and temporal norms, and rendered individuals relatively autonomous and free. The consequence of this explosion of free time has been an everydayness (and Amato posits the everyday as those menial tasks which previously occupied considerable energy and time) receding into relative insignificance. In the space and time freed and with surplus energy available, individuals ‘became the self-designated nucleus of being [and] the more everyday life melted into the background of consciousness’ (199). Like Bargh and Burkitt, Amato is relatively sanguine about the everyday.

Of course, these “defenders” of the everyday, if loosely grouped, are exclusively male. Betty Friedan’s compelling account of domestic routine refutes organised familiarity’s precipitation of individual development and fulfilment. *The Feminine Mystique’s* (1963) delineation of ‘The Problem that Has No Name’, the everyday ennui of the white suburban housewife in 1950s America typified by a ‘smiling empty passivity’ (47), intimates that the provision of material comforts does not ensure personal efflorescence. Friedan actually begins from Amato’s position:

[the] American housewife [has been] freed by science and labour-saving appliances from the drudgery, the dangers of childbirth, and the illnesses of her grandmother. She was healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, her home. [...] She was free to choose automobiles, clothes, appliances, supermarkets; she had everything that women ever dreamed of (7-8).

The disaffection of these superficially, and certainly materially, privileged women reveals a patriarchal conception of infantilised femininity (22-50) that values domesticity, marital fidelity, and motherhood: ‘the woman has no independent self to hide even in guilt; she exists only for and through her husband and children’ (32). The pernicious influence of this “feminine mystique” effectively dissuades women from undertaking higher education (138-141) and, consequently, keeps them from professional employment, and Friedan insists upon the long-term damage of such conditioning (119-145). This compromises women’s ability to ‘achieve full maturity [and] individual identity’ (145), defined as a ‘want of a purpose that truly realises their human abilities’ (59). The latter is precisely the telos of Amato’s argument in this instance *inhibited* by material surfeit.

Friedan notes that the disaffection of the women she interviewed and surveyed was ‘often merely described [as] the daily life she leads’ (19) and that ‘the strange newness of the problem [...] cannot be understood in terms of age-old material problems of man: poverty, sickness, hunger, cold’ (15). The problem *The Feminine Mystique* deliberates is the everyday; one that is oppressive, banal, and vitiating; whose ‘comfortable, empty, purposeless days are indeed cause for a nameless terror’ (253). Though Friedan’s argumentation is premised on the perhaps tenuous viability of an alternative to domesticated torpor, she lucidly demonstrates that everydayness is

constituted by boredom and, when attended to, discloses an architectonics beneath its mellow rhythms. The everyday is not simply the tomb of all that was once interesting and is now sufficiently familiar as to warrant no interest. Instead, the everyday contains multitudes. For example, the utter tedium of housework is alleviated by labour-saving devices, and the technical proficiency these require imbue housework with an alluring *savoir faire*; of course, the monotony of housework serves capitalism's interests as they produce ever more and ever newer products designed to interrupt routine (174-178). Moreover, such purchases do not obviate the task itself. They momentarily puncture a fundamental dissatisfaction assuaged by further commodity purchase. The very everydayness of these chores prevents one from apprehending that they constitute a waste of time, money, and human potential. Friedan offers a compelling delineation of the deleterious effects of routine and her insistence upon dissimulated causal structures subsisting beneath *and because of* improper attention is a forceful rejoinder to Bargh, Burkitt, and Amato.

The everyday is not just the consequence of routines for Friedan: it constitutes a prison to which its inmates are resigned. This leads to unpalatable comparisons: to housewives requiring the same liberation as slaves (64), and between acquiescent women and those who “adjusted” to the conditions of the [concentration] camps’ (247). Friedan argues that if women in America accept the role of housewife, they cede self-determination and risk imprisoning themselves, as inmates of Dachau and Buchenwald did:

The comfortable concentration camp that American women have walked into, or have been talked into by others, is just such a reality, a frame of reference that denies woman's adult human identity. By adjusting to it, a woman stunts her intelligence to become childlike, turns away from individual identity to become an anonymous biological robot in a docile mass (248-249).

This is a maladroit and unsettling comparison. It is not, however, without precedent. In *Vol. I* (1947; 1958 with a new foreword), Lefebvre suggests that alongside the ‘Hitlerian sadism’ of the concentration camps realise another significance: ‘the dominant, essential meaning seems to be this: if Fascism represents the most extreme form of capitalism, the concentration camp is the most extreme form and paroxysmal form of a modern housing estate, or of an industrial town’ (245; 244-46). Subsequent everyday theorists describe the inability of individuals to lucidly attend to their environment as profoundly worrying, and not simply as the dilapidation of anterior human dignity Simmel presumes. Lehan argues that the “masses” constituting modern cities encysts individuals and, consequently, ‘alienation is inevitable; the individual feels alone even in the crowd. And a mass society, when controlled, is a totalitarian society’ (72). Heller's *Everyday Life* is confident that individuals might resist or subvert the “scientific-technological”

manipulation' of the day-to-day (105-106). Nonetheless, she concedes that the instrumentalisation of the quotidian goes on apace:

It “fattens up” particularity and particularistic motivations, but promotes, or indeed, permits, only those particularistic qualities to flower which go to serve the interests of a given “organisation”. It prevents a person from taking a moral decision in ideological or political questions; it forms attitudes and ideologies which serves the *status quo*, without making it in any way questionable (106).

Though Heller's is a more capacious critique of a controlled everyday that debases and alienates individuals' daily experiences, Friedan's disquiet is palpable. Her insistence upon an inalienable potential for self-directing consciousness is intimated at the beginning of *Everyday Life*. Heller describes individuals as those 'who see that they not be identified with the needs of their own existences, and that they should not make their being, the forces of their being, nothing more than a means of satisfying the needs of their existence' (17). The manipulation of the everyday is an abrasion of this potential. In his incendiary account of the distractions beguiling the salariat and obscuring the reality of their historical potential, *The Salaried Masses* (1930), Siegfried Kracauer points out that capitalism 'does not function for the sake of the masses who work it, but at best manages them' (100) as the cooption of the everyday by capitalist interests enfolds social reproduction, too. Friedan, Lefebvre, Lehan, Heller, and Kracauer are all conscious of a dissociation of individuals from an adequate apprehension of the everyday.

Against the benign (in)significance imputed by Amato, Bargh, and Burkitt are critics who deem that which does not breach the threshold of attention to be *precisely* worthy of investigation. An early example is Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901). Freud demonstrates an incredulity towards the everyday:

by exploring a highly suggestive example drawn from my self-observation [...] I reached the conclusion that this particular instance (admittedly commonplace and without much practical significance), in which a psychological function – the memory – refuses to operate, admits an explanation much more far-reaching than that which the phenomenon is ordinarily made to yield (37).

The apparently trivial occurrences of misspeaking, forgetting names or spoonerisms '*can be traced back to incompletely suppressed psychological material, which, although pushed away by consciousness, has nevertheless not been robbed of all capacity for expressing itself*' (344 original emphasis). Sedulous attention to banal ephemera reveals a fullness of significance. Lefebvre offers an example that outdoes parapraxes in its everydayness, 'a woman buying a pound of sugar':

Knowledge will grasp whatever is hidden within it. To understand the simple event, it is not enough merely to describe it; research will disclose a tangle of reasons and causes, of essences and “spheres”: the woman’s life, her biography, her job, her family, her class, her budget, her eating habits, how she uses her money, her opinions and her ideas, the state of the market, etc. Finally I will have grasped the sum total of capitalist society, the nation and its history (*Vol. I* 57).

Lefebvre’s exposition is redolent of Freud’s lecture ‘Parapraxes’ from the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1916). He describes slips of the tongue, mishearing and misreading, mislaying, and losing as ‘unimportant’ and ‘very transitory’ occurrences (51) which must be reconceived: ‘since everything is related to everything, including small things to great, one may gain access even from such unpretentious work to a study of great problems’ (53). Crucial to both Lefebvre and Freud is the apprehension of ostensibly nugatory phenomena which exposes such incidents as *epiphenomena* inviolably related to what in, ‘The Everyday and Everydayness’ (1987), Lefebvre calls ‘deep structure’ (11).

Paul Ricoeur’s lectures on Freud (1970) distinguish between ‘interpretation conceived as the unmasking, demystification, or reduction of illusions, [and] interpretation conceived as the recollection or restoration of meaning’ (9). Freud, alongside Marx and Nietzsche, exemplifies hermeneutics ‘as a demystification, as a reduction of illusion’ (27) and of one that looks ‘upon the whole of consciousness primarily as “false” consciousness’ (33). As Felski outlines in ‘Suspicious Minds’ (2011), the hermeneutics of suspicion now suffuses ‘several waves of literary and cultural criticism’ (216). In the context of the everyday, a hermeneutics of suspicion is particularly pertinent. Not only does such an approach attend to the overlooked but advocates reading *against* the surface *insignificance* to reveal that which is ‘concealed, repressed or disavowed’ (Felski 216). Roberts’s *Philosophizing the Everyday* describes Georg Lukács’s work on alienation as

*the post-revolutionary secularization of the everyday*: that is, the production of culture lies in the reconquest and immanent theorization of alienated, industrialized experience. [...] This brings the immanent critique of experience in Freud into a comparable position to that of the revolutionary secularization of the everyday: alienated experience becomes meaningful and purposeful experience (18-19 original emphasis).

The defamiliarisation of the everyday opens ‘up a space for a hermeneutics of the everyday – out of silence and incoherence emerges an attentiveness to what remains hidden or partially disclosed or seemingly meaningless’ (19). Consequently, what ‘was once thought of as empty, featureless and repetitive, is now the source of extended collective engagement, intervention and

transformation' (20). In *History's Disquiet* (2000), Harry Harootunian alights upon Freud's significance and argues that 'he paralleled but went further than Marx' because 'nothing was insignificant':

the everyday was made the site of both multivariate and complex expression, despite the seeming routinisation of its surface [...] Rather than being an inert experience of facts, everyday life was increasingly seen as the site that revealed symptoms of societies' deepest conflicts and aspirations (69).

In order to excavate interred meaning, one simply has to scour its familiar surfaces to reveal the "deep structure". When Terry Eagleton complains in *After Theory* (2003) that modern academia 'creates a seamless continuity between the intellect and everyday life' when it once denigrated the latter, which 'was by definition not worth studying' (3-4), he simply does not attend to it as Lefebvre and Freud instruct.

There is, however, a paradox inherent to everyday exegesis that troubles accounts of its latent significance. Looking at the unremarkable belies overlooking; the apperceived cannot be everyday. Jeri Johnson articulates this paradox in her introduction to *Ulysses* (1993), noting that 16<sup>th</sup> June 1904 is 'undistinguished except that its very ordinariness makes it remarkable within fiction' (xxiv); Bennett's review of *Ulysses* (1922) describes James Joyce's chosen date oxymoronically as 'the dailiest day possible' (195). If the everyday is that which is beneath the threshold of attention, one cannot look at it; it does not even exist in the penumbra of perception: it constitutes its antithesis. As Olson notes, for anyone to say '*this is ordinary*' is to give significance to what is insignificant' (8 original emphasis). One potential strategy has been ventured by Wayne Brekhus, founder of the *Journal of Mundane Behaviour*. In 'A Sociology of the Unmarked' (1998), he points out that sociology's tendency to focus on the anomalous or discrepant, to "mark" the deviant against an implicit background of normativity (the "unmarked", or the everyday), effectively dislocates the object (or problem) at hand from the structures which are liable to produce whatever is under scrutiny, and reproduce and consolidate stereotypes which warp reality. This is due to the disproportionate amount of attention given to the size or frequency of the "marked" group and the generalisation of conclusions to all members of the "marked" group. For instance, the study of racially categorised homicide occludes the wider socioeconomic structures which have produced, and continue to produce, the apparently remarkable rates of race-specific homicide; though, as Brekhus notes, the posited question is never meant to disclose why all groups kill disproportionately within their own race (38-41). "Marked" categories create epistemological "ghettos" which produce "ghettoised" sociological practices and "ghettoised" policies in turn. Brekhus advocates turning towards the everyday as a corrective to these methodological solecisms. This involves cultivating an attentiveness to the

interstitial, negative spaces overlooked by “marked” categories, and the ‘interactions, boundaries and relationships between the marked and unmarked’ (44-45). Therefore, Brekhus argues, we can understand what is normally deeply “morally” or “politically” or “empirically” interesting with a parity that

cut[s] across epistemological ghettos. Marking the exotic and morally salient segregates the poles from the rest of social life. The tactic of reverse marking desegregates the poles by foregrounding and articulating the negative space between the poles. It inverts conventional asymmetry by making the empirically familiar appear unfamiliar (45).

Therefore, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) is exemplary because Erving Goffman extrapolates a model of human performativity from observations of Shetland islanders’ behaviours rather than a model of Shetland islanders’ performativity. Rather than consciously or implicitly juxtaposing the everyday with an improved future or halcyon past, this type of sociology represents a concerted attempt to meet the everyday on its own terms, outwith qualitative juxtaposition.

Brekhus’s approach still involves “marking” the overlooked, and other approaches attempt to countenance this central paradox. Burkitt insists that the everyday pullulates around us indifferently, and ranges from ‘encounters with institutions that have more fixed and stable form[s]’ to relatively ‘unstable and fluid experiences of open and permeable relationships’ (220). Gregory J. Seigworth and Michael E. Gardiner (2004) posit a profound problem of scale:

the everyday is the groundless ground of lived/living concatenation, conglomeration and visceral cross-reference – even if one must immediately hasten to add that any mention of the “lived/living” should not be understood to somehow exclude the un-lived, inorganic, incorporeal and non-human in whatever form such matters might take: such is the impetus that fully saturates, through and through, the notion of *life* in the couplet “everyday life”. Indeed, it’s hard to fathom what might actually fall outside everyday life since eminently tangible remainderings and immanently fleeting ambiances (and everything in-between) provide its building blocks, its cobblestones (and what flows beneath), and the designs on its wallpaper (and what extends beyond) (141 original emphasis).

Such a battery of heterogeneity does not simply resist delineation: it appears to foreclose such a possibility. John Shotter (1993) goes as far as to argue that a “right” description, a critical description, is one that does not impose a pre-existing theoretical order on the phenomena in question’ (83) and ‘when the phenomena of interest to us are *not* already ordered, when they are –

like the everyday life of human beings – somewhat chaotic, or only partially ordered, then we run into trouble’ (140 original emphasis).

Consequently, definitions attempt to *dislocate* the everyday, to talk *around* and not about it. Rather than descriptive coherence, circumspection is preferred; connotation rather than denotation: ‘it remains an inchoate and heterodox mix’ (*Critiques of Everyday Life* 16), ‘is without truth, without reality, without secret, but perhaps also the site of all possible signification’ (Blanchot 14). Circumvention is obligatory given the paradox of the everyday:

we return to the question, what exactly is “everyday life”? Like the omnipotent term “community”, “everyday life” is in continuous use within lay and theoretical discourse and yet continuously evades definition. Perhaps in the wake of globalization and total commodification we should ask “where is everyday life”? We seem compelled to answer: everywhere and nowhere? [...] Yet, the term has no unequivocal meaning or fixed referent (Sandywell 172-73).

The fact that Sandywell cannot instantiate the everyday exemplifies an imputed ineffability conducive to fluid, malleable definitions. Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross (1987) posit that the everyday exists ‘in the rift opened up between the subjective, phenomenological, sensory apparatus of the individual and reified institutions’; it constitutes the stultifying rhythms of social reproduction enveloped by ‘the dominant relations of production’; it contains the desires which resist satisfaction via extant provisions (3). In a similar vein, the everyday is conceived as the mediator of antitheses outwith the teleological promise (or premise) of synthetic resolution. As such, Patrick ffrench (2004) argues that the everyday is both ‘captured in the trap of ideologically saturated meaning’ (as with Lefebvre’s woman buying sugar, or Freud’s parapraxes) and contingent enough ‘to enable different ways of thinking and different ways of life’ (302).<sup>2</sup> The everyday is composed of these conflictual rhythms even when or where it is not reducible to specific iterations; the everyday is peripatetic qualia intimating an elusive, ineffable quiddity.

Despite the generosity of their remit, neither Kaplan and Ross or ffrench seem to go far enough. Seigworth and Gardiner suggest that one might ‘leap’ beyond a patterned production-consumption-reproduction logic or the binaries of compulsion and resistance, and ‘into the very midst of the differential itself’:

It is a move that sets one on the decidedly less-travelled terrain of that which circulates in the beyond-thing-ish realm of the “processual”, of the transitional, of the affectual, of

---

<sup>2</sup> Harootunian’s position is similar. The everyday is: ‘always immediate, filled with the sedimented layers of countless routines and repetitions that give the present a sense of eternity. But because it always remains incomplete, it is open to the contingent, the unexpected, the eventful, and the possibility for the constant refiguration that both time and place necessitate’ (56)

relations of force, of the in-between (of that which precedes and is outside its own terms). Signs, even structures, have long been erected to prevent such an unhesitant (that is, non-deferred) leap into the differential – they read simply “a void” (143).

This rendition effectively poses the everyday as a vast liminality; a plane of motility, potentiality, and immeasurable actions impervious to the codification of language or hegemonic control. Seigworth and Gardiner invert the void: they fill it with an ongoing and diffuse play to which they can only gesture. Inexorably, this leads to a potentially endless list of components (and fungible prefixes<sup>3</sup>) circling ‘the collective whirl of the variously unaccountable’ (143). At this point, at the nadir or apotheosis of illegibility, the everyday fulfils Shotter’s desire that a ‘static’ discourse be replaced with ‘dynamic, temporal formative “movements”’; not from a position of detached observation, but from a position of involved participation’ (127). The everyday is anathema to systematic signification, and might be celebrated for this very reason. And, yet, this approach is seemingly anathema to Adam’s ostensibly simple dictum ‘to know | That which before us lies in daily life’ (8.192-93).

Before turning to Lefebvre, it is worth pausing to note two salient facets of the everyday(ness) delineated thus far. Firstly, the everyday is constituted by an inability to discern it, despite considerable time and effort. This is a more recent development. Earlier, explicitly Marxist theories saw the everyday as a site of profound alienation and therefore profound revolutionary potential. Raoul Vaneigem (1962) deemed the ‘tangible reality of alienation [...] accompanied by a spreading mediocrity of existence’ constituting the everyday as an exoneration of ‘Marx from all the interpretations a degenerate Bolshevism has made of him’ (‘Basic Banalities (Part 1)’ 117). Revealing these insidious forces would induce ‘a ruthless hand-to-hand fight with naked power’ (121). Moreover, the quibbling ambiguities of Seigworth and Gardiner do not overcome the profound, if ubiquitously unspoken, desire to push against the everyday; this is not always clear transgression, and is often coded as resistance, as in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. For Seigworth and Gardiner, Kaplan and Ross, and Sandywell, resistance to the instrumentality or colonisation of the everyday does not require orchestration as the quotidian already comprises these dissident energies.

Secondly, and this is implicit in the first point, those who critique the everyday rely upon an assignation and arrogation of perspicacity. Lefebvre provides an indicative example of this tendency. Like other paradigms of the everyday, Lefebvre begins with the premise that men (and it normally is men)

---

<sup>3</sup> ‘Labelled “a void”, since it means then having to bring into account those quite potentially messy non-things that are above (and below and between and vaguely “about”) all else: a-signifying, real but incorporeal (i.e. virtual), pre-individual and non-conscious, inorganic, more-than-human, a-human. None of these, and needless to say there are more, are anti- (say “human”) or un- (say “conscious”) or otherwise negating or starkly oppositional’ (143).

do not know their own lives very well, or know them inadequately. [...] Men have no knowledge of their own lives [...] In particular they have an inadequate knowledge of their needs and their own fundamental attitudes; they express them badly; they delude themselves (*Vol. I* 94).

The explicit condescension here echoes through everyday theory (Simmel, Freud, Roberts; and, in a different way Bargh, Amato, and Burkitt) and guarantees the everyday theorist an enviable, enlightened (ad)vantage. Built into this self-positioning is the paradoxical, and here ideologically reflexive, access to that which is precisely overlooked: the critical position is a position of power. As Jacques Rancière indicates in *The Philosopher and His Poor* (1983), philosophy is ‘a discourse on nature as a discourse on nobility. [...] Its concern is less to lock others up than to protect itself from them, less to impose its truth than to safeguard its appearance’ (52). The Marxist rendering of the everyday, whenever and wherever its paradigms are silent, bears received, teleological architectonics, and Rancière warns us explicitly against ‘knowledge adapted to its object but unconscious of itself’ (167). Outwith its own world of reference, Marxism has no efficacy because it is deliberately cleaved from (in order to cleave *to*) the reality it constructs as a legislation of hegemony (155). Here one can draw a direct comparison between a sanguine conception of the everyday, on one hand, and the pervasive inability of critics to coherently articulate that which is seemingly obvious, familiar, and tangible, and, on the other, Rancière’s critique. If the everyday is predicated upon a hermeneutics of suspicion, then an assignation of ignorance implicates a hierarchy of insight, and Rancière is singularly useful in the indictment of discourses invested in their own positioning; indeed, the everyday is potentially the acme of such discursive practices: it claims insight into the necessarily familiar of which individuals are wholly ignorant. Even those attempts which posit a seditious everyday replete with (micro) resistances reticulate such praxis into the familiar pattern of pervasive ignorance; the efficacy of such transgressions – the vast liminality of Seigworth and Gardiner, for instance – depends upon an unthinking resistance to matrices of power to which the theorist has rarefied access. This pertains to the following discussion of Lefebvre, and his critics. In his work, escape is the cynosure, and enjoins an everyday fiat: transcend the banality of the familiar.

Everything is ostensibly de-dramatised; instead of tragedy there are objects, certainties, “values”, roles, satisfactions, jobs, situations and functions. Yet there are powers, colossal and despicable, that swoop down on everyday life and pursue their prey in its evasions and departures, dreams and fantasies to crush it in their relentless grip.

Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life* (55).

Lefebvre provides an expedient bridge from suspicious hermeneutics to escape; while his approach to the everyday is complex and capacious, he does not insist upon the ordinary’s ineffability, as more recent critics have. Lefebvre’s work on the everyday has exerted a considerable influence in the field which, to a certain extent, it inaugurated; his influence is palpable in nearly all of the work under consideration in this chapter.<sup>4</sup> Stuart Elden (2004) notes that ‘the notion of everyday life is immanent to almost all of Lefebvre’s work (110), and that corpus is substantial; according to Elden’s bibliography, Lefebvre authored or edited seventy-one books, and there is a supplementary four-page list of shorter works (257-262). These works are voluminous, and constellate an impressive variety of intellectual interests; Michael Sheringham (2000) lists ‘multiple strands of thought ranging from Descartes to Hegel, Marx, Surrealism, Existentialism, psychoanalysis, linguistics, sociology, and anthropology’ (189). This chapter cannot circumscribe all of this work; there is an extant body of critical material.<sup>5</sup> Charting a course through what Langbauer describes as Lefebvre’s ‘mercurial prose’, ‘stubborn refusal of coherence [and] insistence on fragmentation’ (‘Cultural Politics’ 50) demands an initial statement of intent. Lefebvre’s focus on the previously disregarded residuum of specialised disciplines forms his model of the everyday. This overlooked material, if previous conceptual errors are to be avoided, requires the critical optics developed in *Dialectical Materialism* (1938) and deployed in *Vol. I, Vol. II* (1961), and *Everyday Life* (1968). As a committed and stridently anti-dogmatic Marxist, Lefebvre is interested in late capitalism’s colonisation and organisation of social reproduction palpable in the influx of consumer goods in post-War France. Crucially, the thrust of Lefebvre’s position is predicated upon the anterior axiom of escape, and the express desire to ‘conquer the quotidian’ (*Everyday Life* 63). As will become clearer in chapter three, Lefebvre’s focus upon escape for individual emancipation and utopian futurity outwith the oppressive dis-

---

<sup>4</sup> Heller (128), Highmore (*Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* 113-144), Blanchot (13-19), Randall (10-16), Foley (11-12), Olson (12-17), Smith (90), Roberts (*passim*), de Certeau (*The Practice of Everyday Life* 205) all explicitly acknowledge Lefebvre.

<sup>5</sup> This includes: Elden, Andy Merrifield (2006), and the multi-author volume *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (2008); Lefebvre’s work is also prominent in synoptic accounts of everyday theory, such as Highmore’s *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory*, Michael E. Gardiner’s *Critiques of Everyday Life* (2000) and Sheringham’s *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (2006), and is allocated a chapter in Wark’s history of the Situationist International (93-108)

organisation of the everyday echoes Wells's. Critics who alight upon a lack of critical self-apprehension in Lefebvre help to clarify Bennett's perspicacious sense of epistemic limitation detailed in chapter four.

Lefebvre begins from a recognisably suspicious point:

we need to think about what is happening around us, within us, each and every day. We live on familiar terms with the people in our own family, our own milieu, our own class. The constant impression of *familiarity* makes us think that we know them [...] but the familiar is not necessarily the known. [...] Familiarity, what is familiar, conceals human beings and makes them difficult to know (*Vol. I* 14-15 original emphasis).

In part, this constitutes a criticism of what Lefebvre calls 'metaphysical waffle' and the 'negation of the human' (*Vol. I* 183). This process involves a specious abstraction and elevation of "philosophy" above the apparently trivial which renders "the philosopher" 'master and rule of existence, witness and judge of life *from the outside*, enthroned above the masses' (*Vol. I* 5 original emphasis).<sup>6</sup> Lefebvre argues that 'philosophy used to be one of those exceptional and superior activities through which men who could devote their lives to leisure could step outside of everyday life' (*Vol. I* 85). This dislocation is duplicitous and 'as painful as the duality between action and dream, the real and the ideal' (*Vol. I* 105). From this point, the extreme polarity of 'concrete existence and the splendid but fictive sovereignty of the Idea' (*Dialectical Materialism* 36) leads away from the tangible and into 'some mystic and magical hidden world' (*Vol. I* 127) distinct and distant from the everyday within which such ideation irreducibly begins. The everyday forms the connective tissue mediating 'all activities [...] it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground' and constitutes 'the murky background from which known relations and superior activities (scientific, political, aesthetic) are picked out' (*Vol. I* 97, 252).

The turn to the everyday involves a deliberate attempt to reorient Marxism. Lefebvre wrote *Dialectical Materialism* as a riposte to Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (1938), which 'combined a nominally dialectical philosophy' with a closed, scientific variant of Marxism (Kipfer xv) and a return to early Soviet 'positivism and economism' (Roberts 28). Lefebvre advocated a 'form' of thought 'as fluid and capable of improvement' as its content (*Dialectical Materialism* 47). His approach is partly shaped by a fractious relationship with the *Parti communiste français*, a resistance to 'Comintern orthodoxy', and academic Marxism's 'narrow-minded professors representing variously bounded disciplines' (Goonewardena 124). Lefebvre moved away from

---

<sup>6</sup> 'Mystical or metaphysical criticism of everyday life, be it from poets or philosophers, ends up in a reactionary position, even if and above all when its arguments have *formal* similarities with those of the "left". Escape from or rejection of life, recourse to outmoded or exhausted ways of life, nostalgia for the past or dreams of a superhuman future, these positions are basically identical. This is why extremist, "far-left" critiques so closely resemble reactionary ones' (*Vol. I* 130 original emphasis).

abstractions incommensurate with the exigent questions of modernity and capitalism: ‘it is ludicrous to define socialism solely by the development of the productive forces. Economic statistics cannot answer the question: “What is socialism?” Men do not fight and die *for* tons of steel, or for tanks and atomic bombs’ (*Vol. I* 48 original emphasis). As he points out later in *Vol. I*, ‘no matter how precise the economic determinants may be [...] they cannot be used simply as some kind of algebraic calculation. They have a basis in practical, everyday life’ (190-191), and, Lefebvre asks, is ‘it not in everyday life that man should fulfil his life [...] that the truth in a body and soul must be grasped?’ (127) Without the conflict of the abstract and the concrete, there is a risk that Marxist analysis will ‘either atrophy in antiquated interpretations of the social structures inherited from the past, or else construct new “ideological” interpretations’ (*Vol. I* 181).

Moreover, by occluding the everyday, one cannot properly frame significance:

a humble plant taken from the soil and from the plants around it, seen up close, becomes something marvellous. But then, once images like this have been separated from their everyday context, it becomes very difficult to articulate them in a way which will present their essential everyday quality (*Vol. I* 14).

Of course, the extraction of a plant from the soil is deracination and death; an autopsy has limited relation to the contingent interrelations of the everyday; Lefebvre’s situated approach reinstates the necessary, lived contingencies of the object of investigation. Lefebvre’s approach guards against ‘the intellect [working] independently of the experimental’ and avoids the imposition of ‘*a priori* and systematic forms’ (*Dialectical Materialism* 9, 47). Consequently, the critique of everyday life does not impose abstract concepts onto the world; it will ‘reveal the human reality beneath this general unreality, the human “world” which takes shape within us and around us’ (*Vol. I* 168). If one does not attend to the quotidian, to the soil without which the plant is unthinkable, one can only posit a criticism ‘not of life, but of this pseudo-reality’ (*Vol. I* 168). Lefebvre continues the agrarian conceit:

There is a cliché which with a certain degree of justification compares creative moments to the mountain tops and everyday time to the plain, or to the marshes. [...] Here everyday life is compared to fertile soil. A landscape without flowers or magnificent woods may be depressing for the passer-by; but flowers and trees should not make us forget the earth beneath, which has a secret life and richness of its own (*Vol. I* 87).

The analogue is compelling. The plain (with its homophonic connotations) is overshadowed by the peak’s dramatic conspicuousness. Lefebvre discloses the fecundity of the overlooked; moreover, it is this subsoil, teeming with complexity and life, upon which one stands to gawp at

the mountain. Lefebvre reiterates Adam's advice 'to know | That which before us lies in daily life' instead of being transfixed by 'things remote | From use obscure and subtle' (8.191-194).

The point is not simply to recognise the everyday and overcome overlooking. Lefebvre posits something quite different. In 'The Fact of Television' (1982), Stanley Cavell poses a heart monitor as a 'graph of the normal, or the establishment of some reference or base line, a line so to speak, of the uneventful' (89). This is only a banausic conception that pushes the steadiness of the everyday into mere tabulation without subjecting it to critique. Whereas the indurations of the city produce the blasé attitude for Simmel or automaticity for Bargh, Lefebvre, like Friedan, is concerned with quotidian alienation: there is 'a power concealed in everyday life's apparent banality, a depth beneath its triviality' (*Everyday Life* 31). It is not only the perceived limits of the elevated "philosopher" that prompts Lefebvre. Critique has to attend to the everyday because it was rapidly becoming the domain of neo-capitalism. 'By starting from an abstract notion of the class struggle, some Marxists have neglected [...] to study the recent modifications of capitalism', Lefebvre argues, and only a method attendant to 'the new contents of specifically capitalist relations [...] could perhaps have modified the notion of class struggle, leading to the discovery of new forms of struggle' (*Vol. I* 37-38). Everyday life is the site of inchoate contest. If the everyday was previously a refuge from the instrumentalisation, specialisation, and alienation of labour, consumer capitalism now exerts itself because, as Gardiner (2000) argues, the inexorable repetitions of daily life (bodily appetites, the planet's rotation, seasonal regularity) make 'it particularly vulnerable to the incursion of functionalist logic and the homogenisation of human experience' (91). Lefebvre posits in *Everyday Life* that in

Western neo-capitalist countries there has been no overt programming of production, no total rationalisation of industry; yet a kind of programming, a sort of total organisation has sneaked in unobtrusively; offices, public organisations and subsidiary institutions operate on this basis, and though the structure lacks coherence, grates and jolts, none the less it works [...] and what do these organisations organise, if not everyday life? In Europe after the war a few gifted and intelligent men (who they were is not our concern) saw the possibility of exploiting consumption to organise everyday life. Everyday life was cut up and laid out on the site to be put together again like the pieces of a puzzle, each piece depending on a number of organisations and institutions, each one – working life, private life, leisure – rationally exploited (49; *Vol. I* 243).

This operant paradigm is described as the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption experienced at the level of everyday life (*Everyday Life* 50-51).<sup>7</sup> Deliberate obsolescence, the

---

<sup>7</sup> This process is all pervasive. Lefebvre deliberates a shift from signs to signals in what he calls the semantic field (51-55). The shift from symbols, more directly related to nature 'but containing definite social implications', to signs

passive consumption of atemporal ‘displays of reality’, and the emergence of “durable” consumer goods displacing artisanal crafts (lingering vestiges of different forms of capitalism), are indicative of the colonisation of everyday life and constitute ‘a closed circuit (production-consumption-production)’ (*Everyday Life* 62) that simply cycles on and on in an apparently meaningless, endless sequence of repetitions.<sup>8</sup>

Harootunian describes this as ‘an endless present producing the very-new in the ever-same’ (*History’s Disquiet* 67). As Friedan’s cleaning-procuring-cleaning housewife (174-178) exemplifies, the routines of the everyday’s closed circuit are reticulated into the accumulative linearity of capitalist acquisition; there are, of course, signally different cumulative strata manifest in the everyday, of manners and emotions and ‘gestural conventions’, which evolve ‘according to a rhythm that does not coincide with the time of accumulation’ (*Everyday Life* 51-52). Crucial for Lefebvre in such an instance is the perpetuation of these routines guaranteed by the torpor they induce. Friedan argues that the ‘desperate needs’ and ‘growing sense of emptiness’ (185) carefully manipulated by advertisements leads to interminable, repetitive consumption: ‘American housewives can be given the sense of identity, purpose, creativity, the self-realisation, even the sexual joy they lack – by the buying of things’ (167). Lefebvre describes the ‘depreciation of goods’ as *accelerated* ‘by the process of accumulation; mental fatigue sets in at shorter and shorter intervals’ (*Everyday Life* 52). Repetitious domestic chores conceal an accumulative logic beneath an endless cycle of procuring in which the consumer functions as a manipulable object in a programmed system: ‘Bourgeois individualism implies the dreary, ludicrous repetition of individuals who are curiously similar in their way of being themselves and of keeping themselves to themselves, in their speech, their gestures, their everyday habits’ (*Vol. I* 152). Any mastery of a new cleaning product induces a sense of individualism negated by the product’s ubiquity but quickly and temporarily offset by further procurement.

For Lefebvre, this is utterly pervasive. Not only are ‘leisure activities’ connected ‘to social practice *as a whole*’ (*Vol. I* 88 original emphasis), the distinction between everyday and leisure is a fabrication: ‘the two words are at one and the same time united [...] Leisure [...] cannot be separated from work’ (*Vol. I* 29). The cycle of work-leisure-work constitutes an endless looping: ‘we work to earn our leisure, and leisure has only one meaning: to get away from work. A vicious circle’ (*Vol. I* 40). Debord points out that wasted time is ‘spent at work’, and the only purpose of

---

was precipitated by the written word and printing (52); Wark notes that symbols ‘cannot command and are not particularly legible’ and signs ‘form a region within the semantic field of relatively open networks, a mix of information and redundancy’ (104-05). Whereas both of these are pliable, signals are context-specific and otherwise meaningless. They are inflexible and constitute systems of commands, such as traffic lights. Lefebvre sees this as ‘a general conditioning of everyday life, reduced now to a single dimension (re-assembled fragments) by the elimination of all other dimensions of language’ (*Everyday Life* 53).

<sup>8</sup> Kosik too posits a substantive shift from production to consumption, from labour to procuring in which the ‘individual moves about in a *ready-made system of devices and implements*, [...] This is a *static* world in which manipulation, procuring and utilitarian calculation represent the movement of the concerned individual in a ready-made and fixed reality whose genesis is obscured’ (39-40 original emphasis).

this waste 'is to earn enough to enable one to buy rest, consumption and entertainment – a daily passivity manufactured and controlled by capitalism' ('Conscious Changes in Everyday Life' 96). Nonetheless, the repetitions of work lead to a conception of leisure as a break, as something qualitatively different, from the everyday:

a "world of leisure" tends to come into being entirely outside of the everyday realm, and so purely artificial that it borders on the ideal. But how can this pure artificiality be created without permanent reference to ordinary life, without the constantly renewed contrast that will embody this reference? [...] If we push it too far we run the risk of forgetting that there can be *alienation in leisure just as in work* (*Vol. I* 34, 39 original emphasis).

To think of leisure as discontinuous with the everyday with which it is consciously juxtaposed is to make an error of the order Lefebvre accuses philosophy of making: one cannot make sense of a break from work without situating the two in dialectical relation. Without this interpenetration, the holidaymaker can only experience repeating disappointments because leisure cannot fulfil its imputed (advertised) ideal, one stimulated by the torpor of the everyday.

Kracauer describes similar entanglements of work and recreation. The salariat in his analysis are employed in tedious bureaucracies or corporations, and there is a correlation between the monotony of work and the required compensation. One craves distraction and stimulation, and this is readily supplied by cinema. 'The Little Shopgirls Go to the Movies' (1927) excoriates films' ideological content which normalise class relations (291-294); another, 'Cult of Distraction' (1926), argues that the architectural grandeur of Berlin cinemas 'serves one sole purpose: to rivet the viewers' attention to the peripheral' and provide constant 'stimulations of the senses [which] succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation' (325-326). *The Salaried Masses* juxtaposes the banality of 'the office machine' with its 'true counterstroke': 'the world vibrant with colour. The world not as it is, [...] cleansed, as though with a vacuum cleaner, of the dust of everyday existence' (92-93). There are two resonant echoes in Kracauer's delineation: firstly, the inability to perceive the world recalls Lefebvre's injunction to reprimatinate precisely the conditions from which one is distracted and within which one is immured; secondly, the vacuumed world invokes Friedan's diligent housewife, but this is mediated by the conjunction 'as though', for the everyday cannot be swept away despite persistent effort. Lefebvre is similarly suspicious of distraction as pacification, of reality reduced to spectacle. Anticipating Debord's (1967) assertion that the spectacle manifests 'the estrangement of men among themselves and in their relation to global product' meaning that 'men do not themselves live events' (*Society of the Spectacle* 37, 200), Lefebvre recognised that everydayness contributes to 'the world as an entity passively perceived, and without effective

participation' (*Vol. II* 90; 89-91). This is unequivocal: 'you are totally and thoroughly programmed, except that you still have to choose between so many good things, since the act of consuming remains a permanent structure' (*Everyday Life* 92).

According to Debord, the everyday is constituted by 'the good natives who keep modern society without understanding it' ('Conscious Changes in Everyday Life' 93). Conceived in this manner, the toiling mass of people is alienated everywhere and ignorant always. However, Lefebvre is less assured, less cynical. The *desire* for recreation, for a cessation of alienating labour, expresses a real *need*; in Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914/1955), the material privations and physical demands of manual work prompt a desire not for 'more work, but more grub, more clothes, more leisure, more pleasure' (491). Undoubtedly, Tressell articulates a basic need for respite inherent to the cycle of work and rest strained by the maximisation of surplus value. Similarly, Alison Light, in a review of an "Edwardian" exhibition at the Barbican (1988), complains about working class holidays described as 'occasion for the working class to get into debt', and laughter reduced to 'a capitalist ruse' (159). Lefebvre argues that the realisation of an individual's 'activities, his properties, his impulses involves a *need*'; the ideal bureaucratic society of controlled consumption obviates these human instincts: 'atoms have no needs, they are self-sufficient, without needs, contended, perfect' (*Vol. I* 91 original emphasis). Wark points out that once needs, without which being cannot be, are dissociated from desire they are 'no longer human'; when desire is compromised by abstraction 'need loses vitality, spontaneity, and ossifies into the mere accumulation of things' (96). Despite this threat, need subsists and provides a sustained critique of the everyday manifest *within* the everyday; attempts to get outside the everyday 'are that critique in so far as they are *other* than everyday life, and yet they are *in everyday life*, they are *alienation*' (*Vol. I* 40 original emphasis). If the everyday is beholden to the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption, if it is 'where needs confront goods', it is not reducible to this anterior conception; there 'is always something unformed in the everyday, something that exceeds and escapes both commodity and power' (Wark 98). During 'the camping holiday, work and leisure are barely distinguishable, and everyday life in its entirety becomes play' (*Vol. I* 33); there is a complex, ongoing dialectic at work (and play): 'an unconscious revolutionary desire for an unalienated life sublimated in commodity form – a utopian promise that remains to be redeemed' (Goonewardena 123). Thus, where 'a consciousness of alienation is being born, however indirectly [...] an effort towards "disalienation", no matter how oblique and obscure, has begun' (*Vol. I* 66). Lefebvre goes as far as to argue that the 'incessant conflict between repression and evasion, compulsion and adaptation *is the history of everyday life*' (*Everyday Life* 125 original emphasis).

As Kanishka Goonewardena (2008) points out (119), Lefebvre borrowed heavily from Lukács's 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' (1923). The pressures exerted by commodification are conducive to the 'self-understanding of the proletariat' and therefore 'the

objective understanding of the nature of society' (Lukács 149; 168-69). Similarly, Lefebvre avers that the 'deprivation of the working class is rich in possibilities' (*Vol. I* 143). If the everyday has been colonised by neo-capitalism and is overseen by the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption, it necessarily offers the best promise of refutation. Evidence of humankind's potential abounds within the everyday, too: 'castles, palaces, cathedrals, fortresses, all speak in their various ways of the greatness and the strength of the people who built them' (*Vol. I* 232). Central to Lefebvre's work is the necessity of the everyday's supersession, and the viability of this commitment. The critique of the everyday elucidates a future that is partially visible, and glistens with possibilities; Lefebvre is explicit: 'we are really more interested in transforming everyday life than in setting it out rationally' (*Everyday Life* 21). Roberts deems the transformation of the everyday a central component of 'revolutionary change and proletarian agency' (120). Scandalised by the diffusion of this radical potential in Lefebvre's wake, Roberts declaims that the 'critique of the everyday is a critique of the power or it is nothing' (83) and this critique, as Lefebvre originally stated (*Vol. I* 127, 168, 252), is 'driven by *the promise of the everyday's own demise*' (Roberts 123 original emphasis). However, Lefebvre assiduously resists the delineation of a utopia: 'for me what is possible is already partly real, I am indeed a utopian; you will observe that I do not say utopist: but a utopian, yes, a partisan of possibilities' (*Everyday Life* 163). This resistance to specificity is deliberately commensurate with an 'open totality, perpetually in the process of being transcended' (*Dialectical Materialism* 99). 'Everyday Utopianism' (2004), Gardiner's patient redress of Lefebvre's critics, insists that the open totality is incompatible with 'a monolithic and universalistic vision of "redemption" or "liberation"' (236). Gardiner argues that 'Lefebvre emphatically does not advance a teleological view of history in which the "fallen" present is redeemed in full in some post-messianic time' (241). The movement involves dialectal progress: 'it means *at the same time* to abolish something (as it was) and to raise it to a higher level [...] the reality which has been *aufgehoben* [...] takes on in the process of being "superseded" a new reality, higher, more profound' (*Vol. I* 177). The dregs of that which is superseded are retained by any supersession. There is no pure rupture from the present into a perfected alternative; the castle, palaces, and cathedrals of the present will not be razed by the transformation of the everyday but the alienation coterminous with their construction will have been sublated, and future constructions will exemplify a new, protean configuration of labour and sociality.

Gardiner agrees that, for Lefebvre, reality 'is complex and internally divided; a fractured mosaic of positive and negative forces that partakes of otherness as well as sameness, difference no less than identity' ('Everyday Utopianism' 241). Consequently, there are intimations of non-everyday, disalienated modes of experience. Gardiner is generous and occludes the limitations of Lefebvre's open totality. However malleable, this prospective, protean future necessarily involves material iterations. For instance, *Vol. I* advocates *la fête* as a negation of the contemporary everyday able to overcome its banality and alienation (Elden 118-120). *La fête* involves an

‘enormous orgy of eating and drinking’, cross-dressing, contests, ‘comical taunts’, and parodies of medieval tournaments ending in ‘scuffles and orgies’ (*Vol. I* 202). Crucially, for Lefebvre this ‘merry-making [...] differed from everyday life only in the explosion of force which had slowly been accumulated in and via everyday life’ (202). Though Elden indicates that one might think of the Paris Commune and protests in Paris and Prague of 1968 similarly (154-156), Lefebvre’s example ‘conjures’ (*Vol. I* 201) an archaic ‘peasant community’ (207) in southern France, about which ‘we know nothing very precise or very certain, but we can be sure that at the beginning it had not yet disassociated’ the community (201-202). This halcyon past is peopled by man ‘still immersed in an immediate natural life, lived, mimed, sang, danced his relation with nature and the cosmic order’ (*Vol. I* 207). In a prospective open totality, Lefebvre posits total man: he ‘thinks, but on the level of the real, on an equal footing with the real [and] has no need to *come out of his own thoughts* in order to belong to reality’ (*Vol. I* 186 original emphasis). In step with the cycles of mortality and the seasons, and the relations of society and nature, there existed a pre-alienated equilibrium. Within this peasant tradition, festivals ensured continuity and

contrasted violently with everyday life, *but they were not separate from it*. They were like everyday life, but more intense; and moments of that life – the practical community, food, the relation with nature – in other words, work – were reunited, amplified, magnified in the festival. [...] In his reality, he lived and achieved all his potential. Feeling no deep conflict with himself, he could give himself up [...] to his own spontaneous vitality (207 original emphasis).

Despite Gardiner’s reservations, this vision clearly appeals to Lefebvre, as it did to Debord.<sup>9</sup> The ability of individuals to constitute themselves and their social existence as self-directed, disalienated subjects represents a cohesion between self and world: ‘the free individual is a totality of powers’ realising ‘*man’s unity with himself, in particular the unity and the social, is an essential aspect of the definition of the total man*’ (*Vol. I* 72-73 original emphasis).

This is fine as pure conjecture. Lefebvre admits at the beginning of his lengthy digression on *la fête* that ‘[about] the system of property *we know nothing very precise or very certain, but we can be sure* that at the beginning it had not yet disassociated the peasant community’ (201-202 added emphasis); in *Vol. II* he claims that ‘we know that in archaic societies, the everyday was much less separate from culture, religion and ideologies than it is today’ (130). Amato’s description of the

---

<sup>9</sup> ‘Our epoch, which presents its time to itself as essentially made up of many frequently recurring festivities, is actually an epoch without festival. Those moments when, under the reign of cyclical time, the community would participate in a luxurious expenditure of life, are strictly unavailable to a society where neither community nor luxury exists. [...] In ancient societies the consumption cycle of cyclical time was consistent with the actual labour of those societies. By contrast, the consumption of pseudo-cyclical time in developed economies is at odds with the abstract irreversible time implicit in their system of production. Cyclical time was the time of a motionless illusion authentically experienced; spectacular time is the time of a real transformation experienced as illusion’ (*Society of the Spectacle* 154-155).

typical medieval peasant's life is less sanguine. Certainly, people lived in much more direct and tangible proximity to the vicissitudes of nature, and this meant abject subsistence. Outside of their meagre dwellings, shared with livestock replete with invasive insects, with no provision of warmth or comfort and little privacy, people were engaged in a lifelong attritional battle. The world 'was not of leisure, relaxation and education [...] life was not secure and not dressed in health, running water, light, love and happiness. Life [...] in a multitude of ways, was barren' (85). Unlike Lefebvre, Amato does not forget the medieval women 'reduced to being *une machine à l'enfantement*, and children [...] often too plentiful in number to be sheltered and fed' (87). For Lefebvre, the 'total man is a free individual in a free community. He is an individuality which has blossomed into the limitless variety of possible individualities' (*Dialectical Materialism* 151-152). Such conjecture has little to tell us about the historical conditions Lefebvre invokes in the construction of his exemplary moment: 'the antithesis between the quotidian and the Festival – whether of labour or leisure – will no longer be a basis of society' (*Everyday Life* 31). The proposed paragon of disalienated festivities is strangely ahistorical.

Further, and related, shortcomings have been propounded by feminist critics of Lefebvre's work. Colebrook's 'The Politics and Potential of Everyday Life', Felski's *Doing Time*, and Langbauer's *Novels of Everyday Life* constellate a compelling appraisal of the implicit (and explicit) gendering in Lefebvre's critique of everyday life. Given the shift away from former sites of attention in the neo-capitalist economy, Lefebvre moves from the labouring proletarian male to domesticated, alienated women. 'Consumption was the wife's province' (29), he posits in *Everyday Life*, and, perhaps, Lefebvre's critique warrants a shift from *homo oeconomicus* or *homo faber* to the practices and patterns of consumption of women: 'buyer and consumer, symbol of consumption and of trade' (141). Of course, this is predicated upon the tenuous supposition that men are not consumers. Unfortunately, Lefebvre's argument slips into condescension. Woman is 'closer to nature' and, therefore, 'she is more easily moved to anger, joy, passion and action, more given to emotivity and sensuality, less estranged from the mysteries of birth and death and all forms of elemental spontaneous generosity' (*Everyday Life* 14-15). Lefebvre posits an intrinsic link between women and the cyclicity of the everyday; in fact, they 'symbolise everyday life in its entirety' (*Vol. II* 223). The incessant tasks and exigent pressures of the everyday are most apparent to, and weigh 'especially' on, women:

upon whom the conditions of everyday life bear heaviest – child-bearing and child-rearing, basic preoccupations with bare necessities, money, tradesmen, provisions, the realm of numbers, a sort of intimate knowledge of things outside the sphere of material reality: health, desire, spontaneity, vitality; recurrence, the survival of poverty and the endlessness of want, a climate of economy, abstinence, hardship, repressed desires, meanness and avarice (*Everyday Life* 30).

This seemingly inexorable proximity means women ‘are *incapable of understanding*’ the everyday (*Everyday Life* 63 added emphasis). Lefebvre describes them as ‘consigned’ to the everyday from which they try to escape, despite their apparent ignorance, ‘by the roundabout method of eluding the responsibilities of consciousness; whence their incessant protests and clumsily formulated, directionless claims’ (*Everyday Life* 79).

There is an immediate, if facile, defence in Lefebvre’s dialectical approach. If the ‘deprivation of the working class is rich in possibilities’ (*Vol. I* 143), then it follows that women, if they represent the nadir of everydayness, simultaneously represent the best hope of its sublation. Rancière warns against ‘exclusion by homage’, an efficacious means of silencing those for whom such discourse speaks (*The Philosopher and His Poor* xxvi). However, Lefebvre does not extend this duplicitous courtesy, and women are denied any (deferred) agency. Lefebvre concedes that ‘femininity also suggests feminism, rebellion’ (*Everyday Life* 56) but women cannot apprehend the proximity of this radical potential. Compared with his assertion that *men* ‘have no knowledge of their own lives’ (*Vol. I* 94), Lefebvre’s position becomes incoherent. The familiarity of *man*’s everyday does not impede dialectical critique:

*Man*’s being is at once natural and historical, biological and social, physiological and cultural [...] *Man* thinks because *he* has a brain (a superior activity of the nervous system), and because *he* has hands, and because *he* works and because *he* has a language. Therefore consciousness reflects these manifold interactions; it not only “reflects” the outside world, and things, but also human activity, practical power over nature. It not only reflects a given objective environment, but the equally objective conflicts between *man* and the “environment”, between the human world and nature, between individuals in the human world. (*Vol. I* 94-95 added emphasis).

Women, on the other hand, are denied the provision of expressive needs which men, because of *their* alienation, inhere. The everyday’s apparent ubiquity does not spill over into women’s experiences, and they are denied agency in the critique Lefebvre inscribes.

The position of women is really an assignation of blame, or the instantiation of a necessary other for Lefebvre’s potential total man. Langbauer points out that a gendered everyday is only a recapitulation of ‘the old logic that women can’t understand something because they embody it’:

The implication is that because women can’t understand such ambiguity, don’t recognise their contradictory position, they squander that feminism. [...] Lefebvre casts women in another too-familiar role: both women and the everyday are smothering. They come to

stand for an overwhelming totality. Each, for him, represents the very forces that create subjects, both in literally producing them and then normalising them into culture (*Novels of Everyday Life* 21).

Colebrook points out that this gendering operates in two directions simultaneously. If ‘the feminine has been defined either as the unthinking matter through which form realises itself, or as the effect of forming activity that has become mere semblance and simulation’, man is ‘the subjective forming, active expansive, and appropriating power of praxis’ (688). This is exemplified in the total man of *la fête* (*Vol. I* 205-207) and the ‘hard, linear [...] time of masculine efforts’ (*Vol. II* 83). In this argument, women are both the embodied constraints of the everyday and the predicate of male supersession; both suppositions deny agency and assign blame.

It is worth pausing briefly to note Smith’s compelling *The Everyday World as Problematic*. Though primarily an explication of a feminist sociology, her theorisation of the everyday is substantially more coherent than Lefebvre’s. Smith’s conception of the everyday as *problematic* provides a concerted effort to expose the specious objectivity, concealed gendered norms, and ‘relations of ruling’ originating ‘in positions of power’ of sociological methodology and academic discourse (19). The approach Smith admonishes presupposes the viability of assuming a disinterested vantage from which the objective observer undertakes his disinterested research and produces disinterested conclusions. Smith cogently dismantles the masculine masquerading as the merely factual; she provides an elucidation of ideology: ‘It offers an analysis that shows how a disjuncture can arise between the world as it is known directly in experience and as it is shared with others, and the ideas and images fabricated externally to that everyday world and provided as a means to think and image it’ (55). Against discursive practices organising ‘our social relations with those who become the objects of our study [...] as effective in eliminating our subject’s presence as they are in suspending our recognition of our own’ (73), Smith seeks to reinstate the knower as subject in which ‘relations and organisation can be made visible as they actually arise in the actual activities of individuals’ (81). The everyday is useful for Smith because it has largely been taken for granted and is outwith sociological scrutiny of specific, isolable issues. As it contains a multitude of tangled relations, it is available for women to express the devalued, inchoate experiences of the day-to-day and foregrounds embodied ‘subjects as knower and actors’ who glimpse ‘how these worlds are organised and determined’ (105-106). As Lefebvre’s critique of neo-capitalism evinces, the everyday courses with a multitude of material and social relations; or, as Smith indicates, the ‘present structure of local social relations is organised by relations external to it’ (94). Viewing the everyday as *problematic* rather than as disinterested soil to which one ventures, discloses the specific iteration of extralocal social relations subsisting everywhere: ‘processes outside them and beyond our power of control’ (Smith 92). Smith proposes that recognising the enchained relation of everyday contingency and extralocal

organisation ‘from the standpoint of women means accepting our ineluctable embeddedness in the same world as is the object of our inquiry’ (127). The ‘simple notion of the everyday world as problematic is that social relations external to it are present in its organisation’ (188).

It is tempting to align Smith’s approach with Lefebvre’s. Certainly, Lefebvre concedes that there ‘is nothing more unbearable than the intellectual who believes himself to be free and human, while in his every action, gesture, word and thought he shows that he has never stepped beyond the bourgeois consciousness’ (*Vol. I* 144). Still, he, at least partially, circumvents the weight of this alienation, at least enough to offer a capacious critique; actually, ‘thirty centuries of human alienation’ (*Vol. I* 184) provide an exemplary predicate for Lefebvre’s critique, on his own terms. He tacitly assumes an objective point from which to critique the everyday. Smith forcefully argues that this conceals social relations which are always extant, implicit, and prone to reinscription. The everyday cannot be ‘understood as a secret power behind our backs, determining how we think, how we understand the world, and how we act’, only visible to the gifted, perspicacious theorist, nor does it ‘stand suspended as an instance of an abstract [...] located in an abstract conceptual space’ articulated by an abstract individual (Smith 135, 139). There is no unmediated, disinterested vantage from which to view the everyday; as a subject of critique, Lefebvre recognises that everyday ‘life is profoundly related to *all* activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground’ (*Vol. I* 97 original emphasis). Smith simply points out that critique is implicated in the everyday, and that without the requisite self-consciousness, it is liable to partially consolidate the norms it examines.

There are three primary components in Lefebvre’s position that betray his critique’s complicity in extant discursive practices that ‘are part of the relations of ruling and hence originate in positions of power’ (Smith 19): repetition, home, and habit. For Felski, these constellate a gendered construction of the everyday. Repetition, as Julia Kristeva notes in ‘Women’s Time’ (1979), alongside eternity (or, *cyclical* and *monumental* temporalities; biological rhythms and ‘extrasubjective’ cosmic time), has provided a measure of ‘female subjectivity’ and bears little relation to linearity, progress, teleology; ‘time as departure, progression and arrival’ (16-17). There is a conspicuous overlap between repetitive, stable biorhythms and the monotonous constancy of mass consumption; of course, these parallel cycles are productive in their respective and distinctive ways: ‘[women] are both buyers and consumers of commodities and symbols for commodities’ (*Everyday Life* 63). The thrust of linear progress is a gendered contradistinction; and Felski points out that the looping everyday of women form the background to ‘existentialism’s critique of unthinking routines [...] and] its insistence on the importance of creating oneself anew each moment’ (81-85).

Similarly, home is distinct from the ‘mobility, movement, exile, boundary crossing’ of modernity, of the urban’s constant flux (86). Felski argues that while men move freely about the

city, the home's stasis is mapped easily onto women (87). These are simply temporal distinctions made spatial; the home-world binary: men travail and women reproduce in their respective domains. Friedan, too, posits the American suburban house as a kind of prison, experienced 'by women whose lives were confined, by necessity, to cooking, cleaning, washing, bearing children' (29), and Lefebvre describes a petit bourgeois Parisian suburb with horror:

They are called "pavilions", but no irony is intended. Between these pavilions lie alleyways, muddy paths where the puddles are never dry. Their owners' superficiality oozes forth in an abundance of ridiculous details, china animals on the roofs, glass globes and well-pruned shrubs along the miniature paths, plaques adorned with mottos, self-important pediments. From my window I can see a huge notice nailed to a tree in one of the kitchen gardens, proclaiming: "Danger of death. Keep out." On Sunday mornings, especially when the weather is fine, these little houses open their entrails to the sun with strings of red eiderdowns, sheets, blankets. They spread over the hillside like hundreds of dead chickens in an immense shop window (*Vol. I* 43).

Such regularity, banal equivalence, and spatial regimentation are anathema to the vivacious city streets, where possibilities of 'encounters, chance or otherwise, proliferate [...] all at once something new is about to happen; the sense of play finds an outlet in old games restored or improvised ones' (*Everyday Life* 106). The urban flâneur is celebrated by de Certeau because he actualises furtive resistance 'which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress [...] far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, [they] have reinforced themselves in proliferating illegitimacy' (*The Practice of Everyday Life* 96). Paulo Virno's *A Grammar of the Multitude* (2004) celebrates a permanent state of not-being-at-home, of *bios xenikos*, induced by post-Fordism's increasingly mutable job market and transient, cosmopolitan workforce. For Virno, this means that individuals can and must 'adapt to various enterprises, to be flexible in switching from one set of rules to another, [...] to be familiar with managing among a limited amount of possible alternatives' (85). Lefebvre, de Certeau, and Virno posit (and this is implicit in Friedan's argument) a mobile inquisitiveness as progressive *because* it is outwith the constraints of the familiar and free from the anchor of home.

Habit, Felski argues, is a conflation of spatial stability and repetition, and has been posed as mundane oppression and predicate of escape. The every day becomes everyday, and one must therefore maintain an 'ongoing critical vigilance' (89-91). However, Felski insists that this is a parochial conception occluding the latent value of the repetitive. Her position is sanguine, and redolent of Bargh's and Amato's. Not only does familiarity provide a form of stability against top-down volatility, the cycles of the everyday are crucial to individuation:

Repetition is one of the ways we organise the world, make sense of our environment, and stave off the threat of chaos. It is a key factor in the gradual formation of identity as a social and intersubjective process. Quite simply, we become who we are through acts of repetition (84).

Besides, a panoply of endless progress involves chronic disorder; Heller points out that we 'would simply not be able to survive in the multiplicity of everyday demands and everyday activities if all of them required inventive activities' (129). Despite the novel appeal of Virno's peripatetic individual, Heller sensibly posits the necessity of a 'firm position', of home: 'we need the feeling of confidence: "home" protects us' (239). Only with the established roots of spatial familiarity and temporal stability can progress occur; they must be situated in their dialectical relation.

Taken together, Felski and Heller provide a pointed, commonsense rejoinder to Lefebvre's 'open totality, perpetually in the process of being transcended' (*Dialectical Materialism* 99). Fredric Jameson (2004) notes that such a 'utopia is somehow negative [...] it is most authentic when we cannot imagine it':

Its function lies not in helping us to imagine a better future but rather in demonstrating our utter incapacity to imagine such a future – our imprisonment in a non-utopian present without historicity or futurity – so as to reveal the ideological closure of the system in which we are somehow trapped and confined (46).

If the open totality is a determined response to the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption, one might also reasonably ask what this might look like: where does total man live? Is his perpetual transcending incommensurate with home and habit? These are important, everyday concerns. Felski signals the utopian limits of Lefebvre's protean futurity by asking exigent, everyday questions of its constitution; she indicates its reflexive, paradoxical duality: forceful utopian negation and simultaneous infeasibility.

Given these limitations, indeed because of them, Lefebvre's critique is useful: he exemplifies a hermeneutics of suspicion predicated upon a relatively stable conception of (and antipathy towards) the contingencies of the everyday. Moreover, his teleological materialism, however fraught, insists upon the supersession of the extant iterations of the ordinary; not that one should aggrandise this into climacteric rupture and sudden transformation. A crucial component of this exodic desire is a recapitulation of anterior everyday gender relations indicative of problems inherent to emancipation and the promise of alterity; this is a particularly acute problem for Wells's post-everyday futurological planning, too. For these reasons, Lefebvre

is critical. The chapter now turns to the exodic as a means of thinking about and through the everyday, and as a viable critical framing for Edwardian literature.

Everyday life is to be transformed.

McKenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street* (102)

We would prefer to see the self as a construct which only becomes alive by being wary, elusive, mobile, keeping some distance from social reality. “I escape, therefore I am,” is ultimately the only ontological message we can manage.

Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor, *Escape Attempts* (236)

It is crucial to delineate the gendered limitations of Lefebvre’s critique of the everyday, and the measure of an ostensibly open totality. This section examines escape’s viability as a concept, rather than any problems with its future manifestation, and builds upon the work of Cohen and Taylor in *Escape Attempts*. They posit the exodic as a terminal and interminable problem inherent to the everyday. Against this perpetual struggling, other critics, like Bargh and Amato, are apologists for the everyday. Both apologists and escapists like Lefebvre mediate the exodic response to the everyday. This disagreement provides a compelling premise for the examination of literature attendant to the everyday. Despite extant studies of the everyday in literature, outlined below, none attend to the literary articulation and complication of the exodic impulse in Edwardian literature. This section sketches a fundamental dichotomy which will inform subsequent readings of Bennett and Wells. The latter’s response to the everyday intimates the conceptual difficulties of escaping stultifying routines. The former is more sanguine and queries the necessity of escape.

Exodic critiques orbit the Marxist promise of teleological progress. Leon Trotsky (1923) was cognisant of the necessity of a revolution of everyday proletarian consciousness as the corollary of political hegemony: the ‘life of the ordinary workers’ provides ‘a big field for observation, deduction, and practical application’ necessary to future social organisation (‘Habit and Custom’ 26). Another article published in *Pravda* (1923) reiterated the crucial link between revolutionary action and a lucent apprehension of the everyday’s palpable changes:

The object of acquiring conscious knowledge of everyday life is precisely so as to be able to disclose graphically, concretely, and cogently before the eyes of the working masses themselves the contradictions between the outgrown material shell of the way of life and the new relationships and needs which have arisen (‘Against Bureaucracy, Progressive and Unprogressive’ 59).

Critique is the start point of escape: ‘critical consciousness provides a route out of false consciousness, that analysis can abolish ideology, that the *critique* of everyday life is exactly what will renew it’ (*Novels of Everyday Life* 139 original emphasis). Kracauer’s *The Salaried Masses* coruscates with the desire to refocus the contemporary German left and invigorate an enervated political consciousness. Though war, injustices, and the suppression of revolutionary politics are conspicuous examples of an extant order, Kracauer insists that the scrutiny of the ‘imperceptible dreadfulness of normal existence’ will reveal ‘the core of given conditions’ (101): ‘under present economic and social conditions human beings are not living life’ (59). The banal details of the everyday contain capitalism’s ‘abuses and its foundations’ and disclosure will politicise those stupefied by distraction ‘intended to cast certain contents once and for all into the abyss of imageless oblivion: those contents that are not embraced by the construction of our social existence, but that bracket this existence’ (94).

Like Kracauer, Lefebvre’s express desire to escape the particular confines and alienations he perceives in neo-capitalism involves a transformation which ‘operates in the everyday realm, it flows from the everyday and concludes within it’ (*Vol. I* 96). Lefebvre is sceptical of the facile promises of disalienated escape fundamentally dissociated from the everyday, such as capitalist leisure. Nonetheless, the exodic desire to move beyond neo-capitalism’s current iteration of the quotidian animates his thinking. Elden indicates that Lefebvre’s critique is predicated upon the necessity of a revolutionary reconstitution of the social totality (117-120). This is explicit in the Situationist International’s desire to ‘undertake an effective ideological action in order to combat the emotional influence of advanced capitalist methods’ and ‘present a revolutionary alternative to the ruling culture’ (Debord ‘Report on the Construction of Situations’ 43). Vaneigem (1967), in his delineation of the strict canon of SI decorum, indicates that ‘every revolutionary must at the very least have the passion to defend his most precious attribute: his passion for individual realisation, his desire to liberate his own everyday life’ (‘Aiming for Practical Truth’ 280). Similarly, Debord advocates the ‘critique and perpetual re-creation of the totality of everyday life’ to be ‘undertaken within the present conditions of oppression, in order to destroy those conditions’ (‘Perspectives for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life’ 99).

The exodic is ubiquitous: in Heller’s contention that subjective ‘rebellion against alienation with the aim of creating an everyday life worthy of man is, in itself, a necessary precondition if man is to succeed one day in overcoming alienation socially’ (258); in Simmel’s juxtaposition of urban neurasthenic and felicitous country dweller; in Perec’s somnambulant individual who might awaken; in Friedan’s excoriation of the American housewife’s confines; in Burkitt’s delineation of ‘a real desire to transcend the routine of the everyday’ (226); in French’s assertion that the everyday enables ‘different ways of thinking and different ways of life’ and ‘becomes the space of the potential emergence of “new relations, new virtualities”, or of the

utopic *in the everyday*' (302 original emphasis). The exodic irradiates de Certeau's perpetually transgressive conception of the everyday; if one does not escape it, the everyday still generates the demands of its own repudiation. Synoptic accounts of the everyday recognise (and celebrate) the exodic, too. Roberts notes that the 'critique of the everyday is a critique of the power or it is nothing' (83), and avers that such critique is 'driven by *the promise of the everyday's own demise*' (123 original emphasis). Harootunian lucidly describes the salience of this approach:

Transforming everyday life was considered to be the fundamental condition for remodelling society itself, for altering received political and social relationships in the name of science and rationality and its capability to receive the possibilities offered by the experience of the present (*History's Disquiet* 126).

Wark notes that the SI (and one can add the hermeneutically suspicious critics indicated above) 'practice of negative action' exposes the 'gap between everyday life in twentieth century capitalism, and what it leaves to be desired' (44). Highmore posits that 'the goal of transformation must be the overcoming of and obliteration of [...] everyday life' (*Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* 144). Gardiner's *Critiques of Everyday Life* argues that critical apprehension of the everyday involves 'an ethico-political stance, and place[s] considerable stress on the potential for individual and collective agency to transform existing social conditions' (9). Gardiner concludes with a reiteration of this crucial principle. The 'study' of everyday life is not 'mere description or neutral description' but involves 'a transfigured and liberated social resistance, and *that must be realised fully*' (208 added emphasis). This is too univocal. Rather than advocating a transformation 'that must be realised fully', the implicit desire to transform, to escape, to transcend must be realised fully in order to disclose the structure, and limits, of such critique.

Cohen and Taylor argue that attempts by individuals to escape the everyday constitute an ongoing dialectic between efforts to assert individuality and the social incorporation, diffusion, and attenuation of these strategies. *Escape Attempts* diagnoses three modes of experiencing the everyday. Firstly, those that feel at home: 'reality is embraced, routines are dignified as rituals, conventions are religiously observed, scripts performed with pleasure and satisfaction' (212). Secondly, those that find it a burden: 'we might experience the world as a highly oppressive and restrictive presence [...] there is no one set of activities which fits this metaphor: we might feel quite unoppressed and easy going about work, yet experience a sexual relationship as a terrible burden' (213). Finally, those that experience the everyday as a prison: 'there seems nowhere to go – when there is a sense not just of strangeness or oppression but when everything we see around us is transformed into walls, gates and moats' (214). For Lefebvre, the first mode represents a form of total alienation, and the second two signal the subsistence of needs and desires unfulfilled by neo-capitalism to relative degrees of want. Cohen and Taylor, however, imply that

any simple distinction between these ostensibly discrete levels is simply a misrecognition of what the everyday really means. Their work on the resistance to the everyday began in prisons, and focused on the prisoners' strategies to fend off

the insidious process which attacked personal identity. If you did not constantly attend your own state of mind then you might drift into that condition which characterized some of those in the prison who already had served long sentences, men who now appeared to be more dead than alive, "zombies" (34).

They contend that this resistance to institutionalisation represents a ubiquitous 'fear that "giving in" to habit could be a symptom of a more total deterioration, a disintegration of ourselves into automatons' (50). Metonymically, the prisoner's resistance to the regularity of experience indicates a general mode of experience comparable with the constant routines of the everyday; the potential scale of this approach is more similar to Bargh's than Lefebvre's, even if *Escape Attempts* alights upon examples of life under late capitalism. Cohen and Taylor interpolate this familiar everyday with the notion of meta-grumbles. This is the legacy and corollary of self-consciousness fostered by the possibilities of escape, liberation, and transformation that relativise experience (214-15). That is, work is compartmentalised as one part of existence as opposed to a notional "real" self; work is something to which one attends, if only thoughtlessly, but that is not definitive and leaves an internal distinction between the "automaton" performing the task and a self-conscious, "real" identity.

Cohen and Taylor extend the logic of the everyday. In order to consolidate the distinction between a "work" or "family" and "real" self, individuals bracket activities commensurate with a self-determined identity. *Escape Attempts* makes clear that repeated behaviours and exposure to recognisable environments and situations always involves the intercession of self-consciousness: Bargh, Whitehead, and Amato argue that this is an inexorable predicate of "progress"; Cohen and Taylor posit that such self-consciousness only prompts an anxious desire to escape. Though any subversions might recall de Certeau's all pervasive tactics (xiii-xiv, 36-37), it is important to note that Cohen and Taylor find the problem of everydayness *everywhere*, as it is premised on the ongoing differentiation between one's "real" self and the various roles played elsewhere. The same applies across a myriad of regular circumstances. The 'scripts' ordering social experiences, such as family meals, are qualitatively similar to the same regularity as work (80-83) or prison. Regular (and regulated) social existence means that 'although the cast has been changed, the scenery reconstructed, and the properties refashioned [...] the plot and the parts played by the actors are fundamentally the same' (72) leaving a sense of the familiar, and the desire to (re)assert one's "real" self, to escape. In Cohen and Taylor's view, a

sense of *déjà vu* can always invade [...] novel circumstances, and that which was spontaneous becomes only a variant of an old theme; the new partner begins to speak familiar lines, and the acts unroll predictably. [...] As their awareness of the script increases, so do they strike different attitudes towards it in order to demonstrate their freedom (82).

Any escape attempt requires the norm's presence (85) and, in this model, it is only a matter of time before deviation becomes part of the script, a palimpsest attesting the inevitable failure of previous innovations.

One telling example Cohen and Taylor deliberate involves fantasies; further activities ostensibly beyond the everyday include: hobbies (115-117), holidays (137-138), drugs (148), therapies (149-151), art (142-145), communes (164-169), and epiphanies (180-185). The efficacy of a fantasy involves its flight from the familiar. However, any cognisance of the everyday precipitates the limits of that escape as self-consciousness announces the familiar: 'we always return' (101). Moreover, these fugacious escapes have 'a vocabulary and grammar as certainly as the world of material objects and events' (95), and they form an important support of the everyday (105). The commonplace tactic of distancing oneself from a banal, everyday task 'carries with it such a satisfying sense of the importance of oneself as an individual' that one might overlook this tactic's complicity in ensuring 'that we remain with those conventions and these roles' (56); an ironic attitude towards work quickly becomes repetitive, routine. Any escape follows a pattern (others invariably perform the same rearguard) and one displays another layer of self-consciousness about the initial, routine self-consciousness, and so on. Even the repetitions of a hobby, conspicuously distinct from the everyday necessities of work, are liable to harden into habit; the philatelist might become self-conscious and dissociate herself from 'the rhythms and demands' of cutting, pasting, and inventorying (115). Or, if one's drug taking is commensurate with one's "real" self and provides an escape from the everyday, then this allows one to endure the work or family from which one dissociates oneself; people are still trapped 'in routine, the routine of distancing' (57). Nonetheless, innovations proliferate because of a 'fear that "giving in" to habit could be a symptom of a more total deterioration, a disintegration of ourselves into automatons' (50). Crucially, in a departure from exodic release, there is no end to this process.

The everyday appears as a series of ever expanding *and* enclosing concentric circles outwith the teleological promise of ultimate supersession and a meaningfully different order of existence. Consequently, this ontological problem encysts Lefebvre's felicitous, disalienated medieval peasant. As one hops from one boring circle into liberty beyond, the everyday inexorably reasserts its boundaries before prompting the next attempt. A useful example is provided by Heller. She posits that teaching 'can easily turn into a stereotyped, cliché-ridden, mechanical operation' but might be reconfigured to

claim the whole personality, man's inventive and innovative powers, etc. Thus, whether the man called upon to teach children to read and write, does his job in particularistic or in individual fashion, depends not so much on the nature of the work itself as on the relation between it and the man who has chosen it as his calling (259).

The premise that teaching, a profession composed of annual, seasonal, calendrical, and circadian regularities at the least, might yield to something outwith its rhythms simply does not recognise that professional routines produce a dissociation from a "real" self and the habits of the job. The possibility of a lasting 'claim [upon] the *whole* personality' (259 added emphasis) occludes the circadian realities, regular material necessities of biological life, and reliable assertions of self-consciousness. Exodic accounts of the everyday suppress or occlude this problem.

Cohen and Taylor divide escape routes between utopian (political revolution will induce changes in individual consciousness) and eupsychic (individual changes in consciousness are the precondition for political revolution) (159-60). Twentieth-century Marxism's attempt to incorporate eupsychia into their utopias exist within precisely the escape strategies Cohen and Taylor identify elsewhere:

The slogans are many: through a "critical revolutionary science", a "multi-dimensional revolutionary project", a new "cultural praxis", a "practice capable of facilitating the individual's self-transformation". We are back in the supermarket of self: packaged in all the revolutionary jargon and the obligatory references, is the same promise that lay behind our other escapes [...] all this was to be achieved through the new small group experiences: affinity groups, communes, consciousness-raising groups (232-233).

Looking remarkably similar to other compromised escape routes available in the marketplace of everyday escapism, the promises of Marxist exodic critique fails to apprehend that the everyday cannot be simply transcended by the promised total man. This is partially due to the 'plurality of social worlds' (217) individuals constantly navigate; *la fête* promises disalienated experience but there is an irreducible sense that Lefebvre's joyous medieval peasant will return to everyday work. Discrepant roles and practices, and the pervasive conceit of a "real" self, mean that individuals 'lack a single symbolic vocabulary which binds together the elements of our different life-worlds, a vocabulary which would allow us to evaluate across the range of our activities, which would give moral priority to this or that part of our lives' (220). In Cohen's and Taylor's model, the total man is unattainable because the everyday is a part of consciousness. *Escape Attempts* concludes with a rousing assertion of the human necessity of its title. Even if these sorties are ephemeral, they signify 'the self as a construct which only becomes alive by being wary, elusive, mobile,

keeping some distance from social reality' (236). There is no false aggrandisement, only the compelling delineation of extant fallacies in teleological critique.

Other critics are more sanguine, and do not insist upon the necessity of escape. This ranges from the feminist criticisms of Lefebvre outlined in the previous section to Williams's asseveration that culture 'is ordinary: that is where we must start' (4). Williams provides a useful basis as he intimates the querulous juxtaposition of the already constituted and the nebulous invocation of telos that implies a denigration of the former (from a position of discursive privilege and power). Colebrook appeals to an everyday 'that goes beyond critical correction and establishes everyday life as a utopian point beyond all sense and mediation' (693). She advocates meeting the everyday beyond 'the life-enslaving logic metaphysics' (701) and 'disengaged concepts, systems and logics' (693) that suspend and misrepresent the everyday by pointing beyond the here and now. Rather than project an ideal, everyday life is immediate, tactile, and outwith sensible design; everyday life 'takes on the normative force of *life* itself' (696 original emphasis) and 'affirms the power of life itself' (698). These critics are keen to consolidate the everyday outwith the derogative approaches of extant critiques. Others are more celebratory. In *The Practice of Everyday Life, Volume 2: Living and Cooking* (1994), Luce Giard argues that though there 'have been women ceaselessly doomed to both housework and the creation of life [and] women excluded from public life and the communication of knowledge', there are vestiges of an unwritten history infused in the 'gestures, tastes and combinations' of cooking (153-154). Giard is interested in articulating a denigrated and ignored history implicit in the daily practice of *le peuple féminin des cuisines*. Ostensibly (because literally) everyday, the proficiency of domestic cookery is really an elaborate operation replete with affect, memory, and dexterity:

the preparation of a meal furnishes that rare joy of producing something oneself, of fashioning a fragment of reality, of knowing the joys of a demiurgic miniaturisation, all the while securing the gratitude of those will consume it by way of pleasant and innocent seductions (158).

This approbation is more focused, more explicit, than the defences offered by the critics of Lefebvre noted in the last section.

Similarly, Michel Maffesoli (2004) celebrates the rituals of the everyday rather than castigating its chores or alienations. Like Giard, Maffesoli avers that

*choix labour* allows me to understand, at certain moments, the importance of the qualitative, the suspension of time, rituals of all kinds, and the uses and custom that in fact ensure the framework of the body social. Life without qualities is just what ensures, in a curious manner, the preservation of society (203-204 original emphasis).

Daily practices perform and constitute reliable continuity. Maffesoli intimates that a ‘poetics of banality, a poetics harbouring a high degree of intensity’ (206) constitutes an ordinary cultural wellspring, and is basically oblivious to ‘any and all moral, political or economic imperatives issued by power in the abstract and overarching sense’ (209). Highmore’s ‘Homework’ (2004) recognises the restorative potential of routine, too. Certainly, the daily necessity of work, parenting, and commuting are monotonous but they are also ‘joyous [...] tender’, too: ‘Routines and habits can be hard to acquire and harder still to break. In this sense everyday life is often experienced as something deeply ambiguous, as simultaneously comforting and frustrating’ (311). These procedures are often carried out with a mindless precision accompanied by ‘multiple calls on the attention, [...] ambiguous address to the emotions [...] better described as a peculiar layering of attention that can simultaneously dream of the past and worry about the future’ (318). Giard, Maffesoli, and Highmore, loosely constituting an embodied phenomenological approach similar to Smith’s preferred model, intimate that the routines of the everyday inhere a restive ambiguity belying the simple linearity of escape, whether this is Lefebvre’s dialectical supersession or the endless provisional gambits Cohen and Taylor outline. The deliberation of the everyday as it is constituted represents a viable alternative to the exodic impulse. If we are to leave the everyday (if possible), where would we go? There is a sense in these more equivoque approaches that the answer is a return: to the inviolable rhythms of the day-to-day.

Relevant critical discussions of early twentieth century literature’s interests in the everyday overlook escape. Olson’s *Modernism and the Ordinary* argues that modernism pioneered a formal approach to the everyday and everydayness. Though the everyday appears anathema to the necessarily linear progress of the novel (if only in the sense of sequentiality rather than causality), the formerly overlooked is incorporated into the narrative: ‘modernism makes the filler autonomous’ (19). The ‘ordinary serves not merely as a backdrop to represent an objective reality [...] but as the central subject of the work itself’ (22). Randall’s *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* distinguishes between “daily time” (form) and “everyday life” (content) in the work of Gertrude Stein, H.D., Virginia Woolf, and Dorothy Richardson, and argues for a female everyday temporality with political potential ‘in which productive kinds of attention, alternative relationships – even perhaps empowered relations – to time, can emerge’ (41). Sayeau’s *Against the Event: The Everyday and the Evolution of Modernist Narrative* posits the development of an anti-evental narrativity which suggests ‘a transvaluation of the everyday and the event themselves, or even an attempt to think and write beyond the evental organisation of time’ (6). The argument Sayeau develops is primarily formal, and represents a challenge to ‘our modern human tendency not only to expect that meaning arrives eventfully – whether the event is a “revolution” – but further to valorise this shape as the only possible indicator of change or development’ (47). This is not simply a question of making the filler autonomous: ‘[as] becomes especially clear when we

investigate its proximate genealogy, the modernist novel is not so much *uneventful* as *anti-evental* (39 original emphasis). For instance, the slowing down of modernity, including economic recession, overproduction, and imperial deceleration, at the beginning of twentieth century is coeval with the disruption of clearly linear narration (40-41). Therefore, Sayeau posits Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) in this context as 'a storyless story, a narrative in which nothing happens and which cannot find its ending. Wells's work is, in other words, engaged with a struggle with eventless time itself' (127). Similarly, Sayeau argues that *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is a novel formally responsive to the stasis of unemployment: 'despite its dizzying velocity, going nowhere at all, constantly circling back to the place that is has just left' (152). Olson, Randall, and Sayeau are explicitly modernist and have limited relevance for the Edwardians under consideration here.

More pertinent is *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930*. Langbauer's argument is focused primarily upon the series' formal appositeness to the everyday, and offers compelling feminist revisions of neglected texts, such as Margaret Oliphant's *Carlingford Chronicles* (1861-1876), previously deemed minor because of their everyday focus (49), alongside readings of Sherlock Holmes, Anthony Trollope, Richardson, and Woolf. Series fiction means 'successive novels or stories that are linked together, usually by recurrent characters or settings' (8), such as John Galsworthy's *Forsyte* sequence (1906-1933). Formally, there is an obvious pertinence: the 'series postpones any ending with the illusion of the same continuing endlessness of our own lives' (50). They also foreground the entanglement of the everyday with modernity: 'political attitudes remain unfixed and changing, and keep posing us ongoing questions' (13). Langbauer's readings of these texts insist upon the easily mislaid political significances in form and content. The very expansiveness of the series represents a possible corrective to the ostensibly interesting. The apparently ceaseless proliferation of Trollope's work suggests that the everyday is not reducible to the confines of one iteration, one theoretical perspective; in fact, the series shows us what is left out by other forms might be important given enough pages (233). Langbauer insists upon the radical alterity of the everyday that is easily occluded by canonical renditions (213). The series allows enough room for these alternatives to come to light, and enough time to show their continued subsistence. A sprawling series, 'the endless replication' (36) of incidents, characters and even plots so appropriate to the quotidian, is not simply a catafalque of doxa, but acts as 'a kind of cultural repository [... a] political unconscious (14). The breadth of these works means they 'encode seditious politics that can be tolerated [...] because they are projected onto the *longue durée*' (14). *Novels of Everyday Life* is preoccupied with the theoretical implications of form, and illustrates the fecundity of reading the everyday in literature. The range of Langbauer's primary materials and large historical span means that she does not focus on the Edwardian as a discrete period. Alongside this sizeable range of materials, Langbauer deploys heterogeneous theoretical texts and approaches. Sayeau and Langbauer indicate the productive potentials of paying diligent attention to *different* evocations of

the everyday in literature. Their divergent strategies intimate, and leave open, unexplored alternatives.

In order to examine the prescient and lucid cognisance of the everyday's problematic manifestations, the following chapters will focus specifically on the exodic in Edwardian texts. Given the pre-eminence and subtlety of the deliberation of this problem in Wells and Bennett, constituting a deep structural component of their Edwardian work, it is surprising that no sustained critical attention has been paid to this facet of Edwardian literature. The following chapters deal with Edwardian materialism, Wells, and Bennett, in turn, and use *Escape Attempts* and Lefebvre to orientate close textual analysis. In many ways, Wells and Bennett are split between Lefebvre and *Escape Attempts*. Wells is engrossed by the prospect of sublating the everyday through utopic ambition, in the futurologies and individuated escape attempts in the novels. Bennett is more circumspect about the constituent components of escape. His thinking recalls Smith's in this regard, and, more profoundly, indicates that the very premise of escape, the everyday as torpor and oppression, is a misconception that denies agency to those whose ordinary praxis manifests history.

## II

### THE EDWARDIANS



Marjorie Perloff (1992) recognised that ‘the greatest difficulty’ for modernist criticism is to ‘assume that there must be one metanarrative that will “explain” [modernism as] the term or movement once and for all’ (169). The difficulty involves avoiding univocal explanations, such as posing Edwardian literature as the antiquated forebear to modernist achievements. This chapter is a concerted attempt to reappropriate Edwardian materialism (a pejorative) as a viable critical framing for Edwardian literature and means of uncovering subtle, complex responses to the everyday. Before examining different iterations of Edwardian interest in the quotidian, two instances of this materialist framing are dealt with in turn: King Edward’s function as a facile metonym for the decade’s imputed repletion and equanimity, and Virginia Woolf’s grouping of Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells, and John Galsworthy as crass materialists in ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ (1924). Despite their limited validity, these interlocked framings have attached themselves to the period and denigrated its writers; the different but related accusations of materialism intimate a mutually reinforcing efficacy. Richard Whittington-Egan (2000) argues that the ‘disconcertingly wide variance’ of “the Edwardian” has meant that it ‘has signally lacked the authority accorded to the recognition of such similar periodic nomenclatures as “Romantic”’ (‘Part One’ 202). Despite this asseveration, materialism has functioned as a “metanarrative” for Edwardian literature. However, this materialist critique actually provides an inadvertent means of exploring a sedulous attentiveness to the everyday.

Whittington-Egan’s cognisance of the period’s indeterminate associations, if one ignores its putative materialism, is reflected in a contemporary uncertainty over the period’s distinctiveness. In 1913, Filson Young complained that, despite being ‘free in a way that no civilised nation has ever been free before’, the first decade of the twentieth century looked obsessively backwards:

It is like the morning after a great ball; memories of the scene, the glamour of the lights and the rhythm of the music are still with us; we are haunted by the faces of those who shone upon us in bravery and beauty; and we are for the moment too much occupied with agreeable or romantic reminiscences to realise that their day is over and ours is already with us (585).

Edward’s reign seemingly constituted a continuation of Victorian norms. A.R. Orage recorded the King’s death in *The New Age* (12<sup>th</sup> May 1910) as breaking the ‘last genuine link with the Victorian age’:

[he] was spiritually the mere executor of Queen Victoria. The impulse of her epoch flowed over, as it were, and merged in his reign, begun actually before her death, colouring it with the peculiar tones of the Victorian era. King Edward VII was adored almost as much as the son and successor of his mother as for his own qualities and merits (26).<sup>10</sup>

The sense of a belated ending marked by Edward's death in 1910 is anathema to proclamations in Parliament on his mother's passing in 1901. The Prime Minister, the Marquess of Salisbury, asserted that the Queen 'bridged over that great interval which separates old England from new England. [...] I think that future historians will look to the Queen's reign as the boundary which separates the two states of England – England which has changed so much' (*Hansard* vol. 89 col. 10). Arthur Balfour, then First Lord of the Treasury, described a national grief

affect[ing] us not merely because we have lost a great personality, but because we feel that end of a great epoch has come upon us – an epoch the beginning of which stretches beyond the memory, I suppose, of any individual whom I am now addressing (*Hansard* vol. 89 col. 19-20).

Henry Campbell-Bannerman, leader of the Liberal opposition in the Commons, spoke of the 'lamentable calamity [that] had befallen the nation' (*Hansard* vol. 89 col. 26). Edward's death did not prompt similar responses. H.H. Asquith, the Prime Minister, spoke of Edward's personal qualities: 'an example which the humblest of his subjects may treasure and strive to follow, of simplicity, courage, self-denial, tenacious devotion up to the last moment of conscious life to work, to duty' (*Hansard* vol. 17. col. 795). Balfour abandoned his habitual loquacity, too: '[he] has gone, but the Empire remains; and the burden which he so nobly bore now falls to another to sustain' (*Hansard* vol. 17. col. 799). Despite Orage's asseveration, there is little articulation of significant change occasioned by Edward's death in the opinions of these prominent statesmen.

Consequently, the position of "Edwardian" as stable historical period wavers. Richard Ellmann (1960) concentrates on 'the years 1900 to 1910' (v) whereas John Batchelor (1982) ventures three potential markers: the regnancy; the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War; or, 'the Wilde *debâcle* and the first issue of *Blast*, in 1914' (2). Though Jefferson Hunter (1982) confines himself to literature published under Edward's rule, he has 'no particular quarrel with those who would extend the Edwardian years back to 1897 or forward to 1914' (vii). Jonathan Rose (1986) works between Oscar Wilde's trial and the end of World War One (xii-xiv).

---

<sup>10</sup> Positing the Edwardians as a continuation of the Victorians, before the decisive break of the First World War, is Lascelles Abercrombie's (1933) approach, too: 'it is not so easy to see the Edwardian spirit expressing itself in literature' (185).

The *Oxford Companion* (1997) moves between ‘the decline of the three-volume novel in 1895 and the outbreak of the First World War’ (xv). More recently, Jonathan Wild (2017) is confined by his title: *Literature of the 1900s: The Great Edwardian Emporium* (2017). Meanwhile, the introduction to *Edwardian Culture: Beyond the Garden Party* (2018) is conspicuously vague: ‘c. 1890-1910, a period which has attracted various names, including “aube de siècle”, “fin de siècle”, “turn of the century”, “late Victorian”, “post-Victorian”, “early modernism” or “early twentieth century”’ (1). Perhaps most capacious is Paul Thompson’s (1992) oral history which involved interviewing four hundred individuals, selected from ‘millions of former Edwardians’ in the populace, born between 1872 and 1906 (xviii-xix). This relies upon a conception of individual citizens passively inhering regnal markers; the value of those possessing memories of the decade and those merely born mid-regnancy indicates that the period’s borders are more than porous.

Any monarchical periodisation and nomenclature is liable to imbue the period with Edward’s image. However useful, or simply pervasive, this framing might be countered by an assertion of the period’s political dissidence and aesthetic avant-garde. Anne Fernihough’s *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (2013) has little time for the aureate visions of the Edwardian period (16), and demonstrates the limits of these accounts by detailing its political radicalism. Focusing on Orage’s *The New Age* and Dora Marsden’s *Freewoman* (later *New Freewoman*), Fernihough examines the influence of Nietzsche’s individualism in political discourse. The voluble advocacy of radical socialist policies (4) and ‘anarchist hyper-individualists’ (36-38) presents an alternative face of Edward’s regnancy. This ‘exuberant utopianism’ leads Fernihough to posit an ‘*aube-de-siècle* Edwardianism that looked forwards rather than backwards’ (32-33). Following Fernihough, there are alternative and politically radical “Edwardian” brackets: the assassination of William McKinley, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1901, and the actions of Gavrilo Princip, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1914, between which stand suggestive markers: the publication of Georges Sorel’s *Réflexions sur la violence* (1908) which was translated by T.E. Hulme (1914), and the violent response, following pro-Boer speeches elsewhere, to David Lloyd George’s planned appearance at the end of 1901 in Birmingham, Chamberlain’s hometown, which left two dead after thirty thousand people gathered to protest (Hattersley 101-103).

The signifying ambiguities of “Edwardian” are certainly commensurate with the period’s restive instabilities: the acute embarrassment induced by the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902); concerns over extreme poverty and inequality; militant female suffrage; increasing industrial action; the growth of the Parliamentary Labour Party; renewed calls for Irish Home Rule; growing secularism; Liberal social reforms and substantive constitutional reform; and, international economic competition. Samuel Hynes (1968) stresses that these antagonisms ‘did not add up to a coherent system of beliefs or define a large common goal’: ‘[the] Edwardian period was a time of undifferentiated rebellion, when many rebellious minds seem to have

regarded all new ideas as adaptable if only they were contrary to the old order' (*The Edwardian Turn of Mind* 9). According to Hunter, Edwardian writers felt 'change all about them' and 'yet could not specify the differences between their spirit and that of the nineteenth century' (3) and Batchelor argues for a prevalent sense of 'epistemological crisis' (6). This was a period replete with an 'abundance of polarities': '[the] Edwardians knew that at the very least, they had to acknowledge the contradictions inherent in their era, and some among them acknowledged that fact with cheerfulness, as though it were a new and exciting thing to be pulled in different directions' (Hunter 73). In *Tono-Bungay* (1909), Wells limns 'a loss of traditions and distinctions and assured reactions' (297); similarly, his *Anticipations* (1901) wrestles with modernity's 'process of deliquescence' (83). C.F.G. Masterman's *In Peril of Change* (1905) identifies a sense of enervation and ferment, decay and possibility:

Expectancy and surprise are the notes of the age. Expectancy belongs by nature to a time balanced uneasily between two great periods of change. On the one hand is a past still showing faint survivals of vitality; on the other is the future but hardly coming to birth (xii).

The conclusion of Masterman's later *The Condition of England* (1909) is less ambivalent, more pessimistic: 'the future, whether in orderly progress or with sudden or gradual retrogression, will be astonished at the "illusion of security" in which today society reposes; forgetting that but a thin crust separates it from the central elemental fires, and that the heart of the earth is a flame' (302). Any imputed stability occludes these complicated and complicating assessments of instability. Both Wells and Masterman, in *Tono-Bungay* and *The Condition of England*, evince a slip from hopeful progress to precipitous uncertainty.

Despite literary responses cognisant of fervid activities, a procrustean materialism supervenes. Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson (1996) repudiate the pervasive 'truism' that 'the culture immediately preceding the chaos had offered an idyllic interval for a mindless British populace' (viii). Wells was aware of the conceptual consequence of Edward's habits: 'the British Crown of to-day so far as it exists for science and literature at all, exists mainly to repudiate the claims of intellectual performance to public respect' (*Anticipations* 235). Clearly, the monarch's image provides a reductive misprision for the Edwardians and the period's literature. Writing in 2000, Lynne Hapgood's brilliant 'Transforming the Victorian' argues that, rather than seeing 'historically interesting but parochial statements of a dying tradition', after a century, 'critics can delight in its diversity [and] cross currents' (37). She places the familiar marker, that 'the extent to which individual works of literature configure [the] break with the past [as] a significant criterion of [...] intrinsic value' (22), at the beginning of her essay to demonstrate its vacuity, and advocates an unbiased recognition that 'all fiction and fictional structures were in the process of

change and open up the opportunity for modern critics to reconceptualise the nature of that struggle' congruent with the mutability of its literature 'under the stress of transforming the Victorian' (31). This chapter pursues *one* of these cross-currents: materialism.

Fernihough argues that it is possible to trace salient intellectual movements with no intention of replacing 'one totalising vision of the period with another' (33). Wild, too, posits that the diversity of Edwardian literature might be conceived of through one of the period's new department stores:

Edwardian consumers of contemporary literature might reasonably have considered themselves akin to those wide-eyed shoppers who attended Selfridge's grand opening; unlike their shopping counterparts, however, Edwardian readers accessed an imagined mutable space, replete with new floors, departments, staff and products which appeared in a rapid and colourful succession (*The Great Edwardian Emporium* 3).

With this in mind, and remembering Perloff's wariness of crude metanarratives (169), one can displace the facile image of a halcyon Edwardian decade and Woolf's account by positing an Edwardian materialism disabused of any totalising aspirations. Dislodging materialism as a dominant paradigm, and situating it as *one* literary interest during the Edwardian period, provides a singularly pellucid and fertile means of analysing prevalent questions concerning succour, futurity, autonomy, and escape.

But underneath it all he had worried. This American invasion; this Radical Government so unexpectedly returned at the General Election; this much talked-of Labour vote; these cartoons of John Bull looking over a wall at a bull labelled Labour; this craze for new publicity among the people he knew; this feverishness generally; this adulteration of society [...] what did it all mean? Did it mean they were all riding for some smash? and would the smash, when it came, be constructive or destructive?

Vita Sackville-West, *The Edwardians* (153-54)

This section outlines the projection of Edward VII's materialism across his reign, historical facts complicating this "metanarrative", and alternative Edwardian materialisms ventured by more astute critics. Roy Hattersley (2004) begins his broad survey of the period by invoking its enduring image:

a long and sunlit afternoon, no more than a congenial bridging passage between the glories of the nineteenth century and the horrors of slaughter in France and Flanders. Charm is thought to have replaced energy in the nation, exhausted by the activity and achievement of Victorian Britain, gratefully at rest (1).

Jerome Thale (1974) provides a familiar itinerary of Edwardianism: 'luxury, extravagance, frivolity [...] unparalleled confidence, security, tranquillity' and 'decorum' combined with 'self-indulgence' (26). The period is remembered in George Orwell's autobiographical essay 'Such, Such Were the Joys' (1952) as replete with a 'fatness of wealth':

From the whole decade before 1914, there seems to breathe forth a smell of the more vulgar, un-grown-up kinds of luxury, a smell of brilliantine and crème de menthe and soft-centred chocolates – an atmosphere, as it were, of eating everlasting strawberry ices on green lawns to the tune of the Eton Boating Song. The extraordinary thing was the way in which everyone took it for granted that this oozing, bulging wealth of the English upper and upper-middle classes would last forever (533).

This mythopoesis is partially predicated upon the idea of an upper-class Society suffused with 'style, glamour and elegance' (Bentley-Cranch 91) and bound up with the 'genial picture of a pleasure-loving monarch' (Hattersley 41): 'few monarchs have so precisely embodied the spirit of their time. Edward VII was a man who cared, as his time cared, for material things and fleshy

pleasures' (*The Edwardian Turn of Mind* 4). This was something the Edwardians were aware of: Wells derided Edward as 'a heavy-eyed sensualist, a small-minded leader of fashion [...] a frequenter of race-courses and music-halls' (*Anticipations* 73). He was also prone to ostentatious travelling, and prandial indulgence (Hattersley 28; Bentley-Cranch 79-80). This appetite was less problematic than Edward's dissolute habits; in *Clayhanger* (1910), the King's appearance in *The Christian News* is enough for the family to discontinue its subscription (293). While at Tranby Croft in 1890, the King was playing baccarat at a party in which one member, an army officer, was caught cheating. The accused promised never to play cards again, and the affair would be collectively hushed up. The secret surfaced, however, and the officer brought a suit forward in which the Prince was implicated; his role was more exciting than the case itself. Baccarat was made illegal, and Edward 'found himself castigated by the press for his gambling activities' despite loyalty to his friends (Bentley-Cranch 88-89). Worse still was Edward's recurrent habit of embroiling himself in divorce scandals (Hattersley 19-23). Despite these proclivities and because of his affable personal appeal, Edward seems to typify 'Britain's brief *belle époque*' (Bradbury 70), a vision projecting a minority's privilege over the decade. Thale argues that the popular image of the Edwardians is also a consequence of contemporary events: the devastation of the War meant that the recent past's gilt-edge was burnished (31-34). The putative Edwardian "summer", its sunlit placidity, and languorous afternoons of dalliance and indulgence is necessarily temporary, and looks forwards to autumn's chill, and winter's desolation.

Despite its transience, the imputed repletion has proven singularly enduring. In 2017, the *Daily Telegraph* described the period oxymoronically as an 'eternal summer' (23). Vita Sackville-West's *The Edwardians* (1930), and its emphatic, declarative title, has contributed to this sybaritic image; Batchelor and Hunter single the novel out for this reason (6; 7).<sup>11</sup> *The Edwardians* centres on the voluptuous decadence of a country house's weekend soirees, infidelities, 'absurd paraphernalia of servants and luxury' and 'endless, extravagant meals' (55, 35). While writing the novel, Sackville-West wrote to Woolf (24<sup>th</sup> July 1929) describing her attempt to recall the

impression of waste and extravagance which assailed one the moment one entered the doors of the house. The crowds of servants; people's names in little slits on their bedroom doors; sleepy maids waiting about after dinner in the passages. I find that these things are a great deal more vivid to me than many things which have occurred since (358).

---

<sup>11</sup> This choice is illustrative of the problems of a limited conception of the Edwardians. Though Sackville-West does restrict herself to an aristocratic milieu, the novel is not as enthralled to its mores as Hunter and Batchelor imply. Viola Chevron, the sister of the squire protagonist, is notably iconoclastic: "The society you [her brother] live in is composed of people who are both dissolute and prudent. They want to have their fun, and they want to keep their position. They glitter on the surface, but underneath the surface they are stupid" (123).

Sackville-West intimates that she sought an evocation of the period's material ephemera. A review in the *Bookman* (1930) was more pointed, and described Chevron as the 'suitable background for a post-Victorian but still feudal pageant' (230).

Fittingly, Edward makes a brief appearance, and like so many characters in the novel he requires relief from 'his boredom' (110). One of these distractions is provided by infidelity. The novel is centred on Sebastian Chevron, who is 'bored' with 'weariness of life' (29), and his numerous unsatisfactory liaisons. *The Edwardians* exemplifies Hynes's contention that 'the Edwardian period was an Age of Propriety' in which values were privately ignored and maintained for a patina of respectable stability (*The Edwardian Turn of Mind* 6). The Duchess of Chevron, organising room allocations for a weekend gathering, must observe careful discretion: '[it] was so necessary to be tactful, and at the same time discreet. The professional Lothario would be furious if he found himself in a room surrounded by ladies who were all accompanied by their husbands' (23). Infidelity is expedited, and only disreputable if discovered; in Wells's *Wheels* (1896), the cad Bechamel's wife reckons that an extramarital liaison out 'of her sight, and, more particularly out of the sight of other women of her set [...] was, perhaps, permissible' (132). When Lady Roehampton's affair in *The Edwardians* is exposed by her husband, she scolds his archaic morals: "why, when I'm concerned, behave as though we were living in eighteen-fifty?" (126).

The hypocrisy and invocation of overlapping mores indicates the paucity of any univocal Edwardianism. Monarchical corpulence and lasciviousness are associated with a calm incommensurate with the period's instabilities and various progressive undertakings. Moreover, indulgence also informs Hynes's insistence upon the 'melancholy mood' and 'anxiety [...] which] were a part of the Edwardian consciousness' (*The Edwardian Turn of Mind* 45, 53). There were attendant concerns about the links between accumulation, complacency and decline.<sup>12</sup> In 'The Future of the Anglo-Saxon Race' (1900), an article which attempts to naturalise Anglo-Saxon colonialism, Charles Beresford, admiral and Member of Parliament, describes cupidity as the root of imperial decline:

British society has been eaten into by the canker of money. From the top downwards, the tree is rotten. The most immoral pose before the public as the most philanthropic, and as doers of all good works. Beauty is the slave of gold, and Intellect, led by Beauty, unknowingly dances to the strings which are pulled by Plutocracy. [...] This is the danger which menaces the Anglo-Saxon race [...] the cankering worm in its own heart, the sloth, the indolence, the luxurious immorality, the loss of manliness, chivalry, moral courage and fearlessness which that worm breeds (807).

---

<sup>12</sup> Wells complained of a national indolence beginning with the monarch and vitiating the whole nation (*Mankind* 191-92).

The license and indulgence of the upper classes formed part of a concern, outlined by Beresford, that the Edwardian inheritance of Victorian wealth and hegemony would falter if its morals did.

Decadence and concerns about imperial enervation prompted parallels to be drawn with the Roman Empire. Elinor Glyn (1937) recorded in her autobiography that Victoria's death induced proliferating doubts:

There were many who wondered whether that greatness would continue; who read in the failures of the early part of the Boer War a sign of decadence, and, influenced perhaps unduly by Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* [...] I felt that I was witnessing the funeral procession of England's greatness and glory (97-98).

In *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Marlow intimates the contingency of empire in his juxtaposition of the new imperial centre, London, and its Roman invaders: 'marshes, forests, savages – precious little to eat fit for a civilised man, nothing but Thames water to drink' (6). Joseph Conrad infers a historical palimpsest, mapped over the Thames and the Congo, exposing the transience of apparently permanent hegemony. Similarly, Ford Madox Hueffer's poem 'The Proconsuls' (1907) posits an imagined future's response to the relative power of Rome and London: 'I wonder, will men say | Which was greater: *Pax Britannica* | Or deep-based sway of Rome' (22-24). The eventual answer is affirmative: "'Ay, that old sway was good | And this in turn was good that made them come | Black-garbed and peaceful to this later Rome'" (27-29). Hueffer's confidence is undermined, however; not least by the funereal attire of London's visitors. This conciliatory conclusion is vicariously articulated by an unknown 'they' (27), perhaps the next colonial superpower; and, given the enforced if indeterminate performance, this consolation is a cheap nostrum. The poem reiterates the superannuation of the historical paragon: 'the palaces of vanished Rome' (7), 'old ghosts laugh amid ruin'd Rome' (15), and 'this later Rome' (29). Hueffer's configuration of London amidst ruins and castoffs of 'pomp imperial' (11) indicates a resignation not only to a provisional hegemony, as Kipling reiterates throughout 'The White Man's Burden' (1899), but the ineluctable belatedness of British imperialism. The British Empire has not managed to escape the linguistic grasp of the Romans ('*Pax Britannica*') and, moreover, London is reduced to a proconsul, an imperial agent acting on *behalf* of a consul. The 'old ghosts laugh' because of London's historical recapitulation and ongoing subjugation: the British Empire is proof of its status as a Roman colony, as the colonised becomes coloniser.

These were deep set anxieties. Hunter describes a pervasive and 'widespread national malaise': 'the English as a race were grown too complacent or corrupt or ridden with doubt to manage the empire their fathers had earned' (106-107). Max Nordau's work, published in English during the final decade of the nineteenth century, was particularly influential, especially

*Degeneration* (1892) and *The Malady of the Century* (1887) (Batchelor 7). The damage inflicted upon imperial rectitude by the Second Anglo-Boer War crystallised these doubts, as did the period's economic difficulties, particularly inequality.<sup>13</sup> This was a period of stagnating real wages juxtaposed with 'ostentation and conspicuous class consumption [...] characteristic of the wealthier classes' and epitomised by the House of Lords, 'an institution entirely out of touch with everyday life and ordinary people' (Brooks 159, 134). The gap between affluence and grinding poverty was startling: sixty-seven percent of the nation's capital was concentrated in one percent of the population (Thompson 3-6). In *Fraternity* (1909), Galsworthy signals the remarkable propinquity of poverty and wealth in London: '1, Hound Street, abutting on the garden of a house of better class' (56). "Abutting" suggests an impropriety of relation, and a worrying, unsought proximity. Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree's *Poverty: A Study in Town Life* (1901) and Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of People of London* (1889-1903) uncovered the magnitude of urban poverty: '[over] a quarter of the population were prevented, by their material condition, from making a proper contribution to the national economy' (Hattersley 72). This was apparent during the Boer War: of the recruits drawn from the working classes 'over half [...] were physically unfit for military service' (Rose 117-118). Alarmed by the scale of urban poverty, thinkers as diverse as Beatrice Webb, Winston Churchill, Wells, George Bernard Shaw, and Woolf advocated extreme solutions, such as enforced labour and eugenics (Rose 136-139), in order to increase economic and military efficiency. The Conservative approach focused on heredity's role in poverty that obviated the need for structural reform, and focused instead on eradicating 'fertile poverty' through sterilisation (*The Edwardian Turn of Mind* 33 original emphasis). Other responses materialised, though, cognisant of structural designs producing in-work poverty. New Liberalism, driven by Lloyd George and Churchill and emboldened by a landslide victory<sup>14</sup>, recognised that the state, faced with structural socioeconomic problems, might ensure means of social reproduction necessary to an individual's self-determining pursuits. The Rowntree and Booth reports precipitated a change in the conception of the poor and influenced the Liberal's provision of pensions, labour exchanges, and national health insurance (Rose 59).

Given the political, imperial, and economic fluctuations belying any univocal metanarrative, critical responses have offered differing accounts of Edwardian materialism. For instance, in *Edwardian Occasions* (1972), Hynes posits that the Edwardians 'were concerned with

---

<sup>13</sup> This was exacerbated by faltering economic primacy. Though Britain continued industrial expansion in absolute terms, dominance in world trade, and London remained the financial centre of the world, there was relative decline. The rapid expansion of the German and American economies threatened and eventually overtook Britain's. England's annual average growth rate over the 1860s-1880s was 2.4%. This fell to 1.9% between 1885 and 1905; in the same period Germany grew by 4.7% annually and the United States by 5% (Freiberg 24-26). In Githa Sowerby's *Rutherford and Son* (1912), the owner of the glassmaking factory complains about strikes (16), native technical deficiencies (56), and the force of American industry: 'a loss of four thousand on last year's working. It's not a big loss, considering what's been against us those Americans dumping all that stuff in the spring we had to stop that little game, and it cost us something to do it' (28).

<sup>14</sup> The Liberal victory of 1906 returned 377 Members with only 157 Tories and Unionists in opposition.

social reality', and 'how to live in a scientific universe and how to live with industrialism' (5). Maria Di Battista (2009) argues for a broad intellectual movement in which materialism developed as a response to the devastation wrought on idealistic, Victorian

conceptions of humanity ruled by a higher, selfless and sexless nature [which] paled in the unflattering light cast by Darwin's theory of evolution, Herbert Spencer's evolutionary sociology, Schopenhauer's all-consuming Will to Live, and Nietzsche's iconoclastic vitalism exalting the Will to Power (42).<sup>15</sup>

Within this paradigm, William Bellamy (1971) posits an Edwardian experience of temporality 'under the pressure of post-Darwinian time, living in an ongoing process apparently unresponsive to human control or understanding, living under constant anxiety' (20). Batchelor describes a 'crisis [...] leaving Edwardian man confronted with the self and nothing but the self' (6). This existential precarity was exacerbated by the period's increasing secularism, the grounds of which were outlined in Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* (1907). The slow, inexorable apostasy Gosse describes leads to an explicit denunciation of 'the untruth'

that evangelical religion, or any religion in a violent form, is a wholesome or valuable adjunct to human life. [...] There is something horrible, if we will bring ourselves to face it, in the fanaticism that can do nothing with this pathetic and fugitive existence of ours but treat it as if it were the uncomfortable antechamber to a palace which no one has explored and of the plan of which we know absolutely nothing (197).

*Father and Son* reflects a pervasive Edwardian rebelliousness and what Ellmann (1959) describes as Edwardian literature's 'thoroughly secular' disposition (191), and its increasingly irreligious audience: 'God no longer functioned as an effective sanction in the lives of most thinking people in the last quarter of the nineteenth century' (Batchelor 4; also Keating 105-09 and Rose 1). In *Clayhanger*, when Edwin's companion at the centenary celebration of the Sunday schools' establishment is visibly enthused, he is incredulous: 'fancy exciting herself over a hymn' (232).

Rather than attempt to extract meaning from discredited metanarratives such as religion or inviolate imperial hegemony, Bellamy argues that Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy emphasise

the possessive and locative aspects of their characters because the human type they were depicting found himself, precisely, dispossessed and dislocated. Having defined culture as in crisis in the 1890s and having claimed sickness of the self, Englishmen were apparently

---

<sup>15</sup> Rose explores similar aspects of Edwardian materialism (4-12; 75-80; 91-96).

able in the early years of the twentieth century to consolidate the demands of the self by turning the blame, as it were, on to society. [...] The aims implicit in the Edwardian revolution are not those of cultural revolution, but involve a moving beyond culture (16).

Bellamy posits a therapeutic paradigm capable of accounting for the narration of individuals outwith the security of the social and cultural consensus and, instead, ‘from cognitive analysis’ (12) which might remould ‘the uncomfortable antechamber’ (Gosse 197). This ‘ateleological’ model does not attempt to reconcile individuals to superannuated social or cultural structures but advocates the ongoing cultivation of the self (Bellamy 16-21) as an apposite and necessary response to ‘post-Darwinian teleological deprivation’ (147). Bellamy’s Edwardians establish the nascent stages of being ‘able to define themselves objectively in terms of crisis by looking “from the outside” at themselves and society’ and undertake ‘a transference from teleologies to direct remedial action under-taken on behalf of the self’ (22).

Ellmann argues that another consequence of, or compensation for, secularisation is manifest in the literature’s attempt to assert or construct unity, ‘to see human life in a synthesis’ (203). He describes an Edwardian literary preference, often titular, for the ‘use of a symbolic nucleus’ (200); examples include *A Room With a View* (1908), *Heart of Darkness*, and *The Man of Property* (1906). This symbolic cohesion imbues works with ‘atmospheres rather than narratives’ but the ‘repetition of words and images, while helpful to creation of unity, gives an air of pedantry’ (Ellmann 204, 209). This unifying habit is explored in Rose’s *The Edwardian Temperament*. He finds the ‘reconciling turn of mind’ (3) everywhere:

Connecting ideas, connecting people, connecting opposing sides of the personality – all were parts of the same Edwardian current. The reconciliation of the sacred and the secular, the rich and the poor, sexuality and spirituality, the child and the adult brought with it an inner reconciliation of the self (200).

The corollary of this presupposes the same problems highlighted in the aggrandisement of one facet of the period like the King. Nonetheless, Rose argues that Edwardian ‘tendency to connect everything, as if by reflex’ was ‘an understandable reaction against the suffocating dogmatism of the nineteenth century’ (27, 38). In ‘The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds’, originally delivered as lectures in 1911-1912 and later collected by Herbert Read (1924), T.E. Hulme reduces the Victorian conception of existence to ‘billiard balls on an ideally smooth table’ (202) upon which inert matter is acted upon according to computable laws. Hulme contrasts this mechanistic view of the universe, which can ‘deal with matter but it is absolutely incapable of understanding life’ (174), with Henri Bergson’s contention that the ‘complex organisation does not produce, but is produced by, life’ (208). Hulme argues that, for Bergson,

the only theory which will fit the facts of evolution is to suppose that it is produced by a kind of *impulse* which is something akin to the creative activity we find in our own mind and which, inserted in matter, has, following out this creative activity, gradually achieved the result we see in evolution (204 original emphasis).

Rose concedes that the unifying habit often demonstrates ‘an ability to veer off at right angles to conventional trains of thought, cross the boundaries of discipline and genre, and link ideas that seem to have nothing in common’ (27-28). However, he is suspicious of ‘that recurrent weakness in Edwardian thought – wishful thinking’: ‘[most] of the best minds of this period were prone to settle into exceedingly comfortable philosophies – to believe, for instance, that the conflict between religion and science could be worked out in a tidy synthesis’ (80). There is a recurrent suspicion in *The Edwardian Temperament* that prominent Edwardian thinkers lacked the intellectual resources to deal with the exacting problems posed by their Victorian forebears.

Rose’s scepticism and Bellamy’s approbation are indicative of divergent conceptual paradigms for Edwardian literature; and, perhaps, this very diversity signals the limit of Rose’s asseverations for Edwardians endlessly subsuming difference through synthesis. Given the period’s tumult, it is unsurprising that Hunter argues for an interrogative, critical literature responsive to an ‘abundance of polarities [...] attempt[ing] to discuss more than it can understand’ (73-74). Edwardian literature is, in this sense, materialist because of a conscious intervention in fractious contemporary debates. Ellmann describes the decade’s writers as ‘freshly self-conscious’ (191), even to a fault: ‘it is the age of prefaces and revisions’ (208). Wells argued that contextual instability informed his novels: ‘I was becoming more and more interested in the interior conflict, this controversial matter stewing and fermenting in all our brains, and its ventilation in action’ (*Autobiography* 2.498); Galsworthy’s *Strife* (1905) is preoccupied with the deleterious consequences of capitalist logic during a strike; and, Bennett’s *Clayhanger* has been posed by Robert Squillace (1997) as an indirect response to the House of Lords’ resistance to constitutional reform (87).

Socio-political problems often inform these “materialist” works. Anna Vaninskaya (2011) argues that

the Edwardians’ political commitments damned them as surely as their representational aesthetic. The big names of the 1900s – Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, Kipling – for all their wildly differing ideologies, had one thing in common. They were polemicists, writers with a purpose – often journalists, always public moralists. They tried to convince and persuade their audiences, they had programmes, they wrote propaganda – whether

socialist, Christian, or imperialist is a secondary matter – and their programmes did not have an exclusively artistic import, but a social, supra-literary one (165).

As an indicator of this literary propensity for political engagement, one can posit Galsworthy amidst Vaninskaya's grouping, too. Galsworthy's novels, notably *The Island Pharisees* (1904) and *Fraternity*, are preoccupied with the complications of political intervention in social problems; while deeming action wholly necessary, *Fraternity's* protagonist, Hilary Dallison, prevaricates.<sup>16</sup> Hynes castigates this putatively enfeebled Liberalism (*The Edwardian Turn of Mind* 56-86), and St John Ervine (1920) compared the pugilism of Shaw and Wells with the 'chilled speculation' of Galsworthy: 'he is easily made indignant over suffering, I cannot conceive of [him] sounding any call to fight: I can only think of him persuading to surrender. He did not challenge; he deprecated' (226). On the stage, Galsworthy abjured equivocation, and evinced the New Dramatists' faith in theatre's potential for direct, exacting engagement. Jan McDonald (1986) argues that Edwardian New Dramas readily 'deal with the social and moral problems that confronted the middle classes at the time' (33), and in 'Contemporary Drama as a Reflection of Modern Life' (1911), Elsie G. May posits that New Dramatists sought 'the vivid reproduction of existing social conditions [... and] reflections of everyday life' (161).<sup>17</sup> This was readily harnessed for political ends despite legal restrictions. In his mordant 'About Censorship' (1909), Galsworthy indicates that the requirement for the Lord Chamberlain's approval to publically stage plays ensured 'the preservation of [the public's] comfort and sensibility against the spiritual researches and speculations of bolder and too active spirits' (236). Such constraints were anathema to Galsworthy's aims; they did not impede his writing. *Justice's* (1910) emphatic condemnation of prisoners' mandatory solitary confinement certainly upended the public's "comfort and sensibility" and the play contributed significantly to penal reform (Nellis 78-80).

These nuanced understandings of Edwardian concerns with materialism have been overshadowed by a materialist framing more redolent of the monarch than the literature itself. Malcolm Bradbury (1993) posits the dominant mode of Edwardian novel writing as 'material realism' preoccupied, not as Galsworthy's work is with social relations which produce these

---

<sup>16</sup> Despite his diffident scepticism, Galsworthy's insistence upon the injurious organisation of social relations under capitalism incensed *The Saturday Review* (13<sup>th</sup> March 1909): '*Fraternity* is nothing more nor less than an insidious and embittered attack on our social system. It is calculated to bring the official governing class into contempt and to import prejudice into the consideration of many important problems. [...] But beneath the cold surface of the work throbs a bitter and relentless hatred. It is written with a pen steeped in vitriol. There is no attempt at fairness or impartiality. The appeal is to prejudice and to passion. It is class hatred gone mad [...] It is a book that gets upon the nerves' (341-342).

<sup>17</sup> These plays posed difficult questions for their audiences, and critics were dismayed by the willingness to displace entertainment with focused political and social critiques. Critics had no appropriate vocabulary for these plays. *The Bookman* protested that *Justice* (1910) 'lacks power: unfortunately, Mr Galsworthy cannot interest us in the particular individuals, and we necessarily subordinate them to his thesis' (50). Oscar Parker (May 1907) complained that before attending a St John Hankin play, one must remind oneself that 'we are not sitting down to a play – to a dramatic composition, carefully constructed as a work of art' (402). *The North American Review* (1912) lamented that when Harley Granville-Barker 'has written a play, it is a philosophy of life, it is propaganda, it is dialogue, it is even conversation and portraiture, but there is no play' (572-573).

tangible contingencies, but with individuals generally ‘caught up *completely* in the padded mahogany furniture, the busy streets and commerce, of an age of materiality’ (108 added emphasis). Various critics have repeated this parochialism. Abercrombie argues for an overriding Edwardian concern ‘with the practical actuality of things’, even if there was an attendant ‘development in the power of rendering the actuality of things’ (200-202). Norman Page (1987) locates Galsworthy amongst ‘large houses with mahogany furniture and deep carpets and silent servants [...] tweed, shooting and croquet and tennis’ (15). This is partly reinforced by the lavish televised version of Galsworthy’s *Forsyte* novels: first on BBC2 in 1967 in a 26 episode series, and again in 2002, by ITV. Clearly, these exert some influence in the popular conception of the period. Bennett retains a ‘popular’ image of an ‘aggressively philistine, money-grubbing, self-complacent figure’ (Batchelor 179; Keating 428). After his death, Woolf notes in her diary (28<sup>th</sup> March 1931) that Bennett was ‘glutted with success’ and points out his materialist foibles: ‘a shop keeper’s view of literature [...] covered over with fat & prosperity & the desire for hideous Empire furniture’ (*Diary Vol. 4* 15-16). Similarly, Ezra Pound (1920) celebrated the absence of ‘the click of Mr Bennett’s cash-register finish’ from Wyndham Lewis’s work (429). Isaiah Berlin (1989) describes the Edwardians – including Kipling, Wells, Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, and Bennett – as ‘full-blooded, masculine men of letters, with sometimes coarse (and even to some degree philistine) but vital personalities’ (25). This description appeared in *The Guardian* and indicates that the popular conception of the period had little sense of nuance. Apparently, the prominent authors’ conversations included ‘no talk about literature or the art. [...] There was a not a touch of anything faintly aesthetic [...] They were the best-known authors of the time. The “blind leaders of the blind” so much disliked and disapproved of by Bloomsbury’ (Berlin 25). Quite how Berlin knows the remit of this sodality’s conversations is undisclosed. Nonetheless, his vision of crass materialism and clubbable indulgence still retains a currency.

The introduction to *Edwardian Culture: Beyond the Garden Party*, despite its scepticism of this very framing, invokes ‘Edwardian fabulousness’ and ‘the garden party’ as a lingering understanding of the period

as one long high-society soirée [...] as the last gasp of peace and social privilege before the turbulence of the twentieth century was unleashed [...] Our continuing obsession with the sinking of *RMS Titanic* in 1912 functions as a metaphor for the popular conception of the Edwardian period as a splendid, unsinkable ship sailing unknowingly toward the disaster of World War One (3-4).

Similarly, Sarah Edwards (2018) deconstructs the Neo-Edwardian imaginary, cultivated in such works as Rebecca West’s *The Return of the Soldier* (1918). The imaginative force of the Edwardian Golden Age exhibits the particularly potent retrospective force of ‘a long hot summer [...]’

function[ing] as a symbol of hope and renewal' (28). *Edwardian Culture* relies upon the invocation and dismissal of a popular and critical misconception of the period. Rather than following this method, this thesis attempts to meet the materialist charge, formulated by Woolf and bolstered by the monarch, directly. Liesl Olson (2009) describes modernist literary interest in the everyday as a 'determined dissociation from the Edwardians, whose work is entrenched in material facts' (59). This is an egregious misrepresentation of the complexity of Edwardian evocations of the quotidian. As an accusation, it is met full on in the chapter's next section: Woolf's derogation of the Edwardians is indicative not of their shortcomings but indirectly illuminates complex thinking about the everyday's material facticity. Of course, an Edwardian literary interest in the everyday is not restricted to Wells and Bennett, and the final section of this chapter highlights a more pervasive awareness.

Literature, as we know it, is always ending, and beginning again.

Virginia Woolf, 'The Leaning Tower' (122)

Hattersley argues that Edwardian authors 'made the mundane irresistible' (308). One expedient, cogent, and compelling means of conceiving Edwardian literature foregrounds a sustained interest, even preoccupation, with the material of the everyday. Woolf posits Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy as overly concerned with banal, superficial details and modernists as usurping these superannuated means of novel writing; this conception of the Edwardians has informed periodisation as much as the hedonistic monarch's languorous summer. 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' has become 'a critical commonplace, one accepted often unquestioningly by later generations of critics and students alike' (*The Edwardian Emporium* 44)<sup>18</sup>; Kaplan and Simpson indicate that 'the Edwardian continues to be thought of, in intellectual circles, as a monologic, rather boorish sociologist manqué' (x). This section traces the consequence, and recapitulations, of Woolf's critique. Rather than acquiesce to its vituperations and read around or against accusations of materialism, by making claims for Bennett's modernist credentials as Squillace does, for instance, this section argues *through* Woolf's materialist deprecation and for a fulsome, subtle apprehension of the everyday. Galsworthy's work is notably less interested in the quotidian (Gindin 4). Given the exodic framing of the thesis, and the subsequent chapters devoted to these authors, this section will focus on Bennett and Wells. Their continued, diligent apprehension of the irreducible importance of precisely the banal, tangible superficialities bemoaned by Woolf exposes both the limits of her criticism and the expansive, probing remit of Bennett's and Wells's evocation of the everyday. This section complicates the simple cavil made of these authors by indicating both the complex interactivity of subjectivity and objective reality, and the recognition of material context's shifting ineluctability.

In 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', originally delivered as a lecture at Girton College, Cambridge<sup>19</sup>, Woolf divides the Georgians (Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Forster, D.H. Lawrence) from the Edwardians in order to demonstrate the egregious failures of the latter. Stung by Bennett's accusation in a review of *Jacob's Room* (1922) that her characters 'do not vitally survive in the

---

<sup>18</sup> Randall Stevenson (1998) begins his modernist primer with a discussion of 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' (2-4); Maria Di Battista (43-44), Liesl Olson (2009) (59), Jason B. Jones (2003) (29 *passim*), John Nash (2016) (219), Anna Vaninskaya (2011) (164), Hunter (68-71), Douglas Hewitt (1988) (7), and Batchelor (1-2) also indicate its importance and impact. Whatever Woolf's argument's merits, her pronouncements have proven durable; recently, James Wood (2017) alluded to 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' at the beginning of an essay on Thomas Hardy (5).

<sup>19</sup> Makiko Minow-Pinkney (2014) describes the essay's shifting titles and convoluted publication history ('Reflections on Context' 1-3; 'Appendix' 190-191; and, Fernihough 72). She notes that the version published in Leonard Woolf's edited *Collected Essays* (1966) has been most widely cited, and has been used here.

mind' ('Is the Novel Decaying?' 194), Woolf indicts the Edwardian 'fail[ure] to create characters' (319).<sup>20</sup> "They" are 'materialists': 'we mean by it that they write of unimportant things; that they spend immense skill and immense industry making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring' ('Modern Fiction' 8). Edwardian novels misconstrue character because they are purportedly preoccupied with 'a vulgar, gross concerns with the things of the world, especially its products and goods' (Kaplan and Simpson xi). Di Battista offers an indicative list of details framed by 'the empirical language of British realism':

meticulous representations of where and how people lived (including building materials, layout, the décor of their houses, apartments or, as the case may be, hovels); inventories of the things they bought and sold, and at what price; detailed accounts of routines that regulated their lives and the wages they earned, or had garnished; candid reports of how they courted, and under what constraints; what class they belonged to; how they made their money and how they held onto – or lost – it (40).

Hunter laconically remarks that the Edwardians are charged with providing 'a wealth of things and a dearth of character' (69).

In order to demonstrate these Edwardian shortcomings, Woolf imagines a woman sat in a railway carriage, the eponymous Mrs Brown, and posits the three Edwardian responses: Wells would 'project' a utopian vision (327); encumbered by diligent sociological research, Galsworthy would lament the prevailing socioeconomic norms reducing Mrs Brown to 'a pot broken on the wheel and thrown into the corner' (328); and, Bennett 'would observe every detail with immense care' without apprehending Mrs Brown herself (328).<sup>21</sup> In 'Modern Fiction' (1921), Woolf indicates her preference for the 'spiritual' Joyce (10) whose thoroughly progressive interests 'lie in the dark places of psychology' (11) whereas the superannuated Edwardians 'have laid enormous stress upon the fabric of things' ('Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' 332). Mrs Brown 'is an old lady of unlimited capacity and infinite variety; capable of appearing in any place; wearing any dress; saying anything and doing heaven knows what [...] she is of course life itself' (335-36):

---

<sup>20</sup> This was not a new deprecation. Before 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', Woolf had complained in a missive to Lady Robert Cecil (18<sup>th</sup> February 1918) that reading Bennett's 'very astute realism [...] depresses me' (*Letters Vol. 2* 81). In 'On Re-reading Novels', written 1922 (*A Writer's Diary* 46), Woolf described the 'failure of the Edwardians' as 'disastrous [...] 1860 was a year of empty cradles; [...] the reign of Edward the Seventh was barren of poet, novelist, or critic' (126).

<sup>21</sup> Woolf complains specifically about *Hilda Lessways's* (1911) description of Hilda's domestic situation: '[Bennett] is trying to hypnotise us into the belief that, because he had made us a house, there must be a person living there' ('Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' 330). When reflecting in her diary on Bennett's criticism of *Jacob's Room*, Woolf (9<sup>th</sup> June 1922) conceded 'that I haven't that "reality" gift. I insubstantise, wilfully to some extent, distrusting reality – its cheapness' (*Diary Vol. 2* 248). This confession of limitation is markedly different from the case made in 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' in which the "reality" gift is castigated.

it is the novelists who get in and out [...] they have developed a technique of novel-writing which suits their purpose; they have made tools and established conventions which do their business. But those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruins, those tools are death (330).

Squillace indicates that the revelation of luminous individuality valued by Woolf is, apparently, obstructed by ‘all of the scaffolding of [...] Edwardian solidities giv[ing] the impression that a kind of still life of associated objects, without the presence of a human subject’ (29). Minow-Pinkney goes further, though, and argues that any “scaffolding” is the limit of Edwardian materialism and evinces ‘their complacent belief that what they saw was what existed’ (37); Michael Schmidt (2014), similarly, poses the Edwardian ‘material world’ as ‘too real, too solid, mak[ing] it hard for characters to emerge’ (582).

Rather than identifying ‘something permanently interesting in character in itself’ (321), Woolf avers that the Edwardians produce banalistic novels that seem ‘of great value, and indeed of great necessity’:

Yet what odd books they are! Sometimes I wonder if we are right to call them books at all. For they leave one with so strange a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. In order to complete them it seems necessary to do something – to join a society, or, more desperately to write a cheque. That done, the restlessness is laid, the book finished; it can be put back upon the shelf, and need never be read again (326-327).

Edwardian novels are inadequate because their materialist preoccupations induce a materialist response in Woolf: rather than tunnelling beneath the real, they are inveigled with its mundane carapace. Melba Cuddy-Keane (2014) argues that Woolf instead seeks the ‘fraught and uncertain’ comingling of observer and observed: ‘the action is neither purely subjective nor purely objective, but in the space between’ (71). Woolf implies a double fault. Firstly, and in order to supersede imputed Edwardian shortcomings, modernism used ‘the mirror of art not to reflect nature and the world without, but to illumine the mind within, to portray consciousness’ (Stevenson 16). Secondly, this introspection meant a turn from ‘mimetic’ and to ‘an autotelic form, that is, an internally coherent struggle to construct, from its own discovering means, its own discovering expression’ (Bradbury 103).

The dichotomy Woolf establishes between the Edwardians and Georgians is predicated upon the idea ‘that in or about December, 1910, human character changed’ (320) and the novel, in order to encompass these changes, requires a radical, new configuration; Woolf posits *Ulysses* (1922) as ‘the conscious and calculated indecency of a desperate man who feels that in order to

breathe he must break the windows' and Joyce as usurping 'the very foundations and rules of literary society' (334-35).<sup>22</sup> The date itself is arbitrary, of course; Edward died 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1910 and George V was not crowned until 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1911. It nearly coincides with the first Post-Impressionist exhibition in London but this makes little sense as a dividing marker given that the show was defended by Bennett in *The New Age*<sup>23</sup> after a mauling in *The Times*.<sup>24</sup> December, 1910 is remarkable for its ambiguity rather than its particular or peculiar importance. Woolf herself seems to demur from its totemic significance: her elucidation of the failures of a pre-1910 method cites Bennett's *Hilda Lessways*, published 1911, and her complaint that a Georgian cook moves freely about her employer's house asking 'to borrow the *Daily Herald*' ('Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' 320) invokes a newspaper that was not published until April, 1912 (Cuddy-Keane 73). Perhaps the date was selected for a more self-aggrandising purpose: Minow-Pinkney contends that Woolf aligned an emergent modernist sensibility with the conscious beginning of her novel writing (6-9).

The date is facetiously specific because of the overlapping activities of the apparently discrete Edwardians and Georgians; Peter Stansky (2014) suggests that 'although offered with serious intent, [December 1910] was said somewhat tongue in cheek' (174). Ellmann signals the artificial split of Edwardianism and modernism by indicating that nominally modernist writers were active before 1910 alongside their aged contemporaries (190). Despite this, the force of this singular literary fulcrum is its efficacious assignation of value. Woolf's repeated use of 'our' and 'their' in 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' is a conscious attempt to construct what Robert L. Caserio (2004) calls 'facile oppositions' between the Edwardians and Georgians (86). Woolf successfully inaugurated a longstanding means of framing the Edwardians. Frank Swinnerton's *The Georgian Literary Scene* (1935) notes that, if the brevity of the monarch's rule means that "Edwardian" cannot be meaningfully compared with "Victorian" (4), it still functions as a pejorative:

the object of its use is clear. The object is to suggest that Shaw, Wells, Conrad and Bennett are out of date. It would be very convenient for those fashionable since 1920 if

---

<sup>22</sup> In private, Woolf complicated this approbation of Joyce. Writing to Lytton Strachey (24<sup>th</sup> August 1922), she insists that she never 'did read such tosh' (*Letters Vol. 2* 551). To Roger Fry (3<sup>rd</sup> October 1922) she extolled the joys of Proust: 'like sun and wine and grapes and perfect serenity and intense vitality combined. Far otherwise it is with *Ulysses*; to which I bind myself like a martyr to a stake, and have thank God, now finished – My martyrdom is over' (*Letters Vol. 2* 566). Moreover, Woolf was not above the Edwardian habits she decries: at the end of her letter, Woolf tells Fry that she hopes 'to sell [*Ulysses*] for £4.10' (566).

<sup>23</sup> In a review of the exhibition, Bennett, writing under the name Jacob Tonson (8<sup>th</sup> December 1910), reflected on British cultural ignorance: 'The attitude of the culture of London towards it is of course merely humiliating to any Englishman who has made an effort to cure himself of insularity. It is one more proof that the negligent disdain of Continental artists for English artistic opinion is fairly well founded. The mild tragedy of the thing is that London is infinitely too self-complacent even to suspect that it is London and not the exhibition which is making itself ridiculous. [...] So much the worse for London. For the movement has not only got past the guffaw stage; it has got past the arguing stage. Its authenticity is admitted by all those who have kept themselves fully awake' (135).

<sup>24</sup> The reviewer (7<sup>th</sup> November 1910) describes Matisse's works as proof of 'the depth of the fall' of aesthetic standards, and has political implications comparable with anarchism (12).

they could appropriate the Georgian name to themselves. It would justify that exclusiveness to which they have attached much importance in the recent past (5).

Though Swinnerton does recognise that the Edwardian period ‘may not now seem to us a stirring of pure gold, but at least there were bubbles of modernity in the crucible’ (12), Woolf’s judgement is implicit. Swinnerton’s complaint that Galsworthy ‘arraigned his class’ for its privilege and hypocrisy (202) echoes Woolf’s description of Galsworthy: ‘stuffed with information, arraigning civilisation’ (‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ 327). Swinnerton’s contemporary Abercrombie, who does not deprecate so explicitly, nonetheless supports the materialist metanarrative (200-02).

Hynes notes in *Edwardian Occasions* that, though the dispute between Woolf and Bennett ‘rose out of their personal differences’ and ‘became an untidy and bitter wrangle’ (27), it both ‘helped to create a coterie audience’ for Woolf and ‘speeded the decline of Bennett’s reputation’ (37). Hynes is correct. This division has had a remarkable critical purchase, and a secondary result has been the tacit sanctioning of explicitly qualitative evaluations. Bradbury claims that to ‘understand the novels of Wells, and Bennett and Galsworthy, you had *merely* to read them and perceive their view of life, society and politics’ (115 added emphasis). It is unclear what Bradbury means by this inane asseveration; the tacit acceptance of facile qualitative assessment echoes through subsequent literary criticism of the Edwardian period, though. *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* condemns Galsworthy’s *The Island Pharisees* as ‘feeble’ (85), ‘very bad’ (74), and ‘clumsy’ (75); Anthea Trodd (1991) adjudges *The Man of Property* to be a ‘failure’ (56); Schmidt brusquely deprecates Galsworthy’s oeuvre (588-89); and, Hunter describes *The Man of Property* as ‘a better novel than *The Country House*’ (203). Bradbury reiterates qualitative judgements: ‘the highest *value* of modern fiction is as a form of challenging discovery’ (66 added emphasis). Kenneth Millard’s (1992) work confirms the deep influence of ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’. His claim that ‘the [Edwardian] period and the individual writers represent a line of British poetry which has survived as a valuable contribution to modern writing’ (11) and insistence that ‘the value of the poetry included here is not dependent on its anticipation of modernism’ (182) is clearly undermined:

what distinguishes Edwardians is largely their inability to exploit the shifting indeterminacy of language to the full; their awareness of linguistic artificiality works to inhibit rather than to liberate their creative impulse. The Modernists were less daunted by the prospect of the formal challenge they felt they had discovered, and *their achievements are consequently of major stature* (17-18 added emphasis).

Justifications in these instances are notably absent. Woolf's paradigm invites similar, and similarly unthinking, vituperation. The materialism she laments has, like the King's image, stubbornly attached itself to critical accounts of the literary period.

Frank Kermode's 'The English Novel, *circa* 1907' (1971) describes Edwardian fiction's inadequate literary response to 'a crisis in the relations between fiction and society' (37) which did not reckon that 'serious changes in technique might be required to accommodate the dimly perceived new shape of the world' (39). Obviously, Woolf's deprecation is sustained: Kermode's title echoes December, 1910. He juxtaposes Edwardian stagnation, for whom 'the new novel was still a little too hard' (59), with modernists to whom

the technique of fiction was a matter of intense concern, not only because men wanted, as artists, to refine the instruments they had inherited [...] because they felt with much urgency that the condition of the world required kinds of understanding which could not be provided otherwise than by technical innovation (39).

He favours the modernist avant-garde; James's *What Maisie Knew* (1897) offers 'a model of how technique is necessary to imaginative apprehension of the times' (40). This technical innovation is contrasted with irredeemably antiquated works of Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy. Kermode posits that these writers, however cognisant of historical change, failed to incorporate contemporary ferment in the fabric of their texts (47) and, as such, he merely recapitulates Woolf's qualitative assessment 'that the critical condition of England was the critical condition of life, if one had the means to know it' (59).

Bradbury carves up the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries into canonical periods. The Edwardians fall within the 1900-1915 grouping alongside familiar modernists. This fifteen year period is transmuted into 'a Modernist wonderland – a time when British philistinism and provincialism wonderfully dissolved, and for a few brief years new arts, new ideas, new movements were everywhere' (67; 83). This conjectured idyll is the preserve of modernists and purged of Edwardians. More explicitly, the familiar dichotomy is here reasserted and Conrad is summarily enlisted against the Edwardians despite having written some of his significant works in the decade: *Lord Jim* (1900), *Nostromo* (1904), and *The Secret Agent* (1907), which is dedicated to Wells.<sup>25</sup> Bradbury asserts that Conrad's writing exhibits 'something that could aptly be called "foreign" [...] a double vision, displayed in the spirit of irony – a spirit seemingly at odds with the

---

<sup>25</sup> Conrad's close personal and literary relationship with Galsworthy further complicates any notional divisions. In a letter to Galsworthy, he stated: '[your] words of cheer are more valuable than all the money in the world' (quoted in Marrot 118). Conrad heaped praise on *The Man of Property*, too: 'marvellously done and in its whole a piece of art. I've read it three times. My respect for you increased with every reading. I have meditated over these pages not a little' (quoted in Marrot 185).

best hopes and public themes of the Edwardian age' (97).<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Ford Madox Hueffer/Ford is a liminal figure whose publishing and literary habits allow him to slip across the Edwardian and modernist divide (86-92). Hueffer/Ford 'was the British writer incarnate, but he was also German, or French' (86) and not as stoutly English (or provincially English like Bennett) as the parochial Edwardians. Against Conrad, Bradbury ranges Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy; all are guilty of misleading 'the public into understanding what the novel was – a material thing, made of flat realities, exteriorly seen characters, broad social history, plainly chartered plots' (77). Whereas 'James and Conrad wrote aesthetically, indirectly, from within', Edwardian characters 'are seen from the exterior, their dominant characteristics signalled [...] as if they exist more for their social representativeness than any felt life within' (108). Rather than crediting the Edwardians with any ability to delineate material change, Bradbury privileges modernists: '[it] is, as Virginia Woolf fairly says, material realism' (108). Though Bradbury alights, briefly, upon the influence of Edwardian fiction in twentieth-century realism, this is not seriously pursued; he spends the next couple of pages complaining that Galsworthy is not Thomas Mann, and that *The Man of Property* is not the 'remarkable' *Buddenbrooks* (108-111). More remarkable is the enduring critical deference shown to Woolf's vitriolic conception of the Edwardians.

There has been critical redress engaged consciously in dismantling a purely received version of the Edwardians. Douglas Hewitt (1988) recognises that 'distinguishing a general line of development or even the existence of a number of schools is a waste of time' (8) and is conscious of a pervasive critical disparagement. Therefore, he devotes considerable attention to *TOWT* (1908) in the hope that readers will 'move on to such other major works as *Clayhanger* and *Riceyman Steps*' (9). David Trotter (1993) indicates that modernism is not a benign literary designation. Instead, it has 'acquired an explanatory, or causative, function [and] has come to signify a cultural event or force' (4) at the expense of the Edwardians. The difference and 'distinction between generations then becomes a distinction not between equally valid methods but between blindness and insight' (133-134). Such an intelligent wariness of Woolf's influence frees up Edwardian literature for study. Consequently, Trotter finds space to read *Ann Veronica* against W. Pett Ridge's *Nine to Six-Thirty* (1910) as equally valid, if equally different, accounts of the Edwardian New Woman (129-132). Trotter concludes that Ridge's 'is a better novel than Wells's' (132), so the grasp of qualitative juxtaposition lingers on.

Despite such perspicacity, and aided by a particularly sybaritic monarch, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' and Woolf's myrmidons have ensured that the Edwardians are received as materialist. This is invariably coded as a complaint, one enlisted in the aggrandisement of modernism. However limited a paradigm, thinking of Bennett and Wells as materialists concerned with the everyday does provide a fruitful critical aperture, and reveals the crudity of

---

<sup>26</sup> In 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', Woolf makes a similar case: 'Conrad is a Pole; which sets him apart, and makes, however admirable, not very helpful' (326).

the grouping, too. Bennett and Wells were divided by precisely the shortcoming Woolf imputed. Her complaint about Bennett's attention to material detail, 'how Mrs Brown wore a brooch which had cost three-ten-three at Whitworth's bazaar; and had mended both gloves' (328), was shared by Wells. In a letter (25<sup>th</sup> September 1905), Wells criticises Bennett for

always taking the surface values that I reject, hotels are not luxurious, *trains de luxe* are full of coal grit, chefs and pianists are not marvellous persons, dramatic triumphs are silly uproars. But it isn't irony – you believe in these things [...] For some unfathomable reason you don't penetrate (quoted in *A Record* 121-22).

Strange, of course, to find Wells agreeing with Woolf.<sup>27</sup> Bennett's response (30<sup>th</sup> September 1905) was trenchant: '[you] won't have anything to do with "surface values" at all. You don't merely put them in a minor place; you reject them [...] You will never see it, but in rejecting surface values you are wrong. As a fact they are just as important as other values' (124-25). Woolf's influence has meant the inspissation of such nuances.

When Woolf consigns Bennett's approach to inventorying, she elides the formative role environment plays in subjectivity. In *TAC* (1914) Bennett insists that 'the observer must never lose sight of the fact that what he is trying to see is life, is the woman next door, is the man in the train – and not a concourse of abstraction. To appreciate all this is the first inspiring preliminary to sound observation' (18). Though Richard Larch in *A Man from the North* (1898) is disappointed by Aked's 'attachment to a restaurant cashier' despite having 'spoken to Carlyle' (34), Bennett indicates that such putative bathos is an irreducible fact of everyday existence. Nowhere is this more apparent than *TOWT*'s genesis. Watching an old woman in a restaurant moving between tables and dropping her belongings, Bennett records being 'pained' by the 'coarse grimace of giggling' of the 'beautiful young waitress':

I reflected, concerning the grotesque diner: "This woman was once young, slim, perhaps beautiful; certainly free from these ridiculous mannerisms. Very probably she is unconscious of her singularities. Her case is a tragedy. One ought to be able to make a heartrending novel out of the history of a woman such as she." Every stout, ageing woman is not grotesque – far from it! – but there is an extreme pathos in the mere fact that every stout ageing woman was once a young girl with the unique charm of youth in her form and movements and in her mind. And the fact that the change from the young

---

<sup>27</sup> This is not the only instance of collusion: in another letter (20<sup>th</sup> August 1903), Wells complained that Bennett's *Leonora* (1903) 'impress[es ...] as knowing everything about Leonora except how it feels inside, and you've seen fit to write the book from inside' (quoted in *A Record* 93).

girl to the stout ageing woman is made up of an infinite number of infinitesimal changes, each unperceived by her, only intensifies the pathos ('Preface' vii-viii).

Bennett's attention to this specific elderly diner offers a pointed rejoinder to Woolf's desire to see *through* Mrs Brown to an immutable human quiddity; Minow-Pinkney describes 'an epistemological quest for absolute knowledge [...] towards the impersonal and the permanent' as 'a central feature of Woolf's work' (29). Bennett's example mediates a plenitude of perspectives – the old woman's, the young waitress's, Bennett's, the other diners'. In a letter to Wells (24<sup>th</sup> August 1903), Bennett had expressed his deliberate and 'constant "synthesising"': 'what I am at is the expression of general moods, whether of a person or a whole scene' (quoted in *A Record* 96). Clearly it is not a congeries of banal details, either: Bennett muses on the 'unperceived' and 'infinitesimal changes' constituting the old woman's character, and this precipitates a suggestive recognition of the material, corporeal constitution of youthful condescension. This relativised perspective includes Bennett, and intimates the revelatory implications of materiality. Squillace avers that, for Bennett, an exterior surface 'is more like an unconscious, accidental product of the interior than a simple reflection of it. [...] By Furnishing Mrs Brown's house, Bennett shows what he cannot show by laying open the patterns of her thought' (34). Recognising this plasticity, and the heterogeneity of perspectives, mandates an acceptance of individual singularity; and, moreover, confirms his assertion that there are 'a dozen epical novels in any large restaurant' ('The Fallow Fields of Fiction 2' 557). Woolf, conversely, insists upon fixity. Mrs Brown is a parergon twice over: an illustrative example of Woolf's delineation of the Edwardians, and an incidental detail in the anterior conception of human nature itself: 'Mrs Brown is eternal, Mrs Brown is human nature, Mrs Brown changes only on the surface' (329).

Hunter, therefore, is correct to note that Woolf 'devalues the Edwardian sense of human limitation' (69) palpable in the waitress's myopic, callous scorning of an elderly woman. Squillace goes further, and argues that Bennett's materialist cognisance 'betrays the essential assumption of modernity; that the self is utterly plastic – how else might it continually progress? – and moulded by the blind fingers of ambient material influences' (97). In a letter to Wells (10<sup>th</sup> October 1897), Bennett explicated the importance of materiality: '[it] seems to me that there are immense possibilities in the very romance of manufacture – not wonders of machinery and that sort of stuff – but in the tremendous altercation with nature that is *continually going on* – and in various other matters' (quoted in *A Record* 36 added emphasis). *Anna's* (1902) narrator describes the interaction of industrial activity and the Staffordshire environment as an 'unending warfare' repaying nature 'for some of her notorious cruelties. She imperiously bids man sustain and reproduce himself, and this is one of the places where in the very act of obedience he wounds and maltreats her' (9). The materiality of the everyday is not invariably antagonistic, however. It is

continuous and multi-temporal. In ‘The People of the Potteries’ (1911), Bennett notes that the very success of the district is an aleatory consequence of multibillennial geological variables (quoted in *Sketches* 136). Such an acute sense of the necessarily material predicates of experience runs deep: ‘geography always made history’ (*TOWT* 483), especially in a region whose industry is ‘due to a freak of the earth’s crust which geologists call a fault’ (*Claybanger* 23).

Despite this perspicacious conception of contingency, Bennett’s sense of the individual importance of material circumstances involves a nuanced recognition of its invariably everyday iterations. More recent critics of Bennett, notably Randi Saloman (2017) and Fiona Tomkinson (2017), have argued for the influences of ‘architectural space [...] as both rigidly objective and intensely subjective’ (Tomkinson 226); Randall Craig (1981) outlines the reciprocal, protean dynamics of character and environment in Bennett, too (199-200). Attending to ‘the more subtle aspects of daily life’ allows Bennett to show that ‘the spaces he constructs [are] determinative’ and ‘are the reflection or articulation of [...] interiors, a secondary or visible result of what lies behind’ (Saloman 189, 195). Hilda Lessways is soothed by Janet Orgreave’s bedroom ‘rendered mystically inviolate by long years of [...] occupation’ (*Hilda Lessways* 294) and Richard Larch’s memory of Lily Aked’s smile ‘transformed not only a girl’s face, but the whole of Carteret Street’ (*A Man from the North* 65). In *These Twain* (1916), Edwin’s tacit, titanic conflicts with Hilda are sublimated into ‘the art of fixing up a room’ (138). Her rearrangement of the drawing-room furniture induces ‘anger [...] furious but cold’:

He was not the ordinary inexperienced ignorant husband who “leaves all that sort of thing to the missis.” Interiors mattered to him; they influenced his daily happiness. The woman had clearly failed to appreciate the sacredness of the *status quo*. [...] She probably didn’t care a fig for the *status quo*. Her conduct was inexcusable. It was an attack on vital principles. It was an outrage. [...] With astounding energy he set to work to restore the *status quo ante*. The vigour with which he dragged and pushed an innocent elephantine piano was marvellous (138-39).

Everyday material details form the crux of emotional equanimity; this belies Minow-Pinkney’s conception of ‘realism’s passive mirroring of external reality’ opposed by ‘modernism’s creation of forms to present reality actively’ capable of disclosing ‘meanings occluded from utilitarian everyday life’ (21). For an author putatively obsessed with the merely material, Bennett’s diligent attendance to ordinary details is hyperbolic: Edwin’s contentment is expressly predicated upon the spatial organisation of furniture and his response to Hilda’s ‘inexcusable’ interference evinces the proxy struggle for marital hegemony; the diction is telling: ‘sacredness’, ‘vital principles’, ‘outrage’, ‘astounding’, ‘vigour’, ‘marvellous’, and, with deft bathos, ‘innocent elephantine piano’

(138-39). Edwin's confrontation with Hilda signals his victory: '[he] had conquered. The enemy was in tears, shamed, humiliated' (142). Bennett's conception of the material everyday exposes the relatively precipitous or insignificant consequences for those who move amongst quotidian artefacts, which are suffused with an unexpected, overlooked importance, belying any superficial banality: 'each room bore the mysterious imprints of past emotions' (*These Twain* 15).

Woolf recognises this, too. The resonant, polysemous 'pistol shot in the street' (10) which begins *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) is a signal instance. Others are less conspicuous, more Edwardian: in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Mrs Ramsay feels 'more and more serene' looking at a fruit bowl 'until, oh, what a pity that they should do it – a hand reached out, took a pear, and spoilt the whole thing' (78). Laurie Langbauer (1999) argues that in 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', Woolf 'meant specifically to question how what she called "materialists" like Bennett and impoverished the representation of the material world, not to dispense with it' (174). *A Room of One's Own* (1928) insists that 'fiction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners' (43). The problem, therefore, is one of degree: Bennett and Wells are overly preoccupied with insipid everyday details; Woolf is, apparently, more dextrous, selective, and illuminative. This is not to imply that there is a disavowed commonality, though. There are salient differences. Squillace points out that Bennett's interest in the protean relations of character and context (25) is markedly different from modernist 'lives commonly replay[ing] mythic patters – the modernist myth of myth is that it projects the nature of interior life – but they are never deeply affected by material influences' (97). For Schmidt, this is a failure: 'Wells and other contemporaries put their art at the service of social concerns [...] rather than the intractable human experience' (574).

Significantly, the focus upon the material in Bennett and Wells exhibits an everyday texture, and one important component in Woolf's reactive account of modernism is class. Margaret Drabble (1974) lauds the domesticity of Bennett's writing: 'he knew what domestic life was like' (307-308). Woolf, on the other hand,

feels that detailed and closely drawn setting and context are part of a dead Victorian convention and that she must make a strong case for overthrowing them [...] Bennett understands more clearly than she does that the "details" matter to "character", that social and economic status and geographical and historical situations bear crucially upon the personality (Batchelor 151).

Or, as Fernihough laconically remarks: 'material things have to be dusted, but not by Woolf herself' (24). Hunter argues that the 'Edwardians deserve credit for extending the fictional imagination to those who had rarely been thought worthy of narrative: the unpicturesque, the

unromantic, the unadventurous, the unexceptional' (71). Their contribution is more nuanced than Hunter suggests. In Bennett's 'The Hungarian Rhapsody' (1905), May Scarratt moves from indigent seamstress to affluent newlywed. She enjoys her hotel's luxury 'long carpeted corridors noiselessly paraded by flunkeys, mahogany lifts continually ascending and descending like the angels of the ladder, the great entrance hall with its fire always burning and its doors always swinging' *because* 'in the pinching days of her servitude, she had murmured against the injustice of things, and had called wealth a crime while poverty starved' (102-03). Surfeit and surface are not objective values: they disclose the interactivity of individual perspective and material contingencies. Bennett and Wells deserve extra "credit" for delineating the orders of significance according to experience. As May Scarratt demonstrates, what constitutes the ordinary and which the significant is a matter of class inflected perspective.

Similarly, Edwin conceives the new Clayhanger residence as a 'temple' whose 'hot-water system [...] affected and inspired [him] like a poem' because the previous house's age meant that 'every drop of water on the first floor had to be carried upstairs in jugs and buckets; and every drop of it had to be carried down again' (*Clayhanger* 174-75). Proving Simon J. James's (2012) description of Wells as an 'intensely materialist novelist' whose 'utopian thinking is aboriginally rooted in the quotidian' (95, 134-35), *Kipps* (1905) extends Bennett's cognisance to a feminist critique of pitiless domestic architecture. Kipps's fiancée Ann, a former servant, opposes their planned abode's 'countless bedrooms, acreage of stone steps to be cleaned':

"They build these 'ouses [...] as though girls wasn't 'uman beings. [...] There's kitching stairs to go up, Artie!" Ann would say. "Some poor girl's got to go up and down, up and down, and be tired out, [...] and no water upstairs anywhere – every drop got to be carried! It's 'ouses like this wear girls out [...] 'aving 'ouses built by men, I believe, makes all the work and trouble" (261).<sup>28</sup>

According to J.R. Hammond (1988), this materialist conscientiousness meant that Wells was 'obsessed' with the details of domestic architecture (54). *Anticipations* chides 'the stupidities of our present-day method of house construction', which will be superseded in future: central heating will obviate coal-fires; improved ventilation will reduce dusting; lamps will be replaced with electric lighting; dishwashers and automated window-cleaning will reduce maintenance; cooking will be improved by electric ranges; and, rooms will have rounded corners to aid sweeping (106-10). Wells was so taken by the latter that he included it in *Utopia* (1905): '[the] room has no

---

<sup>28</sup> In *Hilda Lessways*, Sarah Gailey makes the same complaint: "'just think of all those stairs, and not a tap on any of the upper floors' (206). In *The Card* (1911), Denry Machin exhibits a new home to his mother and alights upon a host of labour saving devices: a self-cleaning marble doorstep; a dishwasher; electric lighting; and, most significantly, steam central heating with a gas stove in every room (143-144).

corners to gather dirt, wall meets floor with a gentle curve' (108).<sup>29</sup> Though such concerns are deprecated by Woolf ('Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' 327), Wells recognised banal material facts as of fundamental importance to the socialist polity of his futurologies:

I was somehow already alive to the incompatibility of the great world order foreshadowed by scientific and industrial progress, with existing political and social structures. I was already searching about in my mind, and in the facts about me, for ideas about the political and social will and mentality that were demanded by these inevitable material developments (*Autobiography* 2.651).

Wells's awareness of material provisions is expansive: from skirting boards to the constraints of water municipalisation (*Autobiography* 1.256-58). All of these concerns implicate irreducibly material constituent parts of everyday life; they shape the coming World State and interactions as banal as meeting Mrs Brown.

Besides, as Wells himself made clear in *Mankind* (1903), any injunction against 'grim materialism' simply occludes the materiality from which this complaint originates:

I wish I could get together all these people who are so scornful of materialistic things, out of the excessively comfortable houses they inhabit, and I wish I could concentrate them in a good typical East London slum – five or six together in each room, one lodging with another, and I wish I could leave them there to demonstrate the superiority of high ideals to purely material considerations for the rest of their earthly career while we others went on with our sordid work unencumbered by their ideality (112).

Bradbury argues that Bennett and Wells 'wrote from without, as vivid, objective, "realist" observers of a time in rapid change. They were materialist writers for materialist times' (73). There are no immaterial times. Like Bennett and Betty Friedan (1963), Wells recognises material circumstance's impact upon individuals: 'Build, cheapen, render alluring a simpler, more spacious type of house for the clerk, fill it with labour-saving conveniences, and leave no excuse and no spare corners for the "slavery," and the slavery – and all that she means in mental and moral consequence, will vanish' (*Mankind* 176).

The everyday ubiquity of labour-saving devices means their benefits are manifold, and Wells simply explicates this. Similarly, Bennett's awareness of modern amenities is testament to a

---

<sup>29</sup> These issues preoccupied Wells. In *New Worlds* (1908) he again argues for improved domestic arrangements: 'The domestic work of the ordinary home, one may prophesy confidently, will be very much reduced in the near future whether we move toward Socialism or no; all the dirt of coal, all the disagreeableness attendant upon lamps and candles, most of the heavy work of cooking will be obviated by electric lighting and heating, and much of the bedroom service dispensed with through the construction of properly equipped bath-dressing-rooms' (333).

recognition of the pervasive interactivity of subject and material environs. Drabble notes that however ‘easy [it is] to laugh at Bennett’s enthusiasm’ over appliances such instances betray a real appreciation of ‘a world where badly paid skivvies spent entire lifetimes on their hands and knees scrubbing floors and steps, and living in cold damp basements’ (120). The shared appreciation of banality’s real, palpable significance presages Joseph A. Amato’s (2016) conviction that the incremental gains of technological progress in the everyday, girded by the ‘profoundly democratic idea that daily life could be improved for all, in all ways’ (153), is a necessary predicate to the ‘the self bec[oming] the self-designated nucleus of being, the more everyday life melted into the background of consciousness – its emotions and ambiguities, and its sense of will and freedom’ (199). Wells anticipates Amato at the beginning of his *Autobiography* (1934):

Mankind is realising more and more surely that to escape from individual immediacies into the less personal activities now increasing in human society is not, like games, reverie, intoxication or suicide, a suspension or abandonment of the primary life; on the contrary it is the way to power over that primary life which, though subordinated, remains intact (1.17).

If one accedes critically to Woolf’s materialist grouping, it discloses an Edwardian conception of the everyday’s tangibility, contingency, and profound influence upon those, and Wells indicates that even “idealists” must do so too, who move through and react with it. Moreover, his Edwardian futurologies indicate that seething, just beneath the threshold of the everyday, are inchoate futures: ‘in the everyday the mystery of its difference, the watermark of a history concealed under the smooth surface of routine and sameness’ (*History’s Disquiet* 72). *These Twain* makes clear that historical change is wrought in utterly banal ways: though Auntie Hamps praises Clara’s new drawing-room suite ‘with rapture’, the new furniture also signals the pure contingency of the material everyday and its mores: ‘[the] suite was a proof, disagreeable to Auntie Hamps, that the world would never stand still. It quite ignored all the old Victorian ideals of furniture’ (92). Bennett and Wells were alive to precisely the indelible imprint of change wrought in the ordinary details of domestic ephemera. Despite the perspicacity of their “materialism”, Bennett and Wells are more remarkable for their exodic responses to the everyday. Of course, they are not the only Edwardians concerned with the daily grind and its inducements to escape, and some of these instances are explored in the following section; Bennett and Wells do, however, offer a singular rejoinder to Woolf’s derogation when routed through their remarkable attentiveness to the quotidian.

In England, the country of Accepted Ideas, the novelist who is intent merely to register – to *constater* – is almost unknown. Yet it is England probably that most needs him, for England, less than any of the nations, knows where it stands, or to what it trends.

Ford Madox Hueffer, 'Editorial: The Functions of the Arts in the Republic' (160)

This section argues that, parallel to cinematographic and photographic interests, Edwardian poetry, fiction, plays, and essays made a conscious effort to subject the everyday to scrutiny. Works such as Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914/1955) deploy the exigencies of working class everyday experience as a form of political critique. Others, such as G.K. Chesterton, attempt to simply attend to the overlooked and ordinary. This genial, wry approach is assumed by W. Pett Ridge in the affable mode of George Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892), and developed into a serious defence of the pleasures of lower-middle class habits from criticisms of suburbia which condemned its 'dullness[,] small-mindedness', and 'supposed low quality of life' (Carey 50-51; Keating 320-25). In *Nine to Six-Thirty*, Ridge limns the growing economic independence, and personal autonomy, of women in work, and this provides a pointed, necessary rejoinder to Henri Lefebvre's conception of women as ignorant of their everydays. Following on from Ridge's affirmative politics of everyday lives, this section argues that his sanguinity is, at least partially, due to a specific positioning within an extant set of gender relations. If one examines works by Edwardian female writers, they exhibit a very different sense of the pressures, challenges, and limitations of the everyday. The evocation of the indigence and torpor of the everyday prompts questions of viable escape attempts, which the next chapters examine in detail.

In his 'Editorial: The Functions of the Arts in the Republic' (1908), Ford Madox Hueffer makes a clamant demand for verisimilitude, to *note (constater)*, which was taken up across a variety of literary modes and by disparate writers both representing and posing exigent questions of the quotidian. Hunter correctly notes that the 'Edwardians deserve credit for extending the fictional imagination to those who had rarely been thought worthy of narrative: the unpicturesque, the unromantic, the unadventurous, the *unexceptional*' (71 added emphasis). While this is certainly true, these literary forays paralleled photographic and cinematic interest in the unremarkable. Described by Helmut Gernsheim (1955) as 'the first "candid cameraman"' whose 'unposed street-life pictures of London [...] astonished the public' (448), Paul Augustus Martin's work in the 1890s adumbrates Edwardian literary interests. Though Martin used a Fallowfield Facile camera, this kind of work was partially due to the development of cameras such as Kodak's

portable, simple and inexpensive Brownie which became available in February, 1900 (McDonald 94). Thanks to the hand-camera user's newfound ability to move about freely and discretely, novel and unassuming subjects became viable. Martin surreptitiously photographed anonymous and unremarkable street scenes using a camera disguised as a parcel of books. Using this method, the everyday is met on its own terms: unmediated, automatic, and overlooked. Martin's work evinces the claims made by Walter D. Welford in *The Hand Camera and How to Use It* (1892) for a new mode of clandestine observation of 'the varying incidents of everyday life' available to the "hand-camera worker":

the hand-camera worker troubles no one, he merely waits his opportunity, and it comes, seizes it, then passes on without anyone being any the wiser. There is enough work in the streets to keep us all going – but, alas! there are but few making a distinct feature of it. And why? Well, the results are not picturesque. [...] And yet, how much the future will owe to the hand-camera man if his work will only show what our streets and our people, our everyday life in fact, were like (95-96).

Welford's expansive sense of unassuming, unposed potential subjects is primarily focused upon the urban everyday rather than the 'picturesque' or portentous, remarkable events. His enthusiasm is judicious given the immense and immediate popularity of screenings of everyday street scenes, which might be filmed outside the cinema or local thoroughfare the day of the screening, at the turn of the century, such as the arrival in London of the Lumière Cinématographe in February, 1896 (Nead 80-84; Keating 411).

Lynda Nead's illuminating article, 'Animating the Everyday: London on Camera circa 1900' (2004), argues that the 'expressed goal of the hand-camera photographer was the unstudied, or unposed, qualities of everyday life' (72). The immediacy of photographic technology is appropriate to the contingency of its material, and, moreover, Derrick Price (1983) notes that the camera served 'as a witness to the truth of the many literary accounts of working life that had been made from the middle of the century' (21). Though Price's argument is bound up with the politics of class representation, his insistence upon verisimilitude is redolent of Hueffer's call for a writer 'merely to register' ('Editorial' 160). This involves not only a new perceptive sedulity, but, as Nead points out, a coextensive reappraisal of significance: '[the] minutiae and incidental aspects of contemporary life were the purpose and driving motive of the new handheld cameras that were redefining the value of everyday life' (74-75). And, arguing against the city as mere fulmination inducing neurasthenia, she insists that these new optics posit the urban as aleatory and replete with possibilities (88). Nead concludes with a juxtaposition of Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901) and the 'unprecedented scrutiny' precipitated by filming and

photographing everyday gestures, habits and interactions (89). This is an inapposite, if not disingenuous, comparison as Freud's work attempts to discern substantive structures through fleeting, unexamined parapraxes. Martin's work, on the other hand, is less diagnostic than documentary, and does not rely upon a hermeneutics of suspicion; Nancy Armstrong (1996) notes that 'we find it difficult to tell what such men were doing when Martin happened upon them with his camera' (111), and this is due to methodological immediacy. Obviously, texts cannot mimic the immediacy of composition that Martin's work depends upon and frames. There are, however, similarly concerted attempts to examine the previously overlooked. In the 'Preface' to his *Collected Poems* (1914), Hueffer appears to clarify his early clarion in *The English Review*:

the comfrey under the hedge may seem a safer card to play, for the purpose of poetry, than the portable zinc dustbin left at dawn for the dustman to take. [...] The ashes *represent* the sociable fires, the god of the hearth, of the slumbering, dawn populations; the orange peels with their bright colours *represent* all that is left of a little party of the night before, when an alliance between families may have proved a disillusionment or a temporary paradise. [...] And, similarly, the anæmic shop-girl at the Exhibition, with her bad teeth and her cheap black frock, is safer than Isolde. She is more down to the ground and much more touching (16-17 added emphasis).

Hueffer's insistence upon the signifying stability of everyday materials, the recurrence of 'represent' where a more circumspect or contingent inference accords to the everyday's indeterminacy, indicates a willingness to examine the actual detritus of the city as a viable signifying system for modernity. Following Milton's Adam, there is an intimation that this effluence is a patent fact of existence that has yet to receive its due attention; Hueffer circumvents, without hesitation, theoretical quibbles concerning looking at the overlooked. Moreover, this new poetic sensibility is democratic and commensurate with what Hueffer describes as 'the life of dust, toil, discouragement, excitement, and enervation that I and many millions lead to-day' ('Preface' 28).

Unsurprisingly, the clerk-turned-poet in May Sinclair's *The Divine Fire* (1904), Savage Keith Rickman, turns 'to the streets' where 'you can hear the lyric soul of things as plainly, more plainly perhaps, than in the woods or fields':

He stood in Piccadilly Circus and regarded the spectacle of the night. He watched the groups gathering at the street corners, the boys that went laughing arm in arm, the young girls smiling into their lovers' eyes; here and there the faces of other women, [...] and the pavement, passing and passing. A very ordinary spectacle. But to Rickman it had an

immense significance, a rhythmic, processional resonance and grandeur [...] it was the luminous, passionate nocturne of the streets (32-33).

The admixture of aggrandisement and urban detritus, amongst the mere ongoings of the cityscape, anticipates the potentiality of the everyday Hueffer identifies. Moreover, the ‘immense significance’ Rickman describes in the urban quotidian is redolent of Welford’s capacious sense of potential subjects and compositions, and anticipates Hueffer’s desire for a literature attendant to the everyday.

It is instructive to compare W.W. Gibson’s *Daily Bread* (1910), a verse collection of dramatic dialogues elucidating the everyday privations of the working class, with Rickman’s less pessimistic disposition. Geraldine P. Dilla (1922) describes Gibson’s scenes as dealing with the ‘struggle for daily bread’ amidst injury, ‘illness, death’ in different, equally indigent locations: rural villages, urban tenements, and Northumbrian collieries (45). In one typical story of a farm-labourer’s hardship, a wife chastises her husband for his indolence, and reminds him of their relative privilege:

Twelve shillings don’t go far,  
With rents so high and food and clothes and firing:  
But I have little to grumble at; I’ve only  
Six bairns to feed: my mother had thirteen,  
And ten born after father’d lost his sight  
Blasting, soon after they were wed (143).

And while the farm-labourer resents the ‘dank work hoeing swedes at dawn’ after only five hours sleep, there is a mordant reminder of his position:

Always children, children!  
A woman slaves her very life away  
To rear her children, and they grow up and slave  
Their lives away to rear their children.  
[...] And little guessing  
Life would be labour, labour till the end:  
I thought there would be ease somewhere (144-145).

The internal rhymes of ‘her’ and ‘their’, contiguous repetition of ‘labour’, and the reiteration of slaves, straddling the noun-verb cleavage, intimates an endless, indentured day-to-day of toil. *Daily Bread* attends to the indigence and want of the poor, and in this regard it is similar to *The*

*Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Both texts sedulously delineate the socioeconomic pressures palpably exerted upon individuals. However, Tressell's novel is explicitly political; and this is despite the preface's insistence that *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is 'not a treatise or an essay, but a novel [...] full of human interest and based on the happenings of everyday life, the subject of Socialism being treated incidentally' (2). This is disingenuous. Frank Owen's explanation of *The Great Money Trick* (255-263) is an obvious example in a novel replete with expositions on the turpitudes of capitalism and necessities of socialism.

Gibson and Tressell are keen to limn the depredations of extant hardships, and the novelist even delineates a perspicacious critique and cogent plan of action, but this attentiveness to the everyday is incommensurate with Hueffer's, or Rickman's. It is similar to the distinction Sarah McDonald (2002) draws between the photography of Jacob Riis and John Thompson, whose work depicted the 'appalling conditions of slum housing and child labour', and Martin's attentiveness to the everyday as 'unposed, unselfconscious and completely candid' (94). Hueffer's examples (orange peel, an empty tin, ashes) are decidedly less startling than, for example, a bedroom in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* comprising 'no bedstead and no furniture in the room except the straw mattress and the ragged clothes and blankets which formed the bed upon the floor' (96), or Gibson's itinerant worker trying to find work in London enduring a 'garret in the mouth of Hell' (91). Rickman and Hueffer are less shocking, more similar to Martin's aleatory framing of the everyday, and as potentially capacious as Welford's vision. The everyday is met on its own terms: outwith conscious apprehension, overlooked. This approach is congruent with Claire Colebrook's (2002) resistance to framing the everyday within 'the life-enslaving logic metaphysics' (701) and 'disengaged concepts, systems and logics' (693) that suspend and misrepresent the quotidian, which should be met as it is manifest: 'unintended and unreflective [...] not yet justified, defined or organised' (698-699). Though Georg Simmel (1903) posits unrelenting sensory assault, the everyday, as Nead correctly indicates, is replete with 'diverse speeds and intensities' and includes stasis, repose, and inertia as much as 'speed, productivity, and stimulation' (88).<sup>30</sup>

The everyday requires a less programmatic written approach. G.K. Chesterton's *Tremendous Trifles* (1909), a collection of feuilleton dealing with banal incidents and simple, everyday materials, attends to the overlooked as latently significant. Rose argues that Chesterton's approach is an attempt to find a typically Edwardian coherence in 'his whimsical discussions of serious theology' dealing with everyday objects (175). However, this and Woolf's complaint in 'The Decay of Essay Writing' (1905) that the 'mechanical act of writing is allowed to set the brain in motion which should only be accessible to a higher inspiration' (4), should be measured against

---

<sup>30</sup> There is an overlap with Nead in Colebrook's argument: 'the movements of life in all their fluidity and contingency [...] without any general or common order [...] not conscious disruptions of that order, but unintended dilations, wanderings, or events that occur beyond all sense of order (Colebrook 699).

Hueffer's call for a new terrain of interest: the everyday. Tellingly, Chesterton's approach in *Tremendous Trifles* is also expressly everyday. Presaging Georges Perec's 'Approaches to What?' (1989), Chesterton begins by alerting the reader to their own perceptual indolence:

As the reader's eye strays, with hearty relief from these pages, it probably alights on something, a bed-post or a lamp-post, a window-blind or a wall. It is a thousand to one that the reader is looking at something he has never seen: that is, never realised. [...] None of us think enough of these things, on which the eye rests. But don't let us let the eye rest. Why should the eye be so lazy? Let us exercise the eye until it learns to see the startling facts that run across the landscape as plain as a painted fence. Let us be ocular athletes (v-vi).

Chesterton's strategy involves diligently attending to normally trivial occurrences, subjecting them to rigorous exegesis, and thereby uncovering their latent interest.

In one notable example dealing with a piece of white chalk, Chesterton reflects that 'the chief assertion of religious morality is that white is a colour' (5); in another, the contents of his pocket provide stimulants for excogitation: tram tickets 'touched my patriotic emotions, and brought tears to my eyes', a pocket-knife 'typifies one of the most primary of those practical pillars upon which as upon, thick pillars all our human civilisation reposes', and through a coin sees 'not only the image and superscription of our own Cæsar, but all government and order since the world began' (81-83); and finds 'in a railway station much of the quietude and consolation of a cathedral' (193). Chesterton playfully adumbrates his approach in *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908). At the beginning of the novel, Gabriel Syme, mocking the anarchist Lucian Gregory's conception of poetry as revolt, avers that the 'epical' is a train reaching its destination (17). The everyday functioning of civic infrastructure is sufficient material for modern poetry: "take your books of mere poetry and prose; let me read a time table, with tears of pride. Take your Byron, who commemorates the defeats of man; give me Bradshaw, who commemorates his victories" (17). *Tremendous Trifles* obeys this injunction. Throughout, Chesterton is singularly restless and displays an inquisitiveness seemingly anathema to the indurations of the everyday. This is a matter of playful irreverence as much as a hermeneutics of suspicion. A lamp-post is not just an object for reflection but precipitates question of national history: '[in] London a lamp-post is a comic thing. We think of an intoxicated gentleman embracing it, and recalling ancient friendship. But in Paris a lamp-post is a tragic thing. For we think of tyrants hanged on it' (162). Chesterton's methodology is predicated upon the viability of dislocating specific phenomena from their contexts and unspooling meaning from these incidental manifestations. Chesterton's attendance to the everyday appears to partially satisfy Hueffer's fundamental desire to *constater*.

However inventive and illuminating Chesterton's approach, his ocular calisthenics are reserved for banal *materials*, and are always strictly focalised. The everyday is invariably a matter of common experiences, and not simply a description of chains of potential significance. Caroline Pollentier (2011) correctly notes that the 'inclusive ethics of the genre ["middle" essays] emerges from the essayist's constant reclamation of everyday life' (130), and though Hueffer is interested in such overlooked materials, his exhortation is explicitly linked to a life shared by 'many millions' ('Preface' 28). In *The Divine Fire*, Rickman offers an explication of his democratic sense of self, one redolent of the commonality Hueffer describes. Defending his urban quotidian inspiration against the conservatism of Horace Jewdwine, to whom modern life is 'unpoetic', Rickman argues: "'I *am* modern – modern as my hat [...] I admit that my hat isn't even a fugitive form of the eternal and absolute beauty. It is, I'm afraid, horribly like everyone else's hat. In moments of profound insight I that I am horribly like everybody else'" (481 original emphasis). Jewdwine is patrician, haughty, and derogates the poetic potential of contemporary urban modernity; Rickman is explicitly, democratically cognisant of the manifest potential for poetry when properly reoriented. The embrace of commonality, of Hueffer's "millions", agrees with Bennett's contention in 'The Elections and the Democratic Idea' (1910) that the 'democratic idea at its widest' (558) is definitely not incommensurate with poetry: it is simply a question of poetry's plasticity rather than any nominally or inherently "appropriate" material. Pollentier's explication of the middle's political significance is judicious in this context, as the essayistic articulation of everyday life 'made it easier for the everyday reader to identify with the everyman' and 'the familiar essay fostered in fact a communal spirit, giving rise to the fiction of the anonymous common man' (130-131).

There are notable examples of this ordinariness in Edwardian fiction, too. In three earlier articles entitled 'The Fallow Fields of Fiction' (1901), Bennett implored novelists to abandon a ubiquitous preoccupation with love, to go beyond the conspicuously interesting, and instead tend the uncultivated tundra of the everyday. Balzac is invoked as a paragon: 'no aspect of human life and activity that is lacking in interest; his net was cast with an inclusive sweep. He sought to hold the mirror up, not to two men trying to kiss one maid, but to the whole of human nature' ('Fallow Fields 1' 518). This mandates overturning the 'literary superstition that a man ceases to be interesting when he ceases to be idle [...] and that the novelist must not follow him into the serious affairs of his life' ('Fallow Fields 3' 58). In order to overturn love's narrative primacy, 'human life and activity' ('Fallow Fields 1' 518) must be foregrounded. Novels should insist upon the latent significance of that which is typically only circumambient: 'we emphatically demure in the proposition that Love is Life. It is a part of Life, and of most lives only a very small part' ('Fallow Fields 3' 58). Bennett avers that 'much of modern life is ignored by the novelist' ('Fallow Fields 3' 57), and the corollary (and corrective) of this is a simple question of apperceptive

volition which will reveal that ‘there are a dozen epical novels in any large restaurant’ (‘Fallow Fields 2’ 557).<sup>31</sup>

A clear antecedent in the type of fiction Bennett invokes is Charles Pooter. *The Diary of a Nobody* details the mundane incidents of Pooter’s lower-middle class, suburban day-to-day: ‘two shoulders of mutton arrived, Carrie having arranged with another butcher without consulting me. Gowing called, and fell over the scraper coming in’ (21); ‘ordered a new pair of trousers at Edwards’s, and them not to cut them so loose over the boot’ (68); ‘Mustard-and-cress and radishes not come up yet’ and, again the following day, ‘Mustard-and-cress and radishes not come up yet’ (28-29): the everyday as pure, inactive repetition. *The Diary of a Nobody* records Pooter’s anxieties about social propriety, his son’s ambitions, his foibles, jokes, and genial everydayness. His metronomic quotidian is perturbed by ‘that objectionable youth at the office [calling] out “Hornpipe” as I passed his desk’ (68) and, preoccupied by ‘a thousand happy thoughts’, Pooter lies ‘awake for hours’ after finding his son work as a ‘regular-downright-respectable-funereal-first-class-City-firm-junior-clerk’ (169-170). There is nothing remarkable about Pooter.

At a dinner party, Pooter encounters the provocative ‘Hardfur Huttle, a very clever writer for the American papers’ (195). He indirectly, though Pooter suspects otherwise, denigrates the “happy medium” as “two words which mean ‘miserable mediocrity’”: “[the] man who loves champagne and, finding a pint too little, fears to face a whole bottle and has recourse to an imperial pint, will never build a Brooklyn Bridge or an Eiffel Tower. No, he is half-hearted, he is a half-measure” (197-198). Huttle belittles the everyday whereas Pooter resides firmly and deeply within this “happy medium” and finds much joy. Huttle presumes this to be an oxymoron. For Pooter, it is a tautology; after receiving an invitation to the Mayor’s Mansion House, Pooter suddenly ‘seized [his wife] round the waist, and we were silly enough to be executing a wild kind of polka’ (49). His spontaneous joy may be ‘silly’ but there is no sense of its diminished value. Pooter acknowledges Huttle’s ideas as

original and sometimes wonderful [...] but it is those ideas that are so dangerous. They make men extremely rich or extremely poor. They make or break men. I always feel people are happier who live a simple unsophisticated life. I believe *I* am happy because I am not ambitious (147 original emphasis).

Moreover, Huttle repudiates the ‘unheroic events and overlooked things’ that constitute the everyday (Olson 7) as insipidly ‘orthodox’ (196-197), and derogates precisely the “Pooters” Rickman, Martin, and Hueffer seek out: the “happy medium means respectability, and respectability means insipidness” (198). Pooter indicates that there is much to be enjoyed within

---

<sup>31</sup> Nearly thirty years later (18<sup>th</sup> September 1930), Bennett repeated his argument in ‘Too Much Love!’ (*Books and Persons* 410-12).

the everyday. As Kate Macdonald (2011) argues, the deprecation of the middlebrow was partly constituted by individuals enjoying “improper” materials, not salacious, but coarse to highbrow cultural arbiters, such as Q.D. Leavis and Woolf (10-11). Pooter exemplifies the middlebrow’s transcendence of ‘the fixed linear cultural continuum’ of highbrow-to-lowbrow and focuses instead upon ‘the enjoyment of the individual’ calibrated on their own terms (Macdonald 8).

Pooter’s felicity, the text’s tactful evocation of the relative enjoyments of his experience, and apprehension of the ebullience concealed within the apparently banal is palpable in the work of W. Pett Ridge; and, his work proffers an answer to Hueffer’s injunction to delineate ‘the life of dust, toil, discouragement, excitement, and enervation that I and many millions lead to-day’ (‘Preface’ 28). Certainly, Ridge’s novels are recognisably democratic and mediated by the solidity of the material environs which enclose and disclose interest. *Outside the Radius* (1899) is restricted to the unexceptional events of one suburban commuter crescent in London, and each chapter is devoted to a small local incident. W.D. Howells (1910) argues that if Ridge’s version of London is limited or parochial, ‘it may be answered that the immeasurable majority of Londoners are of the classes and order which he peoples his fiction from’ (71). The narrative’s location is juxtaposed with the dilapidated Old Town: ‘a shapeless cluster of small cottages seemingly left there by mistake and never called for, where families live in one room and the police go about in couples’ (7). Throughout there are telling references to the proximity of London: one neighbour is ‘engaged in a Whitehall Government office’ (23); when a young couple arrive at ‘Number Thirteen with vans bearing the address of South Kensington, The Crescent said that here once more were recruits from high life’ (81); ‘the new occupier of Number Nine had hailed a hansom [...] and had given loud directions to the driver, “Grosvenor Square”’ (314); and, one visitor ‘complained bitterly of the inconvenient situation of our suburb, comparing it in this respect with Kennington Road, to its great disadvantage’ (149). Unlike Gibson and Tressell, Ridge deliberately settles between the obvious intrigues of Society life in London and the destitution of the Old Town; *Outside the Radius* explores the fallow fields of middling class routine. Indeed, the narrator concludes the opening chapter’s description of the unremarkable Crescent and the proceeding narratives sardonically: ‘I want to tell you some of these [stories]. Be sure to stop if they bore you’ (20).

Despite this bracing honesty, the fictionalised author asserts ‘that to declare life in The Crescent as dull and monotonous is a mere pretence; outwardly that may be so; in point of fact there are romances in every house’ (20). Like Grossmith, Ridge has a perspicuous sense of the relative significance of the ostensibly torpid events of The Crescent relayed by the narrator, an author sequestered in the suburbs. For instance, it is newsworthy that the recently arrived Mrs Robert Gregory ‘made her own dresses’ and ‘drops her aitches’ (23-24); there is a tangible disappointment when a new young couple turn out to be ‘not Society people with wealthy relatives, but just an ordinary couple’ (81); and, the narrator is aware of the petit bourgeois, but

apparently significant, obsession with the grandiloquent naming of individual properties in *The Crescent*: ‘The Firs, The Oaks, The Elms, The Beeches [...] Ben Nevis, Beethoven Villa, St. Moritz’ (6). Nothing remarkable is disclosed by Ridge’s narrator. In fact, the final chapter is a concerted effort to disabuse the reader of the necessity of intrigue. A recently arrived ‘aristocratic couple’ (323), the Pulboroughs, have relocated from the grandeur of Piccadilly: “‘to be placed here in such very ordinary surroundings [...] is like being exiled [...] to new and monotonous surroundings’” (320-321). The narrator is not in exile; he examines his surroundings with warmth and diligence. Ridge’s commitment to the everyday is clear in his turn from obvious cynosures.

By 1908, Ridge had consolidated this vision of suburban London into one house: *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road*. The novel has a patent interest in ‘just a common, average, ordinary’ (9) life; and, according to *The Bookman’s* review (1908),

we delight in [Ridge’s] books because they mirror the life that we know; because they tell the unsensational stories of ordinary men and women with such an air of convincing reality; because of their unfailing humour, and of the many quaint, likable, lifelike characters they bring us acquainted with (51).

As Wild correctly notes, ‘very little happens [...] as] one might expect of a novel which intends to only hold a mirror to suburban life, the major events that take place here comprise nothing more dramatic than Fred’s promotion at work and the couple’s seaside holiday’ (*The Great Edwardian Emporium* 69). The plot is relatively simple: Fred and Ella Hartley return from their French honeymoon to their south west London home (shared with their lodger, Dickson, and maid, Florrie), have their first child, and settle into a recognisably normal routine of work and domesticity. Aided and propelled by Ella, Fred enjoys a successful career as a railway superintendent. Dinner parties, polishing a brass name plate, walks on Wandsworth Common, and the thin, clear stratifications of social class boundaries form the pabulum of the everyday in *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road*, where the installation of ‘the brass plate created a gratifying stir’ and warrants surreptitious investigation from the neighbours (28).

Despite this ordinariness, Ridge clearly believes that ‘suburbia exists in the eye of the beholder’: ‘[the] uniformity of suburbia could be regarded as benevolent, according to the Dickens view, or petty and destructive, according to the Ruskin view. The real challenge was to see in it something other than uniformity’ (Trotter 132, 130). In *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road* this is partly constituted by the narrative’s willingness to recognise the relative importance of the incidents to those involved, and partly by explicit apologia. Wild avers that there is ‘a mild but persistent affirmation of the positive qualities of life [...] which] in his view of modern suburban existence’ manifest as a ‘stealthy politics of suburban affirmation’ (67). The novel is more clamant than clandestine, however. In the first chapter, Mrs Featherstone describes the torpid uniformity

of the Hartleys' suburb: "the long straight road with houses on either side all precisely alike [and] the people in the houses, all of one pattern" (16). Ella's defence is clarion:

"You're altogether wrong. People take their own souls and their own bodies and their own lives with them, and whether they reside in Berkeley Square or at Forest Hill, they can be themselves, and they are not obliged to imitate their neighbours; they are not compelled to know them. [...] There's as much intelligence in the suburbs as anywhere else in London; *more*. There's as much goodness and decency of behaviour in the suburbs as anywhere else in London; *more*" (16-17 added emphasis).

Ella's repetition of an unspecified 'more' indicates that perhaps this more-ness connotes a heterogeneity which negates Mrs Featherstone's imposition of sterile homogeneity. At the end of the novel, Ella upbraids a neighbour for deploying suburban as a pejorative: "the word suburban used as you are using it, goads me to violence" (324).

The novel is resolute in its locus of attention. Ella tells Fred: "my day is made up of rising in the morning, looking after Sixty-nine, Birnam Road, and going to rest at night" (332). Ridge happily remains within these bounds. Much like *Outside the Radius* and the careful juxtaposition of city and suburbia, there are plenty of potential plot lines glimpsed in *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road* that less everyday novels would happily transcribe. Mrs Stanford, the wife of Fred's superintendent, who "took to drink" and is euphemistically "put away" (117) by her husband, is accidentally encountered by Ella at Stanford's office: "sounds of fierce disturbance [...] were coming down the stone staircase. "I wan' see him, that's all I want, he's my husband; he's father my two boys, I've got claim to see him, tell you I will see him, I will see him, I will! [...] I am sober, comparatively speaking" (279). *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road* continues without exposition.<sup>32</sup> Elsewhere, Ella wishes that Fred 'were as tall as Massingworth or taller; wished he were as keen of mind as Jephson, or keener' (96). Massingworth, a former beau to whom Ella sent an incriminating letter (of which one learns nothing more than its existence), represents excitement apparently incommensurate with Fred. Jephson, the Hartleys' new neighbour, is a gambler (144) and having lost money, and given 'up all pretence of working at the bar' (253), has to dramatically reduce the family's circumstances. The Jephsons' febrile marriage, moving between tearful financial anecdotes (144), suicidal thoughts (93), to joyous embrace (94-95), recriminations (137), and eventual reconciliation (328), figures intermittently in the novel's main narrative. Events outwith the rhythms of Birnam Road are reduced to vicarious recapitulation: Ella's trip to Lemhurst, Mrs Featherstone's holiday residence at Matfield Green, is recounted as a chapter-long epistle to Charles; Florrie's recent engagement is an interpolation in the description of Fred's promotion

---

<sup>32</sup> A passing remark is made of her death by one of her sons near the end of the novel (344).

(252); and, his declaration that he is “to go on a special commission to make some inquiries concerning American railways [...] for nearly six months” is just as cursory (177-178).

Ridge alights upon glimpses of incident momentarily before moving on. Returning from a successful business dinner, the Hartleys' cabman informs them: “Can't get no closer. [...] There's a carriage standing in front of Sixty-nine. Doctor's carriage, 'parently” (241). These are the portentous, if brief, closing words of the chapter. In the vernacular rendering of ‘apparently’ lurks an intimation of ‘parent’, and one might infer that the doctor's presence pertains to the Hartley's daughter, Vic. However, the next chapter opens with an overview of the health of Fred's railway company before disclosing, with comparative brevity, Vic's month-long illness (242-244). After Fred announces his business trip to the United States (177-178) and without details of his departure, the next chapter turns to Dickson's attempts to write a play (179). Such gaps implicitly recognise the everyday as a form of induration. The new, the exciting, the extraordinary is quickly reduced to the prosaic rhythms beneath active, conscious attention; a child's illness soon falls in with the cycle of the days. Hence, and this is Ridge's remarkable structural conceit, the temporal (and consequent epistemic) lacunae between chapters signal an indifference on the part of the characters, a kind of structural free indirect discourse, which ironically piques the reader's interest.

However, Ridge's everyday is not simply a question of attending to (or not attending to) or defending the mundane. There is a tacit shift in the very means by which one apprehends the everyday itself as that which is axiomatically unfiltered, unposed: ‘unintended and unreflective [...] not yet justified, defined or organised’ (Colebrook 698-699). Having met Dickson while shopping, Ella's conversation is interrupted by Mrs Jephson: “There's a boy with a loose sleeve bowing to you” (320). This is a seemingly innocuous incident in a novel replete with ordinariness and the boy-with-the-loose-sleeve is registered with an immediacy commensurate with an impression rather than justification, definition or organisation. Only afterwards is the looseness of the sleeve explained as an amputation suffered during the Boer War; Ella met Tremner, “a youth with every good feature excepting a chin” (193) while on holiday, and corresponded with him while he served in South Africa (314-315). Mrs Jephson has no cognisance of context that might codify or explain both the looseness of the sleeve, a devastatingly banal detail registered with apposite thoughtlessness, or the identity of the youth. These are details Mrs Jephson cannot furnish and the narrator does not intercede: this is the everyday as it is met.

Of course, this approach necessarily means that significance is not always immediately legible. Flitting in and out of the novel, Ella's errant, caddish brother Charles, a sometime singer-songwriter, is indicative of Ridge's commitment to the autonomy of incidents. When Charles announces that if he does not “have five hundred pounds by the end of this coming week, I must simply disappear” (275), the reader is as startled as Ella. Ridge's resistance to a narrative of sequential causality is embedded with innocuous everyday details. When he is told of Ella's

acquaintance with Mrs Featherstone, Charles 'listened with interest, presently asking for the loan of a pencil that he might record a note of an idea that had just occurred to him; he found, he said, that suggestions for songs came to him at the oddest moments' (37). Only in retrospect does it become clear that this 'idea' denotes borrowing money. Similarly, in *Ulysses*, Bantam Lyons asks for Leopold Bloom's newspaper and is told: "I was just going to throw it away" (82). Lyons inexplicably scuttles off. Everyday, throwaway details take on significance later when, in 'Cyclops', Lenehan reveals the winner of the Ascot Gold Cup: "'*Throwaway* [...] at twenty to one. A rank outsider'" (312 original emphasis). Lyons was "'the only man in Dublin'" to win his bet at "'a hundred shillings to five on'" (321). Bloom is suspected of winning too and not standing a round contributes to him being chased from the pub. In both instances in *Ulysses* and *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road*, there is no prolepsis tempering the narrative. The everyday occurs with an unyielding immanence that is not falsified into a pattern. Howells describes this as 'oblique narration' in *Ridge*: '[a] certain event is portended, and then, suddenly without formal proclamation, the event is accomplished, and you are in the midst of the result' (69). While this is obviously true, Howells does not reflect upon the congruity of this narrative strategy and its observance of the everyday; both *Ridge* and Joyce attempt 'to grab hold of the present on the wing' (*History's Disquiet* 131).

In *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road* and *Nine To Six-Thirty*, *Ridge* is resolutely focused upon the female experience of the everyday. Whereas Ella Hartley's experiences are sequestered to the suburbs, Barbara Harrison's routine is coextensive with employment. She leaves her family home and enters the world of clerk-work; she is the first female employee at Warnett's travel agents, and subsequently moves to a printers. This is an aleatory emancipation, though, as the family's uninsured rental properties burn down and, with them, the Harrisons' income: "'an accident enabled me to escape being a slave all my life'" (150). All of the daughters are turned out to work with varying degrees of success. After this initial excitement, *Ridge* limns a fairly mundane world: Barbara works diligently, is an attentive godmother, and buys old furniture at the weekend. Just as Ella offers a strident defence of suburban existence, *Nine to Six-Thirty* is a progressive account of women's growing economic autonomy; and, as Viv Gardner (1991) argues, this self-determination 'undermined the passivity, physical, mental and emotional, expected of women' (viii). Barbara is met with scorn despite (and because of) her obvious competence and this is bound up in much broader socio-political concerns pursuant to the independence of women. Warnett, though happy to employ Barbara, acerbically remarks: "'recently it's all turned on the vote'" (163); a waiter overseeing a business dinner hosted by Barbara, identifies another cause: "'Ladies have changed a good deal in my time [...] I put it all down to the bicycle. [...] You're actually giving this dinner, are you? You, yourself, I mean'" (300). The dramatic irony discloses the irreducible gap between the actuality of socioeconomic change and the perceptible drag in

mores, and it is clear that Ridge is sympathetic to both Barbara's progressive position, and its attendant hazards.

Firstly, this is manifest in a rejection of Lefebvre's condescending misogyny. Ridge intimates that Barbara's employment ensures a provision of relative autonomy, not simply reducible to (everyday) alienation. In *Everyday Life* (1968), Lefebvre asserts that women are most proximate to the quotidian routines, whose 'tedious tasks [and] humiliations' are 'especially' exigent for women (30). However, because of (and despite) this propinquity, women 'are *incapable of understanding*' the everyday (63 added emphasis) 'by the roundabout method of eluding the responsibilities of consciousness' (79). Of course, this conception is reductive, and inscribes a uniformity outwith a cogent apprehension of women's obviously heterogeneous experiences. For instance, one of the Harrisons' neighbours, Mrs Collins, hopes her parenting will

save her [daughter], so far as was possible, from contact with the outer world, treatment that appeared to have made the daughter into the dullest and must uninteresting young woman in Stoke Newington, gifted with nothing better than small talk concerning church, and hopeless anticipations in regard to the weather of coming months (230).

Instead, young Miss Collins becomes a vociferous suffragette, precisely the criticality or volition Lefebvre deems women incapable of.

Against Lefebvre, one might, with due diligence, posit the routine of work as a form of succour or stability, and signifier of independence. Just as Ella defends the suburbs, Ridge indicates that, after being treated like a servant at home, Barbara's entry into the workplace is a release from becoming a domestic 'machine':

"the chance came, and I took it, and ever since I've known what it is to have an interest in life. I've tasted freedom, and I still need it. I want nothing about me to remind me of the days when I envied general servants. I don't know what business is going to do for me; it may make me hard and selfish and callous, but I do know I feel grateful to it, and that I'm going to stick to it. I'm going to give it all that I've got. It's me. It's me" (151).

The insistent repetition of selfhood, the abbreviated present tense "it *is* me" in a declaration replete with the first person pronoun, resounds with an intimation of possibilities bolstered by financial independence, and, pertinently, Barbara is demonstrably cognisant of the deleterious, numbing consequences of banal routine; she actually explicates a causal link between capitalism's routines and induration. Nonetheless, Barbara articulates the excitement of independence. Granville-Barker's *The Madras House* (1910) foregrounds the life Barbara has avoided. Mrs Madras is introduced in a stage direction: '*silent, as forgotten as any other piece of furniture for which there is no*

*immediate use*' (20-21); the six unmarried Huxtable daughters, 'the prisoners in that chaste little fortress on Denmark Hill' (105), are indistinguishable, even to their father: 'run along Jane... I mean Emma' (25). Sequestered in their parents' home and too respectable to enter the workplace, the daughters evince the paucity of their lives in enervated dialogue:

Minnie: How d'you do?

Thomas: How d'you do?

Clara: How d'you do?

Minnie: How d'you do, Philip?

Philip: How d'you do?

Clara: How d'you do?

Philip: How d'you do? (14)

Jan McDonald contends that Granville-Barker uses 'apparently inconsequential dialogue to demonstrate the inner working of characters and to create an atmosphere on stage' (118). This is fairly bromidic as dialogue is invariably conducive to an "atmosphere". However, McDonald inverts the intimations of this vapid conversation, of what Oscar Parker (May 1910) calls 'mental sterility' (*The English Illustrated Magazine* 165): it is a conspicuous demonstration of the very lack of interiority fostered by an imprisoned domesticity which precipitates "giving in" to habit [... as] a symptom of a more total deterioration, a disintegration of ourselves into automatons' (*Escape Attempts* 50).

Barbara's asseverations gainsay Lefebvre's unthinking positioning of women, and reject a respectable bourgeois torpor. Independence is underwritten by financial autonomy: "I'm free now. I earn as much money as I want" (223), and, most explicitly:

A great joy to walk along New Oxford Street with the confidence that came in the possession of money. Inspecting shop windows, she told herself she was free to go in and select and purchase, and no one could reprove her; she did buy, to assert independence, a penny evening newspaper [...] The great advantage of this life was that anything might happen, whereas previously the thing it was possible to be certain about seemed that one day would exactly resemble another. This was a real existence. This was living (70-71).

Barbara's explicit and lucid sense of an arrogated autonomy is certainly not outwith the type of consumer capitalism, albeit an earlier Edwardian version, that Lefebvre critiques; and, as noted, Barbara is cognisant of its deadening alienation. Ridge does, on the other hand, recognise that any facile derogation of Barbara's burgeoning sense of relative independence ignores the significance subsisting beneath the integument of the everyday. Against Lefebvre, Ridge posits a

substantive link between female autonomy and wage labour. Moreover, this intimates precipitous political change, incremental but momentous: “‘dear mother, when she was a girl, was not allowed to look at newspapers. [...] You can’t expect a sex to obtain assurance and confidence and all the rest of it in a single day’” (186).

Secondly, the novel indicates the manifest dangers of this new socioeconomic position. An office boy brands Barbara a “‘female Tartar and no mistake’” (141), and her ‘masterful and imperious attitude’ in the office is described as a ‘rod of something harder than steel’ (254-255). Ridge poses the rebarbative Smithson as the displaced, disgruntled male subordinate unwilling to cede any ground to his female colleague, and subsequent supervisor. Arguing with Smithson for a meritocratic order in the workplace, Warnett avers that Barbara, given her demonstrable proficiency, should be left in charge. This proves intolerable for Smithson, and he tenders his resignation with a four page letter which ‘explain[ed] his attitude on the question of woman’s interference with work hitherto conducted exclusively by men, giving something like an essay on the question [...] and he certainly did not see his way to submit to the indignity he had been called upon to bear’ (166). An inebriated Smithson later confronts Barbara: “‘I’ve been very badly treated. Treated like dog. [...] I’ve got a certain amount of contempt for you, Miss Harrison. You must remember that you’re only a woman, after all’” (168). Barbara denies Smithson the opportunity to return, and there are intimations of violence; he attempts to follow her into a railway compartment (293), and pursues her off the train: “‘It’ll be one of the unsolved mysteries. See what I mean’” (304). Barbara is visited by Smithson in her dreams ‘awaking always just before he struck her’ (294) and, having dreamt of him again while convalescing, admits that she is “‘frightened of him’” (334). Smithson accosts Barbara and her maid, Ellen, walking around Lincoln’s Inn Fields:

Ellen’s shriek, not to be mistaken for any other. Barbara looking back observed the girl running towards them wildly, and waving her right arm. As she came near, a shot pinged out from the steps of the hotel. Barbara, before she fainted, saw Smithson rushing across to the gate of the garden, pursued by a crowd (338).

These are the very real and very violent consequences of female entry to the work place. Even if Barbara manages to avoid being shot by a disgruntled former employee, Ellen (her employee) is wounded: women are the most liable to experience male violence: directly and vicariously; systemically and specifically. The dyad of independence and insecurity is equilibrated and constituted within the everyday, and Ridge’s cognisance of this admixture reveals the caprices of mundane routine intersected by the prejudices of gendered social relations; in its diligent attention to the unremarkable, Ridge fractures Hueffer’s invocation of lives led by ‘many millions’

(‘Preface’ 28) and discloses an inviolable heterogeneity which undoes the everydayness of Hueffer’s doxic claim.

Despite Ridge’s sedulous attention to women’s banal routines and his patient delineation of the everyday’s relative significances to its constituents, his works are implicated in a particularly gendered (dis)position. As Dorothy E. Smith (1987) indicates, such articulations are invariably compromised by extant discursive and ideological components: if one accepts that the ‘making and dissemination of the forms of thought we make use of to think about ourselves and our society are part of the relations of ruling and hence originate in positions of power’ (19), then Ridge’s generosity must be mediated by his subject position within an extant set of unequal, gendered relations. Therefore, Ridge’s quiet and pervasive optimism, even when tempered by Smithson’s violence, is connected to a position of relative privilege; and any sanguinity is predicated upon the stability of his own subject positioning within a particular socio-political order. In a discussion of Hegel’s master-servant dialectic, Smith argues that the master’s ability to leap from desire to its object, where the object simply appears, occludes the servant’s labour. The ‘object of consciousness’ occludes the autonomous subject undertaking the labour, and only from the servant’s perspective is the ‘totality of the set of relations [...] visible’ (78-80). Similarly, Ridge utilises a patriarchal discourse and inhabits a particular subject position to articulate improved, if precarious, female independence and domestic succour; any (quiet) radicalism enjoins a ‘structure of local social relations’ which are invariably ‘organised by social relations external to it’ (Smith 94). The compromises and limitations Smith highlights perhaps explain why, when written from the dominated’s perspective, there is a conspicuous tonal shift. For instance, Ivy Compton-Burnett’s *Dolores* (1911) limns the domestic routine of the eponymous protagonist. Charles Burkhart (1971) notes that the novel insists ‘upon the importance of “low” or obscure destinies’ (ix), and this is certainly a novel about the everyday within the paradigm Smith delineates. However, *Dolores* is wholly divested of Ella Hartley’s geniality. ‘It was a daily thing’ (1) opens *Dolores*, and this dailiness is commensurate not with Pooter’s felicity, or the economic independence of *Nine to Six-Thirty*. Instead, Compton-Burnett insists upon the privations and exertions imposed upon women at the insistence of men. Like Ridge, however, *Dolores* abnegates Lefebvre’s supposition that women cannot think about that which they inhabit and embody: ‘Dolores found that her daily service to duty was a daily wrestling’ (143). The repetition of “daily” intimates the interminable, inexorable cyclicity of the everyday; and, as an adverb, Dolores might reasonably apply “daily” across the numerous and familiar constitutive activities of her day-to-day.

Compton-Burnett poses this familiarity as a kind of oppression similar to Friedan’s strident critiques of housewives’ ‘sense of emptiness, non-existence, nothingness’: ‘[there] are aspects of the housewife role that make it almost impossible for a woman of adult intelligence to retain a sense of human identity, the firm core of self or “I”’ (247). Measured against *Dolores*,

described as ‘a woman who lives for the trouble of others’ (293), Barbara Harrison’s insistent repetition of the “I” Friedan invokes – “I’m going to stick to it. I’m going to give it all that I’ve got. It’s me. It’s me” (*Nine to Six-Thirty* 151) – sounds hollow in its trying urgency. Indeed, when Dolores ventures a comparable self-affirmation it is utter negation, and commensurate with her poignant sense ‘that her soul was dead’: “I am needed in [my father’s] home; and I *must* see that it is there that I *must* feel my duty” (259 added emphasis). The conspicuous repetition of *must*, functioning as a stringent adverb, intimates a clear distinction between autonomy and imposed duties. Dolores’s self-exhortation typifies Smith’s conception of women’s everyday experiences: ‘the structuring of our lives through time have been and to a very large extent still are determined and ordered by processes external to, and beyond, our everyday world’ (Smith 65). She goes on to describe this ordinance as ‘like a dance in which the subject participates or in which she is placed’: ‘she must be moved by or move with them. The conditions of our action and experience are organised by relations and processes outside them and beyond our power of control’ (92). Dolores proffers the fugacious moment of the pseudo-volition, the assumption of a tempo or specific routine within an extant set of given options, coordinated by external, entrenched patriarchal powers.

This sense of incumbent responsibility compromises the potential escape route of education. Dolores is recalled from a women’s college at Oxford to tutor her younger siblings, a ‘risible, unmeaning, demanding round’ (151). There is an implication that her education is an illusory freedom, providing the necessary conditions for her to remain at home. Her university career, assisting an esteemed playwright, Claverhouse, as amanuensis (another iteration of service), is halted by her father’s letter enjoining her return: ‘you will comply, and that your compliance will be willing, and for your happiness’, a chain of tenuous corollaries, to which Dolores acquiesces:

She neither rebelled then, nor set her face to sacrifice. It was her way to see her life, as in the background rather than the fore, of the lives of others. It was to duty she owed her service [...] For others might be honest doubt, and blameless wavering at a parting of the ways: for herself there was a road to be taken, and another to be left. On the one side lay effort for strangers, to whom others’ effort sufficed; on the other the claims of kindred, of her father and her father’s children (149-150).

Crucial here is the indication that either option for teaching involves an inexorable sacrifice implicitly coextensive with Dolores’s gendered position: ‘to suffer in secret daily, and lie in the night hours helpless under agony below the easiness of tears, was the lot that was *natural* for her’ (257 added emphasis). The explicitly gendered positioning of Dolores as somehow “natural” is manifest elsewhere in the novel. Perdita, one of the women’s college’s graduates, marries

Claverhouse despite the intimations of romance between him and Dolores, called away to tutor her siblings. The narrator proposes that Claverhouse has merely replaced his mother with Perdita but posits himself as a liberator: “[her] life has been monotony and effort; and it is enough for her to be free. She is a lover of books in her woman’s way [...] but I shall teach her to understand. There is no one else I could see in my mother’s place” (235-236). The narrative disabuses the reader of his conceit, predicated upon a conception of his wife as ‘shadowy [...] a creature of surface life and elusive being’ (228):

Perdita lived joyless days, with privation of all that was good to her thought. Their only change was the growing of her suffering shame in her lot, to the indifference of feeling blunted by bitter use; and she marvelled, now with fierce resentment, now helpless wonder, that he could thus be blind to the claims of her youth (241).

This is based on an egregious misprision, perhaps similar to Ridge’s discreet imputations about the felicity of domesticity, that routine and a woman’s happiness are axiomatically coterminous. Really, the repetitions, emphasised by plosive alliteration, are only attenuating: ‘the indifference of feeling blunted by bitter use’. Perdita experiences the ‘torturing shame [of] her daily experience’ within the immutable ‘straitness of her lot’ (243); she dies in childbirth. This grim realism saturates the novel. Dolores and Perdita do not evince nominative determinism as such but their names bear a metonymic signifying force. Perdita, from the Latin *perditus* (“lost”), is bound ‘to straiten her world in straitening her place in her master’s lot’ (231); and, most conspicuously, Dolores: told by her father that she is “‘a good woman, Dolores’” (319) with the pealing echo of “dolorous” functioning seamlessly and simultaneously as an adjective and name, and doubling (down) as an appellative.

*Dolores* provides a necessary rejoinder to Ridge’s affability. The obverse of Ella Hartley’s sedate happiness and Barbara Harrison’s economic ascendancy is Dolores’s life of servitude and denial: ‘the other things of which her lot had been empty;— daily cherishing, little hourly signs of a heart’s homage, the glances of those who knew her early years, and deemed her unsought of men’ (267). Compton-Burnett also introduces a crucial dissonance in Hueffer’s conception of uniform experience, one written, in Smith’s terminology, by those who ‘understand the social matrices of their experience. For each of us is an expert practitioner of our everyday world’ (154). This vantage, glimpsing the totality of a specific if contingent set of social relations, is manifest in Cicely Hamilton’s *Diana of Dobson’s* (1908).<sup>33</sup> Gardner, echoing Smith, notes that the New Woman in plays written by men (Marion Yates in *The Madras House*, for instance) were denied ‘any sort of reality’, and it was left to

---

<sup>33</sup> Tellingly, the author sent the manuscript to an organiser of the Shop Assistants’ Union to verify the facts of the play’s depiction of working conditions with only a couple of small alterations suggested (Gardner xiii).

women writers to combine the new ideas and ideology emerging from the debate over the “woman question” with a grasp of the reality of the lives of women in the period. [... One] will not find idealised portraits of successfully “new” New Women, but women struggling to control and improve their lives in an implacably male world. None of the women in the plays articulate any “New” philosophy, they are shown living out the problems created by traditional views of women (x-xi).

Diane F. Gillespie and Doryjane Birrer (2003) correctly outline Hamilton’s critique of Edwardian marriage functioning as ‘the primary means of achieving economic self-preservation’, and the play’s examination of ‘hiring practices, salaries, and upward mobility based on restrictive assumption about the capabilities and roles of women’ (58). This is certainly the case. However, and though this is enmeshed in these thematic preoccupations, Gillespie and Birrer ignore *Diana of Dobson’s* careful evocation of the material conditions of the everyday, and the conditions constituting, and limiting, escape.

*Diana of Dobson’s* opens in the dormitory of a live-in drapery store, described by one reviewer (1908) as a ‘cheap expedient’ (171), but this candour is illustrative of Hamilton’s assiduous attention to the everyday she depicts, that which Elsie G. May identifies as ‘the vivid reproduction of existing social conditions [... and] reflections of everyday life’ (161). Alongside this lucid depiction of the actualities of live-in work, and Diana is privy to the exigencies of ‘the starve and the stint and the grind of it all [...] the whole grey life’ (129), Hamilton scrutinises the corollaries of escape. Emancipated from Dobson’s by an unforeseen inheritance, Diana immediately sets out for Switzerland with the intention of spending the lot and enjoying ‘a crowded hour [...] I’ll deny myself nothing. I have had six years of scrape and starve – now I’ll have a month of everything that money can buy me’ (88). There is a similarity with Barbara Harrison here. Diana tells her indentured colleagues: ‘have you ever grasped what money really is? It’s power! Power to do what you like to go where you like, to say what you like. [...] With three hundred pounds in my pocket I’d dare any mortal thing on earth’ (87). Certainly, the three hundred pounds Diana receives does entail liberties. However, Diana recognises the finitude of her capital allows for a limited escape. One might reasonably expect that Diana would seek freedom for as long as possible, and make her inheritance last. However, Kracauer indicates that the relationship between work and leisure is directly proportional: the torpor of work corresponds to the intensity of the stimuli required to offset everyday boredom (*The Salaried Masses* 92-94). The Swiss holiday is therefore an indictment of the conditions of Diana’s employment. The salient difference between Ridge and Hamilton, however, is the relative conception of employment which prompts, for the latter, a wholly separate conception of the necessity and conditions of reprieve; in *Nine to Six-Thirty*, this is not remarked upon.

Hamilton indicates that everydayness is not simply synonymous with menial work nor is it spatially specific. Ensclosed in the Swiss Alps, Diana infiltrates an upper-class circle who sharply criticise the ‘unsophisticated Cook’s tourist’ (102) for visiting the same resort. Diana recognises that the novelty of such a holiday comes

as a relief to some people – people whose lives have gone on, day after day, in the same dull, mean, little round, without any hope of change or betterment or advancement. [...] I really like to think that when he gets away from his daily round and common task he really enjoys himself in his own vulgar fashion (103).

Though acutely aware of her own position, Diana’s sympathies intimate that the assembled upper class’s presence is predicated upon exactly the same desire to escape their own everyday, and is an acute reminder of the circumstances from which they sought escape and to which they must inevitably return; the “daily round” indicates the inexorable circularity of any liberation from the everyday; or, as Simmel (1910) recognised, any adventure ‘is certainly a part of our existence’ taking us ‘by a long and unfamiliar detour’ back to the everyday (“The Adventure’ 222). Holidays bolster the everyday. Given that one is able to justify the immediate misery or banality of work, the ‘globe-trotting counter-jumper’s’ (*Diana of Dobson’s* 103) Swiss break can actually be seen as an integral support of maintaining their everyday lives. One is never completely beyond that which one wants to escape; holidays *depend* upon torpor, enervation, and dissatisfaction. Moreover, even if one could enjoy a permanent vacation, this would simply become a new everyday. Bretherton has reached the ‘blasé stage’ and is ‘no longer keen on seeing’ the Alps: ‘you find that once you’ve got used to ’em, one mountain’s awfully like another, especially when it’s got snow on the top. There’s a strong family likeness about the Alps – I can hardly tell which of ’em I’m looking at myself’ (100-101). Hamilton indicates that such everydaying is endemic. Bretherton’s boredom occurs on “holiday”: ‘*déjà vu* can always invade [...] novel circumstances, and that which was spontaneous becomes only a variant of an old theme; the new partner begins to speak familiar lines, and the acts unroll predictably’ (*Escape Attempts* 82). Just as his experience of urban poverty in the final act is novel, a comparable existence on ‘starvation salary’ (83) is absolutely tedious for the live-in women of the first scene. Therefore, Diana’s conscious decision to enjoy an intensely brief escape implies that any break from the everyday involves return.

Elizabeth Baker’s *Chains* (1911) offers a similarly perspicacious account of the everyday not as a simple agglomeration of materials but prompting questions of indenture, induration, and escape. Like Hamilton, Baker is alive to the ironies of escape. Maggie Wilson describes the horror of seeing ‘rows and rows of clerks, sitting on high stools, bending over great books on desks’ while ‘outside there was a most beautiful sunset’ (67 original emphasis), and the play deliberates the potential for transgressing such confines. Maggie herself is presented with two options: shop

work or marriage. She decides on the former, and ‘throw[s] up one sort of – cage – for another’ (69). This is no escape; however, her choice is predicated upon the same demonstrable agency as Diana’s deliberate profligacy. The obvious limitations imposed upon women are juxtaposed with Fred Tennant’s desire to escape to Australia. Charley argues that fellow City-clerk Tennant’s escape from mindless office work might yield only ‘grind somewhere else’, and Tennant’s response acknowledges as much:

It’ll be a change of grind then. That’s something. [...] Of course it’s risky. But who wouldn’t have a little risk instead of that beastly hole every day for years? Scratch, scratch, scratch, and nothing in the end, mind you? [...] I suppose I should marry and have a little house somewhere, and grind on (7-8).<sup>34</sup>

The intention to marry entails the caging Maggie describes, and escaping does not apparently involve an alterity outwith the anterior set of gendered relations which Tennant would only recapitulate. Tennant indicates that Maggie’s escape to the colonies is compromised by the transposition of social mores he will recapitulate in the colonies: ‘She’d marry well out there, I daresay. She looks strong and healthy. Her sort get snapped up in no time’ (71). Clearly, the problem of the everyday is not spatially specific: it is manifest in the Alps as much as Australia. Hamilton and Baker present it as ubiquitous, and they both deploy the same word: grind. This process is invoked by Charley as interminable: ‘I’m just sick of the office and the grind every week and no change! – nothing new, nothing happening’ (60); Diana bemoans the ‘grind and squalor and tyranny and overwork’ (80), ‘the treadmill grind’ (88), and everything ‘going on the same as usual – the same old grind’ (82). She confronts one of the bourgeois hotel guests, Sir Jabez Grinley (a drapery store owner whose name strays close to grind), after he proposes to her: ‘I can’t help thinking of those hundreds of men and women whose lives you control. I mean the people who work for you. [...] Fancy spending one’s life in keeping other people’s noses to the grindstone’ (105). Diana’s antipathy is rooted in her material experience of the socioeconomic relations from which Grinley profits; this is exacerbated by the fact that he made his own way from ‘a brat of a boy running errands’ (108) to ‘forty thousand a year’ (118). Nonetheless, he exhibits ‘the heartlessness to a grind a fortune out of underpaid work-girls’ (119). Both Baker and Hamilton extend the experience of the everyday, which is invariably materially constituted and class specific, from work to escape; and, in this figuration, the everyday is posited as an endless, implacable ongoing grind.

*Chains* concludes with Lily’s revelation of her pregnancy; Charley’s plans to escape are halted, and Maggie chastises Lily: ‘you’ve *got* him after all’ (79 original emphasis). Closing the play,

---

<sup>34</sup> *Polly* opens with an identical complaint about the “‘*Beastly Silly Wheeze of a Hole*’” in which Polly is trapped and from which he extricates himself (313 original emphasis).

Charley complains about his 'beastly collar' (80), the same collar Maggie had 'danced on' when she thought marriage meant escape (15), as he did in the first act, and the yoke is literally and figuratively reassumed. This cyclical return is mandated by the everyday. Moreover, Baker's conclusion highlights the emergence of a type of protagonist staged on the everyday's terms rather than against it: straining against the everyday and constrained by its logic. Millard goes as far as to suggest that the literary conception of a 'hero' is nonsensical in an Edwardian context (46): 'a distinctively Edwardian hero [... is] not a hero at all in the traditional sense, but one who is neutered by the conditions of his existence' (71). The texts discussed in this section indicate the complexity of Edwardian responses to the everyday, and evince the potential for appropriating Woolf's calumny as a critical paradigm. Moreover, Ridge, Compton-Burnett, Baker, and Hamilton indicate conflicting, ambivalent exodic responses, and the felicitous or antagonised quotidian experiences of apparently unremarkable individuals. These questions suffuse the work of Wells and Bennett. The former is preoccupied with the enfeebling constraints of the everyday as experienced by those exposed to its banal rhythms. Moreover, Wells's approach offers a fulsome rejoinder to Millard's disavowal of the Edwardian "hero": *Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905), and *Polly* (1910) evince the steady emergence of individuals frustrated by the everyday and increasingly willing, and able, to transcend its given limits. Bennett, on the other hand, does not necessarily conceive the everyday as an imposition of constraints anathema to individual volition. Rather, the ordinary seethes with individuals actively constituting the everyday in un-remarkable iterations of praxis, obliquely forming events of international historical importance. Bennett's approach allows him to circumvent the limits of escape intimated in *Chains* and pose a more generative, enfranchised means of apprehending individuals capable of efficacious self-determination. In the background to Wells and Bennett, the Edwardians' heterodox and heterogeneous response to the everyday constitutes an impressive cognisance of the relationship between the succour of the familiar and teleological critique of the everyday: its exodic premise, promise, and mission.



III

H.G. WELLS



[T]he cage-like nature of work in Wells's comedies is also indicated by his portrayal of various antitheses to it. The simplest of these is escape.

Christie Davies, 'Making Fun of Work' (88)

In a letter to Arnold Bennett (15<sup>th</sup> June 1900), H.G. Wells declared: 'I want to write novels and before God I *will* write novels. They are the proper stuff of everyday work, a methodical careful distillation of one's thoughts and sentiments and experiences and impressions' (quoted in *A Record* 45 original emphasis). Lurking in this conception of writing is an intimation that novels are apposite to 'everyday work' as a subject whilst constituting Wells's daily labour. *Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905), and *Polly* (1909) are preoccupied with the everyday as resented confinement necessitating escape; Jefferson Hunter (1982) describes these novels as formed by 'similar plots of entrapment and escape' (16). This chapter will examine the different iterations of entrapment, escape, and the novels' difficult, gnomic endings. Even within the Edwardian decade, Wells's sprawling fictional and nonfictional texts and their varied interests present a considerable impediment to isolating a single theme. This chapter will focus upon *Lewisham*, *Kipps*, and *Polly* alongside the Edwardian futurologies: *Anticipations* (1901), *Mankind* (1903), *New Worlds* (1908), and the hybrid *Utopia* (1905). The argument made for Wells's preoccupation with (planned) escapes includes his fiction and non-fiction. This introductory section outlines *Wheels's* (1896) earlier interest in escape, and the novel's gendered conception of escape indicates a limit to the scope of Wells's exodic critique of the everyday.

The importance of escape to Wells is indicated by its primary position within his *Autobiography* (1934): 'Entanglement is our common lot. I believe this craving for a release from – bothers, from daily demands and urgencies, from responsibilities and tempting distractions, is shared by an increasing number of people' (1.15). Later, Wells returns to this in a moment of self-apprehension:

it is only now as I bring facts and dates together that I realise the importance of fugitive impulses throughout my own story. At phase after phase I find myself saying in effect: "I must get out of this. I must get clear. I must get away from all this and think and then begin again. These daily routines are wrapping about me, embedding me in a mass of trite and habitual responses." [...] My revolt against the draper's shop was the first appearance of this mood. It was a flight – to a dream (*Autobiography* 2.738).

This lucid self-analysis alerts one to both escape's importance to Wells and, implicitly, his work. In part, this is constituted by Wells's attentiveness to the material exigencies of the everyday; both the 'everyday work' in the Edwardian novels (quoted in *A Record* 45), and his first journalistic success writing feuilleton on trivial matters, such as seaside holidaying (*Autobiography* 1.372-74). The corollary of this awareness is a yearning for release, and there are echoes of *Escape Attempts* (1992) in Wells's construction of an axiomatic, causal link between the everyday and escape. *Lewisham* concludes with the portentous tearing of his once vaunted Schema 'into numberless little pieces', an acquiescence to domestic normality, and "'the end of empty dreams'" (240). *Kipps* shifts from the metafictional invocation of a bookshop where 'you [the reader] may see him [Kipps] for yourself and speak to him and buy this book' to enigmatic musing upon 'the question of the wonder of beauty, the purposeless inconsecutive beauty, that falls so strangely' (303-304). *Polly*, similarly, invokes 'a great warm friendly globe of crystal sky' before shifting back to the necessities of work: "'Supper to get [...] we can't sit here forever'" (477-79). *Kipps* and *Polly* both end with a subtle refusal to fully locate the post-everyday idyll their narratives have reached for, and this chapter concludes with an elucidation of the implicit failure of Wells's projective exodic instincts.

Foregrounding escape highlights a lacuna in Wells scholarship. Critics alight upon the ordinary in Wells's work. Richard Higgins (2008) indicates that Wells 'chronicles the material conditions of everyday life' (459), and Bernard Loing (2008) extends this to argue that Wells has an 'ability to express the tenderness that can lighten up the drabness of everyday life' (82). Some relate this to instances of escape, too: Sydney Oliver's review of *Utopia* in *Fabian News* (August 1905) notes a 'paramount' desire 'to get the dirt out of our daily environment' (quoted in *Wells's Critical Heritage* 111); A.J.P. Taylor (1966) indicates that Wells had 'been a shop-assistant. He had hated it. He escaped to become a writer. Very considerably, he wanted this to happen to all other shop-assistants' (131); Jonathan Wild (2018) describes *Polly* as a release from a 'social cage' towards 'life-affirming pleasures', and argues that *Kipps* 'demonstrate[s] the liberation of an ordinary man' (21); Simon J. James (2012), indicates that *Polly* seeks 'escape from everyday tedium' (122); and, similarly, Michael Draper (1987) recognises the 'everyday futility' (74) in *Polly* and 'the story of a "little man" who triumphs over his limiting environment' (103). Despite these insights, there has been no coherent attempt to map the exodic as a theme or logic across Wells's Edwardian work. Looking across the texts considered in this chapter, it is apparent that Wells's nonfictional and fictional work is, to a certain extent, preoccupied with the sublation of the everyday; even within the expansive, otherworldly remit of *Utopia*, Wells retains a violent repudiation of the quotidian: "'I wish [...] I could *smash* the world of everyday'" (347 original emphasis). In the novels, this involves the emancipation of an individual immured in an oppressive everyday, and Wells's futurologies posit a vastly expanded post-everyday socialist World State peopled by liberated individuals.

John S. Partington's (2009) perspicuous work on Wells's lifelong construction of 'a cosmopolitan theory of governance that has transformed the lives of much of the world's population' (9) describes 'the establishment of interlocking global bureaucracies' mediated by 'preserving the identity and life-chances of the individual' (60). *New Worlds* typifies the project's Edwardian configuration:

The Socialist has just that same faith in the order, the knowableness of things and the power of men in co-operation to overcome chance; but to him, dealing as he does with the social affairs of men, it takes the form not of schemes for collective research but for collective action and the creation of a comprehensive design for all the social activities of man. While Science gathers knowledge, Socialism in an entirely harmonious spirit criticises and develops a general plan of social life. Each seeks to replace disorder by order (22-23; *Autobiography* 2.781).

*Mankind* makes explicit the intended beneficiaries of a global, scientifically planned order: 'let us keep steadfastly before us that fair, alluring and reasonable conception of all that, even now, the average man might be' (159). Wells might be describing Kipps, Polly, and Lewisham; it is precisely these individuals who are exposed to the indurations of the everyday: 'Their memories set, their opinions set, their methods of expression set, their delights recur and recur, they convert initiative into mechanical habit day by day' (*Mankind* 57; *New Worlds* 49). One viable means of framing Wells's futurologies is as a concerted rejoinder to his lingering conception of a stultifying lower-middle class everyday.

Consequently, the futurologies deal with topics impinging upon the everyday: the geographic dispersal of cities (*Anticipations* 33-65); the 'vital matters of transport and communication' (*Anticipations* 100; 83-84) Masterman laments in *Kipps* (219-20); the potential consequences for domestic arrangements under socialism (*New Worlds* 117-139); the provisional policies of a socialist government and the organisation of local governance (*New Worlds* 260-77); the total reorganisation of higher education (*Mankind* 313-355); the manifold repercussions of advances in locomotion (*Anticipations* 1-32); and, an overhaul of publishing norms and the distribution practices of libraries (*Mankind* 356-390). Despite the disparate areas which preoccupy Wells, the fundamental supposition is profoundly simple: 'through circumstances and simplicity rather than through any exceptional intelligence, I arrived ahead of everyone at the naked essential question, [...] "What, then, will work?"' (*Autobiography* 2.652). One vexed reviewer in *Literary World* (1<sup>st</sup> August 1902) disagreed with this approach, and described *Anticipations* as 'a travesty of possibilities' (quoted in *Wells's Critical Heritage* 89). However, Wells's method is a logical response to *Anticipations's* preoccupation with a modern 'process of deliquescence' (83) impacting the 'small things of daily life' (*Utopia* 48). It is notable that Wells attends to the 'small

things of daily life' as necessarily contingent and malleable. Sedimented behaviours and familiar routines are threatened by the 'impending dissolution of a common standard' and 'a world-wide process of social and moral deliquescence', melding previously discrete cultures and peoples in 'the embryonic mass of the new' (*Anticipations* 135, 143, 149).<sup>35</sup>

This ostensibly alarming collapse is a consequence of an emerging globalised capitalism (*Anticipations* 245). In this regard, Wells's thinking presages Marshall Berman's in *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (1982). Berman poses the technological, socio-political, and material upheavals of nineteenth century modernity which saturate the twentieth as 'capable of everything except solidity and stability' (19). They clear the way 'for permanent change, for perpetual upheaval and renewal in every mode of personal and social life' because 'stability can only mean entropy' (94-95). For Berman, the fluidity of modernity, its perpetual deliquescence, is its quiddity: '[to] be modern [...] is to experience personal and social life as a maelstrom, to find one's world and oneself in perpetual disintegration and renewal, trouble and anguish, ambiguity and contradiction: to be part of a universe in which all that is solid melts into air' (345). Wells's cognisance of this instability indicates a keen apprehension of modernity's destabilising effects upon the everyday's materiality. For Wells, these are amenable to some kind of control under the auspices of scientists, technocrats, engineers, and 'capable men who must necessarily be the active principle of the new mechanically equipped social body' (*Anticipations* 100).

Wells subjects protean change to judicious, efficacious human intervention. In this regard, Partington outlines the importance of T.H. Huxley's conception of ethical evolution (*Building Cosmopolis* 27-30), Wells's influential teacher at the Normal School of Science (*Autobiography* 1.203). Nature's indifference, Huxley argued in 'Evolution and Ethics' (1893), might be tempered by human intervention: 'the influence of the cosmic process on the evolution of society is the greater the more rudimentary its civilisation. Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process' (81). Huxley goes on to state that the 'history of civilisation details the steps by which men have succeeded in building up an artificial world within the cosmos' and the progress is such that 'the organised and highly developed sciences and arts of the present day have endowed man with a command over the course of non-human nature greater than that once attributed to magicians' (83-84). Wells's bold, vatic pronouncements are suffused with the feasibility and desirability of a designed, rationally controlled future, and assay Huxley's contention that there is 'no limit to the extent to which intelligence and will, guided by sound principles of investigation, and organised in common effort, may modify the condition of existence, for a period longer than

---

<sup>35</sup> The cogency of Wells's analysis in *Anticipations* is predicated upon his prescient grasp of global contraction: 'We have seen that the essential process arising out of the growth of science and mechanism, and more particularly out of the still developing new facilities of locomotion and communication science has afforded, is the deliquescence of the social organizations of the past, and the synthesis of ampler and still ampler and more complicated and still more complicated social unities' (245).

that now covered by history' (85). Wells was not myopic about the potential iterations of evolutionary change, though. With grim accuracy, *Anticipations* argues that the “muddling through” of military disorder will be displaced as war is ‘drawn into the field of the exact sciences’ (204; 176-214).

The confidence in steady improvement helps to explain the novels’ faith in sublating the everyday, and Nils Claussøn’s (2006) convincing argument for Wells’s belief in the ‘moral and social commitment’ of fiction (372). If the suffocating social mores and economic constraints are exposed to the deliquescence Wells identifies in his Edwardian nonfiction, the adumbration of escape is commensurate with these broader designs, and the novels proffer indicative examples of potential escape routes and the conditions which mandate emancipation. This subtle link between the two bodies of work is strengthened by two tenets in Wells’s thinking. Firstly, he recognises that ‘[w]hatever sort of community you dream of, you realise that it has to be made of the sort of people you meet every day’ (*New Worlds* 225) because it ‘is not averages that exist, but individuals’ (*Utopia* 319). Secondly, Wells insists upon the singular, inviolable probity of individuality, which is, ‘to the modern thinker’, ‘the significant fact of life’ (*Utopia* 181).<sup>36</sup> David Y. Hughes (1977) describes the ‘idea of the uniqueness of all things from atoms to ethics’ as a ‘favourite notion of Wells’s’ (68) commensurate with Sylvia Hardy’s (2008) delineation of Wells’s belief in free will (134-135). Krishan Kumar (1990) even posits Wells as the ‘greatest [...] utopist of the twentieth century’ (206) because his

vision always took in the need for individual fulfilment and personal happiness as well as for the realisation of social goals of abundance and equity. [...] Wells was always conscious that the social goals were not ends in themselves but the instruments of individual fulfilment (210).

Wells’s conception of uniqueness is all encompassing: ‘every phenomenon amenable to scrutiny was found to be unique [...] therefore there might be no such thing as an identical similarity among outer realities but only approximate similarities’ (*Autobiography* 1.223), and this produces ‘a quiver of idiosyncrasy in every sequence and that nature never repeats [...] the universe continues to be unique and original down to the minutest particle of the smallest atom’ (1.225).<sup>37</sup> Wells extends this principle to *Utopia*:

---

<sup>36</sup> This undermines H.L. Mencken’s pithy but fatuous remark in a review of *Polly* (July 1910) that ‘Dickens regarded his characters as a young mother regards her baby; Wells looks at his as a porkpucker looks at a hog’ (quoted in *Wells’s Critical Heritage* 179).

<sup>37</sup> This was a longstanding pillar of Wells’s thinking. First outlined in ‘Rediscovery of the Unique’ (1891) and published in *Fortnightly Review*, Wells posited: ‘*All being is unique*, or, nothing is strictly like anything else. It implies, therefore, that we only arrive at the idea of similar beings by an unconscious or deliberate disregard of an infinity of small differences. No two animals, for instance, are alike, as any bird or dog – fancier or shepherd can tell. Any two bricks, or coins, or marbles, will be found on examination to differ in size, shape, surface, hue – in endless details as you make your investigation more searching and minute’ (106-107 original emphasis). In a subsequent paper titled

The factor that leads the World State on from one phase of development to the next is the interplay of individualities [...] Each man and woman, to the extent that his or her individuality is marked, breaks the law of precedent, transgresses the general formula, and makes a new experiment for the direction of the life force. [...] [The World State] is the universal rule, the common restriction, the rising level platform on which individualities stand (93).<sup>38</sup>

A clear indicator of the irreducibility of individuality in Wells's work is provided by *Polly's* rarefied, mock-Fabian sociologist; 'a certain high-browed gentleman living at Highbury, wearing a *golden pince-nez* and writing for the most part in that beautiful room, the library of the Reform Club' who 'wrestles with what he calls "social problems" in a bloodless but at times, I think one must admit, an extremely illuminating manner' (407). *Polly's* narrator, after quoting from a sociological analysis aping Wells, intercedes:

I come back to Mr Polly sitting upon his gate and swearing in the east wind, and I so returning have a sense of floating across unbridged abysses between the General and the Particular. There, on the one hand, is the man of understanding, seeing clearly – I suppose he sees clearly – the big process that dooms millions of lives to thwarting and discomfort and unhappy circumstances, and giving us no help, no hint, by which we may get that better "collective will and intelligence" which would dam the stream of human failure, and, on the other hand, Mr Polly sitting on his gate, untrained, unwarned, confused, distressed, angry, seeing nothing except that he is, as it were, netted in greyness and discomfort – with life dancing all about him; Mr Polly with a capacity for joy and beauty at least as keen and subtle as yours or mine (409).

---

'Scepticism of the Instrument', originally delivered at the Oxford Philosophical Society in 1903 and published as an appendix to *Utopia*, Wells critiqued normative modes of classification as crudely obliterating distinctions in 'infinitesimal degree from the previous average properties of the species' (363). In this argument, the repudiation of classificatory thinking leads Wells to a radical individuality: 'If you press me back upon my fundamental position I must confess I put faith and standards and rules of conduct upon exactly the same level as I put my belief of what is right in art, and what I consider right in art' (376). This is perfectly coherent with Wells's conception of the World State, too. In *First and Last Things* (1908) Wells avers that socialism 'is to me no more and no less than the realisation of a common and universal loyalty to mankind, the awakening of a collective consciousness of duty in mankind, the awakening of a collective will and a collective mind out of which finer individualities may arise forever in a perpetual series of fresh endeavours and fresh achievements for the race' (102). This conviction appears in the fiction, too. For instance, in *Wheels* Dangle notes "'that life is made up of individuals, of individual cases. [...] General rules don't apply'" (214).

<sup>38</sup> One can trace *Utopia's* contention that the 'State is for Individuals, the law is for freedoms, the world is for experiment, experience and change' (95) to its practical realisation in Wells's later work on a universal paradigm for human rights outlined by Partington: 'With the outbreak of the Second World War, and particularly after 1941 when fascism and communism ranged their forces against each other, Wells realised the need for in-built guarantees which would protect the rights of individuals and minority groups throughout his world state and which would allow a definite popular voice to directly influence the bureaucracy. [...] Thus, in relation to his world-state project, the "Rights of Man" campaign was aimed at establishing a check on absolute power strong enough to prevent the political repression and general excesses of the totalitarian states' (128).

Wells's Edwardian novel provides ballast against the reifying potential of his nonfiction, and *Polly*, for instance, foregrounds individuals potentially lost amidst the conceptual calisthenics. Such a highly tensioned interaction, almost antipathetic, necessitates continual rejoinders across the two modes of exodic critique: from vaulting abstraction and back to the material fact of discrete individualities.

Wells's novels focus on individuals struggling against the limits of socioeconomic norms manifest as utterly banal everyday. These Edwardian concerns are adumbrated in *Wheels*, a whimsical comedy concerning Hoopdriver, a drapery assistant, and a sequence of improbable adventures during a cycling tour of the Home Counties. Draper points out that Hoopdriver 'is trapped inside a rigid social order' (74), and *Wheels* is structured around the tense interrelation of the everyday as trap and escape's frisson. Hoopdriver bemoans his employment: "it's not very high up; there's no freedom and no leisure [...] you are packed in dormitories like convicts, fed on bread and butter, and bullied like slaves" (253-54). This hyperbolic comparison of drapery work to bondage, both indenture and imprisonment, polarises the extreme torpor and exigent restrictions of the workplace and the effervescent promise of holiday as escape: 'he must go on holiday' (*Maps of Utopia* 86); Polly is more extreme and thinks of holidays as 'his life, and the rest merely adulterated living' (*Polly* 362). This is made explicit in Hoopdriver's transformation from someone notable because of 'how little he was noticeable' in the shop into someone 'to whom Agincourt was a reality and draper a dream' (4, 150).

The narrator explains the importance and structure of the dynamic of confinement and release:

Only those who toil six long days out of the seven, and all the year around, save for one brief glorious fortnight or ten days in the summer time, know the exquisite sensations of the First Holiday Morning. All the dreary, uninteresting routine drops from you suddenly, your chains fall about your feet. All at once you are Lord of yourself, Lord of every hour in the long, vacant day (20).

James (2008) argues that Hoopdriver's meekness leads to diminished expectations of his inner vitality but, though 'he may be perceived as unremarkable, this does not preclude him from doing, or at least dreaming of doing, remarkable things' (39; *Maps of Utopia* 84). Whilst James is not wrong, Hoopdriver's exploits can be productively situated within Wells's exodic preoccupation. The opportunity for self-possession coextensive with the holiday's escape, and escapism, is exemplified by Hoopdriver's fabricated identity as a South African ostrich farmer (189). Ostensibly, this is a means of explaining his cockney accent, social infelicities, and solecisms. Jessie Milton, Hoopdriver's erstwhile upper-middle class romantic interest, given the

sobriquet The Young Lady in Grey (33), cannot quite fathom him: '[his] English was uncertain [... and his] manners seemed to her good on the whole but a trifle over-respectful and out of fashion. He called her "Madam" once. [...] He was certainly chivalrous and a trifle simple-minded' (186-87). He eventually confesses to Jessie: "'Ay'm a deraper [...] let out for ten-days' holiday. Jest a draper's assistant. Not much, is it? A counter-jumper'" (248). Hoopdriver's overwrought vernacular and the insertion of an extra, emphatic syllable in "draper" exaggerates the distance between the patina of colonial respectability and conspicuous class division (and transgression). Though if counter-jumpers might forgo the 'decorous figure of the attentive shopman' (10), there is necessary provision for the return leap. Cohen and Taylor note that the efficacy of holidays as escape is, partly, predicated upon 'the quest for a new self' fulfilled by 'shed[ding] layers of [the] old self' and 'posing in the anonymous free area of the holiday as someone else' (136). They also note that this individual is liable to be 'shamefully revealed as a bank clerk' (136), as Hoopdriver is disabused of the 'superstructure' of his ersatz holiday identity (*Wheels* 116), and upbraids himself as a 'shabby liar' (246).

Cohen and Taylor also indicate that holidays are essentially palliative: '[this] is precisely the safety-net function which holidays perform: after the trip one returns home' (134). In *Vol. I* (1947/1958), Henri Lefebvre describes this as the 'vicious circle' of leisure's dependency upon work (40). *Wheels* offers a version of this unhappy, necessary return. After Jessie has been restored to her proper 'social altitudes' (287), the narrator intercedes: '[so] here is the world with us again, and our sentimental excursion is over' (280), and goes on to declare that 'if [Hoopdriver] has to any extent won your sympathies, my end is attained' (294). This is undermined in the novel's final paragraph, though:

He is back. To-morrow, the early rising, the dusting, and drudgery, begin again – but with a difference, with wonderful memories and still more wonderful desires and ambitions replacing those discrepant dreams. [...] The gate closes upon him with a slam, and he vanishes from our ken (296-97).

The simple, declarative, and monosyllabic force of Hoopdriver's inexorable return and the hard slamming gates bracket, and implicitly interrogate, the restorative or imaginative benefits of the holiday now syntactically pinioned by work. The alliterative 'dusting, and drudgery' undermines the optimism of 'difference' as the latter is subsumed within the aural echo as yet another feature of the daily grind.

McKenzie Wark (2011) indicates that, as one form of praxis, though holidays 'can harden into a thing-like routine' such forays are 'not all alienation. Rather, it's a game in which certain tactics prove dis-alienating for a time, then fall short of their own totalisation, cease to work, forcing groups to [...] come up with new tactics' (101). *Wheels* is too critically conscious for even

this incipient optimism. ‘Self-deception is the anæsthetic of life’ (72), the narrator remarks after describing Hoopdriver’s proclivities as a ‘romancer’ prone to ‘decorating his existence with imaginative tags, hopes and poses, deliberate and yet quite effectual self-deception’ (67). Where Wark locates a locus of potential autonomy beyond the everyday, *Wheels* disabuses the reader of even this possibility because, and this is implicit in Wark’s account, such escape is predicated upon an inexorably temporary respite. Wells is cognisant of this problem. The cyclical necessity of return is indicated at the novel’s beginning:

The first morning is by far the most glorious, for you hold your whole fortune in your hands. Thereafter, every night, comes a pang, a spectre, that will not be exorcised – the premonition of the return. The shadow of going back, of being put in the cage again for another twelve month, lies blacker and blacker across the sunlight (21).

Return to the ‘cage’ cannot be, therefore, an unexpected capitulation; the dissatisfying logic and implacable gravitational force of return are built into the structure of *Wheels*. The opening chariness of escape is confirmed by the desolate conclusion, and faintly intimates the title’s fixed revolutions girded by Hoopdriver’s name. Even though the bicycle is a means of escape, the cyclical motion of its wheels intimates, despite, as James argues, ‘greater freedom of movement’ (*Maps of Utopia* 88) the necessary return its apparently linear trajectory temporarily occludes: a hoop driven inexorably back to its beginning.

Such a reading of *Wheels* prompts Draper to indicate the text’s limited ambitions: Hoopdriver’s ‘fantasies are never connected to any fourth-dimensional reality outside himself. His imaginative quest from individual fulfilment is not linked to any more powerful, general challenge to the status quo’ (74). James, conversely, indicates that the reader might be implicated in a new apprehension of people like Hoopdriver who one might not have given even ‘ cursory attention’ (*Wheels* 4):

The author’s choice of an unromantic, unhappy ending deprives his readers of the comfort of thinking that the underlings who serve them in shops all live contented lives. This form of ending forces the reader to confront the economic and class inequalities of such a relationship. [... The] narrator hopes that Hoopdriver’s disillusionment over the course of the narrative might turn his desires away from romantic fantasy towards more concrete political goals (James ‘Fin-de-Cycle’ 45-46).

Given the perspicacious apprehension of the fragile logic and manifestation of escape the narrator evinces, *Wheels* is sufficiently “political” in its foundational critique of escape. *Wheels*, to this end, establishes the ground for the more thoroughgoing iteration of exodic critique found in

*Lewisham*, *Polly*, and *Kipps*, all wholly disabused of facile escapes; in the *Autobiography*, Wells demonstrates his cognisance of the limits of temporary respite: ‘one had no belief in any possible escape in fact, and sooner or later the mind had to return to its needy habitation and its fated limitations. Temporary escape and alleviation by reverie were the easier substitutes for positive effort to get out of the imprisoning conditions’ (*Autobiography* 1.143). With *Wheels* in the background, this chapter will now turn to the Edwardian novels’ attempts to traduce everyday confines and forecast the means and conditions of escape.

Before doing so, it is necessary to outline an early structural fault in Wells’s exodic critique. This indicates both the limits of Wells’s thinking, and the selection of materials in this chapter. In *Wheels*, Jessie Milton, with whom Hoopdriver travels after rescuing her from the dissolute Bechamel, is trapped by gender as much as Hoopdriver is by the drapery. Hoopdriver castigates an inadequate education for his dissatisfactions:

“My old schoolmaster ought to have a juiced *hiding*. He’s a thief. He pretended to undertake to make a man of me, and he’s stole twenty-three years of my life, filled me up with scraps and sweepings. Here I am! I don’t *know* anything, and I can’t *do* anything, and all the learning time is over” (257 original emphasis).

Jessie, on the other hand, has fled the stultifying confines of her stepmother’s prim social set and eloped with Bechamel, who she presumes a bachelor. Mrs Milton ‘furnished correctly, dressed correctly, had severe notions of whom she might meet, went to church, and even at times took the sacrament in some esoteric spirit’ (162-63). In this sense, her predicament and response is similar to Hoopdriver’s desire to overcome his limiting environment. Jessie’s sense of her position is more astute, though. During a conversation in which she implores Hoopdriver to resume formal education, she remarks: “‘You are a Man. You are free [...] I wish I were you to have the chance of that struggle. [...] What you call educated men [...] are quite satisfied [...] thinking of clever things to say to women like my stepmother, and dining out’” (255). Jessie invokes a gendered iteration of the everyday redolent of the six Huxtable daughters, ‘the prisoners in that chaste little fortress on Denmark Hill’ (105), sequestered by propriety and convention in Harley Granville-Barker’s *The Madras House* (1910).<sup>39</sup> The constraints upon Jessie’s ambitions are manifest as ‘a comfortable home in Surbiton’ (211), as a torpid everyday: “‘little things happen and the days pass. My stepmother takes me shopping, people come to tea, there is a new play to pass the time, or a concert, or a novel. The wheels of the world go on turning, turning. It is horrible’” (180). The repetitious carousel of banal everydays is conducive to Jessie’s

---

<sup>39</sup> In St John Hankin’s *The Last of the De Mullins* (1908), Janet De Mullin is similarly contemptuous of women’s limited everydays: ‘You seem to think there’s some peculiar virtue about always living in the same place. I believe in people uprooting themselves and doing something with their lives. [...] I’m sick of this everlasting *obedience*’ (254-55 original emphasis).

exotic desires, just as it is for Hoopdriver, and the ‘turning, turning’ of her days recalls the title’s necessary cyclicity. In language redolent of Hoopdriver’s lordly self-possession outwith the drapery (20) emblazoned with grandiose majuscules, Jessie “‘want[s] to write [...] to write books and alter thing. To do Good. I want to lead a Free Life and Own myself” (180). Jessie’s desire is similar to Helen Walshingham’s in *Kipps*. With Kipps’s capital, she hopes to become a writer, and this ambition, measured against the torpor of Folkestone, is framed in language redolent of Jessie’s: “‘One must do something. [...] It seems so helpless” (*Kipps* 153).

These female ambitions are framed differently in *Wheels* from Hoopdriver’s. Indeed, they implicate the shifting order of gender relations in the period, as the narrator indicates:

we find, not a straightforward motive on the surface anywhere; we find, indeed, not a soul so much as an oversoul, a zeitgeist, a congestion of acquired ideas, a highway’s feast of fine confused feeling. The girl is resolute to Live Her Own Life. [...] Her motives are bookish, written by a haphazard syndicate of authors, novelists, biographers, on her white inexperience. An artificial oversoul she is, that may presently break down and reveal a human being beneath it (*Wheels* 105-106).

This conception of epochal change in gender relations is signally different from Hoopdriver’s in a couple of important instances. Firstly, Jessie’s place within a broader cultural transmutation anticipates *Ann Veronica* (1909). Much like Jessie, Ann Veronica struggles against the impediments of social propriety and patriarchal authority. An anonymous review in the *Nation* (23<sup>rd</sup> October 1909) described Wells’s apprehension of ‘present peculiar conditions, the revolt which comes from idleness, and artificial occupations, and circumscribing tumuli of dead moralities, dead conventions, dead religions’ (quoted in *Wells’s Critical Heritage* 166). Ann Veronica is determined, like Jessie, to “‘hammer [her]self against all that pens women in” and this is conceived as ‘the universe that would not let her live as she desired to live, that penned her in and controlled her, and disapproved of her, the same invincible wrappering, the same leaden tyranny’ (188). She struggles against this world ‘in wrappers’, composed with ‘no particular place for her at all, nothing for her to do, except a functionless existence varied by calls, tennis, selected novels, walks and dusting’ (11-12); her prospective marriage to “‘woman worshipper” (46) Manning ‘would be the wrapped world almost at its best’: ‘a life restrained, kindly, beautiful, a little pathetic and altogether dignified; a life of great disciplines and suppressions and extensive reserves’ (228). There are loud echoes of Jessie’s everyday dissatisfactions: “‘[the] wheels of the world go on turning, turning. It is horrible” (*Wheels* 180). The similarity between Hoopdriver, Jessie, and Ann Veronica is belied by Wells’s repeated evocation of an explicitly gendered component to the suffocating wrappering. Jessie is inhibited by her stepmother, and Ann Veronica is smothered by her father. They are delimited *as* women. Ann Veronica’s father cannot

conceive the torpid enervations of his daughter's confinement and boredom, and rebukes her: "you *do* live, you *do* exist! You have this home. You have friends, acquaintances, social standing, brothers and sisters" (32 original emphasis).

The second, and crucial, distinction to be made between Hoopdriver and Jessie (and Ann Veronica), and one that confirms an irrefragable difference, involves the circumscribed potential of female emancipation. In *Wheels*, Jessie rejoins her social set after her adventures with a 'swift blow that separated' her from Hoopdriver (286). She returns quietly, deferentially, and 'with her hands gripped hard together behind her' (293). Given that her break relied upon Bechamel acting as her chaperone, this meek accession consolidates the implicit limits of her attempt. Ann Veronica's final capitulation, given her staunch belief that if 'individuality means anything it means breaking bounds' (265), is more startling. After a respectable dinner with her father and aunt, she is effusive, and tells Capes:

"I want children [...] and love – love! We've had so splendid a time, and fought our fight and won. [...] I have to go carefully and bear children, and – take care of my hair – and when I am done with that I shall be an old woman. The petals have fallen – the red petals we loved so. We're successes! We are successful at last" (286).

This is an incongruous declaration of success given Ann Veronica's earlier contempt for wrapped domesticity. Within Wells's schematic conception of female characters, such capitulation is absolutely coherent. Bonnie Scott Kime (1990) points out that Wells's female characters 'all too often discover a virile prig scientist' who 'all too soon steps into a position of authority on relationships' (113-14) and constricts the horizon of possibilities available to the previously independent, irreverent female. Whereas the male protagonists 'usually end up with a sense of utopian, ameliorative mission', Kime indicates that 'few of [Wells's] women find meaningful work aside from motherhood' (116). Their identities are effectively subsumed by the dominant male and then, invariably, their biologically determinative function.

Cliona Murphy's (1990) perspicacious account of Wells's limited feminist purview indicates that, alongside sexual liberation's pertinence for his 'self-indulgence' (219), women were posited as 'breeders for his new race' and, to this end, women 'could perform a better service to the state if supported by the state. [...] It is reasonable to suppose that one who felt that motherhood should be enshrined into the state to this extent would not be overly concerned with the cultivation of women's minds' (221). In *Utopia*, Wells advocates that the state remunerate mothers (184-188). This is predicated upon the tenuous supposition that there are essential markers of inferiority in women: 'her incapacity for great stresses of exertion, her frequent liability to slight illnesses, her weaker initiative, her inferior invention and resourcefulness, her

relative incapacity for organisation and combination' (185). Murphy argues that such derogation constrains Wells's ostensible feminism, and enfeebles any realisation of female independence:

he generally seems to have disliked the idea of a nation of independent educated women as entities in themselves. [...] In the end Wells's females always have to return to the fact that they are women, reminded either by their emotions or their health – these in his view control them. One cannot help concluding that the concept of a woman educated to the extent that, in intellectual terms, she is finally independent of man was one which Wells, despite his desires to be avant-garde, could not entertain (224-225).

This astute assessment helps to explain the ultimate capitulations of Jessie Milton and Ann Veronica.

Fundamentally, Wells's vision for female emancipation from the everyday is attenuated by his anterior conception of "Human Ecology" (*Autobiography* 2.646-48) and biological law because women play a crucial, over-determined role in society's evolutionary progress (*Mankind* 18-19). Much like Lefebvre's (1968) positioning of women as most proximate to the everyday and, yet, 'incapable of understanding' it (*Everyday Life* 63), Wells consigns women, despite their education, to a role which abnegates their autonomy; indeed, Lefebvre's cavils are redolent of Wells's assignation of inherent deficiencies: '[women try] to escape by their incessant protests and clumsily directionless claims' (*Everyday Life* 79). As Laurie Langbauer (1999) points out, this is an assignation of blame (21); in *Lewisham*, Ethel, who had early been rebuked as the origin of Lewisham's 'slavery' (47), is seen 'for the first time clearly in the light of every-day' and becomes a *casus belli* for his resentment (183-84). This is convenient for Lefebvre and Wells, of course. The position of women within the everyday in Wells's exodic critique is, unfortunately, limited, and he devotes most of his considerable intellectual energy to the delineation of his male protagonist's escape attempts. Unlike Ann Veronica and Jessie Milton, they do not acquiesce to the captious norms against which they have energetically and desperately struggled.

I see humanity scattered over the world, dispersed, conflicting, unawakened... I see human life as avoidable waste and curable confusion.

H.G. Wells, *First and Last Things* (101)

Exodic critiques of the everyday posit routine, habit, and familiarity as peremptory entrapment. Cohen and Taylor outline the profound bond of imprisonment and escape suturing the everyday, exemplified by Wells: ‘individual and collective forms of resistance – the escape attempts of this book – draw their sustenance from the very air of the prison itself’ (*Escape Attempts* 43). For Lefebvre, this enjoins a singular response: escape as praxis, and the compulsion to ‘conquer the quotidian’ (*Everyday Life* 63). This section of the chapter will examine Wells’s antagonistic criticisms of Edwardian capitalism and his attendant construction of the everyday as an interminable sequence of boring and increasingly oppressive routines in *Lewisham*, *Kipps*, and *Polly*. Against the *Daily Telegraph*’s (6<sup>th</sup> June 1900) contention that Wells ‘has an infinite tenderness for the ordinary’ (quoted in *Wells’s Critical Heritage* 78), this section argues for his thoroughgoing excoriation of the everyday. Wells despaired at the prospect of an ‘intensely undesirable life’ in a drapery: ‘I could not, give myself satisfactorily to this strange restricted life [...] to go on day after day – for ever it seemed to me’ (*Autobiography* 1.116-17).

There are two foundational components to Wells’s antipathy for the everyday. One is autobiographical, and the other critical. Brian Murray (1990) argues that Wells’s ‘frustration and rage’ when faced with the prospect of permanent drapery employment ‘cannot be overemphasised’:

it stayed with him for the rest of his life. As a novelist, he repeatedly portrays characters who find themselves stuck in circumstances that fail to match their talents and expectations; whose sense of suffocation is matched by an equally intense yearning for flight (22-23).

The antipathy goes back further, though, to his parents’ predicament. After taking over a cousin’s ‘unsuccessful china and crockery shop in the High Street of Bromley’, Wells’s parents were

dropped into that dismal insanitary hole [...] in which I was born, and from which they were unable to escape for twenty-four dreary years. [...] And so they were caught. From the outset this business did not “pay,” and it paid less and less. But they had now no means of getting out of it and going anywhere else (*Autobiography* 1.60).

This sense of economic indenture is exacerbated by Wells's memories of his mother's daily routine: '[her] toil was unending' (1.70). There is a telling recurrence of this verb choice in *Utopia* when Wells distinguishes between 'digging potatoes, as boys say, "for a lark,"' and the incessant 'day after day' of toil 'as a dull, unavoidable imperative'; toil is distinguished from autonomous, disalienated production by 'that imperative, and the fact that the attention *must* cramp itself to the work in hand – that it excludes freedom, and not that it involves fatigue' (*Utopia* 105 original emphasis). Wells's careful description of the exigent demands of Sarah Wells's day implicates the derogatory sense of toil; the boys' digging intimates, James argues, 'Wells's utopia [... where] labour should always be *unalienated*' (*Maps of Utopia* 131 original emphasis). Similarly, Betty Friedan (1963) describes the 'enormous demands' of domestic labour imposed upon housewives (as 'wife, mistress, mother, nurse, consumer, cook') as 'the chains that bind her in her trap' (19). Atlas House, his parents' shop and childhood home, was named after the Titan shouldering the world (*Autobiography* 1.60), and the small globe of Wells's childhood memories posit the everyday as a shouldered, imposed prison: as his mother 'going up and down its wearisome staircases', seemingly forever (1.62).

Wells was aware that this iteration of daily existence was a tangible symptom of supra-individual forces. The critical underpinning to the everyday as entrapment involves Wells's uncompromising critique of Edwardian capitalism. Whereas John Galsworthy's *Fraternity* (1909) indicts capitalism's 'fratricidal principle of survival of the fittest' which has 'made the country one huge butcher's shop' (118), Wells's ire is less visceral in *Tono-Bungay* (1909). The *Daily Telegraph* (10<sup>th</sup> February 1909) described the novel as 'one of the sincerest and unflinching analyses of the dangers and perils of our contemporary life' (quoted in *Wells's Critical Heritage* 148); Bennett's review (published under 'Jacob Tonson' 4<sup>th</sup> March 1909) in *The New Age* praised Wells's audacious attempt 'to render in the limits of one book the enormous and confusing complexity of a nation's racial existence' (384). For Wells, the signal contemporary danger is stupid waste (*Maps of Utopia* 107). Amidst the ruinous beginnings of his uncle Teddy's Crest Hill vanity building project, George Ponderevo excoriates 'this immense process of disorganisation' of capitalist profiteering as 'a thing adrift, a fruitless thing' (338):

What a strange, melancholy emptiness of intention that stricken enterprise seemed in the even evening sunlight, what vulgar magnificence and crudity and utter absurdity! [...] It struck me suddenly as the compactest image and sample of all that passes for Progress, of all the advertisement-inflated spending, the aimless building up and pulling down, the enterprise and promise of my age. [...] For this futility in its end, for an epoch of such futility, the solemn scroll of history had unfolded (314-15).

The inane construction matches George's scorn of London's 'stupendous accidents of hypertrophy' (350) and the attendant insatiable, insensible expansions of capitalism: 'first this man made a wharf and that erected a crane, and then this company set to work and then that, and so they jostled together to make this unassimilable enormity of traffic' (351). "Jostle" gestures towards competitive endeavour, and its etymological root in jousting (*OED* 1a), and also intimates the bathetic, risible efforts of one confined to a crowd, rendered incapable of efficacious self-direction; or, as Masterman inveighs in *Kipps*, "[e]very fool in the world panting and shoving" without aim or effect (218). Still, those inveigled in this scrambling genuflect to common injunctions: 'greedy trade, base profit-seeking, bold advertisement' (*Tono-Bungay* 348). The ruinous profligacy of the attempt to steal quap, a highly radioactive and valuable element, is the nadir of this rapacious cupidity. Quap actuates George's piercing, luminous enmity for the mineral as synecdoche for capitalist enterprise: 'it is *cancerous* [...] something that creeps and lives as a disease lives by destroying; an elemental stirring and disarrangement, incalculably maleficent and strange' (297 original emphasis; *New Worlds* 92). *Tono-Bungay's* searing indictment of capitalism's witless, inchoate operations underwrites Wells's commitment to socialism as 'the scientifically-organised State as distinguished from the haphazard, wasteful, blundering, child-sweating state' displacing 'confusion and accident and waste' with 'design and collective economy' (*New Worlds* 183, 186).

Berman describes the capacity for perpetual unmaking and desultory proliferation as crucial to capitalism's perpetuation: the necessary obsolescence of the recently produced ensures endless, endlessly new production girded by a reproduced fungibility (68-71). For Lefebvre, this paradigm 'provides a closed circuit (production-consumption-production)' coextensive with the everyday's repetitions (*Everyday Life* 62). If this is the conceptual apparatus and material dynamo manifest as 'an endless present producing the very-new in the ever-same' (*History's Disquiet* 67) and remains, on Berman's terms, precariously self-sustaining, Wells aspires to a broader perspective. George Ponderevo's pellucid sense of London's profusion as containing 'no plan [...] no intention, no comprehensive desire' (351) is precipitated by a newly discovered, disinterested vantage: 'I have come to see myself from the outside, my country from the outside – without illusions' (353). Wells is more circumspect than Berman about the viability of such architectonics amidst 'uncontrolled acquisitive energy [...] wasting life for us [...] due not to a system but to an absence of system' (*Autobiography* 1.179). Wells offers a diagnosis of this 'crumbling and confusion, of change and seemingly aimless swelling' (*Tono-Bungay* 352): terminal entropy rather than Berman's precarious self-perpetuation. The symptoms are similar, the diagnosis singularly different. Wells's belief in ductile social progress, orchestrated by what Peter Keating (1989) calls 'Wellsian reconstruction on rational, scientific lines' (102), prevents complete despondency.

The problems of capitalism's lack of teleology and injurious iterations are apparent in *Lewisham*, *Kipps*, and *Polly* not as the morbid excrescences of London or the prestidigitation of 'this modern mercantile investing' and 'fictitious values as evanescent as rainbow gold' (*Tono-Bungay* 198-99). Instead, these inane structural conditions are conducive, paradoxically, given interminable cycles of construction and destruction, to a superficial stolidity and listless everydayness: a static wasting of individuals enjoined to enervating, ongoing work within a larger hypertrophic whorl.<sup>40</sup> As with Wells's recognition that utopia is constituted by 'the sort of people you meet every day' (*New Worlds* 225), his structural critique of capitalism is mediated by its realisation for individuals. Draper notes, correctly, that 'Wells craves to join the everyday details he observes to an informing cosmic scheme' (122) and Wells's approach accords with Lefebvre's foundational apprehension of the everyday's importance: 'no matter how precise the economic determinants may be [...] they cannot be used simply as some kind of algebraic calculation. They have a basis in practical, everyday life' (*Vol. I* 190-191). Wells's apperception of Edwardian capitalism's structural instabilities is mediated by the singular pressure exerted upon individuals manifest *as* the everyday; whatever quintessential deliquescence, he was also cognisant of a supervening carapace of cold immobility in which his parents 'were caught' (*Autobiography* 1.60).<sup>41</sup>

Paul Thompson (1992) describes emergent economic conditions conducive to the everydayness Wells elucidates in *Kipps* and *Polly*. An increasingly 'corporate rather than personal' Edwardian employment model involved 'an identification with the function of the service and perhaps with the idea of social authority' (Thompson 161). For instance, *Polly* reduces an individual, over the course of involved dialogue, to their stipulated economic function: 'the prospective employer' (339-40). C.F.G. Masterman (1909), too, was aware that the 'old order of things has changed': 'The personal element between employer and employee is steadily vanishing. And the assistant of today finds himself bound and fettered with this legacy of feudal days which his employer is often using for all it is worth to exploit the labour of the employees' (*The Condition of England* 169-70). Romolo Runcini (1990) indicates that the late nineteenth century witnessed 'the disappearance of the private entrepreneur from the horizons of the market [...] and] socioeconomic space for the individual was pre-empted by the rise of more powerful industrial and financial organisations' (156). In *New Worlds*, Wells identifies an economic 'change of scale' (167 original emphasis): 'while the small men are more and more distressed, the great organizations of trade, of production, of public science, continue to grow and coalesce' (170). This difference in scale is echoed by Runcini. Sweepingly, he describes this as 'the advent of monopoly capitalism [...] cancell[ing] any possible identification between the hero of the novel and his society: the

---

<sup>40</sup> C.F.G. Masterman's review of *Kipps* in the *Daily News* (25<sup>th</sup> October 1905) alights upon precisely this point: 'All the mordant power of Mr Wells's revolt against the mess which men and women are making of their world, against the failure of a life which has attained comfort but no inner serenity or passion or large and intelligent purpose of being is woven into his picture' (quoted in *Wells's Critical Heritage* 124).

<sup>41</sup> In *New Worlds*, Wells offers a brisk analysis of this economic predicament (157-59).

common man replaces “homo faber” (161). The capacity for the common man to appropriate the role of hero is amply demonstrated by Wells’s Edwardian fiction. Nonetheless, Runcini usefully indicates the strictures facing individuals, such as Polly: ‘the hard old economic world, that exacts work, that limits range, that discourages phrasing and dispels laughter’ (*Polly* 386); the early section of *Kipps* is ‘suffused with a sense of [...] impotent immobility’ induced by ‘the stasis of the shop’ (Higgins 461). After the jouissance of the imaginative metamorphoses of childhood play, the systematic ordinance of Shalford’s Folkestone Drapery Bazaar, planned around a simple ‘philosophy of life – to bustle and save, always to bustle and save’ (*Kipps* 56), induces a sense of insuperable confinement. Shalford’s economic dictates are ‘System’ and ‘Efficiency’. His commitment is such that he ‘abbreviated every word he could’ and informs Kipps, with economical aplomb, that “[we]’ll soon get y’r into better shape than that. Make you Fishent. [...] System! System everywhere. Fishency” (54). Shalford’s idiom betrays the limits of his ambition. “Fishent” is an anagram, and near homophone, of fishnet, and there is a suspicion that, despite his designs, inefficiencies and wastages will occur, slipping through the invariably porous net. In fact, Shalford’s decision to always allow for exiguous accounting errors in the name of expediency inspires his ledger clerk to open ‘a private one of his own account with the stamp box that never came to Shalford’s knowledge’ (55).

Christie Davies (1990) describes Shalford as a ‘muddled exponent of a kind of proto-Taylorism’ whose system of ‘minute rules and heavy penalties’ reduces individuals to ‘slave like machines’ within the ‘calculative rationality of work’ (85-86). Evelyn Copley (2009) indicates that F.W. Taylor’s efforts to obviate the ‘collectively self-defeating’ antagonisms of capital and labour through efficient cooperation meant emphasising ‘the *system* rather than the human agent’ and ‘a communal, cooperative method based on rational planning’ (48-50 original emphasis; 73). Ideally, this conceptual apparatus would harness efficiency for collective benefit. In practice, Taylorism’s application meant instrumentalising calculi and the entrenchment of ‘a coldly efficient machine bent on perpetuating itself’ (52). Efficiency was pursued ‘for its own sake’ and contradicted ‘the self-understanding of the autonomous bourgeois individual of liberal humanism’ it was intended to benefit (57). Davies posits Shalford as a farcical proponent of this logic (84-87). Certainly, his attempts are witless: ‘[during stock-taking] the splendours of Mr. Shalford’s being shone with oppressive brilliancy. “System!” he would say, “system. Come! ’ussell!” and issue sharp, confusing, contradictory orders very quickly’ (*Kipps* 60). The incongruous admixture of instrumentality and practical confusion is indicative of Wells’s lucid apprehension of the simultaneous contradictions of capitalism. Wells remains cognisant of the doctrine’s insidious efficacy, and its stipulations of daily labour conducive to a palpable everydayness. Memories of his time in a severely regulated drapery, with a few hours of autonomy in the evening before ‘[l]ights out at half past ten’, precipitated a sense of incarceration: ‘this was to go on day after day – for ever it seemed to me’ (*Autobiography* 1.117). This is redolent of the escape-inducing routines described in *Escape Attempts*

as an ‘elaborate maze’ within which ‘beleaguered individuals wriggle’ (82): ‘there seems nowhere to go – when there is a sense not just of strangeness or oppression but when everything we see around us is transformed into walls, gates and moats’ (214). This resounds in Wells’s work, and Kipps’s quotidian is reviled as unyielding imprisonment. The merely ‘grey routine’ and ‘dreary waste’ of school (40) is displaced by ‘cosmic disaster’ (64): ‘the great, stupid machine of retail trade [...] caught his life into its wheels, a vast irresistible force [...] caught – they were all caught. All life took on the hue of one perpetual, dismal Monday morning’ (62). *Kipps* is grimly totalising: the repetition of “caught” and “all” within six words and across clauses intimates the pervasive inexorability of a common fate, a shared sentence, broadened to encyst *all life*; the uniformity of the everyday is indicated by the singular and comprehensive “perpetual”; and the closing alliteration, softly echoing the second, preparatory syllable of “dismal”, realises a continuity the semantics threaten.

The ‘stupid [...] vast irresistible force’ (62) recalls Wells’s perspicuous critique of disinterested economics, and *Kipps*’s indictment anticipates *Tono-Bungay*’s castigation of capitalism. *Kipps*’s narrator laments the shibboleths of class propriety and economic contingencies producing ‘clipped and limited lives’, such as Kipps’s and Ann’s:

Above them, brooding over them, I tell you there is a monster, a lumpish monster, like some great, clumsy griffin thing, like the Crystal Palace labyrinthodon, [...] like some fat, proud flunkey, like pride, like indolence, like all that is darkening and heavy and obstructive in life. It is matter and darkness, it is the anti-soul, Stupidity (284).

There is a conspicuous development from the earlier conception of a comparable, looming ‘oversoul’ in *Wheels* constituted by ‘a congestion of ideas’ inflaming Jessie Milton (105) to the insidious, glowering figure of Stupidity in *Kipps*. In Wells’s thinking, stupidity is a notable locus of contempt. *Mankind* lambasts Edwardian Britain as ‘a country where stupidity is, so to speak, crowned and throned’ (195), and where ‘[s]lavery still fights a guerrilla war in factory and farm, cruelty and violence peep from every slum, barbaric habits, rude barbaric ways of thinking, grossness and stupidity are still all about us’ (359). Asinine socioeconomic organisation is synonymous with waste, at every level. In George Ponderevo’s final reflections, he notes that a ‘far better’ title for “his” book is ‘*Waste*’; and *Tono-Bungay* posits society’s stupidity as ‘one spectacle of forces running to waste’ (346). Against Wells’s putative sensible ordering, the obtuse and prodigal system, epitomised by Shalford’s maladroit efficiency drive, perpetuates the revolving wheels of ‘a vast [and] irresistible force’ (62) slowly grinding on, and on.

The incipient and hegemonic threat of ‘the anti-soul’ is poised by the narrator as a disinterested and ‘obstructive’ agent (284) but Kipps’s experiences are paramount. George Ponderevo ‘come[s] to see [him]self from the outside, my country from the outside – without

illusions' (*Tono-Bungay* 353), and *Polly* indicates that sociology involves 'bloodless but at times, I think one must admit, an extremely illuminating' discourse (407). Kipps is disabused of conceptual, objective distance by the enervating tangibility of 'the grey common life' (290):

A vague dissatisfaction with life drifted about him and every now and again enveloped him like a sea fog. During these periods it was greyly evident that there was something, something vital in life, lacking. For no earthly reason that Kipps could discover, he was haunted by a suspicion that life was going wrong or had already gone wrong (68).

*Escape Attempts* is interested in the evasive manoeuvres individuals undertake in order to circumvent 'an awful sense of monotony' (46) and 'the sense of imminent deterioration' in automated, patterned behaviour (34). This depends upon fleeting moments 'when we look around and wonder where we are or what we are doing but we soon pick up the threads again and get back to the rich fabric of life' (38). *Kipps* intimates that this temporary questioning unfolds a vista of grey futility and does not necessarily entail an easy resumption of the very routines which precipitated critical self-awareness. In 'some *irrevocable* way' (68 added emphasis), Kipps's everyday manifests a boundless, enveloping 'sea fog'. Minton, Kipps's colleague, offers a piercing apprehension of the everyday's continuity: "got to stick to cribs until it's over. I tell you we're in a blessed drainpipe, and we've got to crawl along it till we die" (61). Rather than the ephemeral disquiet of questioning the everyday or the lucid conceptualisation of capitalism as waste and entropy, *Kipps* posits the everyday as an ineluctable, terminal prison. Minton's evocation of a 'blessed drainpipe' is peculiar; he indicts Shalford's "blessed System" (61), too. Perhaps this is simply droll sarcasm; or, given Kipps's idiosyncratic diction, it is Minton's verbal trope. There is a tertiary, archaic implication of "blessed", though: to injure or hurt (*OED* v2). In this sense, Minton's adjective-cum-verb derogation intimates the harmful consequences of these systems whilst denigrating their presence with plosive, sarcastic brevity. Whatever the subtleties of Minton's particular condemnation, *Kipps* is underwritten by both this conception of a confining, cramped, and ceaseless everyday, and the consequent enmity mandating escape.

Antipathy for the everyday saturates *Polly*, too. The very diction of *The Times Literary Supplement's* (21<sup>st</sup> April 1910) review indicates the novels' shared interests: 'Polly [...] has always an inherent reference to the strange wasteful organisation which lavishly produces him [...] Wells's drama is the challenge to originality offered by the very stupidity of life [...] and pitiless waste which it involves' (quoted in *Wells's Critical Heritage* 176). Murray describes *Polly* as 'a memorable study in frustration and resolve' (53); Draper highlights 'a world of routine uninformed by creativity' and 'the aimless, repetitious life of Fishbourne' (83-84); and James notes that the 'everyday tedium' becomes so severe as to be 'non-narratable' (*Maps of Utopia* 122-23). *Polly* posits 'a world in which every possible congenial soul seemed either toiling in a situation

or else looking for one with a gnawing and hopelessly preoccupying anxiety' (363) and 'every day some new type joined the drifting shoal' (339); this uniformity is underscored by the 'inflexible palings', 'iron fences', and 'disciplined hedges' of suburbia (363).<sup>42</sup> Before his escape to the Potwell Inn, Polly's life involves 'interminable working hours' (324) and a continuous 'monotony of misery' (422). At The Port Burdock Drapery Bazaar, the assistants are 'doomed to toil behind counters' (326). In his own drapery at Fishbourne, Polly still finds 'toil and struggle, toil and struggle' (420). Toil recalls the enervation of imposed work and Sarah Wells's wearisome, perpetual labour. *Polly* insists upon a relentless, granular dailiness. The fifteen years of 'respectable shopkeep[ing] in Fishbourne' (402), defined by longanimity, and constituted by 'the routine of reluctant getting up, opening shop, pretending to dust it with zest, breakfasting' (405), are years 'in which every day was tedious, and when they were gone it was as if they had gone in a flash' (402), in which 'life had never begun' (424). Lawrence Jay Dessner (1973) describes Polly as 'a helpless and passive cog in the social and commercial system from which he derives no profit' (125), and this should be framed explicitly as a problem of everydayness: 'every day and all the days, just the same, echoing his [...] stagnation' (*Polly* 414). The gerund "echoing", its very nonfinite continuity, both denies Polly the active participation of the verb, and intimates an everyday repetition and vitiation of the action's automated, diminishing recurrence.

Polly endures 'boredom indescribable' (318): 'cards [...] bored him to death' (404), he is 'bored and bothered' in Fishbourne (413), and time spent in the shop leaves him 'bored to death' (414); likewise, Kipps's drapery days involves 'plumb[ing] an abyss of boredom' (58). The world is 'interesting' but overlooked by people 'incredibly blind and bored' (*Polly* 440). The weight of ennui, exacerbated by banal conversations with fellow shop owners, drives Polly to the precipice of existential crisis: '[he] felt himself the faintest underdeveloped intimation of a man that had ever hovered on the verge of non-existence' (412); Kipps, hopelessly bored in Shalford's, is described as 'a mere carcase' (58). Any intimation of life is brusquely negated. Posing Polly as a mere 'intimation' of 'the faint underdevelopment', and there is an implication that the narrator is invoking a pallid photograph and therefore only a simulacrum, signals the vitiations of the quotidian slowly, implacably effacing the individual. *Escape Attempts* diagnoses this as "'giving in" to habit' precipitating 'a more total deterioration, a disintegration of ourselves into automatons' (50) within the imposed limits of the everyday; in *Tono-Bungay*, such individuals, the shoal against which Polly jostles, are described as being "'fast asleep, doing their business out of habit – in a sort of dream. Stuffed men would do just as well"' (59). In a moment of self-reckoning, Polly excoriates himself for 'fifteen years of passive endurance of dullness' (420). His quiet malaise is engendered by the everyday, subsumed as a constituent part of that everyday, *and* ensures its mellow continuation: 'he submitted to things' (424).

---

<sup>42</sup> This is strikingly similar to Lefebvre's disdain for monotonous suburban 'pavilions' (*Vol. I* 43).

While *Utopia* promises the aggrandisement of ‘the individual above the average’ (182), *Polly* foregrounds the threat of an individual’s elision. When he is seeking work, the threat becomes so severe as to abrogate Polly’s humanity:

A young rabbit must have very much the feeling, when after a youth of gambolling in sunny woods and furtive jolly raids upon the growing wheat and exciting triumphant bolts before ineffectual casual dogs, it finds itself at last for a long night of floundering effort and perplexity, in a net – for the rest of its life (344).

The net recalls Shalford’s desire for the totalised, “Fishent” organisation of labour. In *Kipps*, this system is pilloried for its inadequacies. Polly is, on the other hand, caught in the bonded strictures of regulated toil which allow for inefficiencies to slip through. The figure of the rabbit is not pursued by voracious hounds. Strangely, the threat is lugubrious, ‘ineffectual [and] casual dogs’ (344). Even as Polly’s individuality is menaced, the agents of this danger are resolutely banal, even everyday, and the logic of their pursuit is, despite the precipitous existential danger, as insipid as its realisation; the anticipated struggle, Polly ‘floundering [...] in a net’ (344), is appropriately disconsolate. *Polly*’s delineation of the everyday adroitly balances Wells’s fervent animus and its necessarily diffuse, bathetic, and overlooked iterations.

The leporine imagery redoubles Masterman’s condemnation in *Kipps* of an inadequate education system that meant, “‘at thirteen[,] being forced into a factory like a rabbit into a chloroformed box. Thirteen! [...] Monotony and toil and contempt and dishonour! And then death’” (220). Where Masterman posits somnambulant enfeeblement, Kipps feels ‘like a very young rabbit in a trap’ of misunderstood social niceties (206), and the close of the novel recalls his ‘once rabbit-like soul’ (296). As a simile, and by *Polly* it has solidified into a metaphor, the rabbit is somewhat incongruous, at least surprising, choice; neither protagonist is notably timorous. The nature of the financial trap, endured by Wells’s parents and which drives Polly, ‘on the wrong side of solvency’, to the ‘bright attractive idea’ of suicide (420-21), certainly involves a fear of bankruptcy. Moreover, the implacable forces of credit and economic necessity do involve a reifying logic similar to the imaginary deprivation of Polly’s, Masterman’s, and Kipps’s humanity, and their various canine antagonists (teachers, employers, creditors), too. Polly’s designation of his neighbour as the “‘chequered Careerist’” and his ‘patterned legs as “shivery shakys’” (412) indicates a subdued trembling. This implicit fear is offset by the dichotomy of the image and, within Wells’s critique of the everyday, the polarity of ‘gambolling’ (*Polly* 344) and confinement within ‘a chloroformed box’ (*Kipps* 220) clarifies the privations inherent in the everyday: escape is joyous freedom; continued torpor means ‘a trap’ (*Kipps* 296). The descriptive jouissance in *Polly* inheres the excited free play of the emancipated rabbit: ‘a youth of gambolling in sunny woods and furtive jolly raids upon the growing wheat’ (344). Polysyllabic adjectival

indulgence gives way, via the plosive austerity of ‘bolted’, to the sequestered inhibitions of ‘a long night of floundering effort and perplexity, in a net – for the rest of its life’ (344). The sentence itself grinds down to monosyllabic simplicity, through the abrupt finality of the em dash, and the closing declaration of terminal infelicity.

The problem for Wells is not reducible to the confines of live-in drapery assistants. Teaching at Whortley Proprietary School is ‘dim and dull’ and induces in Lewisham a ‘sense of the greyness of a teacher’s life, of the greyness indeed of the life of all studious souls’ (7). This sensation, anticipating the enervating grey of Kipps’s ‘sea fog’ (68) and Polly’s pervasive boredom, of sombre, ashen prospects is prompted when Lewisham is required to undertake ‘preparation duty’ overseeing ‘an obsequious little boy with “lines” to be examined’ (6-7). Lewisham ‘took the “lines,” written painfully over three pages of exercise book, and obliterated them with a huge G.E.L., scrawled monstrously across each page. He heard the familiar mingled noises of the playground drifting in to him through the open schoolroom door’ (7). The very inanity of this task, mutually enervating given that Lewisham’s function is to “complete” the work by defacing it, recalls the stupidity of Shalford’s Efficiency, and is emphasised by the immediate juxtaposition of banal work and joyous, proximate play. Lewisham’s melancholy is prompted by the ‘door slam[ing] behind him’ (7). Hoopdriver’s return to work, and the (symbolic) closure of *Wheels*, is complete when ‘[t]he gate closes upon him with a slam’ (297). Loing describes the development between *Lewisham* and *Wheels*: ‘there is no future, even slightly outlined, for Hoopdriver whereas the story of Lewisham is treated as the first serious step of a young man into real life’ (79). *Lewisham* begins by pursuing the slam, and the work it discloses is just as moribund as Hoopdriver’s escapist holiday was exhilarating. After Whortley, Lewisham earns a scholarship for the Normal School of Science and moves to ‘the grey spaciousness of West London’ (53). The thrill of being taught by Huxley is undermined by the city’s indifference ‘to the fact of his existence’ and the quotidian material realities of his limited income, such as his ‘patent waterproof’ collar (53-55). Lewisham feels ‘the dull stress’ of London induced by the startling propinquity of ‘children begging in the black slush, and starving loungers outside a soup kitchen’, and the ‘blazing shops’ of consumption and material surfeit (56); similarly, *New Worlds* opens with the disarming proximity of ‘feasting and pleasure’ and poverty in London: ‘food enough for all, shelter for all, wealth enough all [...] yet we have this’ (17-19). Unlike *Tono-Bungay*’s pellucid excoriation of capitalist waste, predicated upon George Ponderevo having ‘seen life at very different levels’ (3) and ‘from the outside’ (353), Lewisham’s response is conditioned by the very regularity of urban routine. The city as everyday is both dull *and*, as Georg Simmel indicates in ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’ (1903), dulling. Egregious inequality is ‘only one of a perpetually recurring series of vivid approximations’, whose apprehension is ‘continually impeded in the whirl’ (*Lewisham* 56).

If the city's incessant stimuli effectively erode perceptual acuity, Wells posits that this problem is not reducible to the urban jostle. As a process it is more ubiquitous and vitiates, even debases, experience. Inevitably, the 'particular private concrete situation' of the quotidian asserts its material facticity, and 'ideals [give] place to the real' (*Lewisham* 185). *Lewisham* traces the unfolding of this logic through marriage. Lewisham's partnership with Ethel, initially designed as a means of preventing her "'miserable drudgery'" (127), discloses an unexpected banality of 'a strangely narrow world' (185) after their initial, reciprocal happiness ensconced in 'in their little room with the fire burning, the gas lit[,] the curtains drawn', and Ethel 'flushed and enthusiastic' (167). The 'dull and lonely' (186) reality of Ethel's day-to-day unemployment, the growing, if 'tiresome and disagreeable' (163), detailed 'importance of economy in [...] domestic disbursements' (165), and Lewisham's sour recognition that 'any career as a scientific man was now closed to him forever' (188) all serve to effectively displace romantic glamour with familiarity and rancour. Tellingly, Lewisham's acrimony is sublimated as a disdain for 'the social conventions of Ethel's novelletes' scattered around their limited, limiting accommodation (184). Perhaps it is these instances which prompted the *Saturday Review* (16<sup>th</sup> June 1900) to lament that *Lewisham* was 'morbid, sordid, hopeless dull and depressing' (quoted in *Wells's Critical Heritage* 82).

*Lewisham's* marital discord is explicitly framed as a problem also of everydayness rather than exceptional incompatibility:

After all, the rosy love-making and marrying and Epithalamy are no more than the dawn of things, and to follow comes all the spacious interval of white laborious light. [...] Our young couple, emerging presently from an atmosphere of dusk and morning stars, found the sky gathering greyly overhead and saw one another for the first time clearly in the light of every-day (183).

Like the visitors to a polychrome utopia abruptly returned to the 'sullen roar' and 'grey and gawky waste' of London (*Utopia* 342), Lewisham and Ethel face the monochromatic tedium of marriage. The hyphenation of 'every-day' signals the contiguity of those days, their seamless continuance, and deftly intimates the implacable shift from mounting quantity to resented quality. Moreover, and just as Lewisham's "marking" is juxtaposed with the 'familiar mingled noises of the playground drifting in to him through the open schoolroom door' (7), the jouissance of romance, underscored by excited polysyndeton, offsets, and is offset by, 'laborious', everyday repetitions. The lacklustre tincture is 'greyly evident' (*Kipps* 68) in Wells's derogation of the everyday. One consequence of Lewisham's and Ethel's petty animadversions, each leaving 'its scar', is the 'efface[ment] from yet another line of their lives the lingering tints of romantic colour' (184). The 'light of every-day' (183) involves the steady, implacable inspissation of colour

thickened to an oppressive, phlegmatic greyness, compounding Wells's vision of uniformity and circumscription.

Across *Lewisham*, and, most strikingly, *Kipps* and *Polly*, and lurking within Wells's arresting critique of capitalism as entropic waste and experiential fact of the everyday, lies the consolidation of escape's predicate: the quotidian as oppressive routine; the familiar as conducive to boredom; and, the everyday as an encroaching, reviled prison. Wells described his drapery apprenticeship as 'the prison' (*Autobiography* 1.117). This is writ large in *Kipps* and *Polly*. Upon deciding to purchase the drapery in Folkestone, and after enjoying unemployment, Polly is distraught, and his distressed anticipations exemplify the conception of Wells's inflexible everyday: '[it] was like the end of the annual holiday, only infinitely worse. It was like a newly arrived prisoner's backward glance at the trees and heather through the prison gates. He had to go back to harness, and he was as fitted to go in harness as the ordinary domestic cat' (387). Cohen and Taylor alight upon a sense of 'separateness from the world in which we live; its arrangements are somehow not entirely *our* arrangements' (42 original emphasis) conducive to Polly's sensation of an imposed harness of everyday routine. Most conspicuously, and significantly given that Cohen and Taylor build their conception of escape upon prisoners' tactics (32-37), Polly conceives himself as a prisoner rather than his own boss. The threat to individual autonomy, crucial to Wells's utopian imaginary, is so severe that Polly is, as Kipps and Masterman were, summarily denied his humanity. The door slamming behind Hoopdriver reverberates through these novels, along the narrowed corridor of the everyday. On these terms, escape is a prerogative.

“I escape, therefore I am.”

Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor, *Escape Attempts* (236)

Michael Schmidt (2014) describes the ‘movement’ of Wells’s fiction as ‘toward release or escape’ (575) and *Utopia* explicates ‘the cardinal assumption’ of his approach: ‘much of the essential value of all such speculations lies in this assumption of emancipation, lies in that regard towards human freedom, in the undying interest of the human power of self-escape’ (19). In *Lewisham*, *Kipps*, and *Polly* the lure of escape is pervasive, and the macrocosmic ambitions of futurological possibilities are obliquely tempered by the protagonists’ individual cases. The promise of liberation invigorates the novels and the protagonists’ various desires revel in Wells’s belief in the latent plasticity of the everyday as susceptible to considered amelioration (*Maps of Utopia* 77-78). Davies argues that these ‘misfits whose vague and inchoate but nonetheless real wish for self-expression is in conflict [...] with the constraints of their economic position’ (83). This is correct but offers a univocal account of radically different instances of escape. *Lewisham* posits an industrious honesty against both ‘an unsympathetic world’ (177) of exacting employers and ubiquitous fraudulence; *Kipps*, similarly, attempts to negotiate his escape by reconciling himself to the alien manners and mores of his social superiors; and, in the final instance, *Polly* recoils from conciliation in favour of aggressive volition.

In order to preserve besieged individuality, enduring the everyday ‘like a creature which has been beaten about the head and left for dead but still lives’ (*Polly* 319), the means of escape became increasingly desperate. This is true of Wells’s own attempts to terminate his drapery employment. Threats of suicide forced his mother to pay for his ‘exodus’ (*Autobiography* 1.159). This agency by proxy is described as a ‘vital crisis’: ‘I felt extraordinarily desperate and, faced with binding indentures and maternal remonstrances, I behaved very much like a hunted rabbit that turns at last and bites’ (*Autobiography* 1.157). The ‘vitality’ of this crisis signals escape’s inherent value, and familiar leporine imagery posits release as coeval with individuated humanity. Both instances, fictional and autobiographical, at the precipice of mortal despair, generate a purposive, efficacious, and elementally human escape. Wells presents gradually emboldened individuals willing, and able, to “‘smash the world of everyday’” (*Utopia* 347 original emphasis). As such, and as Wild indicates (‘Introduction’ 10-11), these are paradigmatic figures, and potentially politically threatening, for overcoming an everyday the reader might discover to be circumambient, reviled, and, ultimately, brittle. It is worth noting that the improbability, and dubious legality in *Polly*’s case, of liberation from the everyday in *Kipps* and *Polly* presages the difficulties Wells has in firmly locating exodus examined in this chapter’s final section.

Particular instances of Edwardian capitalism induced a specific mode of critical engagement but there were other contemporary factors conducive to Wells's faith in escape. Draper indicates that Wells's Edwardian work was as an interlocutor in a particular milieu as 'a general attempt by writers of fiction to advance from the kind of imaginative secession from contemporary reality which had dominated the 1890s to a new position of critical engagement' (Draper 59). For instance, in *The Condition of England*, Masterman indicates that increasing secularism facilitates a focus upon immediate, material improvements (266) and Wells's disagreement with Henry James is partly explained by a divergent sense of the novel's formal suitability to these circumstantial pressures. The latter's work is purportedly built upon 'social fixity' and 'a rigid frame of values never more to be questioned or permanently changed' (*Autobiography* 2.494). In 'The Contemporary Novel' (1914), Wells indicates that the novelist is not a disinterested observer above their milieu and 'cannot avoid, as people say, putting ideas into his readers' heads', and this is an imperative given 'the atmosphere and uncertainties and changing variety of this seething and creative time' (quoted in *Wells's Criticism* 200). J.R. Hammond (1988) goes as far as to describe the 'fundamental difference' between the two authors as being rooted in Wells's rejection of 'the beautifully constructed and rounded [...] unitary concept of the novel' in favour of discursive, partisan, and critical engagement (*H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* 37-38).

An indicative example of Wells's preferred method is alighted upon in Hughes's perceptive analysis of the subjunctive mood in *Utopia*. Hughes argues that this technique 'invites the reader to an act of participatory imagination, wonder, reconstruction, and at the same time alters his critical faculties because subjunctives question what they seem to state' and, therefore, 'the process of reading implicates one in the process of discovery' (68).<sup>43</sup> *Utopia* opens by enjoining the reader to participate in its speculative project(ion) as it avowedly involves, and is constituted by, 'a sort of lucid vagueness', an 'effect of obliquity', and is anathema to any reader who 'likes everything in hard, heavy lines, black and white, yes and no, because he does not understand how much there is that cannot be presented at all in that way' (8). Hughes is correct in his assessment of the subjunctive mood's implications. This grammatical structure is, moreover, a clarion indicator of Wells's conviction in the discursive potential of the novel, one in which futurology is necessarily collaborative, protean, eminently subjunctive, and commensurate with the possibilities occasioned by 'social deliquescence and reconstruction' (*Anticipations* 246; *Maps of Utopia* 78-79). As much as Wells's stated enmity for the everyday, a foundational conception of contingency underwrites the protagonists' escapes.

---

<sup>43</sup> If too broad, William Bellamy's (1971) argument that the Edwardian novel rejects didacticism and 'invites the reader to share [...] the ongoing analytic process which alone seems able to sustain the self in post-cultural crisis' (13) does pertain to *Utopia*.

Before outlining the development of emancipatory efforts in *Lewisham*, *Kipps*, and *Polly*, it is worth noting that Wells makes exceptionally clear his commitment to escape. An ostensibly innocuous childhood detail is recorded in *Autobiography*, of Atlas House's 'tortuous staircase' and Wells's father being 'reduced to a blind ecstasy of rage in an attempt to get a small sofa up it' (1.41). Nearly verbatim, *Polly* expands the symbol of a sofa 'jammed' in 'the narrow winding staircase':

his father had coaxed, and then groaned like a soul in torment and given way to blind fury, had sworn, kicked and struck at the offending piece of furniture and finally wrenched it upstairs, with considerable incidental damage to lath and plaster and one of the castors. That moment when self-control was altogether torn aside, the shocked discovery of his father's perfect humanity, had left a singular impression on Mr Polly's queer mind. It was as if something extravagantly vital had come out of his father and laid a warmly passionate hand upon his heart. [...] A weakly wilful being struggling to get obdurate things round impossible corners – in that symbol Mr Polly could recognise himself and all the trouble of humanity (346).

In Polly's father's struggle, and the obstinate impassivity of insensible resistance of surrounding structures, lurks Wells's conception of the wasteful frustration and wasted effort inveigling individuals in the everyday. This symbol, moreover, effectively distils the confrontation of individual struggles and the redress of structural inanity in the futurological works; Polly indicates the pivot of this relation: '[he] could recognise himself *and* all the trouble of humanity' (346 added emphasis). More important than the explication of this memory's significance is the momentary and momentous disclosure, 'the shocked discovery', of Polly's 'father's perfect humanity' (346). The everyday confinement that Wells reiterates, and moving domestic furniture is appropriately bathetic, reveals the potentially immediate efficacy of agential action: its *perfect* humanity involves the deliberate overcoming of impersonal obstruction and a demonstration of forceful will; Polly's father succeeds in moving the sofa, and the impeding structure suffers its due damage.

The crux of this symbol, and perhaps the reason it imprinted 'a *singular* impression' on Polly (346 added emphasis) is the flare of agency that such inhibitions provoke. Polly's father reveals the dialectical contradiction seething within the everyday. Lefebvre elucidates the paradoxical 'dual aspect' and 'dialectical movement' of the 'proletarian' everyday:

it tends to overwhelm and crush the (individual) proletarian under the weight of the toil, the institutions and ideas which are indeed intended to crush him. But at the same time, and in another respect, because of his incessant (everyday) contact with the real and with

nature through work, the proletarian is endowed with fundamental health and a sense of reality which other social groups lose (*Vol. I* 143).

The proximity and attendant possibilities in Lefebvre's conception of this contiguity, though he recognises that this entails 'crossing through alienation' as 'man is disalienating himself' (66) rather than abrupt and total transformation, are collapsed by Polly's father. The exigency of moving the sofa explodes into compelling efficacy and adumbrates a 'perfect humanity' constituted by demonstrative and 'extravagantly vital' action (*Polly* 346). Wells implies that this latent potential is dissembled by the everyday's less exacting manifestations, and actually subdued by its mellow(ing) continuity. His escapees begin from this premise.

However, *Lewisham's* iteration of escape is less explicitly transgressive than Polly's father's. Lewisham's relative velleity is commensurate with the given social potential of liberation through concerted, conciliatory personal endeavour commensurate with a collective, protean 'perfect humanity' (*Polly* 346). From the outset, Lewisham submits to his Schema, an assiduously constructed daily rota of proscribed hourly tasks across various academic disciplines (1-4). Wells confesses his dependency on a similar plan, and notes that such arrangements signified that he 'was making my desperate get-away from the shop and the street' (*Autobiography* 1.171). Lewisham, derided in the *Daily Telegraph* (6<sup>th</sup> June 1900) as an 'underbred, loveable hero, endowed with a somewhat useless catalogue of "ologies" and "ographies", and an infinite ignorance' (quoted in *Wells's Critical Heritage* 79), pursues education as a route out of Whortley, and to a position as a qualified science teacher. Actually, the pursuit of Lewisham's studies is less straightforward, and comes unstuck after meeting Ethel Henderson:

anticipation was in the air, the warm earth was parting above the swelling seeds, and all the pine-woods were full of minute crepitations of opening bud scales. [...] Mother Nature's awakening [was] in the earth and the air and the trees, but also in Mr Lewisham's youthful blood, bidding himself to live – live in a sense quite other than that the Schema indicated (5).

At eighteen, Lewisham is certainly biddable. Against artificial, schematic planning, the slow inducements of apricity, of sexual maturation, however nascent, belie Lewisham's best intentions. The first encounter with Ethel evinces a powerful undertow. In a moment of dextrous sophistry, Lewisham notes the Schema's 'absence of a class forbidding study out of doors' (8) and duly is escorted by a volume of Horace on a country walk. His attention is snagged by a 'figure of health and lightness [...] sunlit, and advancing towards him, something, as he afterwards recalled with a certain astonishment, quite outside the Schema' (9). The framing of this moment is critical: Lewisham is searching 'the vocabulary for *ludibrium*, when his attention, wandering dangerously

near the top of the page, fell over the edge and escaped [...] *Ludibrium* passed out of his universe' (9). The choice and repetition of *ludibrium* is crucial. As the etymological origin of ludicrous, meaning to 'apt to be a subject of jest' (*OED* 1), *ludibrium*, rooted ultimately in *ludere* ('to play'), is significantly ambiguous: perhaps the associations precipitate Lewisham's distraction, rendering his attention a prisoner of the Schema and seeking escape; perhaps the play, so proximate to the 'greyness of a teacher's life' (7), is realised; perhaps Lewisham, ignorant of the word's meaning, indicates that his Schema has only played at real endeavour, hence it easily escapes 'from his universe' (9) and this is suggested by his subsequent propensity for open-air study which involves 'looking over the top of his book' and 'glancing over his shoulder' for Ethel (22). The autodidactic play, performance *and* dalliance, gives way to the serious reality of sexual attraction, and Lewisham vacillates between these two seemingly incompatible options, subsequently polarised as two women: the austere Alice Heydinger, freighted with 'an amorphous dinginess' and resolved to 'stir up his ambitions' (59-60), and Ethel's allure.

In the meeting of Ethel, and the suggestive invocation of "escape", *Lewisham* discloses limitations latent in the prescriptive (and proscriptive) workings out of exodus from the everyday. Moreover, Wells is seemingly aware of the paradox of an escape constituted by diligent, exacting work as one merely replicates and consolidates the originary problem of toil. Emancipation demands meaningful alterity. *Lewisham* is preoccupied by precisely the conditions, constraints, and iterative risks of escape. It is easy to elide the novel's concern in this regard; Murray reduces Lewisham to a 'trapped, strapped lower-class' proxy for Wells (41), and John Batchelor (1982) introduces *Lewisham* as a novel of 'insubordination' by reference to the *Autobiography* (126-27). These are insufficient. Though reduced to quiet allusion, the *ludibrium* incident broaches a crucial critique of Lewisham's totemic Schema that mitigates more acerbic criticisms of Wells's post-everyday, futurological planning. Murray is particularly vehement in his condemnation of the hierarchical, ordered totality of Wells's utopian desires (43-45). Though noting an empathy 'with social underdogs' (45), Murray condemns Wells's 'highly unappealing totalitarian' (156) and 'lingering fascistic streak' (75) predicated upon 'a tendency to view life in thoroughly biological terms' (124). Consequently, there is an incipient and real danger that the total, planned utopia verges on totalitarianism (147), and threatens its promised liberty. John Huntington (1991) notes an 'arrogant rationalism' which led Wells to believe 'that if something makes sense for him, it must be right for everybody' ('Introduction' 8), and Lisa Fluet (2004) indicts the 'authoritarian avatars of technological rationalism' in *Utopia* (291). W. Warren Wagar (1990) is similarly suspicious of 'a messianic scientism that short-circuited democracy, menaced civil liberty, and guaranteed that in a Wellsian world order, supreme power would be wielded by technocrats' (43-44). John Carey (1992) describes this process as the displacement in Wells's thinking of freedom by 'system': 'Polly, Kipps and Mr Lewisham are individuals. But the people who occupy Wells's utopias and dystopias are representative, like the people in adverts. They illustrate a design' (147).

These critics do not help one place Lewisham, though. Cleaving the divide between muddled reaction and scientism, and the antitheses of system and individual, Lewisham's susceptibility to sexual arousal and distraction, despite the aggrandised Schema's planning, indicates the fragility of "system", Lewisham's *and* Wells's. This is patent from Lewisham's first meeting with Ethel. Later that evening, and having kept the lines Ethel was forging, Lewisham retrieves the paper 'and after some maidenly hesitation pressed this treasure to his lips. The Schema and the time-table hung in the darkness like the mere ghosts of themselves' (19). Any effect of these limp, minatory idolons is negated by burgeoning romance. Having enjoyed eye contact in church, another subversion of constraining mores, Lewisham cannot read: '[he] was in Love. [...] The proposition jarred with some vague thing in his mind. [...] He paused in front of his Schema, regarding it' (21). After he is dismissed from Whortley Proprietary School, the headmaster having accosted the couple during a walk in a village 'object[ing] very strongly *inter alia* to promiscuous conversation on the part of the young unmarried junior master' (25), Lewisham faces

the practical issue of this first struggle with all those mysterious and powerful influences the spring-time sets a-stirring. His dream of success and fame had been very real and dear to him, and the realisation of the inevitable postponement of his long anticipated matriculation, the doorway to all the other great things, took him abruptly like an actual physical sensation in his chest (47).

The collision of incorrigible sexual desire and schematic life plan frustrates Lewisham. Following a disappointing exam, he is 'angry, bitterly angry' but his various prevarications do not 'blind his intelligence to the manifest cause of his overthrow, the waste of more than half his available evening, the best time for study in the twenty-four hours, day after day. And that was going on steadily, a perpetual leakage of time' (108). All of these instances are proof of Wells's lucid recognition of significant impediments to the realisation of systematised teleology. An insoluble 'antagonism between his relations to Ethel and his immediate ambitions' (108) usurps Lewisham's designs, and his vulnerability to diversion and ostensible self-sabotage signal the fallibility of his detailed, rational planning. *Lewisham's* studied (and felt) ambivalence elucidates the limits of Wells's critics: Wells was explicitly cognisant of the anterior impediments to the best laid plans of reasoned intention.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> This is evident in *Utopia*, too. John Huntington (1987) is quite right to indicate the botanist's important critical function to the more effusive narrator. Continually harping upon a recently ended relationship, the botanist, despite his taxonomic professional habits, provides a deliberate reminder of the irrational as a presence in utopia: 'a voice that speaks for aspects of his unconscious that the rational ideals of the utopian world cannot satisfy' ('H.G. Wells: Problems of an Amorous Utopian' 139). Huntington goes on to elaborate the broader significance of this reading: 'I am suggesting that part of the power of Wells's work derives from the repressed recognitions in it of desires which

In this regard, *Lewisham* implicates Wells's sense of a radical totality of singularities rooted in his firm belief in fixed individual autonomy. Accusations of 'arrogant rationalism' (Huntington 'Introduction' 8) and 'messianic scientism' (Wagar 43) overlook Wells's piercing, vertiginous critique of epistemology. Developing a position first expressed in 'Rediscovery of the Unique', in 'Scepticism of the Instrument' Wells expounds an *idée fixe*: a 'doubt of *the objective reality of classification*' (362 original emphasis). Classification is a paralogue because each iteration within a given grouping inheres irreducible discrepancies from the given categorisation: 'each new individual in that species does, in the distinction of its own individuality, break away in however infinitesimal degree from the previous average properties of the species' (363; 366-368). Wells notes that this does not often impinge upon daily life, as fundamentally incondite categorisations allow expedient movement through the world, but 'in philosophy it matters profoundly' (365). In *Lewisham*, Lagune, Chaffery's dupe and Lewisham's classmate, applies Wells's critique to scientific demonstration: "Is it dishonest – rigging demonstration? [...] Your professors do it. [...] Your chemical lecturers – you may go downstairs now and ask, if you disbelieve me – always cheat over the indestructibility of matter experiment – always" (91 original emphasis).<sup>45</sup> *Lewisham* indicates the consequences of doltish credulity: Lagune is defrauded by Chaffery, after being 'hypnotised to sign a blank cheque' (227). Unmoored from critical circumspection, naivety is potentially disastrous.

Nonetheless, Lagune's conviction that all "new science is elusive" because of the unreliability of "elementary exhibitions" (92) helps one think through Lewisham's vacillations between the inimical forces of Schema and Ethel. The very fallibility of the former is indicative of its inherent failure to recognise the contingencies its proscriptive tabulation summarily displaces; this includes the exemplary instance of Ethel's disruptive, if welcomed, intercession, and Lewisham's discrepant, labile inclinations outwith the formulaic limits of the Schema, 'that ordered sequence of work and successes, distinctions and yet further distinctions' (239). As a means of limning progress, it obliterates process; as a projected telos, the Schema ignores the fluctuating demands of an always unfolding present. In Wells's terms, Lewisham's plan is incommensurate with that which it *categorises*, that which it brusquely elides: 'what we call stable and solid is in that world a freely moving system of interlacing centres of force' ('Scepticism of the Instrument' 373). In *Utopia*, this is expressed as an ideal state which is 'kinetic and not static' (81). Carey characterises Wells's utopia as rigid, elitist, panoptic (126-28), and anti-democratically organised around four 'main classes of mind [...] called, respectively, the Poietic, the Kinetic, the Dull, and the Base' (*Utopia* 257; 256-68). These criticisms ignore both the utopian pliability Wells describes and, moreover, the cavils of an interloping utopian: '[the] world, he held, was

---

he cannot acknowledge and which are incongruent with his rational, utopian ideals but which he is unable to explain away' (143).

<sup>45</sup> In 'Scepticism of the Instrument', the corollary of conceptual instability leads Wells to advocate the 'repudiation of demonstration' (377).

overmanaged' (123). *Utopia's* narrator dismisses this individual as a 'poor simple idiot [...] feeble and insane' (123). Given the tractability of the utopian project and the manifest failures of Lewisham's Schema, this idiot's signal complaint is, at least partly, Wells's, too.

If *Lewisham* poses teaching, marriage, and determinative planning as incommensurate with meaningful escape, its exodic teleology lies elsewhere; predictably, Ethel's ultimate function is procreation (235-39). After Chaffery absconds and abandons Ethel's mother, the Lewishams move to Clapham and part-let the Chafferys' house, and Lewisham continues tutoring, work which changes their financial affair from 'the catastrophic to the sordid' (190). This does not induce restive acrimony in Lewisham. His response is measured: "We're all in the same boat," he repeated after an interval, and continued drumming. He was chiefly occupied by the curious fact that they were all in the same boat' (223). This is a choice image. Superficially, Lewisham is sequestered within the given and limited confines of the vessel, and those aboard are exposed to the vicissitudes of impersonal currents. Despite this apparent vulnerability, a buoyant, itinerant boat, rather than offering immobile resistance, rides the variable, exogenous flux upon which it is borne. Lewisham's reflective pause, and the suggestive repetition of the image, indicates the boat's significance. Rather than the rigidity of the Schema, incompatible with the reality it ostensibly supervises, the boat's mobility indicates an acceptance of a necessary plasticity. Disabused of his schematised grandiosity, Lewisham corrects Alice's misconceptions of his potential: "you've overrated me. [...] I've got to simplify – and that's the plain fact of the case" (234).

Accession to continuity, outwith the self-aggrandisement of personal improvement, is crystallised by the concluding disclosure of Ethel's pregnancy. Left alone, and holding the yellowed artefact of the rediscovered Schema, Lewisham reckons it 'but a little thing [...] a point of departure', and muses: "it was vanity [...] A boy's vanity. For me – anyhow. I'm too two-sided.... Two-sided?... Commonplace" (238). The 'red-hot ambition of world mending' is abandoned, and he turns to

"the Child. The future is the Child. The Future. What are we – any of us – but servants or traitors to that? [...] And yet – it is almost as if Life had played me a trick – promised so much – given so little [...] No! One must not look at it in that way! That will not do! That will *not* do. [...] In itself it is a career – the most important career in the world. Father! Why should I want more? [...] This alone is life! For this we were made and born. All these other things – all other things – they are only a sort of play" (239 original emphasis).

Hunter contends that Lewisham is acquiescing, 'half-willingly, half-resentfully, into an ordinary house and ordinary life full of gradual changes he cannot change' (205), and Richard Gregory

expressed a desire to “go to [Lewisham] and rescue him from the miserable life in which [Wells] leave[s] him’ (quoted in *The Time Traveller: The Life of H.G. Wells* 152). Clearly, these are specious accounts of Lewisham’s deliberate sanctioning of a new, impersonal prerogative: life outwith the parochial, and misconceived, ambitions of schematic, individual attainment. Very deliberately, Lewisham destroys the Schema: ‘[he] doubled the halves and tore again, doubled again very carefully and neatly until [it] was torn into numberless little pieces. With it he seemed to be tearing his past self’ (240). Lewisham finally escapes the purview which was so delimiting. This is signalled by the ‘numberless little pieces’. Of course, the pieces are calculable. One would simply have to multiply the number of folds and tears to count the resulting pieces, but Lewisham consciously forgoes the Schema’s exactitude, and there is a subtle, telling acceptance of the epistemic ambiguity outlined in ‘Scepticism of the Instrument’.

Fundamentally, Lewisham’s escape is the concerted release from the dual antagonisms of Ethel and Schema, each posited as inhibitive, and the embrace of an evolutionary modus predicated upon yielding, ameliorative teleology. This is clear, and, yet, critics have offered pessimistic readings of Lewisham’s decision. Murray posits Lewisham as a ‘trapped, strapped lower-class figure’ facing lifelong misery (41). Higgins contends that *Lewisham* concludes with a manifestation of his emotional maturity, tearing up the schema, and the wilful abandoning of any prospective release (469); Draper, though he does acknowledge the impersonal progress Lewisham accedes to, poses this response as ‘express[ing] hope rather than conviction’: ‘there is no getting away from the fact that it is also a submission to injustice’ (76). These critical accounts occlude Lewisham’s reconception of purpose, which offers an expedient means of circumventing the nominally stultifying acquiescence to parenthood, and the work and domesticity he had previously struggled against. A. James Hammerton’s (1999) suggestion that Edwardian masculine identity, repudiating ‘demeaning caricatures of Pooterism’, by foregrounding ‘a commitment to, rather than a flight from, domesticity’ (320-21) is more astute. *Lewisham*, however, occupies a more specific place in Wells’s thinking. Wells was clear about the importance of this dialectical conception of progress, and enjoined individuals to remember that ‘that which was *in* him, the impersonal, the man in general, which is as much our inheritance as our human frame’ (*Autobiography* 2.672 original emphasis) and, in *The Discovery of the Future* (1902), argued that individual futures ‘must remain darkest and least accessible’ but ‘the knowledge of the future will be general’ (45-46). However obliquely, *Lewisham* adumbrates *Mankind’s* subsequent explication of Wells’s belief in general progress:

each generation is a step, and each birth an unprecedented experiment, directly it grows clear that instead of being in an eddy merely, we are for all our eddying moving forward upon a wide voluminous current [...] Every part contributes to the nature of the whole, and if the whole of life is an evolving succession of births, then not only must a man in

his individual capacity [...] contribute to births and growth and the future of mankind, but the collective aspects of man (*Mankind* 18-19; *First and Last Things* 78-79).

One of the barques caught in this vast epochal swell contains Mrs Chaffery, Lewisham, Ethel, and an unborn child, and it is to this cosmic temporal current that Lewisham entrusts himself. There is a cogent humility in this decision, too, prefiguring *Utopia's* somewhat bathetic recognition that the imagined paragon's inhabitants are 'everyday people [...] much as the everyday people of earth are' (220). Abandoning Ethel's association with torpid oppression inimical to his singular intentions, Lewisham escapes into the deep time of evolutionary progress.<sup>46</sup>

*Lewisham's* eventual escape involves the concession of individual limitation, and accepting the primacy of dilatory, planetary improvement. Though Higgins argues that Kipps, similarly, does not reject 'the social world outright' (470), and even if Batchelor's analysis of *Kipps* centres on the protagonist's fraught negotiation of unfamiliar class niceties (131-35), the novel's iteration of escape foregrounds the individual's greater importance. This comes at the expense of *Lewisham's* genuflection to contextual pressures. Despite a logical optimism, *Mankind* does lament the necessity of Lewisham's final acquiescence: '[at] present it is a shameful and embittering fact that a gifted man from the poorer strata of society must too often buy his personal development at the cost of his posterity' (69). The apparatus of *Kipps* facilitates improbable escape without subsuming the protagonist; Wells has form here: in *Utopia* the narrator is 'upon some high mountain pass in the Alps' before being summarily transposed: 'behold! in the twinkling of an eye we are in that other world' (24). Kipps's journey is shorter but similarly unexpected and jolting. In this regard, and alongside greater insistence upon individual autonomy, *Kipps* indicates a development of Wells's exodic imaginary from *Lewisham*.

Wells was explicitly aware of the Dickensian influence whilst writing *Kipps*, whose protagonist is described as 'a mute inglorious Dickens' (78), and *Tono-Bungay* (*Autobiography* 1.409; 2.639). The improbable, fortuitous intercession of chance is a clamant echo. In *Kipps* this takes the form of the garrulous and dissolute drinker Chitterlow, an aspiring playwright who crashes into the narrative, and Kipps:

he crossed at the corner of Tontine Street heedless of all mundane things. And there it was that Fortune came upon him, in disguise and with a loud shout, the shout of a person

---

<sup>46</sup> Bennett's *A Man from the North* (1898) ends similarly to *Lewisham*. Despite Richard Larch's unrealised literary ambitions strongly redolent of Lewisham's, Bennett's novel concludes with an acceptance of formerly 'uninteresting' and 'horrid' suburbs (68): '[in] future he would be simply the suburban husband – dutiful towards his employers, upon whose grace he would be doubly dependent; keeping his house in repair; pottering in the garden; taking his wife out for a walk, or occasionally to the theatre; and saving as much as he could' (177). Moreover, the prospect of children, through whom Larch's aspiration might be realised (178), relies upon the same prospect of steady amelioration as Lewisham's, albeit on a smaller scale.

endowed with an unusually rich, full voice, followed immediately by a violent blow in the back. [...] Then he was on all fours in some mud that Fortune [...] had heaped together even lavishly for his reception (82-83).

Kipps's walk is induced by 'incredible despondency' and 'profound melancholia' at the prospect of not seeing his tutor, Helen Walsingham, after the wood carving classes conclude (82); Chitterlow's arrival also provides the mechanism by which their engagement is facilitated. The details of the accident are significant. Kipps crosses "Tontine Street" and is literally waylaid by Fortune. The street name intimates that Kipps moves from the option of a conventional tontine as a means of remuneration and a collectivised provision of improvement to the aleatory, and considerably more expedient and lucrative, inheritance of a "fortune [...] of] twelve 'undred pounds a year'" (114-15). Lewisham's steady, laborious efforts at self-improvement and socioeconomic ascent, which might involve a tontine, are rejected as Kipps crosses over from this option and is swept along by Fortune.

The odd urban nomenclature indicates an important shift in Wells's conception of escape. Hammond argues that the convictions expressed in 'Scepticism of the Instrument' and 'The Rediscovery of the Unique' evince the contingency of 'all philosophy [...] all political thought, all psychology' and, therefore, 'man's provisional nature', and that this mutability infuses Wells's novels: 'a relatively stable environment is fractured by the introduction of a catalyst [...] akin to a chemical reaction in a laboratory experiment, with characters reacting on one another in response to the disturbing agent' (*H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* 23). As a reading of a character like Chitterlow, Hammond's approach is implicitly predicated upon an extant parity or equanimity into which the reactant is introduced.<sup>47</sup> This is not the case in *Kipps* as the novel scrupulously evokes the indentured miseries of the drapery. Kipps is expressly unhappy; in this instance, the physical proximity and class divide between the 'beautiful' Helen Walsingham and himself induces 'a sense of inferiority [...] positively abysmal' (70-71). The depths of Kipps's ennui, exacerbated by the prospective vista of 'servile years' (66), mandates expedient release. Chitterlow performs this function. After their initial coming together, Chitterlow plies Kipps with whisky, 'to restore him' (99), and detains him until after the "'ouse door [shuts] at 'arf-past ten'" (90) leaving him locked out and subsequently unemployed. Given his contributory role in the dismissal, Kipps's is reticent when Chitterlow reappears with a newspaper advertisement seeking "'WADDY or KIPPS. If Arthur Waddy or Arthur Kipps, the son of Euphemia Kipps [...] born in East Grinstead [...] on September the first, eighteen hundred and seventy-eight'" (106-07). Kipps asks his colleague Buggins for advice on advertisements claiming respondents will receive

---

<sup>47</sup> James is more astute. He notes that Wells's 'utopian writing constitutes a catalytic intervention to ensure that the progress is faster and better organised' (*Maps of Utopia* 129). It is, therefore, a concerted intervention prompted by perceived deficiencies in the extant order.

“something greatly to [their] advantage”, and is met with scepticism: “Hide” (111). Buggins posits that such notices involve debts “more often than not” (110). Privately, Kipps hopes for a hundred or fifty pounds (111). Chitterlow is more optimistic: “you’re going to strike it Rich. [...] It maybe anything – it may be a million” (106-07). After *Lewisham*’s assessment of honest, toilsome attempts, *Kipps* proffers escape as a miraculous, capricious intercession in the everyday. Chitterlow concedes as much: “took that newspaper up to get my names [for a play] by the merest chance” (106).

Upon discovering that Young Walshingham has been “speckylating our money [...] and] took ’is ’hook [...] I mean ’e’s orf and our twenty-four thousand’s orf too” (285), Kipps faces “beginning again” in a drapery shop and Ann going to live with her brother in London (290): “back to work, day after day – I can’t stand it Ann” (289). The conscious and explicit threat of the everyday is alleviated by another improbable intercession. Chitterlow’s first drunken encounter with Kipps involved a lengthy discussion of a play ‘as well constructed as anything Ibsen ever did’ (95) with a “ripping opening scene [...] which] had something in it that had never been done on the stage before [...] namely, a man with a live beetle down the back of his neck trying to seem at his ease in a roomful of people” (90); in order to give “a Real Ibsenish Touch – like the *Wild Duck*”, the play is titled “the Pestered Butterfly” (142). During this meeting, Kipps had, apparently, “said something – about buying half of it. [...] Said you’d take a fourth share for a hundred pounds. [...] You’ll have a gold mine in that quarter share” (143). Despite Helen’s remonstrations, Kipps invests ‘two thousand pounds’ (206). Chitterlow promptly disappears; his infrequent postcards are indecipherable ‘hieroglyphics’ (276), and Kipps reckons himself “a brasted fool” for investing (288). After the embezzlement of nearly all the Kippses’s money, and having established themselves as modest booksellers,

Chitterlow returned, appeared suddenly in the shop doorway. [...] It was the most unexpected thing in the world. [...] It was amazing beyond the powers of Kipps. [...] For a long second everything was quietly attentive. Kipps was amazed to his uttermost; had he ten times the capacity he would still have been fully amazed (297-98).

The text’s diction is notable during Chitterlow’s return: ‘a singular radiance of emotion upon his whole being; an altogether astonishing spectacle’, ‘that most excitable and extraordinary person, still in an incredibly expanded attitude’, his ‘tremendous speech’, ‘his extraordinary facial changes’, bearing ‘an exiguous lady’s handkerchief, extraordinarily belaced’, ‘[he] was enormously excited’, and leaves with a ‘buoyant walk, buoyant almost to the tottering pitch’ (298-301). Kipps’s reiterated amazement and the lavish superlatives test the reader’s credulity. The buoyant diction is certainly commensurate with the felicity of the novel’s denouement, and Chitterlow’s gait quietly sends up the plausibility of the conclusion with daring blatancy. Kipps’s amazement is

repeated because his escape *is* incredible, extraordinary, tremendous, and, even, belated: an adroit, winsome design completed with a decorous flourish.

Though the means is serendipitous, the novel depends upon Kipps's ultimate escape. More than *Lewisham*, this is a question of individuation, of Kipps's idiolect and idiosyncrasies when confronted with the confusing etiquette and vexatious harness of middle class mores. The desired 'transformation into an English gentleman, Arthur Cuyps, frock-coated on occasions of ceremony, the familiar acquaintance of Lady Punnett, the recognised wooer of a distant connection of the Earl of Beauprés' (166) proves chastening. When Kipps makes a foray into the parochial world of London hotels, he feels conspicuous, exposed: 'The entire dinner party on his right, the party of the ladies in advanced evening dress, looked at him... He felt that everyone was watching him and making fun of him' (226). Though self-conscious and ashamed, Kipps is 'glad he wasn't one of them': 'In a few moments all Kipps's ideals were changed. He who had been "practically a gentleman" [...] was instantly a rebel, an outcast, the hater of everything "stuck up"' (227). Despite Coote's concerted efforts, Kipps's 'open secret of his desire for self-improvement', and Young Walshingham's instructions concerning how to buy cigarettes, 'order hock for lunch and sparkling Moselle for dinner', 'look intelligently at a hotel tape', 'sit still in a train like a thoughtful man instead of talking like a fool and giving yourself away' (185), Kipps confesses to Ann: "'I 'aven't a friend in this world! I been and throwed everything away. I don't know why I done things and why I 'aven't. All I know is I can't stand nothing in the world no more. [...] I *been* so mis'bel'" (247 original emphasis). The concession of autonomy exacted by acceding to a proscriptive set of social codes, which involves "cutting" his former colleagues, is anathema to Kipps's happiness; in fact, Shalford's is simply replaced by another, equally exacting and arcane "System". Ultimately, Kipps rejects the demands placed upon him, and his marriage to Ann, his childhood neighbour, indicates *Kipps's* resistance to cynical social climbing. Such an ascent constitutes a compromised escape, perhaps no escape at all. *Lewisham* adumbrated the constraints imposed upon an individual by anterior paradigms such as the Schema, and *Kipps* extends this critique to class governance of conduct. 'Submission to Inexorable Fate took Kipps to the Anagram Tea' (233), the narrator declares with majuscule force. Helen's response to their engagement is telling: 'her soul rose in triumph of [Kipps's] subjection [...] behind him was money and opportunity, freedom and London' (164). Such meretricious appeal is a delusive cynosure given its recapitulation of Kipps's initially reviled submission to the organised everyday of the Bazaar.

William Morton Payne in *Dial* (1<sup>st</sup> January 1906) bemoaned Kipps's lack of 'adaptability' and inability to slough 'off even the externals of that habit fashioned for him by his instincts and surroundings' (quoted in *Wells's Criticism* 127). However, Kipps's repudiation of 'the Argus eyes of the social system' (*Kipps* 260) reiterates Wells's concern for individual autonomy. Attending the perplexing and utterly banal Anagram Tea, where Kipps is reduced to repeating "'oo, rather'"

(234-35) amidst the bromidic pleasantries, he feels ‘the smouldering fires of rebellion [leap] to flame again’ (236). Escape is not coextensive with affluence; Masterman notes that “‘smart society is as low and vulgar and uncomfortable for a balanced soul as a gin palace, no more and no less’” (218). Wells’s concern with the probity, and quiddity, of escape in *Kipps* foregrounds the inviolable primacy of the individual. *Utopia*, published in the same year as *Kipps*, reiterates this conviction. ‘To have free play for one’s individuality is [...] the subjective triumph of existence’ (41), the narrator avers, and this is the given, if ideal, function of the state: ‘our political and economic order is becoming steadily more Socialistic, [and] our ideals of intercourse turn more and more to a fuller recognition of the claims of individuality’ (92). *Kipps* mediates the fraught relationship between prospective individual liberty and its political realisation. In the meantime, the exigent pressure of the everyday demands extraordinary means of escape, and Wells willingly provides them. Kumar’s staunch defence of *Utopia* argues that its status as fiction avoids ‘the rigidity and aridity of the conventional treatise in politics or sociology’ and means that Wells ‘allowed [for] an exploration of possibilities, together with the indication of complexities and contradictions, quite beyond the scope of the political tract’ (207). There is no need to restrict Kumar’s astute observation to *Utopia*. *Kipps*’s remarkable, magnificent transcendence of this divide manages to avoid escape’s current compromises, retain the individuality Wells so values, and leap out of the everyday via the incredible provisions of the novel’s plotting. Emancipation in *Kipps* turns from Lewisham’s conciliation to the preservation of the individual escapee.

In this regard, *Kipps* prepares the ground for Polly’s escape. The former’s individuality is guaranteed by propitious and implausible providential design; the latter is irradiated by the meaningful, efficacious ability to escape which is denied Lewisham and Kipps, and confirms that *Polly*’s deliberation of escape is ‘as much about renunciation as reform’ (Higgins 470). In this regard, the novel indicates the shortcomings of Linda R. Anderson’s (1988) contention that Wells acceded to the ‘vital importance’ of equilibrating free will and determinism in his work (114; 130). *Polly* ratifies, and is girded by, the aggrandisement of ‘the human power of self-escape’ (*Utopia* 19). This is indicated from the outset. Rendered in his ‘private and particular idioms’, *Polly* opens with an emphatic denunciation: “‘Oh! *Beastly* Silly Wheeze of a Hole!” He was sitting on a stile between two threadbare-looking fields, and suffering acutely from indigestion’ (313). Before his self-escape, this interjacent positioning indicates the proximity of change. Polly has broached the threshold without, yet, breaching it, and the propinquity of the possible is crucial to Wells’s developing paradigm of escape.

Also apparent from the novel’s opening is Polly’s “‘upside down way of talking’” (478), another indicator of his inchoate and forceful individualism. Kipps’s ‘clipped, defective accent’ (155), which merely indicates his class, evolves into Polly’s playful habit of forging neologisms; perhaps this is gleaned from Wells’s predilection for ‘burlesque description’, such as calling an umbrella an ‘Umbler pop’ (*Autobiography* 2.439-40). Polly’s lexical creativity and garbled

pronunciations saturate the novel. Some are idiosyncratic verbal mishaps: “benifluous influence” (464), “[m]editatious” (379), “intrudaceous” (372), describing a bicycle as “my friskiacious palfry” (368). Some are humorous. Polly spends his free time in cribs creating soubriquets: “Soulful Owner of the Exorbiant Largenial Development” – an Adam’s Apple being in question’ (338). Others are suggestively ambiguous. Describing Uncle Jim as a “noosance” (463), Polly’s intimation of noose presages Jim’s death and his experiences of carceral “reform” (450). There is also a connotative quality to Polly’s wordplay. He describes a wound as “a scrase” (378) and collapses scratch, graze, and scrape into the confused immediacy of pain outwith the iterated experiences insinuated by denotative word usage. “Exultant, Urgent Loogoobuosity” (338), in its extended, languorous vowels befits Polly’s boredom. His bicycle allows for “[e]xploratious meanderings” (365), and the extra vowels in the imaginative adjective indicate cycling’s expansive possibilities. Perhaps most suggestively, and indicative of ‘Polly’s innate sense of epithet’ (443), Kaiser Wilhelm is described as “Xerxiacious” during a conversation about “the German peril” (415). Polly interpolates the historical recurrence of international violence, and his freshly coined adjective indicates the voracious nature of both Xerxes and, presciently, the First World War. Polly dissolves three distinct potential meanings (voracity, Xerxes, Wilhelm) and melds them in one, singular utterance.

There are different explanations of Polly’s idiolect. Whereas Kipps’s education is characterised by ‘stuffiness and mental muddle’ (38), Polly’s is disastrous (318). Thereafter, Polly ‘specialise[s] in slang and the misuse of English’ and ‘mispronounced everything in order that he shouldn’t be suspected of ignorance, but whim. “Sesquippedan,” he would say. “Sesquippedan verboojuice. [...] Eloquent Rapsodooc” (327). Critics have elucidated the potential importance and implications of Polly’s antic speech. Batchelor relegates the habit to a ‘subversiveness [...] entirely playful’ (138), and, in his monograph on Wells (1985), describes Polly as ‘a comic novelist manqué [whose] anarchic phrase-making is one of the pleasures of his inner life’ (89). Given the subtle complexities involved, Batchelor’s account is inadequate. Parrinder does highlight the seditious tendencies latent in neologistic resistance to the everyday’s banality (*Tono-Bungay and Mr Polly* 47). Draper indicates that Polly’s expressions of imaginative engagement, even as they evince resistance to the miseries of the drapery, risk a merely conceptual escape (115), and Hunter describes these instances as ‘daydreaming’ (72). *Escape Attempts* indicates the fugacious efficacy of fantasies as ‘a way of getting away from the world’ (107) because they ‘always return’ (101). This is certainly true of Polly’s reprieve in the ‘World of Books, happy asylum, refreshment and refuge from the world of everyday’ (*Polly* 407), and the imaginative ebullience of his badinage provides a similarly brief reprieve. When Polly feels himself ‘the faintest underdeveloped intimation of a man that had ever hovered on the verge of non-existence’, his rejoinder is indicative of wordplay’s corrective relief: [Polly] called [Hinks] the “chequered Careerist”, and spoke of his patterned legs as “shivery shakys” (412). Language is Polly’s guard against quotidian

misery and self-doubt. As a means of ensuring individuality, his neologistic impulse facilitates an utterly subjective reinscription of an imposed everyday. Taylor and Cohen are resolutely sceptical of the ultimate efficacy of this tactical response. Not only does imaginative reverie risk repetition and, eventually, an everyday familiarity, it is complicit in sustaining the quotidian miseries it ostensibly abnegates and ‘become[s] part of the fabric of life – as supportive of reality as the most everyday routine’ (105). Daydreaming at work, or the ephemeral indulgence of Polly’s playful reinscription of the drapery’s “‘Cosy Comfort at Cut Prices’” as “‘Alliterations Artful Aid’” (331), still leaves him at work. However, Parrinder, Draper, Hunter, and Cohen and Taylor all overlook the signal implication of freely creative neologistic brio. Within Wells’s exodic schema preoccupied with the maintenance and celebration of individuality, Polly’s unique lexicon is outwith the ‘vocabulary and grammar’ which inhibits the freedom of fantasies (*Escape Attempts* 95). Polly’s language misuse is deliberately, conspicuously ungrammatical and wilfully mercurial. Voiced beyond the normative purview of lexical computability, Polly retains and sustains his individuality through incorrigible verbal unpredictability, anathema to Lewisham’s Schema. Avoiding psittacism through the ‘[q]ueer incommunicable joy [...] of the vivid phrase that turns the statement of the horridest fact to beauty’ (405), Polly’s diction also indicates an active resistance to the stolid passivity of the everyday.

Kenneth B. Newell’s (1968) suggestion that Polly’s neologisms are ‘the only way in which he was active’ (88) is truer to their function. Newell misconstrues “activity” on Polly’s part, though. His linguistic play adumbrates an individuality that must be practically realised and Parsons’s dismissal from the Port Burdock Drapery Bazaar is another important preparatory element in Polly’s eventual escape. Parsons, having “‘kept down [his] simmering, seething, teeming ideas’”, desires to revolutionise window dressing at the Bazaar, and does so without permission (330). The “‘pieces of stuff in rows, rows of tidy little puffs’” (329) are overturned by Parsons: ‘a huge asymmetrical pile of thick white and red blankets twisted and rolled to accentuate their rich wooliness, heaped up in a warm disorder, with large window tickets inscribing blazing red letters’ (331). Bristling with adjectives, the narrator’s approbation, intimating Polly’s, is explicit. Parsons’s efforts appal the Bazaar’s manager and a scuffle ensues. Davies describes the altercation between the senior partner and Parsons as a conflict of ‘hierarchical organisation and the limitless anomic individual drive for self-realisation’ (90). Perhaps more important than their symbolic, if mock heroic, encounter is Polly’s response to ‘the genius in window dressing’: ‘the heart of Polly leapt and the world blazed up to wonder and splendour. [...] Parsons was beyond all control – a strangeness, a marvel [...] infuriated, active, like a figure of earthquake’ (332-33). Parsons’s concerted, fraught assertion of his will, similar to Polly’s father’s, via the innocuous medium of window dressing is a seismic revelation wrought in hyperbole. Rather pathetically, Polly attempts to join the insurrection: ‘[he] lost his head. He clawed at the Bolton sheeting before him, and if he could have detached a piece he would

certainly have hit somebody with it. As it was, he simply upset the pile' (333). The animus to his situation is enlivened by Parsons's active dissent and dismissal, and Polly soon leaves the Bazaar suffering 'some mysterious internal discomfort [...] diagnosed as imagination' (337).

The impact of Parsons's lonely rebellion is profound: 'The fabric of Mr Polly's daily life was torn, and beneath it he discovered depths and terrors' (334). Polly is suddenly, vitally aware of the possible. The invoked "terrors" are less threats or antagonists than the natural trepidations of the unknown, of the previously unfamiliar non-everyday, and its capacious, myriad prospects. Despite this expanse of potentialities, Polly opens a drapery in Fishbourne with his unexpected inheritance; unlike Kipps's fortune, Polly's father's insurance policy, 'amounting altogether to the sum of three hundred and ninety-five pounds' (345), is more plausible. The subsequent fifteen years in 'which every day was tedious' (402) is ruptured by violence. Following an inelegant bicycle dismount, Polly crashes into the ironmonger Ruser's assorted wares. The two disagree over culpability: Polly blames the accident on the items being placed "all over the pavement" (416), and Ruser demands Polly straighten the mess. The two come to pathetic blows (417). At this point, the narrative returns to the opening scene of Polly dyspeptic, dysphoric, and cogitating bestride the stile: '[he] was for the first time in his business career short with his rent for the approaching quarter day, and so far as he could trust his own handling of figures he was sixty or seventy pounds on the wrong side of solvency' (419-20). Whether the brawl was a sublimated response to these financial anxieties, Polly and Ruser are quick to violence. Polly goes further than Parsons, though, and proposes a radical act of violent self-control: "Kill myself" (420). Repudiating the 'toil and struggle, toil and struggle' of the day-to-day, suicide forms the 'bright attractive idea of ending for ever and ever and ever all the things that were locking him in, this bright idea that shone like a baleful star above all the reek and darkness of his misery' (420-21).

Polly's "arsonical" (424) plan to burn the shop and slice his throat, thereby ensuring Miriam receives his life and business insurance policies, fails miserably: '[he] drew the blade lightly under one ear. "Lord!" but it stung like a nettle' (425). Abandoning his endeavour as the fire engulfs the surrounding buildings, Polly rescues his neighbour's deaf mother-in-law and is commended by the assembled crowd: '[he] descended into the world again out of the conflagration he had lit to be his funeral pyre, moist, excited, and tremendously alive, amidst a tempest of applause' (433). Just as Polly was inspired by Parsons, and in similar terms, the Fishbourne shopkeeping fraternity glimpse beyond the everyday 'with a certain element of elation' having been released by their insurance policies: 'a great door had opened [...] in the fabric of destiny, [...] they were to get their money again that had seemed sunk for ever beyond any hope in the deeps of retail trade. Life was already in their imagination rising like a Phoenix from the flames' (435). Polly assumes the catalytic function of Chitterlow within the everyday for his peers and himself. Without waiting for the intercession of intricate plotting, he simply leaves Miriam and Fishbourne. The immolation of the material everyday, to which Lewisham and Kipps

eventually reconciled themselves, is the most expedient and meaningful mechanism of escape, and is a signal, clarion indicator of the development of Wells's insistence upon the centrality of the individual: not merely in the utopic future but here and now in its efficacious resistance to the quotidian's inhibitions.

Though Wells has not purged serendipity from escape, given the inheritance and felicitous incompetence of the suicide attempt, there is an insistence upon the necessity of volition: unlike Lewisham's submission to collective amelioration and Kipps's passive fortune, Polly emancipates himself. This is explicated by the narrator:

when a man has once broken through the paper walls of everyday circumstance, those unsubstantial walls that hold so many of us securely prisoned from the cradle to the grave, he has made a discovery. If the world does not please you *you can change it*. Determine to alter it at any price, and you can change it altogether. [...] There is only one sort of man who is absolutely to blame for his own misery, and that is the man who finds life dull and dreary (438 original emphasis).

The clarity, intensity, and sincerity of this injunction is remarkable; in his *Autobiography*, Wells is similarly forthright: '[if] life is not good enough for you, change it; never endure a life that is dull and dreary [...] fight and go on fighting' (1.157). James indicates that Wells offered 'stern adjurations' as 'a radical critique of existing structures of authority' conducive to change in the world in his later fiction (*Maps of Utopia* 11, 31) and *Polly's* injunction exemplifies James's contention that Wells's 'notion of realism' involves 'artistic representation [...] offer[ing] resistance to the status quo, not complicity within it' (99; 80-81). The repetition of "you" and its italicisation in *Polly's* rendition of Wells's creed makes a solemn claim upon the reader's attention and enjoins action rather than contemplation; it is conspicuously gendered, too, and aligns individual praxis with prepotent, male volition: Polly simply abandons Miriam. Not only does *Polly* distil Wells's antagonistic conception of the everyday to a manifesto of personal efficacy, the laconic directive evinces the novels' development of the exodic paradigm from *Lewisham* through *Kipps*. It is this instance, more than the preceding escapes, which evince Richard Ellmann's (1959) claim that 'the central myth for the Edwardians' is manifest in 'the sudden alteration of the self' (198). Notable here is the reiteration of a violent overcoming of a deliberately vague "everyday circumstance", as escape is posited not as teleology but its own totemic, worthy, and autotelic attainment, according with Bellamy's vaunted conception of Edwardian protagonists' propensity to undertake 'direct remedial action undertaken on behalf of the self' (22).

Draper notes that the 'whole passage is one of Wells's most forceful statements of his belief in the revolutionary power of will, yet it has no political content' (85). In the wake of George Ponderevo's closing, gnomic contention that '[we] are all things that make and pass,

striving upon a hidden mission, out to the open sea' (353), one can identify the attenuation of purposive, viable collective praxis within the immediate difficulties of material reality. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive. In *Mankind*, Wells offers a striking analogy applicable to both the probability of 'ten thousands ways of going wrong' in his futurological planning, and the primal urgency of escape:

it may be a complex and laborious thing to escape out of a bear-pit into which one has fallen, but few people will consider that a reason for inaction. Even if they had small hope of doing anything effectual they might find speculation and experiments in escape, a congenial way of passing the time. [...] As a matter of fact, the enterprise is not at all a hopeless one if it is undertaken honestly, warily, and boldly (363).

In lieu of a state purposefully organised to stimulate and sustain autonomous individualities, and without necessarily repudiating this as a desirable telos, *Polly* reiterates the importance of violence in the attainment of non-everyday felicity. Modelled on the 'summer paradise' of Wells's uncle's riverside pub (*Autobiography* 1.114-15), the Potwell Inn Polly escapes to offers a restorative and permanent 'return to the rural' (Bishop 662) and offers a nascent classless freedom (Bishop 666-67) outwith the financial pressures of Fishbourne. Dessner describes the Potwell Inn as 'a more sustained and more successful Utopian fantasy than the Christabel episode which foreshadowed it' (130), and Carey calls it 'a dream of the English countryside' (146). *Polly* explicates the limits of this ostensible idyll which Polly happens upon, 'unhurrying and serene', which 'seemed to him to touch a pleasant scene with a distinction almost divine' (442 added emphasis). The qualifiers are crucial. Not only does Wells explicitly disbar stasis from utopia (*Utopia* 16-17), the Potwell Inn is haunted by Uncle Jim, and his threats to do "'orrible things [to Polly] ... Kick yer ugly... Cut yer – liver out'" (454). Consequently, Polly's claim to escape depends upon the expulsion of this existential threat.

Two pitched battles are fought. The first leaves Polly bleeding from a 'splintered bottle jabbed' at his ear (459) and chased 'round and round the inn' (458) but victorious; the second, involving an eel, is settled when Jim is swaddled in a tablecloth with the aid of some patrons (465-67). Jim eventually leaves after breaking into the Potwell Inn, seizing a gun from the bar, and ransacking Polly's room (468-70). Having absconded with Polly's clothes, Jim's corpse is discovered after some time in the "'Medway in Maidstone'" (474). Miriam receives Polly's life insurance policy; he is absolved of culpability, and free to return to the Potwell Inn. Though Jim's demise is unexplained and certainly fortuitous, Polly twice overcomes mortal danger. Indeed, when Jim first threatens Polly, he promptly leaves 'seeking agreeable and entertaining things, evading difficult and painful things' (455). This defence quickly collapses in a moment of stark self-apprehension:

The reality of the case arched over him like the vault of the sky [...] Man comes into life to seek and find his sufficient beauty, to serve it, to win and increase it, to fight for it, to face anything and dare anything for it, counting death as nothing so long as the dying eyes still turn to it (455).

Polly finds himself in the bear-pit *Mankind* posited (363). This is the clearest exhortation to volitional activity and is antithetical to Lewisham's accession to the social totality's progress. Oddly, the predicate of Polly's wilful self-assertion is his discovered 'sufficient beauty' (455). However, the novels repeatedly bemoan the everyday's pallor: *Lewisham* posits marital familiarity as 'the sky gathering greyly overhead' (183), Kipps finds himself caught in a 'sea fog' (68), and Polly's prospects in Fishbourne are 'utterly hopeless and grey' (407). The Potwell Inn is characterised by a profusion of colour: 'its sun-blistered green bench and tables, its shapely white windows', 'pleasing red blinds', 'bottles fastened in brass wire', 'a white china cask', 'a beautifully coloured hunting scene framed and glazed', and 'three bright red-cheeked wax apples' (442). Wells posits the everyday as etiolated, and the Potwell Inn constitutes a radiant, non-everyday cynosure offering a variety of work. In one block paragraph, the narrator gives an indicative list, seventy-seven entries long, of Polly's responsibilities (446) finishing with an ellipsis suggestive of an ongoing, endless profusion 'both relaxed and varied' (Davies 90). This is less a question of the Potwell Inn's singular charm than the fulsome apprehension it affords Polly, anathema to the reviled everyday 'netted in greyness' (*Polly* 409).

With this as an exemplary justification, Polly's escape can only be completed by the realisation of his will in material conflict and success. Clearly, this constitutes a signal shift in Wells's exodic response to the everyday. It is not illogical, though. Read back through *Polly*, Lewisham's final actions become mere capitulation and Kipps's escape submission to contingency. Any equilibration of individual and the collective is summarily usurped. In *First and Last Things*, Wells posits a conception of socialism which is

no more and no less than the realisation of a common and universal loyalty to mankind, the awakening of a collective consciousness of duty in mankind, the awakening of a collective will and a collective mind out of which finer individualities may arise forever in a perpetual series of fresh endeavours and fresh achievements for the race (102).

*Polly* was published two years later and is purged of this nascent collectivity: displacing an ideal community, the individual's desire to overcome the very collective impediments to that futurity, the 'drifting shoal' of those in cribs, for instance (339), mandates the resolute assertion of singular will. Isonomic, pluralised freedom is displaced by the exigent demands of Polly's required and

highly individuated liberty. Previously, Wells posited an aggregated mode of ameliorative improvement; *Mankind* insists upon ‘the infinite plasticity of the world’ (393), and, consequently, futurological speculations are irradiated by individuals’ ability to engage this malleability. Lewisham, with life seen as ‘incessant renewal, an undying fresh beginning and unfolding’ (*Mankind* 10), in the final instance accords with Wells’s subsequent ideal: of ‘life regarded as a system of constructive effort’ producing ‘that ennobled individual whose city is the world’ (*Autobiography* 2.648, 2.707). In *Polly*, Wells brings this global optimism into conflict with the particular. Polly’s violent and dangerous encounter manifesting desirous and discrete, anomic will, adumbrated by George Ponderevo’s primal urge to ‘drive ahead and on and on’ through the peopled and various metropolis (*Tono-Bungay* 353), evinces a precipitous shift in Wells’s conception of the mode and scale of escaping the everyday.

Critics have alighted upon the importance of Polly’s escape, more so than *Lewisham* and *Kipps*. Draper notes that Polly simply ‘break[s] out of the ordinary world altogether’ (86), and Hammond remarks that *Polly* is ‘concerned with [...] escape from a limiting environment’ (*H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* 105), and that personal transformation is coterminous with escaping ‘an environment which had become intolerable’ (‘Wells and the Discussion Novel’ 96). Parrinder indicates that the fire manifests ‘liberation, as the deterministic world collapses’ and that, afterwards, Polly ‘slough[s] off the corrupted skin of training and servility which was all society had to offer him’ (*Tono-Bungay and Mr Polly: The Individual and Social Change* 49-50). These are all true, in a limited way; none, however, notes that Polly’s release depends on him being *legally* dead. The implications of *Polly*’s iteration of escape are more profound, though. Draper does posit that Polly ‘is an archetypal figure whose actions bear a profound relevance to modern man’ (114). Of course, this is perfectly congruent with the novel’s exhortation to ‘change [the world]’ (438 original emphasis). However, positing Polly as an archetype or paragon for “modern man” is deeply troubling, not least because Draper thoughtlessly imbibes Wells’s gendered presupposition. Parrinder is culpable, too. He argues that Polly’s ‘ordinary life of frustration and defeat [...] culminates in a magnificent rebellion’, and, strangely, that, ‘although he fights a lone battle for spiritual independence, his triumph is not purely an individual one. Wells broadens the significance of the comedy, using the interpretive narrative to show him as a socially representative figure’ (*Tono-Bungay and Mr Polly: The Individual and Social Change* 45-46). The magnificence of the escape is questionable; it is, after all, a botched attempt, and the Potwell Inn’s sinecure is achieved through Jim’s off-stage death. A difficult question precipitated by the aggrandisement of *Polly*’s celebration of will as violence, and one which impinges upon Wells’s stated intent to ‘replace disorder by order’ (*New Worlds* 23), unfastens the viability of a post-everyday future, however protean.

The progressively clamant demands for autonomy, for ‘sufficient beauty’ (*Polly* 455), for making “‘your own little world’” (*Kipps* 250), produced means of escape tacitly incompatible with

planned utopia, and increasingly inchoate. *Polly's* insistence upon the desirability of conflict, producing what Parrinder calls a 'deeply-felt individual triumph' (51), evokes the catastrophic waste of capitalism's vaunted competition. This nexus of conflictual social relations is conducive to the waste excoriated in *Tono-Bungay*: 'they jostled together to make this unassimilable enormity of traffic' (351); it precludes 'that comprehensive freedom' which girds individuals' ability to 'work out their problems of fixation and co-operation, monopolisation, loyalty and charity' with mutually beneficial cogency (*Autobiography* 2.469). If the future is constituted by *Pollys*, it could not look too different from the organisation he repudiates: entropic, embattled, and producing vitiated, wasteful everyday. The contradictions palpable in *Polly's* construction of willed escape, if individually propitious and communally adverse, are indicative of the gnomic endings of *Kipps* and *Polly*.

The conclusions of *Kipps* and *Polly* are particularly difficult components of Wells's exodic critique of everyday life. The material exigencies of the everyday, exactly itemised and castigated throughout, are counterpoised by both the refusal to delineate the provisions of post-everyday felicity and an abrogation of lucid cognition. Polly 'ends up in an abstract utopian space' (Higgins 472); *Kipps* perforates its relatively straightforward realism by the abrupt intercession of metafictional ambiguity. Whereas the futurologies, anchored by 'the trend of present forces' (*Anticipations* 1), are sustained by a veneer of plausibility, *Kipps* and *Polly* simply forgo these obligations. When Polly revisits Miriam in Fishbourne after securing the Potwell Inn, he shocks his ex-wife: "I'm a Visitant from Another World. [...] I thought you might be hard up or in trouble or some silly thing like that. Now I see you again – I'm satisfied. [...] I'm going to absquatulate, see? Hey Presto" (476). Miriam's shock is partially due to the fraudulently obtained life insurance policy which has allowed her to open a tearoom. Polly attempts to allay these real concerns, and indicates that, outwith the everyday of Fishbourne, he has departed for "Another World"; his conjuration, "Hey Presto", typifies the magical, unreal escape. Though Polly does not and cannot go to "Another World", the eldritch quality of his easy self-exemption implies that the promise of escape is delusive, and implicates the perspicacious critique of Wells's thinking articulated in Christopher Caudwell's *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938). His uncompromising account of Wells's deficient socialism offers a means of navigating the gnomic endings of *Polly* and *Kipps*. There are limits to Caudwell's account, however, and this chapter ends with a return to the interminable problem of escape indicated in the closing words of both novels.

Before elucidating the implications of these endings, it is worth outlining their peculiarity. After Chitterlow's remarkable and propitious return, *Kipps*'s narrator engages the reader beyond the novel's fictional parameters:

The bookshop of Kipps is on the left-hand side of the Hythe High Street coming from Folkestone, between the yard of the livery stable and the shop-window full of old silver and such like things – it is quite easy to find – and there you may see him for yourself and speak to him and buy this book of him if you like. He has it in stock, I know. Very delicately I've seen to that. His name is not Kipps, of course, you must understand that, but everything else is exactly as I have told you. You can talk to him [...] (Of course you will not tell Kipps that he is "Kipps," or that I have put him in this book. He does not know. [...] I should prefer that things remained exactly on their present footing) (303-04 original emphasis).

The cursory, indicative details and the ingratiating tone bolster the credibility of this putatively real bookshop. Such metafictional instances are not anomalous. Earlier in the novel, the narrator addresses the reader directly: ‘you know those intolerable mornings, dear Reader, when you seem to have neither the heart nor the strength to rise, and your nervous adjustments are all wrong’ (203). Introducing Helen Walshingham, and in order to convey Kipps’s infatuation, the narrator remarks, in a mock hectoring tone, that ‘it will be well if the reader gets the picture of her correctly in mind [...] I think she was as beautiful as most beautiful people, and to Kipps she was altogether beautiful’ (70). The overt complicity in meaning-making the narrator depends and plays upon is indicative of what Wells later describes as his ‘artless’ fiction which is consciously ‘in discussion with the reader’ (*Autobiography* 2.494, 2.496-97). Even by Wells’s standards, though, *Kipps*’s metafiction, going as far as prompting the reader, furnished with directions, to visit “Kipps” is remarkable. This apparently straightforward invitation is complicated, twice: the reader is prohibited from disclosing the novel’s source, and the narrator indicates that *Kipps* is available to buy: ‘Very delicately I’ve seen to that’ (303). The first constraint implies that the Hythe High Street bookseller might dissent from *Kipps*’s narrative or deny it entirely and thereby disabuse the adventurous reader of the novel’s avowed veracity; and, the second indicates that the narrator, in a text replete with serendipitous plotting and the timely intercession of “Fortune”, has ensured that *Kipps* is in stock. For this to be the case, the “real” bookshop is under the narrator’s auspices, and shifts from real life prospect to textually secured construct. The narrator’s asseverations cannot be tested.

Clearly the closing metafiction demands critical attention. Hammond contends that *Kipps* destroys ‘the illusions of fictiveness [...] momentarily. [...] It is as if a hole has been rent in the text through which the reader peers into a different reality – neither the world of the novel nor the “real” tangible world but a hybrid of the two’ (*H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* 49). Hammond’s account is more descriptive than critical. In a novel preoccupied with escape, however, Hammond’s “hybridity” does not meaningfully attend to its own implications. *Kipps* melds the fictional, metafictional, and ostensibly “real” and displaces the locus of escape from coherent possibility into intangible liminality: the bookshop, real and fictional, is outwith cogent apprehension because it flits across these categories and resides in neither. As an itinerant paragon of post-everyday reprieve, the bookshop makes little sense for Wells’s explicit commitment to ameliorative futurity whose ‘methods of transition will be progressively scientific and humane’ (*New Worlds* 183). *Kipps* abrogates this logic, and dissents from the aggrandisement of literature set out in *Mankind*, which ensures ‘[s]ound thinking, clearly and honestly set forth, that is the sole and simple food of human greatness, the real substance [...] the key that will at least unlock the door to all we can dream of our desire’ (355). *Kipps*’s metafictional ending blithely upsets any prior commitments to materialist lucidity. The ambiguous conditions of escape adumbrate a turn in the novel, reiterated in *Polly*, from the viability of reasoned, ordered,

constructive progress to that which is simply exceptional: the auspicious bookshop circumvents the onerous weight of plausibility, and offers a cynosure sliding across a perpetually receding horizon.

This remarkable instance precedes a turn towards evocative lyrical prose and elliptical excogitation which concludes both novels.<sup>48</sup> Before indicating their shared implications, it is worth analysing them discretely. During ‘a row on the Hythe canal’, Kipps and Ann are ensconced:

It was a glorious evening, and the sun set in a mighty blaze and left a world warm, and very still. The twilight came. And there was the water, shining bright, and the sky a deepening blue, and the great trees that dipped their boughs towards the water [...] Kipps had ceased from rowing and rested on his oars, and suddenly he was touched by the wonder of life, the strangeness that is a presence stood again by his side.

Out of the darkneses beneath the shallow, weedy stream of his being rose a question, a question that looked up dimly and never reached the surface. It was the question of the wonder of the beauty, the purposeless, inconsecutive beauty, that falls so strangely among the happenings and memories of life. It never reached the surface of his mind, it never took to itself substance or form, it looked up merely as the phantom of a face might look, out of deep waters, and sank again to nothingness (304).

A final quiescence, in which colours and light are limpid and the surroundings interfused with calm and are ‘very still’ in the dusk, stands apart from the preceding narrative’s incidents; the lustre is anathema to the etiolated ‘light of every-day’ (*Lewisham* 183). Nonetheless, the momentary reflective pause in which Kipps ‘dimly’ reckons with ‘the question of the wonder of the beauty, the purposeless, inconsecutive beauty, that falls so strangely among the happenings and memories of life’ is apposite to the circumambient calm (304). It is also facile, and posits no meaningful question at all: it simply frames aleatory pulchritude. At a moment of auspicious calm, a resplendent stillness reflects the contingent, ‘purposeless, inconsecutive beauty’ (304) of one evening transposed across memory. *Utopia* contends that ‘all beauty is really [...] kinetic and momentary’ rather than ossified rigidity: ‘[the] Greek temple, for example, is a barn with a face that a certain angle of vision and in a certain light has a great calm beauty’ (228). The very absence of such dynamism in *Kipps* precipitates lethargic reflection. The question ‘never reached the surface of his mind, it never took to itself substance or form’ (304) and its subaqueous

---

<sup>48</sup> These rhetorical uplifts are not wholly anomalous in Wells’s work. ‘The Country of the Blind’ (1904), for instance, concludes similarly to *Kipps* and *Polly*: ‘The mountain summits around him were things of light and fire, and the little details of the rocks near at hand were drenched with subtle beauty – a vein of green mineral piercing the grey, the flash of crystal faces here and there, a minute, minutely-beautiful orange lichen close beside his face. There were deep mysterious shadows in the gorge, blue deepening into purple, and purple into a luminous darkness, and overhead was the illimitable vastness of the sky’ (568).

inaccessibility implies that apprehension lies below the threshold, perhaps scope, of Kipps's intelligence. The 'shallow, weedy stream of his being' (304) cannot bear the leviathan circling fathoms below, and the narrator intercedes to delineate its banal riddling; Kipps's musings upon "what a Rum Go everything is [...] I don't suppose there ever was a chap quite like me" are appropriately asinine, too (305).

The unuttered query challenges the novel's exodic plotting, though. Ensorcelled by the 'wonder of the beauty' which 'falls' accidentally, 'strangely', and briefly amongst 'happenings and memories', Kipps, who is secured by the success of Chitterlow's play, forgets material contingencies. Glowing in a propitious light, serendipity and beauty are 'purposeless [and] inconsecutive', and might be revoked; Young Walshingham's profligacy indicates as much. *Kipps* bustles with incident; capricious chance, typified by Chitterlow's hustle and prolixity, ensured the Kippses's repletion rather than 'the wonder of life' constructed easily in retrospect (304). Draper celebrates Wells's belief that the 'daydreams of small tradesman can be somehow more real than the harsh world' (117). However, the final beneficent equanimity precludes cognition, exhibits a hypnagogic delicacy, and the threat of precarity is disbarred from 'a world warm, and very still' (304). This is not a world but a moment. Transcending the everyday by occluding the material conditions which facilitated escape, *Kipps* intimates that its proffered locus of escape is impossibly irradiated by perpetual, luminous calm.

Nonetheless, Kipps's reverie is as alluring, and chimerical, as the "bookshop". A similar buoyancy is palpable at the 'pastoral, even utopian' (*Maps of Utopia* 122) end of *Polly*. Returned to the Potwell Inn after visiting Miriam, Polly reflects upon 'the mystery of life' in a comparable moment of crepuscular lucidity:

It was one of those evenings, serenely luminous, amply and atmospherically still, when the river bend was at its best. A swan floated against the dark green masses of the further bank, the stream flowed broad and shining to its destiny, with scarce a ripple – except where the reeds came out from the headland – the three poplars rose clear and harmonious against a sky of green and yellow. And it was as if it was all securely within a great warm friendly globe of crystal sky. It was as safe and enclosed and fearless as a child that has still to be born. It was an evening full of the quality of tranquil, unqualified assurance. Mr Polly's mind was filled with the persuasion that indeed all things whatsoever must needs be satisfying and complete. It was incredible that life has ever done more than seemed to jar, that there could be any shadow in life save such velvet softnesses as made the setting for that silent swan, or any murmur but the ripple of the water as it swirled round the chained and gently swaying punt. And the mind of Mr Polly, exalted and made tender by this atmosphere, sought gently, but sought, to draw together

the varied memories that came drifting, half submerged, across the circle of his mind (476-77).

The similarities are clear, and equally conducive to Polly's repose. Again, this momentary, immobile beauty induces a contemplative equilibrium in a mind 'exalted and made tender' (477). The reflections upon the verities of fortune, in which even the stream goes 'broad and shining to its destiny' (477), are outwith the narrative's advocacy of violent agency; particularly galling, given the abysmal depths of his ennui at Fishbourne, is the contention that, to Polly, 'that life has ever done more than seemed to jar', that existence is not only slightly perturbed bliss, and 'that *all* things *must needs* be satisfying' (477 added emphasis). Polly indicates as much to the Potwell Inn's landlady: "I happened, things happened to me. It's so with everyone. [...] It isn't what we try to get that we get, it isn't the good we think we do is good. What makes us happy isn't our trying, what makes others happy isn't our trying'" (478). As with *Kipps*, these obtuse resolutions dissent from the narrative's exodic critique of the everyday; terminal felicity is proffered as an ineluctable outcome and, as Draper points out, 'Polly's breakout from the normal world leads him into a child-like pastoral one' (87). Again, the environs' inducements prompt bromidic notions of invariable, unhurried, and 'unqualified' tranquillity encompassed by 'a great warm friendly globe of crystal sky' (477) which Polly will visit posthumously (479). James calls the ending 'insubstantial, ghostly, evanescent' (*Maps of Utopia* 124) and Davies points out that the 'unrealistic happy endings' and 'fluvial security' in both novels are improbably 'exempt from [...] harsh economic' reality (89). The implausibility is manifest in the description of the Potwell Inn, too, and underwritten by an important qualifier: '*as if* it was all securely within a great warm friendly globe of crystal sky' (477 added emphasis). In order to aggrandise a continual repletion, *Polly* relies upon a static empyrean, a 'crystal sky' (477). Yet the weather's permanent indifference and vacillations, like the economic vicissitudes so cogently elucidated in *Tono-Bungay*, expose the limits of this ambition, and the scene's occluded but inherent friability.

Such tenuous foundations cannot support the individuals they conserve. Therefore, Parrinder's argument that the 'great warm friendly globe of crystal sky' (477) might be seen as 'the womb in which the new civilisation and the new human race could be born' and 'Polly a forebear, [whose] fulfilment as well as his victimisation would have a general significance' is redundant ('*Tono-Bungay* and *Mr Polly*: The Individual and Social Change' 50). Certainly, the utopian credentials of the Potwell Inn are beguiling, and Higgins posits that *Polly* 'ends up in an abstract utopian space' (472). On Wells's terms, 'abstract utopian' is an oxymoron. Utopian thinking mandates 'a dialectical conception of history in which ideas and instincts interact to produce an ultimately forward movement, but one marked by many lapses and reverses' (Kumar 204; *Maps of Utopia* 125-29). This is palpable throughout the futurologies and explicated in *Utopia*: 'There is no perfection, there is no enduring treasure' (228). In this regard, Hughes is correct to

point out the indeterminacy of *Utopia* (71). Prefaced by “H.G. Wells” as a ‘sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussion [...] and imaginative narrative’ (*Utopia* 10) and introduced by “chairman” who is ‘not to be taken as the Voice of the ostensible author who fathers these pages’ (13 original emphasis), “The Owner of the Voice” is announced. The reader is invited to imagine “The Owner” ‘as sitting at a table reading a manuscript about *Utopia* [...] sitting, a little nervously, a little modestly, on a stage, with table, glass of water’ (14 original emphasis). Hughes indicates that these conceptual manoeuvres implicate the reader in the fictional construction of *Utopia* and provide an expedient ‘way of establishing that utopia is not a place but a mode of thinking and a way of placing that mental habit into the fabric of the reader’s world’ (72). Such demands are notably absent from *Kipps* and *Polly*. The complex, layered abstractions of viable potentialities as critique in *Utopia* are displaced by lyrical description, and dynamic tensions and pliable contingency are displaced by rhapsodic stasis.

Given the quiescent objective correlatives, silent and ‘with scarce a ripple’ (*Polly* 476), *Polly* and *Kipps* themselves are appropriately vacant; Dessner goes as far as to contend that the Potwell Inn, *Polly*’s ‘utopia’, ‘entails his radical diminishment – his loss of refinement of sensibility, his loss of awareness of the subtle complication of things’, diminished sexuality, and ‘the annihilation of personality’ (132-33). *Polly*’s mind may be ‘filled’ (477), and *Kipps* may be ‘touched’ (304), but neither is duly stimulated or articulate: ‘not so much thinking as lost in a smooth still quiet of the mind’ (*Polly* 479). This is not a question of a particularly alluring dusk but its consequent stupefaction in which weeds receive their tautologous encomium: “‘just look at the look of them’” (479). If the bookshop was compromised by its ontological uncertainty, these idylls are nescient. *Polly*’s repose is expressly prenatal: ‘enclosed and fearless as a child that has still to be born’ (477); and, if *Utopia* makes intellectual demands of the reader, and any prospective constitution of utopia mandates ratiocination, the sites of escape that en-close *Kipps* and *Polly* are mindless. In fact, the ataraxy they induce is expressly dependent upon the suppression of latent problems: the ‘phantom’ “question” does not surface in *Kipps*’s mind, merely sinking ‘again to nothingness’ (304); and the ‘circle of [*Polly*’s] mind’ is scarcely disturbed by ‘drifting’ memories ‘half submerged’ (477). Higgins argues that if ‘Wells appreciates *Kipps*’s emotion, he deplores the fact that he does not have the capacity for self-understanding’ (465). This is manifestly untrue. The viability, perhaps the promise, of escape, is, in the final proffered instance, constituted by a singular equilibration that disabuses its inhabitants of thought and induces callow serenity and sublime luminosity, less illuminative than blinding.

Certainly, this is an unanticipated deviation in escaping the everyday. Prior to such serenity, even if it is hard won in *Polly*, Wells averred that ‘the world is a world, not a charitable institution’ (*Anticipations* 317) demanding endeavour and collective effort. *Anticipations*, *New Worlds*, and *Mankind* are constitutive components in this work, of course; *New Worlds* emphatically refuses closure and ends ‘with no presumption of finality’ (355). The elision of

thought from the Potwell Inn and Kipps's drowned question forecloses the ongoing re-constructions of the post-everyday. In order to bolster this improbable space, temporality is displaced, too. The conclusion of *Kipps* is presaged by another rowing scene with Helen Walshingham: 'It was one of those times when there seems to be no future, when Time has stopped and we are at an end. Kipps, that evening, could not have imagined a to-morrow, all that his imagination had pointed towards was attained. His mind stood still' (164). Though Kipps's apperception is qualified by 'seemed', the perspicuity of this moment anticipates his outing with Ann. Crucially here, and more explicitly than later, Wells, characteristically, displaces normative temporality. Hammond argues that Wells was preoccupied with 'the fragility and provisionality of our notions of quotidian time and the liberating effects of release from the boundaries of the present' (*H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* 59). The efficacy of this release depends upon 'an argosy which permits the reader to escape from the tyranny of quotidian time into a world rich in possibilities of transcendence and wonder' (70). In *Kipps*, continuity is dissolved into pure stasis outwith the material everyday and normative temporality, and Kipps is rendered vacant: 'his mind stood still' (164). Whilst mediating the promise of liberation, the atemporal dis-location of this moment implies the impossibility of its attainment.

*Polly* includes a similar preparatory scene. When 'real Romance came out of dreamland into life' in the form of the schoolgirl Christabel 'and intoxicated and gladdened him' (371), Polly is infatuated and falls, precipitously,

in love, as though the world had given way beneath him and he had dropped through into another, into a world of luminous clouds and of desolate hopeless wildernesses of desiring and of wild valleys of unreasonable ecstasies, a world whose infinite miseries were finer and in some inexplicable way sweeter than the purest gold of the daily life, whose joys – they were indeed but the merest remote glimpses of joy – were brighter than a dying martyr's vision of heaven (376).

The Potwell Inn is safely free of such emotional instability; the 'plump lady' at the Potwell Inn is 'wholesome' rather than captivating (443). Nonetheless, the luminosity and confounded response is familiar. As with Kipps's disjointed temporality, Polly's ecstasy is posed outside of everyday life as another 'world', one of superlatives and lambency. Not only does it mimic Polly's effervescent joy, this ethereal vision is deliberately, conspicuously unreal. Hammond contends that once Polly has guaranteed the Potwell Inn, he is '[s]ecure in this enclosed womb of happiness and peace he lives out his life, protected against intrusions from the world outside' (*H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* 108). The freefall of his infatuation with Christabel and the capacious vista it seemingly discloses indicates that such loci are unobtainable. The Potwell Inn is not 'protected [...] from the world outside' (Hammond 108): it is outside the world entirely. These crepuscular moments,

augured by fluid, shifting luminance, are outwith economic reality, spatial and temporal specificity, and are inimical to subjective apprehension.

Draper argues that Polly and Kipps have escaped not only the everyday but the latent programmatic dangers of utopian planning; both preserve their individuality outwith potential strictures, and offer ‘an implicit rebuke to all those elite-controlled utopias which aim to absorb the individual into a collective’ (72). Any subversion of ‘the responsible, collective aims of [Wells’s] utopian politics’ (Draper 81) is premised on the anterior conception of viable teleology, though, and it is feasible that escape is fantastic because of structural deficiencies in Wells’s socialist paradigm which compromise his exodic thinking. Caudwell is the most vociferous and perceptive of Wells’s critics in this regard. He argues that Wells’s socialism is ‘turgid and shoddy’ (80) because it is ‘devoid of any world-view and had not escaped from the inborn bewilderment of the *petit bourgeois*’ (83). This is apparent in Wells’s choice of protagonist, and admission that the ideal World State ‘is essentially [...] an expanded middle-class’ (*Autobiography* 1.94-95). Caudwell indicates the critical shortcomings resulting from this premise. Whereas Marx computed historical causality with scientific limpidity and ‘made possible the machinery of revolution which would change social relations by action’ (92), Wells is constrained by the ideological misconception of *petit bourgeois* agency. This is exacerbated by Wells’s deprecation of the proletariat: ‘something dirty and evil and dangerous and terribly near’ (Caudwell 93). Without Marx’s uniquely perspicacious historical materialism, Wells simply recapitulates the ‘old bourgeois assumption’ that

men are born, each perfectly free, and that their wants and dreams mould the world of social relations, not that the world of social relations their wants and dreams [...] Wells naturally makes the “logical” deduction that to change man’s mind it is necessary to preach to them convincingly and interestingly, and then all will be accomplished as one desires. Moreover, since he assumes that the relation between mind and environment is perfectly fluid, that the mind can make of the environment *anything* it pleases (Caudwell 86-87 added emphasis).<sup>49</sup>

Polly’s self-escape is commensurate with this aggrandised notion of individual agency. Polly, moreover, finds himself in the ‘perfectly fluid’ (Caudwell 87) serenity of the Potwell Inn, which is amenable to his individual *petit bourgeois* will, and Kipps’s independent bookshop is resolutely lower-middle class, and revels in illusive capitalist self-possession: ‘ready to leap up and embrace

---

<sup>49</sup> Caudwell’s criticism is somewhat similar to George Orwell’s ‘Wells, Hitler and the World State’ (1941). Orwell argues that Wells’s conceptual apparatus, predicated upon the axiomatic and implacable necessity of ‘victories won by scientific man over romantic man’ (86), is fundamentally shoddy as the conscription of science to the barbaric rationalism of Nazi ideology is outwith Wells’s historical schema (85-87). Though Caudwell and Orwell offer different invectives, both castigate Wells’s ‘shallow, inadequate’ (Orwell 87) socialist paradigm of inexorably rational progress.

goods sold [... Kipps] serves an imaginary customer, receives a dream seven and six-pence [... and] wonders how it was he ever came to fancy a shop a disagreeable place' (295). Moreover, the endings are distinctly unpeopled. Caudwell indicates that competitive individualism renders '[e]very success of one *petit bourgeois* [...] a sword in another's heart. Every failure of one's own is the result of another's activity. No companionship, or solidarity, is possible' (78-79). Within Wells's providential design, the couple survey rest and repletion, and can undertake their solitary way in balmy seclusion. *Kipps* and *Polly* are complicit in the ideological realisation of a bourgeois ideal. For Caudwell, the freedom Wells's protagonists demonstrate is invariably predicated upon the 'productive forces' of labour under capital (85). Any iteration of easy autonomy simply occludes or ignores this.

This is an unconscionable error for Caudwell. Uninhibited by the macro, causal structural conditions which produce the everyday, Wells's exodic solutions are fundamentally inapposite and overlook 'the sole creative force of contemporary society', 'the spear-point of social action [... and] the rallying point for the active forces of all revolution in all countries': the proletariat (Caudwell 94, 91). Caudwell's argument is remarkably similar to Lefebvre's *Dialectical Materialism* (1938), its direct contemporary. Lefebvre argues that, as a method, dialectical materialism, depends upon a recognition the world's deep physical and conceptual imbrications, in which '[e]very activity is co-operation' and whose complexities 'extend beyond the instant, the separate object, the isolated individual. In this sense the most trivial object is the bearer of countless suggestions and relationships' (116). The aggrandised individual, replete with individuated powers, has no meaningful apprehension of social relations, causal conditions or material contingencies. Wells can only offer 'bourgeois metaphysics' composed 'of thought eternally returning on itself and finding no outlet in action or connexion with reality' (Caudwell 92).<sup>50</sup> This exacting critique illuminates the implausibility of escape in *Polly* and *Kipps*: they are a consequence of an inflated conception of *petit bourgeois* ideology. Consequently, Wells readily locates escape outwith material reality. Rather than limn the causal factors involved in escape, Wells's substitutes 'all laws of causality [for] the free operation of the mind' (Caudwell 87), hence the atemporal, immaterial stasis of the Potwell Inn enveloped 'within a great warm friendly globe of crystal sky' (477).

Caudwell's approach insists upon the misguided primacy of *petit bourgeois* autonomy meaning that 'the mind can make of the environment anything it pleases' (87). This cognitive engagement is seemingly at odds with the Potwell Inn's induced placidity and the 'shallow, weedy

---

<sup>50</sup> This is another echo of Lefebvre's repudiation of critiques ignorant of everyday 'life in its humblest detail' (*Vol. I* 227). Beginning in quotidian actuality produces '[g]enuine criticism' able to 'expose the *unreality* in the "reality" of the bourgeoisie [... and] will then reveal the human reality beneath this general unreality, the human "world" which takes shape within us and around us' (*Vol.* 168 original emphasis). Presumably, Lefebvre would deem Polly's remarkable self-escape as outwith the everyday to which critique should attend; he deprecates the 'theory of superhuman moments [as] inhuman' and avers that if 'a higher life, the life of the "spirit", was to be attained in "another life" – some mystic and magical hidden world – it must be the end of mankind, the proof and proclamation of his failure. Man must be everyday, or he will not be at all' (127).

stream' of Kipps's critical myopia (304). However, Caudwell's conception of praxis posits thought in action, thought as action:

thought *is* being, is a part of being, developed historically as part of action to aid that action which we regard as primary, which action in turn casts fresh light on being. At every stage thought must find issue from action and, with what it has learned from action, return to fresh thinking, which again goes out to fresh action (89 original emphasis).

Therefore, total quiescence, 'amply and atmospherically still' (*Polly* 476), engenders a perpetual atemporality disabused of the necessity of ongoing critical praxis. On Caudwell's terms, 'Wells's world is unreal' (82): the novels' final utopian obliquities realise the imposition of bourgeois metaphysics and the displacement of material proletarian agency. Only through the total emancipatory potential of Marxist analysis can 'man in communism [...] become free' (Caudwell 88). *Polly's* and *Kipps's* alluring prospects of escape are outwith plausibility because of an ideological, delusive apprehension of reality; and, moreover, they compromise Wells's vision of a 'modern state' sustained 'by adaptation [...] not a permanent but a developing social, moral and political culture' (*Mankind* 384).

Though the forceful clarity of Caudwell's critique does illuminate underlying shortcomings palpable at the end of *Kipps* and *Polly*, it is perhaps an imposition of inapposite criteria. Wells's socialism was explicitly anti-Marxian. Specifically, he repudiates Marx's emphasis upon the 'mystical and dangerous idea of reconstituting the world on a basis of mere resentment and destruction' (*Autobiography* 1.180), and the paucity of Marx's post-capitalist planning:

the class-war was imposed upon the Socialist idea, until for many Socialism ceased to be a movement for a more comprehensive organisation of economic life and took on the quality of a violent restitution of stolen goods – to everybody in general and no one in particular (1.254-55).<sup>51</sup>

Wells scorned Marx's 'pose of scientific necessitarianism', resistance to 'work[ing] out the details of the world contemplated' (1.263), and the exaggerated antagonisms in his posited social order: '[Marx] did not realise that a movement to reconstruct a society is unlikely to receive the immediate enthusiastic support of the majority' reconciled to its extant organisation (2.731-72) and 'inured to capitalistic methods, represented and ruled by capital-controlled politicians' (*New Worlds* 246). This is perfectly sensible. Wells points out that 'the institutions and formulæ of the

---

<sup>51</sup> In a letter to *The Freewoman* (5<sup>th</sup> September 1912), Wells expressed reservations about the viability of the paper's 'wild cry for freedom [...] unsupported by the ghost of the shadow of an idea how to secure freedom. What is the good of writing that "economic arrangements will have to be adjusted to the Soul of man," if you are not prepared with anything remotely resembling a suggestion of how the adjustment is to be effected' (312).

future must necessarily be developed from those of the present, [and] that one cannot start *de novo* even after a revolution' (*New Worlds* 267). Proper, persuasive critique requires cogent planning bolstered by general edification conducive to socialist citizenry (*Autobiography* 1.262; *New Worlds* 116; *Mankind* 357-60; Partington 39-40) rather than a 'mystic faith in the crowd' and 'uncritical way of evading the immense difficulties of organizing just government and a collective' represents a 'dangerous suggestion' (*New Worlds* 247-48). Wells's criticism mandates specificity in the delineation of 'a planned inter-co-ordinated society' superseding 'a record of catastrophic convulsions shot with mere glimpses and phases of temporary good luck' (*Autobiography* 1.238, 1.243). From Caudwell's perspective, this confirms an alienated metaphysics thoughtlessly recapitulating bourgeois ideology; for Wells, his blueprints are a response to a general dearth of such designs in socialist thinking of the period (*Autobiography* 1.250-52).<sup>52</sup> The contention in *New Worlds*, however, that unplanned, seismic revolution would be 'impracticable' (247) also implicates the conclusions of *Kipps* and *Polly*. In these specific cases, and even within the generous, flexible parameters of fiction, Wells falters, and prefers impracticability to feasibility.

Despite the illuminative potency of Caudwell's argument, *Polly* and *Kipps* are, in their final words, roused from equanimity:

[Kipps] reflected for just another minute.

"Oo! I dunno," he said, and roused himself to pull (305)

and:

They said no more, but sat on in the warm twilight until at last they could scarcely distinguish each other's faces. [...] "Time we was going in, O' Party," said Mr. Polly, standing up. "Supper to get. It's as you say, we can't sit here for ever" (479).

The precarity of their reprieve is adumbrated by *Polly*'s contention that the 'great world friendly globe of crystal sky [...] was as safe and enclosed and fearless as a child still to be born' (477). Escape, then, is gestation: idylls secluded from the everyday and inviolably temporary. Of course, this does not explain away their manifest limits, or the implied shortcomings of an exodic imaginary that cannot conceive the locus of escape the novels explicitly crave. Within this chapter's schema, though, the resumption of work returns us, by a most circuitous route, to Hoopdriver's 'unromantic, unhappy ending' (James 'Fin-de-Cycle' 45): '[he] is back. To-morrow, the early rising, the dusting, and drudgery, begin again' (296 *Wheels*). The eponymous cyclicity

---

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Rose's (1986) critique of an Edwardian proclivity for facile synthesising and elision of difficult contradistinctions, its intellectual 'soft centre' (211), includes the Fabians' attempt strip Marxian class antagonism out of socialism. Apparently, every 'quarrel between individuals, businesses, classes and nations could be settled by managerial referees for the benefit of all' (Rose 142).

recurs in *Kipps* and *Polly*, too; the mantle of day-to-day pulling and getting is arrogated once more, if only to be transcended and resumed, again and again. Necessary as this is in *Wheels* given that Hoopdriver's escape is an expressly brief holiday, the recapitulation of this logic is peculiar in *Kipps* and *Polly*; given their singular equanimity, the novels might close with the everyday firmly displaced. They do not; and this is despite Anderson's contention, ignoring the final resumption of daily labours, that *Polly*'s conclusion means that 'history can be dispensed with' (149). Actually, they disclose the quotidian. After all, there is nothing more everyday than sunset. Perhaps this juxtaposition accentuates the fugacious release of the Potwell Inn and Hythe Canal; perhaps escape irrevocably depends upon everyday components *momentarily* overcome: '[a] State where all are working hard, where none go to and fro, easily and freely, loses touch with the purpose of freedom' (*Utopia* 155).

Given this chapter's analysis of Wells's Edwardian thinking about the everyday and escape, this return indicates the intractable problem of escape. *Escape Attempts* makes clear that *every* sortie out of the everyday is inevitably compromised. This is both a consequence of the repetition of successful escapes which thicken to routines, and each instance's necessary difference from the everyday from which it turns, and to which it returns: 'the escape script is often a homecoming script' (*Escape Attempts* 152), as diminishing returns slowly vitiate any initially effective reprieve. The everyday presents a terminal and interminable problem. In their return to pulling and getting, to the banalities of everyday work and life, Polly and Kipps subtly indicate that escape is not a telos but an ontological axiom. Cohen and Taylor signal as much in their conclusion, positing escape

as a homage to the self, a celebration of the struggle to rise above our social destiny. None of scepticism or pessimism should hide our continual amazement and delight at how people keep up this struggle, how they keep trying to dislodge the self from society – not in spectacular ways but in the infinite number of ordinary and short-lived ways we have recorded. [...] We would prefer to see the self as a construct which only becomes alive by being wary, elusive, mobile, keeping some distance from social reality (234, 236).

Wells, too, revels in the seditious energies of his protagonists. Moreover, *Escape Attempts* indicates the logic of Wells's approach to the everyday: escape is an endlessly prospective project(ion). This explains the gnomic, elusive, and illusive qualities at the end of both novels: sanguinity is a momentary perforation in the stolid facticity of the everyday's continual indurations. This tacit concession to everydayness is implicit in the ongoing task of re-constituting utopias as they coagulate and harden into routine: *Utopia*'s narrator finds himself 'going between [...] work and the room in which I sleep and the place in which I dine, very much as I went to and fro in that real world' (219). Useful as Caudwell's critique of Wells is, the failure to recognise escape as an

illimitable problem produces a skewed invective. At the centre of Wells's vivacious teleological imaginary sits the refractory, endless quandary of the everyday precluding final stasis. Nonetheless, Wells's Edwardian writing is bolstered by a cogent excoriation of the quotidian's imputed dissatisfactions. Returning later to the *Autobiography's* earlier musings on escape, Wells appears to recognise this paradox:

It was a flight – to a dream of happy learning and teaching in poverty. To a minor extent and with minor dislocation this fugitive mood no doubt recurred but it did not come back again in full force until my divorce. [...] That divorce was not simply the replace of one way of living by another; it was also the replacement of one way of living by another. *It was a break away to a new type of work* (2.738 added emphasis).

Restive and dissatisfied, Wells implies that the everyday is composed of fungible components, and this self-diagnosed 'mood' haunts his writings. Thankfully when faced with this monolithic problem, Wells was not reduced to inertia; indeed, it propels 'the repudiation of the rigid universal solutions of the past' (*Autobiography* 2.469) and *Utopia's* 'optimistic enterprise': 'not static but kinetic [... not] a permanent state but [...] a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages' (16-17). Wells's proffered escapes are precarious attempts which engender further efforts. James argues that Wells's refutation of stasis registers a chariness of repose leading to evolutionary degradation (*Maps of Utopia* 60-61): 'Utopia is not a lotus-eating paradise of doing as one likes, but a world that requires a substantial amount of work to construct' (131). The problem is apodictically, specifically that of the everyday; hence, Wells's 'utopian thinking is aboriginally rooted in the quotidian' (*Maps of Utopia* 134-35). The return to work inheres the necessary return of the desire to escape. It signals Wells's commitment to this interminable problem and, crucially, his enduring conception of the necessity of transcending the everyday.

IV

ARNOLD BENNETT



Bennett is *the* novelist of the ordinary.

John Lucas, *Arnold Bennett: a study of his fiction* (26 original emphasis)

In some ways, this chapter is an extended qualification of John Lucas's (1974) conception of Arnold Bennett. His novels are freighted with this association as much as Virginia Woolf's cavils in 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' (1924). Unfortunately, this paradigm is invoked thoughtlessly, as if Bennett's attention to the ordinary is a sufficient description or analytics of his work. This chapter will focus primarily upon *TOWT* (1908), to a lesser extent, *Clayhanger* (1910), and draw upon other works and non-fictional materials. *TOWT* offers a lucid exposition of what Bennett's everyday involves. This constitutes a divergence from the exodic impulse manifest in H.G. Wells's work. If Wells enjoins a return to work after his gnomic conclusions, this precipitates a simultaneous return to escape. Bennett is circumspect about the viability of such desires, and what such impulses negate about the extant everyday. A secondary and theoretically important component of Bennett's everyday is the writer's assumed specious and atemporal vantage from where the everyday is critiqued and the utopian horizon delimited. Against this aggrandisement, and facile self-exculpation, Bennett insists upon the everyday of the author, unavoidable misprisions, and intimates that the agency of individuals traduced in conceptions of an oppressive everyday is, if dissembled, ubiquitous and comprises an active, world-forming praxis.

It is this generative, palpable diffusion of possibility which clearly distinguishes Bennett's everyday from Wells's. Any ostensible commonality between *Lewisham* (1900) and *A Man from the North* (1898) is offset by the latter's reiterated interest in precisely the everyday which Richard Larch initially deprecates. Larch is surprised that the erudite, perspicacious Aked 'could exist surrounded by the banalities of Carteret Street' (61) but Aked makes clear that there is no meaningful opposition between the literary interest and superficial ordinariness:

"the suburbs [...] are full of interest, for those who can see it. Walk along this very street on such a Sunday afternoon as to-day. The roofs form two horrible, converging straight lines I know, but beneath there is character, individuality, enough to make the greatest book ever written. [...] Even in the thin smoke ascending unwillingly from invisible chimney-pots, the flutter of a blind, the bang of a door, the winking of a fox terrier perched on a window-sill, the colour of paint, the lettering of a name – in all these things there is character and matter of interest – truth waiting to be expounded" (68).

Thereafter, Larch alights upon events ‘hitherto witnessed daily without a second thought’ which ‘now appeared to carry some mysterious meaning’ (74). Bennett is further from Wells and closer to more recent, labile critical approaches to the everyday, such as Michel Maffesoli’s (2004) ‘poetics of banality’: ‘a poetics harbouring a high degree of intensity. I would tend to view it as a wellspring of societal energy, a watertable (so to speak), hidden from view but crucially important to collective survival’ (206-207). Bennett’s everyday poetics, described by Lucas as writing ‘memorably about those humdrum, commonplace existences [... which] is, when all is said and done, [Bennett’s] great and unique achievement’ (18-19), are most conspicuous in *TOWT*, and have been attested by numerous critics. Wells wrote to Bennett in October, 1908 and was fulsome in his praise: ‘Ripping. Enormous various Balzac. Arnold has surpassed himself. No further question of *First Rank*. A great book and a big book. [...] Nobody else could come anywhere near it. We are satisfied with our Bennett’ (quoted in *A Record* 152 original emphasis). Wells rightly alights upon the “bigness” of the novel, and this is largely wrought in its sedulous attention to the ordinary materials and routines of Bursley and Paris. Contemporary critics heralded *TOWT* as an everyday novel: A.J.G. noted in *The Staffordshire Sentinel* (11<sup>th</sup> November 1908) that the book is ‘full of the most minute details’; Gilbert Cannan described Sophia as ‘uninteresting’ (11<sup>th</sup> November 1908); the *Times Literary Supplement* (12<sup>th</sup> November 1908) reckoned the book ‘amble[s] from event to event’ and ‘is leagues distant from the exotic’; Edward Garnett (*Nation* 21<sup>st</sup> November 1908) adjudged that ‘the whole narrative holds us; it is life, life petty, commonplace’; in *Vanity Fair* (9<sup>th</sup> December 1908), Frank Harris lauded Bennett’s ‘knowledge of the commonplace and familiar’; and, in the *Daily News* (29<sup>th</sup> December 1908), R.A. Scott-James praised the novel’s evocation of ‘all the minutiae’ of the day-to-day (quoted in *Bennett’s Critical Heritage* 205; 209; 210; 215; 222; 225). This reception still frames the novel: Alice C. Patterson (1976) describes *TOWT* as interested in the ‘quite ordinary’ (248), Linda R. Anderson (1988) notes ‘that all aspects of [ordinary] life could be made the subject of [Bennett’s] art’ (52), John Carey (1992) avers that Bennett seeks ‘the depths that lie within the ordinary’ (162), Kurt Koenigsberger (2003) invokes the ‘everyday life in England’ (138), and Jason B. Jones (2003) describes Constance as ‘an everyday woman’ (32). All of these are inarguably true descriptions of *TOWT*.

However, the everyday is difficult to isolate and discuss not least because, as Liesl Olson (2009) notes, it ‘fundamentally emphasises the impossibility of its representation’ (15). Lucas argues that *TOWT*’s ‘real success’ depends upon ‘the way in which Bennett slowly builds the solidity of the world he is writing about [...] we are interested in and sympathetically responsive to Bennett’s characters because of the dense particularity with which they are socially placed’ (101). *TOWT* ‘slowly and imperceptibly builds up a rich, detailed and dense study of provincial life’, and mere quotation undoes any intended illustrative efficacy (134). John Wain (1953) argues that making a case for Bennett’s approach or looking for an exemplary, indicative quote is

pointless ‘since Bennett’s art is slow and cumulative’ (136). Indeed, Bennett was conscious and deliberate in this regard. In the *Journal* (1933) entry 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1907, he notes: ‘finished the second chapter of [*TOWT*]. I seem to be rather uneasy as to its excellence. [...] However, the effect of the novel will be a cumulative one’ (269). Wain and Lucas attest the imbricated thickness of the everyday developed in *TOWT*, one which cannot be reduced to a single instance or utterance but is constituted by a steady, rhythmized accretion of unremarkable details. This is, moreover, compounded by Bennett’s willingness to undermine the reader’s expectations. *TOWT* opens with a description of the Baines’ home, and the narrator alights upon a ‘peculiar’ second story window:

it was neither blind nor pad, and was very dirty; this was the window of an unused room that had a separate staircase to itself, the staircase being barred by a door always locked. Constance and Sophia had lived in continual expectation of the abnormal issuing from that mysterious room, which was next to their own. But they were disappointed. The room had no shameful secret except the incompetence of the architect who had made one house out of three; it was just an empty, unemployable room (6).<sup>53</sup>

This adroit deflation of expectations, which renders the potentially *unheimlich* decidedly homely and insipid, is indicative of the novel’s resistance to any facile means of eliciting interest. The everyday is met on its own unexceptional terms.

Bennett’s accumulation of material presupposes the interlocked and interlarded relations which are no less a part of the thing than the thing itself. Edwin Clayhanger’s conception of house building, constituted and ‘constructed brick by brick, beam by beam, lath by lath, tile by tile’ (166), is illustrative of Bennett’s strategy:

slow, careful; yes, and even finicking. [...] The measurements, the rulings, the plumbings, the checkings! He was humbled and he was enlightened. [...] He understood that there was no golden and magic secret of building. It was just putting one brick on another and against another – but to a hair’s breadth. It was just like anything else (*Clayhanger* 167).

The obstacle presented by such a construction means that each brick does not offer a singular aperture; instead, it functions structurally within its given whole. As this chapter will argue, Bennett’s explicit conception of the interrelatedness of phenomena, and the fact of their

---

<sup>53</sup> The window makes a subsequent appearance in the novel, and is just as bathetic: ‘the grimy window of the abandoned room at the top of the abandoned staircase next to the bedroom of [Constance’s] girlhood, had been cleaned and a table put in front of it. She knew that the chamber, which she herself had never entered, was to be employed as a storeroom’ (227).

reciprocal materiality, is crucial to his conception of the everyday, its textual evocation, and the tacit rejoinder this makes to the exodic.

With these caveats in place, there are instances which belie Lucas and Wain's univocal approach; an approach which, of course, provides a critical circumvention of the text while declaring that very evasion wholly necessary. Not least amongst these is the opening of *Anna* (1902), where Bennett explicates an interest in the quotidian in startling, pellucid terms: 'Nothing could be more prosaic than the huddled, red-brown streets; nothing more seemingly remote from romance. Yet be it said that romance is even here [...] for those who have an eye to perceive it' (9). Clearly, there is a conscious effort to wrest attention from obvious pulchritude or meretricious interest, and simply look at that which is readily overlooked. The quasi-Biblical diction of '[y]et be it said' imbues this stated intention with an impressive declarative force and positions Bennett's narrator as patently capable of this apperception. This extends to Bennett's protagonists, too. For instance, Edwin Clayhanger, despite straining against 'a net which somehow he had to cut' (*Clayhanger* 116), is consciously, explicitly unremarkable: 'It was the emptiness of the record of his private life that he condemned. What had he done for himself? Nothing large! Nothing heroic and imposing! [...] And yet he had accomplished nothing. [...] He was remarkable for nothing' (175-176). In *TOWT* Samuel Povey is equally unremarkable. 'Who, after all, was Mr Povey? Mr Povey was nobody' (111), muses Mrs Baines; and, devastatingly, Constance reckons that, even 'in the coffin, where nevertheless most people are finally effective,' Samuel 'had not been imposing' (208). These are only minor illustrations that partially gainsay the position of Lucas and Wain. Though their conception of the cumulative force of *TOWT* is judicious, this is no sheer impediment to discussing the efficacy and logic of Bennett's conception of the everyday. The novel is not a mass or deluge of desultory experiences and events. Bennett's approach to the everyday is cogent and coherent. Therefore, this chapter seeks to qualify and refine precisely the terms of Bennett's everyday, and register its implications.

This necessarily begins with the scrutiny to which Bennett subjects the actuality of escape; this is welded to his insistence upon materiality, and provides a tacit, mordant rejoinder to easy release. This is more than a matter of incredulity or pessimism, however, and, involves Bennett's vision of the familiar not simply as pure oppression, alienation or induration. One corollary of this resistance to obligatory escape is a perspicacious recognition of the suppositions undergirding articulations concerning the everyday, a contingency of extant social relations and encoded ideologies, from which such locutions invariably emerge. One of Bennett's most patient and generous critics, Robert Squillace (1997), argues for what he terms 'impersonal perspectivism' (184-187). This goes half of the required distance. The free play of misunderstanding, according to Wain this was 'one of [Bennett's] favourite themes' (127), and myopia in these texts indicates that Squillace has, indeed, posed an oxymoron: one is required to lose the first prefix and insist upon the somewhat tautologous personal perspectivism. This is

embedded in the fictional works and fully outlined in *TAC* (1914). Bennett's willingness to foreground not only the mistakes and misapprehensions of his characters but the narrator's, too, anticipates precisely the critique of ideologically saturated discursive practices outlined by Dorothy E. Smith (1987). Unlike Wells's willingness to begin futurological work, Bennett's profound recognition of an inexorably compromised start point, whose anterior suppositions about the constitution of the possible are carried forwards from the everyday, inhibit the alterity and promise of the exodic. For Bennett, there is nowhere one might reasonably transplant oneself to because there is no utopic, atemporal or pristine vantage one might assume not always already situated within the everyday; the feminist critics of Wells noted in the previous chapter highlight this problem in his work.

Both of these pillars, a generative conception of the familiar and a resistance to facile declarations from the gifted, emancipated critic, are conducive to a remarkable conception of the everyday in Bennett, exemplified by Sophia Baines's experiences during the Siege of Paris. In those chapters, Bennett delineates a lucid conception of how the everyday is invariably constituted by the materially consequential actions of individuals within their familiar routines. It is crucial to insist upon the radical ubiquity of this agential autonomy. Carey posits that Bennett 'believed people were singular and important in themselves' and that this forms a 'doctrine of individual distinction, on which Bennett pins his most serious thoughts about people' (174). This is utterly true, and must be wrought in the quotidian which is fashioned and remade endlessly by people who are not the objects conditioned by the ordinances of capitalism but volitional, effective, and affective subjects in-directly building their own everydays amongst others doing precisely the same.

The terms of this argument are an attempt to bring Bennett into productive contact with a type of theoretical exposure to which he has yet to be subjected. This is not simply a question of superimposing an inapposite or ahistorical theoretical paradigm as a simple illustration of extant suppositions. The chapter intends to read across and between Bennett's work and the manifestly pertinent theoretical precepts and constructs it invokes. An odd ally, in this instance, is Woolf. Derek Ryan's *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life* (2013), in the course of explicating the validity of reading Woolf through Gilles Deleuze, intimates the kind of diachronic, fictional-theoretical dialectic work this chapter explores:

I do not wish to foreclose the significance of Woolf's texts as "Deleuzian" or any such term, but rather to open up new perspectives and conceptual paradigms that might provoke new conversations or affect divergent "lines of flight" in our consideration of *Woolf in theory and theory in Woolf*. [...] Theorising materiality, and materialising theory, through Woolf need not be seen as a violent or naïve act of de-contextualisation (17-18 added emphasis).

The interpenetration Ryan describes, yielding ever more refined conceptions of the work and theory when posed in productive tension, is implicit in Bennett's attention to the everyday. However, and despite much more recent attempts to read Bennett via Michel Foucault and Gaston Bachelard by Fiona Tomkinson (2017) or via Michel de Certeau by Randi Saloman (2017), this has been unilateral, as in the opening contention that 'Bennett is *the* novelist of the ordinary' (Lucas 26 original emphasis). Theoretical approaches to Bennett are certainly less common than those afforded to Woolf. Nonetheless, it is time to read everyday theory in Bennett and Bennett in everyday theory.

I think that it would be well if more of such apparently simple episodes were stated and analysed, in order that light might be thrown upon an extremely obscure class of human relationships, namely, those relations which are familiar and constant without being in the slightest degree intimate.

Arnold Bennett, 'A Tale of Tyranny' (quoted in *Sketches* 65)

Bennett was chary of the prospect of escape, and this incredulity is composed of three interlocked scepticisms. Firstly, there is a critique of escape's vulnerability not only to the operant logic of capitalist homogeneity but its susceptibility to induration. Secondly, the insistence of Bennett's 'narrow, intense materialism' (Squillace 170) precipitates exigent, necessary questions of the constitution of any escape; in this regard, Bennett's insistence upon latent, and easily occluded material conditions, recalls Christopher Caudwell's (1938) critique of Wells's aggrandised misconception of bourgeois agency. Thirdly, Bennett consciously and consistently opposes the reduction of the everyday to mere oppression, and poses the ostensibly banal as a plane ready for exploration and composed of pervasive and heterogeneous latent interest where, as he noted in *How to Live* (1908), '[n]othing is humdrum' (113).

In a discussion of his relatively cultured childhood home, Margaret Drabble (1974) asserts that Bennett 'himself was keenly aware of the civilising effect of a holiday', and this is amply demonstrated by his frequent vacationing (20). However, while in Florence in 1910, Bennett interrupts descriptions of various concerts, piazzas, churches, and frescoes to note banal details. Lodging with friends, and even if everyone is '*très sympathétique & hospitable with real ideas on art*', Bennett devotes more attention to household chores than aesthetic disquisitions:

One had the illusion that it would be jolly to live in such a house. But [...] we saw a little servant let down a small copper vessel about a half a mile into a well & draw up about a quart or 2 quarts of water. An operation taking 60 or 120 seconds, and considerable physical force. The whole domestic life must be like that (*Florentine Journal* 54).

Drabble's rather nebulous idea of the "civilising effect" of holidays is at odds with Bennett's clear sense of their corporeal realities. The pulchritude of a Florentine villa or the edification of artistic discourse is mediated and counterpoised by the ineradicable facts of the day-to-day, such as how long it takes to draw different quantities of water from a well, and the inconvenience, for the 'little servant' at least, of this arrangement. Smith points out in 'Women's Perspectives as a Radical Critique of Sociology' (1974) that there are 'human activities, intentions, and relations

which are not apparent as such in the actual material conditions of our work' but there is always, nonetheless, 'a complex division of labour which is an essential pre-condition' (13). Bennett includes everyday lives easily elided by the fresh stimuli of an unfamiliar locale and the cynosure of touristic attractions. He reminds one that holidays are necessarily predicated upon pre-existing, socioeconomic relations and material contingencies; when one remembers that Bennett has been drinking the water borne by this 'little servant', and the single adjective intimates partial self-reproach, a background of occluded dependencies is elucidated. Bennett is conscious that any holiday's "civilising" effect involves another's everyday toil; it is not purely a question of a focalised, individuated alienation. One can invert Drabble's position then. The "civilising" effect for Bennett is a judicious apprehension of the material relations of holidays, and it is more "civil" to recognise this than pretend that one can enjoy an escape outwith (someone's) everyday work. Alongside his more capacious critique of the structural inadequacies of holidays, outlined below, Bennett's cognisance of the 'little servant', and myriad unseen others, frames, even haunts, his evocation of the everyday.

In his most important short story about the everyday, 'Under the Clock' (1912), Bennett lucidly examines the emancipatory logic of holidaying. The story details Annie and William Henry Brachett's marriage, his parsimony (due to precarious work as a painter), and the extravagance of a visit to the Isle of Man before their return home. Though 'extraordinarily happy', Annie finds her existence 'monotonous', 'hard, narrow and lacking in spectacular delights'; she yearns for the Lake District or Llangollen, whereas William is happy to walk through the nearest Municipal Park (120). Annie is 'astonished that her William Henry seemed to be so content with things as they were. [...] He had no distraction except his pipe' (121). The experience of regularity is stifling, and the adjectives betray a familiar derogation: life is 'tedious' with a 'smoky regularity', Annie looks 'upon the Five Towns as a sort of prison from which she could never, never escape', and reckons her existence 'a harsh and industrious struggle, a series of undisturbed daily habits. No change, no gaiety, no freak! Grim, changeless monotony' (121). These dissatisfactions posit the everyday as oppressive familiarity, of unrelenting and unfulfilling routine demanding redress.

Of course, this experience forms a set of conditions to which capitalism poses a means of reprieve. Dutifully, William maintains his subscription to the Going Away Club, and he saves twenty sovereigns for the annual escape. Bennett figures this break as a move from domestic torpor to the indulgence of consumption: the deck of the ship from Liverpool to Douglas is 'like a market-place' (122) and, below deck, are

bookshops, trinket shops, highly-decorated restaurants, glittering bars, and cushioned drawing-rooms. They had the most exciting meal in the restaurant that Annie had ever had; also the most expensive; the price of it indeed staggered her; still, William Henry did not appear to mind that one meal should exceed the cost of two days living in Birches

Street. Then they went up into the market-place again, and lo! the market-place had somehow of itself got into the middle of the sea (123).

Clearly, the locus of interest has shifted for Bennett since *Anna*. When making the same crossing, Henry Mynors and Anna Tellwright are preoccupied by 'the engines, so titanic, ruthless' rather than the provisions on offer (110). In 'Under the Clock', perhaps because of the Brachetts' limited means compared to Anna's or Henry's, Bennett is astute enough to recognise that expenditure is irreducibly and directly linked to the calculus of William's wages. Consequently, Annie worries about the cost of refreshments while aboard: 'the best "Home and Colonial" tea cost eighteenpence a pound, and that a pound would make two hundred and twenty cups. Similarly with the bread and butter which they ate, and the jam! But it was glorious' (123).

Nonetheless, the holiday consists of 'six days of delirium, six days of the largest possible existence' (123). However, the 'largeness', the 'delirium', both terms undermined by the reiterated finitude of 'six days', of this fleeting (near) week is absolutely not singular. There is a disconcerting regularity to the sojourn: every 'day's proceeding began at nine o'clock with a regal breakfast, partaken of at a very long table which ran into a bow window' (123). The break from Five Towns' domestic monotony is simply the mass regularity and consumption of the holiday:

At nine o'clock, in all the thousand boarding-houses, a crowd of hungry and excited men and women sat down thus to a very long table, and consumed the same dishes, that is to say, Manx herrings, and bacon and eggs, and jams. Everybody ate as much as he could. [...] Of course, the cost was fabulous. Thirty-five shillings per week each. Annie would calculate that, with thirty boarders and extras, the boarding-house was taking in money at the rate of over forty pounds a week. She would also calculate that about a hundred thousand herrings and ten million little bones were swallowed in Douglas each day (123-124).

Perhaps Annie's calculating evinces William's influence, but there is a residual sense that the holiday is constituted only by inducements to consume 'as much as [one] could' and spend on a massifying scale. Leisure is reticulated into capitalism's organising exploits, and what was presumed to be active desire and the fulfilment of organic need is reduced to passive conformity. Henri Lefebvre, in 'The Everyday and Everydayness' (1987), argues that the dictates of capitalism are ubiquitous: 'in leisure activities, the passivity of the spectator is faced with images and landscapes; in the workplace, it means passivity when faced with decisions in which the worker takes no part; in private life, it means the imposition of consumption' (10). Consumption belies the restoration it promises, upon which it is premised, and fails because its scale reveals the structural logic of capitalism: William depends upon an industry of mass production, of course,

and his respite involves mass consumption. Moreover, William's meanness, a symptom of his precarious employment, has infiltrated Annie's enjoyment of the holiday.

This does not *appear* to be the case, though. The profusion of activities and stimuli is arresting, abundant:

Sailing in a boat! Rowing in a boat! Bathing! The Pier! Sand minstrels! Excursions by brake, tram and train to Laxey, Ramsey, Sulby Glen, Port Erin, Snaefell! Morning shows! Afternoon shows! Evening shows! Circuses, music-halls, theatres, concerts! And then the public balls, with those delicious tables in corners, lighted by Chinese lanterns, where you sat down and drew strange liquids up straws. And it all meant money (124).

This compacted list of opportunities to enjoy, spend, and conform to a passive consumption constitutes precisely the rhythmic, ordered patterning Annie sought to escape. The excessive exclamation marks quickly stale, and any exhilaration stagnates amongst this superflux of enthusiasm; the inducements, reduced to paratactic profusion, undo their imputed significance, and the various commodities and commodified experiences are reticulated into a meaningless, over-exclaimed surfeit. There is a manifest incongruity in 'Under the Clock': the extant recompense for the torpor and indigence of the everyday is trite and inadequate in its plenitude. Leisure fails because it does not actualise a sufficient alterity. The everyday, as McKenzie Wark (2011) argues, engenders needs, and it 'is where people appropriate for themselves, not nature but a second nature of already manufactured article. It is where needs confront goods' (98). Certainly this is Annie's reflection: 'it all meant money' (124). Here, *in nuce*, she intuits the insidious interrelation of the Five Towns and Douglas and the logic in which the former mandates the latter only to necessitate the return to monotonous wage-labour; round and round, again and again.

Where Bennett sees the compromises of the exodic promise in holidaying, Lefebvre argues that dissatisfaction such as Annie's implies 'a dialectical movement' between the 'crush[ing]' weight of the everyday and a concomitant 'sense of reality' (*Vol. I* 143):

Alienation is not a fixed and permanent illusion. The individual is alienated, but as part of his development. Alienation is the objectification, at once real and illusory, of an activity which itself exists objectively. It is a moment in the development of this activity, in the increasing power and consciousness of man (*Dialectical Materialism* 88).

One might reasonably extend the logic Lefebvre explicates to the consumption manifest at Douglas; Annie is appropriately chary, and aware of the tangible insufficiencies of holidaying under capitalism. There is, on Lefebvre's terms, some dialectical promise in her perspicacity and

disquiet. The end of the story undermines any potential. Returning home, the couple realise that they have exhausted their funds, and do not have enough money to pay for their cab. In a literal, portentous reinscription of their gendered domains, William tells Annie to go inside and “look under th’ clock on th’ mantelpiece in th’ parlour. Ye’ll find six bob” (125). William explains ‘that prudent members of Going Away Clubs always left money concealed behind them, as this was the sole way of providing against a calamitous return’ (125). Such inexorability signals not the consummation of rest or the possibility of meaningful change but an imprisoned existence chastened by total expenditure: ‘a calamitous return’. Wark delineates a salient temporal difference between two ‘kinds of time [which] meet and mingle in the everyday’:

One is a linear time, the time of credit and investment. The other is a cyclical time, of wages paid and bills due. This is how class makes itself felt in everyday life. Linear temporality is ruling-class time; cyclical temporality is working-class time. The workers spend what they get; the bosses get what they spend (98).

The coin placed deliberately *beneath* the clock intimates that the irrevocable movement of time supersedes the acquisition of wealth. Any meagre linear saving will always be outdone by the implacable revolutions of the clock hands only marking the endless accumulation-diminution-accumulation of the couple’s funds contending with the cycles of everyday work and everyday reprieve.

Curiously, and after the critique of holidaying, Bennett describes a return, though the couple never truly left, to the interminable ‘temporality [of] working-class time’ (Wark 98):

The pair existed on the remainder of the six shillings and on credit for a week. William Henry became his hard self again. The prison life was resumed. But Annie did not mind, for she had lived for a week at the rate of a thousand a year. And in a fortnight William Henry began grimly to pay his subscriptions to the next year’s Going Away Club (125).

Annie’s response is strange; it is redolent of the narrator’s contention, at the end of *Wheels* (1896), that Hoopdriver’s ‘early rising, the dusting, and drudgery begin[s] again – but with a difference, with wonderful memories and still more wonderful desires’ after his brief romantic escapades (296). There is an implication that the holiday has provided some meaningful respite or reprieve despite the clear intimation that the misery Annie describes at the story’s beginning will resurface. Perhaps the verb tense, “going” is endlessly prospective, betrays the efficacy of this deferred desire; Wells’s narrator describes similarly diffuse hopes vested in unspecified but ‘wonderful desires’ (296) clouded by the novel’s final words: ‘The gate closes upon him with a slam’ (297). The distractive function of such compensations for the everyday is described by Siegfried

Kracauer in 'Cult of Distraction' (1926) as 'masking' the socioeconomic conditions it should expose (328), and this is certainly outwith the promise Lefebvre infers from the insufficiencies of capitalism's modes of recompense. Tellingly, the final words deal with the facts of William Henry's existence and imply that this irreducible continuation is more significant than one week of respite, a week compromised by the conditions of "holidaying" under capital. The promise Lefebvre saw in negating the everyday is disappointed by the sheer reiteration of cyclical time outwith the promise, even momentary, of sublation. Bennett agrees. In an essay, 'The Election and the Democratic Idea' (1910), he is mordant, and avers that the working class, 'the very basis and mother earth of society, the transcendent victim, tool and slave, is just as likely [...] to spend its leisure in renewing the chains which bind it' (557)

Bennett's incredulity about the restorative efficacy of holidays, even their fundamental components, appears in *TOWT*. This is bound up with the phantasmagoria of Paris, as a telos of escape and site of romance. Sophia is excited by Gerald Scales's familiarity with the city:

Paris! Paris meant absolutely nothing to her but pure, impossible, unattainable romance. And he had been there! The clouds of glory were around him. He was a hero, dazzling. He had come to her out of another world. He was her miracle. He was almost too miraculous to be true (98).

Even the humble travelling salesman, with a relatively fleeting connection, is irradiated by the ambient allure of Paris; Sophia's paratactic enthusiasm is redolent of Annie Brachett's and the apparent unreality recalls Polly's visit to Miriam: "I'm a Visitant from Another World" (*Polly* 476). When George Cannon echoes his French father's complaints, Monsieur Canonges having arrived from Limoges (*Hilda Lessways* 45), about the Five Town's environment, Hilda senses 'all that was French in him', and is thrilled by 'something rather exotic and entirely marvellous' (183). Similarly, in *Clayhanger* Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* exudes 'a most romantic, foreign, even exotic air' and 'seemed to exhale all the charm of France and her history' (195). Bennett quickly deflates this excitement. Just as Annie Brachett is disquieted by the trappings of tourism and the uniformity of consumers, Sophia Baines is underwhelmed by the proclivities of the English tourists who lodge at her Pension Frensham:

What struck Sophia was the astounding similarity of her guests. They all asked the same questions, made the same exclamations, went out on the same excursions, returned with the same judgments, and exhibited the same unimpaired assurance that foreigners were really very peculiar people. They never seemed to advance in knowledge. There was a constant stream of explorers from England who had to be set on their way to the Louvre or the Bon Marche (*TOWT* 363).

It is perhaps unclear what Sophia desires of her guests; certainly, she is disappointed by the monotony of their expectations. However, Bennett intimates that any escape, and Sophia's is the most conspicuous attempt, is invariably a question of transposition, if only as a matter of degree. She absolutely refuses to go to Paris from London with Gerald Scales unless they are married (243-245), and, when convalescing under the care of Madame Foucault, Sophia inspects the apartment

with the sharp gaze of a woman brought up in the traditions of a modesty so proud that it scorns ostentation, quickly tested and condemned the details of this chamber that imitated every luxury. Nothing in it, she found, was "good." And in St. Luke's Square "goodness" meant honest workmanship, permanence, the absence of pretence. [...] And further, dust was everywhere [...] One of her mother's phrases came into her head: "a lick and a promise" (302).

Sophia's imposition of acquired mores, a kind of automaticity (Bargh 7-11), is of the same order as the tourists' expectations, and subjects the locus of escape to an anterior logic liable to undo any presumed or desired alterity. This, Bennett intimates, is another profound paradox of escape: the very conditions which induce the exodic impulse are liable to evanesce (materially and conceptually) along the escape route or at the destination.

The strange interplay of the new and anterior familiarity is apparent when Sophia visits Restaurant Sylvain with Gerald. She is impressed by 'extraordinary self-assurance of all the women, their unashamed posing, their calm acceptance of the public gaze' (253). This is a stimulating experience:

In its catholicity it was highly correct as a resort; not many other restaurants in the centre could have successfully fought against the rival attractions of the Bois and the dim groves of the Champs Elysees on a night in August. The complicated richness of the dresses, the yards and yards of fine stitchery, the endless ruching, the hints, more or less incautious, of nether treasures of embroidered linen; and, leaping over all this to the eye, the vivid colourings of silks and muslins, veils, plumes and flowers, piled as it were pell-mell in heaps on the universal green cushions to the furthest vista of the restaurant, and all multiplied in gilt mirrors – *the spectacle intoxicated Sophia* (254 added emphasis).

This catholicity will, invariably, yield a callus: a catholicon to the heterogeneity of new experiences without which one could not orient oneself or function. The intoxicating shock fades to sobriety, and Bennett's choice of a transient analogous experience is deliberate. Of course, in

this instance, the ‘multiplied’, ‘leaping’ pageant is refracted by Sophia’s formative years in a drapery shop; she alights upon the stitching, materials, and colours. Randall Craig (1981) notes that Sophia’s flight to London and then Paris is induced by the ‘oppressive dullness of banal reality’ (199). Yet even in the whorl of inchoate stimuli, Bennett indicates that anterior filters work to impose some fixity, however tenuous. The oppression Craig describes is certainly a partial motive for Sophia’s elopement but it also provides orientation, stability. The initial inebriation fades and the ideal of Paris is undone by Sophia’s experiences: ‘a quarter of a century of ceaseless labour and anxiety’ (383). Much like the city’s glamour, the ideal of Gerald Scales fades: he is improvident, dissolute, unfaithful, and abandons Sophia, to the best of his knowledge penniless, in her illness. Sophia is left in the care of Madame Foucault by Chirac, Gerald’s associate, and she subsequently superintends the apartment during the Siege of Paris and Commune. Escape to Paris becomes oppressive: ‘a horrible, vile prison’ (319). Unsurprisingly, after her return to Bursley, Sophia scorns the exiguous imagination of ‘people in Bursley [who] did not suspect what Paris was’ (412). This is ambiguous: she might be contemptuous of their rarefied notions or imposing her own aggrandisements; it is either less or more than these people imagine, and there is a suggestion that actuality is invariably incommensurate with any idea(l).

The everyday is not only a stabiliser of new experiences as Bennett’s preternatural attentiveness to banal, everyday objects retains a crucial material focus. As Saloman argues, the “‘made-ness” of the world rivets Bennett; he is as interested in how things work as in what they accomplish’ (190), and this is disclosed in the ‘consistent desire of Bennett and his characters to know not only what is occurring in the world around them, but why and how – what the underlying principles might be’ (191). In part, this is due to the acuity with which Bennett apprehends the “‘made-ness” of the world’ and its corollary: a nexus of occluded relations, of “‘little servants”. Of course, Bennett’s conception of the everyday, a hermeneutics of suspicion, is redolent of Lefebvre’s explication of ‘the simplest event - a woman buying a pound of sugar’ (*Vol. I* 57). Lefebvre deliberates the relationship between superstructures and these fleeting instances. The preliminary assumption – that fugacious, nugatory events within the everyday are really an endless series of potential apertures – provides a sound frame for thinking through Bennett’s related approach. Hilda Lessways, when thinking about George Cannon, muses on his ‘white wristbands’:

She saw the washing and the ironing of those wristbands, and a slatternly woman or two sighing and grumbling amid wreaths of steam, and a background of cinders and suds and sloppiness.... All that, so that the grand creature might have a rim of pure white to his coat-sleeves for a day! It was inevitable. But the grand creature must never know. The

shame necessary to his splendour must be concealed from him, lest he might be offended  
(*Hilda Lessways* 41).<sup>54</sup>

This example is particularly pregnant because it selects a purely ornamental signifier of wealth, and involves an ongoing, day-to-day cycle of wear and cleaning. Hilda's musing is complicated by the presence of Florrie, the Lessways' new maid for whom, at thirteen and a half and the eldest of ten, it is necessary 'to be earning money for her parents' (33). Mrs Lessways itemises Florrie's various duties, prohibitions and domestic idiosyncrasies, and Hilda is appalled:

She was witnessing now the first stage in the progress of a victim of the business of domesticity. To-day Florrie was a charming young creature, full of slender grace. Soon she would be a dehumanised drudge. [...] All over the town, in every street of the town, behind all the nice curtains and blinds, the same hidden shame was being enacted: a vast, sloppy, steaming, greasy, social horror (36).

When she is later called to work at 59 Preston Street in Brighton, Hilda reckons Florrie 'would only see the sea once a week, except through windows, [...] work fourteen to sixteen hours a day for a living, and sleep in a kennel' (243). This is not a univocal elucidation of privation, however. The dehumanisation runs both ways: Florrie is debased by her servile work and Mrs Lessways's condescension, and George Cannon is transformed into 'the grand creature' (41), a caustic oxymoron, by the impersonality and alienation of laundry arrangements.<sup>55</sup> The incongruity of Hilda's 'mixed and opposing and irreconcilable' ideas of social relations is fractured by the simultaneity of the conditions of labour and its products; and, Hilda intuits, these anonymous figures, for whom Florrie is a corporeal metonym, wreathed in steam, 'sighing and grumbling' (41), would *shame* George were he cognisant of their labour.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, Bennett intimates that

---

<sup>54</sup> In *TOWT*, the cleanliness of the children at Cyril Povey's birthday party is posed in similar terms: 'Weeks of labour, thousands of cubic feet of gas, whole nights stolen from repose, eyesight, and general health, will disappear into the manufacture of a single frock that accidental jam may ruin in ten seconds' (156). Sophia, too, confronted with French millinery causes 'her to picture a whole necessary cityful of girls stitching, stitching, and stitching day and night' (254).

<sup>55</sup> This was something Bennett himself was consciously aware of. Arriving in Vevey in December 1908, Bennett is captivated by the Dents du Midi and the 'enchantingly beautiful' play of clouds and light (*Journal* 309). Having spent the night in the hotel, his mood changes at the beginning of the next entry: 'In the basement of this hotel, very dark with windows that look on a wall that supports the earth, is the laundry, where human beings work all day at washing linen. We live on the top of that, admiring fine literature and the marvellous scenery' (309). In 'The Hanbridge Empire' (1910), Bennett reiterated his disquiet: 'In nearly all public places of pleasure, the pleasure is poisoned for me by the obsession that I owe it, at last, to the underpaid labour of people who aren't there and can't be there; by the growing, deepening obsession that the whole structure of what a respectable person means, when he say with patriotic warmth "England" is reared on a stupendous and shocking injustice' (quoted in *Sketches* 130).

<sup>56</sup> This is complicated by Hilda's subsequent disposition in *These Twain* (1916) which has 'hardened [...] to the consistency of a slave-driver' when dealing with the servants (293). As servants become more and more familiar within (and because of) the everyday, Hilda is less sensitive to what she previously deemed a 'social horror' (*Hilda Lessways* 36). Edwin, on the other hand, spends less time at home, and agonises over the lack of labour reform for domestic workers: "'not one of them works less than a hundred hours a week, and nobody cares'" (*These Twain* 298).

this profoundly gendered division of labour, paid or unpaid, is deliberated occluded or overlooked: the everyday functions as a protective carapace for its shameful, invoked in both passages, functioning.

A similar, momentary insight occurs in *TOWT*. When Samuel Povey is taken through his cousin Daniel's confectionary and bakery, he is led into the back of the shop:

Never before had he penetrated so far into his cousin's secrets. On the left, within the doorway, were the stairs, dark; on the right a shut door; and in front an open door giving on to a yard. At the extremity of the yard he discerned a building, vaguely lit, and naked figures strangely moving in it.

"What's that? Who's there?" he asked sharply.

"That's the bakehouse," Daniel replied, as if surprised at such a question. "It's one of their long nights."

Never, during the brief remainder of his life, did Samuel eat a mouthful of common bread without recalling that midnight apparition. He had lived for half a century, and thoughtlessly eaten bread as though loaves grew ready-made on trees (182-183).<sup>57</sup>

Wells described this 'bakehouse glimpse' as his 'high light [*sic*]' (quoted in *A Record* 154), and it functions as a clarification and extension of Hilda Lessways's response to George Cannon's pristine cuffs; the insistence that the nocturnal labour is "their" work insists upon class specific everyday just as Hilda intuitively genders distinctions. Drabble places an untoward pressure on these moments. She argues that, though Bennett was acutely and perhaps painfully aware of the iniquitous interrelation of wealth and poverty, he never 'allow[ed] himself the simple answer' to the indifference of the prosperous: 'that such men are morally obtuse, dead in their souls, and wicked. He could see [...] that such an answer would condemn not only himself but also most of the things that give life any value. He was looking for a complex answer, which he never found' (343). It is unclear whether Drabble desires a critique of political economy, a programme of revolutionary praxis, or just a partisan declamation from Bennett. Either way, this is an inapposite demand. As Lefebvre's woman buying sugar intimates, just as Bennett's bakehouse does, the rupture of normative patterns of inured perception discloses the proximity of mutually enchainable relations; the totality of these connections is startling, and their partial revelation is sufficient to itself if measured against the occlusion of these facts by the everyday. In two articles published in *The New Age* as 'Jacob Tonson' (4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February 1909), Bennett argues that the middle class

---

<sup>57</sup> There is a similar revelation in *These Twain*. Edwin's midnight trip to the hospital discloses 'a strange nocturnal world – a world which had always co-existed with his own, but of which he had been till then most curiously ignorant' (348).

depends upon this willingness to ignore the conditions which ensure its material privileges; he anticipates Lefebvre's subsequent claim that the 'end, the aim' of the critique of everyday life is 'to make thought - the power of man, the participation in and the consciousness of that power - intervene in life in its humblest detail' (*Vol. I* 227). In the first, Bennett insists that the middle class's 'worship of money and financial success' is predicated upon 'a grim passion for the status quo' (305). In the follow up invective, he argues that the reading habits of this class merely constitute banal distractions because it 'dislikes being confronted with anything that considers it "unpleasant," that is to say, interesting. It has a genuine horror of the truth neat' (326). This stolidity provides a better measure than Drabble's inapposite demands. Given that Samuel *never* consumes bread without remembering that brief revelation, Bennett intimates that the status quo might be undermined by, however momentarily, glancing the truth neat. For Bennett, this is ineluctable, extending beyond Paris or holidays to potential iterations of "post"-everyday escape.

The Five Towns offer an exemplary instance of Bennett's approach to the everyday: it presents a superlative example of overlooked everyday materiality: pottery, utterly pervasive and unremarkable. This is announced at the beginning of *TOWT* during the narrator's defence of the apparently squalid Potteries:

They are unique and indispensable because you cannot drink tea out of a teacup without the aid of the Five Towns; because you cannot eat a meal in decency without the aid of the Five Towns [...] All the everyday crockery used in the kingdom is made in the Five Towns – all, and much besides. [...] Even the majestic thought that whenever and wherever in all England a woman washes up, she washes up the product of the district; that whenever and wherever in all England a plate is broken the fracture means new business for the district – even this majestic thought had probably never occurred to either of the girls. The fact is, that while in the Five Towns they were also in the Square, Bursley and the Square ignored the staple manufacture as perfectly as the district ignored the county (*TOWT* 5).

The interrogative, jussive address to "you" might implicate the reader as much as 'either' (worker and pottery-user; or, Sophia and Constance) woman in the ignorance the narrator derides but this type of invective is more capacious, and pottery a singular manifestation of more pervasive phenomena, and inveighs against a considerable propensity to overlook comparable materials, such as cuffs. For Bennett, this disclosure is 'majestic', and undermines more supercilious approaches liable to derogate the importance of these manufactured products.

This is partially a matter of conspicuousness. The Five Towns is replete with evidence of its industry; it comprises 'an architecture of ovens and chimneys; for this its atmosphere is as black as its mud; for this it burns and smokes all night, so that Longshaw has been compared to

hell' (*TOWT* 5). In *Clayhanger* the Five Towns are 'all netted in flowing scarves of smoke' (21), and people are reduced to 'creeping animal[s] amid the undergrowth of a forest of chimneys, ovens, and high blank walls' (98). In 'The People of the Potteries' (1911), Bennett defends the deleterious effects of manufacture upon the environment:

Ruskin gorgeously inveighed against the spectacular horrors of industrialism. But he would probably have been very cross if he had had to drink his tea out of the hollow of his hand, in default of a cup and to keep himself warm with a skipping-rope, in default of coal. Yet neither cups nor coals can be produced without a great deal of dirt. You use coal; you want coal, you are very glad to have coal and a number of other things which cannot exist without coal; and then you have the audacity to come into a coaly and clayey district and turn up your nose and say: "Really this is very dirty and untidy" (quoted in *Sketches* 138).<sup>58</sup>

However, Bennett is not simply redressing myopia, nor is he merely joining the dots between pottery production and use. The point is to recognise these relations in their necessary ubiquity. Just as he is disabused of his holiday's idyllic succour in Florence, Bennett disabuses readers of the utopic promise of escape from the everyday. One merely visits someone else's, and this inevitably involves the routines of laundry, water collection, baking, and/or the production of pottery. While Bennett's approach to the everyday shares certain methodological features with Lefebvre's, his excavation of an always already extant set of socioeconomic relations and material contingencies within the locus of escape constitutes a significant difference between the two. Lefebvre is purblind about the historical conditions of the medieval peasants he lauds, and encodes patriarchal assumptions in his teleological critique. The "'made-ness" of the world' Saloman describes as preoccupying Bennett (190) is always projected forwards and undoes the exodic imaginary.

Nowhere is this more apparent than Bennett's conception of Brighton. Recent critics have not positioned the resort within the broader critique of dissembled dependencies explicit in Hilda Lessways's meditation on George Cannon's immaculate cuffs. For instance, Andrew Lincoln (1984) is patently wrong to think that Bennett thinks of Brighton as 'the ideal of the governing classes' (190); this is nearly as profound a misreading as Woolf's in 'Modern Fiction' (1921):

---

<sup>58</sup> In 'The Death of Simon Fuge' (1907), Loring, a visitor from London, half-scorns the Five Towns as he rebukes himself: 'I had but passed through them occasionally on my way to Scotland, scorning their necessary grime with the perhaps too facile disdain of the clean-faced southerner, who is apt to forget that coal cannot walk up unaided out of the mine, and that the basin in which he washes his beautiful purity can only be manufactured amid conditions highly repellent' (267).

[Bennett's characters seem] to spend their time in some softly padded first-class railway carriage, pressing bells and buttons innumerable; and the destiny to which they travel so luxuriously becomes more and more an unquestionably an eternity of bliss spent in the very best hotel in Brighton (7).<sup>59</sup>

Though Nicholas Redman's article 'Arnold Bennett, Brighton and Sussex' (2017) does recognise that if Bennett 'was impressed by the gaiety and the spectacle he was equally struck by the darker side of town' (133), this is not explored meaningfully. When Hilda Lessways first arrives, she reckons that the 'multiplicity of beggars, louts, and organ-grinders was alone a proof of Brighton's success in the world' (*Hilda Lessways* 192). This is not, as Redman argues, a question of bifurcation but, Bennett intimates, necessary simultaneity and contiguity: any signifier of wealth is a corollary of material privation, and this is not a matter of Brighton's "darker side" but is clear, conspicuous at the surface.

Any succour Brighton offers, if not all ready attenuated by its effective dependence upon the logic of labour and capitalist profiteering, depends upon an ignorance of its very materiality, its made-ness. This is why Hilda Lessways, contemplating a future in charge of the boarding house at 59 Preston Street, is depressed by her prospects:

Along the entire length of the King's Road, the smells of basement kitchens ascended to the pavement and offended the nose. And Hilda saw all Brighton as a colossal and disgusting enlargement of the kitchen at No. 59. She saw the background and the pits of Brighton – that which underlies and hides behind, and is not seen. The grandeur of the King's Road was naught to her. Her glance pierced it and it faded to a hallucination (*Hilda Lessways* 325).

Hilda's insight makes Lincoln's assertion that Brighton constitutes 'the ideal of the governing classes' (190) redundant. This may appear to be the case but Bennett is cognisant that any locus of escape, any oasis, is no such thing; it depends upon that which 'is not seen'; overlooking is really a misapprehension, a hallucination that needs to be 'pierced' (*Hilda Lessways* 325). Sophia Baines's life at the Pension Frensham is similar to Hilda's at 59 Preston Street. Initially, Sophia 'scarcely slept at all, and she ate no more than she slept' (*TOWT* 362). Despite her successful tenure and hard work, the establishment prompts 'ten thousand apprehensions about [its] management': '[was] it not the fact that she had to supervise everything herself, that she could

---

<sup>59</sup> This is yet another instance of Woolf's maladroitness, simplistic reading of Bennett. In *Clayhanger*, Edwin is painfully aware of a difference between the affluent travellers to Brighton and himself: 'he could not dismiss from his face the consciousness that he was an intruder, that he did not belong to that world. He was ashamed of his hand-baggage, and his gesture in tipping the porter lacked carelessness. Of course he pretended a frowning, absorbed interest in a newspaper – but the very newspaper was strange' (436).

depend on no one? Were she to be absent even for a single day the entire structure would inevitably fall. Instead of working less she worked harder' (384-385).

If escape is compromised, Bennett nonetheless proffers a compensatory strategy for the everyday's presence, always 'proceeding with all its immense variety and importance' (*TOWT* 4). One of these involves a complex or contingent conception of labour not reducible to deadening alienation. In *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (2001), Ben Highmore describes the 'emptying of time' (5) as a consequence of the rationalisation and regulation of time in mass production (5-11). The distillation of this regularity is assembly line temporality; the inexorable repetition without telos, consummation or completion comes to characterise a 'generalised condition' (8) of everyday existence. This approach underwrites much exodic criticism of everyday life. Bennett is less univocal, and implies that labour is not simply coterminous with miserable drudgery. This is not to countermand the argument made here concerning the material realities of holidays and luxury, which are bound up in iniquitous and unequal (if dissembled) social relations which undermine the purity of escape. Bennett's conception of the ordinary is more subtle than sheer dichotomy, and involves a knotty complication of the antithetical relationship of everyday and escape.

Just as holidays *might* induce ennui or financial anxiety, work *might* provide stability, purpose and, potentially, happiness. If Annie Brachett's experience of capitalism's rendition of holiday-as-escape is deflated by its massifying manifestation, this does not condemn the potential of commodities to excite. In *These Twain*, Hilda scorns her sister-in-law's pride in her new furniture:

It was astonishing to Hilda that Clara was not ashamed of the publicity and the wholesale reproduction of her suite. But she was not. On the contrary she seemed to draw a mysterious satisfaction from the very fact that suites precisely similar to hers were to be found or would soon be found in unnumbered other drawing-rooms (94).

Similarly, work is not necessarily miserable torpor. Hilda is genuinely excited having learned Pitman's shorthand: 'she was a priestess! [...] She was a pioneer. No young woman had ever done what she was doing. She was the only girl in the Five Towns who knew shorthand' (*Hilda Lessways* 60). Big James, foreman compositor at the Clayhanger print works, by, 'the continual monotonous performance of similar tasks that employed his faculties while never absorbing or straining them, had soothed and dulled the fever of life in him to a beneficent calm' (*Clayhanger* 75). In 'Mary with the High Hand' (1905), Bennett describes Mary Beechinor's work as a proficient 'band-and-line' paintress requiring 'a hand as sure as Giotto's', and her completing the task 'with miraculous swiftness, hour after hour, week after week, year after year':

“Doesn’t she ever do anything else?” some visitor might curiously inquire, whom Titus Price was showing over his ramshackle manufactory. “No, always the same thing,” Titus would answer, made proud for the moment of this phenomenon of stupendous monotony. “I wonder how she can stand it – she has a refined face,” the visitor might remark; and Mary Beechinor was left alone again. The idea that her work was monotonous probably never occurred to the girl. It was her work – as natural as sleep, or the knitting which she always did in the dinner-hour. The calm and silent regularity of it had become part of her, deepening her original quiescence (40).<sup>60</sup>

Mary Beechinor’s quiet concentration, as thoughtless and restorative as sleep, is strikingly similar to the analeptic rhythms of the everyday Maffesoli describes as “‘immediate life’, non-theorised, non-rationalised, with no finality or aim, but entirely invested in the present’:

Investment in the present, *intensity*, is what ties me to others in order to live this mutual investment. A *choice labour* allows me to understand, at certain moments, the importance of the qualitative, the suspension of time, rituals of all kinds, and the uses and customs that in fact ensure the framework of the body social. Life without qualities is just what ensures, in a mysterious manner, the preservation of society. This leads us to the heart of everyday society, of banality, but also *survival* in the long run (203-204 original emphasis).

Bennett attempts to render the everyday on its own terms; or, perhaps, that does not go far enough to elucidate the true significance of this fleeting glimpse of labour: it is not something that must axiomatically be sublated but might be posited as, or revealed to be, a deeply meditative, restorative, and equilibrating constituent of life; indeed, Maffesoli implies, in its effective stability, it is life itself. Hilda, Big James, and Mary Beechinor, constellate a pointed rejoinder to Lefebvre and Kracauer, even Betty Friedan (1963), and their insistence upon the absolute conquest of the everyday by capitalism, reification, and alienation.

Mary Beechinor also problematises one of the guiding assumptions in *Escape Attempts* (1992). Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor posit that the everyday begins to resemble coercive entrapment as soon as one can dissociate an abstract “real”-self from the “other”-self performing a particular role; this might be worker, father, husband, chess player, *inter alia* (70-73; 80-83; 214-15). Whatever the circumstances, the problem remains: ‘We can relegate habits to the lower part

---

<sup>60</sup> In a later essay, ‘Clay in the Hands of the Potter’ (1913), Bennett describes the process, in one of the rare instances dealing with the technicalities of pottery manufacturing, undertaken by these “paintresses”: ‘you must remember that there are in existence millions upon millions of vessels decorated with band-and-line, and that they have all of them been painted separately by young women seated at revolving tables. It is a wondrous and dreadful thought, but it is part of the singular romance of clay. The skill for the task is soon learnt. The task is monotonous in the highest degree. It is endless. You might suppose that its monotony and its endlessness would drive these young women into some form of lunacy or melancholia. But no! The vocation merely endows them with a sort of benignant placidity’ (quoted in *Sketches* 160).

of the brain and reserve the higher regions for innovation and originality. Shovel away the flotsam of day-to-day existence and then we get down to real living' (50). This restive model of everyday life mandates successive escapes. Mary Beechinor, however, adumbrates a quiescence seemingly incommensurate with the process Cohen and Taylor delineate. In fact, work serves to amplify, deepen this original calm; work is not a catalyst for another abstraction of oneself but effective consolidation. In *Rhythmanalysis* (1992), Lefebvre posits that this kind of experience actuates a different temporal order called "appropriated" time:

normal or exceptional, it is a time that forgets time, during which time no longer counts (and is no longer counted). It arrives or emerges when an activity brings plenitude, whether this activity be banal (an occupation, a piece of work), subtle (meditation, contemplation), spontaneous (a child's game, or even one for adults) or sophisticated. This activity is in harmony with itself and with the world. It has several traits of self-creation or of a gift rather than of an obligation or an imposition come from without. It *is* in time: it *is* a time, but does not reflect it (76-77 original emphasis).

Certainly, Bennett intuits this potential experience within the everyday, and it is a necessary compliment to a profoundly disparate and differentiated plane of possibilities. Moreover, the frustration of the univocal, unilateral logic of escape is partially constituted by a recognition that the everyday contains heterogeneous activities, some of which entail quiescence and excitement even if they are readily deprecated.

Given this portentous reorientation of (some) labour, it is worth noting that Bennett does not obviate the praxis of escape: he qualifies its utopian suppositions. Tacit in Bennett's work is a consistent willingness to posit the everyday as one source of familiarity and stability. He thereby avoids the singular necessity of escape, and, when confronted with the actuality of escape, exposes its latent structural logic. Consequently, one can realign one's expectations of holidays. Constance and Samuel Povey revel in their yearly sojourn in Buxton. Their life is one of monotony, of equilibrium:

nothing happened. Unless their visits to Buxton could be called happenings! Decidedly the visit to Buxton was the one little hill that rose out of the level plain of the year. They had formed the annual habit of going to Buxton for ten days. They had a way of saying: "Yes, we always go to Buxton. We went there for our honeymoon, you know." They had become confirmed Buxtonites, with views concerning St. Anne's Terrace, the Broad Walk and Peel's Cavern. They could not dream of deserting their Buxton. It was the sole possible resort. Was it not the highest town in England? [...] They always stayed at the same lodgings [...] Each year they walked out of Buxton station behind their luggage on a

truck, full of joy and pride because they knew all the landmarks, and the lie of all the streets, and which were the best shops (*TOWT* 138).

Crucially, this passage is prefaced with an epiphany: ‘Constance began to see what an incredible town Bursley had always been – and she never suspected it’ (138). This is the crucial ballast which distinguishes Constance from Annie Brachett: the former does not impose a qualitative contradistinction between the torpor or everydayness of the Five Towns and the (com)promise of the holiday. The recognition that the apparently banal is rife with interest means that the annual holiday is not imbued with an exodic mandate it can never fulfil. Indeed, it is Buxton’s familiarity, one which is pregnant with interesting details rather than figuring as oppressive routine, which attracts the Poveys, and there is no sense that the ‘joy and pride’ which they feel is capitalist subterfuge or alienating leisure. Their commitment to Buxton is predicated upon the familiarity derogated as a stupefying, ‘vicious circle’ by Lefebvre (*Vol. I* 40). Bennett, on the other hand, presages Rita Felski’s insistence in *Doing Time* (2000) that repetition is fundamental to an individual’s ability to orientate themselves and, moreover, is a fundamental process in the consolidation of identity (84).<sup>61</sup>

Bennett’s most profound and generative reconception of the everyday involves a more precipitous paradigm shift. The everyday is not merely loci of covert interest; it is certainly more than an ordinance of banality to be simply opposed. Properly apprehended, the everyday discloses an originary infinitude. When Sophia, faced with Constance’s intransigent desire to remain in Bursley, muses on her position, she considers herself to be

a fixture in the Rue Lord Byron. She was a part of the street. She knew all that happened or could happen there. She was attached to it by the heavy chains of habit. In the chill way of long use *she loved it*. There! The incandescent gas-burner of the street-lamp outside had been turned down, as it was turned down every night! *If it is possible to love such a phenomenon, she loved that phenomenon*. That phenomenon was a portion of her life, dear to her (383 added emphasis).

Here is Bennett’s irreducible faith in the succour of the known. There is no reflexive deprecation of the everyday, of the familiar; it is not the prison that Cohen and Taylor outline, nor the torpid

---

<sup>61</sup> This is present elsewhere in *TOWT* and Bennett’s work. Indeed, Sophia’s routine during the Siege constitutes her sense of self as much as she imposes this routine upon her existence: ‘overworked and harassed by novel responsibilities and risks, she was happier, for days together, than she had ever been, simply because she had a purpose in life and was depending upon herself’ (*TOWT* 332). Though ‘Edwin did not cease to marvel at his father’s pleasure in a tedious monotony’ (*Clayhanger* 293), there is no indication that any enjoyment Darius Clayhanger finds in the everyday is debased or to be scorned; instead, there is an implication that the failure is Edwin’s. Later in the novel, he recognises his misapprehension. Facing his father’s death, Edwin realises the value of stable routine: ‘He saw suddenly that in the calm of regular habit [...] he had arrived at something that closely resembled happiness’ (338).

draper's shop of *Polly* (1910) and *Kippys* (1905); it repudiates Wain's assertion that Bennett is 'numbed' by the 'ultimate monotony' of the everyday (153) and certainly gainsays Squillace's assertion that habit 'is action unconnected with desire, action that entails no self-revelation' (53). Sophia's experience of this quantum of the everyday, and the city's organised response to this every-day event, intimates that such phenomena are an efficacious means of situating oneself in the world; there is an implication that Sophia's love of this banally regular event countermands her isolation. The communal need for street-lighting exemplifies Sophia's participation in the polis, an entity constituted through its knowable organisation. The 'heavy chains of habit' described might imply the stolid and oppressive stytic of the daily. However, they also gird that which might otherwise devolve into merely inchoate or meaningless (epi)phenomena, and Sophia's love signifies the continuity and the profoundly felt associative *bonds* of person and place.

Certainly, Sophia's familiarity with the Rue Lord Byron provides the type of stability Felski describes (82-84), recalls Maffesoli's 'poetics of banality' willing to celebrate rituals (206), and presages Highmore's argument in 'Homework' (2004) that routines are 'joyous [...] tender' and monotonous: 'everyday life is often experienced as something deeply ambiguous, as simultaneously comforting and frustrating' (311). Sophia, too, describes a predictability conducive to happiness, comfort. Bennett goes beyond this equilibrated admixture of banality and succour. 'Love' is invoked three times in this brief passage and is, seemingly, an inapposite response to the everyday. However, Sophia's love of the streetlamps adumbrates a conception of the everyday broached by Andrew Metcalfe and Ann Game (2004) in which such an apperception registers the infinitude of the everyday, of its immeasurable reach which is not at the horizon but, inexorably, *here* and *now*.<sup>62</sup> The eternal is present in 'an experience of repetition' (354), and the steady going down of daylight and evanescent luminosity of the streetlights constitutes a cosmic, originary return:

Eternity *is* the everyday. It is experienced as a return to and not an escape from ordinary life. When we are rushing about purposefully, aware of the smallest movements of the hands of our clocks, we are absent from *here* and from *now*. Eternity is the return of these humble life truths (353 original emphasis).

For Metcalfe and Game, the dilated *presence* manifest in such intimations of infinitude is cognisant of an eternally recursive cyclicity; it is outwith the mere repetitive indurations of the everyday

---

<sup>62</sup> Though this is, perhaps, an unexpected analytical strategy, it is not without precedent. Marshall Berman's 'Afterword' (2010) to *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (1982) notes that, after his sweeping analysis of capitalist modernity's influence upon cities and literature, what he has written about love it is 'not enough' and vows to 'write about it more. Love is not just an accessory of meaning; it is central to what human life can mean. [...] But what social conditions will it take? Here are a few: crowds of metropolitan density, where strangers can encounter, [etc]' (354).

because it is *'present* to these repetitions' (354 original emphasis); and, it is anathema to the demarcations of time by the 'vibration of quartz atoms' (352). They posit that the *only* way to properly reckon with this infinitude is love. Octavio Paz (1993) indicates that love 'opens [time] a crack' (134) disclosing that 'here is there and now is always' (160) making 'of the instant an eternity' (264). This presents, therefore, an apposite response to the inviolable repetitions of the everyday: Metcalfe and Game insist that love 'is never exclusive but always infinitely inclusive' (359), and one can pose Sophia's loving encounter as a redress to Squillace's much vaguer delineation of Bennett's apprehension of 'the magnificence of inhuman vastness' (181). Love circumnavigates the polarity of subject and object, and posits one within an open, expansive mutuality; the world is felt as a whole but not delimited as a totality; Sophia mediates this shared experience and reticulates the brute fact of street lighting into a diffused presence of daily, infinite return. Only this radically decentred perception implicates 'our primitive infinitude':

Love is what connects us with, allows us to belong to, the universe. [...] Without love, the everyday is a time and space we must get through to arrive at the otherworld: the fantasy time and space where life really happens. With love, we return to the everyday and find there – here, now – the wonders of life (Metcalfe and Game 360).

To overcome the deadening divisions of everyday time, which Lefebvre calls 'the consecution and reproduction of the same phenomenon, almost identical, if not identical, at roughly similar intervals; for example a series of hammer blows' (*Rhythmanalysis* 90),<sup>63</sup> is to love the everyday. To embrace its infinitude uncritically, generously is Sophia's perspicuous response: 'she loved it' (*TOWT* 383). Bennett was explicitly aware of this, too. In 'My Religious Experience' (1925), he notes that his apprehension of the everyday mandates 'living this present life without worrying myself about any other life, I can find scope for all my longings – *and yet live in eternity too*' (quoted in *Sketches* 175 added emphasis). As the exodic turns from the here and now towards some conjectured, immaterial promise of emancipation, Bennett advocates a (re)turn, via the mere flickering of a streetlight, to an inclusive love commensurate with the promise of the everyday: its succour, democratic ubiquity, originary promise, and incubation of life itself.

---

<sup>63</sup> If 'repetition is tiring, exhausting and tedious', Lefebvre posits that 'the return of a cycle has the appearance of an event and an advent' (*Rhythmanalysis* 73): 'We can all picture the waves of the sea – a nice image, full of meaning – or sound waves, or circadian or monthly cycles. The linear, though, is depicted only as monotonous, tiring and even intolerable' (76).

In a *Journal* entry, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1908, Bennett posits that his ‘leading sentiment is my own real superiority, not the inferiority of others. It depends on how you look at it’ (300). In his fiction, such relativity constantly supervenes: when Richard scorns the ‘pure accent of London’ that surrounds him at Littlehampton, the narrator quickly interjects: ‘Richard forgot that he was himself a clerk, looking not out of place in that scene’ (*A Man from the North* 113). Any inkling of inferiority or superiority is invariably a matter of perspective; Bennett’s self-assessment is typically wry and fundamental to the ‘complex dailiness’ (*Clayhanger* 113) his works tirelessly invoke. Of course, the complexity of daily routine(s) is ostensibly oxymoronic. For Bennett, however, it is an axiomatic response to the everyday’s heterogeneity. Consequently, it is not met with a monologic perspective and Bennett retains a strict cognisance of perspectival constraints composed of occlusions and reciprocal misunderstandings; of misprisions, lacunae, and multiplying chains of relative values and significances. This approach has been described by Squillace as ‘impersonal perspectivism’ (185-186) ranged against critical accounts of an “objective” conception of Bennett’s work. Bennett’s deliberation of epistemic limitation also undermines Olson’s claim that Woolf (71) and Joyce (55) contribute a new perspectivist approach to the ordinary. In part, Squillace makes this case. However, it is imperative that impersonal perspectivism is revised in light of Bennett’s *TAC* because the abnegation of absolute authorial or narratorial control is crucial to his critique of the exodic. Deferring authorial hegemony and interpretive certainty, Bennett’s approach presages the self-regarding situatedness outlined in Dorothy E. Smith’s *The Everyday World as Problematic* (1987). This section argues that Bennett’s narrative approach implies that there is no dislocated, atemporal, perspicuous vantage from which one describes and delimits the locus of escape. If holidays temporarily suppress the everyday, Bennett’s personal perspectivism encysts the very articulation of escape.

Squillace is right to draw attention to the deliberate epistemic limits interlarding Bennett’s works as it forms a necessary redress to a longstanding critical insistence upon narrative omniscience and objectivity. After the publication of *TOWT*, J.E. Barton’s ‘Fiction and Mr Arnold Bennett’, published in *The New Age* (3<sup>rd</sup> December 1908), enthused about Bennett’s ‘immense detachment, absolute immunity’ (110). Wain lauds the control, ‘patient restraint’ and ‘patient precision’ in the novel (134-136), and Lucas identifies a ‘fixed disposition which [Bennett] himself sees in metaphysical terms and which sounds out loud and clear’ (104). Anderson argues for *TOWT*’s narrator’s ‘omniscient viewpoint’ and ‘objective plotting out’ which is ‘painfully remote’ (78, 47, 49); Peter Keating (1989) notes Bennett’s ‘distanced narrative tone’ (117). William J. Scheick (1983) goes somewhat further and argues that ‘Bennett especially controls narrative objectivity’, and claims that the ‘narrative voice of *Anna* is “above it all” [...] permitting identification with, at the same time as distance from, humanity’ (306-07). In an otherwise

compelling account of ‘Arnold Bennett’s Social Conscience’ (1971), Kinley E. Roby juxtaposes the author’s iconoclastic, class conscious wartime journalism with an ‘icy impartiality’ (513) manifest in the novels: ‘He was [...] deeply committed to the technique of maintaining a strict impartiality toward his material’ (524). None of these claims is meaningfully substantiated. Perhaps this is due to their pervasiveness.

The objective, controlled, and controlling conception of Bennett’s work has exhibited a stubborn critical purchase. Kurt Koenigsberger (2003) contends that “Edwardian realism” in *TOWT* ‘aim[s] to see life disinterestedly and in its totality’ (132), and evinces ‘the Edwardian ideals of distanced observation and integrated totality in the form of the English novel’ (156). Similarly, Anthony Patterson (2017) has argued that ‘Bennett invariably adopts a detached third person narrator’ (161), and substantiates this claim with a quote from Bennett’s *Journal* (24<sup>th</sup> June 1898): ‘Observation can only be conducted from the outside’ (82). However, it is disingenuous to pose this as Bennett’s personal endorsement of detached, ‘knowledgeable third person narrators’ (Patterson 166). Actually, the entry discloses Bennett’s sense of the limits of gendered perspectives:

A woman is too close to woman to observe her with aloofness and yet with perfect insight – as we should do if we had her insight. Observation can only be conducted from the outside. A woman cannot possibly be aware of the things in herself which puzzle us; and our explanations of our difficulties would simply worry her (82-83).

Patterson’s misprision, or misrepresentation, is clear. Bennett is patently wary of the myopia of experience and the lacunae of representation. In a later distillation of this premise, and deploying another deliberately gendered contradistinction, Bennett notes in the *Journal* (11<sup>th</sup> June 1908): ‘I didn’t seem to be getting near to the personality of Hilda in [*Clayhanger*]. You scarcely ever do get near a personality. There is a tremendous lot to do in fiction that no one has yet done. [...] The fact is, the novelist seldom really *penetrates*’ (381-382 original emphasis). He is cognisant of posing an impossible demand of writing: ‘Observation can only be conducted from the outside’ (82). Bennett indicates that comparable proximity to experience would warp any attempt to transcribe this “objectively”: ‘as we should do if we had her insight’ (82). Against Patterson, Bennett implies that propinquity and familiarity distort representation.

Against prevalent critical accounts, Squillace proposes a much more cogent reading, impersonal perspectivism, and offers a sustained delineation of an approach that Craig (202) and Nash (216) only adumbrate. Squillace posits that Bennett’s texts are riven by misunderstandings, misprisions, epistemic missteps, and narratorial fallibility. Firstly, Squillace simply points out that the ‘fixed disposition’ Lucas describes (104) is illogical:

the extent to which the voice is unique [...] will undermine the claims of universality and advance those of multiplicity, for its very existence implies the insufficiency of any universal tongue, any arrangement of conventions amenable to everyone's experience (Squillace 182).

It is erroneous, on Lucas's part, to suppose that Bennett is not cognisant of this. This reading of Bennett's insistence upon the deferral of authority coextensive with a multiplicity of interlocking, if distinct, vantages forms the premise of Squillace's position. Making a distinction between Joyce's propensity in *Ulysses* (1922) to allow idiolect to infiltrate narration and Bennett's less experimental approach, Squillace argues that Bennett nonetheless recognises unavoidable perspectival distortions (184-186):

Bennett, then, might be termed an impersonal perspectivist. His interest lies not so much in comic or tragic disjunctions between different styles of subjectivity as in the privileges and limitations that are imposed on any subject because it occupies the place of subject only in reference to itself (Squillace 186-187).

Squillace argues that this is not only a question of characters' limitations:

The narrator, neither withdrawing behind a cloak of invisibility nor adopting the limitations of his characters' perspective, continually judges, continually explains – but his observations, at times confirmed by subsequent events, are as often disconfirmed. The narrator neither admits nor explicitly corrects his error of judgement; they are simply left in ironic coexistence with the events that give them the lie (184).

One telling instance occurs at the beginning of *TOWT*. In the introduction to the Five Towns, the narrator declares that 'the time will never come when the other towns – let them swell and bluster as they may – will not pronounce the name of Bursley as one pronounces the name of one's mother. Add to this that the Square was the centre of Bursley's retail trade' (5). This sweeping declaration, made conspicuous by the narrator's bombastic parenthetical judgement, is gainsaid by events. Firstly, by the rise of 'arrogant and pushing Hanbridge, with its electric light and its theatres and its big, advertising shops' (409) at Bursley's cost. Secondly, as Walter Benjamin points out in his review of *TOWT* (1933), the purchase of what was once the Baines' family business by the Midland Clothiers Company casts a 'shadow over the town': 'competitors come onto the scene, with posters, gramophones and knockdown prices' (Benjamin 55). Whereas John Baines 'would never hear of such a thing as a clearance sale' and 'objected to what he called "puffing"' (*TOWT* 7), the Midland Clothiers Company, whose 'sole idea was to sell goods',

undertake a brash advertising campaign: 'they meant to sell ten thousand overcoats at their new shop in Bursley at the price of twelve and sixpence each' (486). Finally, the spectre of Federation looms in the closing pages, and, though Constance's vote is cast for the successful opposition campaign, the narrator indicates that the 'blind, deaf, inert forces of reaction' (493) will be overcome: "Federation is going on after all" (497).

For Bennett, such fallibility and the dangers of self-aggrandisement are comparable to childish narcissism. *TOWT* offers Cyril Povey's infantile experience of the world of the family drawing room:

He had no cares, no responsibilities. The shawl was so vast that he could not clearly distinguish objects beyond its confines. On it lay an india-rubber ball, an india-rubber doll, a rattle, and fan. [...] He seized the doll and tried to swallow it, and repeated the exhibition of his skill with the ball. Then he saw the fire again and laughed. And so he existed for centuries: no responsibilities, no appetites; and the shawl was vast. Terrific operations went on over his head. Giants moved to and fro (149-150).

Cyril's babyish dilation of time and distorted sense of scale, the immediate physicality, shifting distractions, and the improvident and inexplicable movements of the world constitutes the narcissism of singularised perspectivism of which Bennett was duly sceptical. Clearly, that which lies outwith the 'confines' of an immediate purview is, partially, insensible. Such a means of conceiving the world is palpably infantile, distorted, and specious.

It is no coincidence that another instance of this problem, in *Clayhanger*, again involves a child. Edwin, rearranging his library, is disturbed by a rapping against the window. Peering over the garden wall, he discovers young George Cannon attempting to break crocks by pelting stones at them. Due to his narcissistic, childish perspective, George does not contemplate anything beyond the immediacy of his actions and needs. When Edwin tells him that he might break a window, George's face is 'troubled' as he examines 'the facts, which had hitherto escaped his attention, that there was a whole world of consequences on the other side of the wall [...] Edwin watched the face with a new joy, as though looking at some wonder of nature under a microscope' (*Clayhanger* 470). Bennett is aware that Cyril's apparently vast shawl and George's garden wall constitute the limits of their perceptual and conceptual reach, and one that is insufficiently cognisant of that which is not immediately visible, or coterminous with their needs. Erich Fromm (1957) distinguishes the narcissism from objectivity, only ever manifest in combinations of various degrees. The former involves reducing or distorting the world so that

one experiences as real only that which exists within oneself, while the phenomena in the outside world have no reality in themselves, but are experienced only from the viewpoint

of their being useful or dangerous to one. The opposite pole to narcissism is objectivity; it is the faculty to see people and things *as they are*, objectively, and to be able to separate this *objective* picture from a picture which is formed by one's desires and fears (98 original emphasis).

This is not simply an issue of immaturity. In *These Twain*, Edwin rebukes Hilda as 'a fierce and unscrupulous egoist' (408), and Auntie Hamps's cruelty is attributed to her exiguous imagination (341). Moreover, Bennett intimates that Edwin's perception is comparably limited as his interaction with George involves a parallel instance of glimpsing over his own garden wall in order to complicate and compound his conception of 'why children were interesting' (*Clayhanger* 470).

Though one cannot achieve an unalloyed objectivity, it is worth noting that this is not simply a question of endless, lamentable misprisions. It might be felicitous. Indeed, Edwin's conception of Hilda is predicated upon an interiorised 'refracting glass' first described in *Clayhanger* 'which would enable him, which would compel him, to see an ideal Hilda when he gazed at the real Hilda. He would not see the real Hilda any more unless some cataclysm should shatter the glass' (*Clayhanger* 268). Clearly, Bennett is aware of the refractions mandated by what Fromm calls narcissism. 'The Death of Simon Fuge' details the steady unravelling of Loring's expectations of the eponymous Five Towns artist during a visit from London, where he had met Fuge, to the Wedgwood Institution. Having heard of Fuge's 'nocturnal scene on Ilam Lake – the two sisters, the boat, the rustle of trees, the lights on the shore', Loring imagines 'a romantic figure, the figure of one to whom every day and every hour of the day was coloured by the violence of his passion for existence' (266). This is pure conjecture, and he is roundly disabused of his pretensions when the prosaic details of the lacustral sortie are disclosed. One sister is a barmaid and Loring is mortified: 'I had not expected *that*. [...] I had not expected the banal, the perfectly commonplace. [...] She was a condemnation of Simon Fuge' (294 original emphasis). Edwin's refracting glass is compounded of the same mistakes as Loring's misconceived idea(l) of Fuge. Moreover, Loring does not realise that there is no disinterested condemnation of Fuge; there is only a multiplicity of views, or competing narcissisms, undermining the viability of objectivity when met with 'the perfectly commonplace' (294).

Of course, fictional narration is complicit in the germination and dissemination of misapprehensions. Bennett intimates precisely this dissembling function in *TOWT* through the humorous metafictional juxtaposition of expectations fostered by literature and first-hand experience. When Sophia meets the bibliophile Dr Stirling after she returns to Bursley, he asks if she has read Zola's *Downfall* (*La Débâcle*, 1892): "'I haven't read it," she said, and [...] could see that he was dashed' (423). This is a matter of Stirling's projection of significance induced by Zola. Stirling questions Sophia about her experiences: '[she] responded as well as she could to his

eagerness for personal details concerning the siege and the commune. He might have been disappointed at the prose of her answers' (424). The momentary juxtaposition of fiction's misrepresentative function is not a mere cavil but a signal warning to *TOWT*'s reader that its evocation of Sophia's time in Paris is, apodictically, parochial. 'What were they, after all? Such was her secret thought. [...] Still, were the estimate of those events true or false, she was a woman who had been through them' (424), Sophia reflects. This doubles down the instability that equilibrates Stirling's expectations and Sophia's experiences: her own *estimate* is potentially true *or* false. 'Estimate' implies elision and compression including the factual and factitious. Stirling's implicitly aggrandised notions of the intrigue and frisson of apparently momentous historical events indicates the active, formative, and limited role of literature in the construction of History. Sophia's sense of her *prosaic* answers implies the expectation of more *poetic* answers of the actual texture of events which are apparently measured by Stirling's anterior conception of their significance. *TOWT* intimates this problem, and adroitly forecloses any accusation that it proffers anything but a partial and fallible version of events.

The texts are scrupulous, precise in their insistence upon the limits of narration. Squillace argues that the interstices of ignorance, 'in the gap between what characters do and do not perceive', is where 'Bennett's fiction lives' (32-33). *Clayhanger* is partially structured around the ignorance underwriting the glacial, titanic struggle, a dynamic of 'bullying and submission' (294), between Edwin and Darius, 'against whom [Edwin] had a thousand grievances' (36). This antagonism is comprised of Darius's inability to perceive that in his son a 'flame burnt that was like an altar-fire, a miraculous and beautiful phenomenon, than which nothing is more miraculous nor more beautiful over the whole earth' (27). Edwin is similarly ignorant of his father's history. When Edwin encounters the ancient Shushions in the print works, he is startled by the old man's 'epic tear' (36) induced by Darius's successful business. The next two chapters disclose the brutality of Darius's early career as a handle-maker, his parents' indigence, and experience of the workhouse or 'Bastille, as the place was called' (43). Shushions, Darius's former Sunday school teacher, 'saved them' and found 'a superb situation for Darius himself as a printer's devil' (46). Edwin is singularly unaware of these experiences:

Darius had never spoken to a soul of his night in the Bastille. All his infancy was his own fearful secret. His life, seen whole, had been a miracle. But none knew that except himself and Mr Shushions. Assuredly Edwin never even faintly suspected it. *To Edwin* Mr Shushions was nothing but a feeble and tedious old man (46 added emphasis).

This ignorance is certainly consequential: it informs Darius's harsh conception of his son, who had 'never had a care, never suffered a privation, never been forced to think for himself [...] and] lived in cotton-wool' (94); Edwin merely 'saw an old man, a man who for him had always been

old, generally harsh, often truculent' (93). The narrator interposes, and avers that 'Edwin's grand misfortune was that he was blind to the miracle. [...] Every hour of Darius's present existence was really an astounding marvel to Darius' (140-141). The narrator ensures that each perspective is wedded, with its possessive apostrophe, to its creator. Following Darius's death, the narrator interjects and underscores the terminal misconception: 'Edwin did not know that the little boy from the Bastille was dead. He only knew that his father was dead' (416). Within Bennett's adroit mediation of collective misapprehensions, in this instance the clear separation of Darius's life and his son's necessarily partial conception of that life, and frustrated communicative possibilities, the narrator can only disclose this pathos to the reader.

*TOWT* is littered with comparable instances. Some are minor. When Matthew Peel-Swynnerton returns from Paris after discovering Sophia at the Pension Frensham, he meets 'a short, fat, middle-aged lady' (377) who turns out to be Constance. Others are more significant. After intimations of a relationship between young Constance and Samuel Povey, Mrs Baines imagines that she alone knows. In fact, the employees 'discussed little else': 'Mrs Baines really thought that she alone knew. Such is the power of the ineradicable delusion that one's own affairs, and especially one's own children, are mysteriously different from those of others' (108). In this instance, Mrs Baines's mistake is linked to her legitimate familial bias, and there is a clear indication that such bonds, an intrinsic refracting glass, are conducive to conspicuous mistakes, to 'ineradicable delusion[s]' (108). This is no censure, and such parental limitations are echoed when Samuel concedes that Cyril is 'mysterious', too:

Mr Povey had learned to regard him in the light of a parcel which he was always attempting to wrap up in a piece of paper imperceptibly too small. When he successfully covered the parcel at one corner it burst out at another, and this went on for ever, and he could never get the string on (165).

Samuel presciently realises that attempting to fathom his son's demeanour, personality or behaviours is an endless, thankless task. This is partially a question of inter-generational differences manifest as mutual incomprehension. It is also a matter of insuperable epistemic division enjoined to the provision of autonomy.

Squillace argues that such instances call 'into question the degree to which any observer – character, narrator, or reader – can gain [...] control' (43). When Constance thinks about the notable aging Sophia's elopement has precipitated in their mother, she does not 'allow for the chemistry that had been going on in herself' (*TOWT* 130). What 'chemistry' might mean in this context is deliberately, playfully vague. It might constitute the aging mother and daughter undergo in parallel, it might denote Constance's burgeoning romance with Samuel, it might involve pubescent bodily changes; all of these are possible, and this ambiguity is crucial to the

constellation of differences constituting the very polysemy ‘chemistry’ signifies. Such alchemical changes might include the narrator, too. Consequently, Bennett avoids sciolism. The instability of signification, while gesturing towards myriad plausibilities, quietly defers any certitude incommensurate with the intimated ambiguity, and avoids the type of conceptual error Loring evinces in ‘The Death of Simon Fuge’.

According to Squillace, Bennett’s resistance to the imposition of meaning, especially that which is outwith one’s comprehension, ‘involves a learning of the other through sympathetic identification rather than force, a recognition of the other’s right to be other, an extension of the modern ideal of autonomy everywhere without exception’ (108). This manifests Bennett’s ‘passionate argument for recognising the existence of other privileged centres of consciousness’, and mandates ‘recognising the existence of other subjectivities [...] and] the subject in question is called upon to surrender the illusion of his or her own rightness of perception when he or she can honestly see no evidence of error’ (188). More fundamentally, it means that one is forced to acknowledge another’s existence. Maria Insull, the unremarkable if competent Baines’ shop assistant, is inconspicuous: no ‘one knew anything about her, because there was nothing to know. Subtract the shop-assistant from her, and naught remained’ (*TOWT* 223). However,

*for Charles Critchlow* she happened to be an illusion. [...] During eight years the moth Charles had flitted round the lamp of her brilliance [...] she charmed him: she was something ornamental and luxurious for which he was ready to pay – and to commit follies. [...] All is relative in this world. As for her, she was too indifferent to refuse him. Why refuse him? Oysters do not refuse (223-224 added emphasis).

Despite deliberating the unexpected manifestations of subjective attraction, even humanity, the narrator is irrefragably complicit: ‘Oysters do not refuse.’ Through this brief juxtaposition of the narrator’s and Critchlow’s perspectives, *TOWT* indicates textual cognisance of misapprehensions and idiosyncrasies does not preclude those very habits.

Such playful, ironic humility indicates the scope of Bennett’s conception of epistemic fallibility and this highlights a profound shortcoming in Squillace’s critical account of these textual instances. If one accepts Squillace’s contention that misprisions are all pervasive, any corollary thereof inheres a similar contingency. It makes little sense to univocally insist upon provisionality. The intractable paradox of Squillace’s argument is manifest in his phrasing: *impersonal* perspectivism. Remarkably, this formulation, ostensibly astute, implies that one might objectively, in Fromm’s sense, elucidate a profoundly, inexorably narcissistic mode of apprehension. This is not to gainsay Squillace’s judicious conclusions concerning the intersubjective, perhaps political, implications of Bennett’s *personal* perspectivism; instead, their mutability and invariably subjective constructions are now commensurate with the paradigm that

composed them. Moreover, the tacit implication of Squillace's impersonal perspectivism is that Bennett preserved some space of control outwith the texts' multiple contingencies and misprisions. Essentially, Squillace imputes the same objective, controlling conception of Bennett he ostensibly denies: control is maintained behind, and by, a veneer of computed epistemic instability. However, Bennett was explicitly aware that his characters' misapprehensions and narcissistic shortcomings necessarily implicate him, too. To appropriate Squillace: 'each can stand in the relation of subject only to himself or herself' (185). This accords with Bennett's injunction for writers to 'approach normal life [...] by constant steady plunges into the cold sea of the general national life [... let] him mingle with the public' (*TAC* 130). Bennett's approach is predicated upon the anterior supposition that sound 'observation consists not in multiplicity of detail but in coordination of detail according to a true perspective of *relative* importance' (14 added emphasis).

In order to demonstrate Squillace's underlying shortcoming, it is expedient to indicate the limitations of a critic who explicitly argues for Bennett's objective, controlling narrative structure. Koenigsberger claims that the 'explanatory apparatus' (151) of *TOWT*, and by extension a nominal "Edwardian realism", cannot cope with 'an increasingly mobile capitalism that disrupts the fixities of mid-Victorian provincial life' (133) because the 'exhibitionary machinery of empire' (133) discloses 'social relations encompassing both provincial life and its other – metropolitan, cosmopolitan, and imperial' (136). The exposure of hermetic, controlling realism to these occluded forces, such as a refractory elephant, undermines any confidence in its hegemony and legitimacy; Koenigsberger posits that 'Bennett comes to occupy the position of John Baines': as his head is (fatally) turned, 'the "whole spectacular and sensual show" of global modernity in the early twentieth century' passes the superannuated invalid by (156). This causes 'the dissolution of a totalising perspective within the labyrinth of empire' (154). Koenigsberger relies upon a singular notion of the novel's 'realist mandate' to situate the Baines sisters' 'experiences within the larger social whole, first the local English community and then high modernity generally' (132) and thereby maintain a coherent 'explanatory apparatus' (151). Koenigsberger is wrong. Perhaps his argument does expose the limits of a certain kind of narrativity which posits totality as desirable, viable, and meaningful but Bennett rejects such claims. Koenigsberger alights upon an indicative and important passage in *TAC* – though he erroneously cites 1913 as the publication date (136) – in which Bennett delineates his approach to realism, and does intimate a grasping for totality:

all physical phenomena are interrelated, there is nothing which does not bear on everything else. The whole spectacular and sensual show – what the eye sees, the ear hears, the nose scents, the tongue tastes and the skin touches – is a cause or an effect of human conduct. Naught can be ruled out as negligible, as not forming part of the equation. Hence he who would beyond all others see life for himself – I naturally mean

the novelist and playwright – ought to embrace all phenomena in his curiosity. *Being finite, he cannot. Of course he cannot!* But he can, by obtaining a broad notion of the whole, determine with *some accuracy* the position and relative importance of the particular series of phenomena to which his instinct draws him (19 added emphasis).

Koenigsberger focuses exclusively upon Bennett's apparent desire to represent complex social relations in their total, myriad complexities. While this is certainly present in Bennett's argument, more important are the caveats he attaches; moreover, these are a recapitulation of earlier circumspection: 'Allow for accidents. Allow for human nature, especially your own' (*How to Live* 33). No matter the reach the novelist's corporeal, explicitly sensory, and therefore limited *embrace*, his inalienable finitude undermines the gesture's grandiosity: an embrace is constituted as much by what escapes as what is encircled. Even the particular gendering of the author in this articulation reveals the biased constitution of the notionally "abstracted" author. Indeed, the possessive apostrophe in *TAC* is emphatically singular, and we can see this intimation of humility writ large in the narcissism Bennett's narratives constantly mediate; the titular definite article is, in this instance, deliberately *self*-reflexive.

Moreover, the page preceding the one Koenigsberger selects from *TAC* indicates the human limits of Bennett's project, its very everydayness:

Observation endows our day and our street with the romantic charm of history, and stimulates charity – not the charity which signs cheques, but the more precious charity which puts itself to the trouble of understanding. The one condition is that the observer must never lose sight of the fact that what he is trying to see is life, is the woman next door, is the man in the train – and not a concourse of abstraction (18).

Bennett has a clear and palpable sense of the observer's constitution within the world: 'formation will depend upon the personal bent of the observer' (*TAC* 33), and even the basic fact of corporeal (dis)position: '[we] see the phenomenon at the moment of looking at it, but we particularise in that moment, making no effort to conceive what the phenomenon is likely to be at other moments' (*TAC* 29). To observe one's neighbours involves a relational mode of apprehension: 'Observation can only be conducted from the outside' (*Journal* 82). One must constitute a body in the world in order to *have* neighbours, and this discloses a necessary corollary: 'what we know of the other is conditional upon that location as part of a relation comprehending the other's location also' ('Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology' 13). Koenigsberger's most egregious critical misprision involves the facile equation of objectivity and totality. This provides a useful if somewhat oblique juncture with Squillace. While Squillace does not nominally avouch Koenigsberger's position, the underlying assumptions are

commensurate. It is implied that Bennett has recourse to an objective vantage from which he equilibrates a dis-order of epistemic failures. Bennett's disposition is antithetical: objectivity, invariably mediated by narcissism, is the extirpation of the illusion of objectivity.

Bennett indicates that incomprehension, exacerbated by insufficient self-awareness, is a perennial problem of cognitive reach, even at points of exigent need: 'the power of credence, of imaginatively realizing a supreme event, whether of great grief or of great happiness, is *ridiculously finite*' (TOWT 114 added emphasis). This finitude includes the narrator in moments of self-reproach. When Constance gives birth to Cyril, the narrative's attempt to limn the 'the supreme endless spasm' is freighted by the admission that 'she was alone' (151-152). Immediately after the halting efforts to describe childbirth, the doctor returns and 'astounds' Constance

by saying that hers had been an ideal confinement. She was too weary to rebuke him for a senseless, blind, callous old man. But she knew what she knew. "No one will ever guess," she thought, "no one ever can guess, what I've been through! Talk as you like. I *know*, now" (152 original emphasis).

The proximity of this silent reflection intimates that there are considerable insufficiencies in the narrative's ability to articulate the singularity of the experience. Constance upbraids the doctor as 'senseless', and this pejorative has a particular resonance for Bennett given his injunction in *TAC* 'to embrace all phenomena' through the senses (19). The vituperative censure of the 'senseless, blind, callous' doctor implicates the narrator, and author, too, in the sodality of male ignorance Constance identifies. Sophia's acquaintance in Paris, Chirac, is similarly myopic:

like most men who have once found a woman weak, [he] imagined that he understood women profoundly. He thought of women [...] as a race apart, mysterious but capable of being infallibly comprehended by the application of a few leading principles of psychology (347).

By *These Twain*, however, Bennett indicates some progress. Reflecting on Auntie Hamps's dismissal of her domestic servant, Minnie, because of an illicit affair, Edwin admits: "Compared to her [...] I don't know what life is. No man does" (337). The ardent monosyllabic finality of Edwin's pronouncement is a clarion against Squillace's insistence upon some putative authorial control; and, given that the final book of *TOWT* is emphatically entitled 'What Life Is', there is an important qualification of Bennett's former confidence. Moreover, the provision of ignorance, and necessary silence, discloses a plenitude of that which is simply outwith the epistemic embrace of the individual (character, narrator, author, reader).

All of these instances are predicated upon gendered differences. As a male author, and unlike W. Pett Ridge's limitations discussed above, Bennett is cognisant of the implicit limits undergirding his particularised experiences; Constance is explicit: "I *know* now" (152 original emphasis). He also recognises that simply ignoring these distinctions would occlude the distortions of a refracting glass. Such circumspection is commensurate with Smith's deconstruction of normative masculine discourses manifest as disinterested objectivity, in Fromm's sense; and, though the aforementioned examples of personal perspectivism are telling, these explicitly gendered instances imply Bennett's critical cognisance of the type of elisions upon which discursive practices are unconsciously predicated. Smith argues that 'normative masculine modes of being', after colonising professional discourses, such as sociology, and dissembling their material and ideological constitution, have 'provided women with forms of thought and knowledge that constrain us to treat ourselves as objects': 'we are alienated' (*The Everyday World as Problematic* 36). There is a resonant intimation of this dissociation in Edwin's totalising concession: "I don't know what life is. No man does" (*These Twain* 337). Bennett's concession of consciously gendered interpretative and epistemic control, and his simultaneous cognisance of indisputable, if overlooked, material contingencies, presages Smith's claim that 'a relation between knower and known' actually 'suspend[s] the particular subjectivities of knower and known in such a way that its character as a social relation disappears [...] very much in the way in which [...] the activities of people disappear in the social relation constituted in the commodity form' (73). Smith's stated aim is to 'constitute the everyday world as problematic, where the everyday world is taken to be various and differentiated matrices of experience' (88), and thereby disabuse normative modes of sociological inquiry of their objective façade: 'the position of the observer [is] no longer fixed and [can] no longer be disattended in interpreting observations' (99). Much like Bennett, Smith seeks the exposition of the necessary historical and material contingencies by beginning in the everyday and plumbing its imbricated, complex constitution.

Within Smith's framework, Bennett's elucidation of male parochialism and explicit admission of perspectival limitations proves crucial to his conception of the everyday, and the problem of escape, whose irreducible materiality reveals extant capitalist arrangements of labour and class, examined in the previous section. For Bennett, clearly, the everyday is not *simply* a panoply of overlapping misprisions and solecisms. Rather, and with this very conception as ballast, the everyday functions as a determinative matrix of operant, hidden forces which precludes the articulation of an exodus not already compromised by the material and ideological substrates constituting the everyday one is *always* embedded within. Any abstraction of the everyday not consciously and critically aware that the 'local and particular, the actualities of the world that is lived' (Smith 90) suppresses the material and ideological conditions of its own constitution. Smith's contentions about the dissimilitude of objectivity help to clarify Bennett's singular resistance to escaping the everyday; this is not to say that one demands of Bennett a

pellucid, explicit critique of such possibilities. Given the scope of his incredulity, Bennett's deeply rooted wariness forecloses the facile promise of escape, route or telos; to propose a total alterity elides the epistemic limits Bennett elucidates, and would, eventually, reveal 'a whole world of consequences on the other side of the wall' (*Clayhanger* 470) previously unseen, unimagined. Wells does make provision for remaking utopian futures but Bennett is even more scrupulous and incredulous, and insists upon the anterior logics and misprisions framing futurological speculation. His reticence is implicit in the very texture of the novels, and constitutes a resistance to simply abjuring the everyday. Fundamentally, Bennett presages Fredric Jameson's (2004) contention that 'all utopias spring from a specific class position' and 'reflect a specific class-historical standpoint or perspective' (47), and, therefore, are inveigled in a nexus of circumstances which informs any negation and precludes total release, as glimpsed obliquely, momentarily at the end of *Kipps* (1905) and *Polly* (1909). For Bennett, any conjectured escape from the everyday, already riven by misprisions and narcissistic fallibility, would similarly reduplicate shortcomings in a future. There will always be, though in unfathomable iterations, 'a little servant let[ting] down a small copper vessel about a half a mile into a well' (*Florentine Journal* 54).

At its core, the conception of the everyday *as* problematic attempts to elucidate these contingencies: 'the individual's working knowledge of her everyday world [...] provides the beginning of the inquiry [...] and] an account of the constitutive work that is going on' (*The Everyday World as Problematic* 154-155). Smith argues that the 'conditions of our action and experience are organised by relations and processes outside them and beyond our power of control' (92). However, Bennett is less enthralled to the seemingly imperious forces which constitute Smith's everyday; to a certain extent, her argument replicates the critique of the everyday which has already accepted capitalism's colonisation and ideology's authority. Another component of Bennett's evocation of the everyday, examined in the next section, is predicated upon a more generative sense of the quotidian. With Bennett's reasoned wariness of delineating an escape from the familiar bolstered by a materialist deconstruction of this projected possibility, the outlines of an engaged and variously constituted everyday emerges: the everyday as shifting, contingent and labile, as not merely imposed and totalising, and, most importantly, always composed by the myriad daily goings on of individuals moving about and forming their everyday. Though Michel de Certeau's (1984) approach to the everyday retains the *agôn* of resistance, he articulates a remarkable faith in individuals' ability to meaningfully direct themselves within given structures. Beneath an 'illusory inertia':

an uncodeable difference insinuates itself into the happy relation the system would like to have with the operations it claims to administer. Far from being a local, and thus classifiable revolt, it is a common and silent, almost sheeplike subversion – our own. [...] In reality, in its depth it is ubiquitous. (200-201).

Without the ovine condescension and the pervasive force of axiomatic domination, Bennett's approach is analogous: he maintains a profound insistence upon the innumerable material world-forming activities comprising the everyday.

This romance, this feeling which permeates the district, is quite as wonderfully inspiring as any historic memory.

Arnold Bennett, *Journal*, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1897 (49)

Shopping all afternoon with Marguerite. Two dresses bought at Selfridge's by Marguerite. Crowds of women in Oxford Street and Regent Street just as usual, and shops just as usual.

Arnold Bennett, *Journal*, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1915 (554)

Smith provides the bridge from personal perspectivism to Bennett's fundamental conception of the everyday. In 'Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology' she argues that sociology must not devolve into self-indulgent 'subjectivist interpretations. [...] Rather the sociologist's investigation of our directly experienced world as a problem is a mode of discovering or rediscovering the society from within' (11). Bennett traverses this route, and uncovers a history-making coextensive with the everyday. This is an affirmation redolent of Raymond Williams's (1958) titular contention: 'Culture is Ordinary' (3). In *TOWT*, history is ordinary. Consequently, Bennett's everyday is not simply a negation of the exodic. This is because the everyday is denied a hegemonic, monolithic force: the quotidian is not simply a given totality mandating escape. Smith indicates the imputed force of the everyday in which 'people [...] are used': 'The governing processes of our society are organised as social entities constituted externally to those persons who participate in and perform them' ('Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology' 8 original emphasis). Another clarion example, from *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967): '[by] means of the spectacle the ruling order discourses *endlessly* upon itself in an *uninterrupted* monologue of self-praise. The spectacle is the self-portrait of power in the age of *power's totalitarian rule* over the conditions of existence' (24 added emphasis).<sup>64</sup> Bennett proffers a pre-emptive critique of the exodic reflex and stalls Wells's post-everyday planning by renegotiating the terms of the day-to-day: the ordinary vibrates with agency, with individuals building their worlds in various, overlooked capacities. Bennett thereby precludes the need for the violent assertion of individual will, the explicit desire to '*smash* the world of everyday'" (*Utopia* 347 original emphasis), over and against an everyday which necessarily leaves individuals 'netted

---

<sup>64</sup> In *Everyday Life* (1968), Lefebvre is similarly capacious: 'In Western neo-capitalist countries there has been no overt programming of production, no total rationalisation of industry; yet a kind of programming, a sort of total organisation has sneaked in unobtrusively; offices, public organisations and subsidiary institutions operate on this basis, and though the structure lacks coherence, grates and jolts, none the less it works, its shortcomings hidden behind an obsessive coherence and its incapacity for creative integration disguised as participation and communality' (49).

in greyness and discomfort' (*Polly* 409). His conviction is explicated in *TAC*: 'The function of the artist is certainly concerned more with what is than what ought to be' (131). For Bennett, history is formed within the everyday. Rather than project individual autonomy into the exodic, Bennett finds it in Sophia's ordinary history-making in Paris. Individuals, seemingly unawares, constitute a formative, if easily overlooked role, in the total fabric of historical events. Bennett's quotidian is sufficient to itself and constituted by the agential undertakings of individuals. Underpinning this vision, and providing its necessary ballast, is Bennett's notion of 'individual distinction' (Carey 174) which effectively abnegates the imputed passivity of exodic critiques.

'One might say that only the banal is eventful' (208), argues Maffesoli, and Bennett is alive to this ostensible paradox. In the 'Preface' (1917) to *TOWT*, Bennett describes a conversation with his hosts at Fontainebleau, where he lodged while writing the novel, who

had been living in Paris at the time of the war. I said to the old man, "By the way, you went through the Siege of Paris, didn't you?" He turned to his old wife and said, uncertainly, "The Siege of Paris? Yes, we did, didn't we?" The Siege of Paris had been only one incident among many in their lives. [... The] most useful thing which I gained from them was the perception, startling at first, that ordinary people went on living very ordinary lives in Paris during the siege, and that to the vast mass of the population the siege was not the dramatic, spectacular, thrilling, ecstatic affair that is described in history (x).

This is *TOWT*'s axiom and irradiates the novel's capacious, crowded sense of history. The doubling down from 'ordinary' to 'very ordinary' forms a bulwark against the cursory, inapposite adjectives: 'dramatic, spectacular, thrilling, ecstatic'. *TOWT* deliberates Sophia's ordinary, constitutive role in the Siege of Paris, a role which belies the aggrandisements of any imposed majuscules and fustian adjectives. The everyday is not the obverse of History: the quotidian is not the platform for the exceptional: the everyday looms, ineluctably *is*, the thick, total fabric of history. Bennett's approach implicates an ongoing and illimitable totality redolent of de Certeau's claim that, beneath the 'scopic drive' of strategy and panoptic spatial organisation, the quotidian subsists as 'a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alternation of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and infinitely other' (*The Practice of Everyday Life* 92-93). This is one oblique means of apprehending the everyday's supposed illegibility. Moreover, the pullulating rhythms of the city that de Certeau lauds include – are indeed predicated upon – Bennett's generous conception of history and provision of autonomy.

The originary force of Bennett's everyday depends upon his preternatural willingness to simply examine the familiar, and, in doing so, reveal 'in the ordinary [...] the drama that lies in all

things' (Drabble 279). The combination of this faculty and personal perspectivism means that events, apparently uninteresting, are enlivened by their relative significance. When he decides that Edwin requires 'a suitable niche' in the family business, and is duly charged with managing the business's complex subscription accounts, Darius comports himself 'with the mien of one who was giving dominion to a faithful steward over ten cities' (114). After Cyril moves to the Endowed School 'he arrived late for tea [...] and] the whole machinery of the meal was disturbed. These matters seemed to Samuel and Constance to be of tremendous import, seemed to threaten the very foundations of existence' (171). When Rose Bennion informs the sisters, lodged at Buxton and between servants, that she will not be working for them, Constance cannot countenance 'the monstrousness of it! [She] felt that this actually and truly was the deepest depth of her calamities. [...] She bore herself bravely, nobly; but she was stricken' (442). Not only do these examples evince Bennett's desire in 'The Fallow Fields of Fiction' (1901) to situate events at a 'proper level in the scheme of things' ('Fallow Fields 2' 557), they are notable for the free indirect discourse which signals the personal consequence of each apparently trivial event. Samuel and Constance think of a thirty minute dislocation of mealtime as a threat to 'the very foundations of existence' (171), and the exclamations induced by Rose Bennion's letter are certainly Constance's. The ostensible exaggerations in *TOWT* and *Clayhanger* are not sardonic or supercilious. Bennett's limited narrator's deprecation of their value would be similarly parochial.

Moreover, this recalibration of interest evinces Bennett's conscious repudiation of the superficially, conspicuously intriguing. The exploits of Wombwell's elephant during the Wakes is reduced to one terse paragraph. The elephant manages to kill someone, attempts to eat another, maims a handler, and is shot by members of the Rifle Corps:

Such was the greatest sensation that has ever occurred, or perhaps will ever occur, in Bursley. The excitement about the repeal of the Corn Laws, or about Inkerman, was feeble compared to that excitement. Mr Critchlow, who had been called on to put a hasty tourniquet round the arm of the second victim, had popped in afterwards to tell John Baines all about it. Mr Baines's interest, however, had been slight (60).

The elephant incident might reasonably occupy its own chapter, short story, or novel. Bennett reduces it to a paragraph, detailing an individual's impressively underwhelmed response. The narrator indicates that this brief local intrigue is more stimulating than events of national and international political consequence. Significance is a matter of locale and, therein, individual perspective, and *TOWT* consciously and consistently scorns obvious moments of intrigue and excitement. If the everyday is habitually derogated for its banality, its torpor, Bennett inverts this: that which is superficially interesting or meretricious is displaced by the more banal rhythms of the day-to-day.

The reiterative force of Bennett's attention to the ordinary involves a precipitous shift in where one might locate nodes of substantive change as everyday individuals subsume history. Similarly, Karel Kosík's *Dialectics of the Concrete* (1963) argues that history is invariably predicated upon, because it is constituted within, the everyday. History here pertains to Kosík's sense of an interruption of 'the replicability of every day' as, in 'the collision of war (of History) with the everyday, the latter is overpowered: for millions, the customary rhythm of life is over' (43-44). War is an extreme example; comparable events punctuate the similitude of the day-to-day. Bennett anticipates Kosík's contention that the 'everyday is thus not meant as a contrast to the unusual, the festive, the special, or to History: hypostasising the everyday as a routine over History, as the exceptional, is itself the *result* of a certain mystification' (43 original emphasis).<sup>65</sup> This is a false binary, and Kosík evocatively poses the familiar against History:

a transcendental reality occurring behind its back and bursting into the everyday in [the] form of a catastrophe into which an individual is thrown as "fatally" as cattle are driven to the slaughterhouse. The *cleavage* of life between the everyday and History exists for this consciousness as fate. While the everyday appears as confidence, familiarity, proximity, as "home", History appears as the derailment, the disruption of the everyday, as the exceptional and the strange. The cleavage simultaneously splits reality in the *historicity* of History and the *ahistoricity* of the everyday. History changes, the everyday remains. The everyday is the pedestal and the raw material of History. It supports and nourishes History but is itself devoid of history and outside of History (44 original emphasis).

The everyday cleaves *to* history, inseparably. Even the most egregious disjunction in the everyday does not and cannot transcend its necessary materiality and continuities.

Kosík's lucid phenomenological approach (46-49; 82-84) is similar to Smith's: 'the everyday *reveals* the truth about reality, for reality outside the everyday world would amount to transcendental non-reality' (Kosík 45 original emphasis). One cannot meaningfully separate the everyday and History: 'Reality breaks down into the relativised world of historical facticity and the absolute world of transhistorical values' (83). 'Reality' is not incommensurate with the everyday; indeed, the posited dialectical tension is manifest in the everyday, and involves the melded iterations of the absolute and the relative. Consequently, there is a substantial provision of autonomy in Kosík's paradigm:

---

<sup>65</sup> This is similar to Lefebvre's repeated assertion any critique which is insufficiently reflexive 'will be a criticism not of life, but of this pseudo-reality. Blinkered by alienation, confined to its perspective, such a critique will take as its object the "reality" of the existing social structure' (*Vol. I* 168 original emphasis).

reality is not the chaos of events or of fixed conditions but rather the unity of events and their *subjects*, a unity of events and the *process of forming them*, a practical-spiritual ability to transcend conditions. The ability to transcend conditions allows for the *possibility* to proceed from opinion to cognition, from *doxa* to *epistémé*, from myths to truth, from the accidental to the necessary, from the relative to the absolute. It is not a step out of history but an expression of the specificity of man as an event-formative and history-formative being; man is not walled into the animality and barbarism of his race, prejudices and circumstances, but in his onto-formative character (as praxis) he has the ability to transcend towards truth and universality (84-85 original emphasis).

Outwith Kosík's implicit endorsement of the dialectical progress of history, seemingly meliorist or even whiggish (Mayr 305), he usefully elucidates Bennett's intermingling of history and the everyday. This approach is crucially different from Squillace's account. He posits that history and progress are coextensive for Bennett in the Edwardian period (17), and modernity 'assumes a gradual and natural evolution toward a more rationally organised society' (112). In *How to Live* Bennett demonstrates his faith in the benefits of rational organisation. Undertaken rigorously, the 'minute practical examination of daily time expenditure' (11) means that the 'control of the thinking machine is perfectly possible' (73). Bennett was subsequently disabused of this by his experiences at the Front, and the post-War works are notably preoccupied with 'the inadequacy of scientific reason [...] the bankruptcy of material progress [...] and] the inadequacy of the old modernity' (Squillace 135-136). In Squillace's schema, the attenuation of progress's viability is sequential, and predicated upon a loss of pre-War faith. *TOWT* and *Clayhanger* limn 'society's continual evolution toward greater individual autonomy' through the efforts 'of the individual to reorganise his or her own existence' (Squillace 49, 91). This is congruent with this section's claims for Bennett's faith in individual agency, of course, while locking it within a specific paradigm.

Squillace's argument depends upon a univocal conception of Bennett's reading of Herbert Spencer's *First Principles* (1860); Lincoln reckons that any 'debt to Spencer was probably of the most general kind' (189). In a *Journal* entry, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1910, Bennett is effusive about Spencer's work's influence: 'by filling me up with the sense of causation everywhere, [it] has altered my whole view of life, and undoubtedly immensely improved it, I am confirmed in my opinion of that book. You can see *First Principles* in nearly every line I write' (392).<sup>66</sup> Squillace infers, somewhat reasonably, that Bennett retains Spencer's conception of steady, inexorable progress: 'it is exemplified in the evolution of *all* products of human thought and action, whether

---

<sup>66</sup> Spencer is mentioned at the beginning of *Sacred and Profane Love* (1905). Carlotta Peel, the protagonist, remembers the influence of his *Introduction to the Study of Sociology* (1873): 'I had not guessed that anything so honest, and so courageous, and so simple, and so convincing had ever been written. I am capable of suspecting that Spencer was not a supreme genius; but he taught me intellectual courage; he taught me that nothing is sacred that will not bear inspection; and I adore his memory' (13). He appears in *How to Live*, too. Herbert is described as 'the greatest mind that ever lived' (22) and *First Principles* as 'the most majestic product of any human mind' (125).

concrete or abstract, real or ideal' (Spencer 279 added emphasis); this includes sidereal cosmogony, evolutionary biology, philology, anthropology, and political economy (265-279). Squillace seemingly predicates Spencer's influence upon the latter's contention, in relation to Bennett's delineation of incipient individualism, that a balance between society and individuals will, eventually, emerge:

the establishment of this equilibrium, is the arrival at a state of human nature and social organization, such that the individual has no desires but those which may be satisfied without exceeding his proper sphere of action, while society maintains no restraints but those which the individual voluntarily respects. The progressive extension of the liberty of citizens, and the reciprocal removal of political restrictions, are the steps by which we advance towards this state. [...] Each increment of heterogeneity in the individual implies as cause or consequence, some increment of heterogeneity in the arrangements of the aggregate of individuals. And the limit to social complexity can be reached only with the establishment of the equilibrium [...] between social and individual forces (412-413).

Given the prominent mediation of 'progressive aggregation' and 'progressive differentiation' (263-265) in *First Principles*, one cannot easily dismiss the importance of Spencer's teleological paradigm Bennett saw saturating his own work. The *Journal* entry (392) coincides with the completion of *Clayhanger* and the novel's scrupulous account of Edwin's steady 'release from a horrible and humiliating servitude' (326) from which 'he could expect no independence of any kind until his father's death' (296) does trace the emergence of a more fully articulated individual. *Clayhanger* troubles Squillace's account, though: Edwin's stated desire to become an architect is brusquely denied by Darius (144) and Edwin's recognition of inviolable autonomy does not occur until *These Twain*, published mid-War, 1916: 'marriage must be a mutual accommodation' between discrete, independent individuals (414).

Furthermore, Squillace's insistence upon the ineluctable emergence of rational, autonomous individuals within a liberal polity elides the implications for Bennett's everyday, and its relationship with historical veracity. The ubiquitous, unyielding forward thrust Spencer describes is 'seen in the evolution of Society, in respect alike of its political, its religious, and its economical organisation; and it is seen in those countless concrete and abstract products of human activity, which constitute the environment of our daily life' (290). Rather than posing a qualitative conception of progress in Bennett's work as Squillace does, one can foreground its quotidian manifestations which actually evince these shifts. Bennett consciously and conspicuously deliberates exiguous indicators of change as they emerge within the everyday. This focus, rather than Squillace's putative new individuality, accords with 'the advance of heterogeneity' that is 'endlessly varied' (*First Principles* 286). Enveloped by inured perceptual habits

and the inherently dissimulate stability of the everyday, these myriad and fugacious indicators are carefully elucidated by Bennett.

History is not obviated by the everyday and *TOWT* elucidates the complexity of overlapping historical dis-continuities and incongruities. It is not accidental that in the same chapter as Wombwell's elephant's escapades, John Baines 'wakened up, and, being restless, [...] slid out partially from his bed and died of asphyxia' (65). The pachyderm relic's death is the result of pure contingency: Sophia, having been left to supervise her partially paralysed father, is distracted by Gerald Scales in the shop downstairs; or, as Mr Critchlow scolds her: "Gallivanting with young Scales! [...] Well you've killed yer father; that's all" (66). Critchlow's acerbic final words are commensurate with the everydayness of the event. The narrator interjects to elaborate the in-significance of this accident: 'John Baines had belonged to the past [...] Mid-Victorian England lay on that mahogany bed. Ideals had passed away with John Baines. It is thus that ideals die; not in the conventional pageantry of honoured death, but sorrily, ignobly, while one's head is turned –' (68). This brief passage discloses crucial components of Bennett's everyday. Paradoxically, this event's delineation indicates that while the reader's head is thus turned, other events continue apace; the paragraph's final em dash subtly defers the invoked period's finality, and there is an apposite breaking of the narrator's attention, as if their head is turned, midsentence. The strange admixture of tenses, 'John Baines *had* belonged to the past', intimates that, alive or dead, he is invariably outwith modernity. Both his living and posthumous belatedness are a superannuated manifestation of outmoded ideals; there is a further implication that if he *had* belonged to the past, there is some release from bearing the given weight of a historical period. However, this strictly and neatly sequential reading of historical periods is incommensurate with his very presence; one which presumably would have continued if Sophia had been duly attentive. The very specificity of 'that mahogany bed', which persists, precludes any aggrandised claims of historical rupture or neat sequencing.

Constance later muses on the significance of 'the bed on which she was born', which she assumes with Samuel Povey, 'its succession of death, conceptions, and births', and decides that 'it was just a bed – so she had to tell herself – like any other bed' (122). This final, and consciously duplicitous assertion, indicates that the bed, replete with past, present, and future significances, elucidates a stark, impersonal timescale subsisting beneath, and within, the familiar. If ideals passed with John Baines, they still, surely, suffuse *that* bed. Squillace contends that *TOWT* possesses an 'evolutionary vision', and this means

that personal identities collapse because the social contexts that informed them progress into new, unfamiliar forms [...] and] death scenes in *TOWT* are not primarily about the experience of dying; death is the outward sign of the collapse of the identity, the passing of an era (165).

The everyday, however, always materially extant for Bennett, frustrates such temporal disjunctions; *that* bed remains. Within the everyday, multiple temporalities interfuse, overlap, and circulate. This gainsays Anderson's contention that the past for Bennett "fathers" the present and 'accommodate[s] the individual within the sense of a larger whole' (64). Bennett recognises a more inchoate everyday. Harry Harootunian (2000) posits that the heterogeneous everyday, as a minimal condition of unity, contains 'differing forms of historical consciousness' (*History's Disquiet* 105). Within this alloyed constellation, simultaneously discordant and cohesive, of historical dis-continuities there is a 'coexistence of different values and customs' (*History's Disquiet* 137). Bennett goes further: within one nominally cohesive household resides a confluence of historical modalities. If 'the extraordinary [is] in the ordinary' (Drabble 279), Bennett indicates that this is at least a matter of the multiplicity of histories, potentially 'endlessly varied' (*First Principles* 286), pullulating beneath normative regularity.

Perhaps the most startling contention prompted by John Baines's death is that history goes on 'while one's head is turned' (68). Of course, this indicates the epistemic limits of the narrator, who is, like Sophia, preoccupied with Gerald Scales in the shop and seems to discover John Baines along with his daughter: 'she was startled because her father's head and beard were not in their accustomed place on the pillow. She could only make out something vaguely unusual sloping off the side of the bed' (65). The apparent polarity of historical shift and individual attention is mediated by Bennett and there is a reiterated indication that occlusions are inexorable and that the circumambient is rife with interest. Hilda, looking down on Bursley, describes a 'beautiful relation' permeating the townscape: 'here and there in the dim faces of the streets a window shone golden ... there were living people behind the blind! It was all beautiful, joy-giving' (*Hilda Lessways* 73). The rhyme and plosive alliteration of 'behind the blind', with 'beautiful' a resonant adjunct, conspicuously yokes these nouns together, and one alights upon their paradoxical relation: any appeal, or pulchritude, depends upon a necessary occlusion. Concealed *and* overlooked, the everyday signals its aureate potential through a ubiquity balanced by Hilda's deliberately singular 'blind', as inalienably unique as its neighbour, as particularised as *that* bed. Bennett brushes against the integument of the everyday, and indicates that even if the narrator's head is turned, as the reader's is and Sophia's was, history is palpable *and* occluded.

Peering at the curtained windows in her courtyard, Sophia experiences a similar sensation in Paris:

she heard a piano – somewhere. That was all. The feeling that secret and strange lives were being lived behind those baffling windows, that humanity was everywhere intimately pulsing around her, oppressed her spirit yet not quite unpleasantly. The environment softened her glance upon the spectacle of existence, insomuch that sadness became a

voluptuous pleasure. And the environment threw her back on herself, into a sensuous contemplation of the fundamental fact of Sophia (*TOWT* 301).

Like Hilda, Sophia is beguiled by the ‘secret and strange’ circumambient everyday goings on behind ‘baffling windows’; pervasive sibilance intimates the contiguity of familiarity, occlusion, and interest. Undisclosed and inaccessible, if nearly tangible and certainly audible, the quotidian, ‘pulsing’ rhythms draw attention to events concurring ‘while one’s head is turned’ (68). Hilda and Sophia offer instructive examples of Bennett’s sense of the everyday’s scope. Clearly, it abides, ‘somewhere’ *and* here; Hilda’s frisson and Sophia’s ‘voluptuous pleasure’ intimates that their very everydayness, their irrevocable position within and relation to the unremarkable, is the predicate of their enjoyment. The everyday is not merely disinterested. The threat of oppressive propinquity is abnegated by Sophia’s reticulation into the environment: she is not a dislocated observer but a constituent of that everyday, ‘sensuous’ and corporeal.

Of course, this is a corollary of Bennett’s personal perspectivism; Sophia’s cognisance of ‘what the eye sees, the ear hears, the nose scents, the tongue tastes and the skin touches’ is commensurate with his approach (*TAC* 19). More notable in such instances is the imbrication of the central narrative, the necessarily occluded interest of the nearby, and its inaccessible significance. This interrelation is clarified by Loring in ‘The Matador of the Five Towns’ (1912). Having seen Jos Myatt play for Knype against Manchester Rovers with Dr Stirling in the day and spent the night at Myatt’s pub while his wife, fatally, delivers twins in the bedroom above, Loring excogitates on the drive home:

mysterious rooms which I had not seen and never should see, recondite rooms from which a soul had slipped away and into which two had come, scenes of anguish and of frustrated effort! *Historical* rooms, surely! And yet not a house in the hundreds of houses past which we slid but possessed rooms ennobled and made august by happenings exactly as impressive in their tremendous inexplicableness (43 added emphasis).

Hilda and Sophia adumbrate the everyday’s potential significance. Loring discloses the intimate and inexorable bonds of history and the inscrutable, supreme ordinariness of passing houses, replete with golden windows, and with precisely the kind of momentous incidents he has witnessed. Paradoxically, his testimony precludes aggrandisement. Instead, Loring recognises that all that he ‘had not seen and never should see’ is, potentially, as or more significant than his own experience. ‘Historical’ is certainly portentous; there is an intimation that the ‘tremendous inexplicableness’ of these ‘happenings’, a considered choice belying the implicit ostentation of

“events”<sup>67</sup>, is perhaps incompatible with the delineations of the history they actually constitute. Myriad and manifold, the profusion of the everyday forecloses history even as it *is* “historical”.

At the centre of the conjoining of history and the everyday, or through their persistent juxtaposition, is an attempt to resituate where history resides: ‘reality is not the chaos of events or of fixed conditions but rather the unity of events and their *subjects*, a unity of events and the *process of forming them*’ (Kosík 84 original emphasis). Consequently, when Samuel Povey places the ‘singular signs [...] painted in shiny black on an unrectangular parallelogram of white cardboard by Constance’ in the Baines’ shop window, the narrator expostulates upon this monumental insignificance: ‘Those two, without knowing or guessing it, were *making history* – the history of commerce. They had no suspicion that *they were the forces of the future* insidiously at work to destroy what the forces of the past had created, but such was the case’ (73 added emphasis). Verbatim, this recalls *TOWT*’s opening sentence: ‘Those two girls, Constance and Sophia Baines, paid no heed to the manifold interests of their situation, of which, indeed, they had never been conscious’ (3). ‘Those two’: in both instances, the narrative is deliberately, conspicuously cursory, as if one had managed to glance ‘behind the blind’ of an arbitrary gilt window (*Hilda Lessways* 73) and glimpsed history. In their ‘making’, which Kosík calls ‘event-formative and history-formative being’ (85), those two undertake un-important, quotidian praxis. Though ‘the everyday raises an essential problem of representation’ (Olson 150), this is adroitly (circum)navigated by Bennett: “those two” precludes the aggrandisement of Samuel and Constance above their constitutive function within their shop, the local economy, or the totality of capitalism, even as it implicates this nexus. They are no less, no more than one component of structural change, conducting their business with an importance ostensibly incompatible with its banality. Bennett recognises that this is a question of attention: in the steady and imperceptible movements of the everyday, history is emergent, like the slow accretion of details that constitutes the everyday in Bennett’s work, or the unity of bricks steadily forming the Clayhanger home (*Clayhanger* 167). Therefore, the final dissolution of the Baines’ business is not *simply* an exogenous shock. Changing business practices is, and are, preparatory to the Midland Clothier’s Company. Though Craig contends that characters ‘shape their milieu’ and this ‘mirror[s] the individuals who mould them to suit their own predilections’ (200), this claim is mitigated by the ‘making’ of Constance and Samuel (3), and by the precipitous shift such insignificant actions facilitate. By the end of *TOWT*, the revolutionary operations – Samuel is also designated a ‘revolutionist’ (130) – of capitalist change are writ large in St. Luke’s Square: “[the Midland Clothier’s Company] caused to be constructed a sign compared to which the spacious old “Baines” sign was a post card. They covered the entire frontage with posters’ (486).

---

<sup>67</sup> There is an echo of Constance and Samuel’s conception of their annual holiday: ‘nothing happened. Unless their visits to Buxton could be called happenings’ (*TOWT* 138).

The subtle intermingling of the ordinary and history is crucial to Bennett's conception of the everyday's given sufficiency. It does not mandate supersession because it is not, clearly or simply, the anterior, totalised imposition of structural, capitalist forces. Bennett is closer to Claire Colebrook's (2002) rousing claims for the everyday's fecundity: 'dynamic, unreflected, immediate, productive, and continuous with itself. It is life as pure potential, not yet enslaved to one of its created or actualised products' (696). Colebrook's irradiated everyday, efflorescing with heterogeneous potentialities, is redolent of Bennett's deliberation of history, disabused of its aggrandisement, and the everyday produced by a continuity 'with itself' (Colebrook 696). In *Clayhanger*, the historical vagaries of Trafalgar Road and Aboukir Street are described. Bennett was consciously sceptical of a type of historical narration signalled by such nomenclature: 'History indeed resolved itself into a series of more or less sanguinary events arbitrarily grouped under the names of persons who had to be identified with the assistance of numbers' (*Clayhanger* 24). It is, therefore, unsurprising to find imperial, martial designations juxtaposed with details of 'the deep, slippery, scarce passable mire' traversed by pottery-laden mules, and the recent arrival of 'a couple of pair-horsed trams' (29). These are clearly salient details, and indicate a shift away from emblazoned History, redolent of Kosík's '*mystification of history* which [...] appears as the Emperor on horseback' (45 original emphasis), to the local and overlooked, the everyday: '[the] history of human manners is crunched and embedded in the very macadam of that part of the borough, and the burgesses unheedingly tread it down every day and talk gloomily about the ugly smoky prose of industrial manufacture' (*Clayhanger* 30). The adroit verb choices, 'crunched and embedded', intimate the materiality and density of history, its daily comminution and sedimentation; their reiterative force mimics the constant action of this consolidation of this 'prose', echoing the 'prose of [Sophia's] answers' to questions about Paris (*TOWT* 424), thoughtlessly impressed 'every day'.

*Clayhanger* indicates that, with the eponymous family business as an incidental example, attentiveness to unassuming goings on is warranted:

The trickling, calm commerce of a provincial town was proceeding, bit being added to bit and item to item, until at the week's end a series of apparent nothings had swollen into the livelihood of near half a score of people. And nobody perceived how interesting it was, this interchange of activities, this ebb and flow of money, this sluggish rise and fall of reputations and fortunes, stretching out of one century into another and towards a third! Printing had been done at that corner, though not by steam, since the time of the French Revolution (31).

Again, there is a conspicuous distinction drawn between the local quotidian "happenings", which innocuously trickle along, and the Historical cynosure of the French Revolution. In this instance,

the inertia of ‘apparent nothings’, which Kosík calls ‘the replicability of every day’ (43), of provincial business produces an impression of stasis. However, the ‘swollen’ confluence of these various undertakings contributes to the density of historical change across centuries, while one’s head is turned treading familiar routes. Apparently innocuous, Spencer indicates that increasingly heterogeneous iterations of progress manifest in the everyday are ‘made more various by the increasing composition [...] formed from the detritus of the more ancient [...] rendered highly complex by the mixtures of materials they contain’ (267). This is dilatory agglutination, and Bennett posits history as ‘the accumulation of modifications upon modifications’ (Spencer 299) outwith the strictures of a supervening logic. This is not to pose the French Revolution as strictly comparable with the vicissitudes of Five Towns’ printing but the very evocation of this singular event counterpoised with the thick fabric of diurnal rhythms indicates that they should not, indeed cannot, be readily polarised or anathematised.

Sophia’s time in Paris offers a concentrated commingling of the everyday and history. There is no more clamant indicator of this heterodox hierarchisation than the belated, utterly bathetic disclosure of international conflict. While Sophia is convalescing, Laurence, one of her “courtesan” nurses, enters into a lengthy disquisition on the financial incompetence and personal failings of Madame Foucault, her own convoluted relationship with Monsieur Cerf and illicit relationship with his cousin, inviting Sophia for a double date, and receiving a bracelet from Sophia before stating, quite simply: “[by] the way, have I told you that war is declared? [...] The scene with Aimée [Foucault] made me forget ... With Germany. The city is quite excited” (315). History slips into the everyday’s ‘refracting glass’ (*Claybanger* 268); the personal and the momentous are not held with parity in a single vision. Despite ‘booming’ cannons and the ‘excited and vivacious’ and ‘feverish atmosphere of Paris’, Sophia is complicit in this narcissism, too: ‘using all the panorama of the capital as a dim background for her exacerbated egoism’ (286). Tellingly, the narrator does not indicate the cause of the city’s fever; the scope of ‘all the panorama’ gives way to the confines of the alliterative, cloistered, polysyllabic ‘exacerbated egoism’. Though complicit in the strictures of personal perspectivism, such insouciance is predicated on Bennett’s thoroughgoing apprehension of everydayness:

[Sophia’s] ears were soon quite accustomed to the sound of cannon, and she felt that she had always been a citizeness of Paris, and that Paris had always been besieged; she lived from day to day. Occasionally she had a qualm of fear, when the firing grew momentarily louder, or when she heard that battles had been fought in such and such a suburb. But then she said it was absurd to be afraid when you were with a couple of million people, all in the same plight as yourself. She grew reconciled to everything (333).

Any singularity is eroded by constancy, and the rapidity of this adjustment indicates that the everydayness of history is pervasive; once again, Sophia's disquiet is mollified by the propinquity of communal experience: 'that humanity was everywhere intimately pulsing around her, oppressed her spirit yet not quite unpleasantly' (*TOWT* 301). While a cannonade fulminates in the background and in the penumbra of her consciousness, Sophia's sense of the Siege is utterly banal: "How strange it is that I should be here, doing what I am doing!" But the regular ordinariness of her existence seized her again' (363). The everyday forms a bulwark against precipitous, Historical change as much as it inures one to that change.

*TOWT*'s recognition of tumult and international significance manifests a more capacious, fine grained sense of context:

Except for [...] the frequency of military uniforms in the streets, the price of food, and the fact that at least one house in four was flying either the ambulance flag or the flag of a foreign embassy [...] *the siege did not exist for Sophia*. The men often talked about their guard-duty, and disappeared for a day or two to the ramparts, but she was too busy to listen to them. She thought of nothing but her enterprise, which absorbed all her powers. [...] When asked why she continued to buy at a high price, articles of which she had a store, she would reply: "I am keeping all that till things are much dearer." This was regarded as astounding astuteness (333 added emphasis).

Astounding, yes, and deliberately prosaic; the particular frame through which the reader glimpses the privations of the Siege and the violence of the bombardments is limited, everyday. Jones indicates that the whole "Siege" episode in the novel evinces 'the ease with which we can often miss cataclysmic events' (40); this is certainly congruent with what Craig describes as Bennett's 'primary law': 'a concentration on the specific, concrete details of everyday life, regardless of apparent triviality' (197). However, this still relies upon the supposition that history is imposed, and brusquely overlooks the details Bennett does attend to: '[the] siege had begun. It was in the closing of the creamery that the siege was figured for her; in this, and in eggs at five sous a piece' (332). This might be seen as the nadir or acme of the egoism which reduces a city to a backdrop and history to shadows playing out behind the effulgence of Sophia's experiences. However, *TOWT* still registers some kind of shift; there are symptoms of *something* interlarding the Paris streets (flags, soldiers, ambulances, inflation) without completely derailing its rhythmic continuity.

Perhaps most remarkable is the contention that the 'siege did not exist for Sophia' (333) even as its effects are clearly palpable. This assertion implies that the myriad daily components are inimical to any generic nomenclature, such as the Trafalgar Road and Aboukir Street in *Clayhanger* (40-41), which, in the very singularity of 'the siege', is incompatible with the apparent banality of Sophia's experiences: it is simply everyday. The siege cannot exist *for* Sophia as a

received ontic monolith. She collapses the distinction Wark makes in Lefebvre's thinking: 'the everyday is the level of tactics; history that of strategy' (99). Clearly, her constitutive function, storing provisions and providing rooms and board and driving up prices, precludes this. Sophia's 'event-formative and history-formative' (Kosík 84) role is indicated by her desire 'to devise a livelihood', successfully manage Madame Foucault's apartment, and 'be independent' despite material instabilities (331); clearly, these are exigent: 'an undescribed soup' comes from 'a butcher in the Faubourg St. Honoré, who has bought the three elephants of the Jardin des Plantes' (345). Hence, the alleviation of the siege is not felicitous: '[for] Sophia the conclusion of the siege meant chiefly that prices went down' (359). The denial of the majuscule is pointed; the price deflation matches Sophia's dispirited loss of earnings and her myopia is no more remarkable than Laurence's initial disclosure of the conflict.

Events, though "happenings" retains its force here, are palpable, and are figured, in their quotidian manifestations: in the price of provisions and the relative value of coins; in 'the daily and hourly texture of existence' (*TAC* 61). It is the very parochialism undergirding personal perspectivism which filters the everyday, and indicates the downscaling of the momentous to exiguous, hourly indicators of change. These are not merely received, though, and do not render Sophia 'powerless and passive' (Anderson 80):

[Sophia] sold to the wife of a chemist who lived on the first floor, for a hundred and ten francs, a ham for which she had paid less than thirty francs. She was conscious of a thrill of joy in receiving a beautiful banknote and a gold coin in exchange for a mere ham. [...] It was astounding (*TOWT* 336).

Once again, deliberate reiteration, here 'astounding', in *TOWT* mediates the strange admixture of history and the everyday. Sophia's astonishment is perhaps predicated upon the incongruous mixture of the unfamiliar within the day-to-day which is purportedly 'the pedestal and raw material of History [...] but is itself devoid of and outside of history' (Kosík 44) but nonetheless tangible, manipulable. The malleability of the everyday belies Anderson's claim that individuals are invariably assimilated into 'the general framework of values' and anterior historical contexts (74; 82-83): 'acceptance, rather than escape or transformation, became the goal in [Bennett's] novels' (132). For Bennett, the everyday is manifested by individuals 'reconciled to everything' (333) in their quotidian praxis, in which 'everything' is deliberately totalising *and* expansive. Sophia's routine during the Siege constitutes her sense of self as much as she imposes this routine upon her existence: 'overworked and harassed by novel responsibilities and risks, she was happier, for days together, than she had ever been, simply because she had a purpose in life and was depending upon herself' (332). She provides a crucial rejoinder to Lefebvre's 'woman buying a pound of sugar' (*Vol. I* 57). This illustration posits the passive consumer, rendered doubly so

given the analysis reducing her to mere instantiation, within the operative force of ‘the sum total of capitalist society’ (57). Lefebvre’s contention that ‘alienation is constant and everyday’ (*Vol. I* 167) is predicated upon an imputed ignorance and passivity, and posits ‘the world’ as experienced ‘without effective participation, and processes unfold within it which are visible but inaccessible’ (*Vol. II* 90). Erich Fromm similarly insists upon an implacable and ubiquitous ‘passive consumption’ in which ‘the world’, and the definite article is conspicuous across these iterations, is ‘geared to exchange and to receive, to barter and consume; *everything*, spiritual as well as material objects, becomes an object of exchange and of consumption’ (75 added emphasis). Friedan is similarly totalising, and describes the everyday of suburban domesticity as the ‘comfortable concentration camp [of] American women [...] that denies woman’s adult human identity. By adjusting to it, a woman stunts her intelligence to become childlike, turns away from individual identity to become an anonymous biological robot in a docile mass’ (248-249). Bennett abjures the basic premise of the everyday’s given totality: ‘the siege did not exist for Sophia’ (333). This is perfectly congruent given the thick entanglement of the everyday and history in *TOWT*; the siege did not exist as an external, impersonal paradigm because it is partially constituted by Sophia in the flux of the everyday. Moreover, as Laurie Langbauer (1999) points out in her astute critique of Lefebvre, Bennett refuses ‘the old logic that women can’t understand something because they embody it’ in which ‘both women and the everyday are smothering. They come to stand for an overwhelming totality’ (*Novels of Everyday Life* 21). Unlike Lefebvre’s female consumer, Sophia manipulates, however minutely, the price mechanism; she is not a mindless consumer; she repudiates Lefebvre’s contention that women ‘are incapable of understanding’ the everyday (*Everyday Life* 63). Individuals like Sophia do not simply subsist as tactical, clandestine guerrillas subverting the imposition of strategy but actually shape this unfolding mutuality. Just as Samuel and Constance ‘were making history’ in their small way (73), Sophia makes history, too.

This is a contiguous intermingling. The simple and inexorable fact of her ostensibly exotic life is that ‘Sophia’s life, in its way, had been as narrow as Constance’s [...] she had been in a groove as deep as Constance’s’ (441). Despite imagining Paris as ‘bright, clean, glittering’ and ‘the magnificent slanting splendour of the Champs Elysées’, Sophia concedes that ‘Paris had not seemed beautiful to her’ and recalls a ‘hard, fighting, exhausting life’ (411). Nonetheless, Bennett insists that history is wrought by people like Sophia. The ability of individuals to constitute the everyday in which they live which is not the obverse of History but is the palpable and total actuality of history. Kosík indicates that this is ineluctable: ‘Divorced from history, the everyday becomes emptied to the point of being absurdly immutable. Divorced from the everyday, history turns into an absurdly *powerless* giant which bursts into the everyday as a catastrophe but which nevertheless cannot change it’ (45 original emphasis). Sophia *is* history; her actions loom the total fabric of events. Her experiences are not, as Benjamin avers, ‘played [...] out *against* a world-historical backcloth’ (56 added emphasis); history is not happening merely on the outskirts of

Paris. In *TAC*, Bennett declares that *every* ‘street is a mirror, an illustration, an exposition, an explanation, of the human beings who live in it. Nothing in it is to be neglected. Everything in it is valuable’ (24). Bennett’s conception of the everyday attenuates teleological and causal historical narration prone to miss this ubiquitous interest. Sophia’s exploits in Paris exemplify this conception of diffused significance even as Bennett intimates that to be *both* the object of history (in posterity) and the ‘forming, active’ (Colebrook 688) subject is difficult to frame, even locate. In part, this is due to Colebrook’s insistence that, if the ordinary is sufficient to itself, its ‘dilations, wanderings [and] events [...] occur beyond all sense of order’ (699). Bennett gestures to this proximate disorder. The propinquity of lives burgeoning in adjacent, curtained-off rooms, demonstrates both the density of *TOWT*’s focus and its necessary limitations.

This is not simply an abstract critique of history, one which demands an ineffable thickness and infinite elasticity. Bennett’s insistence upon individual agency relies upon what, juxtaposed against elitist modernism’s ‘unsharpened impercipient’, Carey lauds as an apprehension of ‘the intricacy and fecundity of each human life’ (160). Bennett is ‘the hero’ (152) of Carey’s *The Intellectuals and the Masses* partly because of his insistence ‘upon the absolute singularity of each person, especially of seemingly unimportant people [...] This doctrine of individual distinction [...] crosses the barriers intellectuals erect between themselves and the masses, for it is combatively unexclusive’ (174). Carey’s appraisal is redolent of Squillace’s contention that Bennett asserts ‘the modern ideal of autonomy everywhere without exception’ (108). Bennett mitigates against facile characterisation, though: to ‘be an “individuality”, paradoxically, a character must not be flamboyantly individual’ (Squillace 140; Patterson 163). A.J.P. Taylor (1966) noted that Wells’s Edwardian novels are, on the other hand, peopled with unrealistic ‘characters’ and ‘creatures of fantasy to whom comic things happen’ (128). Bennett’s focus remains with the history-forming praxis of inconspicuous individuals. Edwin’s ‘career, which to others probably seemed dull and monotonous, presented itself to him as almost miraculously romantic in its development’ (*Clayhanger* 422), and the narrative, ‘constructed brick by brick, beam by beam, lath by lath, tile by tile’ (166), does not deprecate this slow accumulation of in-significance. Such an edifice is inviolably deserving of attention. Hilda reflects upon the remarkably undistinguished Edwin: ‘[why] did she like him and like being with him? He was not brilliant, nor masterful, nor handsome, nor well dressed, nor in any manner imposing. On the contrary, he was awkward and apologetic, and not a bit spectacular’ (*Hilda Lessways* 311). For Bennett, and Hilda apparently, these traits do not preclude interest.

*TOWT*’s first pages, provides a striking example of Bennett’s capacious sense of everyday, isonomic importance. Looking out from a window, the sisters observe Maggie, the Baines’ servant, moving across the square. Maggie’s life is regular, ordinary:

She lived seventeen hours of each day in an underground kitchen and larder, and the other seven in an attic, never going out except to chapel on Sunday evenings, and once a month on Thursday afternoons. "Followers" were most strictly forbidden to her; but on rare occasions an aunt from Longshaw was permitted as a tremendous favour to see her in the subterranean den. [...] She] was allowed to fall in love exactly as she chose, provided she did not "carry on" in the kitchen or the yard. And as a fact, Maggie had fallen in love. In seventeen years she had been engaged eleven times. No one could conceive how that ugly and powerful organism could softly languish to the undoing of even a butty-collier, nor why, having caught a man in her sweet toils, she could ever be imbecile enough to set him free. There are, however, mysteries in the souls of Maggies (9).<sup>68</sup>

This is perhaps the most generous and pellucid declaration, and one easily applied to the sisters themselves, of an approach to the everyday that does not invest Maggie with a singular value. Maggies, those with whom we are familiar and overlook, constitute the world through which, and alongside whom, we move on a regular basis, have an inalienable probity and interest. The narrator, again, belies the simplicity of the injunction as '[no] one could conceive' of Maggie's inherent interest while declaring this to be utterly false. Despite this difficulty, one must apply a conscious interest *everywhere* and to *everyone*: we are all Maggies, hence the plural. "Those two girls" (3) might have been Maggie and her sister. In fact, with her string of broken engagements, Maggie presents, ostensibly, a more interesting novel. The sisters' myopia, unimaginative and condescending, means that when Maggie announces her plans to leave and marry Hollins, the fish-hawker

Constance detected for the first time, beneath the dehumanized drudge, the stirrings of a separate and perhaps capricious individuality. Maggie's engagements had never been real to her employers. Within the house she had never been, in practice, anything but "Maggie" – an organism (118).

The inability to think of Maggie as a sentient person is figured as a manifestation of an ignorance induced by the everyday; *TOWT*'s narrator, similarly, reduces Maria Insull to an oyster (224). In *TAC*, Bennett notes that when one sees a policeman one merely apprehends 'an indivisible

---

<sup>68</sup> Edwin makes a similar discovery about his own sister in *Clayhanger*: 'As he approached, Maggie burst into a girlish laugh. "Not really?" she murmured, with the vivacity of a young girl. He knew not what they were discussing, nor did he care. What interested him, what startled him, was the youthful gesture and tone of Maggie. It pleased and touched him to discover another Maggie in the Maggie of the household' (362). Similarly, Hilda is 'disconcerted at the discovery of Florrie as an authentic young woman' (*Hilda Lessways* 91), and, later, by the realisation the beneath 'the deferential servant in Martha was a human girl, making a third in the room, who familiarly divined the moods of the other two and judged them as an equal' (305).

phenomenon of blue cloth, steel buttons, flesh resembling a face, and a helmet; “a stalwart guardian of the law”; to you little more than an algebraic symbol: in a word – a policeman’ (31). Such everyday myopia is pervasive and occludes the individuals subsumed by their assigned roles and routines. This is tantamount to an inability to witness one’s cohabitants. The importance of such individuals is quickly erased. *TOWT* insists that Maggie’s role is crucial to the household’s functions. When Maggie gives notice, Mrs Povey’s response is muted by class propriety, and the narrator, in order to correct any misapprehension, quickly rebukes the employer’s intimation that the servant’s help was unimportant: ‘as if Maggie was not the central supporting pillar of the house, just as if Maggie had not assisted at her birth, just as if the end of the world had not abruptly been announced, just as if St. Luke’s Square were not inconceivable without Maggie’ (118).

Maggie is a clarion for a consistent affirmation of the singular value of individuals. Bennett experiences ‘a deep sense of the majesty and beauty of the whole inexplicable affair’ walking along ‘a common street’ *because* he is ‘rooted in the private assurance that there is nothing more wondrous, or possessing greater ultimate potentialities, than the individual man’ (‘My Religious Experience’ quoted in *Sketches* 172). Samuel Povey is exemplary, a ‘nobody’ (111): ‘a quiet, diffident, secretive, tedious, and obstinate youngish man, absolutely faithful, absolutely efficient in his sphere; without brilliance, without distinction; perhaps rather little-minded, certainly narrow-minded; but what a force in the shop’ (14). Though there is a quiet derision in this account of Povey’s (lack of) achievement, and the subsequent emasculating removal of his tooth, this is counterpoised by an evocation of Povey’s competence, acumen, and efficaciousness in the shop. This tonal ambiguity is revised posthumously by the narrator in a conspicuous interjection:

A casual death [...] Samuel Povey never could impose himself [...] He was little. I have often laughed at Samuel Povey. But I liked and respected him. He was a very honest man. I have always been glad to think that, at the end of his life, destiny took hold of him and displayed, to the observant, the vein of greatness which runs through every soul without exception (206).

This signal assertion of Samuel’s value is predicated upon two immutable tenets of Bennett’s everyday: the narrative’s diligent attention to the unremarkable mediated by personal perspectivism, and the inalienable significance and interest precipitating this very focus. Vein, invoking both a universal corporeality and an unmined, precious lode, deftly equilibrates value and ubiquity; not that this evinces self-aggrandisement: ‘I have often laughed *at* Samuel’ (206 added emphasis). This approach is predicated upon the notional viability of the type of disposition the narrator delineates: *without exception*, there are novels waiting to be written about

the superficially banal, purely monotonous, and utterly mundane. One cannot deem this meaningful if it is not girded by the kind of democratic sympathies Bennett delineates.

As if to assert the eerie balance of continuity and singularity, and of the “historical” and the ordinary, *TOWT* articulates the bustling and ongoing fact of the everyday with a celerity that alarms Samuel. After Daniel Povey is remanded, Samuel returns to the shop: ‘he found customers absorbed in the trivialities of purchase *as though nothing whatever had happened*. He was shocked; *he resented their callousness*’ (190 added emphasis). Perhaps this resentment discloses or intimates the limit of Bennett’s confidence in the viability of his vision, or its difficult attainment. Samuel cannot see that not everyone has been through the same experience as he has. The world goes on, and on, of course, and is apparently indifferent; just as Sophia reduces the Siege of Paris to ‘a dim background for her exacerbated egoism’ (286), Samuel’s customers, who ensure the provision of *his* everyday’s continuity, either reticulate Daniel’s trial into the merely circumambient or are blithely ignorant. Samuel betrays a narcissism undermined by the ‘callousness’, heterogeneity, and continuity of the everyday. Bennett transcends this parochialism: one must see what he identifies in Samuel Povey, the unremarkable containing the utterly singular, everywhere, and in everyone forging the everyday worlds through which they move. Of course, one should remain cognisant, as Smith does in *The Everyday World as Problematic*, of the extra-local forces which shape, which is not to say totally determine, the everyday. Nonetheless, Bennett’s quotidian is never simply the pervasive imposition of hegemonic non-everyday forces but a plane of immanence, suffused with agential possibility and rife with active, subjective, ‘event-formative and history-formative’ (Kosík 84) individuals.

=  
CODA



Arnold Bennett's and H.G. Wells's interests in the lives of nominally ordinary individuals and the complex differences involved in their conceptions of the everyday belie simplistic, "materialist" accounts of their Edwardian work. Clearly, these Edwardian interests qualify claims made for subsequent innovations, such as Richard Ellmann's contention that 'no one knew what the commonplace really was until Joyce had written [...] Joyce was the first to endow an urban man of no importance with heroic consequence' (*James Joyce* 5); Declan Kiberd's (2009) claims that *Ulysses* (1922) is an unprecedented defence of ordinary life (3-15); or Liesl Olson's (2009) assertion that it was Virginia Woolf rather than Bennett who sought 'a representation of the everyday [that] cannot be reduced to one authentic experience' (79). Reading the Edwardians outwith fustian cavils, reductive juxtapositions with other periods, and procrustean metanarratives reveals their distinctive, subtle, and probing interrogations of the everyday.

Approaching Edwardian literature in this manner involves a reconception of what is critically apposite. Theories of the everyday provide a mode of analysis which is not monological, as Wells's and Bennett's thinking often presages and challenges subsequent critiques. For instance, Henri Lefebvre's (1968) contention that 'what is possible is already partly real' and his claim to be 'a utopian, yes, a partisan of possibilities' (*Everyday Life* 163) are anticipated by Wells: 'a *Utopia* [...] has grown up in my mind during the course of these speculations as a state of affairs at once possible and more desirable than the world in which we live' (*Utopia* 6). Their shared apprehension of the everyday, including various hermeneutically suspicious critiques, is fundamentally exodic. 'Things that seemed permanent and final, become unsettled and provisional' (*Mankind* 18), Wells avers, and the opportunity afforded by instability enables 'a practicable way of escape' for those who 'bury the solitary talents of [their] lives' in the vitiating, wasteful day-to-day' (*Mankind* 33). Lefebvre and Wells excoriate the everyday and indicate preferable futurities but offer 'no final closure to the historical dialectic, which manifests itself in unpredictable and unfathomable ways' (Gardiner 'Everyday Utopianism' 241). Against the spacious remit of futurological speculation, Wells's novels indicate that increasingly exigent pressures necessitate means of escape seemingly inimical to a future collectivity disabused of everyday characterised by 'narrowness and limitation' (*New Worlds* 49). Polly cannot build utopia nor can Kipps; both adjoin escape and enjoy gnomic, transitory bliss. Lewisham comes closest to collective improvement but there is a sense that Wells saw acquiescence to ameliorative deep time as insufficient to the everyday's tangible threats. Lefebvre's medieval peasant provides a delusive paragon, too. The protean promise of utopias, Lefebvre's or Wells's, is complicated by instantiation.

For Wells, the everyday offers a negative critique; '[it] is vital for what it can be, not for what it is' (Wark 101). Bennett abjures this premise. In an article praising George Moore (31<sup>st</sup> October 1929), Bennett reaffirms his commitment to the 'dailiness of life' because it 'is as interesting in fiction as any heroical doings, and indeed heroical doings cannot be made really

interesting without some picture of dailiness [...] Explain to me how Nausicaa went out to do the washing, and I am held' (quoted in *Books and Persons* 319). For Bennett, the everyday is of epic significance but Wells criticised him for 'taking the thing that is, for what it was, with a naïve and eager zest. He saw it brighter than it was; he did not see into it and he did not see beyond [...] the whole adorable, incessant, multitudinous lark of it' (*Autobiography* 2.628). Bennett *did* see into the everyday, into its shifting plenitudes and tessellating significances which are not merely 'adorable'. Bennett did not deprecate; did not sermonise about the everyday's imputed privations and possible future redemption because he apprehended an originary significance preceding the fume of 'things remote | From use, obscure and subtle' (*Paradise Lost* 8.190-91). Bennett's grounding in the familiar evinces, and is predicated upon, an extant, supervening plasticity. 'I cannot conceive of something being made out of nothing', he declares in 'My Religious Experience' (14<sup>th</sup> October 1925), and this ubiquitous endeavour animates his apperception of the everyday's plenary, overlooked contingency. Girding history and odysseys, the quotidian is vital because it is not a static monolith. One alights upon Sophia's important role in the Siege of Paris and yet overhears a piano in the adjacent, curtained room. In the familiar Bennett saw history unfolding, constituted by people unconstrained by their everyday because they, in their myriad, interrelating, and unremarkably remarkable activities, are not simply subject to it: they actuate its clandestine, heterogeneous energies.

Wells reckoned that his own generalisations 'grew wider and stronger' as he 'lost precision', whereas Bennett's precision increased and 'generalisations weakened' (*Autobiography* 2.630). This lucid self-analysis is instructive. Perhaps the nascent signs of this cleavage are discernable in the authors' Edwardian conceptions of the everyday. A generalised view of the everyday, perhaps a necessary predicate its theoretical scrutiny, is liable to expound its insufficiencies, as Wells's did; the interrogation of deep structures belying mellow routines implies an ample purview. Wells's emboldened protagonists offer shining, Daedalian examples as negative critique, as intimations of the possible: 'Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek' (*Paradise Lost* 8.197). Bennett remained cognisant of the immediate, exiguous details of the day-to-day, and the concomitant compromises this implied. These distinct versions of the everyday are not wholly inimical, though; differences concerning the exodic should not cloud kindred tenets. Both recognise that the ordinary warrants diligent attention and patient elucidation; both accede to the materiality and ductility of the everyday. The crucial, foundational supposition, a prime wisdom, is the same, too, and pervades their work: the inalienable dignity and manifold intrigues of ordinary individuals. This anterior, guiding axiom enfranchises those inconspicuous, mysterious souls; Polly and Sophia Baines, Hilda Lessways and Lewisham: the constituents of the everyday. Despite Ellmann's and Kiberd's claims for Joyce, the Edwardians undertook important preparatory work. Indeed, their lucid apprehension of this principal value, rife with literary potential, disclosed seeds that might Bloom.

=

BIBLIOGRAPHY



- Abercrombie, Lascelles. 'Literature.' *Edwardian England A.D. 1901-1911*. Ed. F.J.C. Hearnshaw. London: Ernest Benn, 1933. 185-203.
- A.G. '[Review of Sackville-West's] *The Edwardians*.' *The Bookman* 78.466 (July 1930): 230.
- Anderson, Linda R. *Bennett, Wells and Conrad: Narrative in Transition*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988.
- Amato, Joseph A. *Everyday Life: How The Ordinary Became Extraordinary*. London: Reaktion Books, 2016.
- Anonymous. 'Fall in love (all over again) with *The Forsyte Saga*.' *The Daily Telegraph* 5 January 2017: 23.
- Anonymous. '[Review of] *Diana of Dobson's*.' 1908. *Diana of Dobson's. Diana of Dobson's: A Romantic Comedy in Four Acts*. Ed. Diane F. Gillespie & Doryjane Birrer. Ormskirk: Broadview, 2000. 170-172.
- Anonymous. '[Review of] *Fraternity*.' *The Saturday Review* 107.2785 (13 March 1909): 341-342.
- Anonymous. '[Review of] *Justice*.' *The Bookman*. 38.223 (April 1910): 50.
- Anonymous. '[Review of] *The Madras House* by Granville Barker.' *The North American Review* 195.677 (April 1912): 572-573.
- Anonymous. 'Mr Pinero's Latest.' *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* 2 February 1906: 8.
- Anonymous. 'New Problem Play.' *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* 27 September 1905: 8.
- Anonymous. "'Post-Impressionistic" Painting.' *The Times* 7 November 1910: 12.
- Anonymous. '[Review of] *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road*.' *The Bookman*. 35.205 (October 1908): 51-52.
- Ardis, Ann L. *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Armstrong, Nancy. 'City Things: Photography and the Urbanisation Process.' *Human, All Too Human*. Ed. Diana Fuss. London: Routledge, 1996. 93-130.
- Arvatov, Boris. 'Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing (Toward the Formulation of the Question).' 1925. Trans. Christiana Kiaer. *OCTOBER* 81 (Summer 1997): 119-128.
- Asquith, H.H. *Hansard*. HC Deb. 11 May 1910. Series 5. Vol. 17, cols. 791-796.
- Baker, Elizabeth. *Chains: A Play, in Four Acts*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1911.
- Balfour, Arthur. *Hansard*. HC Deb. 25 January 1901. Series 4. Vol. 89, cols. 19-23.
- Balfour, Arthur. *Hansard*. HC Deb. 11 May 1910. Series 4. Vol. 17, cols. 796-800.
- Bargh, J. A. 'The Automaticity of Everyday Life.' *The automaticity of everyday life*. Ed. R.S. Wyer, Jr. Mahwah: Erlbaum, 1997. 1-61.

- Barrie, J.M. *Peter Pan and Other Plays*. Ed. Peter Hollindale. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. 1957. Trans. Annette Lavers. London: Paladin, 1973.
- Barton, J.E. 'Fiction and Mr Arnold Bennett.' *The New Age* 4.6 (3 December 1908): 110-112.
- Batchelor, John. *The Edwardian Novelists*. London: Duckworth, 1982.
- Batchelor, John. *H.G. Wells*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Beard, George M. *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences, a Supplement to Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia)*. New York, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1881.
- Bellamy, William. *The novels of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy: 1890-1910*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.
- Benjamin, Walter. 'By the Fireside.' 1933. Trans. Rodney Livingstone. *New Left Review* 96 (November-December 2015): 53-57.
- Bennett, Arnold. *Anna of the Five Towns*. 1902. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994.
- Bennett, Arnold. *Arnold Bennett: The Evening Standard Years: 'Books and Persons' 1926-1931*. Ed. Andrew Mylett. London: Chatto & Windus, 1974.
- Bennett, Arnold. *The Author's Craft*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914.
- Bennett, Arnold. *The Card: A Story of Adventure in the Five Towns*. 1911. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.
- Bennett, Arnold. *Claybanger*. 1910. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954.
- Bennett, Arnold. *Florentine Journal: 1<sup>st</sup> April-25<sup>th</sup> May 1910*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1967.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'The Death of Simon Fuge.' 1907. *Tales of the Five Towns Including: The Grim Smile of the Five Towns*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1964. 264-313.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'The Election and the Democratic Idea.' *The English Review* (February 1910): 552-560.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'The Fallow Fields of Fiction 1.' *Academy* 15 June 1901: 517-518.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'The Fallow Fields of Fiction 2.' *Academy* 29 June 1901: 557-558.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'The Fallow Fields of Fiction 3.' *Academy* 20 July 1901: 57-58.
- Bennett, Arnold. *How To Live on 24 Hours a Day*. 1908. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'Is the Novel Decaying?' *Things That Have Interested Me: Third Series*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1926. 191-195.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'James Joyce's *Ulysses*.' 1922. *Things That Have Interested Me: Second Series*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1923. 191-201.
- Bennett, Arnold. *The Journal of Arnold Bennett*. New York, New York: The Literary Guild, 1933.

- Bennett, Arnold. *Hilda Lessways*. 1911. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'The Hungarian Rhapsody.' 1905. *Tales of the Five Towns Including: The Grim Smile of the Five Towns*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1964. 99-113.
- Bennett, Arnold. *A Man from the North*. 1898. London: Hamish Hamilton Library, 1973.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'Mary with the High Hand.' 1905. *Tales of the Five Towns Including: The Grim Smile of the Five Towns*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1964. 35-47.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'The Matador of the Five Towns.' 1912. *The Matador of the Five Towns and Other Stories*. Birmingham: C. Combridge, 1963. 1-41.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'Neo-Impressionism and Literature.' 1910. *Books and Persons: Being Comments on a Past Epoch, 1908-1911*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1917. 280-285.
- Bennett, Arnold. *The Old Wives' Tale*. 1908. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1995.
- Bennett, Arnold. Preface. *The Old Wives' Tale*. 1908. By Arnold Bennett. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1917. vii-xi.
- Bennett, Arnold. *The Reasonable Life: Being Hints for Men and Women*. London: A.C. Fifield, 1907.
- Bennett, Arnold. *Riceyman Steps: A Novel*. 1923. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Bennett, Arnold. *Sacred and Profane Love*. 1905. London: Chatto & Windus, 1917.
- Bennett, Arnold. *Sketches for Autobiography*. Ed. James Hepburn. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979.
- Bennett, Arnold. *These Twain*. 1916. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.
- Bennett, Arnold. 'Under the Clock.' 1912. *The Matador of the Five Towns and Other Stories*. Birmingham: C. Combridge, 1963. 119-126.
- Bennett, Arnold and H.G. Wells. *Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells: A Record of a Personal and a Literary Friendship*. Ed. Harris Wilson. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1960.
- Bentley-Cranch, Dana. *Edward VII: Image of an Era*. London: HMSO, 1992.
- Beresford, Charles. 'The Future of the Anglo-Saxon Race.' *The North American Review* 171.6 (1 December 1900): 802-810.
- Berlin, Isaiah. 'Beloved monster.' *The Guardian* 21 October 1989: 25.
- Berman, Marshall. Afterword. 2010. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. London: Verso, 1982. 349-356.
- Berman, Marshall. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. London: Verso, 1982.
- Bishop, Nicola. 'Ruralism, Masculinity, and National Identity: The Rambling Clerk in Fiction, 1900-1940.' *Journal of British Studies* 54 (July 2015): 654-678.

- Blanchot, Maurice. 'Everyday Speech.' 1959. Trans. Susan Hanson. *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 12-20.
- Bradbury, Malcolm. *The Modern British Novel*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1993.
- Brantlinger, Patrick and Richard Higgins. 'Waste and Value: Thorstein Veblen and H.G. Wells.' *States of Emergency: Essays on Culture and Politics*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013. 96-117.
- Brekhus, Wayne. *A Mundane Manifesto*. 2015. 25 June 2017. <<http://mundanebehavior.org/a-mundane-manifesto>>
- Brekhus, Wayne. 'A Sociology of the Unmarked: Redirecting Our Focus.' *Sociological Theory* 16.1 (March 1998): 34-51.
- Brooks, David. *The age of upheaval: Edwardian politics, 1899-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Bryce, James. *Hansard*. HC Deb. 15 August 1901. Series 4. Vol. 99, cols. 1022-1029.
- Burkhart, Charles. Introduction. 1971. *Dolores*. 1911. By Ivy Compton-Burnett. Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1971. v-xvii.
- Burkitt, Ian. 'The Time and Space of Everyday Life.' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 211-227.
- Burton, Richard. *Forces in Fiction and Other Essays*. Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1902.
- Butler, Samuel. *The Way of All Flesh*. 1903. London: Everyman's Library, 1933.
- Campbell-Bannerman, Henry. *Hansard*. HC Deb. Series 4. 25 January 1901. Vol. 89, cols. 23-26.
- Carey, John. *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992.
- Carle, Naomi, Samuel Shaw, and Sarah Shaw. 'Introduction: Venturing Beyond the Garden Party.' *Edwardian Culture: Beyond the Garden Party*. Ed. Naomi Carle, Samuel Shaw, and Sarah Shaw. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018. 1-14.
- Caserio, Robert L. 'Edwardians to Georgians.' *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature*. Ed. Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 83-99.
- Caudwell, Christopher. *Studies in a Dying Culture*. London: John Lane, 1938.
- Cavell, Stanley. 'The Fact of Television.' *Daedalus* 111.4 (Fall 1982): 75-96.
- Chesterton, G.K. *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare*. 1908. Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1924.
- Chesterton, G.K. *Tremendous Trifles*. London: Methuen & Co., 1909.
- Chialant, Maria Teresa. 'Dickensian Motifs in Wells's Novels: The Disease Metaphor in *Tono-Bungay*.' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July*

1986. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 97-107.
- Child, Harold Hannington. 'Fraternity.' *The Times Literary Supplement* 372 (25 February 1909): 71.
- Clark, Keith. *The Muse Colony: Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, and Friends at Dymock, 1914*. Bristol: Redcliffe, 1992.
- Clausson, Nils. 'H.G. Wells's Critique of Aestheticism in "Through a Window": The Picture and the Splintering Frame.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 49.4 (2006): 371-387.
- Cobley, Evelyn. *Modernism and the Culture of Efficiency: Ideology and Fiction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Cohen, Stanley and Laurie Taylor. *Escape Attempts: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Everyday Life*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Colebrook, Claire. 'The Politics and Potential of Everyday Life.' *New Literary History* 33 (2002): 687-706.
- Compton-Burnett, Ivy. *Dolores*. 1911. Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1971.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 1899. Ed. Owen Knowles and Robert Hampson. London: Penguin, 2007.
- Conrad, Joseph. 'John Galsworthy.' 1906. *Last Essays*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1926. 185-195.
- Conrad, Joseph. Preface. *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': A Tale of the Sea*. 1897. By Joseph Conrad. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1914. 11-16.
- Craig, Randall. 'Choses Vues: Arnold Bennett and Impressions.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 24.4 (1981): 196-205.
- Crossley, Robert. 'Wells's Common Readers.' 1990. *Critical Essays on H.G. Wells*. Ed. John Huntington. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co. 1991. 170-180.
- Cuddy-Keane, Melba. 'Un-defining Mrs Brown: modernism, movement and anti-manifestoes.' *Virginia Woolf and December 1910: Studies in Rhetoric and Context*. Ed. Makiko Minow-Pinkney. Grosmont: illuminate, 2014. 69-75.
- Davies, Christie. 'Making Fun of Work: Humour as Sociology in the Works of H.G. Wells.' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 82-96.
- Debord, Guy. 'Perspectives for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life.' 1961. Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Revised Edition. Ed. Ken Knabb. Berkley, California: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 90-99.
- Debord, Guy. 'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organisation and Action.' 1957. Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Revised Edition. Ed. Ken Knabb. Berkley, California: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 25-43
- Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. 1967. Trans. Black & Red. Detroit, Michigan: Black & Red, 1977.

- de Certeau, Michel. *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. 1980. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1984.
- de Certeau, Michel, Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol. *The Practice of Everyday Life, Volume 2: Living and Cooking*. 1994. Ed. Luce Giard. Trans. Timothy J. Tomasik. Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1998.
- Dessner, Lawrence Jay. 'H.G. Wells, *Mr Polly*, and the Uses of Art.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 16.2 (1973): 121-134.
- Di Battista, Maria. 'Realism and rebellion in Edwardian and Georgian fiction.' *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*. Ed. Robert L. Caserio. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 40-55.
- Draper, Michael. *H.G. Wells*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1987.
- Dryden, Linda. "'The Difference Between Us': Conrad, Wells, and the English Novel.' *Studies in the Novel* 45.2 (Summer 2013): 214-233.
- Dupré, Catherine. *John Galsworthy: A Biography*. London: Collins, 1976.
- Eagleton, Terry. *After Theory*. London: Allen Lane, 2003.
- Edwards, Sarah. 'Dawn of the New Age: Edwardian and Neo-Edwardian Summer.' *Edwardian Culture: Beyond the Garden Party*. Ed. Naomi Carle, Samuel Shaw, and Sarah Shaw. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018. 15-30.
- Elden, Stuart. *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*. London: Continuum, 2004.
- Eliot, T.S. 'Ulysses, Order, and Myth.' *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. London: Faber and Faber, 1975. 175-178.
- Ellmann, Richard. 'Foreword.' *Edwardians and Late Victorians*. Ed. Richard Ellmann. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. v-vii.
- Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. Revised edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Ellmann, Richard. 'Two Faces of Edward.' 1959. *Edwardians and Late Victorians*. Ed. Richard Ellmann. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. 188-210.
- Ervine, St John. 'Some Impressions of My Elders.' *The North American Review* 211.771 (February 1920): 225-237.
- Felski, Rita. *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture*. New York, New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Felski, Rita. 'Suspicious Minds.' *Poetics Today* 32.2 (Summer 2011): 215-234.
- Fernihough, Anne. *Freenwomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

- French, Patrick. 'A Different Life? Barthes, Foucault and everyday life.' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 290-305.
- Fluet, Lisa. 'Modernism and Disciplinary History: On H.G. Wells and T.S. Eliot.' *Twentieth Century Literature* 50.3 (Autumn 2004): 283-316.
- Foley, Michael. *Embracing the Ordinary: Lessons From the Champions of Everyday Life*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2012.
- Forster, E.M. *Howards End*. 1910. London: Penguin, 2012.
- Forster, E.M. *A Room With a View*. 1908. London: Penguin, 1995.
- Frazer, June M. 'Galsworthy's Narrative Technique in *The Man of Property*.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 19.1 (1976): 15-24.
- Fréchet, Alec. *John Galsworthy: A Reassessment*. 1979. Trans. Denis Mahaffey. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Freiberg, Aaron L. *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Expression of Relative Decline, 1895-1905*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. 1920. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1961.
- Freud, Sigmund. 'Parapraxes.' 1916. *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Trans. James Strachey. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973. 39-110.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. 1901. Trans. Alan Tyson. London: Pelican, 1975.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. 1963. London: Penguin, 2010.
- Fromm, Erich. *The Art of Loving*. 1957. London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1975.
- Fromm, Gloria G. 'Remythologizing Arnold Bennett.' *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 16.1 (Autumn 1982): 19-34.
- Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Galsworthy, John. 'About Censorship.' 1911. *The Inn of Tranquillity: Studies and Essays*. London: William Heinemann, 1912. 236-253.
- Galsworthy, John. *The Country House*. 1907. London: William Heinemann, 1927.
- Galsworthy, John. *Fraternity*. 1909. London: William Heinemann, 1927.
- Galsworthy, John. 'In Chancery.' 1921. *The Forsyte Saga*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994: 291-520.
- Galsworthy, John. *The Island Pharisees*. 1904. London: Capuchin Classics, 2010.
- Galsworthy, John. 'Justice: A Tragedy.' *The Plays of John Galsworthy*. London: Duckworth, 1929. 217-274.

- Galsworthy, John. 'The Man of Property.' *The Forsyte Saga*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994: 3-247.
- Galsworthy, John. *The Patrician*. 1911. London: William Heinemann, 1927.
- Galsworthy, John. 'The Silver Box.' *The Plays of John Galsworthy*. London: Duckworth, 1929. 1-48.
- Galsworthy, John. 'Strife: A Drama.' *The Plays of John Galsworthy*. London: Duckworth, 1929. 99-156.
- Galsworthy, John. 'To Let.' *The Forsyte Saga*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994: 521-724.
- Galsworthy, John. 'Vague Thoughts on Art.' 1911. *The Inn of Tranquillity: Studies and Essays*. London: William Heinemann, 1912. 254-278.
- Gardiner, Michael E. *Critiques of Everyday Life*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Gardiner, Michael E. 'Everyday Utopianism: Lefebvre and his critics.' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 228-254.
- Gardner, Viv. 'Introduction.' *New Woman Plays*. Ed. Linda Fitzsimmons and Viv Gardner. London: Methuen Drama, 1991. vii-xiv.
- Gardner, Anthony. Foreword. *The Island Pharisees*. 1904. By John Galsworthy. London: Capuchin Classics, 2010. 7-10.
- Gascoyne-Cecil, Robert, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Salisbury. *Hansard*. HL Deb. 25 January 1901. Series 4. Vol. 89, cols. 7-11.
- George, David Lloyd. *Hansard*. HC Deb. 15 August 1901. Series 4. Vol. 99, cols. 1035-1036.
- Gernsheim, Helmut and Alison Gernsheim. *The History of Photography: from the camera obscura to the beginning of the modern era*. 1955. London: Thames & Hudson, 1969.
- Gibson, W.W. 'Daily Bread.' 1910. *Collected Poems: 1905-1925*. London: Macmillan, 1926. 59-150.
- Gillespie, Diane. F. and Doryjane Birrer. Introduction. *Diana of Dobson's*. By Cicely Hamilton. Ormskirk: Broadview, 2003. 13-60.
- Gindin, James. *John Galsworthy's Life and Art: An Alien's Fortress*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1987.
- Glazzard, Andrew. 'Bricks, Mortar and Moonshine: Building Houses in the Edwardian Novel.' *Edwardian Culture: Beyond the Garden Party*. Ed. Naomi Carle, Samuel Shaw, and Sarah Shaw. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018. 62-78.
- Glazzard, Andrew. 'Getting Something Out of Money: Bennett's Economics.' *Arnold Bennett Companion: Volume II*. Ed. John Shapcott. Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 2017. 89-104.
- Glyn, Elinor. *Romantic Adventure: Being the Autobiography of Elinor Glyn*. New York, New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1937.
- Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. 1956. London: Pelican, 1971.

- Goonewardena, Kanishka. 'Marxism and Everyday Life: On Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, and some others.' *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. Ed. Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom and Christian Schmid. London: Routledge, 2008. 117-133.
- Gosse, Edmund. *Father and Son*. 1907. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1984.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. *The Madras House*. London: Methuen, 1977.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. 'The Voysey Inheritance.' *The Collected Plays*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1967. 89-179.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. 'Waste.' *Three Plays by Granville Barker*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1913. 211-342.
- Green, T.H. *Prolegomena to Ethics*. Ed. A.C. Bradley. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1883.
- Grossmith, George, and Weedon Grossmith. *The Diary of a Nobody*. 1892. London: Penguin, 1975.
- Guattari, Félix and Toni Negri. *Communists Like Us: New Spaces of Liberty, New Alliances of Alliance*. 1985. Trans. Michael Ryan. New York, New York: Semiotext(e), 1990.
- Hamilton, Cicely. *Diana of Dobson's: A Romantic Comedy in Four Acts*. Ed. Diane F. Gillespie & Doryjane Birrer. Ormskirk: Broadview, 2003.
- Hammerton, James A. 'Pooterism or Partnership? Marriage and Masculine Identity in the Lower Middle Class, 1870-1920.' *Journal of British Studies* 38.3 (July 1999): 291-321.
- Hammond, J.R. *H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988.
- Hammond, J.R. Introduction. 1994. *Tono-Bungay* 1909. By H.G. Wells. London: Everyman, 1994. xxix-xxxix.
- Hammond, J.R. 'Wells and the Discussion Novel.' *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Ed. Steven McLean. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 86-98.
- Hankin, St John. 'The Last of the De Mullins.' *The New Woman and Other Emancipated Woman Plays*. Ed. Jean Chothia. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. 211-263.
- Hapgood, Lynne. 'Transforming the Victorian.' Ed. Lynne Hapgood and Nancy L. Paxton. *Outside Modernism: In Pursuit of the English Novel, 1900-30*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000. 22-39.
- Hapgood, Lynne and Nancy L. Paxton. *Outside Modernism: In Pursuit of the English Novel, 1900-30*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000.
- Harcourt, Sir William. *Hansard*. HC Deb. 15 August 1901. Series 4. Vol. 99, cols. 978-983.
- Hardy, Sylvia. 'H.G. Wells and William James: A Pragmatic Approach.' *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Ed. Steven McLean. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 130-146.
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994. 134.
- Hargreaves, Tracy. 'Nostalgic Retrieval: Sexual Politics, Cultural Aesthetics and Literary Form in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*.' *English* 56 (Summer 2007): 127-145.

- Harootunian, Harry. *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Harootunian, Harry. 'Shadowing History: National narratives and the persistence of the everyday.' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 181-200.
- Harvey, Geoffrey. 'Reading *The Forsyte Saga*.' *The Yearbook of English Studies* 26 (1996): 127-134.
- Hattersley, Roy. *The Edwardians*. London: Abacus, 2004.
- Heller, Agnes. *Everyday Life*. 1970. Trans. G.L. Campbell. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.
- Helm, W.H. 'Review of *The Edwardians*.' *The English Review* (July 1930): 152.
- Henderson, Archibald. 'George Bernard Shaw.' *The North American Review* 185.616 (7 June 1907): 293-305.
- Henthorne, Tom. "'Stench!'" Arnold Bennett's End and the Beginning of *Finnegans Wake*.' *Twentieth Century Literature* 54.1 (Spring 2008): 31-46.
- Hepburn, James, ed. *Arnold Bennett: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Hewitt, Douglas. *English Fiction of the Early Modern Period: 1890-1940*. London: Longman, 1988.
- Higdon, David Leon. 'John Galsworthy's *The Man of Property*: "now in the natural course of things."' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 21.3 (1978): 149-157.
- Higgins, Richard. 'Feeling like a Clerk in H.G. Wells.' *Victorian Studies* 50.3 (Spring 2008): 457-475.
- Highmore, Ben. *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Highmore, Ben. 'Homework: Routine, social aesthetics and the ambiguity of everyday life.' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 306-327.
- Hill, Clive E. 'The Evolution of the Masculine Middlebrow: Gissing, Bennett and Priestley.' *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950: What Mr Miniver Read*. Ed. Kate Macdonald. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 38-55.
- Hobhouse, Emily. *Report of a visit to the camps of women and children in the Cape and Orange River colonies*. London: Friars, 1901.
- Hobhouse, L.T. *Liberalism*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1911.
- Holloway, David. *John Galsworthy*. London: Morgan-Grampian Books, 1968.
- Housman, A.E. *The Collected Poems of A.E. Housman*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1939.
- Howells, W.D. 'Mr Pett Ridge's Clever Books.' *The North American Review* 191.650 (1910): 64-74.
- Hueffer, Ford Madox. 'Editorial: The Functions of the Arts in the Republic.' *The English Review* 1 (December 1908): 157-160.

- Hueffer, Ford Madox. Preface. 1914. *Collected Poems*. By Ford Madox Hueffer. London: Max Goschen, 1914. 9-29.
- Hueffer, Ford Madox. 'The Proconsuls.' *Literary Digest* 34 (18 May 1907): 808.
- Hughes, David Y. 'The Mood of *A Modern Utopia*.' 1977. *Critical Essays on H.G. Wells*. Ed. John Huntington. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co. 1991. 67-76.
- Hulme, T.E. 'Cinders.' *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*. Ed. Herbert Read. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1924. 215-245.
- Hulme, T.E. 'The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds.' *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*. Ed. Herbert Read. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1924. 171-214.
- Hunter, Jefferson. *Edwardian Fiction*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1982.
- Huntington, John. 'H.G. Wells: Problems of an Amorous Utopian.' 1987. *Critical Essays on H.G. Wells*. Ed. John Huntington. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co. 1991. 136-147.
- Huntington, John. 'Introduction.' 1991. *Critical Essays on H.G. Wells*. Ed. John Huntington. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co. 1991. 1-14.
- Huxley, T.H. 'Evolution and Ethics.' 1893. *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1895. 46-116.
- Hynes, Samuel, *Edwardian Occasions: Essays on English Writing in the Early Twentieth Century*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Hynes, Samuel. *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Isherwood, Christopher. 'H.G. Wells.' *Exhumations: Stories, Articles, Verses*. London: Methuen & Co., 1966. 38-46.
- James, Simon J. 'Afterword.' *Edwardian Culture: Beyond the Garden Party*. Ed. Naomi Carle, Samuel Shaw, and Sarah Shaw. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018. 261-263.
- James, Simon J. 'Fin-de-Cycle: Romance and the Real in *The Wheels of Chance*.' *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Ed. Steven McLean. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 34-48.
- James, Simon J. *Maps of Utopia: H.G. Wells, Modernity and the End of Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Jameson, Fredric. 'The Politics of Utopia.' *New Left Review* 25 (January-February 2004): 36-54.
- Johnson, Jeri. Introduction. *Ulysses*. 1922. By James Joyce. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. ix-xxxvii.
- Jones, Henry Arthur. *Mrs. Dane's Defence: A Play In Four Acts*. London: Samuel French, 1908.
- Jones, Jason B. 'Revisiting "Mr Bennett": Pleasure, Aversion and the Social in *The Old Wives' Tale* and *Riceyman Steps*.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 46.1 (2003): 29-52.
- Joyce, James. *Letters of James Joyce*. Ed. Stuart Gilbert. London: Faber and Faber, 1957.

- Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. 1916. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Joyce, James. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Ed. Richard Ellmann. London: Faber and Faber, 1975.
- Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. 1922. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Kagarlitsky, Julius. 'Wells the "Culturologist"?' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 252-253.
- Kaplan, Alice and Kristin Ross. 'Introduction.' *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 1-4.
- Kaplan, Carola M. and Anne B. Simpson. 'Edwardians and Modernists: Literary Evaluation and the Problem of History.' *Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature*. Ed. Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1996. vii-xxi.
- Keating, Peter. *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1989.
- Kemp, Sarah, Charlotte Mitchell and David Trotter. *Edwardian Fiction: An Oxford Companion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Kermode, Frank. 'The English Novel, circa 1907.' 1971. *Essay on Fiction: 1971-82*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983. 33-51.
- Kiberd, Declan. *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Living*. London: Faber and Faber, 2009.
- Kipfer, Stefan. 'How Lefebvre Urbanized Gramsci: Hegemony, everyday life, and difference.' *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. Ed. Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom & Christian Schmid. London: Routledge, 2008. 193-211.
- Kipling, Rudyard. 'Recessional.' *The Times* 17 July 1897: 13.
- Kipling, Rudyard. 'The White Man's Burden' *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. 8<sup>th</sup> Ed. Vol. 2. New York, New York: Norton, 2006. 1821-1822.
- Koenigsberger, Kurt. 'Elephants in the Labyrinth of Empire: Modernism and the Menagerie in *The Old Wives' Tale*.' *Twentieth Century Literature* 49.2 (Summer 2003): 131-163.
- Kosík, Karel. *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World*. 1963. Trans. Karel Kovanda and James Schmidt. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. 'Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces.' 1926. Trans. Thomas Y. Levin. *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Ed. Thomas Y. Levin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995. 323-328.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. 'Georg Simmel.' 1920-21. Trans. Thomas Y. Levin. *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Ed. Thomas Y. Levin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995. 225-258.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. 'The Little Shopgirls Go to the Movies.' 1927. Trans. Thomas Y. Levin. *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Ed. Thomas Y. Levin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995. 291-304.

- Kracauer, Siegfried. *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*. 1930. Trans. Quintin Hoare. London: Verso, 1998.
- Kristeva, Julia. 'Women's Time.' 1979. Trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake. *Signs* 7.1 (Autumn 1981): 13-15.
- Kumar, Krishan. 'Wells and "the So-Called Science of Sociology"?' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 192-217.
- Langbauer, Laurie. 'Cultural Studies and the Politics of the Everyday.' *diacritics* 22.1 (Spring 1991): 47-65.
- Langbauer, Laurie. *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Lawrence, D.H. 'John Galsworthy.' 1928. *Selected Essays*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950. 217-230.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume I: Introduction*. 1947. Trans. John Moore. London: Verso, 2008.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume II: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*. 1961. Trans. John Moore. London: Verso, 2002.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Dialectical Materialism*. 1938. Trans. John Sturrock. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 'The Everyday and Everydayness.' Trans. Christine Levich. *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 7-11.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Everyday Life in the Modern World*. 1968. Trans. Sacha Rabinovitch. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. 1992. Trans. Stuart Elden & Gerald Moore. London: Continuum, 2004.
- Lehan, Richard. *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998.
- Light, Alison. "'Don't Dilly-Dally on the Way!': Politics and Pleasure in "The Edwardian Era"?' *History Workshop* 26 (Winter 1988): 158-162.
- Lincoln Andrew. 'The Sociology of Bennett's *Clayhanger*.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 27.3 (1984): 188-200.
- Loing, Bernard. 'Love and Mr Lewisham: Foundations and Sources for a First Social Novel.' *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Ed. Steven McLean. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 76-85.
- Lucas, John. *Arnold Bennett: a study of his fiction*. London: Methuen & Co., 1974.
- Lukács, Georg. 'The Ideology of Modernism.' 1962. Trans. John Mander and Necke Mander. *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory, 1900-2000*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 395-412.

- Lukács, Georg. 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat.' 1923. Trans. Rodney Livingstone. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1971. 83-222.
- Macdonald, Kate. 'Introduction: Identifying the Middlebrow, the Masculine and Mr Miniver.' *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950: What Mr Miniver Read*. Ed. Kate Macdonald. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 1-23.
- Mackenzie, Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie. *The Time Traveller: The Life of H.G. Wells*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973.
- Maffesoli, Michel. 'Everyday Tragedy and Creation.' Trans. Karen Isabel Ocaña. *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 201-210.
- Marrot, H.V. *The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy*. London: William Heinemann, 1935.
- Masterman, C.F.G. *The Condition of England*. London: Methuen & Co, 1909.
- Masterman, C.F.G. *In Peril of Change: Essays Written in Time of Tranquillity*. New York, New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1905.
- May, Elsie G. 'Contemporary Drama as a Reflection of Modern Life.' *The Sewanee Review* 19.2 (April 1911): 161-171.
- Mayr, Ernst. 'When is Historiography Whiggish?' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51.2 (April-June 1990): 301-309.
- McDonald, Jan. *The 'New Drama' 1900-1914: Harley Granville Barker, John Galsworthy, St John Hankin, John Masefield*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1986.
- McDonald, Sarah. 'The hidden camera.' *Black & White* 10 (June 2002): 94-95.
- Merrifield, Andy. *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Metcalfe, Andrew, and Ann Game. 'Everyday Presences.' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 350-362.
- Miles (General Sir Frederick Maurice). 'Where to Get Men.' *The Contemporary Review* 83 (January 1902): 78-86.
- Millard, Kenneth. *Edwardian Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Milton, John. 'Paradise Lost.' *The Complete English Poems*. Ed. Gordon Campbell. London: Everyman's Library, 1990. 143-441.
- Minow-Pinkney, Makiko. 'Appendix.' *Virginia Woolf and December 1910: Studies in Rhetoric and Context*. Ed. Makiko Minow-Pinkney. Grosmont: illuminate, 2014. 190-191.
- Minow-Pinkney, Makiko. 'Reflections on Context.' *Virginia Woolf and December 1910: Studies in Rhetoric and Context*. Ed. Makiko Minow-Pinkney. Grosmont: illuminate, 2014. 1-44.
- Müller-Bach, Inka. Introduction. *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*. 1930. By Siegfried Kracauer. Trans. Quintin Hoare. London: Verso, 1998. 1-22.

- Murphy, Cliona. 'H.G. Wells: Educationalist, Utopian, and Feminist?' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 218-225.
- Murphy, Katharine. 'Intertexts in the City: Edwardian London in Pío Baroja's *Le ciudad de la niebla* and Six English Novels.' *The Modern Language Review* 97.1 (January 2002): 149-163.
- Murray, Brian. *H.G. Wells*. New York, New York: Continuum, 1990.
- Nash, John. 'Arnold Bennett and Home Management: Domestic Efficiency.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 59.2 (2016): 210-233.
- Nead, Lynda. 'Animating the Everyday: London on Camera circa 1900.' *Journal of British Studies* 43.1 (January 2004): 65-90.
- Nellis, Mike. 'John Galsworthy's *Justice*.' *The British Journal of Criminology* 36.1 (Winter 1996): 61-84.
- Newbolt, Henry. *Poems: New and Old*. London: John Murray, 1913.
- Newell, Kenneth B. *Structure in Four Novels by H.G. Wells*. The Hague: Mouton, 1968.
- Olson, Liesl. *Modernism and the Ordinary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Orage, R.A. 'Notes of the Week.' *The New Age* 7.2 (12 May 1910): 25-27.
- Orwell, George. 'Such, Such Were the Joys.' *Partisan Review* 19.5 (September-October 1952): 505-545.
- Orwell, George. 'Wells, Hitler and the World State.' 1941. *Critical Essays*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1946. 83-88.
- Page, Norman. 'Ejected Gentleman.' *London Review of Books* 9.9 (7 May 1987): 15-16.
- Parker, Oscar. 'The London Stage.' *The English Illustrated Magazine* 46 (January 1907): 398-404.
- Parker, Oscar. 'The London Stage.' *The English Illustrated Magazine* 86 (May 1910): 165-171.
- Parrinder, Patrick, ed. *H.G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Parrinder, Patrick. 'Island of Fools: *Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* and the Twentieth-Century Human Predicament.' *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Ed. Steven McLean. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 99-111.
- Parrinder, Patrick. '*Tono-Bungay* and *Mr Polly*: The Individual and Social Change.' 1970. *Critical Essays on H.G. Wells*. Ed. John Huntington. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co. 1991. 36-52.
- Parrinder, Patrick and Robert M. Philmus, eds. *H.G. Wells's Literary Criticism*. Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980.
- Partington, John S. *Building Cosmopolis: The Political Thought of H.G. Wells*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2003.
- Patterson, Alice C. 'Cyril Povey: Emblem of Social Change.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 19.4 (1976): 248-264.

- Patterson, Anthony. 'Democratising Art: Realism in Arnold Bennett's Short Stories.' *Arnold Bennett Companion: Volume II*. Ed. John Shapcott. Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 2017. 157-172.
- Paz, Octavio. *The Double Flame: Love and Eroticism*. 1993. Trans. Helen Lane. New York, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995.
- Perec, Georges. "'Approaches to What?'" from *L'Infra-ordinaire*. 1989. Trans. John Sturrock. *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. Ed. John Sturrock. London: Penguin, 1999. 207-211.
- Perloff, Marjorie. 'Modernist Studies.' *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn. New York, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1992. 154-178.
- Pinero, Arthur Wing. *His House in Order: A Comedy*. London: Heinemann, 1906.
- Pollentier, Caroline. "'Everybody's Essayist': On Middles and Middlebrows." *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950: What Mr Miniver Read*. Ed. Kate Macdonald. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 119-134.
- Pound, Ezra. 'Wyndham Lewis.' 1920. *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*. Ed. T.S. Eliot. London: Faber & Faber, 1954. 423-430.
- Power, Arthur. *Conversations with James Joyce*. 1974. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1999.
- Price, Derrick. 'Photographing the Poor and the Working Class.' *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*. 22/23 (Autumn 1983): 20-25.
- Priestley, J.B. *The Edwardians*. London: Sphere, 1972.
- Rancière, Jacques. Afterword. By Jacques Rancière. *The Philosopher and His Poor*. Trans. John Durr, Corinne Oster and Andrew Parker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. 219-227.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. 1995. Trans. Julie Rose. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Rancière, Jacques. *The Philosopher and His Poor*. 1983. Trans. John Durr, Corinne Oster and Andrew Parker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Rancière, Jacques. *The Politics of Aesthetics*. 2000. Trans. Gabriel Rockhill. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Rancière, Jacques. 'Ten Theses on Politics.' Trans. David Panagia and Rachel Bowlby. *Theory & Event* 5.3 (2001).
- Randall, Bryony. *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Redman, Nicholas. 'Arnold Bennett, Brighton and Sussex.' *Arnold Bennett Companion: Volume II*. Ed. John Shapcott. Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 2017. 123-139.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. Trans. Denis Savage. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Ridge, W. Pett *Nine to Six-Thirty*. London: Methuen & Co., 1910.

- Ridge, W. Pett. *Outside the Radius: Stories of a London Suburb*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899.
- Ridge, W. Pett. *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908.
- Roberts, John. *Philosophizing the Everyday: Revolutionary Praxis and the Fate of Cultural Theory*. London: Pluto Press, 2006.
- Roby, Kinley E. 'Arnold Bennett's Social Conscience.' *Modern Fiction Studies* 17.4 (Winter 1971): 513-524.
- Ronneberger, Klaus. 'Henri Lefebvre and Urban Everyday Life: In search of the possible.' Trans. Stefan Kipfer & Neil Brenner. *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. Ed. Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom & Christian Schmid. London: Routledge, 2008. 134-146.
- Rose, Jonathan. *The Edwardian Temperament: 1895-1919*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1986.
- Runcini, Romolo. 'H.G. Wells and Futurity as the Only Creative Space in a Programmed Society.' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 153-161.
- Russell, Bertrand. *Autobiography*. 1975. New York, New York: Routledge Classics, 2010.
- Ryan, Derek. *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
- Sackville-West, Vita. *The Edwardians*. 1930. London: Penguin, 1937.
- Sackville-West, Vita and Virginia Woolf. *The letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Louise DeSalvo and Mitchell A. Leaska. London: Hutchinson, 1984.
- Saloman, Randi. "'But luck was in everything": The Architecture of Arnold Bennett's *Claybanger* Novels.' *Arnold Bennett Companion: Volume II*. Ed. John Shapcott. Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 2017. 189-208.
- Sandywell, Barry. 'The Myth of Everyday Life: Toward a heterology of the ordinary' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 160-180.
- Sayeau, Michael. *Against the Event: The Everyday and the Evolution of Modernist Narrative*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Scheick, William J. 'Compassion and Fictional Structure: The Example of Gissing and Bennett.' *Studies in the Novel* 15.4 (Winter 1983): 293-313.
- Schmidt, Michael. *The Novel: A Biography*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014.
- Scott, Bonnie Kime. 'Uncle Wells on Women: A Revisionary Reading of the Social Romances.' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 108-120.
- Scott-James, R.A. *Modernism and Romance*. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1908.

- Seigworth, Gregory J. and Michael E. Gardiner. 'Rethinking Everyday Life: And then nothing turns itself inside out.' *Cultural Studies* 18.2/3 (March/May 2004): 139-159.
- Sinclair, May. *The Divine Fire*. New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1904.
- Shapcott, John. 'Aesthetics for Everyman: Arnold Bennett's *Evening Standard* Columns.' *Arnold Bennett Companion: Volume II*. Ed. John Shapcott. Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 2017. 261-276.
- Sheringham, Michael. 'Attending to the Everyday: Blanchot, Lefebvre, Certeau, Perec.' *French Studies* 54.2 (2000): 187-199.
- Sheringham, Michael. *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Shotter, John. *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life: Social Constructionism, Rhetoric and Knowing of the Third Kind*. Buckingham: Open University Press: 1993.
- Simmel, Georg. 'The Adventure.' 1910. Trans. David Kettler. *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. Ed. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone. London: SAGE Publications, 1997. 221-232.
- Simmel, Georg. 'The Alpine Journey.' 1895. Trans. Sam Whimster. *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. Ed. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone. London: SAGE Publications, 1997. 219-221.
- Simmel, Georg. 'The Metropolis and Mental Life.' 1903. Trans. Edward A Shils. *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*. Ed. Donald N. Levine. London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971. 324-339.
- Simmel, Georg. 'Sociology of the Senses.' 1907. Trans. Mark Ritter and David Frisby. *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. Ed. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone. London: SAGE Publications, 1997. 109-120.
- Simmers, George. "'An Out and Out Radical": Arnold Bennett and Politics.' *Arnold Bennett Companion: Volume II*. Ed. John Shapcott. Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 2017. 247-260.
- Smith, Dorothy E. *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987.
- Smith, Dorothy E. 'A Peculiar Eclipsing: Women's Exclusion from Man's Culture.' *Women's Studies International Quarterly* 1.4 (1978): 281-295.
- Smith, Dorothy E. 'On Sociological Description: A Method from Marx.' *Human Studies* 4.4 (October-December 1981): 313-337.
- Smith, Dorothy E. 'Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology.' *Sociological Inquiry* 44.1 (January 1974): 7-13.
- Sorel, Georges. *Reflections on Violence*. 1908. Trans. T.E. Hulme. New York, New York: W.B. Heusch, 1914.
- Sowerby, Githa. *Rutherford and Son*. 1912. London: Methuen, 1994.
- Spencer, Herbert. *First Principles*. 1860. London: Williams & Norgate, 1904.
- Stansky, Peter. 'On or about December 1910 revisited.' *Virginia Woolf and December 1910: Studies in Rhetoric and Context*. Ed. Makiko Minow-Pinkney. Grosmont: illuminate, 2014. 174-180.

- Steffen-Fluhr, Nancy. 'Women and H.G. Wells.' 1985. *Critical Essays on H.G. Wells*. Ed. John Huntington. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co. 1991. 148-169.
- Stevens, Harold Ray. 'Galsworthy's *Fraternity*: The Closed Door and the Paralyzed Society.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 19.4 (1976): 283-298.
- Stevenson, Randall. *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*. Revised edition. London: Prentice Hall, 1998.
- Sutherland, John. Introduction. *The History of Mr Polly*. 1910. By H.G. Wells. London: Penguin, 2005. xiii-xxix.
- Swinnerton, Frank. *The Georgian Literary Scene: A Panorama*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1935.
- Taylor, A.J.P. 'The Man Who Tried to Work Miracles.' 1966. *Critical Essays on H.G. Wells*. Ed. John Huntington. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co. 1991. 127-135.
- Thale, Jerome. 'The Making of the Edwardian Age.' *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 7.2 (Winter 1974): 25-43.
- Thomas, Edward. *Poems and Last Poems*. Ed. Edna Longley. London: Collins, 1973.
- Thompson, Paul. *The Edwardians: The remaking of British society*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Tomkinson, Fiona. 'Escaping from Madame Foucault's Chamber: The politics and poetics of space in Arnold Bennett.' *Arnold Bennett Companion: Volume II*. Ed. John Shapcott. Leek: Churnet Valley Books, 2017. 209-228.
- Tonson, Jacob (Arnold Bennett). 'Books and Persons.' *The New Age* 8.6 (8 December 1910): 135-136.
- Tonson, Jacob (Arnold Bennett). 'Books and Persons (An Occasional Causerie).' *The New Age* 4.15 (4 February 1909): 304-306.
- Tonson, Jacob (Arnold Bennett). 'Books and Persons (An Occasional Causerie).' *The New Age* 4.16 (11 February 1909): 325-326.
- Tonson, Jacob (Arnold Bennett). 'Books and Persons (An Occasional Causerie).' *The New Age* 4.19 (4 March 1909): 384-385.
- Tonson, Jacob (Arnold Bennett). 'Books and Persons (An Occasional Causerie).' *The New Age* 4.20 (11 March 1909): 404-406.
- Toye, Richard. 'H.G. Wells and Winston Churchill: A Reassessment.' *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Ed. Steven McLean. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 147-161.
- Tressell, Robert. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. 1914/1955. London: Penguin, 2004.
- Trodd, Anthea. *A Reader's Guide to Edwardian Literature*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.
- Trotsky, Leon. 'Against Bureaucracy, Progressive and Unprogressive.' 1923. Trans. Marilyn Vogt. *Problems of Everyday Life and Other Writings on Culture and Science*. New York, New York: Monad Press, 1973. 57-65.

- Trotsky, Leon. 'Habit and Custom.' 1923. Trans. Z. Vergerova. *Problems of Everyday Life and Other Writings on Culture and Science*. New York, New York: Monad Press, 1973. 25-30.
- Trotter, David. *The English Novel in History 1895-1920*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Vaneigem, Raoul. 'Aiming for Practical Truth.' 1967. Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Revised Edition. Ed. Ken Knabb. Berkley, California: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 277-281.
- Vaneigem, Raoul. 'Basic Banalities (Part 1)' 1962. Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Revised Edition. Ed. Ken Knabb. Berkley, California: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 117-130.
- Vaneigem, Raoul. 'Basic Banalities (Part 2)' 1963. Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Revised Edition. Ed. Ken Knabb. Berkley, California: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 154-173.
- Van Heyningen, Elizabeth. 'A tool for modernisation? The Boer concentration camps of the South African War, 1900–1902.' *South African Journal of Science* 106 (May-June 2010): 1-10.
- Vaninskaya, Anna. 'The Political Middlebrow from Chesterton to Orwell.' *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950: What Mr Miniver Read*. Ed. Kate Macdonald. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 162-176.
- Virno, Paolo. *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. 2004. Trans. Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007.
- Vogeler, Martha S. 'Wells and Positivism.' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 181-191.
- Wagar, W. Warren. 'Science and the World State: Education as Utopia in the Prophetic Vision of H.G. Wells.' *H.G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H.G. Wells Symposium London, July 1986*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe. London: Associated University Press, 1990. 40-53.
- Wain, John. 'The Quality of Arnold Bennett.' 1953. *Preliminary Essays*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1957. 121-156.
- Wark, McKenzie. *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*. London: Verso, 2011.
- Watson, William. *Ode on the Day of the Coronation of King Edward VII*. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1902.
- Welford, Walter D. *The Hand Camera and How to Use It*. London: Iliffe and Son, 1892.
- Wells, H.G. *Ann Veronica*. 1909. London: Penguin, 1968.
- Wells, H.G. *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1901.
- Wells, H.G. 'The Country of the Blind.' 1904. *The Country of the Blind and Other Stories*. London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1911. 536-568.

- Wells, H.G. *The Discovery of the Future*. 1902. New York, New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1913.
- Wells, H.G. *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866)*. Vol. 1. London: Victor Gollancz and The Cressent Press, 1934. 2 vols.
- Wells, H.G. *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866)*. Vol. 2. London: Victor Gollancz and The Cressent Press, 1934. 2 vols.
- Wells, H.G. *First and Last Things: A Confession of Faith and Rule of a Life*. 1908. Revised edition. London: Cassell and Company, 1917.
- Wells, H.G. 'The History of Mr Polly.' 1910. *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul and The History of Mr Polly*. Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2017. 307-479.
- Wells, H.G. 'Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul'. 1905. *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul and The History of Mr Polly*. Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2017. 25-305.
- Wells, H.G. *Love and Mrs Lewisham*. 1900. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1946.
- Wells, H.G. *Mankind in the Making*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1903.
- Wells, H.G. *A Modern Utopia*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1905.
- Wells, H.G. *New Worlds for Old*. London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1908.
- Wells, H.G. 'Rediscovery of the Unique.' *Fortnightly Review* 50 (July 1891): 106-111.
- Wells, H.G. 'Scepticism of the Instrument.' 1903. *A Modern Utopia*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1905. 358-378.
- Wells, H.G. *Tono-Bungay*. 1909. London: Everyman, 1994.
- Wells, H.G. 'To the Editor of *The Freewoman*: The Policy of *The Freewoman*.' *The Freewoman* 42.2 (5 September 1912): 312.
- Wells, H.G. *The Wheels of Chance*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1896.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *An Introduction to Mathematics*. 1911. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *A Treatise on Universal Algebra: With Applications*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898.
- Whittington-Egan, Richard. 'The Edwardian Literary Afternoon: Part One.' *The Contemporary Review* 276.1611 (1 April 2000): 201-206.
- Whittington-Egan, Richard. 'The Edwardian Literary Afternoon: Part Two: Now Came Still Evening On.' *The Contemporary Review* 276.1612 (1 May 2000): 244-249.
- Wild, Jonathan. *Literature of the 1900s: The Great Edwardian Emporium*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017.
- Wild, Jonathan. Introduction. *The Story of a Simple Soul and The History of Mr Polly*. By H.G. Wells. Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2017. 10-24.

- Wild, Jonathan. *The Rise of the office Clerk in Literary Culture, 1880-1939*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Wild, Jonathan. “‘Watching the Papers Daily in Fear and Trembling’: The Boer War and the Invention of Masculine Middlebrow Literary Culture.’ *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950: What Mr Miniver Read*. Ed. Kate Macdonald. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 56-72.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. St Albans: Paladin, 1975.
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture & Society: Coleridge to Orwell*. 1958. London: The Hogarth Press, 1983.
- Williams, Raymond. ‘Culture is Ordinary.’ 1958. *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*. London: Verso, 1989. 3-18.
- Wood, James. ‘Cramming for Success.’ *London Review of Books* 39.12 (15 June 2017): 5-8.
- Woolf, Virginia. ‘The Decay of Essay-Writing.’ 1905. *Selected Essays*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 3-5.
- Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume 2, 1920-1924*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie. London: Hogarth, 1978. 5 vols.
- Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume 4, 1931-1935*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie. London: Hogarth, 1982. 5 vols.
- Woolf, Virginia. ‘The Leaning Tower.’ 1940. *The Moment and Other Essays*. Ed. Leonard Woolf. London: The Hogarth Press, 1947. 105-125.
- Woolf, Virginia. *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 2: The Question of Things Happening, 1912-1922*. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann Banks. London: Hogarth, 1976. 6 vols.
- Woolf, Virginia. *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 3: A Change of Perspective, 1923-192*. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann Banks. London: Hogarth, 1977. 6 vols.
- Woolf, Virginia. *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume 4: A Reflection on the Other Person, 1929-1931*. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann Banks. London: Hogarth, 1978. 6 vols.
- Woolf, Virginia. ‘Modern Fiction.’ *Selected Essays*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 6-12.
- Woolf, Virginia. ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown.’ 1924. *Collected Essays*. Ed. Leonard Woolf. Vol. 1. London: Hogarth, 1966. 319-337. 4 vols. 1966.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs Dalloway*. 1925. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2003.
- Woolf, Virginia. ‘On Re-reading Novels.’ *The Moment and Other Essays*. Ed. Leonard Woolf. London: The Hogarth Press, 1947. 126-134.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One’s Own*. 1928. Penguin: London, 2000.
- Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. 1927. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2002.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Writer’s Diary: Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Leonard Woolf. London: The Hogarth Press, 1972.

Wright, Walter F. *Arnold Bennett: Romantic Realist*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1971.

Wyatt, David. 'The Forsyte Saga.' *The Hopkins Review* 4.3 (Summer 2011): 401-415.

Young, Filson. 'The Tyranny of the Eighteen-Nineties.' *The Saturday Review* 116.3028 (8 November 1913): 584-585.