

The H. G. Wells Society

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Call for Papers

The H. G. Wells Society Annual Conference

H. G. Wells and the Anthropocene: Time, Earth, and Us

Saturday 21 September 2024

(hybrid: online and at The Art Workers' Guild, London, UK)

Keynote speaker: Dr David Shackleton, author of *British Modernism and the Anthropocene: Experiments with Time*, University of Cardiff

H. G. Wells's work spans various genres and themes, but a common thread is his fascination with time. He explores different modes of time travel, temporal paradoxes, and historical narratives, always with an eye to the future of humanity. His stories challenge his characters and readers to confront the vastness and indifference of geological time, in which human existence is a brief and precarious episode. Some of his best-known works, such as *The Time Machine*, and some of his lesser-known ones, such as *The Croquet Player*, illustrate this theme of human vulnerability in the face of Earth time.

Wells's engagement with Earth time makes his work relevant for the current discussions of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene is a contested term that refers to the geological epoch in which human activities have a significant impact on Earth's systems. This concept suggests that humans have transcended their natural limits as a species. They exploit the fossil fuels and alter the climate that have taken thousands of years to form. The effects of these actions will persist for thousands of years more, leaving a mark on the geological record beyond human history.

The Anthropocene poses urgent questions about how humans relate to time and how they cope with the environmental crises that unfold within it. We aim to explore these issues both in Wells's own writings and through comparative studies including Wells, and invite proposals for papers on topics such as the following:

- Deep time and deep history;
- Posthuman and posthumous geology: the fate of Earth and its inhabitants;
- Nonlinear temporalities: time travel, parallel worlds, alternate histories, and temporal paradoxes;
- Human and nonhuman (co)evolution, degradation, and symbiosis;
- Capitalist extractivism and its damaging effects on the climate, life, and matter;
- Genetic engineering;
- The geoengineered Earth;
- The human and its extraterrestrial others.

In particular, we welcome proposals that consider visualizations of Wells's work: How are Wells's visions of a damaged Earth and the 'good Anthropocene' represented in visual and media adaptations of his writing?

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Please send your 150-250-word abstracts and short bio notes to Maxim Shadurski (Maxim.Shadurski@uws.edu.pl). The deadline for abstract submission is **10 August 2024**. Notifications of acceptance and registration details will be sent by 17 August.