

Identity and Empire in British Future-War Fiction, 1871-1914

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1. Introduction: The British Future-War Tale and Empire

The Empire crumbled when Britain was invaded by the recently established German Empire in the 1870s. The British quickly found out that they were wholly unprepared for the resolute and swift German attack. Great Britain was dismantled and its colonial possessions seized by the Germans, leaving behind a traumatised and weakened British population. For Britain, the start of the era of imperial conflict between the European powers had ended its global hegemony.

This is the situation that the British officer George Chesney envisioned in his 1871 short story *The Battle of Dorking*, a foundational narrative in the subsequently emerging and thriving genre of late-Victorian and Edwardian future-war fiction. Such texts were deeply involved with questions of national defence, always questioning British military capabilities within the new and ever-changing landscape of rival powers emerging and/or consolidating all over the world – France, Germany, Russia, and even the USA, China, and Japan. Indeed, Chesney seems to have hit a sweet spot, as it were, of contemporary anxieties, giving a voice to fears within British society concerning a future in which British hegemony suddenly cannot be taken for granted any more.

Naturally, therefore, empire stands at the centre of future-war narrative discourse of the period. The much-discussed dichotomy of imperial centre and periphery is strongly invoked in the genre, for narratives of war-to-come are fundamentally uneasy about this dipole: The depicted invasions, wars, and attempts on British sovereignty hint at a possible weakness of the British metropolis – so much so that Britain is either in danger of becoming a peripheral space to another power or of being overtaken by its own imperial margins. In this, the tale of future war is paradoxical: While the decades between 1871 and 1914 represent the height of British imperial power (as well as popular imperialism), with the British periphery being “totally dominated” and “so unequal in power” to the metropolis according to Edward Said (6), metropolitan British discourse is nevertheless preoccupied with a nervous discourse about the apparent weakness of the imperial centre. At its core, the future-war tale thus has the capability to subvert what contemporary culture has accepted as facts or truths about the modern world – and expose such truths as illusions.

This study examines how future-war narratives from 1871 to 1914 approach this potential imperial reversal, focusing on the various new, innovative identities that the genre

builds from its premise. In such tales, the usual framework of empire as constructed by contemporary discourse is open to new configurations; the borders between metropolis and periphery, thought as strong and impermeable, are porous. What is more, the attendant interactions between centre and margins, typically seen as fully controlled by the imperial centre, now potentially allow the frontier to actively exert influence on the metropolis.

As a result, the identities constructed by the future-war tale are often hybrid identities, sometimes explicitly and proudly so. Hybridity inevitably becomes an important if often unconscious topic. Said's summation that the "British empire integrated and fused things within it" (4) is thus true for this genre, for it looks deeply into colonial, native, marginal spaces and integrates aspects of identities found in these spaces into its envisioned contemporary or near-future British society/-ies. Authors of narratives in the genre thus implicitly agree with Patrick Brantlinger's assertion that

British colonizers were far more hybrid than is usually acknowledged. [...] Although colonialist discourse was often Manichaeic and hence obviously stereotypic, its emphasis on hybridity, even when it evoked anxiety and revulsion, was also both more and less than Manichaeic. (*Cannibals* 18)

Through its renegotiation of imperial identities, future-war fiction too becomes colonialist discourse. Underneath the racial and cultural stereotyping of its times, the genre builds intriguing characters, both heroes and villains, that can be at once familiar and alien, fascinating and repulsive. As such, the late-Victorian and Edwardian tale of coming war offers a 'third space' as defined by Homi Bhabha in which hybrid identities can be assessed. As an "articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements" (37) it therefore opens a discourse in which hybridity can be negotiated rather than negated.

To integrate these new concepts of identity and empire, the genre draws structural as well as thematic inspiration particularly from contemporary colonial romance and the boy's adventure story, a genre that too represents a prime stage for renegotiating ideas of empire. In fact, the future-war tale of the period is a sibling to the adventure tale and colonial writing, for fictions of coming conflict themselves inhabit a hybrid space between metropolitan and colonial literary production. Furthermore, this borrowing from adventure fiction enables writers in the genre to package unique concepts into a familiar shell that complements the future-war tale's own colonial affinity. Elleke Boehmer's summary of colonial writing thus can also very much apply to future-war fiction's charting of unknown dimensions:

To decipher unfamiliar spaces – what were to all intents and purposes airy nothings – travellers and colonizers relied on and scattered about them the stock descriptions and authoritative symbols that came to hand. They transferred familiar metaphors, which are themselves already bridging devices, which *carry meaning across*, to unfamiliar and unlikely contexts. Strangeness was made comprehensible by using everyday names, dependable textual conventions, both rhetorical and syntactic. (*Colonial and Postcolonial* 15; Boehmer’s emphasis)

The future-war tale attempts to decipher the unfamiliar space of an uncertain future for the British Empire and its peoples. To articulate its ideas and to embed these in a concrete, existing framework, the genre draws from popular contemporary literary traditions; not only from adventure fiction, but also from such diverse genres as for example Gothic tales, detective fiction, and the emerging spy thriller.

1.1 Definition of the Examined Genre and Time Period

Charting accurately the generic boundaries of the type of narrative discussed in this study has been a neglected task among scholars who have examined British stories of future war to any meaningful extent. There is a certain formal imprecision in many discussions of texts belonging to the genre. When, for instance, Aaron Worth asserts that “[t]he theme of racial extinction, even explicit genocide, is [a] characteristic feature of future-war fiction,” he ignores the decades-long development of and “significant variety” in the genre which he stressed earlier (100). He moreover does not define what he considers the “classic form” of the future-war novel (*ibid.*). Hence he examines George Griffith’s *The Angel of the Revolution* and Louis Tracy’s *The Final War*, two sensational texts of the mid-eighteen nineties written in especially racially-loaded language, for the whole of future-war fiction as it was produced in Britain before the First World War – even those texts which explicitly refrain from populist sensationalism and instead focus on strategic and technological aspects of modern warfare. He envisages the genre as exceedingly monolithic.¹

Similarly, other scholars have failed to define which type of narrative they mean exactly when they discuss the ‘tale of future war’ or the ‘tale of invasion.’ Confusion seems to exist about the very term under which the various visions of conflicts-to-come are to be grouped, for they have alternately been described as ‘future-war tales,’ ‘stories of invasion’, or ‘invasion fiction/literature.’ The literary encyclopedia *Edwardian Fiction* by Kemp,

¹ Even more problematically, Worth undermines his argument as he ignores Griffith’s sequel to *The Angel of the Revolution*, 1894’s *Olga Romanoff*, in which the preceding novel’s heroes’ achievements are almost undone in another world war. The decades-long scheming and secret armaments race described in that sequel indicate that after the events of *The Angel of the Revolution* there has in fact been no “historical stasis” (Worth 100), a situation which is only achieved at the conclusion of *Olga Romanoff*.

Mitchell, and Trotter catalogues the genre under “invasion scare stories” (207), but their title proves somewhat misleading. The authors include *The Great War of 189-* by Admiral Philip Colomb et al. in their article even though it is debatable how much of an invasion scare there is in that particular text. That story is a forecast of “the course of events preliminary and incidental to the Great War which, in the opinion of military and political experts, will probably occur in the immediate future” (*The Great War of 189- 1*), rather than a cautionary tale. Considering its topic, the authors are nevertheless right to include that text in the article, for they do mean to describe the whole future-war genre, and they list comprehensively important developments, essential texts, and influential historical events, despite conflating terms.

A central problem in this confusion has thus been the inconsistent usage of the term ‘invasion fiction’. Obviously enough, a narrative in which is predicted a large-scale invasion of the British Isles by a foreign people, like George Chesney’s seminal *The Battle of Dorking* or William Le Queux’s *The Invasion of 1910*, can justifiably be classified as invasion fiction, irrespective of the depicted attack’s ultimate success (i.e. crushing defeat and occupation of Britain in *Dorking*, the successful repeal of the enemy in *The Invasion*). Stories in which an enemy fleet is sunk by the British navy way before any actual incursion can commence (as in *The Great War of 189-*), prophesying situations paralleling the attempted attack on British soil by the Spanish Armada in 1588, are surely invasion narratives, as well. The classification becomes more complicated when one considers stories in which a potential invasion of Britain is stopped still in the planning phase, before enemy troops even set out from home. Especially if espionage is involved in a narrative, like in Erskine Childers’s *The Riddle of the Sands*, how much of an invasion scare can be found in such a tale seems a question of perspective. As most spy narratives contain, to a considerable degree, a premonitory thematic element and discuss issues of national security, one might concede that such texts can well be invasion fiction.

All the above example narratives are also future-war tales, certainly; the threat of a coming large-scale war between nations impacts their respective plots. On the other hand, texts of incursions by supernatural beings, for example Rider Haggard’s *She*, Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle*, or Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, which are often cited alongside *The Battle of Dorking* as tales of invasion, hardly belong to the corpus of future-war fiction, for in them the techno-military element is missing. What is more, if one were to consider future-

war and invasion stories as one homogeneous collection of texts, one would ignore those strategic and technological forecasts in which no invasion takes place.

Are stories like Arnold-Forster's *In a Conning Tower*, in which the authors' goal is showcasing modern warship technology and educating the reader in the probable methods and conduct of future warfare, part of a wholly different genre, although many of the issues debated in them correspond to those found in invasion narratives? What about examples like *The Great War of 189-*, in which Britain conducts its own invasion of a foreign power's soil as part of a preventative policy? To ascertain which particular generic tradition a scholar discusses when they examine what they describe as 'invasion tales,' it is therefore very necessary to keep in mind their individual perspective and methodological approach (cf. Frank 87).

Michael C. Frank suggests a more precise classification of the term 'invasion narrative' which is based on the "conceptualisation of the mode as a formal possibility which may be realised in any kind of literary text – and which is therefore not limited to one (fixed) genre" (75). Frank here builds upon work by Fredric Jameson, who eschews the restrictions of a syntactic (fixed, synchronic) approach to genre in favour of a semantic (open to constant renegotiation, diachronic) approach (Jameson 142; Frank 74). The resulting conception of 'mode' provides the advantage that now "any text may freely choose between various available modes, only momentarily participating in a particular generic tradition, without being fully absorbed and appropriated by it," so that "every mode may assume different generic forms" (Frank 75). By approaching the invasion narrative as a mode, it is then possible to find a more succinct distinction between 'tales of invasion' and 'future-war tales'. This means that *The Riddle of the Sands*, for example, can be a future-war tale but also a colonial adventure narrative and a spy thriller. Likewise, the invasion narrative can participate in the generic tradition of the future-war story as much as it can in the Gothic tale or the adventure story – *Dracula* or *She* can be narratives of invasion but are also Gothic tales and/or colonial romance. This then illustrates why texts like *Dracula* or *She* are not part of the corpus examined in this study. Although one of *Dracula's* modes is that of the invasion narrative, it is also a Gothic tale.

The works of fiction examined in this study participate in the generic tradition of the future-war narrative; in addition, most of them make use of one or several other modes, for example the invasion narrative, spy tale, or the terrorist or 'dynamiter' story. The future-war genre in Britain and Ireland thus encompasses all fictional narratives whose subject

matter includes as a substantial factor a prophesied future military conflict between the British Empire and any foreign powers, predominantly its rival European powers France, Germany, or Russia; but also others, for example the United States of America or Japan.

Ignatius F. Clarke, a pre-eminent authority who has published extensively on British future fiction, has described the story of the war-to-come as “the most favoured means of presenting arguments for – or against – new political alliances, changes in the organization and equipment of armies, technological innovations in naval vessels, or even schemes for colonial expansion” (*Voices* 1) and as “a new type of purposive fiction” (28). In fact, he adds, future-war tales are “forceful lessons on naval policy or warnings about the dangers of military unpreparedness in a pattern of fiction that the middle classes and – later on in the 1890s – the new literate masses could readily comprehend” (2). His description stresses the prophetic and socially critical aspects of these texts, as well as their propagandistic character. There is no question that these texts are predominantly reactionary and often openly display their Tory affinities. It also hints at the genre’s increasing ability in the *fin de siècle* to communicate concerns of Conservatives from the upper and middle classes to the working people of Britain. These concerns and anxieties were in fact wide-ranging, from social to technological and organisational reform in the British Empire.

The corpus of future-war narratives which forms the textual basis of the present study has been assembled from bibliographies by Clarke, whose listings have proven to be most comprehensive, and Everett Bleiler, in whose massive *Science-Fiction: The Early Years* is found a handful of texts which have escaped Clarke’s attention. Clarke’s approach is comparative, so his “Checklist of Imaginary Wars, 1763–1990” in the second edition of his *Voices Prophesying War* contains publications from Great Britain, Ireland, the British dominions and colonies, Germany, France, the United States, Italy, and even Sweden, written in various languages. For the period of 1871–1914 he lists over four hundred titles, out of which over two hundred were published in the British Isles and are written in English. In addition, the corpus also includes texts that were produced in British colonies, territories, and Dominions; a comparatively much smaller volume than what was written in the British mainland.

Out of these over two hundred texts, the narratives examined here are particularly innovative, or even eccentric, in terms of the themes of empire and identities that they cover. Each text features its own idiosyncratic, sometimes quite original, view of British

society and the individuals that make up the British people, often fusing the metropolitan and the colonial, and sometimes showing how modern society has changed and will continue to change the basis of what it means to be British. Out of the mass of future-war tales from the period, they most prominently engage with questions of change, adaptation, and hybridity – that is, ideas of how British society evolves due to empire, technological progress, and conflict with rival powers. With this, they stand out as those tales of coming war that engage most prolifically not only with the socio-political discourse of their times but also with other popular forms of fiction, both cross-pollinating and being influenced by imperial romance, the spy thriller, the war narrative, and newly developing science fiction.

The Battle of Dorking, first published in 1871, is the first British future-war narrative which received major and widespread recognition by the contemporaneous public and thus became the generic trendsetter for the following four decades. There had been prophecies of coming struggle in Britain before, and the long-standing tradition of utopian literature in English attests that British authors were looking into the future centuries before George Chesney did, but the lieutenant-colonel's narrative became the foundation of Victorian and Edwardian future-war tales. Therefore the date of 1871 proves a sensible starting point to this study. Considering its wide-ranging and often disruptive effect on European societies and cultures, the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 seems a natural cut-off date. World War One, the first large-scale European war since Napoleon (if one counts the Crimean War as a conflict fought in what could be called the threshold of the Orient), is the event by which virtually all the prophecies of universal war since 1871 became obsolete. It therefore represents a decisive caesura for the genre.

During the war, newly published stories of the near future had a somewhat different outlook than those from before. These were now prophecies of the future development of the present conflict, with the thematic objective being a prediction of the actual war's development – for example, John Buchan's *The Thirty-One Steps* (1915) centres around espionage and a German conspiracy right in Great Britain. Furthermore, as world politics changed between the world wars and during the Cold War, the bulk of future-war narratives from before 1914 became ever more outdated. The decades preceding the Great War however had witnessed the first discrete phase(s) of a genre which, although the vast majority of its earlier writings have become little-read and obscure, has continued to reinvent itself and has remained popular worldwide, as the successes of Hollywood movie blockbusters which prophesy future invasions like *Red Dawn* (featuring invasions of small-

town America, very much analogous to the sudden appearance of German troops around Dorking, by Soviet forces in the 1984 original and by North Korea in the 2012 remake), *Independence Day* (itself heavily indebted to H. G. Wells and the 1950s science fiction films which draw from his work), and the many cinematic re-imaginings of Wells's *The War of the Worlds* can attest.

1.2 Reception of and Scholarly Interest in the Genre

Despite the smashing commercial success of many narratives of the war-to-come at the time of their publication, public interest in such texts from late Victorian and Edwardian times is rather low today. The genre's topicality and reactionary attitude, as well as many tales' now-questionable ideologies, have proven an obvious disadvantage, inhibiting most of these publications' longevity. Of the hundreds of works published in the more than four decades between 1871 and 1914, perhaps only *The War of the Worlds* has remained in the public consciousness at large. Some readers might still be aware of Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* because of its influence on the modern spy thriller, but besides this and Wells's work the vast majority, even erstwhile bestsellers, have not been republished for decades; most have not been in print since they first appeared at book-stands. Recently, there have been special-interest editions by I. F. Clarke and George Locke, respectively, of some of the more commercially successful narratives. Clarke has also edited two volumes of primary texts, with contemporary essays on and reviews of future-war stories, as well as an anthology edition of *The Battle of Dorking* and Saki's *When William Came* for a general readership.

Somewhat mirroring the low interest of the public at large, only a handful of scholarly works has been dedicated to studying the genre in any significant quantity, although the last two decades or so have seen some improvement. The first studies on the genre, the bibliography *Tale of the Future*, and the dedicated genre history *Voices Prophecy War*, were written by Clarke, who also includes thoughts on the future-war tale in a monograph with a wider focus on British speculative fiction in general, *The Pattern of Expectation*. Clarke approaches the subject as a bibliographer, literary historian, and comparative critic. In *Voices Prophecy War*, he unearths and contrasts the histories of the production and reception of the future-war tale in the British Isles, France, and Germany. His scope encompasses wider trends, the similarities and differences between texts in different languages, and generic features rather than detailed analyses of specific texts and

issues. By his writings' design, therefore, he does only hint at many ideas and opinions that are contained in these works. Most studies by other scholars discuss the future-war tale only more tangentially.

Two monographs on the martial spirit in British pre-war literature contain discussions of future-war fiction only as part of a larger whole, for the authors of these studies are interested in issues which cross various genres and types of discourse. Cecil Eby in *The Road to Armageddon* examines the increasing militarisation of pre-war popular literature from the late Victorian years onwards and the consequences of this development on British popular culture, and Charles Gannon in *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines* is interested in the politics of actualisation of the prophecies and ideas found in future-war and other militaristic tales. These two scholars' works thus focus more on broader military and socio-political issues than on the future-war genre specifically. Similarly, Johan Höglund's doctoral thesis, which looks at the ideological connections between the more militaristic types of British pre-World War One popular fiction and the Great War, is executed as a broad overview on texts and themes. These scholars' approach towards the genre, studying it *inter alia*, has been the general norm.

The research done by A. Michael Matin is an exception from this tendency, as he examines in a series of articles which are derived from his doctoral thesis ("Securing Britain") the impact of narrative and sociocultural issues raised by the future-war story on more 'respectable', canonical writers like Rudyard Kipling ("Historicizing Kipling's Militaristic Rhetoric," in two parts) and Joseph Conrad ("Conrad's Transposed Nationalism"). He is however more concerned with these authors' writings than with specific texts of the future-war corpus, and in his perspective the transfer between authors and genres is unilateral. His discussions focus specifically on Kipling and Conrad. Matin's work is nevertheless a milestone of sorts, since he is the first scholar to seriously examine the genre within the wider context of other works of the period's literature, and especially the lines of cross-fertilisation between authors and genres. Even more recently, Philip Steer has included a chapter on cross-currents between future-war writing in the colonies and metropolitan products in the genre (*Settler Colonialism*). It is laudable that in recent years more scholarly works on these narratives have been published which touch upon a variety of issues concerning future-war tales specifically, even if there is still no dedicated or wider research in the genre.

While the tale of coming war is mentioned by Patrick Brantlinger in *Rule of Darkness* and Stephen Arata in *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, both scholars do not include the genre in depth in their studies of late Victorian fears of degeneration and decline. Both are correct to stress that many of the issues and ideas expounded by future-war stories are the same as those found, and examined in more detail, in more recognised *fin de siècle* texts (Brantlinger, for instance, cites those texts which participate in the so-called imperial Gothic), but hereby they miss the idiosyncrasies of the future-war narrative's spin on these issues. Arata posits that this genre and what he calls "reverse colonization narratives" are very different kinds of texts: "Invasion scare novels focus on the threat posed to Britain by other industrial nations. [...] By contrast, reverse colonization narratives are obsessed with the spectacle of the primitive and the atavistic" (110-11). As will be seen in this study, this limits the perspective; there are indeed several tales of coming war that do contain primitive spectacle, not least the tales of William Le Queux and Robert Cole. Arata assumes that the invasion scare novel by its very nature cannot participate in the themes of reverse colonisation narratives. Unfortunately, he does not offer any explanation why in his opinion writings on technological progress cannot also contain thoughts on regression, as if technology and primitivism were mutually exclusive.

Arata's neglect concerning the tale of future war is not an exceptional case, however. Scholars usually only give acknowledgment to the existence of the genre and provide a context of where it is situated within the matrix of their examinations but do not conduct any further research in it. Here, Troy Boone's results are noteworthy, as he examines the ideological foundations of the future-war tale in conjunction with the development of the Boy Scouts movement and thus finds instances of contact between the genre and socio-cultural processes within pre-war Britain. His argument that "[t]he ideological apparatus of both invasion scare narrative and Boy Scout handbook is in large measure designed to repair the embarrassments of the Second Boer War" seems nonetheless muddled (109), as his chronology of events appears irregular. Pre-South African War future-war stories (whose existence Booth recognises) could hardly predict the events of said conflict and adjust their ideological basis accordingly. Often short and sometimes imprecise as such contributions to research on the future-war tale may be, the above studies are nonetheless important to the present study, as their arguments provide suitable starting points for further examinations.

Evidently, most scholars have isolated the future-war story somewhat by giving it such short shrift, as if it were unconnected to the rest of popular fiction in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. Science fiction scholars have proven to be the exception to the rule. They generally contextualise the future-war narrative within the emergence and development of that particular genre, and especially *The War of the Worlds* is considered one of its foundational texts. Even though Brian Aldiss in his seminal history of science fiction (or perhaps histories, since his *Trillion Year Spree* builds heavily upon the earlier *Billion Year Spree*) remains sceptical about the degree of relationship between the two genres, he acknowledges their connection by way of H. G. Wells (109). On the other hand, Darko Suvin distinguishes between three subgenres of early science fiction and places the future-war tale among these, affirming its generic belonging. According to him, the future-war story has to be considered a vanguard for science fiction, establishing it as “a significant part of UK social discourse” (238).

Notwithstanding these two scholars’ differences of opinion, both agree that these texts as they were written in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain and Ireland still enjoyed a considerable degree of formal and generic fluidity. Future-war authors certainly did not envision themselves as writers of early science fiction – in contrast perhaps to their peers writing boy’s adventure or sensation fiction, which were already recognised entities in the literary world of the era –, since the concept of what is science fiction would not be codified for decades; the genre’s name itself only was firmly established in the late 1920s (cf. James 28-9). Nevertheless, the deliberations on generic belonging and categorisation seem to have had an adverse effect, discouraging further comprehensive inquiry into other qualities of the future-war genre. Whether British future-war fiction is an early outpouring of science fiction or not, focusing on the genre solely in this one context disadvantages or even hinders other readings.

1.3 Scope and Aim of This Study

This study does not approach the future-war tale with considerations as to its status within science fiction. Like Matin’s work, it proposes that one has to examine the tale of coming war within the greater context of the literature of the period, for the genre needs to be read analogously to other genres of pre-World War One popular fiction in order to understand it more fully. It is furthermore important to recognise it as a heterogeneous and persistently evolving group of texts, and accordingly this is a diachronic study. In the four decades or so

before the Great War, the genre developed from the dystopian alarmist propaganda of Chesney's inaugural short story into a close companion to the often equally patriotic and sensationalist imperial romance. These widely-read tales of colonial adventure by authors such as Rider Haggard, Kipling, or A. E. W. Mason that flourished from the 1880s onwards and future-war tales were competitors at the book-stands, and the two genres came to influence each other considerably. The future-war tale appropriates ideas found predominantly in the imperial romance and recontextualises them within its thematic matrix of national security, cultural rejuvenation and resistance, and the maintenance of Empire. I would argue that this is perhaps one of the most distinguishing elements of the genre from the 1890s onwards. In those tales, new or modified ideas concerning British identity, heritage and Empire are introduced and communicated to an at the time ever widening readership. My primary interest will be in the colonial origins of these new identities, as well as the narrative legitimisation of these modifications.

Particularly during the era of New Imperialism, in tales of war-to-come concepts of social organisation and methods of cultural resistance that Britons encountered in the colonies, as well as the lessons learned from colonial wars, are transported into and appropriated by the British homeland, especially in response to the blunders of the Boer and Zulu wars. There these methods help the British people, who adopt them readily, to prevail over domestic and alien forces of invasion and decline. The usually firm distinctions between the imperial metropolis and the periphery are thus open to renegotiation. As the homeland as a geographical area is under attack, so is its ideological status as the strong and unassailable centre of an empire. This allows for a renegotiation of the intrinsic qualities which make up each of the two poles, for all of a sudden the periphery, usually considered the weaker of the two, can reverse the flow of cultural impact towards the metropolis. For a short period, the periphery becomes the more powerful entity, but this does not damage the metropolis; it instead strengthens it.

In many such stories, British soil is occupied by foreign armies, and the local people have to contend with the prolonged presence of the invader. A number of tales even envision Britain wholly as a dependency of another imperial power, languishing as a 'second Ireland' or as 'another India'. By learning from modes of resistance experienced among the colonised peoples on the imperial periphery, however, the British in these tales are now themselves an indigenous population revolting against the oppressor. The imperial centre thus draws power from those forces which have previously threatened its hegemony.

The tale of the war-to-come is hence utilised as a means of codifying a partly new, stronger British identity. Moreover, it is an anchor which secures and thus confirms the British people's place in a modern world. It proves a nexus in which are discussed and, if needs be, revised the cultural identity of the British people and the history and heritage of the Empire. From the recent past as well as the present is extrapolated a future configuration of Britain and its worldwide possessions – socially, 'racially', militarily, technologically, etc. If, as Martin Green asserts, the Victorian adventure tale is the energising myth of Empire (xi), the future-war tale develops amidst the anxieties and insecurities of the *fin de siècle* and Edwardian period into the re-energising, reaffirming myth of Empire.

The second chapter of this study focuses on narratives which depict a post-invasion Britain. The nation has been defeated in such tales, the Empire shattered; in effect, Britain becomes a marginal space. The two stories that most vividly envision such a scenario are from opposite sides of the examined timeline: George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) and Hector Hugh Munro's *When William Came* (1913). While *Dorking* is mostly concerned with the emotional state of a people that has been made a colonial subject, equating this new Britain with India, *William* paints an in-depth picture of what a Germanised Britain under the Kaiser's rule would look like. That novella shows a remarkable grasp of the diverse conditions under which colonised peoples in Britain's actual overseas territories live, with the tale's subdued Britons evoking many these peoples' struggles in terms of cultural preservation, collaboration, and resistance. Munro here shows what can happen to British culture when it becomes suppressed: By naming the German emperor, Wilhelm II, "William" in his title, Munro inevitably evokes the Norman conquest of England under William of Normandy, as well as the general displacement of Anglo-Saxon culture among the social elites that followed in the following decades and centuries. Likewise, Munro thus argues, modern British culture might irreparably become extinguished under colonisation. At the same time, his characters come to find familiarities with the coloniser, opening up possible paths of mutual understanding – an initially disturbing if not ultimately pleasant realisation for his characters.

On the other hand, the texts central to chapter 3 subscribe prestige to colonial identities, for they argue in favour of social and cultural renewal through the settler lifestyle. This set of marginal knowledges and skills then allows the embattled British to repel the invaders. In doing so, the future-war tale most closely approximates the imperial romance, for now the frontier space of invaded Britain or wartime Europe becomes the background for daring

escapes, thrilling chases, and great stand-offs with villains. The stories examined here are William Butler's *The Invasion of England*, William Le Queux's *The Great War in England in 1897* and *The Invasion of 1910*, as well as Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands*. As Elleke Boehmer points out about the Boy Scout movement, an organisation whose ideological foundation of integrating the colonial into the imperial centre is congruent with these narratives, "Britain is, Dracula-like, to draw life force from subordinated cultures whose own vitality, arguably, has been forcibly repressed" (Intro to *Scouting for Boys* xxxvii); in effect, this leads to a vibrant "mingling or hybridizing of cultural discourses" (ibid.).

Hybridity and how to integrate it in metropolitan identities is the central topic of the fourth chapter of this study. Max Pemberton's *Pro Patria* sets two mixed-race Britons against each other, with one remaining a patriot, the other becoming a villain by rejecting his half-British heritage; in effect, the tale argues for integrating hybridity into British identities as long as the 'British' part of such identities is the dominant one. M. P. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* too features a hybrid hero and hybrid Eastern villain, advancing the message that Britain can only survive the coming age of global conflicts by co-opting those traits from its enemies that allow it to keep at the forefront of worldwide politics. Subverting Yellow Peril stories like Shiel's, future-war narratives that seek to ideologically accommodate potential military allies like the Japanese stress the essential similarities of such possible friendly powers to the British, establishing useful cultural traits and methods among these possible allies that the British need to internalise.

Unlike the tales in chapters 2-4, the narratives examined in chapter 5 seek new identities by envisioning how the ever-faster technological progress of Britain will change its demands on its men; H. G. Wells's *The Land Ironclads* and *War of the Worlds* as well as George Griffith's *The Angel of the Revolution* and *Olga Romanoff* negotiate updated and new masculine identities within a technocratic world: less belligerent and physically active, but more calculating and educated. In the process, these texts predict a general evolution of British identity under the requirements – and advantages – of the modern age. For Griffith, the 'Anglo-Saxon' race must remain the most technologically advanced worldwide to build a foundation on which it can bring order to a new world, thereby itself improving. Wells on the other hand remains more sceptical, showing the dehumanising effects of excessive mechanisation and reliance on machinery as well.

The final chapter of this study widens the scope of the British future-war tale by highlighting two texts produced in British colonies: *The German Invasion of South Africa* from the Cape Colony and *The Back Door* from Hong Kong. These texts illustrate the community-making capabilities of the future-war genre, for they depict the dynamic space in settler territories that attempts to reconcile British heritage and the new-found local identity unique to the respective colony. The texts thus build their own miniature centre and dangerous colonial periphery from which invaders might attack, establishing discrete populations and cultures that oscillate between a patriotic longing for being part of Britain and the realisation that in the event of an enemy attack, the colonies may need to rely on their own population's capabilities to withstand invasion. In this, these stories too integrate and celebrate settler life and its concomitant self-sufficiency, presenting it as uniquely necessary for the community's survival. The future-war story produced in the colony thus provide an illustrative example of the processes that are at work in the metropolitan tale of war-to-come as well.

1.4 A Short History of the British Future-War Narrative, 1871-1914

I. F. Clarke has produced a quite comprehensive history of the future-war tale, but it seems prudent nonetheless to provide a concise summary of the genre's development. This study's focus is on discrete steps in the genre's evolution and on the emergence of certain clusters of future-war texts which are significant to the overall shaping of the genre as a medium of renegotiation of identities and of cultural rejuvenation. Before these reforming qualities emerged, however, the future-war tale experienced considerable development. Clarke lists as the earliest works of British future-war fiction Francis Cheynell's *Aulicus his Dream of the Kings Sudden Comming* of 1644, a Puritan tirade against Charles I ("First Main Phase" 387), and the anonymous *The Reign of George VI, 1900–1925* of 1763 (*Voices* 5), long before the genre became a cultural phenomenon in the late nineteenth century. The fact that such narratives were published as pamphlets in various times of national crisis indicates their core qualities: their topicality and readiness to exploit contemporaneous fears. During the Napoleonic Wars, the threat of invasion seemed to loom large again on the British, when the French emperor amassed his fleet and only decided against an attack on Great Britain when he was needed elsewhere (cf. Eby 11). Consequently, the British public was alarmed by a host of prints, plays, and pamphlets which warned of coming French invasions as well as tried to stiffen the British people's resolve (Clarke, "Before and after"

35; *Voices* 8-9). The people were roused sufficiently at this and other times, but the writings produced by all the doom-sayers and self-styled prophets were forgotten quickly.

The conditions were different in 1871 and afterwards. *The Battle of Dorking* arrived with a bang and then faded to some extent, but stayed in the public consciousness for decades. Chesney's narrative was an anonymously published contribution to the May issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*. That periodical's status as a respectable, prestigious publication hints at the intended audience for which Chesney wrote: (upper) middle class and Conservative. An experienced Colonel of the Royal Bengal Engineers and an advisor at the military academy at Staines, Chesney was a proponent of military reform and critical of the ongoing army reform scheme, the Cardwell Reforms of 1868 to 1874. He criticised the British Volunteer Corps' inadequate training and the lack of public support for this and other volunteer institutions, as well as the authorities' general tardiness when dealing with military expenditure. Extrapolating from recent developments on the Continent, where German troops had won a spectacular victory over France in the Franco-Prussian War, which led to the formation of the German Empire, he developed a potent cautionary tale. His question perfectly captured his contemporaries' unease: What if the energetic young German Empire crosses the Channel and attacks a virtually undefended Great Britain?

As Clarke asserts, there was a perfect constellation of circumstances: "And then quite suddenly the great powers of the press, politics, and population came together" ("The First Main Phase" 387). This all contributed to the enormous success of Chesney's short story. *Blackwood's* May issue enjoyed high sales, necessitating several reprints. Later, the story was sold in pamphlet form, which proved a success as well, with sales numbers exceeding 80,000 (Eby 13). It became equally successful in the colonies, and translations appeared in French, German, and other languages. Even on the European continent, *Dorking* thus established the future-war tale as a popular literary form. In Britain, editorials and articles in newspapers and magazines discussed *Dorking* and the state of the British military throughout 1871.

The response to *The Battle of Dorking* was not all positive, and rebuttals in literary form appeared fast, some of them rebuking Chesney's lament of British military inadequacy. Others, however, elaborated upon Chesney's ideas. That this public debate became widespread is apparent by the intervention of Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, who during a speech in Whitby on 2 September 1871 voiced his displeasure with the tale, asserting that such paranoid fear-mongering as evidenced in *Dorking* would only hurt the

international standing of Britain (Clarke, *Voices* 1). Nevertheless, people read and remembered Chesney's story, even if only as a joke among colleagues (cf. Eby 15).

The Battle of Dorking became the great template for any subsequent tale of future war. Even decades later, newly published narratives in the genre were contextualised within the *Dorking* mould by literary reviewers, and authors of such tales still explicitly invoked Chesney's story, such as in the anonymous serial *The German Invasion of South Africa* which appeared a Cape Town newspaper in 1885. In 1900, the *Dorking* story (or at least its title) was so ingrained in the public consciousness that Colonel Frederic Maude could publish *The New Battle of Dorking* and be recognised immediately. More than one and a half decades after its first publication, a December 1886 article in the *Saturday Review* discusses the *Dorking* text's lasting power: "That was an excellent battle to fight once, when it suggested itself spontaneously to a very competent writer who wrote for his own joy and gratification. It was a very brilliant piece of work, and no one will be likely to forget the effect it produced, especially if he was young enough in those days to enjoy it properly" (review of *Dorking* 772).

Revealingly, the reviewer's argument in that particular text is that Chesney in no way intended his work to be taken seriously; the tale is received as a piece of pleasurable escapism. This sheds light on a change in the public's reception of the future-war story in the mid- to late 1880s. The review suggests that such stories are particularly popular among boys and young men, whose enthusiasm for adventures seems to be a prerequisite for their enjoyment. Apparently, the perception as to what was the future-war tale's intended readership had changed considerably. Chesney's intended audience were 'respectable' middle-class men, people of some political clout who could effect the changes he hoped for. The *Saturday Review*'s writer would however suggest that the most ardent readers of the story were not at all those parts of the population which Chesney had wanted to reach. In the decade and a half between *Dorking* and this review, the future-war tale would therefore become more appealing to the masses – maybe more juvenile.

After the *Dorking* uproar had died down in late 1871, the following years were rather quiet for the future-war tale. The young German Empire showed no signs of attacking Britain anytime soon, and the paranoia subsided. By the second half of the decade, however, the intermittently proposed idea of creating a Channel Tunnel which would link Britain with France reawakened fears of invasion. A first warning of such a tunnel's threat to national security in fictional form was published in 1876, but a considerable number of

Channel Tunnel scare tales only appeared after plans became somewhat more concrete in 1882. Those who were afraid of the Channel Tunnel saw their concerns justified by the rapidity with which France had recovered from the disgraceful war with Germany in 1870, French politics now focusing on rapid rearmament. The fears concerning the tunnel illustrate a deep-seated anxiety at the time about the state of Britain's 'splendid isolation'. Seeing as the English Channel could be crossed easily within hours by a whole enemy fleet in the new age of mechanisation and technological progress, any further ties (say, by underground railway) to the Continent were abhorred – especially considering the continuous tensions between the European powers. The North Sea, long seen as an effective barrier against any foreign aggressor, had become a rather convenient highway by which to reach the British Isles, especially since the bulk of the British navy was increasingly often deployed to all corners of the world and the waters around the islands were perhaps only patrolled by one squadron. The spreading thin of the Navy was problematic enough for the isles' security, but by being landlocked to Europe, Britain would be utterly open, a ready entry being granted to whomever controlled the other end of the tunnel at Calais. What is more, there exists resentment in stories such as the *Seizure of the Channel Tunnel* against French assertions that a tunnel connecting the two nations would benefit the economies of both greatly and even increase Britain's safety. France was seen as an unreliable potential ally at best. Channel Tunnel tales envision the French people as naturally disingenuous, stressing the need for Britain to remain self-sufficient and detached from Europe and its problems.

The craze about the Channel Tunnel subsided when plans were not pursued further. However, after the Fashoda Incident new narratives of the French building a tunnel to prepare a secret invasion were again published, as tensions between Britain and France incited another one of the many war scares of the period. Edmund Downey's *London's Peril* (written under the pseudonym F. M. Allen) and Max Pemberton's *Pro Patria* are spy stories in which British individuals attempt to thwart the invasion before construction work on the tunnel is completed. Generally, the same issues are raised in these tales as are typical to the genre: the danger of a foreign power's technological progress. Together with the apparent shrinking of the world's size, when global communication by telegraph was near-instantaneous and large shipments of troops across the waters could be achieved in a matter of hours or days, the British nation's faculties seemed to be taxed to their utmost, possibly for the first time in the Empire's existence.

In a number of future-war tales of the first half of the 1880s, the focus is reverted back to the British Isles, and especially towards Ireland. Home Rule had become a hotly debated political issue by 1883, so that on both sides of the Irish Sea fictional prophecies of an Irish war of independence (sometimes in conjunction with a Great War and sometimes without) were published. The Irish stories emphasise the need to forge alliances with Britain's enemies, which could enable the Irish people to repel the British from Ireland – provided the rest of Britain's resources are preoccupied with fighting off the Irish allies' incursions on British soil. A war in or near Britain would then be the perfect opportunity to overthrow English oppression. In opposing texts written in Britain, the Irish war is described as considerably less glorious, with the focus being more on the dangers such a double front would entail for the British army. Ireland is an unsure property in these narratives, not wholly part of Britain – definitely not in spirit – but also not really part of the British colonial empire. The hybrid state of Ireland thus also informs its ambivalent qualities concerning British national security in these narratives.

The Great Naval War of 1887 by William Clowes and Alan Burgoyne ushered in a new era for the future-war tale. It was the first narrative which did not try to warn of an imminent invasion of Britain or the outbreak of a great war pitting nation against nation. Rather, it concerned itself more with the possibilities of naval warfare and the probable course of a large-scale naval engagement between modern, highly armoured and armed steamships. The prediction of naval conflicts thus became an integral part of the corpus of future-war fiction. For a few years afterwards, literary responses to Clowes and Burgoyne's story were published, in which various colleagues and critics espoused their own ideas on how the next naval war would be waged. Even after that, naval forecasts were a popular subject for writers of future-war fiction.

Furthermore, future-war stories were now increasingly being printed in novel form and being backed by wealthy sponsors from the publishing industry, whereas earlier they had been published mostly in pamphlet form or as short stories in magazines. *The Great Naval War of 1887* was published as a serial before its reprint in novel form by Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe, a newspaper magnate. Through this change, the future-war tale enjoyed ever-increasing economic success. Before, the writers of these stories had been officers, military experts, and/or politicians, but now journalists and professional authors also wrote about Britain's future wars. This expansion of the writer pool led to an expansion of readership. Although the descriptions of coming battles often became ever

less accurate regarding military realities, they were now so much more sensational – and therefore more sellable. Now, anyone could be a prophet of coming war if he or she could write gripping enough scenes of carnage.

The success of educational reforms and advances in printing technology contributed to the rise of the story of future war towards being a stalwart of the era's popular literature. By the mid 1890s, literacy was nearly universal in Britain, and so literary producers' and publishers' gaze extended towards a vast new set of rather indiscriminate readers. The newly literate 'masses' were especially catered to by newly founded tabloid newspapers, and the future-war narrative became a hot commodity for the owners of the emergent popular press in the last decade of the nineteenth century. W. T. Stead employed George Griffith and M. P. Shiel, while Harmsworth commissioned William Le Queux to write two hugely popular invasion stories in 1894 and 1906, to boost the sales of his newly founded or newly bought newspapers. Clowes and Beccles Wilson wrote the *Siege of Portsmouth* for Harmsworth's *Portsmouth Mail* specifically to boost sales and support the entrepreneur's efforts to be voted into Parliament in the 1895 general election (Clarke, *Voices* 109). The stories were influenced by the newspapers' economic needs; Le Queux had to have his German invaders advance towards London not by the most logical route, but by visiting every town on the way in which the *Daily Mail* was read, which would then hopefully drive demand for the newspaper (122).

This newly popular interest in the future-war story coincided with what John McKenzie has called the high-time of popular imperialism in Britain. Especially in the Jubilee years of 1887 and 1897, there were gigantic and spectacular (and, some contemporary commentators would say, overdone) displays of patriotism, with jingoist material invading every facet of British everyday life, from the music hall to cigarette cards (cf. *Popular Culture* 9). The future-war story followed this trend readily, as the increasingly sensationalist and racist language of texts from the 1890s shows. Highly racialised ideologies entered the narratives, with Darwinian discourse and increasingly radical socio-Darwinian ideas forming integral parts of the stories' ideological bases. George Griffith's, M. P. Shiel's, and Louis Tracy's works present the apogee of this development. The next great war was not just solely a conflict between enemy nations, but a cataclysmic struggle for supremacy between the races of the world. Whoever came out of the struggle victorious would be the new sovereign of the world's peoples, ushering in an epoch of universal peace and prosperity. Britain's stakes thus became higher than ever, since an ignoble defeat and

possible reconstruction were not an option any more: A nation (or a 'race') absolutely had to win if it did not want to be completely eradicated. The next war would be a war of extinction.

This radical point of view was informed by the writers' realisation that the great powers' level of militarisation and the destructive potential of weapons technology had advanced to such a degree that any large-scale future conflict would entail wholesale destruction of large swathes of land and the loss of life on an unprecedented scale. Griffith presents the most apocalyptic scenarios in his two novels *The Angel of the Revolution* and *Olga Romanoff*. Winning the looming, seemingly inevitable great mechanised war became the only sure method of survival. In this atmosphere of patriotism and socio-Darwinism the tone of the future-war narrative had changed considerably: Mostly gone were the predominantly alarmist stories in the old *Dorking* style, having been replaced by more defiant tales of recovery and reconquest. Even if initially beaten soundly, the British people were now bold and strong enough to beat back any aggressor, be it at exceedingly high costs. Here the idea emerged that the embarrassing blunders of recent colonial wars can be somehow rectified, avenged, and essentially buried silently under the glory of future successes. The colonial experience became a source of knowledge and a motor of resistance, for in such newly defiant narratives the whole nation learns from the past and realises that it can beat its enemy by employing the unorthodox methods of colonial warfare together with innovative technologies.

Technology advanced so quickly that the global imperial powers had to contend in an armaments race to ensure technological superiority. Falling behind other nations would lead to certain doom at the hands of the more advanced enemy, so a nation had to keep its competitive edge. The rate of progress would have to be increased even further. Thus the fantastical element of unprecedented inventions entered the future-war tale by way of Griffith and H. G. Wells, and especially the promise of human mastery of the air incited these and other writers' imaginations. Here the dynamiter story crossed over into the future-war story, in which new and dangerous technology like improved cannons and airships fell into the hands of (half-)secret revolutionary organisations. In 1893, when Griffith's tale of a world conspiracy *The Angel of the Revolution* was first published as a serial in *Cassell's Magazine*, there also appeared Edward Douglas Fawcett's *Hartman the Anarchist*. In both stories, the command over vehicles enabling easy and quick air travel puts socialist/anarchist groupings in a position of considerable power. While Griffith's

revolutionaries are in the end benevolent towards the British people and all ‘Anglo-Saxon’ brothers, Hartman’s gang is a band of ruffians out only for destruction. The doings of those national and international organisations, seen as dangerous and possibly nation-destroying enemies by the majority of writers of future-war tales, became a constant threat looming on the fringes of the next battlefields, sometimes entering the spotlight and playing a decisive factor in the conflict of nations.

At the turn of the century, the future-war tale came to overlap with the emergent genre of the spy thriller. The Dreyfus Affair had sent a message that modern politics consisted of large chess games of espionage and counter-intelligence, and this message was interpreted by reactionaries that no person was secure any more – potential foreign spies could be anywhere. William Le Queux, as paranoid as he was boastful of his achievements as a British agent (cf. Andrew 73-5), led the way. Everywhere, his stories claimed, German spies and enemy sleeper cells had infiltrated Britain, working in secret for the Kaiser. The great intermingling of foreign workers and tourists in London, Britain’s seaside resorts, and other popular destinations immediately became a danger to British life. Alien agents working within Britain were not new to the future-war story, but now they became an established norm. Erskine Childers’s *The Riddle of the Sands* is perhaps the best-known and most readable of these foundational spy thrillers. The foreign component within British society and the increasing cosmopolitanism of the metropolis, seen as a frightening prospect considering the more unsavoury connotations of equally cosmopolitan Paris, became ingrained in the xenophobic paranoia underlying the ideas discussed in more extremist Edwardian stories of coming war.

After the Entente Cordiale was signed in 1904 and as the German Empire entered a new phase of increased armament and shipbuilding, the high variability of potential enemies in the fictional next war decreased, and Germany became the one true future opponent. One aim of future-war stories in the decade before the outbreak of the actual Great War was to prepare mentally and ideologically for the inevitable. The fictional warnings became increasingly shrill, writers of future fiction envisioning the War Inevitable that was just around the corner in most commentators’ opinion. Most incisive among the stories published in the years leading up to August 1914 seems Hector Hugh Munro’s *When William Came* of 1913, a prophecy of a Britain under the iron heel of the Germans, and perhaps the most sombre work of that author of satires. This sombreness is however paired with a bellicose spirit throughout the novel, culminating in an affront towards the German

emperor, the new lord of Great Britain, by the youth of the nation. In fiction, the Boy Scouts, Volunteers, and other such movements had for one last time before the Great War prepared the boys and young men of the former Isle Inviolata for the decisive conflict for world supremacy. Shortly thereafter, however, the real struggle started and changed not only the genre, but British society as a whole.

2. Envisioning Britons as Colonised Subjects

Shortly before he enters battle for the first time during the momentous Anglo-German war, George Chesney's unnamed Volunteer, the protagonist of *The Battle of Dorking*, experiences his home in terms befitting a frontier space. The thick woodland near Dorking, where he is to meet the German invaders, seems to him a "primeval forest" (23), a location more associated with far-away, 'uncivilised' territories on the imperial periphery than with highly developed Britain. His impression is augmented by the place's unusually tropical atmosphere, with the summer heat and thick haze creating oppressively steamy conditions, "so that you could scarcely see the town below, and the hills opposite were merely a confused blur, in which no features could be distinctly made out" (26). His and his fellow soldiers' general situation tops off this 'colonial' experience, for they must go into battle without reliable supply lines or contact to the outside world, their training and equipment woefully inadequate. In a war on the fringes of the Empire, they would be equally (or perhaps less) isolated and ill-prepared. The narrator's perception that his otherwise idyllic, typically British rural surroundings have transformed into a wilderness is a symptom of his dawning realisation that Britain itself has become a place on the margins. Civilisation seems to abandon Britain amidst isolation and chaos. Eventually, therefore, the homeland does not fully register as such in the Volunteer's mind.

Identities consequently begin to blur as well, especially in the thick of battle:

[W]hen each minute may be your last, you do not think much about other people, nor when you are facing another man with a rifle have you time to consider whether he or you are the invader, or that you are fighting for your home and hearths. All fighting is pretty much alike, I suspect, as to sentiment, when once it begins. (35)

This apparent universality or interchangeability of combat allows a renegotiation of the fight's context, so that battles on British soil can assume the shape and "sentiment" of battles on the imperial margins. The Volunteer's remark moreover hints at his realising that the parameters of this particular conflict are unprecedented: Implicitly he understands that the identities of invader and defender are inverted, for in similar circumstances the traditional role of the British soldier would be that of the attacker. The positions do matter quite a bit outside of this battle too, after all. In the contemporaneous British world-view, these soldiers should fight on the imperial frontier against insurrectionist natives, who would be the defenders of their homeland. Yet now the British home is the frontier,

a situation which ought not to exist. Britons should not need to fight for their home and hearths, for their land should never be invaded. The Volunteer consequently makes it clear that such a state of marginalisation as he experiences is wholly unbecoming the nation.

Here Chesney introduces a key strategy of the future-war tale: He raises the spectre of the British homeland, the centre of a powerful empire, being reduced to a peripheral place after it has been defeated in the next great war. Naturally he and subsequent authors of such invasion-scare stories aim to shock: They emphasise to the point of exaggeration the dire consequences of unpreparedness in order to incite the public towards more awareness of the shortcomings of Britain's national defence. Ostensibly, it is necessary to directly confront the audience with the horror of imperial reversal so that, as Chesney's Volunteer claims, the public can "take profit [...] from the lesson it [the reversal] teaches" (3). The warning's full effect is achieved by defamiliarising the reader from their habitual conception of their home as an impregnable refuge, and indeed from their trust in British superiority.

This defamiliarisation is effected by inculcating doubt in the strength of empire. The future-war tale by nature questions contemporary imperialist ideology, for it is critical of the hegemony and stability typically associated with the British metropolis, especially in an era in which rivals like the German Empire have emerged on the world stage. Being threatened from the outside (as well as the inside at times), Britain in the future-war narrative is in constant danger of becoming another power's next target, either for quick raids on its resources or as a potential candidate for colonial expansion. In effect, it becomes a new frontier space, ripe for foreign occupation if not defended properly. Chesney's description of the outskirts of Dorking at the eve of battle in terms befitting a tropical locale hence anticipates the imminent fall of the nation and the loss of its civilisation.

Among the mass of future-war tales from 1871 to 1914, only a small number are invasion-scare tales which envision a Britain which ultimately loses the war-to-come and experiences the fallout of this imperial reversal. Even less imagine Britain being completely made a colony of a rival imperial power after a staggering defeat in war².

² Cecil D. Eby rightly singles out Hector Hugh Munro's *When William Came*, as it "departs from the others of the genre by depicting occupation of the country without showing the war itself" (*Road to Armageddon* 81), and I. F. Clarke's "Checklist of Imaginary Wars, 1763-1990" lists *When William Came* and Horace Francis Lester's *The Taking of Dover* as the only two major stories between 1871 and 1914 to envision Britain as a wholly colonised space (*Voices* 224-36).

These especially Cassandran³ narratives are thought experiments which invert Britain's position. Now the erstwhile coloniser too experiences foreign invasion, oppression, and (in a very few cases) wholesale colonisation. These narratives thus concern themselves with the type of question which Charles Masterman articulated in 1909:

[N]o living observer has ever seen England in adversity: beaten to the knees, to the ground. No one can foresee what spirit – either of resistance or acquiescence – latent in this kindly, lazy, good-natured people might be evoked by so elemental a challenge. England is often sharply contrasted with Ireland, and the Irish with the English people. What spirit would be manifest amongst the English people to-day if they had been subjugated by an alien conqueror, with their lands dispossessed, their religion penalised, their national ideals everywhere faced with opposition and disdain? [...] And no one can foresee what a nation will do in adversity which has never seen itself compelled to face the end of its customary world. (*Condition of England* 12-13)^{3a}

Crucially, the authors of these exceptional narratives draw from the nation's own imperial experiences, using the qualities and situations of its colonised subjects as a template. The empire's marginal spaces here provide a familiar blueprint after which Britain's own marginality can be modelled. To paraphrase Masterman, fallen Britain in these texts becomes a new Ireland or a second India. Thus the colony is utilised as an instructor to the metropolis, for it provides both an analogue and a deterrent. It is a looking glass which shows the British of the late Victorian and Edwardian present where to mend their ways in order not to end up a subject people in the future.

In the words of John Rieder, the “straightforward matter of the fiction's reversing the positions of colonizer and colonized, master and slave, core and periphery”, by itself “a relatively simple procedure”, nonetheless “yields complex results” (*Emergence of Science Fiction* 124). Both Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871; *BD*) and Hector Hugh Munro's *When William Came* (1913; *WWC*) utilise the premise of British marginality to explore issues of British identity and the state of the nation in their times, uncovering a potentially disturbing affinity between their imagined postcolonial British and the colonised subjects

3 I use this term following Richard J. Norton's helpful classification: “Cassandrans seek to sound the tocsin, to call attention to dangers and conditions that if not addressed will harm or even destroy the state. For these writers, setting the story in a future where calamity has already befallen the target audience is a means of driving the warning home.” (“Through a Mirror Darkly” 125)

3a It should be noted that most authors of future-war stories, even if they addressed the same issues, did not necessarily share Masterman's Liberal alignment but can be placed on a broader political spectrum. There might even be a Conservative preponderance, certainly. Indeed George Chesney became a Conservative MP for Oxford late in life (cf. Clarke, Introduction ix; Shorrock 77).

of their times. By this, both texts dismantle the clear-cut divide between the polar opposites of imperial metropolis and periphery.

Indeed, their criticism of British shortcomings finds Britain the more peripheral place in several respects. This reversal allows for a deeper examination of several sociocultural implications of imperialism and colonialism from a unique perspective, for it can show the conquered British behaving quite analogously to other marginal peoples. In the *Dorking* narrative, the nation's disunity of purpose leads to an administrative chaos which enables the enemy to beat the British quickly. Although the nation is not subsumed in the German empire but stays independent, the results of this invasion disrupt British life severely, destroying its economy and society. As a result, the demoralised people's self-image is reshaped, leading to an examination of what constitutes British identity. Going further than Chesney, Hector Hugh Munro (under his pen name Saki) imagines a fully colonised Britain in *When William Came*, actualising in his tale latent fears of reverse colonisation. His narrative may be called pseudo-colonial literature: the literature of a colonised near-future Britain. Through his hero Murrey Yeovil, Munro is able to examine the complexity in the range of interactions between coloniser and colonised and the actual veracity of his people's strictly dichotomous centre-periphery ideology of Empire itself.

Inhabiting the unfamiliar point of view of the colonised subject, these tales' British characters display a wide range of complex attitudes towards their individual situation, the nation's fate, and the invader/coloniser divide. At the same time, the ambitions and underlying ideology of the fictional invader's imperial project represent a benchmark for (and often, a mirror to) Britain's own mission and provide a point of reference for criticism of domestic imperial ambitions. Here the authors show an awareness of the power imbalance inherent in colonialist relations and its negative consequences on the indigenous subject. There is empathy with the lot of the colonised; the 'degraded' state of Britain under the invader also provides insight in contemporary Britons' ambivalent reception of Britain's colonised subject.

Nevertheless, this empathy does not lead to a full re-examination of colonialist values but only goes as far as Britain's own benefit is concerned. The indigene's situation is merely the deterrent in these narrative lessons for Britain, fuel for the argument that Britons, accustomed as they are to a position of power, have to avoid such full marginality at all costs. The periphery still carries negative connotations here. However, it also represents a tiny hint of hope, for the centre still has to admit its affinity with the margins:

Only by witnessing peripheral Others and their condition can the British realise what it takes to be (and to remain) a coloniser.

Moreover, these tales represent a subversion of social Darwinist legitimisations of colonial rule. The authors recognise that if only the strongest nation is most qualified – perhaps even most obligated – to colonise weaker, less civilised populations, then a weak Britain has no right to complain about its being invaded. It would be the more powerful rival power's fully justifiable duty to colonise an uncivilised Britain, after all. The nation's annihilation would be wholly deserved in this case, for it has proven its unfitness to rule. "A nation too selfish to defend its liberty could not have been fit to retain it", Chesney's Volunteer argues (*BD* 48), pointing out his people's responsibility. The invasion-scare story thus recognises the basic unfairness of imperialist power relations and social Darwinist imperialism's tendency to blame the victim, as it were. It thus introduces a hint of relativism concerning Britain's moral standards, for it shows the metropolitan nation how little it itself complies with its own ideological imperatives. Hereby it reminds the colonising nation to not take for granted its hegemony. This places an onus on the metropolis to ensure its fitness to administrate its empire, lest it relapses into marginality itself. Accordingly, Chesney and Munro take the British to task in this regard by taking such an ideology to its most extreme – yet still logical – conclusion.

2.1 George Chesney's Britain on the Margins

The unnamed Volunteer narrates Chesney's short story *The Battle of Dorking* five decades after they happened, reminiscing as an old man to give his grandchildren a lesson on Old Britain's hubris. Growing tensions with the recently founded German Empire in the 1870s have led to an overeager Britain declaring war on the new rival. The nation is not ready, however, so German troops swiftly land on British soil. The young Volunteer and many of his peers are sent into battle severely untrained, and chaos reigns among the authorities. The defence force inevitably collapses, and the Volunteer abandons the front after being wounded near Dorking. He helps his dying friend Travers to his family home and realises amidst the death of Travers and that man's son that Britain's fate is sealed. The Germans overpower the defenders, and Britain becomes a dependency of Germany. Poverty and decay lead to mass emigration after the Germans strip the British Isles of all their wealth; the Volunteer spends the rest of his life in a depressed Britain, while his grandchildren will emigrate to an unspecified location far from the former homeland.

While he marches through the yet-unspoilt countryside, some hours before the German troops overrun the defenders' positions, the Volunteer notices a cognitive dissonance which is developing in his mind. This dissonance is caused by the stark contrast between the summer idyll around him and the inescapable truth of war only a few miles away, which is made all the more foreboding because of his battalion's unpreparedness for battle. He is certain of impending doom:

[W]hat, as I remember, most impressed me, was the peaceful beauty of the scene – the little town with the outline of the houses obscured by a blue mist, the massive crispness of the foliage, the outlines of the great trees, lighted up by the sun, and relieved by deep blue shade. [...] The quiet of the scene was the more impressive because contrasted [sic] in the mind with the scenes we expected to follow; and I can remember, as if it were yesterday, the sensation of bitter regret that it should now be too late to avert this coming desecration of our country, which might so easily have been prevented. [...] Too late, alas! (23)

It seems that the Volunteer has already given up. Reality has intruded harshly into his almost dreamlike impression of the small town. Although he has not yet encountered the invader, he is aware that subjectively something has already been lost. His surroundings might still look like before, but increasingly they do not register as Old Britain any more. In his mind, another power has already claimed it. Indeed, his connection to his home soil is loosening, and he later becomes thoroughly disconnected from his home and people. Through his observations he implicitly realises that because of the invasion, Britain and the British have become a peripheral Other. In Heideggerian terminology, his surroundings have become *unheimlich* (uncanny), quite literally not-home. The conquerors' seizing of the locals' homes later in the narrative, when it becomes indisputable that the country is lost, is only a final stimulus which fully confirms his alienation.

The metaphor of the Dorking woods being a "primeval forest" holds a significant amount of narrative weight (23). The jungle connotes a lack of civilisation and agelessness; and indeed the Volunteer's homeland becomes a place out of time. All progress stops once the Germans win the deciding battle at Dorking. In effect, the war with Germany represents a caesura which ends British civilisation: Britain enters an indefinite period of stasis as the invasion destroys both its economy and society. In terms of sophistication, the nation even seems to regress, for the isolation of the country once all communication lines have been severed seems to the Volunteer "as if we had suddenly come back to the Middle Ages" (7). It is made obvious that this Britain is doomed to stay on the same 'degraded' level as its former colonies. All that remains of the Empire's glory is "associations of happy days of

peace – days now ended and peace destroyed through national infatuation” (38). The spectre of Travers’s wife when the Volunteer last sees her, “widowed and childless within a few moments, [...] coming forth like a ghost from the chamber of the dead” (43), is emblematic for the nation’s state at large: ghostlike, detached, only a husk of its former self. The humiliation of defeat has shaken the nation to its core, so that being British signifies deep shame.

John Robert Seeley paints a rather similarly negative image of India in his *The Expansion of England*, reinforcing a commonly held preconception about the peoples of the subcontinent: “India is all past and, I may almost say, no future. What it will come to the wisest man is afraid to conjecture, but in the past it opens vistas into a fabulous antiquity. All the oldest religions, all the oldest customs, petrified as it were” (176). The Volunteer’s new Britain corresponds closely to Seeley’s reading. Like the Indian peoples as described by Seeley, the British in *The Battle of Dorking* too may possess a long and impressive history and a rich cultural heritage, but that history is all they have left. They are equally petrified on a sociocultural level.

It is instructive to read Chesney’s invasion narrative in light of his lifelong connection with India. When he wrote *The Battle of Dorking*, Lieutenant-Colonel George Chesney was a decorated veteran of the 1857-8 Mutiny and member of the Royal (late Bengal) Engineers who had shown a vested interest in military reform both at home and abroad (cf. Clarke, “Before and after” 40, *Voices* 27; Shorrocks 73-5), spending much of his life on the subcontinent and as a result being considered an expert on Indian affairs (cf. Shorrocks 77). His writings are understandably much influenced by his colonial attitude, which becomes apparent not only in the non-fiction articles and the novel (*The Dilemma*) he contributed specifically on Indian issues but also in his work concerning Britain. Often he illustrates his respective argument by juxtaposing Britain with India, the Indian example providing a grounded, pragmatic point of reference for a larger theoretical issue. In an 1881 *Fortnightly Review* article he uses the example of the “typical” Indian village to examine problems of economic over-production (377), favouring the colonial location’s simplicity and self-containment. He thus posits a universality behind many issues and ideas concerning the imperial centre, so that complex discussions can be best elucidated in the context of the maybe basic but more comprehensible example of the periphery.

Twenty years after the first publication of *The Battle of Dorking*, Chesney wrote a series of articles in *The Nineteenth Century* in which he still decried “The Confusion Worse

Confounded at the War Office”, a direct continuation of the criticisms central to the *Dorking* tale. In the context of “the prospect of a successful parliamentary career ahead of him” (Shorrocks 77), these articles were his attempt to translate his expertise to domestic matters. In all of these texts he warns of disorganisation among the military authorities, his central point of contention being that “in the unwieldy overgrown establishment in Pall Mall a degree of confusion obtains in these matters [of organisation] which must be seen to be appreciated” (“How to Re-organise” 886). In his December 1891 article, he contrasts the chaotic situation at the home front with the orderly state of India’s armies, among which he finds “a scale of completeness which, compared with what obtains at home, may be termed perfect” (890). He continues:

It is only by decentralisation and the delegation of responsibility that so large and necessarily complicated a machine as the Indian armies could possibly be worked. If the same degree of centralisation as is practised at our War Office were attempted in India, with its larger establishments, and where there is practically always a state of war in some part or other of the Empire, involving the constant movement of troops, munitions, and transport animals from one part of the country to the other, the military administration would break down at once, just as the military administration here will assuredly break down at once in the event of war. (892)

This comparison finds Britain in an embarrassing position. If it is more difficult to coordinate affairs at home in ‘civilised’ Britain than abroad on the intrinsically ‘disorderly’ periphery, then this sheds a rather dim light on the homeland. In some respects, Britain here proves a more colonial place than India, since for once it is not the colony which is in need of organisation. Chesney thus incites the people at home to step up their game lest they suffer the consequences of their disorganisation.

In this respect, he connects these inadequacies of administration with a larger national malaise: the public’s general lack of will to ensure a proper, orderly functioning of government. His Volunteer perceives the advent of mass politics after the Reform Act of 1867, when “Parliament-rule was beginning to give way to mob-law” (*BD* 5), as one of the first symptoms of Britain’s marginality, even long before the Anglo-German war reaffirms his profound uneasiness with the increasing political power of the working classes. The vote of the masses is portrayed as tantamount to confusion, for the firm structure of British society, which ostensibly has helped Britain to attain its place of prominence in the world, has been lost:

The warnings of the few were drowned in the voice of the multitude. Power was then passing away from the class which had been used to rule, and to face political dangers, and which had brought the nation with honour unsullied through former

struggles, into the hands of the lower classes, uneducated, untrained to the use of political rights, and swayed by demagogues; and the few who were wise in their generation were denounced as alarmists, or as aristocrats who sought their own aggrandisement by wasting public money on bloated armaments. [...] Politics had become a mere bidding for Radical votes, and those who should have led the nation stooped rather to pander to the selfishness of the day, and humoured the popular cry which denounced those who would secure the defence of the nation by enforced arming of its manhood, as interfering with the liberties of the people.
(47)

The unstable state of politics here described is the disruption of a natural order, with the old elite, who would know best, now unable to perform its duty properly. The British being “an impulsive lot” (6), the Volunteer laments that informed and competent decisions are reflexively suppressed by the whims of the masses. The nation’s inability to reach political consensus is therefore the beginning of its decline, mob mentality being a first sign of Britain’s weakness. It is not far until it reaches the “condition of anarchy” which “seems almost to have been chronic in India” in pre-British Raj times (Seeley 196).

The Volunteer experiences this collapse of order intimately. Chaos breaks out as the authorities are unable to supply and direct their troops in any effective way – the narrator’s company does not receive enough provisions and is first sent towards the wrong front line –, leaving the soldiers and their direct superiors on their own. Inevitably, the volunteer troops’ trust in their out-of-their-depth superiors, in their equipment, and in themselves weakens considerably long before their first battle. The troops’ rather quick abandoning of all discipline when hungry, looting a bakery, is then merely another result of the social fabric’s dissolving as personal virtues disappear – “some of the officers were as bad as the men” (*BD* 19). Importantly, the sociocultural decay of Britain is therefore not the consequence of the German invasion but a process which is only catalysed by the attack. Even before the defeat, the British have already lost integral qualities: their dutifulness, orderliness, dedication to structure and tradition, and their courage. They have already become an Other, for their eschewing of such central qualities of Britishness has made them unrecognisable as Britons. In consequence to this, the Volunteer implies that in such a confused state the nation cannot sufficiently take care of its empire – or even itself – any more. His proclamation that “you would have thought that Providence had ordained [...] that trade came to us because we lived in a foggy little island set in a boisterous sea” is intended to take his (and his author’s) contemporaries’ self-satisfaction amidst a flourishing economy down a peg (47). After all, theirs is not an exceptional island, and they themselves are not a special people. Britain’s position of power is thus deconstructed as

a mere lucky anomaly, which in turn makes protecting this unusual advantage an even more pressing concern. What is more, Chesney hereby dismantles the myth of Britain's god-given empire, for it is made obvious that the security of Britain does not depend on divine grace alone but on the population's own efforts. Accordingly, the Volunteer finds a distinct reason for Britain's inability to maintain economic progress post-invasion in the population's inability for self-examination.

Patricia Kerslake assumes that George Chesney pursues "anti-imperial propaganda" (*Science Fiction and Empire* 26), but it needs to be noted that Chesney's criticism is more specific and focussed than launching a broad salvo against imperialist practice. Ensuring a steady influx of resources means securing Britain's prosperity to him, and for that prosperity to stay, the importance of empire is stressed (cf. "Value of India" 235-6). National defence is associated with economic imperatives, with both being subsumed under the people's imperial duties. The Volunteer in the *Dorking* tale again points towards Great Britain's unnatural existence as "merely a big workshop" that would collapse without its colonies sending it raw materials (*BD* 4), so that its antebellum prosperity is only "artificial" (47). In fact, the narrator emphasises the importance of empire through this condemnation of British self-satisfaction. Chesney is critical of contemporary Britain's imperial ambitions, even if he supports its imperial ideology per se. As a military planner, he is especially concerned about the empire's expansiveness, warning that Britain has stretched its means too thin. His narrator considers keeping up colonies in indefensible locations an "incredible folly" (*Dorking* 6), as this spreading thin also impacts the home front's capacities adversely. The nation has succumbed to hubris in this regard. Being invaded is the inescapable reality check, and the economic ruin after its empire's dismantling is seen as fully deserved. As I. F. Clarke puts it, "in the manner of high tragedy the nation brings on its own doom" (*Voices* 30).

Nevertheless, even after the wake-up call of invasion, an inhibiting social atmosphere influences British economics adversely, for it seems that the post-war depression is made all the more dire by the people's social and cultural stasis. Again an emphasis is put on the issue of order; post-war Britain is characterised by the absence of structure and purpose. Any motivation to even attempt reconstruction seems absent from the populace; the people's hopelessness and general feeling of humiliation over the invasion form a feedback loop which cannot be broken. This goes as far as being envious of the fallen:

Happy those whose bones whitened the fields of Surrey; they at least were spared the disgrace we lived to endure. [...] When I look at my country as it is now – its trade gone, its factories silent, its harbours empty, a prey to pauperism and decay – when I see all this, and think what Great Britain was in my youth, I ask myself whether I have really a heart or any sense of patriotism that I should have witnessed such degradation and still care to live! (*Dorking* 46)

Since by narrative concept the Volunteer's life story mirrors the experiences of a large part of the population, his guilt and alienation reflect a larger, nation-wide sense of loss. It seems the people suffer survivor's guilt. Those "whose bones whitened the fields of Surrey" are glorified as heroes who gave their life for the lost cause, making them martyrs; yet in turn this makes the survivors into traitors. Through the ignominy of defeat and its subsequent marginality, the nation now sees itself as a laughing stock in the world. Being British and alive after invasion means having betrayed everything Britain stood for, so a rather negative identity has replaced the formerly positive British self-image.

A crucial hint at the importance of the British homeland itself as a source of identity is Chesney's use of religious terms. When the Volunteer speaks of the Germans' landing being a "desecration of our country" (23), he reveals his belief that the people have a fundamental responsibility to defend their soil's sanctity. Allowing an enemy to invade is a sin, a grave offence on a fundamental level. It is therefore fully reasonable that after the defeat the Volunteer should feel remorse over the "humiliation which has been brought on the land" (3), for he has neglected his obligations towards his home soil itself. It is made clear that through the permanence and eternity of British soil, all generations of Britons – past to future – are intertwined together:

Venerable old age! Dishonourable old age, I say, when it follows a manhood dishonoured as ours has been. I declare, even now, though fifty years have passed, I can hardly look a young man in the face when I think I am one of those in whose youth happened this degradation of Old England – one of those who betrayed the trust handed down to us unstained by our forefathers. (3)

The Volunteer imagines that there is an intergenerational responsibility which every Briton has towards the nation. "Old England" thus must be seen as the sum of every Briton's deeds. This makes the defence of the homeland the prime obligation of all Britons, for the nation draws its very sense of self from it. The Volunteer's generation losing the country is hence a betrayal of everything British. Furthermore, the fact that his people cannot defend their home implicitly means that they have forgotten their identity. This loss leaves the Volunteer and his compatriots uprooted, for they have severed all the vital connections, spatial and temporal, which should be the basis of their identity and national pride.

The narrator's entrenched shame has an external origin as well, for he and his compatriots seem to fully internalise the invader's contempt for them. By this the people's humiliation becomes both an extension of the guilt of allowing the invasion to happen and a reflection of the oppressor's attitudes. The Volunteer first experiences the enemy officers' low regard for their defeated adversary when he pleads for the lives of two insubordinate fellow volunteers:

Between [the] lame *Freiwilliger* pleading for his comrades and the captain of the conquering army, there was, in his view, an infinite gulf. Had the two men been dogs, their fate could not have been decided more contemptuously. They were let go simply because they were not worth keeping as prisoners, and perhaps to kill any living thing without cause went against the *Hauptmann's* sense of justice. But why speak of this insult in particular? Had not every man who lived then his tale to tell of humiliation and degradation? For it was the same story everywhere. (45)

Again Chesney emphasises the debilitating impact of foreign imperialist ambition on a native population. The German conqueror utterly dehumanises the British. The attitude revealed here shows the oppressive practices of control in such an asymmetrical contact situation, where the subjugation of the native subject is legitimised by conceptualising it as an inferior Other. The Germans exert power over the Britons not only in terms of military might but also via social oppression. Chesney projects the damaging effect of such internalisation of racial prejudice as operating in much the same way the Britons, as colonisers, had classified indigenous peoples on the British imperial margins as inferior. As a result, the post-war Britons, for once themselves an indigenous people unable to resist an invader, come to believe in their inferiority to the Germans.

It is an additional insult that the invading soldiers are themselves crude thugs whose behaviour out of battle reveals their apparent cultural inferiority. Their table manners in the Travers' dining room, abusing the family's furniture and silverware, lead the Volunteer to question their status as civilised beings:

"*Sind wackere Soldaten, diese Englischen Freiwilligen,*" said a broad-shouldered brute, stuffing a great hunch of beef into his mouth with a silver fork, an implement I should think he must have been using for the first time in his life.

"*Ja, ja,*" replied a comrade, who was lolling back in his chair with a pair of very dirty legs on the table, and one of poor Travers's best cigars in his mouth; "*Sie so gut laufen können.*"

"*Ja wohl,*" responded the first speaker; "*aber sind nicht eben so schnell wie die Französischen Mobloten.*"

"*Gewiss,*" grunted a hulking lout from the floor, leaning on his elbow, and sending out a cloud of smoke from his ugly jaws; "*und da sind hier etwa gute Schützen.*"

“*Hast recht, lange [sic] Peter,*” answered number one; “*wenn die Schurken so gut exerciren [sic] wie schützen [sic] könnten, so wären wir heute nicht hier!*”
“*Recht! Recht!*” said the second; “*das exerciren [sic] macht den guten Soldaten.*”
(43)

To a competent speaker of German, this rather unidiomatic, at times ungrammatical German has a presumably unintended but fortuitous side-effect: These soldiers appear to be unable to fully grasp their own mother tongue, conversing in a stereotypically ‘half-savage’ idiom; a sentence in the style of “*Sie so gut laufen können*” reads quite similarly as, for example, ‘*Me Tarzan, you Jane*’ in English. The embarrassing fact that on cultural terms the successful Germans seem so far below the British thus further empowers the author’s argument for a stricter political and military orderliness: Although the German line infantry is made up of uncouth barbarians, at least their discipline, training, and perfect leadership ensure their tremendous success.

In H. Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*, Allan Quatermain compares the militarism of the natives of Kukuanialand with that of the Germans (85). Quatermain shows a positive attitude towards national militarism and the martial spirit. This correlation with the Germans gives the African people a high degree of prestige: By being so similar to the Germans, the Kukuana are almost civilised. However, in the case of the Volunteer’s tale, that point of view is reversed, for the apparent identity of a European people with a ‘savage’ nation functions rather as a denigration of the Germans. In the *Dorking* story, the Germans therefore must be considered almost uncivilised.

In turn, however, this also signals that there is a need to balance cultural and military achievements. Apparently, cultural sophistication is worth nothing when there is no firm organisation behind the nation’s every effort. The Volunteer indicates that Germans are seemingly only bred for war, but their single-minded unity of purpose and efficiency allow them to ascend the ranks of the world’s foremost nations. By contrast, the Britons’ sole deficiency, their political disunity, is thus exposed as their Achilles’ heel. Although their culture is so much richer and the nation’s interests much broader than war, they eventually lose even the sophistication which originally has elevated them over the invader by allowing confusion to reign.

In fact, the volunteers are themselves in a half-savage state by the time of battle. Because of the insufficient provisioning of the troops before their departure and an essentially non-existing resupply system, Travers’s picnic basket contains “priceless luxuries” compared to what the troops eat near the end of their march (15). The volunteers

have to resort to ever more objectionable means of consuming their food. A tipping point is reached when the famished volunteers do not care any more whether they might be about to eat potentially raw meat – “at any rate we devoured it” (36). In contrast, only a short time before they explicitly cannot eat raw food. This marks them as being perilously close to ‘going native’; their disinterest in distinguishing between cooked and raw meat hints at them being well on their way in regressing into savagery. It is again stressed in the narrative, however, that this degradation is not the volunteer’s own fault of character but rather the price these troops pay for the nation’s mistakes, as at this stage the authorities have failed them. Chesney thus demonstrates that the ultimate outcome of national disorganisation is the horror of regressing into an atavistic state. The volunteers, left to their own, can do nothing but try to muddle through, responding to the deprivations of warfare by slipping into barbarism.

The Volunteer offers only one possibility of healing for the British nation, but opines that even this possibility will unlikely restore Britain’s full power: The children’s and grandchildren’s generations are not as bound to the soil as is the older generation and so experience less of their elders’ humiliation. They can recover their pride by abandoning the old country and their British identity. Emigration is a “regular custom” after the war and for the majority of Britons possibly the only recourse to escape poverty (4), so leaving a diminished Britain is considered a sensible choice. Starting anew and forging a new identity is preferable to lingering humiliation. It is likely that the “more prosperous land” that is the grandchildren’s destination is a former British colony (48). Since the Empire has been dissolved, however, the erstwhile dominions are either other powers’ colonies or independent nations. The new settlers would in time consider themselves citizens of their free and independent new homes and grow new roots.

Here the author introduces a different kind of periphery compared to the now marginal British nation. This different, more positive kind of periphery proves an outlet and holds the potential for a possible revitalisation of the British ‘stock’, for in Seeley’s terms there “everything is brand-new” and people are unencumbered because “[t]hey have no past and an unbounded future” (176). Interestingly, here the periphery attains a prestigious position, unlike that of the marginal post-war Britain. Detached from the former metropolis and on its way towards independence, it appears to profit most from this migration wave. The settlers provide a new workforce and potential for growth, and to the newcomers this periphery promises a better life. This stands in contrast to the ‘negative’ periphery of post-

Empire Britain, where the burden of history clouds the nation's future. This hints at the one option which would allow the degraded British to regain their old virility, for the unclaimed margins of another empire would again see the British people inhabit their traditional, 'natural' role of the coloniser.

The situation in *The Battle of Dorking*, with British society destroyed despite the nation being a former global power, highlights the danger of being forced into contact with a strong foreign adversary – even in a situation where Britain would not end up being actively colonised by a foreign invader. Chesney warns of rival powers' destructive influence on the ostensibly weakened nation; so should Britain seek war, its humiliation could potentially be its least negative punishment. In the case of the *Dorking* narrative, the British cannot regain their former power. On the contrary, the war's outcome leaves the British, like the Indian peoples in Seeley's example, powerless. They are forever doomed to await being invaded by another foreign nation and once again fall under a different imperial power's control. In this regard, Chesney builds his argument upon a different point of reference than Hector Hugh Munro, for he keeps his focus on the British population as a marginal people that is spared direct rule. Munro on the other hand envisions Britain as a full-blown colony, which enables him to look both ways, towards coloniser and colonised. He thus goes even one step further than Chesney, finding affinities of his invaded British with both the actual contemporary Britain's colonised peoples and his imagined foreign coloniser.

2.2 Ambivalent Contact: Hector Hugh Munro's Colonised Identities

In Munro's novel *When William Came*, main character Murrey Yeovil returns to Britain after a lengthy expedition to the Russian Far East. In his absence, Britain has fought and decisively lost a short war with the German Empire; now the Germans have annexed Britain and have begun to form the colonised nation according to their ideas. Initially taken aback by these changes, as well as by his fellow Britons' silent acceptance of the new status quo, Yeovil wanders London and the surrounding countryside in search of anyone who would help him fight back against the coloniser. Gradually, however, he too comes to terms with the new order of things, befriending a personable German officer in whom he sees a kindred spirit. At the end of the narrative, Yeovil watches preparations for a parade honouring the German Kaiser (titular William, or Wilhelm II) in which the Boy Scouts are scheduled to march by; the boys stay absent wilfully, this small sign of defiance against the

oppressor seen as a last faint hope of the British again finding the spirit to reclaim their lost homeland. Future-war narratives which imagined a thoroughly colonised Britain had come before Munro's novel, yet Munro gives this premise a much more comprehensive dimension, confronting the reader with a Britain that is not in danger of becoming a second India, as in Chesney's *Dorking* story, but which already has become such a society.

A 1909 short story by Horace Francis Lester, *The Taking of Dover*, opens with a new status quo in which the French have installed governors in their British prefectures after their successful annexation of the island in a near-future war. However, Lester does not depict day-to-day life in this colonised land and gives no hint as to the current situation of the British subject. Yet, not least in the context of Munro's later story, the prevailing attitude of Lester's short story's narrator towards the British, and towards the colonisers' treatment of them, is a revealing turnaround of contemporary attitudes.

In *The Taking of Dover*, the governor of the Préfecture Maritime de Kent writes a letter detailing his contributions to the invasion to his son, who has been sent back home to France to attend military school. It becomes apparent that the governor considered the Britons' apparent general social and cultural inferiority as the deciding factor in his decision to send the youth away. With a "pedlar spirit pervad[ing] everything here still", Britain's cultural cachet is simply too low, the country being merely a "nation of shopkeepers" (*Taking of Dover* 115). As a result, the standard of education is inferior; so Britain is obviously no place to adequately raise a child. The governor's attitudes here seem a calculated narrative choice intended to condemn the British national character's shortcomings. Lester wrote his story to argue his belief in the nation's general lack of awareness concerning foreign agents in their midst. The reader is encouraged to agree with the governor's criticism, even though his arrogant dismissal of British civilisation might at first appear to be outrageous. "They have genius, courage, patriotism. But they are slow, lazy, credulous, and confiding to a ridiculous extent", he proclaims (113), and the tale's consistent portrayal of British naiveté validates him. It is no wonder therefore, and rather justifiable within the narrative's implied ethics, that the French fully exploit these natives' weakness.

Arguably a British colonial administrator, for example, would think and act very similarly. He too would send his children back home for a better education than is available on the imperial margins. The French colonisers' approach to their new dominion here merely reflects the Britons' own conduct in their overseas territories. In essence, the

governor's contempt for his colony's backwardness and his feeling of superiority over the native population reflects British attitudes. Lester's juxtaposition of these near-future subjugated Britons with contemporary attitudes towards indigenes is therefore a reminder that positions of privilege will not necessarily enjoy indefinite existences. It allows him to perform an examination of colonialist ideology from an opposite perspective, his Britons' subjugated state illustrating the harmful consequences of colonialist power structures, built as they are upon exploitation and prejudice, on the indigenous subject. Naturally, this comparison is purposefully humiliating, for it is premised on every Briton's ostensible desire to avoid the 'inferior' state of the indigenous subject.

Hector Hugh Munro's childhood experiences were quite similar to those of Lester's fictional French governor's son. Born in Burma to a family with "strong military and imperial connections" and later serving as an officer in Burma like his father before (Byrne 5), Munro seems to have kept the colony in his mind as much as did George Chesney. Upon his mother's death, Munro was sent to England to stay with his aunts; it was hoped that he too would find a better upbringing in the homeland than on the imperial periphery (3). Munro's insight into colonial life and colonial societies informs the situation of his occupied Britain in *When William Came*. He captures the ambivalence of both coloniser and colonised towards each other, so that ultimately their respective identities are not clearly delineated any more. His critical examination of both the colony of German Britain (the emasculated homeland) and British India (the virile yet troublesome new abode of the royal court and many exiled Britons) reveals that reclaiming Britishness (and with it, Britain's former glory) seems utterly impossible in both colonial locations. Although his praise of the Britons' frontier spirit in India is much in line with his jingoist/militarist attitude (cf. Gibbon 209), the author implicitly admits by leaving his narrative open-ended that the nation's divisiveness (in a scenario analogous to Chesney's) makes reconstituting a pure, independent and strong Britain all but impossible after losing the war-to-come, despite positive qualities still remaining within the population.

His main character's ultimately unsuccessful quest to rediscover lost British virtues among the colonised population of southern England exposes the multifaceted nature of contact. His colonised population's dealing with the coloniser proves no clear-cut case of either full collaboration or general antipathy. Murrey Yeovil, at first fully opposed to the Germans, fails to join or start a resistance movement because he does not find anyone left who would still uphold old English virtues and fight for Britain. In the face of the

coloniser's efforts at accommodation, comfort has quenched any rebellious spirit in the populace. He therefore only finds people who have made the best of the situation – and potentially even profited from it substantially. This problematises the issue how deep Yeovil's compatriots' will towards retaining their identity really goes. Yeovil complains about his people's laxness towards their Britishness, too eager to discard it and their national pride. Like the Volunteer in *The Battle of Dorking*, he is ashamed of Britain having lost its supremacy so easily, and worst of all due to home-grown weakness. However, the people at large do not share the protagonist's sense of humiliation. Large swathes of society seem quite indifferent, even "acquiescent" (*WWC* 64). It becomes clear that the German coloniser has created a relatively stable new social hierarchy in which the former British classes are individually placated or otherwise distracted from rebellion. Many British, especially the old elites (including the royal court), are in exile or have secluded themselves, while the middle classes form a new *comprador* elite. A central foundation of the British people's lack of patriotism thus lies in their widespread assimilation.

Clearly the German coloniser exploits the middle classes' vanity to keep them in line. Murrey's wife Cicely Yeovil is presented as an exemplary materialistic profiteer, indulging her egoism and social ambitions instead of rejecting the Germans' offers. Her assimilation into German-led society has allowed her to climb the social ladder quickly, something which has been much easier under the new conditions in the country. Importantly, however, her lack of virtues is not a sad result of her desperate need to conform in order to survive her home's colonisation: The coloniser has only amplified flaws which she already possessed; her decadence and implied infidelity are effectively inborn.

Cicely goes so far as to commodify the young artists whom she keeps around herself, considering the musician Ronnie Storre her newest "acquisition" and "an indulgence she had bestowed on herself" (53). Cicely's adulterous relationships thus reflect the successfulness of the Germans' tactic of pandering to the British middle classes' basest desires. They obviously pursue a colonialism of consumerism: As long as the middle classes still can indulge themselves as much as (or perhaps even more than) they did before, they are distracted from their harsh reality. Since they are still able to have "a tempting array of caviare, crab and mushroom salads, cold asparagus, slender hock bottles and high-stemmed wine goblets" for lunch (54), they are well-sated.

Upon being confronted by Murrey, Cicely's unconvincing justification of her collaborating with the coloniser reveals how the people at large whitewash their situation.

Even though she admits that “[t]he German occupation, or whatever one likes to call it, is a calamity” (95), her prognosis that in time the British might gain political dominance within the German empire (and through this, perhaps independence) by “impressing our national characteristics on it, and perhaps dictating its dynastic future” (96) is merely a deferring of responsibility. So is her argument that “we may become strong enough to throw off the foreign connection at a moment when it can be done effectually and advantageously” (ibid.). To maintain her material comforts, she gladly relegates the burden of resistance to future generations and thereby seeks to ignore her guilt of allowing Britain to be colonised in the first place. This impresses upon Murrey how inextricably dependent the British now are on the Germans, and this makes the prospect of a popular uprising, at least one originating from the middle classes, unlikely.

The author is aware of the debilitating effect of a coloniser’s culture on indigenous cultures, which he utilises to criticise the Britons’ little regard of their own traditions. In his narrative, the colonised British gladly shed their cultural distinctness. Munro’s London elite basically sell out their culture (and with it their Britishness) to accommodate the Germans, now favouring their masters’ Continental tastes. An atmosphere of cronyism and conformism is in effect. Thus, when the Yeovils’ social circle willingly abandons its traditions, this is not an act of genuine love for Continental art but, to them, a social necessity. Most of the audience sit voluntarily through a ludicrous Germanised theatre performance, which not only highlights this new society’s creative poverty but also shows its warped priorities. Yeovil finds that his compatriots’ indulging in foreign fads debases the idea of art. Far from being an exhibition of the nation’s most treasured cultural artefacts, the arts are now just another opportunity for ingratiation with the Germans. Indeed, in the way that fearsome predators have been infantilised for the audience’s amusement during these new theatre performances, the Britons’ own downfall is reflected:

Yeovil had encountered wolves in North Africa deserts and in Siberian forest and wold, he had seen them at twilight stealing like dark shadows across the snow, and heard their long whimpering howl in the darkness amid the pines; he could well understand how a magic lore had grown up round them through the ages among the peoples of four continents, how their name had passed into a hundred strange sayings and inspired a hundred traditions. And now he saw them ride round the stage on tricycles, with grotesque ruffles round their necks and clown caps on their heads, their eyes blinking miserably in the blaze of the footlights. (106-7)

Like these animals, the British people have fallen far from their former position of power. Where before they too were predators, they are now pets performing to the amusement of

the Germans. Similarly, the 'magic' of British sociocultural identity, its depth and importance, is lost as well, for it has been commodified by the British themselves, to be cast aside once convenient. Munro here uses exaggeration to shed light on what he perceives as a contemporary evil, and so participates in contemporary discourses on decadence and cultural degeneration. His post-war society reveals the insubstantiality of contemporary cosmopolitan culture, having sacrificed tradition for cheap thrills and laughs. "Luxury, sloth, ennui, decadence – Munro's catalogue of moral lapses attending twentieth-century existence is a familiar litany", Cecil Eby attests and situates the author among cultural critics like H. G. Wells and Rupert Brooke (*Road to Armageddon* 82).

Munro moreover points out that even those classes whose customary obligation it was to guard British cultural traditions have deviated far from their duties. In contrast to the social climbers of the middle classes, the upper-class landed gentry in this narrative still considers itself the self-proclaimed last bastion of Britishness, but it is nonetheless unable to resist the Germans. The former elites live secluded in their manors and are unwilling to emerge. It seems that no one has any concrete and vivid plans for the future, for the metropolitan middle classes only live in the moment and the landed gentry prefers to focus on the past. Murrey's friend, the Dowager Lady Greymarten, embodies this stratum of society's situation. Grown old and weary, she like the rest of the gentry cannot help the British people any more. "I am an old woman now", she proclaims, and "I must die in my cage. I haven't the strength to fight" (*WWC* 141). The Dowager mentioning that she has now freed her falcon again reflects British weakness: "The other birds may be reconciled to their comfortable quarters and abundant food and absence of dangers, but I don't think all those things could make up to a falcon for the wild range of cliff and desert" (*ibid.*). The vast majority of Britons have shown their preference for comfortable quarters and therefore their cage; they are falcons no more. Lady Greymarten's manor being called Torywood has a gloomy significance too: Long-standing Tory virtues which Yeovil (and his author) clearly admires, reverence for tradition and national history as well as class consciousness, are dying like the old dowager. However it also shows that insularity and retreating into the past are as hazardous to the nation's defence as is simply accepting the invader.

Yeovil, although filled with a desire to rebel against the coloniser, in time falters; he too becomes accustomed to the coloniser's presence. He must confront his own ambivalence towards the coloniser when he befriends Lieutenant von Gabelroth, who makes him question easy dichotomies in this contact situation. Von Gabelroth moreover complicates

Murrey's attitude towards what constitutes distinct markers of British and German identities, for the German officer shares with him a love for the outdoors and corresponding hobbies, a quality which Murrey thoroughly admires. "Was this what he really wanted to be doing, pursuing his uneventful way as a country squire, sharing even his sports and pastimes with men of the nation that had conquered and enslaved his Fatherland", he asks himself (171), already envisioning a future in which he, like the gentry, would live secluded in the countryside, and like the middle classes would fraternise with the coloniser. Both men realise there is common ground upon which an understanding, even friendship can be reached. As the officer's friendliness is not a facade but a real sign of his respect for Yeovil, the author here admits the possibility for coloniser and colonised to live together amicably in recognition of mutual commonalities.

This, however, is what makes colonisation so dangerous from Munro's point of view. When he climbs into the German's automobile, Yeovil still symbolically deserts his cause. The German's geniality moreover leads him to accept the comforts of modernity, another signal of the Briton's changing attitudes. His erstwhile scepticism of technological progress, considering railways a "stark bare ugliness" which mars the "green solitude" of nature (131), turns into acceptance of Britain's colonial present and future. By embracing the usefulness of technology, he too abandons the martial spirit and fervent patriotism which in his eyes made him the last true Englishman in a mass of collaborators. This marks the point when he himself becomes a collaborator, and his deep feeling of shame at the narrative's end reflects his inner torment about his decision. Ideological imperatives are here weighed against personal fulfilment (with the narrative squarely favouring the demands of British imperial ideology), and when he surrenders to his desires, Yeovil proves to be no better than the people he criticised before.

The only remaining true Britons are the nation's young, for only they actualise the Britons' yearning for a resistance movement. This positive portrayal of the British youth is congruent with Munro's militarist attitudes and anti-authoritarian ideology, which imagines children as the more mature individuals than adults and which leads to some of his writing's most defiant scenes (cf. Gibson 208). In *When William Came*, British boys combine the landed gentry's predisposition towards an active outdoors life – and its associated martial spirit – with a youthful patriotism unbounded by adult complacency. Their refusal to attend the German emperor's Boy Scouts parade is thus a signal of hope and a potential first strike against the coloniser. It is nevertheless only a small sign of

defiance, and only a passive show of resistance. The effectiveness of the scouts' signal towards the invader must be questioned, therefore, as in the face of the British people's general apathy it might need a stronger wake-up call to incite a broader rebellion. The tragedy here is that those most willing and able to revolt against oppression are those with the least chance of success, if only because in terms of sheer numbers and due to the fact that they are only boys. On their own, the scouts cannot ever win a war of independence against Germany. The narrative's open-endedness leaves the outcome of this situation uncertain, yet rationally, the British youth's success in this situation is highly unlikely.

Munro did not stand alone in seeing Britain's younger generations, and in particular those boys participating in youth organisations like Robert Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts and citizen militias like local Volunteer groups, as a potential remedy to Britain's martial weaknesses. A number of other texts in the future-war genre incorporate similar ideas. Guy Du Maurier's play *An Englishman's Home*, first staged in 1909, for instance anticipates Munro's arguments. In this play, the lethargy of a large part of the British population, personified by the Brown family, hinders those of the younger generation who are willing and capable to fight the invaders. The older brothers Brown first ridicule their younger sibling Paul, who has joined the Volunteers, calling him a wannabe "Kitchener" (*Englishman's Home* 21) – clearly, they see Paul's dedication as ineffectual play-acting. Yet Paul proves to be the only Brown who can effectively fight back once enemy soldiers storm the family's home. His efforts are in vain, however, as the larger part of the population is as unprepared and ultimately defeatist as his brothers and father. Such men at first complain about the British soldiers not doing their job (112), and only when pressed to the utmost do realise that as Englishmen, they are obligated to be soldiers of the Empire in such a crisis. Their inborn instinct to protect home and empire kicks in too late, however; the father is executed by the occupiers (130), the Browns' home is set aflame, and Britain is doomed to fall.

A young P. G. Wodehouse, in later years a social critic and satirist like Munro, on the opposite end of the spectrum ridiculed such glorifications of the strength of popular youth movements. In his short story *The Swoop!* from 1909, published in reaction to Du Maurier's play, he paints the premise of Boy Scouts saving the day for Britain as a ludicrous proposition, at the same time mocking the self-seriousness of most texts in the future-war genre. His young hero Clarence Chugwater, the "Boy of Destiny" (*Swoop* 3), is introduced with a description of his clothing and accessories, which shows no difference

between harmless boys' pastimes and sports and Clarence's – equally harmless – Boy Scouts aspirations:

He was neatly, but not gaudily, dressed in a flat-brimmed hat, a coloured handkerchief, a flannel shirt, a bunch of ribbons, a haversack, football shorts, brown boots, a whistle, and a hockey-stick. He was, in fact, one of General Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts. (91)

Wodehouse thus undercuts any prospect of martial strength that such Boy Scouts are alleged to possess. Clarence's complaints about England's supposed fall and debasement echo the melodramatic mutterings of many similar, more serious stories (5). In fact, in Wodehouse's tale the invasion might have much more terrible consequences for the invaders than for the defenders. Nine powers invade Britain simultaneously – Germany, Russia, the “Mad Mullah” (10), the Swiss, China, Monaco, the Ottomans, Moroccan brigands, and the “dark-skinned warriors from the distant isle of Bollygolla” (11) – creating “a very serious state of things” (ibid.). The sheer mass of competing invaders alone does more to hinder the would-be invaders than any British soldier; “[t]here is barely standing-room” left (10).

Amidst this confusion, Clarence and the Boy Scouts become an integral part of the British military, being perhaps the only corps whose inherent ridiculousness is a match for the ridiculousness of the situation. They act like a secret organisation, such as for example the Black Hand (28), to inconvenience the invaders through subterfuge, sowing distrust between the invading powers. This leads to a decisive battle between the German and Russian forces, who are now turned against each other, forgetting their original intention of subduing Britain. The narrative here exposes the insufficiency of teaching youths outdoor skills for actual war, for the boys effectively merely play childish pranks and mummer's plays instead of actually battling their foes. Wodehouse reveals the pomposity and posturing of militaries, and specifically of movements like the Boy Scouts, as mere theatrics, simply being analogues to the artifice of music hall performances – in fact, a Russian general does come to partake in stage performances (46). Fittingly, the decisive ‘battle’ against the remaining enemies is on stage. Once the last invaders leave Britain either sated, discouraged or dissuaded from further warring, the narrative implies that there is a great career in show business ahead for Clarence after his successes (64). This juxtaposition of the Boy Scouts with the artifice of music halls shows the movement's ineffectualness and essential banality when contrasted with actual war (65).

Wodehouse thus acknowledges that the Boy Scout movement is imbued with what Elleke Boehmer calls the “delight in play-acting” of its founder, Baden-Powell (introduction to *Scouting for Boys* xvii; see also xxviii). In the movement’s foundational text, *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell advises that “Scouts are to learn through acting out; by way of plays, pageants, and entertaining competitions” (xxvii), and that is what they do most effectively in Wodehouse’s story. Crucially, Wodehouse’s fellow satirist Munro is for once rather sincere in his belief that the youth of Britain, properly trained and competent in scouting, will be an integral source of martial strength for the nation in coming wars.

Even if for Munro the Boy Scouts remain a potential source of future rebellion, and despite the colonised population’s misgivings in his *When William Came*, all the Germans’ efforts appear to be quite successful. The colonial authorities display a very thoughtful and cautious approach, free of overt oppression or violence against the British. Crucially, Munro’s narration subverts negative prejudices concerning his German characters; colonial administrator von Kwarl’s “facial aspect that suggested stupidity and brutality” turns out to be a quite misleading impression, the man being of considerable “shrewdness” and kindness (*WWC* 85). It is clear that Munro shows reverence towards the German empire, and hence his depiction of the German imperial effort in Britain must be seen rather as a harsh criticism of the British side than a denigration of the invader. In fact, the invader’s work is considered admirable. A discussion between von Kwarl and another German reflects their people’s elaborate considerations:

“London is not our greatest difficulty,” continued von Kwarl. “You must remember the steady influx of Germans since the war; whole districts are changing the complexion of their inhabitants, and in some streets you might almost fancy yourself in a German town. We can scarcely hope to make much impression on the country districts and the provincial towns at present, but you must remember that thousands and thousands of the more virile and restless-souled men have emigrated, and thousands more will follow their example. (91)

The fact that the scouts’ no-show is the first serious act of resistance against the coloniser tells of the Germans’ effectiveness. They do not approach the Britons with military force or overt violence but more passively: They put pressure on those natives who do not wish to assimilate by slowly creating conditions in which these “restless-souled” people will favour emigration over staying. By letting Germans immigrate, they let the British people’s own xenophobia work against them; no force is needed. Even if resentment towards the coloniser is widespread, the people still feel that they can make autonomous choices – either accommodation or emigration. Apparently this “gradualism” (Eby 83) has prevented

any large-scale revolts. Those Britons who stay in the homeland, like the Yeovils and their circle, are already caught up in the Germans' new order, either through decadent consumerism or genuine friendship.

Munro's narrative juxtaposition of the two countries Britain and India lends itself to a direct comparison between differing approaches towards colonialism: The Germans' imperial project seems considerably more effective than that of Munro's contemporaneous Britons. The Germans have produced a rather devious style of colonialism which functions as well as it does because the colonised subject has the illusion of unchanged (or better) conditions in their everyday lives. Murrey may be aghast that the official language of colonial Britain is German, with every street and landmark possessing a German name like "Grossmutter Denkmal" [sic; Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace] (*William* 62), but apparently the coloniser has not suppressed the usage of English. By allowing German-English bilingualism within British society and offering Continental art merely as an alternative to, instead of as a replacement of, British art, they leave their colonised subject a considerable amount of cultural freedom. Indeed, the Germans make their culture more palatable to the British by showing their cultures' intertwined and similar character, Queen Victoria being proudly recognised as the grandmother of Wilhelm II. The Britons may rant about increased bureaucracy (64) or the prevalence of signage stating "*verboten*" or "*straffbar*" [sic] (79), or even lament the prevalence and high visibility of Germans, yet in the end these rants are merely the usual "idle chatter" (Eby 83), as much a part of everyday life as political discussions were before the invasion. In comparison to the contemporary situation in Ireland, British culture and the English language fare much better in German Britain. There is no need to discuss British Home Rule or fear civil war in this colony, for those Britons who choose not to emigrate apparently feel content enough not to rebel. There is no need for de-Germanising efforts among the colonised British similar to Irish de-Anglicising efforts (cf. Hyde 117), for the colonial British do not feel culturally oppressed. These colonised subjects therefore fall easily in line.

This seems to be the reason why there is a strong cultural synthesis already in progress between coloniser and colonised. Londoners are Germanised in their artistic tastes, but vice versa the coloniser has also appropriated British cultural markers. Yeovil notices that "Hebraic-looking gentlemen" in his old club are "wearing tartan waistcoats of the clans of their adoption" (*WWC* 153), a fashion statement (and with it claim of shared identity) which would be scandalous in Munro's 1913 but has become commonplace enough in

Yeovil's new society. That there is now no public humiliation inherent in such a hybrid fusion of Scottish and Jewish-German cultures reflects the essential danger of colonialism towards ideals of cultural purity. Munro is aware that, as Eby notes, "once invaders have a cultural foothold in the island it is nearly impossible to dislodge them" (*Road to Armageddon* 83). The author thus presents the ultimate horror of colonialism lying in the coloniser's cultural hegemony, for his main character realises that recreating an authentic, pure British identity after contact with the Germans will be all but impossible as old markers of difference and distinctness are quickly lost. Britishness will inevitably be subsumed within the coloniser's sociocultural identity.

Although positioned as a vigorous antithesis to German Britain, the British royal court's exile in Delhi further obfuscates the question of which group has remained essentially British in this new world. India now has a "strange half-European, half-Asiatic Court" which in time "will seem more and more a thing exotic and unreal" (*WWC* 71). Even if the Britons-in-exile try hard to reproduce in their clubs a "St. James's Street atmosphere as nearly as the conditions of a tropical Asiatic city would permit" (153), they are already becoming culturally distinct with new customs and a changed lifestyle. This means that even if the Indian court were to retake Britain, there would be two distinct British cultural identities which would then need to be reconciled. This again complicates any chance of extracting an authentic Britishness after independence. Furthermore, in contrast to the Germans' thoughtful approach, the British-in-exile have seized India in a much more forceful manner. As they have claimed the subcontinent as their own, the native peoples who before had a share in the colonial administration are now apparently fully disenfranchised. The natives effectively do not factor into the society and culture of British India.

It is only reasonable to the exiles that they would cultivate an exclusivist self-image: The Germans consider the British in their new *Reichsland* a kindred people and a formerly great civilisation, but to the British in India the gulf between the colonisers and their indigenous subject appears to be too large. Since it is apparent that the exiles' wish has been to shape their new home as much as possible in the mould of old Britain, theirs must be by necessity a rigidly segregated society, where the settlers form their own enclaves and guard their status and power against their indigenous neighbours, who comprise the majority of the population. One might imagine this new India as an analogue to Britain's traditional settler colonies like South Africa, where equally absolute segregation was the

norm. It is doubtful that the social peace in this new India can be upheld in such stratified circumstances, and the likelihood of future conflicts with the even further marginalised natives must surely increase. It is doubtful therefore how strong this new Britain-in-India can be in the long term, even if it still holds several other former overseas territories of the British Empire.

Munro, showing his preference for frontier living over metropolitan society (a quality which connects him with his main character), does indeed situate the ‘truest’ Britons still to be found in the world as living abroad, and his young Indian Britons’ virility sets a standard which his British Boy Scouts have to (and do) muster up to. He nevertheless leaves the ultimate outcome for German Britain highly doubtful. The author is careful to emphasise that it is Yeovil’s point of view that the royal court might still inspire pride in his fellow Britons (98), but he makes it increasingly clear that his main character is deluding himself. Ultimately, Murrey delegating the responsibility of regaining Britain’s independence towards Indian Britain reflects his only half-hearted patriotism after his conversion (174). In truth the exiles may soon forget about Great Britain even if they style themselves patriotic Britons (and are the more patriotic Britons, compared to the Yeovils). It remains to be seen how far the younger generation in India will come to identify with the old homeland. The observation of Mrs Kerrick, a settler in India, that “part of the joy” of her son’s “shooting expeditions lies in the fact that many of the duck and plover that he comes across belong to the same species that frequent our English moors and rivers” might only be a projection of her own desires, as well as a sign that the British-in-exile might not be too interested in returning to their former home – after all, apparently India has got everything they need to feel comfortable (160).

The Battle of Dorking and *When William Came* were published on the opposite ends of the period examined in the present study, which opens an interesting path of inquiry. The two texts show a marked difference in British perceptions of the German Empire and thus trace the development of relations between the two powers. The *Dorking* narrative is the seminal text in the genre, written as a military reformer’s pensive reaction to the Prussians beating “the first nation in Europe” and establishing a German empire (*BD* 4), when the idea of a new rival empire rising to challenge British hegemony seemed somewhat outrageous⁴. By the time of Munro’s invasion narrative, in Eby’s opinion “the last of the

⁴ See for example PM William Ewart Gladstone’s rather testy speech on 2 September 1871 deploring the alarmism inherent in *The Battle of Dorking* (cf. Clarke, “Before and after” 40, *Voices* 1, 34-5; Eby 15).

important invasion novels” before the First World War (*Road to Armageddon* 81), the Germans had become a dangerous economic and political rival and had started their own colonialist expansion. Their successes were both feared and admired by the British to such an extent that authors writing about Germany “demonstrate such sufficient respect for German achievements that they subsequently struggle to define an effective inimical alterity beyond the stereotypes of ‘the beastly Hun’” (Rau 186). It follows that Munro’s story would focus directly on German colonialism and the struggle to delineate differences in sociocultural identities, whereas Chesney’s text is a localised reflection on France’s situation shortly after the Franco-German War. Both authors, however, are in agreement on the economic and concomitant sociocultural consequences of Britain’s imperial reversal, carefully constructing the beaten nation’s character from personal experiences. They are clearly aware of the impossibility of maintaining cultural authenticity and a ‘pure’ national character in imperialist/colonialist contact situations, especially when being on the side of the colonised subject. They hence find firm distinctions between colonisers and their colonised difficult to sustain when examining issues of national identity, in particular concerning their imagined German-British or British-Indian contact situations.

Accordingly, they locate ‘marginal’ tendencies – signs of metropolitan weakness – in contemporary, pre-war society, anticipating the Britons’ metamorphosis into a peripheral people. It seems natural that Munro, the biting social satirist, would gleefully rub salt into the wound in the nation’s ego that his criticism of contemporary British inadequacies has produced. Chesney, more the pragmatic reformer, however arrives at the same conclusion. In uncovering instances where the British themselves fall short of their own ideals, both authors uncover a hint of alterity within their depicted British people, which affiliates the nation more closely with its contemporaneous colonised subjects than seems comfortable. Therefore both texts champion the argument that, as Rau asserts, “in order for the British to retain their Empire and global supremacy they would have to become more like the Germans” (ibid.). Even although Chesney shows less reverence for the German Empire, he too sees the British Empire adopting German efficiency and unity of will an inevitable necessity. Paradoxically, Chesney and Munro thus wish to protect British distinctness by demanding a modification of the national character.

The invasion-scare tale thus confronts its readership with yet another reversal of ideas: The more Britain wishes to stay the same, the more it must change. As a result, the genre asks the question what it takes for Britain to stay strong. As Munro tentatively hints at with

his defiant Boy Scouts, one narrative answer was to incorporate into national identity the skill-sets and tactics that Britons acquired while living a rugged outdoors life – and this happened mainly on the Empire’s periphery. As the next chapter shows, a number of future-war authors thus created a new kind of prestige around formerly marginalised identities, for, they argue in their narratives, useful colonial knowledge absolutely needed to be transferred from the margins of empire to the centre.

3. The Prestige of the Colonial and National Regeneration

This chapter examines the ways in which a number of future-war tales invoke what Thomas Richards calls the Imperial Archive to normalise ‘colonial’ qualities within metropolitan society, going so far as to integrate these into metropolitan identity. The last chapter highlighted narratives which envision a depressed post-invasion homeland that has deteriorated to the point where it embodies the worst qualities of the colonial. Consequently, the defeated British people become a colonised subject in these texts. The tales presented in this chapter have a very different outlook, for they welcome the possibilities of a Britain which has become a frontier space. These stories are William Butler’s *The Invasion of England* (1882; *IE*), William Le Queux’s outlandish *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894; *GWE*) and *The Invasion of 1910* (1906; *I1910*), and Erskine Childers’s *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903; *RS*). They find new prestige in and ascribe positive identities to metropolitan Britons who have internalised the lessons of the frontier, and in doing so subvert the ideas of the narratives found in the previous chapter. Instead of weakness, these narratives ascribe strength to the colonial. Preparing the population for the next large-scale war is among the purposes of the future-war genre, and frontier knowledge comes to be seen as a means to regenerate an ostensibly degenerated British people.

Thomas Richards has introduced the concept of the Imperial Archive, the fiction of an immaterial institution which embodies the sum of all British knowledge of the world, which enabled the control and maintenance of the Empire (*Imperial Archive* 6). British characters in *The Riddle of the Sands* and other future-war narratives draw upon it when they incorporate its data on settler knowledge as well as native skills into metropolitan circumstances. When the British in such stories succeed over the invading enemy, they reinforce the Archive by legitimising its usefulness as a tool for national defence. At the same time, the British heroes exert their hegemony as colonisers by co-opting native skills and assuming ‘native’ identities at their leisure, again proving the Archive’s qualities for ensuring the imperial status quo. In co-opting the colonial as a potent skill-set, these metropolitan characters however also acknowledge a military insufficiency in the imperial centre, which has to be remedied by such unusual ends.

Naturally, writers of future-war stories are critical of their nation’s state of defence. They reference the British troops’ historical defeats and barely-won victories on frontier battlefields as mementos; a chief reference point being the two Boer Wars. Thus they incite

their readership to learn from past embarrassments, so that the lessons of defeat can be turned into future triumph. It is especially the sting of defeat at the hands of technologically inferior indigenous peoples, who possess what could be called “low-ranking”, “dominated” knowledges (T. Richards 133), which occupies the thought of many *fin de siècle* and Edwardian future-war narratives. Adding what has been learned of indigenous resistance to the Imperial Archive therefore ensures imperial stability in two ways: For one this neutralises the unexpected superiority which the colonial subject exerts over the coloniser in armed conflict, and it suppresses the indigenous danger; after all, in the tales presented in this chapter native enemies’ tactics are now internalised and can even be utilised against new enemies, who do not possess the particular skill-sets needed to counteract the British ‘natives’, in the future.

To regain lost strength, metropolitan British characters accept both the settler of British stock and the native as valid sources of beneficial knowledge in these narratives. Indigenous modes of resistance, and native qualities in general, are characterised as containing a vitality which can counteract the perceived degeneration of the British stock – an injection of ‘uncivilised’ grit acting against modern decadence. Thus these future-war narratives respond to contemporary discourses on physical degeneration and racial decline by presenting remedies to these apparent sociocultural woes. Writers in the genre thus participate in contemporary discourse on national regeneration, anticipating and later echoing voices like Robert Baden-Powell’s proposition of his Boy Scout movement as integral steps to physically prepare the populace for the coming century.

In the first edition of his *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell early on advances the idea of scouting as preparation for coming invasions, which shows how his text and those of contemporary future-war writers are engaged in a dialogue, sharing fundamental affinities and influencing each other. He introduces a fictional campfire yarn on young scouts who proved valiant soldiers in the defence of Mafeking during the South African War:

Nobody ever thought of [Mafeking] being attacked by an enemy any more than you would expect this town (or village) [the respective Boy Scouts’ home town in Britain] to be attacked – the thing was so improbable.

But it just shows you how you must be prepared for what is possible, not only what is probable in war; and so, too, we ought to be prepared in Britain against being attacked by enemies; for though it may not be probable, it is quite as possible as it was at Mafeking, and every boy in Britain should be just as ready as those boys were in Mafeking to take their share in defence.” (*Scouting for Boys* 10)

By deliberately introducing scouting, a largely non-technological, pre-industrial skill-set, Baden-Powell and authors of future-war fiction build up the transfer of colonial knowledge to the metropolis as an inevitability. The late-Victorian and Edwardian tale of the war-to-come naturally proves an optimal platform within contemporary popular fiction on which the efficacy of such ideas around integration of the colonial can be tested. As will be seen, foremost among these ideas stands Charles Dilke's proposal of a Greater Britain, which describes the British Empire as settled by one interconnected people unified by the same racial heritage, language, and laws (cf. *British Empire* 9-10), which effectively enables this closely-knit worldwide people to exchange information and therefore to easily transfer frontier knowledge to the imperial centre.

3.1 The Yeoman Warrior as Domestic Settler: William Butler's Anglo-Saxonism

Lieutenant (later Lieutenant-General Sir) William Francis Butler's *The Invasion of England* (1882) occupies an intermediary position between the sober work of "distinguished" military men like George Chesney (Clarke, *Voices* 57) and more defiant and sensationalist later narratives like Le Queux's, for it anticipates the regenerative concerns of later works while still imitating Chesney's style. Butler's novella in effect retells the *Dorking* story. Its narrator is another old Briton in exile reminiscing about his involvement in the unsuccessful defence of the country decades prior. This particular German invasion's setting is Essex rather than the South of England, but the tale's narrative progression is a copy of Chesney's: from the narrator's young self marching into battle through an unspoilt, pastoral countryside to his traumatic realisation that the Britons are wholly unprepared, and to the subsequent utter defeat. This novella however transcends the *Dorking* pattern by ending on a hopeful note, a "brighter light beginning to dawn upon the old land" which prophesies a return to power (*IE* 247). Unlike Chesney's Volunteer, who considers a breakdown of the nation's communications network the first step in Britain's terrifying fall to dark-age crudity (*Dorking* 7), the narrator of *The Invasion of England* ultimately welcomes his people's reversal to pre-industrial conditions. This happens after the imperial reversal of the Germans' attack, when "the immense manufacturing mills became silent" (*IE* 247). The resurgence of the freehold farmer, now returned to the countryside from the city, is greeted as the harbinger of a physical as well as spiritual renaissance.

Unlike later writers, Butler thus locates the source of national renewal not on the colonial periphery but in the English people's own past, although this past effectively resembles the modern imperial frontier. Butler's modern Britons learn from imitating their medieval, Anglo-Saxon forebears, using the same outdated and local knowledges upon which Erskine Childers's heroes will later draw in their own adventure. In this, the narrative echoes Thomas Carlyle's sentiments in his work *Past and Present*, in which Britain's national development has always been fundamentally intertwined with its roots, so that modern society would do good to embrace the heroism (and its concomitant strengths) of bygone times: "[H]e who dwells in the temporary Semblances, and does not penetrate into the eternal Substance, will *not* answer the Sphinx-riddle of To day, or of any Day" (Carlyle 16-7; Carlyle's emphasis), meaning that a Britain that refuses to recognise its historic heritage is not able to succeed in future ages, for it has lost sight of what has made the nation powerful.

Butler agrees with this and posits an identity between Britain's past and the colonies' present in his narrative. Ostensibly, the medieval yeoman farmer possesses the very same qualities as does, for example, the 19th-century British settler or Boer. Importantly, these qualities comprise a pre-industrial, natural "strength and vitality" which comes from their working the land (*IE* 247). Uniquely in the genre, Butler therefore relocates his ideal near-future Britain temporally (advertising a nation which resembles a medieval landscape), where other writers propose a spatial relocation (positioning Britain as a modern imperial frontier).

To the narrator, Britain's past martial prowess was a product of the English people's advantageous Germanic racial stock during Anglo-Saxon times. This allows him to emphasise the modern nation's decline into an unnatural weakness while still supporting the idea of Britain's essential superiority. The weakness of contemporary Britain in this story stems from a culturally degenerative source, the decadence of late Rome (66), but not from an intrinsic racial fault. He points out the nation's historic Germanic warrior spirit as the source of its worldwide hegemony, which allows him to utilise the contrast between this heritage and the current state of being invaded.

The common ancestry and innate kinship of the English and German peoples – "ties of race, religion, and dynastic alliance" (107) – provide an opportunity for critical juxtaposition, for Butler's energetic Germans prove to be a foil to the degenerated British nation under English rule. Whereas in the early Middle Ages the continental Germans and

the Anglo-Saxons started out as equals (evolving, indeed, from the same ancestor peoples), the English have turned away from the martial world-view of their forefathers while the Germans have re-embraced it to great success. "It is true that both nations had long departed from Christianity as the basis of their social and political institutions", the narrator concedes; "but there was this wide difference in their respective departures, that while Germany had gone back to the rugged manhood of their Gothic and Frankish forefathers, England had bent the knee before the golden idols and sensuous worship of the degenerate days of Rome" (91). Fittingly, the novella's first chapter is titled "Thor and Mammon"; German bellicosity is juxtaposed with British decadence. The British have embraced the wrong deity as the ethical foundation of their imperial project, while Germany by contrast has found a new spiritual (and martial) purity. The German Empire's superiority in terms of ideology thus justifies its imperial ambitions and in particular legitimises its claim to the lands of its weaker cousin. Therefore the narrator tacitly accepts the Kaiser's proclamation that "the consolidated German nation [...] is the true and rightful inheritor of the labours and the acquisitions of the whole Germanic race" (159).

As the narrator here implies, the British must embrace the Germans' ideology, or rather re-embrace their own Germanic heritage, to be able to overcome the invader. The yeoman farmer, presented as the contemporary city worker's progenitor, is the central figure of Butler's suggested reforms, for the peasant personifies the physical and martial excellence which the author presumes lost in the modern era. Butler the officer here pleads for an improved soldier stock: As a civilian warrior, the yeoman is of special importance within his medieval society, for he is the nation's foremost defender in war. This condition needs to be recreated, for the Empire needs such capable foremost defenders.

In effect, the author here positions the frontier farmer as the modern equivalent of the pre-industrial yeoman, while the often-times untamed colonial environment finds its equivalent in the imagined archaic world of the medieval peasant. Both Anglo-Saxon yeoman and contemporary British colonial settler are embodiments of a frontier myth of self-sufficiency and individuality. When he complains that it is folly to give away freely to the colonies "the untrained, undisciplined, soil-divorced children that might have been made the rooted pillars of the state which flung them forth so lightly from her bosom" (184), the narrator therefore advertises internal colonisation. Those emigrants who would become farmers on the imperial frontier could be capable frontiersmen at home, living within a de-urbanised Britain, and thus could be of better use to mainland Britain in a great

war as soldiers defending the metropolis. The narrator's overview of the changed post-war nation in his closing statements supports his idea, for he finds that the urban poor who recolonised the British countryside after the post-war industrial collapse already show physical improvement. "Homesteads are again numerous over the face of the country; fewer men are toiling with pick below the ground, but there are more spades at work upon the surface; pheasants have lessened, but peasants are numerous" (247), the narrator concludes his reminiscences, specifically mentioning the return of the Scottish Highlander as a sign of improving national health (248). In the near future, the British people could again be rugged yeomen, physically rivalling any invader like the German soldiers of this narrative, "strong, deep-chested men, who marched with a long, steady, swinging step" (166).

Returning the working classes to the countryside is of critical importance, then, for "[t]he muscle that is made in the confinement of the workshop, or the gas-lighted gallery, where the steam-shuttle is rocking and the loom is spinning, is of a very different fibre than the sinewy strength that has its source in the open-air toil of the husbandman" (224). The vitality of the countryside is juxtaposed with urban degeneracy; active, stimulating pre-industrial work with passive, emasculating factory toil. *The Invasion of England* here proves an essentially pastoral story in its criticism of the modern city, emulating the works of contemporary nature writers like Richard Jefferies and participating in a long tradition of pastoral writing. It anticipates the generally anti-urban sentiment of the *fin de siècle* and Edwardian future-war tale, which in turn reflects an ongoing contemporary debate on degeneration. Butler's narrator exhibits a deep resentment of his times' rampant urbanisation when he summarises that "each year told more heavily on the outside yeoman and peasant life drained off to feed the monstrous growth of cities" (80). He demonises urban life, for he sees in it the source for the working classes' dehumanisation and the upper classes' decadence:

In these foul centres of life [the poor] increased to dismal multitudes; their children became early familiarized with all the corruptions and contaminations inseparable from the life of large cities [...] It was little wonder that under the altered conditions of life thus produced, a great physical and moral degeneration should have taken place. The laws of nature were reversed. (75)

Living in the countryside, a place where the "laws of nature" are still in effect, is presented as the way humans are supposed to live. Butler here shows his awareness of William Cobbett's anti-urban writings and positions himself as an ideological heir to that advocate

of the rural. He adopts almost verbatim Cobbett's disparagement of London as the great "Wen" (cf. Cobbett 73) when his narrator pathologises urbanisation as "this huge wen upon the face of England" (*IE* 80). City life is tantamount to sickness; creating a new yeoman class, as the narrator hopes, is the cure. Butler thus envisions an essentially non-urban, non-industrial identity of Britishness influenced by pastoral thought.

This brings the novella in line with a general debate on national degeneration within late-Victorian society. In the text, the conditions of the city have led to degeneration of the 'stock' both physically and in terms of virtuousness, with the working classes brutalised by squalor – and subsequently becoming lost to sin. Moreover, the middle and upper classes ostensibly embrace an equally sinful, degenerative decadence (cf. 66-7). Butler participates readily in this discourse, as does the future-war genre at large after the 1880s. The narrator connects physical with spiritual decline; the health and hygiene problems of the city slums act as catalysts for a degeneration of virtues. In particular, these highly degrading conditions affect the city's women:

I cannot attempt to find words to put before you the fearful condition of these poor creatures, pent in the foul "courts" and fetid lanes of the great cities. Enough that in a wide experience among wild and savage races, in early life, I had never beheld the face and figure of woman so debased, so defiled, so utterly estranged from every attribute of humanity, as might have been any hour of any day within a ten minutes' stroll of the spot which was regarded as the centre of the civilized world. (81)

Modern life has dehumanised the urban poor, leading to a situation where they appear more savage than Britain's colonised subject. Butler here directly accuses modern British civilisation as a social construct which ultimately degrades its population more than the wild spaces of the colonial fringes would. Compared to the urban proletariat, the 'savage' is the more virtuous, noble, and definitely more vital human.

Again, Butler is most concerned about the soldier question, for in terms of sheer physicality, he sees the savage warrior superior to the metropolitan recruit. When his narrator hints at the inadequate physical condition of the working-class recruit during the German invasion, he prophesies a situation that indeed concerned military officials during and after the South African War. In the wake of that conflict, the larger public would come to discuss the nation's sub-standard recruiting pool (cf. Boone, *Youth* 108; Prior 12). Butler prefigures the call for National Efficiency that would be raised in the early twentieth century: A return to pre-industrial living conditions would not automatically lower military standards even further but would in fact increase the military's efficiency. Because of its

physical demands and virtuousness, rural life thus safeguards the nation's martial capabilities.

In an article concerning the peasant and national defence, published in the May 1878 issue of *Macmillan's Magazine*, Butler anticipates his later novella's arguments. He posits an "ultimate union existing between the land, the peasant, and the soldier in all modern countries" except Britain ("Plea" 27). He advances the argument that the German example needs to be heeded in even another respect, for he considers the success of mid-century Prussian land reforms the proof "that the cradle of an army is the cottage of the peasant" (29). He describes the situation in Prussia as a freeing from bondage: "Serfdom in every shape ceased, peasants and burghers were given the right to become owners of land, [...] and large portions of the vast estates of the nobles were divided amongst the peasants" (28-9). His equation of the domestic land-owning peasant with the frontier farmer becomes apparent once more in his discussion of a similar situation in the American Civil War, where he suggests that "not until the farmers of the North-Western States [...] had poured from their 160 acre freehold farms was the great civil war brought to a termination" (29) – in the event of war on British soil, the domestic frontier farmers could then pour forth similarly decisively. According to Butler, however, a large hindrance to such a success happening in Britain lies in its enclosure laws and extensive modern land clearances, which according to the narrator of *The Invasion of England* are the reason for the disappearance of the yeoman in the first place.

On this topic, Butler the Irishman shows his sympathy for the Celtic peoples, and specifically the Irish and Scottish peasant. While the Irish soldier stock has become scarce through famines and emigration, "[t]hat other Celtic race, that soldier breed, [...] was expiring beneath the remorseless tyranny of a monstrous law – the Highlands of Scotland were being cleared of men" ("Plea" 34). This monstrosity reveals the inherent contradiction in modern civilisation as described by Butler: If there can exist the "cold malignity of a civilised law, which permits a brave and noble race to disappear by the operation of its legalized injustice" (ibid.), the comparatively 'barbaric' circumstances of the medieval era, when Irish and Scottish peasants were abundant, are perhaps more civilised than modern times.

The author's investment in these questions of land ownership (cf. Wynne 146), together with the narrator's aversion to urbanisation and industrialisation, produces in *The Invasion of England* a critique of modern capitalism (and the urbanised life which it births).

Contemporary economic processes are un-British, for they are disintegrators of the nation's fabric:

[W]hen the "operation of economic laws" had destroyed the germs from which our "matchless infantry" had sprung, giving us, in place of the healthy country-bred recruit, the dwarfed offspring of the "corner boy" and the factory girl, then people began to find out that if victory was to be won with such materials something more would be required among leaders than the comfortable club system of military education. (*IE* 94-5)

With "the operation of economic laws" the narrator again means land enclosure, a process which he terms "a condition of land tenure which virtually divorced the nation from the possession of its own soil" (77). Severed from their home soil, Butler's modern Britons become severed from their heritage.⁵

Here Cobbett's thought is evoked anew, for Butler agrees with the former's outrage at enclosure and the swallowing up of small farmsteads by larger estates, a process which radicalised Cobbett (cf. Dyck x-xi). In *The Invasion of England*, the military's failure during the German invasion is thus linked directly with the destructive force of capitalist interests, painting a situation where the nation's greed has overtaken its natural interest in self-preservation. In both the *Macmillan's* article and his novella, Butler evokes the Marxian idea of the "expropriation of the agricultural population from the land" (Marx 877), and his explanation of the peasant's demise appear congruent with Marxist thought.

However, Butler is no radical like Cobbett and no proponent of socialism, although his affinities in that direction are apparent. His reform proposals originate from a distinctly conservative military perspective. He does agree with Marx that "[c]ommunal property [...] was an old Teutonic institution" (879), yet his British yeomanry which reclaim this institution after their defeat do not again live under the "cover of feudalism" (*ibid.*). Instead, his rural population is free from any bondage, for it has power over its means of production. His imagined community in effect resembles the idealised frontier farmstead more closely than a medieval feudal estate.

Contrary to its potentially subversive effect towards class hierarchies, Butler's proposal, while aimed at elevating the peasant, effectively aims to keep the working classes appeased. Butler's interest mostly focuses on the working classes being able to fulfil their

⁵ Importantly, this strength is described as being superior to any "comfortable" military education; the yeomen troops' vigour, obtained through toil and knowledge of the land, compensates for the failings of their decadent military superiors. Heritage and hands-on field experience are preferred here over any theoretical knowledge.

function as the source of a strong soldiery. As his modern yeomen obtain independent control over their labour, they become content with their lot in life. The classes become more ossified in this post-industrial Britain than before, with a reduced presence of working class people in the (now much smaller) cities and the bourgeoisie dominating the metropolis. The projected outcome of this reform is rather traditionalist, for it consciously reinforces boundaries. Class warfare is solved by separation of the combatants, the working classes pacified in an exile of sorts. The narrative thus affirms the “‘safety valve’ theory of colonization” (Irvine 242) which had been part of colonialist discourse since the early nineteenth century, especially since the Chartist movement of the 1830s to 1850s. Butler agrees with Sir Robert Torrens, who in his 1836 essay *Colonization of South Australia* considers colonisation “needful, to save the country [Britain] from servile war” (qtd. in Irvine 242). Emigration finds an outlet for mass unemployment and so contributes towards the amelioration of urban labourers’ discontent according to this economic theory. In *The Invasion of England*, this is realised following the described post-war domestic colonisation: The resettling of the British countryside becomes an essential ingredient of domestic peace.

One can find the impetus for Butler’s will for reforms in his Irish childhood. During the Great Famine he witnessed first-hand the catastrophic effects of peasants’ disenfranchisement, which would later incite adult William to feel “heartfelt sympathy for those whom he believed to be of a down-trodden race”, as his friend General Garnet Wolseley put it (qtd. in Wynne 145). The loss of population in his family’s lands during the Famine appears to have impressed itself on him especially. He recalls in his autobiography that “I was about eight years old when the crash came. The country about where we lived in Tipperary was swarming with people. Along the road were cabins or little thatched mud-cottages at every hundred or hundred and fifty paces” (*Autobiography* 2), which paints a picture of the land wholly opposite to that at the time of the writing of his autobiography: “I passed along that same road a few days ago: not one house, not even the site of a house, can now be discerned there” (3). Crop failures had led to disease, starvation, and eventually mass evictions of those unable to pay their rents. Butler calls those who abuse their power over the wretchedly poor a “crowd of villains”; witnessing a landlord’s men evict local peasants was to him a “sight I have never forgotten” (12).⁶

⁶ Martin Ryan adds that as the local landowner, Butler’s father himself must have ordered the traumatic eviction which Butler describes here (Ryan 1). Nonetheless, this scene proved most instructive to William.

Subsequently, Butler kept his scepticism of power structures throughout his life, be it between Irish landlords and their tenants, the English and the Irish, or the British and their colonised subject. As a Catholic Irish nationalist officer, he thus possessed “bifurcated allegiances” (Wynne 145), for he both extended and defended the Empire while being disaffected with European imperial hegemony over oppressed indigenous peoples (146). He did not glorify war, but remained compassionate towards the soldier’s hardships, and was proud of the soldier’s martial prowess as an individual virtue. In this he concurs with his wife, Elizabeth Butler, herself a renowned painter of “sympathetic narratives of war” which carefully placed the tragedy of soldiers’ suffering before jingoist pathos (Wynne 145). Thus, as Wynne explains, the Butlers must be seen as “rather anomalous figures, though not iconoclasts” among the late-Victorian imperial elite (144).

Garnet Wolseley, himself an Irishman but not interested in Irish affairs, speaks disparagingly of Butler’s pity for his “down-trodden” people specifically, but in fact in his writings Butler shows sympathy for the down-trodden worldwide. This his friend does acknowledge: Butler possessed “the warmest and most chivalrous of hearts, had he lived in mediaeval times, he would have been the knight errant of everyone in distress” (qtd. in Wynne 145). This idea of Butler as a latter-day knight manifests in his writing, and in his future-war narrative the virtues of chivalry are reinforced by a rejuvenated population. He recognises the dutifulness of the modern British soldier as a direct continuation of the chivalric ideal, and his ideal modern nation would rediscover such virtues.

Butler is therefore an adherent of medievalist thought, but herein he again possesses an idiosyncratic point of view which puts him at odds with mainstream ideology. Examining the impact of medievalism on British literature, Liliana Sikorska notes that “Victorianism showed fascination with ideas of chivalry. Victorian writers searched for moral values and social order lost in the industrialized world of nineteenth-century England” (8). By the end of the century, however, a popular “belief in Anglo-Saxon freedom, once used to defend popular liberties” had been “transformed into a rationale for the domination of peoples throughout the world” (Horsman 387). Anglo-Saxonism thus became a means for justifying colonisation and legitimising British expansion (cf. Frantzen and Niles 3). The ‘medieval’ moral values and social order sought by *fin de siècle* medievalist-imperialist discourse were subject to the demands of empire. Accordingly, Butler’s narrator’s description of the hamlet

of Battle Bridge does indeed construct an imperial continuity between Anglo-Saxon and modern Englishman:⁷

Perhaps fifteen centuries earlier some fleet of canoes, hailing from the swamps and fens of Friesland or Sleswick, had landed here their crews and fighting men, and had hacked and harried the mixed and degenerate races that remained when the Romans had quitted the island, that for evermore the spot had borne the name of the exploit [...] (*IE* 149)

In the narrator's mind, the Anglo-Saxon invaders carried out their own imperial project, themselves conquering "mixed and degenerate races" over whom they were vastly superior. This makes modern British imperialism an heir to these tribes' exploits and the British colonialist drive a naturalised constituent of the nation's heritage or, as it were, collective DNA. It is only natural, then, that "if the spirits of the old Norsemen or Saxon warriors still lingered around the spot where last they had looked in the flesh on the sight most dear to their soldier hearts, they might well have smiled a grim smile through their long sleep of centuries" when the Britons again fight at Battle Bridge (*ibid.*), still trying to keep alive the warrior spirit of their ancestors (even if they ultimately fail).

However, Butler adheres to this ideological construction only up to a certain point, for a rather different purpose underlies his Anglo-Saxonism. As Wynne asserts, "Butler, an Irish imperial soldier whose political sympathies for the 'down-trodden' extended from Ireland to Africa and included Native Americans, does not conveniently subscribe to the conventional trajectories of British imperialist or Irish nationalist aspirations" (146). It was especially the exploitative and often brutal practices by which native populations were suppressed which unsettled him. In his future-war narrative, his "disaffection with European imperial expansion" (*ibid.*) is expressed through the narrator's condemnation of the financial irresponsibility underlying Britain's imperial ambitions – a crucial reason for the nation's defeat: "I thought of the millions that I had seen wasted in cruel oppression upon some ill-armed and defenceless Asiatic or African enemy, and it seemed as though some just retribution had overtaken us" (*IE* 139). He laments the funds (amounting to "millions") which were badly needed for home defence but have been wasted on senseless, far-away conflicts. These colonial wars, merely "petty [...] conflicts" (93), become grotesques: The industrial-military juggernaut of the imperial centre overexerts itself in

⁷ The Normans' later invasion and subsequent influence on English/British historical development is noticeably and curiously ignored in *The Invasion of England* despite them virtually emulating what the Anglo-Saxons had done some centuries earlier (the first Anglo-Norman king even gaining the epithet The Conqueror). One must assume that Butler's Anglo-Saxon Englishmen fully assimilated the Norman newcomers for there to be significant 'racial' and ideological continuity.

order to conquer or contain militarily vastly inferior native peoples. Plainly, such insignificant victories in the greater scheme are not worth the effort put into them if the home front is underfunded; the British Empire's fall due to a war at home is just desserts for its short-sighted greed. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Butler therefore does not advocate an aggressive Anglo-Saxonism which propagates conquest, but an ideology which has as its goal the improvement of the nation's quality of life, and by this its defensive capabilities.

The Invasion of England advances the cause of Muscular Christianity through its infusion of spiritual virtue in martial capabilities, again taking up Thomas Carlyle's arguments. The Christian faith is presented as a necessary ingredient of a strong nation. When the narrator laments that Britain had forgotten Christianity, he thus points out another failing of decadent modern urban society. It is with grim satisfaction that he witnesses flocks of people returning to the churches at the last minute, when the Germans have already surrounded London and the nation's doom is imminent:

In one or two of the usually silent and deserted City churches bells were being rung, and people were going in to "special prayer," as the notices on the doors said, "for help against the enemy." Alas! that part of the national defence seemed to have been as much neglected in the past as the other. The great Protector's formula had been forgotten; our powder had got damp, and the trust in God had disappeared. (IE 186-7)

Christianity too is brought under the purview of national defence; like the chivalric warrior code it is instrumentalised. Its capability to mobilise and inspire the people contributes not only to the nation's spiritual well-being even in wartime but also to its defensive capabilities. Butler here evokes fellow Irishman William Blacker's argument that Christian Britons need to be ever ready to take action, for according to Blacker's poem *Oliver's Advice*, only those that are well-prepared can fully trust in their salvation: "Then put your trust in God, my boys, and keep your powder dry." (701) Consequently, Butler's invaded Britain, incapable of taking action and helping itself, has fallen from god's grace.

Butler's novella herein concurs with welfare organisations like the Salvation Army of William Booth (founded in 1865), which propagated the idea of the Christian soldier who needs to be able to be self-sufficient. Like Booth, Butler attempts to pave a way out of Darkest England (as is the title of one of Booth's treatises) by both charity and prayer, merging the soldier ethos and Christian spirituality. Appropriately, the post-war British in *The Invasion of England* have not only rediscovered their ancestral warrior strength but also their Christian beliefs, which has given them hope towards reclaiming their lost

imperial power. They now realise that “[t]he hand of God is ever painting in the blood and tears of nations the great picture of man's life on earth, and in that picture the lights must have their shadows”, but that “the colossal canvas is still unrolling” (*IE* 249-50).

Like Booth, Butler promotes “social imperialism”, which is “the notion that British imperialism can solve the domestic (or ‘social’) problems that have plagued England since the advent of industrial capitalism” (Boone, *Youth* 85). Booth’s idea in *In Darkest England* is to send the urban unemployed into the countryside as a preparatory step before imperial service as colonial farmers. As Troy Boone points out, this treatise “throughout implies that only in the (fairly unsuccessful, as it turned out) ‘Farm Colony’ ([Booth] 92) could poor city-dwellers achieve the regeneration necessary to make them fit for service in the ‘OverSea Colony’ ([*ibid.*])” (“Germs” 81-2). Butler’s proposal, anticipating Booth’s by eight years, originates from the same premise: that country living will regenerate the destitute. However, it leads to the very different conclusion that these new farmers might as well stay at home, for even in the British countryside these farmers would perform imperial service. Where Booth finds “millions of acres of useful land to be obtained almost for the asking” on the imperial periphery (93), Butler finds them at home.

The Invasion of England anticipates the texts of Robert Baden-Powell, especially his *Scouting for Boys* (first edition 1908), in that it flattens Britain’s history into a continuum in which past and present always exist alongside each other; for example the medieval yeoman, modern city-dweller, and colonial settler. Elleke Boehmer posits that Baden-Powell envisions the ideal modern Briton (and in this specific case, the ideal British youth) as an amalgamation of everything British history has to offer:

Modelled on the hardy colonial frontiersman, the ideal Scout, disciplined and selfsacrificing, is also set up as the culmination point of a mythical lineage of British national history: he embodies the *virtu* and honour of the medieval knight, the stout-hearted courage of the Elizabethan explorer. (introduction to *Scouting for Boys* xix)

Similarly, Denis Flannery finds *Scouting for Boys* an example of heritage-making anti-historicism; for Baden-Powell, the term Scout is “applicable to everyone – medieval knights, John Smith, Zulu warriors, Kipling’s Kim, and US President Theodore Roosevelt” (Flannery 327). As such, William Butler’s future Britons are Scouts too.

Butler’s idiosyncratic conflation of contemporary imperialist thought and medieval martial ideals produces a picture of modern Britain as the result of a past vigorous imperialism, as a metropolis which has been built on a former fringe. The process of

constructing an English nation in the Middle Ages as described by his narrator is uncannily similar to the consolidation of later British settler spaces on the imperial periphery. Butler thus proposes a frontier origin of Britain, which has supplied the modern British with the latent, now ‘archaic’, abilities and skills with which to defend the Empire. Despite his misgivings about imperial practice, he considers empire an essential component of British identity: the vigorous Anglo-Saxon and Celtic heritage of a warrior nation. Furthermore, Butler reinforces the historical dimension of the Imperial Archive, a dimension which offers a key to self-rediscovery. It does not only contain information on the contemporary Empire but also holds the archaic, now-forgotten knowledges of Britain’s own past. Butler proposes that there has always been an archaic essence in British character. In order to succeed over future enemies in the next great war, these buried skill-sets only have to be reactivated by returning to ‘natural’ conditions. *The Invasion of England* thus finds inspiration in Romantic pastoral thought – especially that of William Cobbett – to plead its reformatory case. Butler’s narrative is dystopian when it confronts the reader with an emasculated Britain; his message however is deeply utopian.

Later writers took up Butler’s idea of national regeneration through embracing colonial modes of living and imagined a near-future Britain that draws on essentially colonial skill-sets even more readily. Such tales would end more positively than Butler’s, with the British heroes defeating the invader through their unique repository of knowledge and their indomitable spirit. At the same time, these same colonial skills enable urban populations, especially Londoners, to better survive the wilderness that is the modern, sprawling metropolitan city, as well as helping the upper and middle classes to better control the unruly lower classes co-inhabiting the city.

3.2 William Le Queux and Metropolitan Jungle Warfare

By the time of the mid-1890s, when Le Queux’s *The Great War in England in 1897* was published, the future-war tale had become more jingoist, as New Imperialism reached its peak and, as a result, the popularity and rate of production of a more defiant kind of invasion tale increased. Now, full future-war serials and novels largely replaced the earlier pamphlets and short stories. A change in tone had actually been noted even before 1890. In its December 1886 review of *The Great Naval War of 1887* by William Laird Clowes and Alan Hughes Burgoyne, the *Saturday Review* advanced an opinion on the future-war tale which both indicates a change in the reception of the genre by the general readership and

presages the significant shift in the circumstances of production of such narratives. The author of that article puts emphasis on the imaginative achievements of *The Battle of Dorking*, which tale is perceived as “an excellent battle to fight once, when it suggested itself spontaneously to a very competent writer who wrote for his own joy and gratification” (“Some Naval Scares” 772). This point of view overlooks the narrative’s primary intention. George Chesney’s earnest critique of Britain’s defence policy is not noted, for one and a half decades after its first publication, *Dorking*’s primary draw seems to be its spectacle. As befits this altered focus, the *Saturday Review* retroactively locates Chesney’s most receptive readership among the nation’s youth: “It was a very brilliant piece of work, and no one will be likely to forget the effect it produced, especially if he was young enough in those days to enjoy it properly” (ibid.). The very fact of *Dorking* having been first published in the reputable, literary *Blackwood’s Magazine* points towards a quite different intended readership – older; interested in and able to influence politics; Conservative (cf. Clarke, *Voices* 1-2; 27; 40-1). However, by now the future-war tale was more widely associated with somewhat frivolous entertainment for boys than with respectable political discourse. While Chesney’s short story had had its detractors in 1871, the most prominent of these being incumbent Prime Minister William Gladstone himself (34-5), these critics took it seriously. Within the literary-political landscape of the *Saturday Review* article, the future-war story is not anymore considered serious business. The article’s author finds most such narratives rather inane; they “credit their countrymen with a degree of imbecility which would make them incapable of defending the island of Laputa itself” (“Some Naval Scares” 772). The future-war tale had become the purview of the young and/or foolish.

I. F. Clarke summarises the genre’s “change of direction” in that period as the emergence of an open market in which professional journalists like Le Queux now increasingly dominated production and sales; “distinguished admirals” now “competed and sometimes co-operated” with these newcomers who wrote a different kind of future-war story (*Voices* 57). With this, readers witnessed “the second and major phase of this literature” (ibid.). Clarke attests a changed tone in public discourse and rather commercial motivations underlying these developments:

Behind this change, and shaping the stories of the period throughout Europe, were the increasingly powerful forces of mass journalism, mass literacy, and the mass emotions of extreme nationalism. The new tales of future warfare had the marks of a raw and frequently brutal epoch. At times they were violent and vindictive both in

matter and in manner; they were often nationalistic to the point of hysteria; and they displayed an eagerness for novelty and sensation at the level of entertainment provided by the new journalism in publications like *Answers* and the *Daily Mail*. (ibid.)

Indeed, the founder of both *Answers* and the *Daily Mail*, newspaper magnate Alfred Harmsworth, later 1st Viscount Northcliffe, was a driving force behind the emergence of this new crop. Future-war narratives were a staple of his many publications and proved integral to his business model.⁸ Harmsworth's publications' intended readership was the masses. In effect, the genre's new audience became younger and thus potentially less discerning, less actively interested in specifics of military policy, and less respectable than Chesney's had been. The boundaries between audiences – juvenile/adult, (upper) middle/working class – blurred, and from a purely commercial standpoint had become irrelevant.⁹ There was no place in highly commercial future-war stories of the Harmsworth model for the “cool tone, the objective approach to contemporary problems, the controlled emotion of Chesney”, for “excited language” and “crude emotionalism” appeared to sell better (Clarke, *Voices* 57).

Patrick Dunae emphasises the prevalence of invasion narratives in boys' periodicals which were published under Harmsworth's Amalgamated Press especially after the Second Boer War (1899-1902), noting how “far-fetched” these stories are “even by boys' standards” (118). Their jingoism replaced an earlier effusiveness about Empire in these publications (ibid.). The same happened in narratives ostensibly aimed at adults; a much more consciously imperialist tone was introduced into the genre. In ideology and in target readership, the future-war story thus coexisted and contended for customers with the proudly imperialist boys' literature of the time. Indeed, a juxtaposition of the two literary forms reveals their ideological as well as compositional similarities. The writers of future-war tales learned much from contemporary writers such as George Alfred Henty, whose martial ideology they fully embraced. Henty's proclamations in his preface to *St. George for England* could very well stand as a *raison d'être* of the future-war narrative:

It is sometimes said that there is no good to be obtained from tales of fighting and bloodshed, that there is no moral to be drawn from such histories. Believe it not. War has its lessons as well as Peace. [...] The courage of our forefathers has created

⁸ For instance, Clarke records the 1895 publication of *The Siege of Portsmouth* by William Laird Clowes and Beccles Wilson in Harmsworth's newly-founded *Portsmouth Mail* as an advertising tactic to increase initial sales numbers of the newspaper (*Voices* 109-10).

⁹ John Springhall notes the wide circulation of Harmsworth's halfpenny papers, within which future-war tales featured prominently, among working-class boys (108).

the greatest empire in the world around a small and in itself insignificant island; if this empire is ever lost, it will be by the cowardice of their descendants. (Henty v).

In addition to their ideological foundation, even those future-war tales ostensibly aimed at adult audiences had absorbed much of the narrative structure of the boy's adventure story. The narratives of wars-to-come in the Harmsworth mould played out much like Henty's tales of historic conflicts. Both forms followed a pre-set, codified 'Henty formula':

[The hero] meets with some family misfortune which involves him being orphaned, dispossessed or cast out into the world. He invariably becomes involved in one of Britain's wars, distinguishes himself, encounters famous historical heroes, makes his fortune and retires to England, often (though not always) to marry and settle down as a prosperous landowner. The ritual of chases, captures, missions, escapes and fights is intercut with straightforward factual accounts of battles and campaigns, which are detailed and rather dull, though full of just the kind of lists of regiments, armaments and casualties that boys of a certain age devour [...] (J. Richards 75)

The writers of future-war tales after 1890 modified this formula only superficially: The famous historical heroes of Henty's stories become still-living, distinguished military leaders like Field-Marshal Lord Frederick Roberts, or thinly veiled stand-ins for them, who would lead nation and empire to glorious victory.¹⁰ Future-war narratives' detailed and dull descriptions of armies and battles are extrapolations in which existing contemporary regiments are employed, which preserves the Henty atmosphere of the reader reliving imperial military history. The central heroes of these tales – invariably male – come from the same stock. Thus William Laird Clowes's young privateer Thomas Bowling, the "Captain of the 'Mary Rose'" (1892) and lovelorn Guy Bentall of Lloyd Williams's *The Great Raid* (1909), among others, can trace their lineage back to the boy hero of the Henty type.

The genre thus continues where Henty's writing leaves off, envisioning an imperial future equally heroic as the past. Crucially, the setting merely receives only a superficial change: In terms of military adventures, the British battlefield offers the same excitement and ideological lessons as does Henty's combat on the imperial frontier. Again the future-war genre imagines the British landscape in terms of colonial surroundings. Britain is just one more location on the imperial map where British heroes have to prove their mettle. This goes so far that Le Queux and his imitators envision a communal imperial experience shared by all people of British extraction, echoing Charles Dilke's idea of a Greater

10 It would become customary that distinguished military authorities would preface future-war narratives to give their warmest consent to these tales' contents and their authors' reformatory intentions. Le Queux's two novels examined in this chapter both have forewords by Lord Roberts himself.

Britain, in which even though “climate, soil, manners of life, that mixture with other peoples had modified the blood, [...] in essentials the race was always one” (Dilke, preface to 1st edition). Like Dilke, writers of future-war narratives assume an English racial essentialism which has been transferred over the globe, and their conclusion unifies imperial existence as a mixture of both the metropolitan and the peripheral. Their narratives imagine a trans-imperial Britishness under the auspices of metropolitan British values, where British life and its circumstances are a universal experience. Accordingly, they envision metropolitan Britain (as well as Britons) in light of the colonial, a quality which in these narratives is the very saving grace of the British people and the Empire.

Le Queux the journalist constructed his tales according to the latest geopolitical developments in order to present the reader with a story which best captured the zeitgeist. In *The Great War in England in 1897*, he foretells invasion by a French-Russian alliance in the wake of these nations’ defensive pact of 1894. A decade later, after an ambitious German Empire had built up its navy to rival Britain’s, Germany is the enemy *du jour* in *The Great War in 1910*. These novels’ plots are rather interchangeable: Infiltrating foreign agents interrupt British infrastructure, and the enemy lands on British soil quite suddenly. The population is taken by surprise, and because of partisanship and infighting (not least due to class warfare), the enemy can advance easily upon London. However, defeat can be averted at the last moment by the people’s rallying. Now every last Briton realises his/her duty as citizen of the Empire and fights the invader in guerrilla warfare. Loyal colonial troops, landing on British shores just in time, provide additional help. Amidst all the destruction, Britain thus emerges as an even stronger imperial power.

The depicted decisive battles in London put the Britons in the position of natives who are defending their land against a conqueror’s imperial ambitions, and in this position Londoners show their knowledge of ‘indigenous’, ‘colonial’ modes of resistance. Crucially, these narratives’ description of the urban environment as a colonial space and the population’s quality as natives, who possess intimate knowledge of their land and skills building upon that knowledge, allow them to be victorious.

Following up on Butler’s demonisation of everything urban, Le Queux further heightens the genre’s fear of the city. In the two Le Queux novels examined here, London is the space that contains all the evils that have befallen the British people in the modern era. Its high society’s culture of conspicuous consumption clashes with the degeneracy of the other side

of the social ladder, for not far away from all the decadence there is the squalor of the urban poor. Both sides have degenerated into savagery in the jungle of the metropolis. London is described as a “Modern Babylon” in *The Great War in England in 1897* (277). This epithet evokes the title of fellow journalist William Thomas Stead’s series of scandalous articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (1885), in which Stead infamously highlighted child prostitution within the city. Like Stead, Le Queux sees London as sinful to its core, and in his future-war narratives it indeed proves a worthy successor to the biblical city of sin. An invasion puts the local population’s inability to produce strong traditional soldiers in stark contrast with the number of people and size of the city’s land; despite all its masses, the city seems helpless in the initial stages of the war.

Butler equates the metropolis with “some monster of the deep to which the fickle tide has played false” and which “found herself huge and helpless waiting for her death” (*IE* 140), invoking its bloat, decay, and death. The metropolis as a beached whale: Writers of future-war narratives take grim satisfaction in their dismantling of the urban. Lying prostrate before the invader, London’s destruction in battle is a rightful punishment for its sinfulness and a welcome chance at rebuilding a more virtuous capital. Besides the apparent moral degeneration of its denizens, there is moreover a latent menace in the city’s unfathomable geographical expansiveness; that is, the lurking threat of disappearing without trace within its proverbial abyss. London’s status as a vast and dangerous place is reflected in Robert Cole’s imitation of Le Queux’s writings, *The Death Trap* (1907), whose narrator describes the city as a “great wilderness of bricks and stucco” (62). The use of the term “wilderness” here again evokes colonial desolation: Like the inscrutable tropical jungle, the city contains dangers to civilisation.

Yet implicitly, Le Queux’s works remain ambivalent about the city, also seeing hidden strengths in its barbarity. As Joseph McLaughlin argues in his study of late-Victorian writing on London’s urban jungle, contemporary portrayals and interpretations of the city’s depths carried with them more varied implications than mere degeneration. The *fin-de-siècle* and Edwardian future-war text partakes in a narrative trend in which “ways of describing peoples, places, and experiences on the periphery of empire became an effective rhetorical strategy for imagining the imperial center” (*Urban Jungle* 1), so that “metropolitan London and Londoners, far from being the antithesis of those colonial and imperial places and peoples that comprised the British Empire, were actually their curious

doubles” (5). The city thus proves “an imaginative domain that calls forth heroic action: exploring, conquering, enlightening, purifying, taming, besting” (3). In Le Queux’s (and his followers’) narratives, London possesses a primitive but powerful essence which ultimately proves vital for Britain’s continued existence. As with Butler, the urban poor are central to Le Queux’s narratives, but he finds national salvation not in their removal from London but in their staying. He proposes a defensive role for the lower rungs of city society that affirms their status as ‘urban savages’, channelling their destructive energies towards a constructive goal: Those who cannot afford to flee from the city before the invasion, that is, the unemployed, the working classes, and the lower middle class, become its front-line defenders. The author thus posits a potential advantage in ‘savagery’ that is vital to Britain’s martial effort. In order to be able to utilise these energies, however, the workers and the destitute first have to be tamed: They need to be convinced (by force, if needed) of their role as imperial citizens.

As a jungle, London is thus inhabited by its own kind of savage. In Le Queux, the masses are at best only half-civilised people whose thin veneer of civilisation erodes quickly at the first signs of crisis. That the lower classes are the first to revolt during the early stages of the enemy’s march upon London is presented as a virtual inevitability. Indeed, the less well-off inhabitants of the East End (and the author emphasises their place of origin) prove to be infused with strong savage desires, and inhibitions are lost quickly after the state descends into chaos.

This anarchic element of the invasion plot can be first found in the 1885 narrative *The Siege of London*, published under the pseudonym ‘Posteritas’, in which the mob takes to the street after news of invasion and blockade of British trade become public. This blockade means that survival becomes even harder for the most destitute, and these people are quickly driven mad:

Then ensued a scene such as had never before been witnessed in England. A panic set in, and from every den and alley, from every rookery and slum in the great city there poured a countless multitude of the offscourings and scum of both sexes. Like a howling pack of fiends let loose from hell, this maddened rabble tore through the streets, leaving havoc and ruin in their wake. [...]

Next they tore up the seats and trees that had adorned the Embankment, and, making a huge bonfire, danced round it in savage glee. [...]

It was a stupendous outburst of the worst human passions. Women went mad, and absolutely in their excitement threw themselves into the fierce flames. Men, seized with the ferocious rage of disappointed wild beasts, committed the most unheard-of

outrages, and children of tender years were tossed about like balls, and then trampled to death in the gutters. (*The Siege of London* 288-9)

Here, the regression into savagery of the British urban citizen, often feared in contemporary discourse, comes fully true. By dancing around fires in fetishistic rituals, these people evoke the ‘savage’ of deepest Africa in Victorian imagination. The existential peril of the jungle has wholly gripped the metropolis. Indeed, the mob is now dehumanised; it becomes a manifestation of the greatest fears of degeneration, for here Britons have become “wild beasts” or “fiends”.

Society is therefore doubly in peril during invasion, with both the advancing foreign army and degenerative forces from within being a threat to the nation. In Posteritas’s *The Siege of London*, the domestic assault on British society contributes to the nation’s inevitable fall, but Le Queux innovates here. Although he and fellow future-war writers insert very similar scenes in their texts, and though they too take care to portray the ‘dregs’ of British urban society as a contributing factor towards Britain’s failing political and military strength, they have a more belligerent attitude. Their local and national authorities overcome the mob and turn around its aggression towards the true enemy. In *The Great War in England in 1897*, Le Queux reinvents the above class battle as a deciding heroic event in the course of his Great War and in the history of the British Empire as a whole. In this narrative, the rioting mob is shot down by arriving British troops “like dogs, without mercy” (48). The assertive, ruthless, and by imperial logic fully justifiable suppression of the ‘native’ insurrection is a reassertion of hegemony over this part of the population. Proper imperial rule is reinstated. Turning this destructive energy around, in *The Invasion of 1910* the pacified mob later provides the very fighting force which repels the invader. The middle and upper classes (in the narrative described as ‘the British people’ in general) have learned to channel the aggressive impulses of the working classes against the foreign enemy, utilising the masses’ knowledge of the urban terrain and their capabilities in urban combat; in effect, they now let the insurrectionist element carry on its rioting against the invader, where this action is put to much better effect.

With this, they beat the existential fears of the imperial Gothic. Patrick Brantlinger defines the imperial Gothic along three central themes, two of which are salient to the future-war genre: “individual regression or going native” and “an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism or demonism” (*Darkness* 230). Narratives of war-to-come in the Le Queux mould participate in this mode actively. Their themes are not much different

from those of tales like Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* or Haggard's *She*, their novelty being that they find atavism already ingrained deep within British society (if still predominantly in the Other of the working classes). The urban jungle of London shows that the British have already gone native, and within them lie the forces of barbarism which must be combated. While Brantlinger is right that "[n]umerous invasion fantasies were written between 1880 and 1914 without Gothic overtones" (235), Stephen Arata's claim that there is an absolute division between the future-war narrative and what the terms fictions of "reverse colonization" (Arata 110) therefore cannot be supported. The *fin de siècle* future-war narrative is as "obsessed with the spectacle of the primitive and atavistic" (113) as are the tales of reverse colonisation as summarised by Arata. The future-war novel combines the "middle-class fear [...] of an industrial underclass that was itself becoming increasingly politicized" (110) with its fascination with the primitive. It thus becomes a narrative of reverse colonisation; indeed, it celebrates aspects of reverse colonisation.

There is an element of pride in living within the London 'jungle', for by surviving it on a daily basis, Londoners prove their mettle as an imperial people. They have subdued its degenerative qualities and thus maintain civilisation within the unlikeliest of places. Where they are (usually) able to control the urban jungle enough so that peace and the social order are upheld, Le Queux's invaders fail to overcome the jungle. This turns the usual pattern of the adventure tale on its head. The positions are reversed, for the invading foreign troops seek to emulate the numerous heroes of British imperial romance while the British people occupy the role of the indigenous enemy who must be bested. However, the enemy has no Allan Quatermain or Sir Henry Curtis (both from Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*) to succeed in their quest. The invaders fail to obtain the native treasures – the accumulated wealth of the Empire – at the centre of the seemingly insurmountable wilderness. The rival empires France/Russia and Germany are thus put to the test: They fail this test, proving to be inferior imperial powers. Where the Britons have succeeded time and again, the French, Russians, and Germans cannot win. Further, this ties into Le Queux's vision of the British not only fighting their invaders to defend their home soil, but competing with rival empires for hegemony over the world. This outlook is very Darwinian: As inhabitants of their jungle, Londoners have adapted to its demands and seem to thrive within it to a degree. Therefore they have a right to claim it as their own. On the other hand, the unprepared foreign invaders, not possessing the same knowledges as do the British, perish amidst this environment. Here the narrative underlines the importance of imperial

ideology on individual martial qualities, for only by realising their status as imperial citizen do the Londoners prevail.

At the end of Le Queux's wars, the clashing armies in his narratives are not only comprised of Britons and French/Russians/Germans but also of various supporting troops made up of native battalions that have landed in Britain to fight for their empires – in the case of *The Great War in England in 1897*, Indian Gurkhas and North African Arabs (295). This underlines the importance of native peoples within imperial military structures and in turn shows the Britons' strength as colonisers, for their native troops fight gladly for the metropolis: "The fate of England, nay, of our vast British Empire, was in the hands of those of her stalwart sons of many races who were now wielding valiantly the rifle and the sword" (303). The enemies are repelled at tremendous cost, but beaten conclusively by the concerted effort of a finally unified people; when, as Danny Laurie-Fletcher sums up, "colonial forces out of a sense of racial or imperial loyalty come to Britain's aid against invading forces" (Laurie-Fletcher 9).

In these highly imperialist future-war narratives, the civilian populace of Britain again becomes an integral part of the defence effort, being a large mass of irregular units. These guerrilla forces do away with traditional distinctions between soldier combatant and civilian. While the actions of civilian commandos, creating entrenchments and striking at the alien armies in ambushes, is only briefly mentioned in *The Great War in England in 1897*, this form of defence takes a central role in the later *The Invasion of 1910*, a text much concerned with the South African War. The author creates a situation which is quite similar to that found by British troops during their battles with the Boers, when modestly sized bands of Afrikaner commandos, highly mobile units consisting of armed farmers, proved able to withstand the British military's pressure. In this narrative, the Britons reverse the situation wholesale, themselves becoming the Boers. Throughout the fight, elevations within London are described as kopjes; the urban wilderness becomes the South African veldt. In this environment, the city's natives then fully use their skills to form powerful fighting units. That the British populace should now imitate the Boers and engage the superior enemy in 'frontier combat' is a belated recognition of the advantages of the Boers' method of warfare, and a conscious act to redeem Britain. Previous embarrassment is converted into a future advantage. The people of London here become a highly decentralised, mobile indigenous fighting force. Even the debris accumulated during the

enemy artillery's bombardment of the city is turned into a weapon of defence, as a news reporter observes:

“Imagine a huge wall erected right across the road from Tarn's front to the publichouse opposite, an obstruction composed of every conceivable object that might resist the German bullets, and with loopholes here and there to admit our fire. Everything, from paving-stones torn up from the footpath to iron coal-scuttles, has been used in its construction, together with thousands of yards of barbed wire.”
(11910 471)

In this, Le Queux's idea of a popular defence of the empire agrees with Thomas Richards's idea of the Imperial Archive as a compendium of 'outdated' knowledges upon which Britons could draw in situations of war. Crucially, the means of victory over the invader does not lie in technological or scientific superiority, but in quite the opposite methodology. London's population take any weapon they can obtain:

The whole infuriated population seemed to emerge suddenly from the side streets of the Kingsland Road on the appearance of the detachment of the enemy, and the latter were practically overwhelmed, notwithstanding the desperate fight they made. Then ringing cheers went up from the defenders.

The Germans were given no quarter by the populace, all of whom were armed with knives or guns, the women mostly with hatchets, crowbars, or edged tools.
(362)

This fighting force here does indeed consist of representatives of the whole populace. It is mainly the working classes which provide front-line troops, but the lower middle classes also participate readily. The upper and upper middle classes, who have fled the city before the Germans advanced upon it, provide help from the outside by supplying equipment and weapons. Le Queux thus positions the homeland's defence as an imperial duty of every citizen. National security becomes a truly universal concern, in which every rung of society must be involved. Indeed, success is assumed to hinge on every party's dutiful fulfilment of their individual role in the war effort. Women are explicitly included, and in Le Queux's stories are able to improvise quite effectively, utilising items and tools found in the household. In fact, the women of London might be the most fearsome combatants in this conflict:

Many of the London women now became perfect furies. So incensed were they at the wreck of their homes and the death of their loved ones that they rushed wildly into the fray with no thought of peril, only of bitter revenge. A German, whenever caught, was at once killed. (363)

As shown by Laurie-Fletcher, here the “portrayal of women fighting reflects the fact that at the time girls' periodicals such as *The Girl's Own Paper* encouraged rifle training for girls

as a healthy activity but also the display of women fighting suggests they were making up for the shortfall of trained male fighters” (Laurie-Fletcher 63).

The class and gender roles depicted in both of these novels inscribe new prestige to formerly marginalised identities. Everything is subsumed under the purview of homeland defence, so that the margins wholly merge with the metropolitan. Not only are peripheral modes of resistance greeted with new sympathy, but also those people who would be on the periphery of metropolitan society. No wonder, then, that a new-found sense of purpose and pride even extends to the city workers’ dialect, a significant marker of their identity. This idiom is used in the newspapers that are printed after the Germans occupy much of North London, proving a message of defiance towards the occupying army. The German authorities set up an interim government and restart London’s social life on a limited scale, but the city’s inhabitants quickly find methods to undermine the oppressor:

At the head of each newspaper office in and about Fleet Street was a German officer, whose duty was to read the proofs of everything before it appeared. He installed himself in the editorial chair, and the members of the staff all attempted to puzzle him and his assistants by the use of London slang. Sometimes this was passed by the officer in question, who did not wish to betray his ignorance, but more often it was promptly crossed out. Thus the papers were frequently ridiculous in their opinions and reports. (*1910* 466-7)

Londoners have found the subversive power of using ‘indigenous’ language – in this specific case, presumably the Cockney dialect.

The London natives thus continue to fight the would-be coloniser in non-martial ways, by which they can set themselves apart from the oppressor and reclaim some power over him. This small gesture of defiance, which by itself only annoys the Germans, then feeds into a larger movement of popular resistance which proves much more of a danger to the invader. As the people in occupied London are linked to the larger population of Great Britain via underground networks, their resistance, the so-called League of Defenders, is a single unit, crucially coordinated by officers who have seen military service in the colonies, with every capable civilian person contributing to the effort in their way.

The very essence or life-blood of the London people is put into their last bastion of resistance, large barricades constructed of every material available, showing the ultimate willingness of every Briton to fight until the last. From the remains of people’s personal belongings, all their worldly possessions, is thus built a bulwark of entrenchments which facilitates the victory over the aggressor. This rubble barricade becomes an object of pride, standing for the perennial valour of the British people. The small Union Jack stuck onto

one of the barricades, described as hanging “limply” (328), is a reminder of lost glory and a sad memento of the British people’s recent unworthiness to that flag’s underlying idea. However, this small flag is later turned into a patriotic and defiant gesture by the population rising against the Germans, signalling Britain’s reawakened imperial spirit. While their old lives and identities are lost as their homes are destroyed, these newly imperialist citizens turn their broken belongings into an opportunity to survive and start a new life with a new, prouder national identity. That they have to sacrifice prized personal belongings is not only a necessity but proves to be an honour to them in this light. Herein they show their superior ingenuity to the overconfident German war machine, turning their loss into a tactical advantage and rubble, things that have lost their erstwhile utility and importance, into an implement of defiance.

While Le Queux stresses that it is tragic that it has come to such a loss of lives and livelihoods, the people’s loss of property is also a consequence of their erstwhile complacency and materialism. Nevertheless, it is also a clean caesura which enables them to learn from their mistakes and start afresh. On a more national scale, this also happens to the British people as a society, the destruction of the ancient and hallowed monuments of Westminster and Whitehall being a reminder of its failings – calling into question contemporaneous Britons’ worthiness to the imperial legacy of their forebears – as well as an opportunity to erect in their place even more splendid monuments of empire in the new century. The rubble of bombed buildings and the Londoners’ trashed belongings, violently ripped from their original place and meaning, become building blocks in a new construct, the fabric of which is composed of the belongings of a multitude of people. Quite similarly to their possessions, the people themselves, having been uprooted and displaced by the war, thus find their new place in the fabric of a reinvigorated British society. The composition of the barricades which crucially slow the enemy’s advance indicates the direction of British society as it needs to be, every citizen giving freely, ensuring structural cohesion as a part of the whole.

This does not mean that this new British society will do away with its class and wealth hierarchy. Of course, there is a very cynical component in this celebration of the workers of the city. As the front line of the resistance out in the streets, these people are in fact cannon fodder. Their numbers thin considerably in the final battle in which the Britons reclaim London and their island. After the invader’s defeat, it is therefore easy for upper- and middle-class survivors to praise the people of the East End and other slums, in the full

knowledge that there will be less social pressure to alleviate their situation. The author emphasises, moreover, that the loss of capital many wealthy citizens have had to suffer does not make a better society with a more even distribution of income. On the contrary, after this near-disastrous invasion, everyone is poorer, and British society must rebuild itself.

Nevertheless, Le Queux advances the hope that after all the destruction, reconstructed London will be a cleaner, healthier place even for the poorest. This weaponisation of all that was before considered undesirable about the city by the upper and middle classes, its material rubble as well as the squalor of its lower-class inhabitants, turns into a valuable asset for the Empire. Le Queux's and his successors' proposed systematic subsumption of nearly all aspects of British life under Empire here does not provide suggestions for the alleviation of the lower classes' hardships; in effect it is wholly centred on middle- and upper-class ideas and needs. Rather, it shows how in this new era of imperial rivalries in the two decades before the actual Great War of 1914-18, everyone and everything British were supposed to fight for the glory of the Flag and the Crown.

Later narratives that are derivative of *The Invasion of 1910* push their jingoism to even greater extremes, envisioning a Britain that is in desperate need of the guiding (and often very firm) hand of its colonial military heroes. Robert Cole's novel *The Death Trap* posits an inherent superiority of the colonial over the metropolitan. The British in the imperial centre are "an idle, pleasure-loving, and degenerate body of people, incapable of sacrifice or effort, living only for sport and pleasure. It would rather win an international football match than a battle against the Germans" (*Death Trap* 25-6). Against such a lethargic population, the German invaders have an easy time taking over much of Great Britain. The tides only shift when Lord Eagleton, the greatest imperial hero of his day, arrives on the island, fresh from active duty on the colonial fringes. He takes on the lead of the British military and government, becoming a latter-day Roman "Dictator" (177). Like the Germans, Eagleton sees the British as an "idle and unpatriotic people" (78). Under his authoritarian oversight, necessary policies are forced on the nation, chiefly directing the lower classes' "useless rage to useful channels of activity" against the German occupiers (253). The narrative moreover presents martial law and the abolition of personal rights as fully justifiable in the face of an enemy threat. Clearly, *The Death Trap* argues for a "[r]uthless, merciless" leader to save Britain (77-8), and such a leader is best found on the imperial periphery, where circumstances ostensibly allow for a more pragmatic though

ultimately more brutal approach to crises than would be possible for political and military living in the 'degenerate' metropolis. Cole's novel is a highly sensationalist text that is on par with anything written by Le Queux, a "rabble-rousing exercise in popular fiction for the masses" (Clarke, introduction to *The Death Trap* 4).

While being a pastiche of Le Queux's and Cole's works, Lloyd Williams's *The Great Raid* (1909) is far less aggressively jingoist. This novel paints its colonial military leader as significantly more paternal and benevolent. While defending the city, the narrative's hero Guy Bentall meets Lt.-Col. Rudd, a decorated veteran of British campaigns in India, who organises British troops procured from the civilian population. Guy becomes Rudd's official messenger and under his command lives through daring escapes, chases, and stand-offs during his rides across the home front, adventures that would rival anything he could have experienced in the colonies (which were his intended destination at the outset of the German invasion). Rudd is stern but not ruthless; he "was a harsh leader" but he "held the confidence of officers and men" (*Great Raid* 360), and this makes him the perfect man to lead the defence of Britain. Crucially, Rudd's experience in fighting on the imperial frontier makes the difference in beating back the invasion. The recent Second Boer War, only barely won by Britain, proves to be an important lesson according to Rudd:

"Have you forgotten the South African war? How many Boers held up General Buller's army? We are short of guns and cavalry, but this is the kind of warfare where riflemen are most valuable. Moreover, Continental armies are not accustomed to it, and, unless I am mistaken, they will blunder into traps in exactly the same way that our poor fellows did in South Africa until they learned the trick of it." (369)

Naturally, this is exactly the type of warfare that in the end saves Britain against the Germans, who are unable to adapt to the defenders' frontier tactics. Like many imperial romances of the period following the South African War, *The Great Raid* thus participates in contemporary discourse on that conflict and its ramifications for the Empire. At the same time, it relocates the adventure that contemporary imperial romances usually found on the periphery of the Empire into European spaces: Guy Bentall becomes an unlikely adventurer and imperial hero despite never leaving Britain. In this, Williams's novel and narratives of its kind follow the template set by Erskine Childers's tale of scouting in the North Sea, *The Riddle of the Sands*, which finds admirable qualities in hobbies that are considered unconventional and non-metropolitan, such as for instance amateur sailing.

3.3 Hidden Depths: Erskine Childers's Amateur Heroes

Erskine Childers's adventure novel *The Riddle of the Sands* is considered a seminal spy story (cf. Stafford 497; T. Richards 123), yet it also is much indebted to the colonial romances and boy's adventure tales of the time. Childers envisions the German Baltic and North Sea coast as a wild, dangerous frontier space within which survival is only possible by relying on colonial skills. Carruthers, the narrator of the story, reluctantly accompanies his friend Davies on a yachting trip in the Baltic and Wadden Sea to hunt wild fowl – or so he thinks. It turns out that Davies needs Carruthers's help to uncover why there was an attempt on Davies's life when he had visited the area earlier. Together, the heroes solve the titular riddle and thwart a clandestine German invasion plan via a fleet of secretly-built transport craft. They succeed by utilising techniques of scouting, detective work, and spying on the Germans, in particular clashing with Dollmann, whom they expose as a Briton who has defected to the German side. In the course of their adventure, Carruthers learns to appreciate the rustic methods of Davies, which he initially had considered peculiar, and becomes more competent in frontier life himself. Davies's hands-on knowledge of sailing (as well as of the dangerous and ever-shifting sandbanks) and Carruthers's social skills as a metropolitan gentleman both prove essential to avoiding the impending war: They pursue and confront Dollmann, the man in charge of Germany's war preparations; the defector commits suicide; and the German battle plans collapse without Dollmann's own considerable skills as a seaman.

As David Trotter has shown, Childers's favourable opinion on outdoors life was much influenced by his experiences as a sailor and as a Volunteer during the South African War (introduction to RS xiv-xv). Childers translates his belief in the regenerating, ennobling spirit of outdoors life and efficacy of frontier skill-sets into the narrative of *The Riddle of the Sands*. He argues for continuity between the periphery and the metropolis, or as Philip Steer calls it, “the metropolitan adoption of a colonial paradigm of imperial identity” (“Imperial Outpost” 81). This new paradigm is aimed at the whole of British society, for at its centre lies the idea that the nation needs to be prepared for coming invasions by staying active. The colonial skill-set is established as a simple, grass-roots training which allows civilians to become proficient in a modicum of martial expertise. It is the hobbyist that wins the fictional wars of the future (cf. T. Richards 133), with no formalised military training required. Davies is no soldier but a gentleman amateur, yet he is instrumental in averting war because he has an acute awareness of sea and sands, still practices non-

motorised yachting in an industrial age, and thus knows how to handle a sailing vessel on his own.

These local, outdated “knowledges” become Britain’s first line of defence (cf. 134). Davies’s, and later Carruthers’s, deliberate inclusion of the colonial in their metropolitan British personalities thus elevates the colonial to a position of prestige. The heroes of *The Riddle of the Sands* employ “sets of low-ranking knowledges, dominated knowledges, disqualified knowledges outside the purview of the state and beneath the contempt of the dominant” (ibid.). Yet ‘colonial knowledge’ or even ‘being colonial’ becomes a positive, vitally necessary quality.

Philip Steer claims that Childers integrates into his protagonists the settler identity of the “imperial outpost”, an identity informed by *fin de siècle* Australasian reports and narratives of struggle with the native Maori. Such texts propagated “an idea of guerrilla resistance based upon intimate knowledge of the land” (“Imperial Outpost” 81). While Steer is perhaps too eager in connecting the entrenchment of this imperial outpost mentality in Australasia to the future-war genre via Childers and the South African War¹¹, he rightfully points out a parallel development within the greater British sphere. As seen, metropolitan writers who had lived in the colonies and therefore knew frontier life first-hand, like for example William Butler, and those imitating them from the 1880 onwards incorporated and examined colonial identities in their metropolitan British future-war heroes. Unfortunately, Steer ignores this facet of metropolitan productions in the genre and instead posits that “the new kind of protagonist that settler writers sought to mobilize in response to the threat of invasion would contribute to reshaping the genre in Britain” (*Settler Colonialism* 163-4); according to Steer, the invasion narratives produced in the colonies reshaped the genre in the metropolis. *The Riddle of the Sands* is not the only future-war tale, and moreover not the first, to offer “a rethinking of the relationship between British character and territoriality” (187). Steer somewhat overstates the importance of Childers’s novel within the wider framework, for this particular narrative did not so much transform the tale of war-to-come but indeed proved a heightening and refinement of existing conventions. Earlier stories in the genre had already concerned themselves with the positive effects of the British Isles becoming a frontier space, and had already concluded that a nationwide

¹¹ Steer does not address specifically how Childers (and other commentators) found inspiration from Australasian writings during and after that war, leaving in the air the very “Australasian origins” announced in his title. As it stands, his article “Imperial Outpost” describes a convergent rather than sequential development in colonial and metropolitan writings within the genre.

rediscovery of pre-modern martial skills would be a necessary step towards racial and cultural reinvigoration.

The Riddle of the Sands nonetheless focusses these deliberations by invoking the specific conditions of the South African War. The war had been won, but “bitterly” so (Prior 2), and it had “damaged Britain’s imperial ego” (ibid.). In the aftermath of the South African War, future-war narratives more vocally participated in a public discourse of criticism, inquiring in the reasons for Britain’s military blunders during the conflict and proposing reforms by which future embarrassments could be avoided (cf. Boone, *Youth* 109). The genre after 1902 confronts the reader directly with theories on which lessons would have to be learned. Indeed, in the Edwardian era the tale of coming war became more preoccupied with the imperial outpost idea that had been addressed sporadically before by the likes of Butler, now more prominently proposing to integrate the colonial into metropolitan culture. *The Riddle of the Sands* is an important narrative in this respect, for as Thomas Richards states, it is the point when “the invasion novel [...] reaches maturity” through its explicitly pro-frontier reflection upon contemporary military doctrine (123). Childers makes it clear in his novel “that though examinations are important, Britain is failing to recognise individual talents which do not necessarily appear obvious through written examination or theories, but which are demonstrated through practical skills” (Laurie-Fletcher 60).

Among Childers’s two protagonists it is especially Davies who shows the most competence in thwarting the Germans, for he has the experience and knowledge of a settler solely through pursuing hobbies that could be called frontier activities. His hardiness has been built up through outdoors life, he has almost instinctual capabilities in sailing and intimate knowledge of the treacherous terrain of the Wadden Sea. All this combines to impress the more urban socialite Carruthers, who initially considers his friend more of an eccentric acquaintance at the outset of their yachting trip:

I thought I remembered enough of Davies’s means to know that he had no money to waste on luxuries. That brought me to the man himself. I had known him at Oxford – not as one of my immediate set; but we were a sociable college, and I had seen a good deal of him, liking him for his physical energy combined with a certain simplicity and modesty, though, indeed, he had nothing to be conceited about; liked him, in fact, in the way that at that receptive period one likes many men whom one never keeps up with later. We had both gone down in the same year – three years ago now. I had gone to France and Germany for two years to learn the languages; he had failed for the Indian Civil, and then had gone into a solicitor's office. I had only seen him since at rare intervals, though I admitted to myself that for his part he

had clung loyally to what ties of friendship there were between us. But the truth was that we had drifted apart from the nature of things. I had passed brilliantly into my profession, and on the few occasions I had met him since I made my triumphant *début* in society I had found nothing left in common between us. He seemed to know none of my friends, he dressed indifferently, and I thought him dull. (RS 15)

Carruthers here initially reveals his metropolitan condescension towards the colonial, with Davies essentially standing in for the frontier settler. His “modest means” and indifferent appearance make him unfit for sophisticated society. Yet at the same time, Carruthers even here emphasises Davies’s strong loyalty despite his friend’s indifference towards him, which mirrors the dynamic at large between imperial centre and periphery in many contemporary future-war narratives. Soon, however, Carruthers learns to appreciate and even admire Davies, realising that he let himself be deceived by superficialities. Under his unassuming appearance, Davies is a highly capable, honourable man. Carruthers, with his urbanite’s eyes, has become blind towards what really counts in a man, he gradually acknowledges. Davies consistently engages with his fellow men with unprejudiced courtesy, which leads Carruthers to reconsider his outlook: “I saw my silly egotism in contrast with a simple generous nature” (26).

Davies’s small sailing yacht, the *Dulcibella*, wholly reflects his unpretentious character and hidden qualities. Like its owner, originally the sailing boat is a disappointment to Carruthers, who had envisioned a more luxurious vessel. Nevertheless he recognises that boat and captain are “businesslike and solid” (29), quickly recognising his prejudices:

I glanced round at Davies [...] and for a moment or two I studied his face with an attention I had never, since I had known him, given it. I had always thought it commonplace, as I had thought him commonplace, so far as I had thought at all about either. It had always rather irritated me by an excess of candour and boyishness. These qualities it had kept, but the scales were falling from my eyes, and I saw others. I saw strength to obstinacy, and courage to recklessness, in the firm lines of the chin: an older and deeper look in the eyes. Those odd transitions from bright mobility to detached earnestness, which had partly amused and chiefly annoyed me hitherto, seemed now to be lost in a sensitive reserve, not cold or egotistic, but strangely winning from its paradoxical frankness. Sincerity was stamped on every lineament. A deep misgiving stirred me that, clever as I thought myself, nicely perceptive of the right and congenial men to know, I had made some big mistakes – how many, I wondered? (31-2)

Tellingly, Davies has kept his “boyishness”; he is the adult version of a Boy Scout, ever personifying the public-school ethos of ‘playing the game’ like the young heroes of boy’s adventure tales (cf. 188; 190). Likewise, he is unshakeable during crises; Carruthers calls his friend “a being above my plane, of sterner stuff, wider scope” (63) when Davies tells him how he survived a potential attempt on his life by Dollman when he first visited the

Frisian coast and almost uncovered the defector's and Germany's plans. (Davies's suspicions are of course later vindicated when both heroes solve the riddle and expose Dollmann's conspiracy.)

Consequently, the *Dulcibella* becomes an "insidious little viper" in the "imperial bosom" of Germany (86), as do the story's heroes. The fact that a small boat and two ordinary men can disrupt a whole empire emphasises Childers's argument on how effective settler knowledges and skills can be in coming wars. Davies's yacht is a lonely British bastion – a "frail atom of English soil" (258) – amidst the hostile German North Sea and Baltic, but it nevertheless withstands anything the weather, the tides, and the Germans throw at it. Davies's competence as a sailor and a scout make him more at home in these foreign waters than the Germans themselves.

A later spy thriller by John Buchan voices Childers's ideas concerning a merging of colonial and metropolitan identities even more explicitly. In *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915), written and published shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, protagonist Richard Hannay returns to Britain from lengthy service in South Africa, only to find that in the new climate of war, life in the imperial metropolis is as exciting and dangerous as it is on the frontier. Instead of rebelling natives (as for example found in another Buchan novel, *Prester John* (1910), which is set predominantly in South Africa), the young man must overcome spies working for the Germans, but in effect the stakes for the hero – and for the Empire – are the same. "Buchan's tale takes off from the point at which the imperial romance closes", Susan Jones explains ("Into the Twentieth Century" 418); it consciously follows the style of the boy's adventure tradition of the late nineteenth century, "updat[ing] the adventure story to accommodate the modern context" (ibid.). Despite its reversal of location, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* presents a British environment (more precisely, a Scottish Highlands environment) which still feels like the imperial frontier.

Accordingly, the abilities which Hannay has learned in Africa are of equally good use to him in his new home. Thus Buchan's choice of paralleling the colonial and metropolitan location also translates the usefulness of outdoors skills from margins to centre; in his spy tale, the suppression of domestic threats requires the very same qualities which are typically attributed to the hero of imperial romance.¹² However, Buchan's narrative innovates this heroic image, for it furthermore proposes implicitly that a colonial skill-set is

12 Martin Green identifies "certain kinds of virtue, like leadership, cunning, endurance, courage, and so on" as central traits of the adventurous male hero (*Adventurous Male* 4), and these qualities are readily found in male heroes of British adventure fiction.

an essential part of modern Britain's catalogue of methods to combat foreign aggressors, containing knowledge which has been acquired from contact with non-British, native sources, and complementing the hero's innate talents. Hannay re-imports to the homeland the manly virtues – essentially British virtues – which David Crawford in the above-mentioned *Prester John* exported to the colonies, but with vital additions: his frontier experience and, crucially, his learning from the Boer Peter Pienaar, “the best scout I ever knew” (*Thirty-Nine Steps* 102). Buchan argues for a conscious synthesis of metropolitan and colonial knowledge, fusing the two ostensibly disparate identities of the “Colonial”, as Hannay self-identifies (41), and the metropolitan man.

Carruthers's transformation from dandy to adventurer in *The Riddle of the Sands* exemplifies this fusing of identities. At the start of his narration, he already unconsciously rejects the sedateness of city-dwelling, but only with Davies's help does he fully embrace a more exciting outdoors life. This development is best traced in his changing opinion on proper dressing, which underlines his greater shift towards becoming a frontiersman: Before his adventure, he equates proper dressing with civilisation, explaining that “I have read of men who, when forced by their calling to live for long periods in utter solitude – save for a few black faces – have made it a rule to dress regularly for dinner in order to maintain their self-respect and prevent a relapse into barbarism.” (11)¹³ Gradually, however, he rejects this notion, seeing in pragmatic clothing and a rugged lifestyle quite a bit of self-respect and anything but barbarism. Even early on, once he receives his friend's invitation, he stops dressing for dinner – “an epoch in itself” (19). Though he might at first not admit it, the call of the wild intrigues him; in fact, the frontier proves to have an irresistible attraction. Like Davies, Carruthers cherishes the fresh air, the sea, and the weather in all its forms. Once fully converted, he sees in markers of luxury only “foppish absurdities of a hateful past” (107).

Crucially, Carruthers nonetheless still needs to utilise his deftness in socialising for the two Britons' venture to be successful, blending into polite German society to uncover Dollmann's secrets. This underlines the necessity for a proper balance of metropolitan and colonial skills: Davies and Carruthers are such an effective team because they complement each other perfectly. Also, both have no military training; Davies is in fact more effective as an amateur than he would have been had he been accepted into military service in India.

13 It is telling that these are the very first lines of Carruthers's narration; this further highlights how much Carruthers changes in the course of the adventure.

The heroes have already internalised, and must draw on the full extent of, the Imperial Archive to topple the Germans' scheme.

The German society that the heroes mingle in is generally portrayed in a positive light, not counting the traitorous Dollmann, who proves to be the real villain of the story. Davies, a consummate imperialist, voices his (and potentially the author's) admiration for the German Empire:

“Here's this huge empire, stretching half over central Europe – an empire growing like wildfire, I believe, in people, and wealth, and everything. They've licked the French, and the Austrians, and are the greatest military power in Europe. I wish I knew more about all that, but what I'm concerned with is their sea-power. It's a new thing with them, but it's going strong, and that Emperor of theirs is running it for all it's worth. He's a splendid chap, and anyone can see he's right. They've got no colonies to speak of, and *must* have them, like us.” (74; Childers's emphasis)

Again Davis demonstrates his public-school spirit in calling Germany's expansionism only fair if the British have done the same for centuries. In addition, this keeps Britain on its toes, necessitating a constant improvement of the British Empire to outcompete the Germans: “*We* can't talk about conquest and grabbing. We've collared a fine share of the world, and they've every right to be jealous. Let them hate us, and say so; it'll teach us to buck up; and that's what really matters” (90-1; Childers's emphasis). Accordingly, German characters like Commander von Brüning, whom Davies even considers to be a friend, are depicted as highly honourable. Due to the German officers' martial prowess, fighting them in a potential war seems to be a dangerous prospect for Britain, Davies and Carruthers recognise. Luckily, the Germans lack an Imperial Archive of their own which would allow them to counter the British heroes' frontier tactics, and Dollmann, while a capable seaman himself, is too involved in the German war machine. This allows the amateur adventurers to undermine their opponent.

Among all opponents, Dollmann is the only one whom the equitable Davies considers “a noxious vermin to be trampled on for the public good” (219), for he is a traitor to his nation. Initially not knowing that Dollmann is in fact a spy for the Germans who wants to kill him, Davies has fallen in love with the man's daughter Clara; a suspicious Carruthers tries to dissuade his friend from any further involvement: “Imagine his position if we're right about him; the vilest creature on God's earth – a disgraceful past to have been driven to this – in the pay of Germany. I want to spare you misery.” (143) Next to his unpatriotic switching of allegiance, Dollmann's vileness also lies in his ungentlemanly behaviour that is wholly unbecoming an Englishman: brutality, subterfuge, spying not for imperial defence

(as do Davies and Carruthers), but for his own enrichment. Davies makes the differences between the villain and the heroes clear: “I look at it like this. The man’s an Englishman, and if he’s in with Germany he’s a traitor to us, and we as Englishmen have a right to expose him. If we can’t do it without spying we’ve a right to spy, at our own risk” (80).

As Lisa Hopkins points out, it is miraculous that Carruthers as a patriotic Englishman can effortlessly pass as a German while Davies quickly sees through treacherous Dollmann’s pretence of being a German (“The Irish and the Germans” 78). Despite the heroes’ competence, the narrative “repeatedly insists that Englishness and Germanness *are* distinguishable” (ibid.; Hopkins’s emphasis). Davies explains this as an instinctual affinity with one’s own compatriots:

“It was something in his looks and manner; you know how different we are from foreigners. And it wasn’t only himself, it was the way he talked – I mean about cruising and the sea, especially. It’s true he let me do most of the talking; but, all the same – how can I explain it? I felt we understood one another, in a way that two foreigners wouldn’t. He pretended to think me a bit crazy for coming so far in a small boat, but I could swear he knew as much about the game as I did; for lots of little questions he asked had the right ring in them.” (RS 71)

Ostensibly, good knowledge of “the game” – in this case sailing; more generally, colonial skills – is an essentially British quality. The British therefore are always distinct, even advantaged, compared to other peoples, which makes perfectly impersonating them all but impossible for other peoples. On the other hand, patriotic Britons seem to have an unconscious capacity for exactly knowing what makes out Englishness (or Britishness) as opposed to, for example, Germanness; this makes them better able to pass as foreigners. As Dollmann’s case shows, as an unpatriotic traitor he has apparently never been fully a Briton, so that his capacity to intuitively delineate Englishness and Germanness falters in front of Davies.

Nevertheless, the fact that Dollmann is so similar to Davies in the way he approaches sailing, even having written a books on the topic, a copy of which is even used by Davies (cf. 173), indicates a dangerous affinity between villain and hero. If Davies did not possess such an ardent belief in the British Empire, maybe he too would have joined the German side of the coming conflict, and no one would be able to stop it this time. In this respect, Childers’s novel traces very close parallels to other future-war narratives that examine blurring identities between protagonist and antagonist. In fact, as presented in the next chapter, Max Pemberton’s novel *Pro Patria* from 1901 shares with *The Riddle of the Sands* the same constellation of patriotic British hero versus a formerly British villain that has

defected to an enemy power because of some past disgrace. Pemberton's story drives the affinity between its main characters even further by presenting both as being of mixed heritage and choosing their lives' paths differently because of their different opinion on Britishness. As will be seen, such stories actively attempt to negotiate questions of cultural hybridity and how to best integrate foreign identities within a unifying sense of Britishness.

4. Negotiating and Incorporating Hybridity

“There is an honour of nationality and there is a dishonour. The patriot is he who makes his country’s honour as his own” (*Pro Patria* 284), proclaims Alfred Hilliard in Max Pemberton’s novel of an attempted French invasion of Britain through a clandestine tunnel under the Channel, *Pro Patria*. The novel’s protagonist here delineates two distinct sides in the coming war: Honourable Britons, who fully embrace their nation and commit to defending their homeland to their last breath, are true patriots; conversely, those who do not wholly stand behind Britain are traitors. This exclusivist us-versus-them mentality typically constitutes a central pillar of late Victorian and Edwardian future-war narratives’ ideological economy – modern industrialised warfare is total warfare, where every last person must contribute to the cause of their nation. In order to legitimise said cause and build absolute unity, there can only be the British way (in essence, the English way), and any deviation is tantamount to treason. Anything and anyone that does not subscribe to this tenet is potentially un-British and thus immediately considered of suspicious allegiance. Daniel Darvay rightly posits that authors of late-Victorian and Edwardian future-war tales used this dichotomy “not only to strengthen but also to construct the need for national cohesion” (693-4), pointing out *Pro Patria* as among the most famous examples of the genre.

This binary ideology naturally encounters a moment of crisis when negotiating hybridity; situations where there is no ‘either/or’ but instead an ‘as well as’ create tension. Mixed-race identities, racial Others that have long been exposed to British culture, and Britons that have significantly experienced the Other destabilise the neat polarity of ‘us’ and ‘them’. This tension is a central (if perhaps implicit) theme in a number of British future-war narratives before the First World War, which thus produce at times ambiguously British heroes and villains, as well as racial Others that reflect lost British ideals and as such represent perfect allies to the British. Despite these narratives’ lingering uneasiness about such processes, the British essentially draw strength and ultimately achieve victory by crossing cultural and racial boundaries.

Robert Young has shown that hybridity can be both a force to separate as well as to unite, since it “makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different” (24-5). The future-war stories examined in this chapter reflect this duality and negotiate the issue

in striking ways. Max Pemberton's *Pro Patria* (PP; 1901) is uneasy about the identities of its mixed-race hero and antagonist, promoting the importance of fully embracing one's British side while also presenting signifiers of the characters' non-English heritage as a possible advantage – every Briton's individual faculties count towards success over the foreign invader. In this, that novel envisions hybridisation as an attempt to reconcile heterogeneity into unity (cf. Young 3). As a prime example, M. P. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* complicates the Yellow Peril narrative typical of the time by introducing a villain whose whole existence mixes East and West, as well as a hero who gradually absorbs the 'barbarism of the East' to lead the British to victory over Chinese hordes. Shiel here refutes race-based theories of English purity and exceptionalism by introducing the contemporary image of the English themselves as a heterogeneous race that has always striven to absorb the Other (cf. Young 2-3; 16). Finally, in Alan Burgoyne's *The War Inevitable* (WI; 1908) the very idea of the Yellow Danger is reputed, with the novel offering glimpses into a successful alliance between Britain and Japan. During Burgoyne's German invasion of Great Britain, the Japanese relief troops emerge as an example to the British, reigniting old and somewhat lost ideals among the defenders.

4.1 *Pro Patria*: Mixed-race Patriots and Traitors

In Max Pemberton's *Pro Patria*, hybridity is both a threat and (at least sometimes) an advantage, and the narration remains ambivalent, declining any ultimate assessment. This novel at once flattens and also emphasizes hybridities. Half-Irish army officer Alfred Hilliard (who considers his Irish heritage as a distinct racial identity), the narrator and hero of the story, clashes with his old acquaintance Robert Jeffery, a brilliant engineer of part-African heritage who has relocated to France and is now responsible for a secret French war effort. Although both men started their lives in the same place, being both of mixed descent and room-mates at school, their lives' trajectories have turned them into opposites. While Hilliard has committed himself to protecting his homeland Britain, Jeffery has renounced Britain after falling out with the ruling classes and being suspended from the military academy at Woolwich. Now he actively aims to humble Britain as revenge for his humiliation. The narrative makes it very clear that sticking with the British homeland is the only acceptable option for anyone of even partly British heritage. Choosing against Britain is ultimately an act of self-sabotage: While on visit to France, Hilliard crosses paths with Jeffery and uncovers a planned invasion via a secretly excavated tunnel under the English

Channel. He escapes French capture by utilising the ‘belligerence’ of his Irish heritage and returns to England with the help of an allied French officer, whose sense of honour leads him to despise his government’s plans. At the site of the planned tunnel outlet in Southern England, Hilliard confronts Jeffery shortly before the French drilling machines reach the surface. To escape the consequences of his act of treason, Jeffery detonates his hideout with himself still in it, and the French invasion is averted. Eventually, the friendly French officer and his daughter Agnes become British citizens, seeing their French compatriots as cowardly, and Hilliard marries Agnes.

The novel’s title and its sections’ sub-titles (“The Man” and “The Patriot”) programmatically state the narrative’s main message: Hilliard sees staying loyal to Britain as the prime duty of every British citizen; British identity should supersede any other. Half-castes such as Hilliard and Jeffery should thus be expected to serve their British fatherland despite their hybrid identities – even in case of Jefferies, whose ancestry makes him an outsider to English society much more so than Hilliard. In joining the French war effort, Jeffery becomes a traitor to his people, while Hilliard proves to be a British hero: The sub-titles of the narrative’s two halves therefore trace the progression of Hilliard from a “man” to a “patriot”. Crucially, Hilliard overcomes his bi-racial birth, as it were, and the (as typically imagined by late Victorians) less optimal traits of his Irish identity, while Jeffery ultimately dooms himself by giving in to his conflicted mind.

Hilliard himself, while somewhat underplaying his own hybrid heritage, is quick to point towards the utility of drawing from both ancestries. In fact, the perceived negative aspects of his half-Irish ancestry become an asset when he knocks Jeffery unconscious to escape imprisonment in France:

Now, I have said that I come of a race which was never known at any time for a well-controlled temper. My mother is of Irish birth; my forefathers were fox-hunters and soldiers, jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel. There was never one of them that counted his life at the value of a pin’s point if honour thereby were imperilled. And all the world had said that as the fathers were, so the son. (*PP* 78)

Stereotypic Irish impulsiveness and readiness to fight here save the day. Effectively, negative racial traits can transform into a positive when used in the right circumstances. The noble goal furthermore legitimises ungentlemanly behaviour; Hilliard’s rather rough treatment of Jeffery is thereby excused. Moreover, this is the moment that Hilliard becomes a patriot according to his own definition – a British/English patriot – while embracing his Irish ancestry.

This transition at the same time represents the hero's acceptance of a holy mission. He comes to see himself as a divinely appointed defender of Britain:

Always in my ears were the words, 'You, you are the chosen, yours is the lot, by you shall men know.' Belief in a mission sent by God, and not of my own asking, was, I hold, the guiding impulse of much that I did that night. I, an obscure officer of Hussars, had robbed France of her secret. I hugged it as a precious possession. Come what might, I would seek to do my duty. (81)

This gives further legitimacy to Hilliard's actions, which at times rely on subterfuge, dealings that as Thomas Hitchner explains were seen as "dishonorable and villainous" by contemporary readers (Hitcher 415).

While championing his own patriotism, Hilliard is however uninterested in examining the situation of Jeffery, to the point of being dismissive of his grievances. Hilliard is not clear on what was the occurrence that resulted in his former room-mate's disgrace and removal from Woolwich. Hilliard for his part seems disinterested. As if to distance himself from his traitorous opponent, he is quick to remember his dislike and pity for Jeffery. Recalling their times together at school, he notes "the old effrontery, the old reticence" of his erstwhile friend (*PP* 44). Refuting Jeffery's self-description as a victim of society, he explains his antagonist's diatribes against Britain and its treatment of him as "this strange, maudlin self-appreciation," even seeing them the rantings of a "confused" mind (262). In effect, Hilliard finds Jeffery's oscillations between self-consciousness and inflated ego appalling (*ibid.*). As David Pick proposes, Hilliard's narration emphasises that the English governing classes have rightfully rejected Jeffery because of "their instinctive and well-founded suspicions and reserve" (Pick 84).

Nonetheless, Hilliard's narration represents a filter, so that the reader has no direct access to Jeffery's thoughts and motivations. While he gives voice to his opponent's complaints, Hilliard rejects them as signs of Jeffery's irrational envy of 'the white man'. Furthermore, he remains silent in evaluating Jeffery's perhaps more legitimate grievances concerning the British public's racial prejudices against people of colour, offering no further context on the antagonist's situation during his years in Britain. At the same time, he describes Jeffery's alcoholism as founded upon a weakness of character, ignoring the possibility of it being a consequence rather than the cause of any deep resentment. It is clear that to Hilliard, Jeffery's failings are not of his birth, but of his behaviour, revealing an uneasy tension between the narrative's aim of promoting unity and its lack of engagement with racial prejudices (*cf.* Pick 84). Jeffery's defection to France is thus wholly

grounded upon his jealousies instead of being the consequence of larger social pressures, especially of any antipathy towards his African heritage. On Hilliard's question if he remembers having been an Englishman once, Jeffery therefore remains bitter. In his own view, he was "an Englishman, hounded out for being as God made him" (*PP* 259):

"The black man's something in his head [...] he was an Englishman once, eh? – well, he's going to be an Englishman now. He'll die quiet, sonny, as quiet as the best of 'em. And he'll take his brains with him. They had no room for 'em in this blasted country – they made a Frenchman of him!" (264)

Notably, Jeffery here effectively describes becoming "a Frenchman" as a last resort for him after his ousting from Woolwich and resulting disgrace. As Hilliard himself comments, in French society Jeffery would blend in much more readily:

In type a creole, whose 'colour' you might detect in the thick lips and angular nails of well-shaped hands. Hair matted and curly; [...] a man of taciturn aspect whom you would have passed a hundred times without notice in any crowd. (20)

As an additional ideological danger, Jeffery's disenchantment with British society manifests in his radical socialist leanings, which is portrayed as a misguided, desperate act of rebellion. This is depicted as another sign of Jeffery's irrationality, and a further tool with which he threatens the fabric of British society. In fact, Jeffery conflates his black identity with his identity as a 'worker', as someone who produces tangible results for the progress of society, to emphasise his worth as a person:

"What are your idlers worth—your singing birds, who never see the scissors on their hair; your fiddle-scrappers, who kiss the women; your ranters in Parliament and your ranters out of it? What good do they do? Is the world richer for them? I guess not. Wipe 'em all out to-morrow with decent tombstones, and you and I won't miss as much as a postage-stamp. No, sonny, it's the workers, the men who think in iron and steel, who make countries [...]. I've done the work, and it'll stand your generation and your son's and your grandson's after that. There's no other living man that could have done it – and they called me 'black,' the swine. Well, I'll wipe the ground with them some day, as I promised you [...]. Ah, Bobby Jeffery takes second place; he isn't good enough for the white man. There isn't one of 'em living that could do his work, but he isn't good enough for 'em." (*PP* 261-2)

Jeffery, as a 'worker', here sees himself as a much more industrially 'productive' part of society than many creators of cultural and political value. Thus, Jeffery's dangerousness gains an ideological dimension; he represents not only a somewhat unknowable Other but also a radical movement.

As Pick notes, Jeffery nonetheless exerts an “almost mesmeric fascination” over Hilliard, implying an additional danger of sexual impropriety (Pick 84). Like the narrative itself, the hero is at once repulsed and attracted by the Other that Jeffery represents. Here *Pro Patria* mirrors many contemporary colonial novels, which as Young notes “betray themselves as driven by desire for the cultural other, for forsaking their own culture”, being “concerned with forms of cross-cultural contact, interaction, and active desire” (Young 3). Like many native characters in contemporary colonial novels, Jeffery is at once pitiable, repulsive, and intriguing. Consequently, as a villain Jeffery is a complicated figure, and his utter fall and (quite literal) disintegration all the more tragic.

In fact, Hilliard ultimately agrees that his opponent that he has been victim to inexorable societal pressures, although in a tragic twist to Jeffery’s complaints Hilliard sees him as a victim to the French elites’ misguided plans. Therefore, Jeffery’s treachery stems from “the mad ambition of a man, fed upon conceit and hatred, and nursed by those who want a king but have no kingdom” (*PP* 283). This underlines the honour of Britain and resulting importance of loyalty to it. In Britain, Jeffery apparently only felt betrayed by his peers, while in France they actively used him as a pawn in their game:

The Nationalists of France, I said, those unresting madmen who cried ever in the French capital for change and ferment and revolution; who had never ceased to remember Fashoda, who had condemned Dreyfus to the living death; who would stake all to destroy the Republic when their own time came – these irreconcilables were the secret power; feeding Jeffery and his schemes with their money and their pledges; compelling the Government to permit the workings at Calais; themselves responsible for this surpassing hazard upon our shores; believing all, hoping all of the wildest scheme one nation has devised for the conquest of another – these were the true enemies, these the plotters, the Jew haters, the empire seekers, the dreamers, the fanatics, the unresting rabble of a dead society which ever asked for a new order, and, winning it, were dreamers and fanatics still.” (243)

Hilliard thus argues that blame for the attempted invasion should not be placed upon the French people as a whole. In fact, the narrative makes it clear that it is a few misguided individuals, like Jeffery himself, who would want war with the British. The rest of the French people are apparently willing to coexist in peace. Thomas Hitchner’s assertion that the novel’s “underlying message is that friendly relations with foreign rivals are impossible” (Hitchner 417) thus are untenable – however, it is true that that at least the French elite are depicted as “arrogant, craven, and hateful of England” (*ibid.*). Hilliard’s falling in love with and betrothal to Agnes, the daughter of a French officer that he

befriends while on his journey through France, additionally shows that there can be peaceful interaction between citizens of European nations.

However, while Agnes and her father find a new home in Britain, any potential hybrid identity as immigrants is immediately denied: Implicitly, they are Britons in all but name even at the start of the narrative, subscribing to the honesty, morals, and integrity depicted as common to patriotic Britons. In fact, Agnes and her father seem glad to change their nationality (cf. Hitchner 417) when they choose to move to Britain, rejoining Hilliard. Agnes herself is instrumental to Hilliard's safe return to Britain, following him across the Channel on her own to warn him of undercover agents in his homeland (*PP* 178).

Daniel Pick explains that literature which imagined a French invasion of Britain through a Channel tunnel "helped both to *produce and to corrode* the conception of purity, the singular identity so alarmingly at risk" (89; Pick's emphasis). As such, *Pro Patria* is emblematic of this duality, explicitly rejecting hybridity in favour of unilateral, pure British identity and ideals, yet also commending the potentially beneficial impulses that hybridity can add to British martial and cultural power. Pemberton's future-war novel thus shows a tense narrative ambiguity concerning hybridity and interactions of races common to contemporary narratives in the genre. Further developing this, and representing its most extreme form, that tension comes to the forefront in M. P. Shiel's novel *The Yellow Danger*, in which hero and villain both draw considerable strength from their increasing hybridity – and so grow increasingly more alike. Through sheer exaggeration, Shiel's novel thus ridicules *fin de siècle* concepts of racial purity, distinctness, and immutability.

4.2 M. P. Shiel's Yellow Peril: Reconciling East and West

There was something brooding, meditative, in the meaning of his long eyes; and there was a brown, and dark, and specially dirty shade in the yellow tan of his skin.

He was not really a Chinaman or rather, he was that, and more. He was the son of a Japanese father by a Chinese woman. He combined these antagonistic races in one man. In Dr. Yen How was the East.

He was of noble feudal descent, and at Tokio, but for his Chinese blood, would have been styled Count. Not that the admixture of blood was very visible in his appearance; in China he passed for a Chinese, and in Japan for a Jap.

If ever man was cosmopolitan, that man was Dr. Yen How. No European could be more familiar with the minutiae of Western civilisation. His degree of doctor he had obtained at the University of Heidelberg; for years he had practised as a specialist in the diseases of women and children at San Francisco. (*YD* 4)

This is the introduction of Yen How in Shiel's *The Yellow Danger*, the villain being introduced long before the novel's young British hero, John Hardy (who first appears in the sixth chapter). How is an atypical villain for the genre because of his unique heritage and life story, which at the same time make him particularly intriguing and dangerous: His half-Chinese, half-Japanese heritage combines the 'worst' of both worlds; he is positioned as the epitome of the East. Yet he is also well-acquainted with the West, having received higher education in Europe and being familiar with Western science, cultures, and politics. How is therefore not utterly alien, as the narration seems to imply; his identity is complicated by his easy movement between East and West.

Positioned opposite the doctor, yet of similar character, John Hardy is How's double. His increasing similarity to the doctor provides ammunition for the novel's central conflict; that is, the interpersonal struggle between the two main characters. Shiel's narration presents the reader with a hero that at times acts unconventionally if not villainously, and an ostensibly exotic villain that possesses the same strengths and weaknesses as does the British hero.

In the novel, young British officer John Hardy becomes leader of Britain's defence against an all-out Chinese invasion of Europe, led by Dr. Yen How. How first orchestrates a war between the European powers to weaken them before an attack from the East. During a naval battle, Hardy as the last surviving officer commands the nearly-routed British navy towards an unlikely victory, proving to be a military genius. Thus, he takes up the role of Britain's champion, leading an expedition into China after the nation's involvement in the European war is suspected. During that mission, he is captured by How's troops. Hardy and How had already met in London and fallen out over servant girl Ada Seward – and as a result of this personal affront, How has Hardy tortured. Hardy escapes his captivity and finds his way back to Britain, where he leads the remaining European troops against the Chinese hordes, who have by then already overrun and all but destroyed the Continent. To stop the final massive push against Britain, Hardy embraces the villainous tactics of How to attempt the total destruction of the invading Asian peoples. He devises a last naval battle in the North Sea, sinking the Chinese armada and killing How, and then orders the spread of a fatal infection among the remaining Chinese population in Europe, to destroy any and all hold-outs.

By presenting such a fluid dynamic between the increasingly un-British hero and often very European villain, the narrative questions the absolute rightness of the British

protagonist, and caricatures the ideological conventions of contemporaneous imperial romances. Hardy's and How's actions show that the lines between good and evil, or the familiar and the Other, are diffuse. British moral superiority is untenable in the crisis at the invasion's climax, when the British must employ underhanded tactics against the ostensibly 'morally inferior' peoples of the East. Said invaders themselves might threaten Britain's civilisation less than Hardy's ethically questionable orders of biological warfare and total extinction.

Shiel here twists the outrageousness peculiar to the future-war genre close to the breaking point by exaggerating the scale of the coming conflict with China. He emphasises the demonic nature of the Chinese: In his narrative, contemporary notions of race are overstated, nearly becoming satire. Shiel here holds a mirror to the preoccupations of the popular literature of the day, and stretches its conventions and values to extremes. Shiel here has his cake and eats it too, as it were: His characters are far from total opposites, and his narrative criticises British ideologies, but the enemy army is indeed a stereotypical barbarian horde whose aggression must rightfully be met with force. As a contemporary review in *The Saturday Review* sums up, the narrative "is horrible, exciting, impossible, alluring, fascinating; but, above all, it is audacious" (YD review 448).

John Sutherland remarks that Shiel never was a discreet author, describing his writing as "unique and [...] extraordinarily strange" (Sutherland xiii). Fittingly, *The Yellow Danger* is everything but an ordinary future-war novel. The narrative proudly proclaims Shiel's erstwhile affinity with the Decadent movement, following an aesthetic of excess and artificiality that, as William Svitavsky concurs with Sutherland, "shaped and limited the later development of his work, giving form to the racial views that would pervade much of his fiction" (Svitavsky 1). This excess, however, allows the narrative to put emphasis on these racial views: "In Shiel's recurring narrative pattern," Svitavsky concludes, "racial conflict is a struggle between Self and Other, each owing its existence to its opponent. They battle for dominance, but their struggle is a constructive conflict that offers learning and a transfer of strengths" (15). As such, Hardy represents the external manifestation of How's inner conflict, and vice versa. Neither of them could develop as a person without the other; their fates are inexorably linked. In parallel, the struggle between Self and Other is externalised in the theme of how reconciling Eastern and Western identities can build successful hybrid identities.

The novel is nonetheless uneasy about such hybridity, reflecting the author's own uncertainty: Shiel himself was of Afro-Caribbean ancestry, born in the West Indies to a father of Irish descent and a mother of mixed heritage. Biographer Harold Billings has found that Shiel was ambivalent on his heritage all his life, but at the same time his narratives envision a future of mixed-race humanity, where all races blend (Billings 42; also cf. Sutherland xiii). Ross Forman's assertion that Shiel being of West Indian origin and mixed race "was no barrier to creating archetypal imperial heroes and recycling stereotypes about Asians" (Forman 6) is therefore only partially right; Hardy is far from an archetypal hero, and How appears decidedly less stereotypical under close scrutiny. Considerably more weight can be given to Amy Ransom's assertion that the author's strategy of "a reverse assimilation" (Ransom 84), that is of Hardy 'going native', fits *The Yellow Danger's* implicit themes – that "Orientalized Westerners mirror the Westernized Asians [...] They, too, represent unnatural figures of hybridity" (ibid.).

Hardy and his nemesis How share a long conversation during the former's captivity about how alike they both are for ostensibly representing wholly irreconcilable positions, both racially and morally. This in turn complicates the hero's expected ultimate moral victory over the Chinese opponent. There is increasingly little difference in these characters' thoughts and actions, as Hardy recognises. Hardy says:

"What a beast you must be, Yen, to torture a poor boy like that! What a sad beast!"

"Poh! You do not know anything. I had worse in store for you than that, boy."

"What a damned reptile for God to make!"

"Abuse away. Your mind is not really first-class, after all. You are the slave of old, popular surface-ideas. A reptile is no worse than anything else, boy. If he is stronger than other things, he is better than them."

"Ah, well, if that were so, I should be glad, too, Yen. There is not much to choose between us, now, in that way."

"What, you are of the species, too, then?"

"Something of that sort, perhaps if venom makes the reptile. It is your own fault. You have made me like yourself. By the Lord, I warn you, Yen How...!"
(*YD* 312-3)

Implicitly, Hardy here accuses How that his opponent has forced him to 'go native', to abandon British principles of civilised behaviour. In effect, Hardy's realisation mirrors that of Charles Marlow in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, who sees, as M. Keith Booker and Anne-Marie Thomas put it, that metropolitan Britons, "with their safe protected lives, cannot possibly comprehend the violence and savagery that inform life" on the periphery and beyond it (*Science Fiction Handbook* 190). Hardy later comes to accept that

in order to win the war against China, he has to employ his opponent's merciless tactics, and to essentially commit genocide.

However, Hardy's morals are compromised even before his journey to China. How recognises Hardy's genteel veneer as "old, popular surface-ideas" (*YD* 312), under which lie the same failings of character that How possesses. Unlike the typical boys' adventure hero, educated at public school before going on his adventure, Hardy abhors book-learning and intellectual rigour, instead relying on his instincts and intuition – he has been accepted as an officer not because of excellence at school (79) but due to his family's Navy tradition (a Fleet Captain Hardy commands the HMS *Majestic*; cf. 22). Furthermore, Hardy pursues indecent habits:

[He] had been reported to the Admiralty for 'unsatisfactory conduct' and had been 'warned.' The 'unsatisfactory conduct' consisted in walking arm-in-arm with a girl of the lowest class through the streets of Dartmouth, both the girl and John being pretty far gone in a state of intoxication. (79)

Hardy's drinking, womanising, and transgression of class-appropriate etiquette mirror How's thoughts and behaviour dangerously closely.

Both characters' approach to courtship is a central point of overlap, as Hardy is as unrefined and obsessive as the doctor. Both identify love with the total possession of a woman: "When I come back from China, I shall have you," Hardy tells Isabel Jay, the New Woman he pursues despite (or maybe because) her rejection of him (84), and repeats this mantra to himself several times. "To his patience there was no end – to his resolution to possess her, by fair means or foul no end" (6), the narration at the same time describes How's fruitless wooing of servant girl Ada Seward during his stay in London – herself of a much lower occupational standing than the doctor's. Crucially, How thinks that he is in direct competition with Hardy, as he interprets Ada's kissing the young man as a sign of romantic involvement. The narration's remark that "[e]ven in the matter of love the Eastern is essentially different from the Western. It is impossible for us, in anything, to understand them, so foreign are they" (*ibid.*) thus reads as a highly ironic statement considering that hero and villain both share the same opinions about love.

The failed courtship of Ada Seward, which becomes the spark to ignite a war, effectively highlights the ridiculousness of one of the novel's premises – that a petty misunderstanding is catalyst for massive geopolitical upheaval. In parallel, it recontextualises the conflict between Britain and China away from a consequence of contemporary imperialist polity and into the personal space. A contemporary review

noticed this and commented on How “going to [wipe all the people from the face of the Earth except the yellow race] in order to secure a servant girl” (*YD* review, *Saturday Review* 448). The great war of Britain versus China becomes a distorted mirror image of wars in popular romance, a mockery of the Trojan War for example: Ada is no Helen, over whose virtue a legendary war would be fought. She is neither noble nor virtuous (concurrently to Hardy and How, she also socialises with the soldier John Brabant), and she is no classical beauty:

She was a small creature, with skin of a warm yellowish colour, and little quaint Chinese eyes, and light hair with the whitest tinge of red in it; not perhaps pretty, but with some unspeakable attraction of piquancy about her uncommon, saucy little face, which had caused her to receive twelve offers of marriage before she was twenty. Her friends declared that she was the living image of Miss Marie Tempest, the ‘Geisha’ *prima donna*. In figure she was typically English. (*YD* 86)

Her appearance, being a mix of European and Chinese physical traits, hints at and anticipates Hardy’s Orientalisation: His (however slight) attraction to her is a sign of his increasing, if unconscious, desire for the Other. Similarly, the fact that Ada rebukes her suitor How because of, as Forman puts it, “his unalienable racial difference” (Forman 148), is an ironic hint at the narrative’s intrinsically malleable and at times blurred identities.

Hardy’s actions in effect represent a critique of the upright, conformist protagonists of contemporary boy’s adventure fiction, with his unnatural military competence transcending any realism. In his first naval battle, Hardy immediately shows an intuitive knowledge of seafaring, maritime tactics, and natural leadership. Both single-handedly winning his first battle and then becoming leader of the undercover military mission to the Chinese mainland by age eighteen, he thus far outstrips other young heroes of imperial romance.¹⁴ Moreover, he achieves this while being physically far less capable than other young literary heroes. He has a slight build and carries a chronic disease (“depicted in terms identical to that most Victorian of ‘female’ diseases, tuberculosis” – Forman 148), yet he shows resilience, even surviving How’s torture. Although intelligent and gifted, Hardy eschews rigid hierarchies, regulations, and routine. He has a “gipsy attitude of mind, that sort of devil-may-care lawlessness characteristic of him” (46), which resembles How’s disdain for tradition. Like How, he harbours a strong belief in the “supreme importance” of an idea, unfettered by any conventions (49). This unorthodoxy is what elevates Hardy, making him “the great man of England” (342).

¹⁴ As just one point of reference, George Henty’s ambitious Charlie Marryat, who rides *With Clive in India* to aid in the expansion of the Empire, is a colonel only by age 26, despite his rapid rise in the ranks (378).

In terms of behaviour, too, Hardy spurns the characteristically gentlemanly or masculine, which makes his deification in the British newspapers as “as essentially an English thing as the cliffs of Dover, or the smuts of the Black Country” (74) all the more ironic. If Hardy is an avatar of England (and as such all of Britain), then Britain too is decidedly less masculine, physically strong, emotionally controlled, and morally pure than contemporary ideals would suggest:

For the rest, the young gentleman is said to have an ailment of the chest; he has the typical blue eyes of the English tar, and very light wavy hair, which he wears rather long. He is small in stature, and slim. His face is said to be the gravest, saddest, prettiest girl-face in the land, and his disposition in private life is much more than usually mild, soft, and affectionate. Our informant hints at a supposed weakness for the fair sex, and confesses that, at the examination stage of his career, the man who bids fair to become the national hero proved himself far from brilliant. (74-5)

Hardy’s behaviour is at times overly emotional or even irrational, foregoing the ‘stiff upper lip’ attitude of gentlemanly (and especially military) society (cf. Hardy’s reaction to Captain MacLeod’s prediction of future events, 55). Britain itself is thus implicitly positioned similarly far from its self-prescribed ideals – in effect, it appears somewhat effeminate. The narrative thus suggests that the British people have long held unrealistic ideals and, like Hardy, need to accept the less desirable aspects of human nature; aspects which Britons have attributed only to the Other. In essence, Britons in general too are not unlike How, who is considered “intensely foreign” (121). If Hardy at first has “not only the soul of a hero but the mind of a baby” (85), so too must Britons grow up and embrace the Other to succeed in the coming era of imperialist conflict.

Hardy becomes a tainted martyr for the cause of Empire by committing atrocities on behalf of his homeland. His suffering, especially his torture while imprisoned in China, seem “necessary for him” towards his final victory (*YD* 135), yet this win turns out less than heroic. In this vein, the final war between Britain and China becomes a mock-biblical struggle, in which good and evil are not as clearly marked as would be comfortable to the contemporary reader, mainly due to the barbarism on both sides. The arrival of the Chinese hordes, described as a latter-day Mongol invasion, is equated with biblical Armageddon: “[T]here was transacted so red an orgy of massacre, screaming lust, and sighing drunkenness, so mixed a drama of filthy infamy and sabbatic Satanism, as earth, and perhaps hell, never saw” (288). A violent volcanic eruption fittingly drowns Earth in a

shroud of gloom and “at the same time an intolerable oppression settled upon the chest” (285-6).

Thus Hardy’s mission should be messianic, to defeat the devil as personified by How. Indeed, after his torture in China, Hardy essentially resurrects in order to return to Britain:

Somebody on the outskirts of the crowd whispered to somebody else:

“What a *face* he's got!”

And the whisper went round. And now it was: “Just look at the phiz [sic] of him”; and now it was: “I don't think he's all there”; and now it was: “Lor! look at his face.”

It was a face in which there was something thrillingly *wild*; the face not merely of a judge and an avenger, but of a judge and an avenger come back from the grave, with just that hint of the Ineffable which makes us shudder. (196) Nevertheless, as seen above, Hardy has never been a saint. Fatefully, he renounces his Christian faith after his escape from torture, which effectively marks his turn to the Other:

[L]et us state, that on this morning of his deliverance he several times resisted and repelled the impulse which rose in him to give thanks to God. He refused. So much had Yen How changed him. The boy had hardened into something more (or something less) than a man. (186)

His fate after winning the decisive battle for Britain is ignoble, befitting his turning away from Christendom; and again it subverts any generic conventions. His is no hero's death in battle, nor does he get rewarded for his efforts by settling down and entering respectable society. Instead, Hardy dies following a duel just after the final battle in the war. Hardy's legacy is therefore complicated:

The results of his malignest act of enmity against the yellow race – results far surpassing in horror and vastness those of any of his other acts – he did not live to witness.

It is certain that he could never have expected so widespread a result from the distribution of the injected Chinamen about the European coasts [...] (343)

Ransom's reading that “it is significant that John Hardy's plan to exterminate the yellow races fails, reinforcing a sense of British moral superiority” (Ransom 79) here does not capture the full repercussions of Hardy's demise. *The Yellow Danger* does not conclude with a “shoring up of the dominant ideology of white superiority that subtended the civilizing mission of European imperial pretensions” (ibid.); instead, as Forman points out, “Shiel portrays the use of biological warfare as a ‘crime,’ for which his character is immediately punished by dying in a bizarre duel” (Forman 149). The “universality on the Continent of the new Black Death” (*YD* 343) is the shocking conclusion to a war of extermination, in which the ostensibly superior British side has won by employing the most brutal methods available – more brutal than what How had devised, in fact.

Hardy's tactics in the final stages of the invasion become a grotesque amalgamation of historic interactions between Europeans and native peoples on other continents: His order to infect the Chinese invaders with a "Black Death" (345) is in essence a reversal of the spread of historic Black Deaths, and at the same time recalls the patterns of disease that native populations succumbed to after contact with Europeans. Hardy thus performs a deliberate repeat of colonialist patterns on a grand scale, reasserting the West's dominance over Eastern populations. The narrative attempts to legitimate his actions by emphasising the righteousness of Hardy's motives compared to How's:

The difference between him and Hardy was chiefly this: that with the race-instinct and race-hatred and race-ambition of the Chinaman was mixed a personal, private motive, stronger even than the race-motive. Hardy, *like the very greatest*, was concerned only for the world.

It is written in the book of the Law of the Universe that selfishness shall sooner or later be a source of weakness. Whoever denies this has not gone deep.

The difference between Hardy and Yen How was the difference between Wellington and Napoleon. The latter, being more richly endowed, should have been the stronger and was not. (271; narrative's emphasis)

Here Hardy's brutality is declared as being righteous because of its selfless intentions, while How's weakness is his very personal motives for starting the conquest of Europe. However, the actual situation of course has been presented as being much more complicated, with Hardy's ultimate motivation being revenge on How for his imprisonment and torture. Again, the purity of the intentions on the British side is implicitly put into question.

As much as Hardy becomes a tainted messiah for Britain, How also declares himself as a messiah to the peoples under his command. This allows him to seize control over the whole Chinese population:

The religion of China consisted in the worship of the dead; and this worship took the form also of the worship of the living, whenever the living happened to be a reincarnation of the dead. On this point Buddhism and Confucianism were at one: the belief in reincarnation.

The living were reincarnations of the dead when they were either proclaimed to be so by the priests, or when they were proclaimed to be so by the Emperor, or – when they could work miracles.

Now Yen How could work the most astounding miracles; and he was proclaimed by the Emperor, and he was proclaimed all over China by the priests, to be the reincarnation of a dead man. And the dead man of whom he was proclaimed to be the reincarnation was – Confucius. To begin with, he was made a Saint [...].

Confucius was China; and Yen How was Confucius. He stood for the Race. (261-2)

In effect, his “very intimate knowledge” of the lower classes, be they British or Chinese, allow How to be a dangerous demagogue (5). It is apparent that he does not share the faith and religious fervour of the people he inspires; as with much of his actions, he professes to hold convictions as a means to an end. Instead, he utilises and warps Confucian teachings to indoctrinate the ‘undeveloped’ minds of the Chinese peoples (259). How remains amoral even after his establishment as a saint, acutely aware of the superstitions of his people as well as of how to utilise them for his own gain. He himself analyses existence through a rigorously scientific lens: “To God the world is a grain of dust; to Yen How it is a geographical globe: he metes [sic] it with a compass; in a moment he walks about it” (269). This conscious removal from “ethical considerations” is presented as vital to ensure racial survival, as Hardy’s victory over the Chinese is only realised when he too becomes “like an avalanche, as cold, and as resistless” (10).

The doctor’s cosmopolitanism is as dangerous as is his education, for it allows him to successfully combine the knowledge of the West with the cunning of the East. He has spent considerable time in Europe’s centres, including London, and learned much about European cultures and peoples, which allows him to devise the strategies that prove so effective in allowing the Chinese troops to conquer the Continent. As Forman shows, the “danger of the mimetic Eastern mastermind also lies in his abilities to expose the flaws in the design of the original” (Forman 147), meaning that How’s greatest threat lies in his ability to shine a light on the weaknesses of the British, not least in terms of their moral strength. Shiel thus inverts a convention of the invasion narrative in which the invader carries a decisive weakness that helps the British win over their enemy – in *The Yellow Danger*, the weakness lies in the West, and strength lies with “an educated, partly technologized East” (ibid.).

According to Svitavsky, Shiel’s work not only examines “the priorities of ruthless race war” but also “the possibilities of human advancement” (Svitavsky 1), which manifest in how the author envisions a future of racial mixing. Ransom notes that Shiel allows his Asian characters to express their own opinions, including on race (cf. Ransom 77):

Although placed in the mouths of villains and race-traitors [...], these passages express a utopian fantasy for a world in which racial mixing will not only be permitted, but actually desired in order to bring about and end to the current conflictual order imposed by social Darwinist conceptions of racially motivated wars as representing the ‘natural’ order for human society. [...] Shiel’s Yellow Peril narratives subvert the dominant discourses about race of their day. (85)

Shiel thus calls out contradictions underlying the racial discourses of his day (cf. 86); and he proposes a future in which racial differences and hybridity are accepted, maybe even the norm in British society.

While Shiel's sensationalistic, outwardly anti-Asian novel carries this theme perhaps unconsciously, later narratives in the future-war genre actively point out commonalities between the ostensibly exotic, unknowable peoples of the East and the British. From around 1900 on, a number of narratives even openly attempted to reconcile especially with the Japanese, emphasising cultural and ideological similarities between the British and Japanese peoples. Geo-political shifts necessitated this change in the portrayal of East Asian characters and cultures. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 proves a watershed, before which future-war novels emphasised the utter gulf between East and West; yet after the signing of the treaty the genre produced several narratives that cast a highly favourable light on the new ally. The fledgling Japanese Empire would secure the Far East, containing the other European powers' ambitions in Asia as well as the Chinese Empire. In order to comment on this pact, British future-war authors created Japanese characters that reflect the best attributes of the British as imagined in contemporary imperial romance. Moreover, they show the British reader qualities that are lacking in contemporary society. In short, authors saw an alliance with the Japanese island nation a perfect fit.

4.3 War Narratives of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: Familiarising the East

The Yellow Danger, of all narratives, notes the natural position of the Japanese Empire as an antipode to the British Empire: "For was not Japan the friend of England? Were not their interests identical? The Britain of the East, and the Britain of the West – how natural that they should stand shoulder to shoulder!" (130) Although Shiel's Japanese turn traitorous, other authors consider "this queer, outlandish, yellow ally of England" (ibid.) a vital source of support. Evidently, this new appreciation of and search for commonality with the Japanese is the result of British future-war discourse having to come to terms with Japan's new-found prominence on the world stage. The expanding Japanese Empire need not merely be a potential threat to British hegemony, but instead could become a valuable asset in helping defend Britain's Far-East possessions.

Following Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, John Morris's novella *What will Japan Do?* (1898) sees being on Japan's good side a definite necessity for the security

of the East (189-90). The narrative sees in Japan's development clear parallels to Britain's rise towards hegemony. Imperial Japan's rapid industrialisation has put it in a similar trajectory (16), with Osaka becoming the "Liverpool of Japan" – a prominent industrial hub and port (43). After all, letting Japan develop its colonies can only be beneficial, as long as Britain does not have to worry about Japanese encroachment on British possessions.

Both powers' similarities are therefore subsumed in an ideological framework against which the British themselves can justify their own imperial efforts. To legitimise Japanese imperial ambitions, the narrative portrays Japan's colonial efforts in Korea as part of its own civilising mission, equivalent to Britain's own self-prescribed destiny to bring civilisation to native populations in its colonies. As such, Korea is predicted to flourish once its population has been educated (73), which makes its Japanese occupation absolutely necessary for future prosperity (177).

Later narratives present and evaluate Japanese characters during the various respective coming wars. In *The War Inevitable* (1908), Alan Burgoyne imagines the Japanese Empire as a younger sibling to the British Empire. His novel describes an attempted invasion of Britain by the German Empire, during which the Japanese send relief troops to fight alongside the British. The British and Japanese are able to repel the invasion, and following this victory both empires see new power and prosperity, as they become the two nations to control the oceans – Japan forming a counterweight in the Pacific to Britain in the Atlantic.

The alliance here represents a mutual exchange, in which the British benefit from an influx of Japanese ideas as much as do the Japanese from British technology and know-how. These energising imports extend even to concepts of how the British people ought to lead their everyday life: The novel consistently emphasises the unfaltering integrity and honour of the Japanese, presenting them as an ideal to which the British ought to aspire. Special mention is made of Japan's maritime excellence, with Tōgō Heihachirō lauded as belonging "on a pedestal of fame beside our own Admirals of a glorious past" (221).¹⁵ In land combat, the Japanese troops prove their dedication to defending Britain through their resolute advances towards the German positions. The British are impressed and inspired by their allies, who "regardless of life [...] went on with their storming resolved to a man either to win or die" (265), and the now beleaguered Germans quickly realise that "if the

15 Significantly, Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō furthered his studies of naval warfare in Britain, 1871-1878, showcasing the mutual benefit of an Anglo-Japanese exchange.

Japanese had made up their minds to take the position, take it they would, be the cost what it may” (265-6).

Once the initial German assault is repelled, the British diligently prepare for the next attack, evoking the warrior code of the samurai.

Yet down in the country, in fields and on hills, men,— stern, silent men,— practised steadily with rifle and revolver. Crack! Crack!!

It was “Bushido” – the Spirit of Patriotism. (*WE* 96)

Although here Bushido is subsumed under patriotism, the term encompasses a whole set of ideals and codes that at least in theory dictate the samurai’s life; tenets which now reinvigorate the British people in the novel. Notably, the dictates of discipline, dedication, and ‘stiff upper lip’ mentality that the British militias here follow largely agree with traditional British gentlemanly ideals – through the example of the Japanese samurai, the British thus reignite their own strengths.

The duel between the Japanese Captain Iwamura and German Major Eberkraft during a battle for a fort near Portsmouth fittingly substantiates the ‘chivalric’ code of the samurai, with both officers becoming the champions of their nations in one-on-one combat and as such proving their honour. Again, it is specifically the Japanese combatant that acts most nobly. Iwamura has already shown his mastery of combat during his advance to the Major’s position, armed only with his sword, yet in the following unarmed duel he greatly astonishes both armies. Of light build, the Captain appears to be physically no match for the tall, broad German, yet he still decisively wins the fight:

For a moment they lay as they had dropped,— exhausted; and from the watching Japanese and Germans came a thunderous applause. For a space, it seemed, the mad anger of the combating nations had died away in the momentary but absorbing interest of this extraordinary duel. [...]

Eberkraft did not move and Iwamura noticed that his right leg was twisted under him in a curious manner. [...] Still the truce reignited, still the two masses of troops stared at this astounding scene,— and then came one of the greatest deeds of the campaign. Bending down until he lay nearly full length upon the ground, Iwamura carefully levered the unconscious form of his foe on to his shoulder and raising it with infinite care, set out slowly up the hill towards the fort on the crest!

Both sides guessed in a moment the *raison d’être* of this manoeuvre and wild cheers arose in this most magnanimous act of the war. Arrived at a bastion he quietly deposited his burden and waited two German Red Cross bearers sent out to meet him.

“Bad hurt,” he said simply, and, after saluting the garrison strolled carelessly back to his own lines. (*WE* 270-1)

This showcase of nobility and mercy is far removed from the half-feral hordes of *The Yellow Danger*. In fact, the Japanese in *The War Inevitable* have so much earned the

respect and admiration of their ally that upon retaking the embattled hill, “from its summit fluttered the flags of the Empires of the East and West” (274).

Burgoyne’s novel is among the most enthusiastic portrayals of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Other authors of future-war fiction are somewhat less cordial while still approaching the Japanese favourably. Anglo-Japanese relations in Robert Cole’s *The Death Trap* (DT; 1907) are characterised by a system of mutual favours. Japan here supports Britain in a war against the invading German Empire due to its misgivings over increasing German interests in the Far East (DT 261). In addition, the secret pact of France and Russia provides another incentive for Japan’s aid to the British, for these powers too have clashing interests with Japan – the Russians just recently having lost the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. So, while Russia is seeking “revenge on the yellow monkeys” (22), the “little yellow men [...] remembered a debt they owed to England, and a debt of a different kind they owed to the rest of Europe” (77).

The combined British-Japanese armies effectively repel the attackers from the British Isles and protect Britain’s colonies, as the cunning and diligence of Japanese officers prove to be efficient strategic advantages for the British militias (cf. 292). Here again, the Japanese relief troops seem to push the British soldiers towards greater competence on the battlefield. At the war’s outset, the British are “an idle, pleasure-loving, and degenerate body of people, incapable of sacrifice or effort” (25-6), with the volunteers being mere “boys” compared to the invading Germans (82). However, after combining with the Japanese army in the Midlands, even fighting in appalling conditions, the British soldiers can win a decisive victory against the Kaiser and his allies.

Such positive depictions of Asian peoples are nonetheless outliers among the future-war genre. Fear of the Yellow Peril represented the usual narrative thrust of such stories. Naturally, the awakening of the Chinese Empire and beginning expansionism of the Japanese Empire in the late 19th century created concerns in Britain’s Asian and Pacific dominions and colonies, especially in Australia. Kenneth Mackay published *The Yellow Wave* in 1895, envisioning another Chinese invasion. With this novel, Mackay hit upon a nerve among “a nervous Australian culture that was not prepared to adapt itself to what it saw as an inferior race” (Enstice and Webb xviii). Stories of future war, more commonly against a French, German, or Russian invading force, were popular in the British colonies, where the individual topographic, climatic, and demographic circumstances of each

territory provided narrative room for imagining and reinforcing a unique local identity in the face of foreign aggression, as is described in the concluding chapter of this study.

While the future-war texts examined up until now have all in one way or another concerned themselves with the periphery and thus mostly looked into pre-industrial identities, there are several narratives by authors such as H. G. Wells and George Griffith that explicitly turn their attention to future British identities shaped by an ever-increasing production of and dependence on technology. The two authors, whose tales of coming war are the focus of the next chapter, envision new masculine identities and a wholesale evolution of British racial stock and British/‘Anglo-Saxon’ identities, anticipating their most extreme, technophile future development.

5. Techno-Social Transformations

The previous chapters covered future-war narratives that look backwards or sideways to locate the hidden strengths that their British characters must find to overcome a rival imperial power's attack. These tales propose an inherently pre-industrial, marginal skill-set that may lead to the nation's – and its Empire's – potential salvation in the next great war. The texts featured in this chapter look in the other direction: H. G. Wells's "The Land Ironclads" (1903; "LI") and *The War of the Worlds* (1898; *WW*) as well as George Griffith's *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893; *AR*) and *Olga Romanoff* (1894; *OR*) see the engineering marvels of modernity as essential for Britain's martial superiority. By being at the top of the technological arms race, these works argue, the British Empire will be best protected against invasion. The authors propose that by fully embracing this modern age, their heroes will create and/or conform to new, highly successful concepts of modern masculinity. This new masculinity departs in interesting ways from late Victorian and Edwardian ideals of manliness, at times conflicting with old ideas concerning the British soldier specifically and the British man in general. The unique circumstances of war in a highly mechanised environment, and indeed of life within an increasingly machine-dependent society, inevitably bring about a different kind of man; one who is specially adapted to modern times. As the ultimate outcome of their Britons' growing use of technology, Wells and Griffith prophecy a future British (or British-descended) people that will have radically evolved from the contemporary nation.

Arthur Conan Doyle envisioned a near-future conflict in the July 1914 issue of *The Strand Magazine* that gives an instructive insight in the arguments that the narratives of Wells and Griffith advance in terms of the British public needing to adapt to new technologies. In Doyle's short story "Danger! Being the Log of Captain John Sirius", said Captain Sirius, a navy officer from a small North European nation, narrates his perspective in his people's war with Britain. He recounts Britain's ignominious defeat; Britain's tactical and technological deficits enable Sirius's small submarine fleet to blockade the British Isles at will and thus starve their population into surrender. Doyle's primary intent with this narrative is to highlight Britain's dependence on food imports from its dominions and colonies, which would provide a crucial risk to the nation's defences during even the most minute of maritime wars. This further advances his argument for the construction of a

Channel Tunnel, through which a permanent link to the European mainland could be established. Trade could then still function even during a sea blockade.

Doyle's secondary message, however, is equally pressing if less prominently articulated: If the British people allow themselves to fall behind in the arms race of technological innovation, they will soon be defeated by those who possess the most sophisticated machinery or those who possess the greatest command over this machinery. Captain Sirius is able to irritate the British time and again because the Royal Navy is helpless against his state-of-the-art submarines; as well as against his tactics, which have been adapted perfectly to fit both his equipment and the asymmetric type of warfare which his small nation must wage by necessity. Advanced technology and competence in handling it here beat inflated military budgets and superior numbers. The British defeat "could not have been more complete or more rapid if they had not possessed an ironclad or a regiment", Sirius explains ("Danger!" 293).

In 1918, Doyle claimed in a preface to a later edition of "Danger!" that the actual submarine conflict with Germany of the previous years had vindicated his warnings:

The writer must, however, most thankfully admit that what he did not foresee was the energy and ingenuity with which the navy has found means to meet the new conditions. The great silent battle which has been fought beneath the waves has ended in the repulse of an armada far more dangerous than that of Spain.
(Preface v)

The German "armada" had been repulsed by "energy and ingenuity", that is, by the Britons' superior speed and skill in the development and adaptation of scientific and technological discoveries. In the actual Great War, the Britons had thus according to Doyle reasserted their lead in the arms race in a way they could not against Doyle's fictional Norlanders. Both fiction and reality ostensibly bear testimony to the author's admonition that keeping up with the progress of military technology is a vital necessity if Britain wants to survive in the new, highly technological century. "It seems to me that this nation, postpone it as it will, has to face an entirely new situation and that unless it faces it boldly and logically it will be in a sad tangle", Doyle wrote on his thoughts concerning the submarine in a letter to his brother Innes in June 1914 (*Letters* 597).

The future-war genre's general attitude towards the era's advancements is in agreement: Authors in the genre use their fiction to debate the advantages (and, sometimes, risks) of the latest military technological breakthroughs. Their narratives become test-beds in which new weaponry or other military equipment is introduced to the reading public. Besides

their twin capacity of warning and entertainment, these tales are sources of information on the state of the armed forces' materiel situation.

Here the genre fully exhibits its qualities as a forecast: The coming century may witness as-yet unimagined innovations, and the tale of war-to-come predicts the consequences of these innovations on national security, especially the advantages Britain can gain in the international arms race. With this ideology, the future-war tale participates in the larger technological optimism of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, equating technology's progress with the progress of the British people in general. An increase in the understanding of the world is seen in this often militant genre as an automatic increase of Britain's chances to win coming conflicts. Breakthroughs like the armoured ironclad warship, the submarine, or the airplane are often the nation's salvation; superior British workmanship can wring that little extra bit from existing technology to beat the enemy or maybe wholly rout the enemy with more advanced weaponry. In addition, British soldiers need to be perfectly trained to operate this new machinery of war, having evolved far from the British soldiers of past centuries.

5.1 The Technologically Competent Soldier of "The Land Ironclads"

Wells's short story "The Land Ironclads", first published in the December 1903 issue of *The Strand Magazine*, shows the same anticipation of mechanised warfare, sending a new kind of British soldier into the field. It mostly follows the perspective of an enemy war correspondent working with troops in battle with the British. The identity of this enemy of the British is never stated explicitly, which allows Wells to work in allegory. The enemy troops personify traditional rough-and-tumble soldiery, heavily influenced by colonial life, and its imagery of masculinity. By critically following their point of view, he can further underline his propositions. While the enemy's men are "nice healthy hunters and stockmen and so on, rowdy-dowdy cowpunchers and nigger-whackers" who have spent all their lives outdoors and physically active ("LI" 658), the British soldiers are, in an enemy lieutenant's opinion, "a crowd of devitalised townsmen" wholly unfit for war (657-8):

They're clerks, they're factory hands, they're students, they're civilised men. They can write, they can talk, they can make and do all sorts of things, but they're poor amateurs at war. They've got no physical staying power, and that's the whole thing. They've never slept in the open one night in their lives; they've never drunk anything but the purest water-company water; they've never gone short of three meals a day since they left their feeding-bottles. (658)

To the enemy's great chagrin, however, the ostensibly weak Britons score a decisive victory when they field heavily armoured land-ships, which are proto-tanks piloted by small crews of rather young men. These land ironclads overrun the enemy positions easily. Technological innovation beats old notions of masculinity, as the war correspondent recognises when he envisions his next article's headline: "Manhood *versus* Machinery" (674; emphasis in the narrative).

Thus Wells responds directly to contemporary commentators and counters their alarmism concerning the British male's apparent degeneration, positing a new kind of technological vitality among Britain's urbanised populace that stands in contrast to traditional notions. At the same time, he here rebukes many fellow writers of future-war tales, like for example William Butler, who would rather champion the old ways. Butler's ideas to recover an archaic masculinity contradict Wells's argument towards necessary change. The 'degenerated', domesticated stock of man that Butler decries is exactly the type of soldier that is needed in Wells's future wars. Where others would find racial deterioration, therefore, Wells on the contrary identifies this new male domesticity as an evolution congruent with the changing patterns of modernity itself.

Moreover, this change is welcomed as a development that is necessary for the further development of British civilisation. The critical war correspondent here verbalises the author's ideas:

He believed that there were other things in life better worth having than proficiency in war; he believed that in the heart of civilisation, for all its stresses, its crushing concentrations of forces, its injustice and suffering, there lay something that might be the hope of the world; and the idea that any people by living in the open air, hunting perpetually, losing touch with books and art and all the things that intensify life, might hope to resist and break that great development to the end of time, jarred on his civilised soul. (659)

Technology here is a signifier of civilisation, and scientific progress enhances social sophistication. Wells's ironic tone when speaking of the story's enemy as "nigger-whackers" (658) underscores his disgust with several facets of contemporary masculine and soldierly imagery. The ideal soldier is exposed as a reductive thug who is himself barely above the 'savages' he is sent to 'whack'. To glamorise such imagery is to advocate rude and retrograde patterns of behaviour, so characters who follow such patterns are revealed as ignorant or backward.

Although Wells takes care to describe the enemy of the British somewhat positively as "simple, coarse, but hearty and noble-hearted soldiers of the old school" (673), the enemy

is nevertheless unmasked as ridiculous, especially since their lieutenant's opinions prove patently wrong in the face of the Britons' technological and social sophistication. In fact, the rather rustic enemy people are first introduced thinking about the coming harvest (656). This nation of farmers is clearly an anachronism in the modern world, so 'civilised' and progressive British society should not subscribe to the same ideals. Instead of the crudeness of the old type of warrior, the modern, technologically savvy soldier exhibits intelligence and rationality.

Besides debunking traditionalists' arguments on British soldiership and manhood, this juxtaposition of unequal nations allows Wells to comment on the recent South African War. With "The Land Ironclads" he re-fights that conflict, envisioning a much more resounding (and easier) victory for Britain. Had the British utilised their industrial superiority over the Boers, as well considered a nation of farmers by the British, the war would have been over sooner according to Wells. He points towards the absurdity of attempting to fight fire with fire, as it were. Instead of engaging the Boers on their level, the British armed forces would have benefited from pushing forward their manufacturing capabilities and introducing the right technological innovations.

Instead of lamenting the inferior physical capabilities of the British recruit, as was a favourite of the popular discourse during and after the South African War, in Wells's tale military authorities have recognised the Briton's superior training when handling machinery, having grown up in a highly industrialised society. The soldiers who emerge from the land-ships are "[s]mart degenerates", for although they come from "[a]naemic cockneydom" (674), their excellent work has won the battle. The beaten enemies thus both marvel and scoff at their British foes, who seem too young and too unimpressive to be great warriors. Wells here demystifies the soldier: No feats of physical prowess or derring-do but quiet professionalism and intelligence secure the victory. The tank crews' paleness and quiet demeanour here belie their effectiveness in battle, for despite their outward appearance, they are as courageous, well-trained, and disciplined as any soldier. Since the "mechanical precision of a good clerk" is needed when using machinery in future wars (671), this very characteristic is the Britons' greatest asset. Britain, a nation of clerks, as contemporary stereotypes went, is therefore actually best situated for modern warfare. As Wells suggests, the unspectacular manhood of the urban professional becomes the new norm for soldiery. To these machinist warriors, fighting is indeed rather an engineering challenge than an opportunity for heroism.

The British soldiers' informal rapport and the "business-like rather than pedantic" discipline on board the land-ships (672), even during battle, signals a shift in their conception of hierarchy and proper etiquette between officers. The captains, gunners, and mechanics are all part of one team, and their efficiency at working together necessitates this business-like conduct. These soldiers are, like any other professional, carrying out a job as employees. Carrying this attitude, they have no love for excessive patriotism or heroics; rather, they admit to abhor such theatrics:

For the enemy these young engineers were defeating they felt a certain qualified pity and a quite unqualified contempt. They regarded these big, healthy men they were shooting down precisely as these same big, healthy men might regard some inferior kind of native. They despised them for making war; despised their bawling patriotisms and their emotionality profoundly [...] (671)

Wells here posits that such men would consider soldiers of the old guard as uncivilised and beneath them. Overcoming what he describes as "emotionality" is thus another step in the advancement of civilisation, for technological warfare births a type of man who sees fighting through a detached, almost abstract perspective.

The paradoxical consequence of this intellectual approach to their craft is that the British soldiers are loath to fight at all; they "resented being forced to the trouble of making man-killing machinery; resented the alternative of having to massacre these people or endure their truculent yappings; resented the whole unfathomable imbecility of war" (ibid.). The author here imagines a situation where the very aggressiveness of the soldier is questioned and presents men who have overcome their baser impulses. Moreover, he thus synthesises his criticism of war with a criticism of empire, positioning his 'new men' in the context of an imperialist world whose demands conflict with their ideals. Although they are soldiers of the Empire, Wells's young Britons do not actively attempt to further the imperial programme. They do not want to abuse their great technological advantage towards active conquest, and they see no need to treat their enemy like "some inferior kind of native", as the enemy would perhaps do. Their idea of furthering the cause of civilisation is not to suppress their inferiors with "man-killing machinery" but to devise technologies which would help mankind in other capacities.

Wells is not interested in creating a new ideal soldier or another myth of masculinity, however. He criticises his British tank officers for participating in war in the first place. Despite all their misgivings, they nonetheless "moved their knobs and pressed their buttons" (ibid.), which implicitly reveals their paradoxical existence. Although they are

highly rational people and adverse to war, they still are dutiful soldiers who readily (and easily) kill. There is an underlying realisation regarding the British tank crews' conduct that technological warfare might make killing too easy. Besides the British tank crews emerging after battle clad in "blue pyjamas" and none the worse for wear (674), their capacity to enjoy coffee and biscuits immediately after killing in battle also leaves an impression of exceeding detachment, even callousness. Apparently, utilising powerful modern weaponry amounts to a leisure activity when the soldier is removed from the actual killing by his buttons and levers. Where on the enemy's side personal effort is necessary to perform in battle, on the British side machinery does the work.

Wells thus hints at the ramifications of ever more mechanised warfare. His war correspondent's final thoughts on how to overcome an enemy's technological superiority by even more "ironmongery" address the danger of civilised society ultimately standing inimical to the technology it has itself created – "Mankind *versus* Ironmongery" (ibid.; emphasis in the narrative). "The Land Ironclads" thus concludes with an admission that civilised society cannot only change in step with the positives of scientific and technological development but must also adapt to its negative potentials.

Other authors of future-war narratives share Wells's aversion to useless military conventions, presenting equally innovative, often technologically advanced soldiers. In 1903, Ernest Swinton, one of the fathers of the tank, published an instruction manual for young officers in the *United Service Magazine* which later became a popular pamphlet. *The Defence of Duffer's Drift* is presented as an allegorical series of dreams in which he attempts to expose shortcomings which he had noticed during the South African War. Initially, his narrator, Lieutenant Backsight Forethought, is painfully unprepared for the challenges of contemporary warfare (in this case, against an enemy like the Boers): "Now, if they had given me a job like fighting the battle of Waterloo, or Sedan, or Bull Run, I knew all about that, as I had crammed it up and been examined in it too" (*Duffer's Drift* 24). Clearly the old standards and procedures no longer work. Real experience in the field has made the young officer's dusty book-learning redundant. He learns about modern warfare dream by dream, in the process learning to do away with sacred traditions – for instance, afternoon tea. Lighting fires for this particular refreshment is revealed to him to be a hazard, for it is "a clear-cut monument to all around that here was a British sentry fully on the *qui-vive*" (27). The narrator's ironic tone here underscores his recognition of such cultural idiosyncrasies as needless distractions. He realises the futility of clinging to often

outdated customs in the face of the changed conditions in combat. His ideal modern British soldier is pragmatic, willing to forego his own pride and (class) entitlement, and eager to get his hands dirty for his nation. Those men who are averse to digging trenches, “as becomes good British soldiers” (ibid.), end up shot by the Boers, who in contrast to them are perfectly willing to crawl through the dirt. Swinton thus proves to be an iconoclast when addressing advances in warfare and technological discoveries. To him, as to Wells, scientific pragmatism trumps what they consider empty habits and dangerous gestures of national pride.

The British soldier’s red uniform, a distinctive marker of British identity on the international stage and a symbol of masculinity and heroism, is an exemplary item of scorn here. It best represents what Swinton and Wells find anachronistic or even laughable about contemporary conceptions of the soldier, for it highlights the disconnect between popular (and often jingoist) military imagery and the reality of war. The redcoat, though equated with Britishness and heroism, has become disconnected from reality. As early as in George Chesney’s *The Battle of Dorking*, the Volunteer notices his superior officers’ meaningless, at times even dangerous, attempts at heroic posturing, proudly displaying their uniforms and soldierly grit. The narrator laments old men’s notions of an officer’s duty, for it is apparent that in the war in which he now participates there is no heroism any more. ‘Playing the hero’ gets a soldier killed, for as Horace Lester’s narrator in *The Taking of Dover* (1888) notes, the British soldiers’ traditional “scarlet uniforms, faced with blue, [...] render them excellent targets” (*TD* 123). Khaki and camouflage are the soldier’s lifeline in the new century, and characters’ insistence on redcoat tradition and its overcome heroic imagery is accordingly ridiculed.

In a related fashion, in 1900 William Elliot Cairnes, an Irish officer and military writer, criticised in his writing on the ongoing South African War that infantry instructors had become “perfectly mad on the subject of collective firing, quite regardless of the fact that modern conditions of warfare entirely favour the individual marksman as opposed to the section” (*Absent-Minded War* 87). Like the redcoat, theories of musketry battles with long infantry lines had long been antiquated – the authorities here betraying their obvious inertia. In his later future-war narrative *The Coming Waterloo* (1901), Cairnes commends the “new and scientific process” (56) by which the British soldiers have been thoroughly prepared in all aspects for his near-future conflict with the French. His narrator stresses that the infantry’s new camouflage uniform is the successful product of “a series of protracted

experiments” (14-15). Although he is “quite disgusted” with these new colours (14), the tale’s protagonist Walter Desmond soon sees that “the sombre garments of the British would stand them in good stead on the day of battle” (15). Not possessing a conspicuous, easily identifiable uniform becomes the soldier’s new item of pride. Desmond thus learns that the essence of being a soldier is not immutable and instead should adapt quickly.

Despite his equally high positivity towards technical advancement, however, H. G. Wells’s works in the future-war genre remain critical of technological development. Specifically the interface between technology and sociocultural processes is a returning issue. Wells’s outlook is forward, orientated towards the future; yet despite this, his future-war writings additionally discuss the primitive. Influenced by the thought of Thomas Huxley (cf. Eby 38), Wells imagined evolution as an ambivalent process where progress is as much possible as is retrogression. Cecil Eby asserts that “Wells was intrigued by the possibility of reducing civilized man to a level of what a proper Victorian might have called ‘animal’ behavior” (39). In *The War of the Worlds*, this is realised in a narrative discussion of the divide between technology and civilisation.

5.2 *The War of the Worlds*, Dehumanising Mechanisation, and Educated Masculinity

The British, although the self-proclaimed most advanced society on the planet, share the same fate as many indigenous populations under the technologically even more advanced Martians in Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*, with Britain regressing into a state of near-anarchy. The Martians land in the suburbs of London, including the narrator’s home town, and advance on the capital with large tripod-shaped machines, destroying everything in their wake. In addition, the Martians begin terraforming the landscape of Southern England to shape it into a replica of their original home. The narrator wanders through the country in order to meet his brother, finding two other survivors, an artilleryman and a curate. He leaves both these men behind, abandoning the artilleryman when he realises the soldier’s ineffectiveness and killing the hysterical clergyman to avoid being detected by the Martians. The narrator eventually reaches the ruins of London. As the British are helpless against such a superior invader, the nation’s fate seems sealed; however, the invaders quickly succumb to Earth’s microbes, all enemy troops dying off and leaving behind a nearly destroyed Britain.

Wells shows an acute awareness of both the physical and psychological effects of technological warfare in this novel. Patrick Parrinder finds that Wells’s “grasp of the

totality of military strategy – communications, intelligence, supply-lines, firepower, morale, and the problems of evacuating the civilian population – is far superior to that of most future-war writers” (“Thames Valley Catastrophe” 69). Harry Wood shows that Wells “was one of few analysts who understood the impact modern technology was likely to have” (Wood 5), which makes him “all the more remarkable by these terms” (6). Added to that, Wells also knows how to examine closely the variety of human reactions to crises. His narrator relates that “[n]ever before in the history of warfare had destruction been so indiscriminate and so universal” (*WW* 55). Mechanised war can wholly destroy civilisations.

In particular, Wells critiques traditional conceptions of masculinity, soldiership, and empire, juxtaposing these ideas with the dehumanising, identity-erasing effects of mechanisation. It is of interest to him how a situation of crisis exposes lies which humans tell themselves in order to preserve long-held preconceptions. Clinging to overcome ideas is harmful in *The War of the Worlds*. Wells was aware that a society that may encounter a situation where it may probably be annihilated cannot continue life in the same modes as before. Such a society would need to adapt. I. F. Clarke therefore locates torment in Wells’s writing when dealing with “the conflict between outdated but still-with-us institutions and the urgent need to adjust everything [...] to the new world that science had called into existence” (*Voices* 87):

In one way he saw it as the struggle between traditional practices in education and the new approaches required to prepare the citizens for life in a technological epoch. [...] War and science [...] demanded a better and more widespread form of education, or else the nation would go under in the new international struggle to survive. Wells’s thesis was very simple: we must educate or perish. (*ibid.*)

Being both a society which is capable of waging mechanised war and a society which might be on the losing side of such a struggle, Wells’s Britain in *The War of the Worlds* shows a panorama of a largely as-yet uneducated humanity. Crucially, out of the male characters who are encountered in the novel and who survive the Martian invasion, the narrator and his brother are the most educated, and therefore best able to cope with the unprecedented situation. These men do not hold onto the old ways of defining masculinity as represented by the narrator’s two temporary companions.

It is no accident that the narrator survives long enough to see the invader succumb to disease, for he never subscribed to his companions’ foibles: neither to the artilleryman’s boisterous ideas of heroism nor to the curate’s paralysing fearfulness and eventual nihilism.

Both the Martians and these men are unable to adapt to their situation sufficiently, as they are too much beholden to their nature. The narrator proves that there needs to be a rational compromise between extremes to ensure one's survival. He represents an educated masculinity, alternating when necessary between being a man of action and an observer. In contrast, his companions represent two distinct contemporaneous masculine identities which are both revealed to be insufficient in times of crisis.

The artilleryman embodies the sober reality behind the boisterous masculine and soldierly ideals that the war correspondent of the later "The Land Ironclads" so abhors, for behind a façade of manly courage he is as helpless as any Londoner. That the narrator at first believes in his companion's arguments – "But you are a man, indeed!" he shouts, gripping the other's hand in awe (*WW* 155) – shows the potency of the myth of the soldier. At first the artilleryman seems to him one of those "able-bodied, clean-minded" men who conform fully to traditional manly ideals and who could be depended upon to fight the Martians (157). The narrator wants to believe that his companion is indeed a hero who could lead the people to overthrow the invader. Nonetheless, this soldier conveys a false sense of authority, and his "tone of assurance and courage" is ungrounded (158). In reality, the artilleryman's actions preparing for battle are meaningless, not least due to his unwillingness to perform hard labour:

"But the work?"

"Oh, one can't always work," he said, and in a flash I saw the man plain. (159)

Here the artilleryman reveals himself as an "undisciplined dreamer of great things" (162). Soldierly heroism is an empty ideal in the current situation, for no heroics could save the nation against such a powerful invader. Thus, the artilleryman's grand plan for an underground resistance movement is misguided machismo. In effect, his optimism concerning his plan despite all contrary evidence must be seen as a coping mechanism. His trust in evidently unrealistic ideals is merely a reassuring lie, although one which allows him to find continuity in an unprecedented situation. His continued optimism keeps him going amidst catastrophe. As the narrator notes, his digging of a tunnel for future resistance use, however insufficient this work might be, is "a curious relief from the aching strangeness of the world" (159). The artilleryman's apparent embrace of a barbaric age for Britain under the Martian oppressor further discredits him. His perception of the middle classes as fully useless or 'weak' even marks him as an enemy of education and knowledge (cf. Parrinder, "Thames Valley Catastrophe" 64).

Despite having the opposite personality to the artilleryman, the curate too has seen his world-view collapse upon the Martians' arrival, and he has coped badly. Again, this man's narrow conception of the world, his "stupid rigidity of mind" (*WW* 131), leaves the character unprepared for severe crisis. He evokes the contemporary image of the dandy, depicted as an emasculated figure. His unpronounced chin, curly hair, and large eyes call into question his masculinity; he seems feminine, almost childlike. Thus, the narrator is disgusted by him; he considers him "one of those weak creatures, void of pride, timorous, anæmic, hateful souls, full of shifty cunning, who face neither God nor man, who face not even themselves" (132). Like the Martians, the curate has lived against his very nature, which has divorced him from this nature. "Be a man!" the narrator admonishes him ineffectually as he descends into insanity (71). 'Feminine' passivity thus proves as ineffective as the artilleryman's persistent demand for activity. Evidently, neither the traditional grit of the soldier nor the ostensibly rather effete qualities of the modern urban male provide effective methods of surviving a crisis, not to mention the mental fortitude to cope with it intellectually.

Additionally, whereas the artilleryman lacks any advanced education or refinement, the curate is an educated man, yet his learning is of a retrograde kind. His education has been too restrictive, for his thoughts cannot exceed religious parameters. To him, the Martian invasion is god's punishment for society's immorality (70). This legitimises his passivity in his eyes, for it would be useless to dispute an all-powerful deity's wishes. To the narrator, the curate's obstinacy concerning the invader's divine mission is appalling, however. "What good is religion if it collapses under calamity" (71), he scoffs, implying the curate's failure as a man of the cloth. The curate neither welcomes the coming of the biblical Apocalypse (cf. Eby 41) nor attempts to cope on a more rational, scientific level. That the narrator is forced to kill the delirious curate in order to prevent the Martians from capturing him further underlines his disgust with this companion. Eby points out that this is Wells's strike at the failures of institutionalised religion (*ibid.*). Christian dogma is not able to account for extraordinary, but obviously secular, occurrences. Where the curate sees signs of the end of days, the narrator is knowledgeable enough about biology, physics, and engineering to see the Martians' mundane origins and plans with Earth.

Therefore, the narrator surviving the Martians' attack must be attributed to his active intellect, a quality his two companions lack. Wells here advertises a thorough, modern education: His narrator does not let himself be entrapped by preconceived ideologies.

He furthermore finds a sensible middle ground between the extremes of cold rationality, masculine courage, and morality. Thus he embodies a new concept of masculinity, one which does not lack courage or determination but which is free of both the jingoistic posturing of the contemporary soldier and the apparent effeminacy of modern urbanism. To further emphasise this dual character, he lives in the Surrey countryside but has received an extensive, metropolitan education, combining the advantages of both the city and the countryside. As a futurologist, a philosopher and writer, he is widely interested in the potential of the future, whereas most Britons “went to and fro over this globe” with “infinite complacency” (*WW* 7).¹⁶ Therefore he is best situated from the beginning to grasp the developing crisis. When the Martians first land, he is “busy upon a series of papers discussing the probable developments of moral ideas as civilisation progressed” (12), which somewhat prepares him for the attackers’ amoral and wholly alien nature.

Parrinder notes that the narrator fails as a futurologist in his extrapolation of human civilisation two hundred years into the future (“Thames Valley Catastrophe” 67), yet this does not mean that his active interest in progress is misguided. Ultimately, according to Wells only the thinking man survives in a technocratic future. The narrator has knowledge coupled with an analytical mind, which enables him to stay calm amidst chaos. He recognises when “not bravery, but circumspection” is needed (*WW* 115); his education allows him to judge situations correctly. This thoughtfulness at least gives him the chance to survive long enough until the invaders have succumbed to earthly diseases. With this, Wells argues for a pervasive modern education of the people which would give British society the flexibility to adequately meet the demands of the future.

Notably, however, the Martians provide a convincing argument not to pursue an ever more amoral rationality. Aspects of morality, the narrator’s interest at the outset of the story, are shown as being important for an advanced civilisation. During his encounters with the Martians, he learns that their civilisation has become monstrous, having apparently evolved unconcerned with morals. In later narratives like *The War in the Air* (1908) and *The World Set Free* (1914), Wells further envisioned wholesale destruction in mechanised wars. His opinion there and in other writings of the period was that “science had begun to confront the human race with a choice between total war and total peace” (Clarke, *Voices* 82). This is already hinted at in *The War of the Worlds*; the Martians have chosen total war, and this has doomed them. The British would do well to learn from this

¹⁶ It seems reasonable to here identify ‘mankind’ as ‘Britain’, as Eby suggests Wells’s choice of words is very much aimed at a British audience (Eby 40).

cautionary example, this narrative argues. It might be for the better that British scientists are not able to recreate the Martians' weaponry at the end of the novel, but scientific progress may make it only a matter of time until humans catch up. With humanity's potential for self-destruction, as mentioned by the narrator, humanity could itself become monstrous. Wells therefore advocates societal change along with a strong observance of morals. Adapting to new technologies should also mean the concomitant questioning of one's ethics; as the technologically advanced Martians prove to his narrator, civilisation must necessarily carry a system of morals, guidelines along which progress can be achieved beneficently.

At the same time, his Martians prove that a technologically advanced society might not automatically be properly 'civilised'. Wells here analyses what becomes of identities within an absolutely technocratic future. In his *Martians*, one can see his incisive criticism of aggressive colonialist practices, for the Martian would-be conquerors reveal themselves as parasites whose ostensible superiority as a civilisation is negated by their own barbaric nature. Although the narrator hypothesises that the Martians' interest in Earth is actuated by Mars's increasing "cooling" (8) – that is, its advanced state of entropy compared to Earth – which has rendered the red planet barren, at the same time their ravenous behaviour on Earth implies that they have played a significant part in their planet's devastation. The narrator here points out humanity's own "ruthless and utter destruction" of whole animal species, even other human peoples (9). This voraciousness would lead Martian civilisation to live in a cycle of exploitation and resettling, leaving an area once all its resources have been used up. Fittingly, the narrator's recurring metaphor of society as an organism depicts the Martians as a sickness, initially an "inflammation" (37) which later grows into a terminal disease that brings the "social body" of Britain on the brink of "swift liquefaction" (92). Moreover, the Martian body itself is a repulsive "speck of blight" (85), its very shape evoking sickliness, as the narrator opines:

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedge-like lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth – above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes – were at once vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the tedious movements unspeakably nasty. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread. (21-2)

The Martians' bodies, large spheres with tentacle appendages, are reminiscent of viruses. Both as a society and as living beings, the Martians are thus not too divorced from the earthly germs which bring about their annihilation. The narrator's description of germs as "the humblest things that God [...] has put upon this earth" thus also carries the connotation of the Martians' baseness (168).

This ironic disparity between the Martians ostensibly having overcome infectious diseases on their home world (128) and themselves being a disease underscores their dichotomous nature as highly evolved but utterly savage creatures. It is telling that they introduce plants which quickly overgrow the local flora around London, for thus they bring with them the jungle and its concomitant atavism. The deterioration of the countryside into a dense, steamy forest of red weed echoes the collapse of British civilisation into near-barbarity, as the Londoners' flight evokes the chaos of the migrations of the "legendary hosts" of Goths and Huns (104). Both products of and propagators of the jungle, the Martians reveal themselves as unrepentant cannibals, cheerfully "hooting" before consuming their human livestock on their newly-constructed farms (134). What is more, their hunger for human blood – and their red weed's tell-tale blood-red colouration (142) – betrays their "recklessly vampirish" nature (Parrinder, "Thames Valley Catastrophe" 71). This complicates any appreciation of Martian society's technological accomplishments, for the Martians' savagery disproves any Victorian notions of civilisation. Despite their evolved science, the Martians must be seen as a degenerate people. Clearly, technological superiority does not equal superiority as a civilisation.

The Martian machinery itself, despite being such a technological marvel, possesses a repulsive, bestial quality; it is itself savage. Again, the narrator notes his impression of Martian sickliness: The sticky, noxious vapour emitted by their weapons is unhealthy and unclean; it produces "scum" when in contact with water (*WW* 88). Their main machines of locomotion, the tripods, move with a "disturbing" animal-like agility (130), which further emphasises their operators' predatory nature but also paints martial technology itself as predatory. Thus, this technology becomes a mirror of its builders' hideousness.

This identity of the Martians with their machinery is the ostensible result of the Martians' systematic evolution alongside their technology. Technology has taken over biological functions for its builders, so that machines become extensions of the Martian body. Effectively, a Martian is only the brain in a complex apparatus, "much as a man's brain sits and rules in his body" (51). Here technological sophistication complicates

distinctions between living being and machine, as the narrator further notices when he observes a Martian ‘worker’:

Its motion was so swift, complex, and perfect that at first I did not see it as a machine, in spite of its metallic glitter. [...] People who have never seen these structures, and have only the ill-imagined efforts of artists or the imperfect descriptions of such eye-witnesses as myself to go upon, scarcely realise that living quality. (123-4)

In turn, however, the Martians are now dependent upon their technology; the slavers are themselves slaves. Without their machines, the Martians have such reduced physical aptitude that, in fact, they resemble infants. Their emergence from their landing pods is described as “sluggish lumps [...] disgorged from the cylinder[s]” (51). From this very first moment, when the Martians are thus ‘birthed’ by their machines, they rely on these machines’ support. Without their technology, the Martians are pitiable creatures instead of a menace. Their essential fusion of lifeform and machine becomes the invaders’ downfall, for their succumbing to Earth’s environment is a result of their weakened bodily powers. Science and technology have eradicated germs and made most bodily organs redundant, but this hyper-sophistication ultimately backfires when the Martian metabolism cannot cope with new situations.

Furthermore, excessive technological progress apparently has had a debilitating effect on Martian society’s liveliness, for loss of identity, dehumanisation, and narrow-mindedness seem to have followed their mechanisation. There is no outward Martian individuality, with the individual Martian almost indistinguishable from the machinery built to support it. At least to the human eye, they in addition appear indistinguishable from one another even outside their machines. Moreover, the Martian ‘body’, the apparatus which executes the Martian brain’s commands, is exchangeable, disposable, and thus ephemeral.

Also, the Martians apparently lack any gender identities as well. Each Martian thus seems to be part of a homogeneous whole, a cog in its species’ machinery. Their whole existence appears to be aimed solely towards the singular goal of consumption, the colonisation of Earth and enslavement of humanity being a component of this. Instead of opening it up towards the universe’s possibilities, mechanisation has constrained Martian civilisation. As the narrator presupposes, the Martians have made their world too insular and sterile, their development along ever more mental paths ignoring their well-being.

For the British in this novel, counteracting this dehumanising mechanisation is impossible, for (to paraphrase the war correspondent in “The Land Ironclads”) ironmongery vs. even more ironmongery would not work here. Nonetheless, it is specifically education and keeping an open mind which ultimately guarantee survival, as seen with the narrator. What is more, despite the Martians’ evident repulsiveness, the narrator attempts to keep an even perspective, pointing out human biases. Although the Martians consume blood, the idea of which “is no doubt horribly repulsive to us”, their biological needs are nevertheless the product of an impartial evolutionary process, so that “we should remember how repulsive our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit” (125). As in “The Land Ironclads”, Wells thus calls upon relativism and moderation. The narrator negotiates extremes to reach compromises where both the Martians’ and many human men’s respective excessive one-sidedness proves their undoing.

Like Wells, Hugh Arnold-Forster proposes a masculinity and humanity that is both controlled and well-trained in technology, but he lacks Wells’s mind towards the consequences of mechanisation. His short story “In a Conning Tower”, first published anonymously in July 1888 in *Murray’s Magazine*, begins with this rhetorical question: “Have you ever stood within a conning tower? No; then you have not set foot in a spot where the spirit of man has borne the fiercest and direst stress to which the fell ingenuity of the modern world has learnt to subject it” (“Conning Tower” 139). In this narrative, Arnold-Foster participates in the popular mode of maritime tales of coming war¹⁷ which aimed at informing the lay reader objectively on the particulars of battle aboard modern warships. In these stories, war at sea is romanticised as a heroic duel. The captain is a modern Achilles who commands “hidden powers which the mind can scarcely grasp, but which one and all are made subservient to his will, and his will alone” (142). Battle between such machinery is mythologised yet at the same time abstract. It evokes the sports matches of Eton or a game of chess, gentlemanly activities; the lethal consequences of modern weaponry fired in anger are glossed over, casualties being heroic sacrifices for Britannia. Destructive potential is fetishised, as is masculine command over such power.

Other authors, writing somewhat more jingoist fare, also revel in the cataclysmic results of, for instance, modern artillery attacking London. William Le Queux’s tales of invasion obtain their thrills from the exhilaration at witnessing unprecedented weaponry and punishing the Britons for their sluggishness in rallying to meet the enemy in battle (cf.

¹⁷ William Laird Clowes and Alan Hughes Burgoyne’s *The Great Naval War of 1887* (1887) started this sub-genre, which would persist until the mid-1890s.

Clarke, *Voices* 123). The graphic scenes of carnage in his works are sensationalistic, aimed at titillation; as Charles Gannon asserts, Le Queux “was fond of representing Britons as the mangled martyrs of machine-age warfare” (Gannon 56). This imagery is mostly disconnected from the real impact of the horrors of war, however. Most writers of future-war narratives are disinterested in accurately predicting the psychological effects of mechanised total war on the individual.

Contrary to this, Wells attempts to form a more nuanced picture in his tales of coming war than his peers do. He envisions a future in which humans need to adapt mentally to their machinery. In fact, science and technology may produce a perhaps improved humanity according to Wells, because they both foster education. George Griffith, another author of future-war narratives that concern themselves with the transformative effects of technology, goes even further, imagining a fantastical future development for the British people that will alter it substantially but also advance it towards worldwide social and cultural hegemony.

5.3 George Griffith’s Evolutions of Technology and Race

In George Griffith’s two novels *The Angel of the Revolution* and *Olga Romanoff*, the development of the manoeuvrable airship equals an evolutionary jump for the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’, for it leads to the establishment of a new and better society. Richard Arnold, the young British engineer who first develops this technology, is the hero of *Angel*. He is approached by a secretive organisation that is comprised of members from across the English-speaking world and beyond, an inner circle of reformatory upper-class and middle-class social, industrial, and scientific elites. This group, the so-called Terrorists or the Brotherhood, aims to end conflicts in the world by using Arnold’s airships to deter the rivalling imperial powers from attacking each other, lest they be bombarded by the Terrorists as punishment for their warmongering. Arnold constructs a prototype for the organisation and falls in the love with Natasha, the daughter of its founder and leader, and the titular angel of the revolution. Tsarist Russia, itself close to completing an airship to rival Arnold’s, jealously kidnaps Natasha, starting a great war with the Brotherhood. Soon, most imperial powers enter this war on either side, with combat spreading across Europe. Arnold rescues Natasha and takes her and the rest of the Terrorists to a secluded valley deep in the African continent. There, they usher in an advanced and unprecedented society, the Aerians, and construct a powerful fleet of airships. With this fleet, and with the Aerians

taking control over the British Empire and the USA, they can at last defeat the Russians and dismantle tsarist rule, in the eyes of the Terrorists the most despotic system on the planet. After the war, the Aerians become an authoritarian peacekeeping force, policing the peoples of Earth to prevent further conflict.

The peace lasts for over one hundred years, as is revealed in *Olga Romanoff*. In this follow-up novel to *Angel*, the Aerians have prospered and grown into an evolved society, far above the other peoples on the planet. The Aerians return full sovereignty to the nations of Earth, which however results in the resumption of bloodshed. The culprit behind this is Olga Romanoff, the last descendant of the deposed Russian tsar, who wants to reclaim the Russian throne and has sworn revenge on the Aerians. She seduces Alan Arnold, descendant of Richard and Natasha, and steals his airship. This allows her to mobilise the forces of the remaining tsarists and her ally, the Sultan of all Muslims, into building their own airships. Another great war breaks out. The Aerians ally themselves with the Anglo-Saxon Federation to drive back the Russo-Sultan alliance but are beaten time and again. Amidst massive destruction all over the world, the Aerians retreat; they have spotted a deadly comet whose fiery tail will inevitably scorch the Earth. Preparing for this catastrophe, the Aerians seal themselves in an impermeable base. Olga, having taken control of the whole globe in the Aerians' absence, too learns of the coming comet, but her own bunker proves unable to protect her from the horror of the cataclysm. She is driven insane and dies, leaving only the Aerians as the last surviving humans, now free to repopulate the barren planet in racial, social, and cultural unity.

In *The Angel of the Revolution*, Richard Arnold thus represents the starting point of a new concept of humanity. His personality combines traditionally 'male' and 'female' qualities, which proves an essential factor for mankind's survival in an age of ever-increasing mechanisation: Like Wells's British soldiers in "The Land Ironclads", Arnold is perfectly adapted to the new realities of modern civilisation: His education and affinity for technology allow him to lead his people to success. Also, like the captain in "In a Conning Tower", Arnold has the competence to control the destructive potential of his creation and, crucially, the wisdom to refrain from unleashing it unnecessarily. Yet from the narrative's start it is clear that Arnold is no traditional soldier – in fact, he is a thinker and dreamer. With his inclination towards signifiers of femininity, such as passivity, sensitivity, and need for sympathy (*AR* 22), he deviates from the masculine ideal. Nonetheless, Arnold also has qualities typically attributed to men; he does proclaim a "hatred of emotion" (112) and

regards rationality as an essential foundation to human behaviour. In essence, Arnold shows that extreme ideals need to be tempered.

In a speech before the House of Lords, Tremayne, a higher-up in the Brotherhood, underlines that the mechanised war of the future needs a breed of man different from the traditional soldier:

He therefore besought his hearers not to trust too implicitly to that hitherto unconquerable valour and resource which had so far rendered Britain impregnable to her enemies. These were not the days of personal valour. They were the days of warfare by machinery, of wholesale destruction by means which men had never before been called upon to face, and which annihilated from a distance before mere valour had time to strike its blow. (137)

Tremayne here argues that men like Arnold are far better positioned than the soldiers of old, for the young man possesses the capacity to create and operate the very machinery which makes men of 'valour' ineffectual. Arnold's strength is grounded in his mental faculties, not in physical superiority. In modern warfare, British bravery alone does not grant military superiority any more (302). Thus, even the British Navy, the most celebrated of Britain's armed forces, fail "simply because the conditions of naval warfare had been entirely changed" towards a non-personal concept of combat, so that the individual alone cannot succeed "because the personal equation had been almost eliminated from the problem of battle, and because the new warfare of the seas had been waged rather with machinery than with men" (290). In essence, Arnold becomes an Adam to this fledgling technocentric humanity when his successes as an engineer and strategist allow the Brotherhood to build a new, advanced civilisation. Together with Natasha, Arnold thus ushers in a better humanity in their new refuge of Aeria.

As the counterpart to Arnold, Natasha herself is a driving force in the creation of the Aerians, for she skilfully uses her femininity and attractiveness to entice Arnold ever onwards towards building a new people. Her ambitions even surpass those of Arnold – she has

waking dreams of universal empire, and a world at peace equitably ruled by a power that had no need of aggression, because all the realms of earth and air belonged to those who wielded it. [...] herself, the Angel of the Revolution, sharing the aerial throne of the world-empire with the man who had made revolutions impossible [...] (108-9)

Indeed, Natasha knows to manipulate men towards her objectives. After all, she is "peerless among the daughters of men. What more natural, then, that all the sons of men should fall speedy victims to her fatal charms?" (52) Though Natasha thus plays with the

love of men, she here differentiates between her ambitions for humanity and her private goals. In all these ambitions, she aims high, for she would possess her man whole:

She had put her hand upon his heart, and, though no words of human speech had passed between them, save the merest commonplaces, her soul had said to his, 'This is mine. I have called it into life, and for me it shall live until the end.' (55)

Significantly, the love of Natasha is an object of conquest. The battle for Britain and the Anglo-Saxon race thus is twinned and intertwined with the battle for Natasha's heart (cf. 61). Her love becomes the ultimate prize allotted to the man who would bring peace; for only that man, she claims, is worthy of her affection. Arnold's 'conquest' of Natasha is therefore the deserved reward for his obedience and dutifulness (384).

Initially, Natasha appears to be a *femme fatale*, but Griffith's two novels quickly put woman characters into more passive, traditional models. Although it seems that Natasha embodies an aggressive new type of woman to mirror Arnold's new man, she is in reality still driven towards domesticity and marriage. Natasha the 'new woman' is only a smokescreen; her initial defiance disappears after her "dream of universal empire" has come true – she claims that "[t]here never was a true woman yet who did not love to meet her master. When that day comes I shall have met my master, and I will do his bidding." (113). Natasha is all too happy to embrace the life of a housewife. Here the narration is quite clear: After all, "love and motherhood" are "the highest aims of existence" of women (107), making Natasha 'just a woman'.

Significantly, Natasha is of East European descent. Thus, the Aerians, the 'new race' that she mothers through her marriage with Arnold, are not a 'purely' Anglo-Saxon race – many of the Brotherhood members who settle the African valley that becomes the Aerians' home region are not of English heritage. Here the importance of blood is second to social identities. It is more important that the Aerians uphold the ideals typically prescribed to the British people than that they are of Anglo-Saxon blood. The people to resettle the world after the apocalypse of *Olga Romanov* are thus a hybrid people whose blood is not 'weakened' or in any way lesser than pure Anglo-Saxon blood. On the contrary, the Aerians are without exception physically and mentally superior to other peoples. Thus, Griffith's two narratives see hybridity even as an essential ingredient for the betterment of mankind – as long as its culture remains thoroughly Anglo-Saxon.

This concept of race primarily as a shared adherence to common values and ideas, with ties of blood being only a secondary factor, is more important than any other sociocultural construct in Griffith's novels. The racial idea supersedes the national one, for

it is the more natural and noble marker of identity (310-11). “After all, the kinship of a race was a greater fact in the supreme hour of national disaster than the maintenance of a dynasty or the perpetuation of a particular form of government”, the narration explains in *Angel* (307); “it was not now a question of nation against nation, but of race against race” (ibid.). Thus, before Arnold’s invention, the Anglo-Saxon race’s innate superiority is held back by the inadequacies of the capitalist ideological foundation of both Britain and the USA, which prohibits a society-wide unity of purpose.

Natasha’s father Natas (actual name Israel di Murska) is a central figure in this heterogeneous evolution of the Anglo-Saxon stock. Through his Hungarian and Jewish blood (that is, thoroughly Oriental blood according to contemporary imagination), his initial impression upon the reader mirrors that of a Dracula: a man from the untamed European East in possession of ostensibly occult powers, who might in time conquer the West. Natas’s methods, however, though often inscrutable, clearly show his benevolent intentions – he is indeed Satan in reverse, as his name suggests. These methods are a clear antithesis to his outward appearance. The man’s contradictions make him so intriguing to his fellows, and to the reader: He has a beautiful upper face (with “somewhat prominently aquiline” nose), but bestial lower head, with “a hideous grin, which made visible long, sharp white teeth, more like those of a wolf than those of a human being” (141). His legs and feet are badly crippled from his time as a prisoner in Russia, but otherwise he possesses a strong body (142). The disparity between his physical and mental powers create tension even among his own organisation. The Brotherhood themselves doubt that Natas as a handicapped man could be one of the most powerful people in Europe, potentially in the world, is “inconceivable” to the other Terrorists (162).

However, Natas uses his considerable mental powers towards achieving worldwide peace. Mind control – powers of hypnotism, inducing visions, including powers of suggestion and command (223-4) – is to Natas a legitimate means to this noble end (148). Natas’s revenge on the Russian tsar, and on despotism on Earth in general, is explained as being the symbolic revenge of all Russian Jews for the discrimination, exclusion, persecution, oppression, and unjust punishments under the tsarist system. Consequently, as an inverted Satan, he is placed as the one man to oversee humanity’s best survive the last war on the planet, which he appropriately equals with the biblical Armageddon.

Crucially, the Brotherhood itself subscribes to Judaeo-Christian ideals. Natas conducts a wedding in Jewish style, with the Talmud a central object in the ceremony (197-9), which

early on shows the Brotherhood as interested in questions of spirituality. The organisation's new societal plan is founded upon what the Terrorists see as a simple a system of laws that follows the Decalogue (287). This 'simplicity' is seen as superior to modern Western legal traditions, which have become too inextricably intermingled with the failing Western cultural system. Clearly the Brotherhood see themselves as latter-day Noahs, saviours of a doomed humanity – the rebuilding of society after the great war is akin to the repopulation of Earth after the Deluge (64). Their new system, however, is authoritarian: The foundation of the Aerians' new order for the planet is "the new despotism of peace" (370), which enforces amicable relations between the European powers. Misconduct results in severe punishment – that is, the annihilation of any nation that does not submit to the Brotherhood's and, later, the Aerians' dictates. To Griffith's main characters, this 'just' tyranny of enforced peace is considered preferable over the unjust despotism of the tsarist system.

The narrative therefore emphasises that the Brotherhood is very much in the right about its goals and methods. A British naval captain objects to the Terrorists' methods: "Confound it, sir! you talk as if you were omnipotent and arbiters of peace and war" (168). Here the narrative is fully on the Brotherhood's side, for the captain's opinion is not treated as a reasonable objection. Instead, this is portrayed as an unnecessary obstruction of the Terrorists' work. As part of the old establishment, the captain thus proves to be part of the problem: He is representative of a dysfunctional, outdated social system that has lost its focus.

Harry Wood emphasises that "[t]hough Griffith did not propose radical change and technocratic reorganisation in the manner of Wells, his work was just as heavily shaped by a specific set of social and political principles" (Wood 7). Griffith's narrative reveals his hostility towards modern governmental institutions and promotes a more naturalistic conception of society: "The peoples of the world would be good enough friends if their rulers and politicians would let them" (*AR* 352). In the narrative, all current national entities are beholden to weaknesses, especially their tendency towards tolerating the various peoples' ruling classes' personal whims – this despite war being "a matter of diplomacy and Court intrigue, and not of personal animosity" (*ibid.*). Here the narrative especially criticises the Russian tsar, whose government represents "a despotism that [Richard Arnold] looked upon as the worst earthly enemy of mankind" (9).

Arnold's invention of the airship is therefore a welcome breakthrough against tyranny, for he thus makes this crucial breakthrough before the Russians, who in his eyes never should have such a powerful weapon at their disposal. At the start of *Angel*, the Tsar has promised a large reward for the inventor of a propellant which can drive airships; Arnold would thus have an easy way out of his poverty. Yet Arnold vehemently spurns this offer, for he sees the tsar as a cruel autocrat who would destroy the whole of Europe with Arnold's airships (9). The Ariel, his prototype, on the contrary becomes the "power which, as he honestly believed, would be used for the highest good of mankind when the time came to finally confront and confound the warring forces of rival despotisms" (106).

Despite these rival despotisms, the narrative emphasises that the Anglo-Saxon race is most endangered not by external conflicts but by internal economic stresses and petty jealousy; otherwise it would already dominate the planet (146). Accordingly, Arnold's opinion on contemporary British society is low: "It is based on fraud, and sustained by force – force that ruthlessly crushes all who do not bow the knee to Mammon" (13). Here the hero shares the author's socialist sympathies. Arnold's examination of human frailty here carries an authorial voice: "I have proved that, as Society is constituted, it is the worst and not the best qualities of humanity that win wealth and power, and such respect as the vulgar of all classes can give." (112), and his estimation is vindicated by the quick rise to power of the egalitarian, anti-capitalist Aerial people. British politics in contrast are revealed as ridiculously ineffective in the face of a severe crisis, such as the impending world war: the "spectacle of what was really the most powerful nation on earth losing its head amidst the excitement of a general election" amuses the already mobilising rest of Europe (139). A general lament is raised on the British public not having introduced conscription, which reduces the number of Britain's soldiers compared to other nations (293-4). The authoritarian politics that the Brotherhood introduces are therefore seen as a benign form of despotism: Under their strong oversight, there shall be no more warmongering and partisanship but peace at all costs.

Interestingly, the Brotherhood or the "Terrorists" is an all-encompassing organisation that unites people from various occupations and social standings: "Terror is an international secret society underlying and directing the operations of the various bodies known as Nihilists, Anarchists, Socialists – in fact, all those organisations which have for their object the reform or destruction, by peaceful or violent means, of Society as it is at present constituted" (32), the narrative explains. As such, it combines the British public's collective

fear of such organisations and inverts them from being a destructive force towards a (self-proclaimed) benevolent one. Instead of working towards destruction, the organisation works towards preservation, with members striving to prevent an all-European war by directing the various governments' resources towards domestic politics instead of international conflicts (33). Their modus operandi is utilising the nervous, somewhat paranoid atmosphere of their time, "where every other [person] you danced with might be a spy..." (52) In another inversion, the leadership of this 'terrorist' organisation is a circle of learned, upper middle-class people, with their meetings including sophisticated conversations.

The Brotherhood in addition represents a flattening of the social hierarchy, owing to its implicit omission of social class distinctions. The American chapter of the Brotherhood, for instance, is closely linked to trade unionism (269), and agents of the Brotherhood are active in several major British towns. In fact, the reason for the organisation's success is its worldwide and diverse membership and wide reach – even into deepest Siberia (88-9). Its appeal is universalist, for it speaks to most strata of Anglo-Saxon societies: The Brotherhood pursues an anti-capitalist and racial-nationalistic agenda, which is welcomed by both the middle and working classes for "[t]here were few who in their hearts did not believe the Republic to be a colossal fraud, and therefore there were few who regretted it." (282) Here the socialist agenda of the author is mirrored by the narration: "No one really believed in the late [U.S.] Government, and every one [sic] in his soul hated and despised the millionaires." (283) The Terrorists know how to involve the working classes and work with their strengths as the unseen backbone of Western industrialised economies: For example, they uncover the darkest secrets of the social elites to use for later blackmailing by simply employing the most reliable cab company in London (25).

The Brotherhood's founding of a federation of all Anglo-Saxon peoples across confines of states and political systems is what ultimately saves the Western world as a whole in *Angel of the Revolution*. Here, Griffith shows a "racialised understanding of Anglo-American relations" (Wood 19), pointing towards an inescapable need for re-unification between Britain and the USA. In fact, joining is the only choice for Britain if it wants to survive the onslaught of foreign enemies, for under a unified pan-Anglo-Saxon banner "the siege of London would be raised, the power of the invaders would be effectually broken for ever, and the stigma of conquest finally wiped away" (AR 311). For the catastrophic final war, the peoples of Europe need to be prepared against the peoples of the

East, and only the Anglo-Saxon race, “the conquering race of earth, and the choicest fruit of all the ages until now” (146), can assure victory over the East. In fact, an Anglo-Saxon victory is seen as essential to guarantee the continuation of the Western world, as an impending invasion from the Continent is compared to the Spanish Empire’s attempt at invasion in 1588: “Then it was England against Spain; now it was Anglo-Saxondom against the world; and the conquering race of earth, armed with the most terrific powers of destruction that human wit had ever devised, was rising in its wrath, millions strong, to wipe out the stain of invasion from the sacred soil of the motherland of the Anglo-Saxon nations.” (322) In this vein, the rebuke of the invader by the combined Brotherhood and British forces represents a milestone in Western history. When Tremayne speaks of this victory – “The Anglo-Saxon race has rallied to the defence of its motherland, and in the blood of its invaders has wiped out the stain of conquest. It has met the conquerors of Europe in arms, and on the field of battle it has vindicated its right to the empire of the world.” (355) –, he points towards this developing fusion of all ‘Anglo-Saxon’ nations.

The Brotherhood entering the valley of Aeria then is a necessary leap for humanity to enter its next evolutionary stage. The settling of the remote valley is the closing of a circle that began with the first humans. The valley is a place where flora and fauna “belong to an anterior geological age” (127) and where apes live who are “several degrees nearer to man, both in structure and intelligence, than any other members of the Simian family that had been discovered in other parts of the world” (128). Therefore, Aeria may be the cradle of the modern human; the Brotherhood returning here and building their utopia represents a new beginning for humanity. Evolution has brought mankind far, but the Aerians again prove an evolutionary leap. When entering the valley, the passengers of the airship Ariel immediately call it “our new kingdom” (118). Crucially, this drive towards colonisation is apparently innate in them – perhaps it is the exact reason for their success.

This colonist drive and the knowledge obtained through this drive proves to be an advantage for the British during the battle for London, when the Russian and French troops are defeated in the urban environment. In contrast, the Londoners thrive, for they have both internalised colonial knowledge and as ‘natives’ of the city an intimate understanding of their environment. Accordingly, the urban battleground of London proves a “huge deathtrap” for the invader (343):

No army could have lived in its wilderness of streets swarming with enemies, who would have fought them from house to house and street to street. Once they had entered that mighty maze of streets and squares both their artillery and their

warballoons would have been useless, for they would only have buried friend and foe in common destruction. There were plenty of ways into London, but the way out was a very different matter.” (305)

Echoing Le Queux, the urban wilderness in *The Angel of the Revolution* resists any traditional method of warfare, and technological advances become obsolete amidst the narrow streets. Even before the war, there is a stark contrast between the opulence and brightness of the northern bank of the Thames with “the half-lighted gloom of the murky wilderness of South London, dark and forbidding in its irredeemable ugliness” (8), but during the war the fact that the “march of progress seems to have left this half of London behind as hopeless” (23) paradoxically proves a last line of defence against invasion. In this respect Griffith echoes the ideas of William Butler (as seen in Chapter 3). The Enclosure Acts have had disastrous consequences, so that

the people of Britain saw, at first dimly, then more and more clearly, the real issue that had been involved in the depopulation of the rural districts to swell the populations of the towns, and the consequent lapse of enormous areas of land either into pasturage or unused wilderness. (257)

Griffith thus too shows ambivalence about the situation of the urban working class. The very fact of the slums’ impenetrability provides Britain’s salvation: The inner city remains the one place where the enemies of Britain and the Brotherhood cannot win as long as they lack the Terrorists’ technology for aerial bombardments.

Nevertheless, even without the capability for air support, the Continental troops’ devastating attacks prove a harsh awakening for the people of the world, and here Griffith positions the horrors of modern war against the Brotherhood’s sometimes dubious means to keep peace between the various imperial powers of Europe. The utter destruction of whole cities underlines the Terrorists’ argument that any method is legitimate when preventing modern mechanised warfare. In the build-up to the great war, the Brotherhood’s predictions are already dire: “The next war will be the most frightful carnival of destruction that the world has ever seen”; so the thought of any Continental nation possessing “the power of raining death and desolation on its enemies from the skies” (10) is a frightful proposition.

Here a biblical dimension again enters the narrative’s argument, for the great war develops into “such a war as the world had never seen before, – a veritable Armageddon, which would shake the fabric of society to its foundations, even if it did not dissolve it finally in the blood of countless battlefields” (136). Mechanised warfare is the most monstrous invention in human history, Natasha asserts: “This awful destruction is sickening me. I knew war was horrible, but this is more like the work of fiends than of

men. There is something monstrous, something superhumanly impious, in blasting your fellow-creatures with irresistible lightnings like this, as though you were a god instead of a man” (345). Humans therefore are utterly unprepared for such carnage – which the narrative implicitly gives as the reason for the need to avoid it.

The necessity for unity amongst the Anglo-Saxon peoples re-emerges as well, for modern warfare entails the potential annihilation of whole nations (cf. 212). To counter such a genocidal potential, the abilities of all Anglo-Saxons must work together, for “that conflict of the giants” inevitably will resolve the “issue [...] whether the Anglo-Saxon race was still to remain in the forefront of civilisation and progress, or whether it was to fall” (289). Griffith here sees a mechanised war between the major world powers as a last war which is to decide humanity’s future. It is not only Europe, but also Asia which will enter such a conflict, because the Asian peoples, “that mighty mass of humanity, pent up and stagnant for centuries, is about to burst its bounds and overflow the earth in a flood of desolation and destruction” (145); likewise, the last decisive battle will be fought between the Christian and Moslem peoples of the planet.

This future is revealed in *Olga Romanoff*, Griffith’s successor to *The Angel of the Revolution*. In this narrative, the descendants of the settlers of Aeria have become a powerful new nation that controls all other nations’ foreign politics to ensure world peace. As the reason for the Aerians’ rapid development, as well as their capacity to improve the physical condition of man, the narrative cites their abandonment of greed, exploitation, and active warmongering (*OR* 10). Thus Alan Arnold’s appointment as world president is legitimised by his people’s higher standing; that is, by “something higher than election or inheritance” (10). In fact, the Aerians have colonised most of the planet even before the cataclysm.

The Aerians are portrayed as still being in the right to control of other peoples’ militaries and fully govern Britain and the USA for a century, for their fast development has made them a superior people. As such, they now rightfully exert a paternalistic and authoritarian power over lesser peoples, in order to educate them and drive them towards racial progress, as well. Technological and cultural development is reflected in every aspect of society, including physical features:

Although the average physique of civilised man had immensely improved under the new order of things, the Aerians, descendants of the pick of the nations of Europe, were as far superior to the rest [...] as the latter would have been to the men and women of the nineteenth century [...] (*OR* 10)

Thus the Aerians proclaim themselves “as men who have developed under the most favourable circumstances possible, and who have known how to make the best of their advantages” (52) – that is, living in a pastoral home but still effectively advancing science and technology. The narrative explicitly names “a book, written nearly two hundred years ago in the Victorian Age, called *The Coming Race*” (45). The Aerians live in the same higher state as the Vril of that novel, and the difference in sophistication between Aerians and the rest of humanity is nearly as profound. As such, the Aerians feel obligated to treat other peoples as a parent would a child, both exerting authority and educating their wards – and punishing them if they are disobedient.

Here the narrative implicitly criticises the idea of the White Man’s Burden to bring civilisation to native peoples in their colonies: The British people, too, still have much need for improvement. The superior society of the Aerians thus reverses contemporary justifications of British colonialism, for the Aerians include the European powers in their mission to educate ‘lesser’ peoples worldwide. All the world’s cities are rebuilt to present their inhabitants a more dignified environment, now free of the slums that had plagued them. There is now a verdant garden where London “had once been made hideous by the slums and sweating-dens of Southwark” (35). In contrast, even the European powers of the 19th century lived in “a state of half-barbarous strife and brutality” (10). Any punishment by the Aerians towards misbehaving European nations is thus legitimised and counted as a rational action. Consequently, the Aerians’ watch over the British and American peoples proves to be an engineering of these nations towards reaching the Aerians’ state of development. As a mission statement for his new nation, Natas explains on his deathbed that “the blood-lust is but tamed, not quenched, in the souls of men, and that long years must pass before it is purged from the world for ever” (4). Therefore, a responsible people is needed to control humanity’s impulses – and as a result he envisions every nation subscribing to enlightened, ‘Anglo-Saxon’ values.

The fast relapse of the Western peoples into old habits once the Aerians return self-government to them vindicates the Aerians’ authoritarian stance. The Anglo-Saxon Federation falls “into the anarchy of unrestrained democracy” (81) as had been prevalent before the foundation of Aeria. Paranoia, partisanship, political ineffectiveness, and the threat of a new great war erupting from unknown enemies return to world politics. The narrative’s stance is again firmly against government by majority consent, for these lead the Anglo-Saxon peoples to once more become decadent amidst an uneasy peace and

luxury, “like the Romans of old” (193). The novel’s villain, Olga Romanoff, is thus right in her analysis that “Anglo-Saxondom is a babel of conflicting opinions, and the mob rules throughout its length and breadth. Where everyone is master there can be no leaders, and those who are without leaders are the natural prey of the strong hand” (150). Likewise, Alan Arnold’s rant against the Anglo-Saxon Federation’s slowness and indecisiveness concerning the Sultan’s armament proves to be fully justified, as well (220-1).

In addition, the narrative explicitly criticises the Anglo-Saxon peoples’ inclusion of women into politics, which it identifies as the reason for much of their political ineffectiveness. The Aerians exclude women from participating in politics and enjoy an effective government: ““Which proves,’ said Alan, ‘that what was called our discourtesy and unfairness was not so very unwise after all’” (223).

Here a misogynist authorial tone again enters the narrative, which the character of Olga heavily underlines. Although she is outwardly powerful – her family and its cause still possess numerous followers, and she is an accomplished alchemist and seductress –, eventually she realises her powerlessness amidst a world that is shaped by powers beyond her control, both male interests and cosmic forces. Thus she is compared to Cleopatra and other famous cold, loveless seductresses of history whose schemes ultimately fail. Revealingly, she sees herself more positively as a successor to Catherine the Great or Semiramis (28), but also negatively as similar to scheming Lucrezia Borgia (56). Her place among historic overambitious female world leaders and her ambivalence already early on hint at her ultimate failure.

This dichotomy also characterises Olga’s very core, showing that she lives against her natural inclinations and norms. This means that her active rebellion against her place in the world as a woman and as a descendant of disposed tyrants precludes her from ever finding a happy life. It is instructive to compare her to Natasha: She and Richard Arnold enjoy a loving and caring relationship, whose success stems from Natasha fully subscribing to Victorian gender norms. By contrast, the union between Olga and her husband Serge is calculated and unhealthy (the wife being the active, dominant partner) – almost resembling a relation between a slave and their master (cf. 29). As such, Olga represents a corrupted mirror image of Natasha, as the Aerians note:

Remember how Natasha was trained up by the Master in undying hate of Russian tyranny, and how she inherited the legacy of revenge from her mother and him. No doubt this Olga has done the same, and she has been taught to look upon us as the Terrorists looked upon the Tsar and his family. (104)

Unlike Natasha's beauty, Olga's attractiveness is hampered by her half-Oriental physical appearance. She is "in all the pride and glory of budding womanhood" but with facial features that are "almost masculine in their firmness" (14). Therefore, her taking charge of situations is rather unsettling to the Victorian reader – as is the "defiant poise of her splendid head on the strongly-moulded throat" (14). Accordingly, she realises too late that as a woman she will inevitably be subject to men's dominion – as she might be the only woman left on Earth after the comet's passing of Earth (362). Her realisation of her plans' futility is the first time she realises her own feminine failings.

In essence, Olga's mastery over alchemy marks her as an enemy of the progressiveness of the Western peoples. She represents the atavism of the East – that is, she shows how under the tsarist system Russian culture remains regressive. This atavistic knowledge almost threatens the future of humanity, for the strange disease that affects many Aerians is heavily implied to be of her making (cf. 348). "If anyone could see me just now, I fancy they would take me rather for a witch or a poisoner of the fifteenth century than for a girl of the twenty-first," Olga remarks in her alchemist kitchen (54). And indeed, her true image as revealed by alchemical flame and her mirror is that of a witch (55), separating her further from both the natural world as well as modernity. Apparently, these atavistic practices are a legacy of her family, with her father displaying vampiric characteristics: He is a dying man of advanced age, but an upon drinking a "deep red" concoction "[f]ifty years seemed to have been lifted from the shoulders of the man who would never see another sunrise" (17). In this the Romanoff dynasty is a further antithesis to Natas's family, for Olga's brother Paul is as disgraced and humiliated a man as Natas was, but unlike the founder of the Brotherhood he plans to overthrow those nations that actively work against tyranny, gathering around him loyal people for the wrong reasons (cf. 20).

This coalition against Aeria and the nations under its guardianship consists of degenerative forces. Collaborators with the tsarists come from groups who are descended from former potentates, disposed aristocracy, or capitalists, in short all those who long for the standing, wealth and power of their ancestors (130). Crucially, a Sultan who has conquered most of the Muslim world participates in this pact, for he has a low opinion of the Anglo-Saxon Federation:

Its millions were unarmed and its wealth unprotected. Its indolent and luxurious democracies, occupied solely with social experiments and the increase of their material magnificence, would be crushed almost without resistance by his splendidly armed and disciplined legions. (162)

As a result, the great war about to break out is a fight between atavistic and progressive, technocratic forces. While on the surface many of the technological marvels of the Aerians appear to be as much created by magical means as the devices of Olga, their achievements stem from a thorough use of scientific methods – Natas’s ability of prophecy, for example, warning his descendants of the world’s fate, is explained as the result of his meticulous study of astronomy (300).

The natural disaster that leaves only the Aerians as inheritors of the Earth is an ultimate punishment for the warmongers of the planet. Bloodlust and longing for war characterise the Sultan and House Romanoff, “a heritage of hate and vengeance, which you shall keep hot in your hearts and in the hearts of your children against the day of reckoning when it comes”, Olga and her brother are told (19). Alan warns the Aerians that Olga’s new world would mean “the breaking up of the Anglo-Saxon Federation [...] and the inauguration of an era of personal despotism and popular slavery” (129), and so envisions a possible Russian-led future in which humanity has regressed by centuries. Again it is the peoples of the British colonies, the “manhood of Europe, America, Southern Africa, and Australia” that Alan activates to help the Aerians in fighting the Romanoff-Muslim alliance – the Anglo-Saxon race (or its descendants) against the rest of the world.

Subsequently, the repopulation of Earth under the Aerians promises a lasting peace, in which “the most perfect flower of our race” will create a new “Golden Age” (306). This new world will then only be populated by peoples of Anglo-Saxon descent; a completely white, European humanity, with all ‘inferior’ races extinct by cosmic fire. The fact that Griffith’s Aerians clearly originate from heterogeneous heritage (despite them being described as effectively ‘Anglo-Saxon’) underlines the power of hybridity: The descendants of Richard Arnold and Natasha are partly British, partly of Eastern European Jewish stock. This mixture of racial and social backgrounds has produced an evolutionary step in humanity. The hybrid Aeriens at the end of *Olga Romanoff* become global settlers, able to inhabit and shape any corner of the planet that they want to colonise. Griffith probably did not envision any further development of these discrete settlements into their own territories or even nations, but possibly thought of a unifying Aerian or racially ‘Anglo-Saxon’ world government that will oversee every territory in which the Aerians settle.

In the following, last chapter of this study, future-war tales produced in the British colonies of South Africa and Hong Kong depict colonial hybrid identities that also oscillate

between belonging to Britain and being a product of inexorably local conditions; in fact, these narratives present communities that are actively engaged in establishing their own individual voices, in effect attempting to reconcile ideas of a universal British people and society with their new home far from the metropolis.

6. Imagined Communities and Colonial Narratives

Fantasies of coming invasions were en vogue across the English-speaking world and beyond in the decades leading up to the First World War: While British authors envisioned Britain as a battlefield for future wars specifically in order to alert and/or thrill metropolitan readers, the genre quickly became successful in the British colonies and dominions as well. I. F. Clarke counts reprints of George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* in Australia and New Zealand among the many releases of that defining story within the Empire and internationally ("New Kind of Fiction" ix). Later stories would enjoy similar or even greater success; clearly, Britons and British-born settlers living across the expanse of the Empire responded eagerly to imagined conflicts with other powers. Those imported tales provided a tether to the homeland and a reminder of the importance of the Empire to the imperial periphery. In the way the narratives typically attempt to activate the martial capabilities of the whole imperial population, calling for unity against enemy powers, colonial readers could feel part of the greater whole.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, adaptations to fit local situations quickly followed. Clarke lists future-war stories published in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, and South Africa, among others (cf. *Tale of the Future*). Such tales would usually set main battles (if not the whole war) at the readers' doorstep, which gave much greater immediacy to the various narratives. Like the metropolitan stories, colonial fictions of future war present arguments for specific shortcomings of local defences or praise the strength of regional troops. Additionally, they are peppered with local colour, by which they create a canvas on which they can paint that particular part of the Empire as an entity of its own, linked to but most certainly distinct from the metropolis.

Benedict Anderson posits that 'imagined communities' lie at the centre of the construct of a nation and by extension nationalism; such communities are formed by "indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship and clientship" (Anderson 6). Though far from positing new national identities, future-war tales originating in British colonies nevertheless create such imagined communities. With this they form a foundation on which they can develop an imagined local people that is not a mere offshoot of the British. This is in part a consequence of the specific military circumstances of the colonies: The imperial periphery is not as well-defended against incursions as the metropolis. With British troops spread across the world and there potentially being less desire in the British homeland to protect

smaller colonies, settlers would be highly aware of the need to defend themselves. If the next great war happens, localised narratives of invasion propose, Britain might itself be besieged, so any relief troops' transit to the colony might take too long or no troops may be sent at all. Out of this realisation, such tales construct valiant local forces that put up a credible fight against the invader. This legitimises the depicted colonial societies, for even if their defence should fail, the real blame lies with inadequate metropolitan policy.

The German Occupation of South Africa (1885; *GOSA*) and *The Back Door* (1897; *BD*) are two representative examples of the kind of future-war story that envision their colonial spaces – South Africa and Hong Kong, respectively – as unique and discrete societies. Both texts consciously build continuity with the metropolis yet still present distinctly local ideas. The narratives define societies that are at the same time British and local, presenting characters who consider themselves British but who have built a complementary subtle local identity. Moreover, for the depicted settlers, the colony is the centre of their daily lives. The local authors of these tales thus effectively create spaces in which the colony becomes its own metropolis, with adjacent spaces being respective fringes – a miniature version of the Empire within the Empire.

6.1 *The German Occupation of South Africa: Building a Robust Society at the Cape*

The serial *The German Occupation of South Africa* was published anonymously from 30 May to 18 July 1885 in *The Lantern*, a weekly newspaper in Cape Town. It was discontinued afterwards and remains unfinished, so that the titular German occupation has not even occurred; in fact, the Germans have not entered the war at all at the time of discontinuation.¹⁸ This fragmentary state shows how ultra-topical the genre could be, fickle publishers printing such narratives only as long as current events were conducive to a good invasion scare. In the case of this story, the impetus for its creation likely came from the German annexation of South West Africa (today's Namibia) in 1884, just north of Cape Colony, as well as general tensions between the European powers during the accelerating Scramble for Africa.

¹⁸ In addition to its unfinished state, the sequence of volumes and edition numbers in which the story's chapters were published is confusing: The first chapter appeared in Vol. XI no. 411 on 30 May; however, starting with no. 413 on 23 June, numbers were assigned to vol. X. Also, there are two editions no. 413 in consecutive weeks (23 June and 30 June), as well as two editions no. 415 (4 July and 11 July). For clarity in citations, the present dissertation uses the labels no. 413a for chapters on 23 June and no. 413b for 30 June, and no. 415a for chapters on 4 July and no. 415b for 11 July.

The narrative is presented as the translation of a German report from the 1920s on the Germans' invasion of South Africa that took place in a fictional future of July 1885-1888. In 1885, France, Germany, and Russia form a secret alliance to carve up the British Empire: Russia invades Britain's South Asian possessions to annex India, France aims to expand in Southeast Asia, and Germany will occupy South Africa and divide Britain's African colonies with France, as well as attack the British Isles directly. As the first salvo in the South African part of the war, the French land near Port Elizabeth, and subsequently advance towards the Cape, in a westward motion across the less densely populated areas of the region. The defenders' troops, mostly consisting of local militias, suffer a serious defeat at Grahamstown, allowing the French to advance on Cape Town nearly unopposed. The siege of Cape Town in turn ends in a success for the settlers, and the French troops retreat. At the point when the narrative stops, the French have just surrendered to the colonists; the main invasion, however, is only starting, as German warships are fast approaching.

The story explicitly embeds itself in the plot of *The Battle of Dorking*, which means that the German invasion of Britain as told by the Volunteer in that narrative happens parallel to the invasion of South Africa as reported here. Additionally, the *The Lantern* text references *The Siege of London* by 'Posteritas' and "other well-known historical works" (*GOSA* vol. XI, no. 411, 9), creating a network of interconnected future-war stories. This narrative continuity allows this particular colonial tale to give itself greater weight. It positions itself (and colonial future-war narratives in general) as an equal to metropolitan products of the genre: As a companion to *Dorking*, *The German Occupation of South Africa* therefore emphasises that colonial texts share in British literary production, adding a unique voice. Plot and characters are rather typical of the genre, including the usual rhetoric, letting the enemy speak the harsh truths that the British/British-descended reader needs to realise. A French officer remarks upon victory in Grahamstown: "England? The Devil! She did not know how to manage her colonial *canaille*" (vol. X, no. 415A, 9). Thus he drives the story's political objective to show the need for greater support for the Cape Colony.

To give the depicted invasion global significance, the narrative contextualises the French invasion of South Africa within a historic framework of large conflicts. Several times, the invasion is compared to the Napoleonic Wars, underlining its importance on the world stage and giving South Africa considerable prestige – after all, it must be an attractive goal for conquest if it warrants such momentous military actions. Accordingly, the fall of

Grahamstown is “a second Moscow” (ibid.), for the withdrawing colonial troops have left the town burning in a tactic similar to the Russians’ strategic retreats some 75 years before. Although the torching of the town is considered “a heroic but a foolish act” (ibid.), it nevertheless deprives the invaders of resources; and while the South African winter is milder than the freezing cold of the Russian winter, this considerably weakens the French troops. Indeed, like Russia, the South African defenders have an extensive, sparse hinterland that complicates the movement of large troops and that helps the colonists retreat efficiently. Like Napoleon’s army in Russia, the French are in part routed by the very land they are invading. In parallel, the defenders can thus gather all their remaining troops comparatively uninterrupted at their last bastion, Cape Town. The victory at that city, in turn, evokes great defensive works by the British during the Peninsular War, positioning the colonists’ quickly erected fortifications in line with the Duke of Wellington’s secretly built Lines of Torres Vedras (vol. X, no. 415b, 9). This puts the local defenders in the footsteps of great British men and underlines their credentials as legitimate defenders of the Empire as well as a respectable force of their own.

The South Africans realise their importance only during the course of the French incursion. The initial consensus among Cape Town’s citizens is that the region is too unimportant in the grand scheme: “What, said they, would they [the French] be doing fooling round here?” (vol. XI, no. 412, 10) During the war’s first phase, the belief still prevails in “the colonial world” that the British will win the war with an extensive campaign at home (vol. X, no. 413a, 10); later the people at the Cape see that the colonies must defend themselves on their own, for the regular British troops have left South Africa to fight in other territories of the Empire. In essence, South Africa thus becomes its own Empire, presenting a divide between a strong metropolis and large marginal regions. With Cape Town as the core of the war effort, the vast area of Cape Colony east of the town form a hinterland that is considerably wilder and open to invasion. Especially the eastern seaboard is seen as nearly undefended (vol. X, no. 413a, 9), mirroring concerns in British tales of future war about its defences on the southern and southeastern English coast. The East being the initial point of attack echoes the conventional metropolitan invasion scare narrative’s east-to-west corridor of invasion towards Britain.

This divide between Cape Town and the rest of the colony results in the narrative raising questions regarding colonial demographic and racial policies. Compared to the other regions, the population at the Cape is portrayed as more uniform, and in turn there is

greater social and racial diversity in the hinterland, which threatens these areas' stability and thus defensive strength. The population of Cape Town is implicitly presented as generally white and of British stock, and this ostensibly builds solidarity during the French invasion. The town's defence equalises social differences, for all members of the population here show their love for their home: "The Capetown Cavalry, Cadet Corps, and the citizens remained to defend Capetown" (vol. X, no. 413b, 9). The general draft means a flattening of social hierarchies – "every man, the employer by the side of his employees, was at drill" (vol. X, no. 414, 9), and the defence force includes "merchants, lawyers – aye, and clergymen, too, and even women" (ibid.).

However, this equality does not include non-white, non-British populations. The black population is all but invisible throughout the narrative, and the only mention of the colony's native inhabitants is a report on the French "treating the natives [...] well" (ibid.) – potentially attempting to turn them against the white settlers in the colony. Here the story subtly criticises of the lack of plans of integrating the indigenous peoples into colonial defences during a foreign invasion. The main thrust of its concern about integrating non-British populations, however, is in regard to the Boer population, which features more prominently in the narrative and which proves to be an equally uncertain ally.

Before the war's outbreak, arguments to arm the Boer volunteer militias are unheeded, despite "Burghers" being described as an integral part of South African colonial system (vol. XI, no. 412, 10). Once the conflict has started, Boers within the colony are directly approached by the French in an attempt to have them join the invaders' efforts: "The sun of England has set. France has freed Ireland, she comes to free South Africa!" (vol. X, no. 414, 9) Possibly, the mentioned invasion of Britain has been facilitated by the French offering the Irish independence if they joined the fight on the invaders' side, and the French apparently plan to use a similar tactic with the Boers. This also sets the Boers within the British colony on the same level as the Irish, as colonised peoples who live under (at times brutal) overlordship by the British. This tactic is successful because of an apparent lack of effort on the side of the British settlers to better integrate the Boers into the colony, so that they are not classed as a part of the British colony, but separate. Thus many Boer soldiers change sides, and a further number stays neutral in the conflict – as does the Malay population (vol. X, no. 415b, 9). This shows the tension between the core area around Cape

Town and the rest of the colony east of the town – at the Cape, commentators complain about “the selfishness of the East” (ibid.).

Thus the story communicates distinctly South African concerns, reflecting on situations that are particular to the Cape Colony. It presents the British colonists as well as the Boers (those that stick with the British colonists) as capable defenders and describes their knowledge in riding and shooting as rough but effective preparation for being soldiers, which necessitates the better integration of British and Boer settlers into this society. So though untrained, their lifestyle has best prepared them to fight any invader. Most settlers see themselves as “essentially English, and therefore patriotic” (vol. X, no. 414, 9), yet are aware of the fact that they are part of a unique society that is characterised by self-reliance. In the crisis of the French invasion, the Cape Colony is naturally much closer to the settlers’ hearts than Britain, so protecting their homes takes primacy (although this is of course also an action to defend part of the Empire).

Thus the Cape Town newspaper *The Lantern* commented on the larger situation of South Africa at the time, depicting it as a diverse and strong society that can stand on its own. A decade later, a newspaper in Hong Kong published a similar tale that reinforced that particular colony’s society as a capable, discrete community within the Empire, tentatively hinting at a shift in its characters’ self-perception from being ‘just British’ to being ‘Hongkonger’.

6.2 *The Back Door: Establishing Hong Kong’s Potential*

Between 30 September and 8 October 1897, the Hong Kong daily newspaper *The China Mail* published the serial *The Back Door*. This anonymously written narrative confronted the newspaper’s readers with a fictional attack on and takeover of the British colony by allied French and Russian forces and was intended to warn the public about the defenceless state of Hong Kong Island’s southern part, which could prove the titular back door for enemy invaders. The timing of its publication was just right: The lease of the New Territories, which might have provided a place to fall back to and regroup in case of invasion (Bickley, “Historical Introduction” 21; Endacott 227), had not yet been effected, and from 9 October 1897 a manoeuvre of the Hong Kong Volunteer corps was to take place in which this exact scenario of an enemy landing on a remote part of the island was to be carried out (Bickley, “Historical Introduction” 20). Moreover, an actual attack on the colony within the foreseeable future seemed plausible in the wake of the Sino-French war

of 1884-5 and Russia's growing interest in South and East Asia, which lent the tale verisimilitude. It follows that the story, and especially its message, proved a productive topic for discussion in the weeks following its publication, as is reflected by the varied responses to it in *The China Mail's* letters section and by the fact that a specimen of the pamphlet edition of *The Back Door*, printed after the story's serial run, was sent to the Colonial Office in London as an item of interest (Bickley, "Historical Introduction" 22; "Literary Introduction" 4).

The Back Door was intended as a propaganda piece like most pamphlets featuring future-war narratives, aiming to incite the public towards more awareness of the colony's shortcomings in military and defence. This tale copies the narrative structure George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* and uses this framework to produce a decidedly local tale. Like *The German Occupation of South Africa*, it thus creates continuity between the colony and the metropolis, as it engages with contemporary literary production and public discourses of the British homeland. In effect, it makes Hong Kong Island a smaller – but to its inhabitants equivalent – sibling to the British Isles, creating a parallel to the fictional large-scale struggles of Britain and its Empire within the microcosm of the island colony. At the same time, it emphasises Hong Kong's quality as an idiosyncratic space by representing local characters and their thoughts and actions, even though care is given to recognise their links to Britain. Within the frame of a moment of crisis, *The Back Door* negotiates ideas of Britishness and questions of community and 'home'. More generally, this specific tale reveals the multifaceted nature of Hong Kong, mirroring in its narrative patchwork of metropolitan and local influences the vibrant and heterogeneous status of the town.

The narrative is constructed as a letter by an unnamed (former) Hong Kong resident who witnesses the attack on and the subsequent fall of Hong Kong and the reversal of the British Empire. He writes to Reginald Brooks, a friend and compatriot who has had no knowledge of world events due to his stay in remote parts of the Pacific ocean. The reader, also unaware of the chain of events of the described short but devastating war, is as much in need of education as is Brooks. Like the diegetic recipient of this letter, the reader has no contextual knowledge of the world as presented here. This automatically creates a bond with Brooks, the narrator, and their shared imagined community, even if *The China Mail* as a Hong Kong publication probably expected its readership to be predominantly from Hong Kong.

Gillian Bickley hypothesises in her Literary Introduction to a new edition of *The Back Door* that the text's author must have been an editor of *The China Mail* or someone who would have had equal knowledge of Hong Kong personalities (Bickley, "Literary Introduction" 8-9). Indeed, the majority of named characters are literary representations of actual inhabitants, sharing the same positions within the civic and military structure of the colony. The systematic use of actual public figures deepens the tale's aspect of community-building by confronting its readers with the potential fate of well-known local people, persons they might even be acquainted with. This emphasises the idea of being a distinct, isolated location, where every inhabitant is an important part of the local society, producing a heightened sense of belonging. This concept of Hong Kong as a net of relationships between its people then again feeds into the geographic concept of it being a unique place.

Although officers and other persons of authority stress throughout the story that they are British subjects and as such consider the colony's fate being linked to the Empire's fate, it is clear that they too fear for their home. The final image in the narrative, a description of Hong Kong burning, having been set on fire by the retreating defenders, thus heightens the pathos of this situation on a personal level. A sense of melancholy and loss prevails when the narrator proclaims on the corpse of an acquaintance: "Poor Blobs [A. P. Nobbs, a Volunteer], if spooks revisit this world, his should haunt the isle he guarded so well and loved so dearly in life" (*BD* 86). Many of the soldiers were born in the British Isles and have lived in a variety of places throughout the Empire; the narrator reminds Brooks of a mutual friend who was stationed in South Africa and fought in wars against native peoples (66). Britain might still be called their homeland, yet it is this only in an ideological sense (cf. Bickley, "Literary Introduction" 15). *The Back Door* thus attempts to balance two main identities: the abstract, imperial, and the concrete, local. Bickley sums this up by rightly positing that the residents "face in two directions at once" (*ibid*).

The story concerns itself much with the self-image of the British living in the colony, which as Bickley has found informs their relationship with the various other ethnic groups of Hong Kong (4). The apparent effectiveness and even harmony of the colony's multi-ethnic society as portrayed in the tale aims to legitimise British rule. Non-British citizens of Hong Kong are invariably imagined as highly loyal to the British authorities to promote an image of unity: Many Chinese, Indian, and Portuguese Volunteers swear to fight the invader to their death since the British have treated them well (66). This resoluteness is received positively by the narrator, even though he points out that the Portuguese

combatants are rather untrained and ineffective. What counts for the narrator, nonetheless, is their commitment for the colony and the Empire. The unity of Hong Kong citizens – and the tragic irony of this unity appearing strongest only before certain death – is evoked in the description of the defending army’s encampment as “one vast picnic” (*BD* 70).

This projection of multi-ethnic harmony, however, has to be seen critically. *The Back Door* in effect claims the defence of Hong Kong as a wholly British affair and thus proves unsure about how to integrate the island’s colonised subjects. Non-Britons are either imagined as submitting to the authorities’ orders or consciously exempted from the fight for their homes. Naturally, this casts doubt over the story’s message of unity. Only the Britons have the burden of defence “thrust” on them, the narrator proclaims (67). Non-British citizens are sent away to the Chinese mainland once the defences are prepared, and only a few of them stay. Although the narrator acknowledges that many of these people have lived on Hong Kong Island for some time and consider it their home, their resulting entitlement to remain and join the battle is ignored (*ibid*). This makes the society depicted in this text an exclusionary one. The colonial hierarchy is firmly set, with people of British extraction at the top, with loyal non-British citizens of Indian and Chinese extraction allowed to carry out minor duties, and all other nationalities being considered problematic since they are in varying degrees ‘foreign’ and thus of questionable affiliation. In this respect, the colony attempts to reflect the metropolis, presenting a fundamentally ‘Anglo-Saxon’ race (even allowing Americans to fight on the Britons’ behalf).

Mary Louse Pratt calls the colony a “contact zone” in which cultures and identities meet and interact. Her assumption is that “empires create in the imperial center of power an obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself” (Pratt 4). A similar process happens in *The Back Door*, running the other way: The imagined Hong Kong continually looks to the metropolis and (re-)presents itself through this lens in an effort to (re-)produce metropolitan order and stability on the imperial margin. Unlike the metropolis, however, the colony has a much more visible number of non-British residents, as seen in the number of people who have to be ferried off before Hong Kong’s defenders’ last stand. This leads to problems and contradictions in this society’s representation. Here *The Back Door* reveals an ambivalence in its Hong Kong’s self-image. The settlement is both a small part of a larger empire and a home for its inhabitants, as well as both undeniably British (or so the British-born population would think) and a melting pot of many ethnicities and cultures. The fact that ‘foreigners’ are

excluded from battle is a sign of the colonial authorities being unsure about the status of its non-British population. At the same time, the concession that some ‘foreign’ Hongkongers are allowed to participate is considered a recognition of their loyalty, but the potential social danger of their apparent equality is avoided by their only working in supporting roles within the defenders’ military hierarchy.

In the 1865 census of Hong Kong, only about 2,000 residents out of a population of over 125,000 were Americans or Europeans (cf. Endacott 65). This social imbalance typical of many British colonies, with a minority portion of the population occupying most if not all positions of power, could and often would lead to ethnic tensions; South Africa and its ‘rebellious’ native peoples, for example, are mentioned in the story. In the specific case of the Hong Kong of *The Back Door*, any potential social tensions are ignored by presenting the reader a harmonious and unified community under British guidance, where everyone respects his/her place. The narrative thus constructs a society which shows this strength of unity especially in times of crisis.

Clearly, there is quite a bit of wishful thinking involved on the part of the British minority when Chinese and Indian residents are portrayed as being enamoured with Britons’ fairness and benevolence. However, even when doing so, the text engages with and participates in the forming of a distinct identity of Hong Kong as a community and as a place. Although it is not ready to fully reflect the settlement’s multi-ethnic status, at least short mention is made of non-Britons’ desire to defend their home as well, even if this is not elaborated on further. At the same time, the narrative thus seeks to harmonise a specifically local character with metropolitan cultural ideals, vacillating between continuity and innovation. *The Back Door* thus attempts to negotiate the ambivalent and often contradictory aspects of Hong Kong identity, and thus to sort the young colony’s many sociocultural currents into a new, hopefully agreeable whole. The narrative proves, as Bickley adds, that Hong Kong in the 1890s was no “cultural desert” but indeed an active cultural space in whose fictions such issues could be discussed (“Literary Introduction” 15).

Like the examples of colonial future-war fiction examined in this chapter, the tales of wars to come produced across the British Empire between 1871 and 1914 too negotiate identities, reflecting in their often ambivalent and uncertain assessment of Britishness or otherness the heterogeneity of voices that take part in the genre as well as the dynamic nature of such identities. Doing so, they continuously rebuild British identities, envisioning

them as adaptable and strong in the face of a coming age in which empire, and indeed the security of one's own homeland, cannot always be taken for granted.

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