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**WOMAN AS A MATE AND COMRADE OF MAN  
IN H. G. WELLS'S *THE NEW MACHIAVELLI***

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**Abstract:** H. G. Wells's *The New Machiavelli* (1911) was the bold statement of the rights of women in the new century. It was, of course, useless to deny that *The New Machiavelli* had a sexual base. The sexual relations between men and women had come to dominate Wells's mind, and it was going to be an important topic in his books. Wells's novel, which is a cry of anger against the oppressive conventions of society, is in part based on autobiographical details of Wells's own life, his affair in 1908 with Amber Reeves, a brilliant Cambridge graduate. Central to Wells's doctrines of male-female relationships is his understanding of the duality of love. Wells stresses the importance of two people loving each other at the level of the mind as well as the body. Work is considered by Wells as important as sexual relationship. In both cases the dual nature of love, that is fulfilment both physically and spiritually, is deemed necessary for a true and satisfactory relationship. In his feminist texts Wells distinguishes clearly between male ideals of marriage and womanhood, and emancipated female characters who are aware of what they are doing, but consider it their right and privilege to lead the kind of life they wish to, and are prepared to take the consequences.

**Keywords:** H. G. Wells, women's emancipation, sexuality, free love, marriage

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No evaluation of the presentation of the Edwardian woman can ignore the heated arguments that had been going on from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as to a woman's position in the home and in society. Herbert Geo-

rgé Wells (1866–1946) based his female portraits on contemporary ideas of women, such as those of John Ruskin (1819–1900)<sup>1</sup>, on ideas expressed in the debate on emancipation and suffrage in the magazines of the day, as well as scientific ideas about women. In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century women's freedom became increasingly limited, especially in middle and upper class homes. What might be called 'super-patriarchalism' ruled. The woman and mother ideal, symbolizing the home as heaven of peace in an otherwise troubled world, was placed on a pedestal by Christian philanthropists. The rapid growth in technology, and increasing doubts as to the validity of traditionally held Christian doctrines, only emphasized the need for something static and unchangeable in a world of doubt and unrest. Society chose the woman as that static symbol, forgetting that she too was influenced by the changing world in which she lived. The hypocritical side of the Madonna figure in literature from the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the decline of the Angel in the House<sup>2</sup> figure were both subjects for heated discussions at the time.

Another reason for the isolation of the woman in the home was financial, particularly in the growing middle-class. As the industrial revolution progressed in the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it brought with it the loss of traditional jobs in the country and the town, and a change in traditional work patterns. Machines took over and there were fewer jobs

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<sup>1</sup> Religious and social leaders of the Victorian and Edwardian times pounced on Ruskin's theory of woman as the prime maker of the home as sanctuary from the world, and by divorcing his writing from its context, suborned it. Woman was, therefore, to be confined to the home, so as not to be sullied by contact with the evils of the outside world. Ruskin's promotion of women as the guardians of the home was only a part of his view on women. He devotes much space in *Of Queen's Gardens* in *Sesame and Lilies* to showing how women were superior to men, and used the testimony of literature to prove his point, drawing on texts from the time of Aeschylus, through the knight gallant ideals of medieval literature, to Shakespeare and Scott. Ruskin considered men and women as having different roles. Traditionally Ruskin has been attacked by feminists as a supporter of the Victorian ideal of the Angel in the House. However, a detailed reading of *Of Queen's Gardens* shows that many of the points made by Ruskin were supportive of female emancipation. The weakness in his argument lies in its tendency to demand for women an ideal state which many felt they could never reach. The question of feminine ideal is a dominant theme in many works of the period. In *Ann Veronica* Wells mocks the Ruskin ideal by using Manning, one of the young men who courts Ann Veronica, as his spokesman.

<sup>2</sup> The Victorian feminine ideal of angelic virtue, used originally by Coventry Patmore in his domestic epic *The Angel in the House* (1845–1862), embodied sexual purity and a strong sense of Christian morality, placing women in a secondary role to men. Woman's appropriate sphere of influence was seen as domestic, and with this a clear line was drawn between the female values expressed in the well-run Victorian Christian middle-class home and the male public values of a fast-expanding capitalist economy.

available. Preference was given to men, except in certain industries, such as cotton, where work was often given to women because they could be paid less, causing widespread male unemployment in some districts. Gradually it became a source of pride for a man to have a wife who did not work, a status symbol which has survived well into the twentieth century.

The issue of work was central to discussion of the Woman Question from the 1850s onwards. Books and periodicals commented frequently, variously, and at length on women's work in this period, employment registers and employment societies for women, including the Society for the Promotion of Employment for Women, were founded, and the *English Women's Journal* was established in 1893, largely to discuss the present industrial employments of women.

Wells's thinking about women was shaped by the particular anxieties of pre-war England, but it was also a product of his own personal experiences. When we look closely at his private life, we can see his interest in free love and sexual liberation of women was too closely related to his own sexual needs. Wells was notorious for his affairs and liaisons. He was married twice – this is not of course significant in itself, but his first wife Isabel divorced him for adultery and he was repeatedly unfaithful to the second one, Catherine Wells. Catherine seems to have been a remarkable woman who was able to adjust to Wells's affairs. These included, among others, the British author and journalist Rebecca West, the novelist Amber Reeves, whose parents were prominent members of the Fabian Society and Rosamund Bland, one of the daughters of Wells's Fabian colleague Hubert Bland<sup>3</sup>. In 1909, a scandal over the Amber Reeves affair became a serious threat to his career and fixed his public image as a philanderer. It was this that caused him to back down over the free love issue. And his involvement with the daughters of two members of the Fabian executive contributed to his breach

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<sup>3</sup> The married life of Wells had not been orthodox. In *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934) Wells describes his sexual frustrations as a young man, his first romantic, but unsatisfactory marriage to his cousin Isabel Wells and his love affair with and eventual marriage to his student Amy Catherine Robbins, confusingly known as Jane. He and Jane had two sons, George Philip ('Gip'), born in 1901, and Frank, born in 1903, and the couple seemed to have settled down to a steady and lasting marriage of mutual tolerance and acceptance – though she had more to tolerate than he. Wells's liaisons with other women were to become notorious. Most of his mistresses were independent free-thinking women and some of them were writers: they included Dorothy Richardson (who introduced him satirically, but affectionately, into her fiction as a successful author Hypo G. Wilson, looking like a grocer's assistant; the Australian-born novelist Elizabeth von Arnim; Rebecca West (who bore him a son); and the temperamental half-Greek, journalist Odette Keun; the Russian-born aristocrat and presumed double agent Moura Budberg.

with the society in 1908. Beatrice Webb<sup>4</sup> was particularly shocked that the affair with Amber Reeves was “consummated within the very walls of Newnham College”<sup>5</sup>. He respected his wife Catherine and needed the stability and security she provided, but at the same time he was suffocated by marriage, its ties, duties and responsibilities. He suffered from what he called ‘domestic claustrophobia’ and was driven to lead a permanent and hectic double life, living now at home with Catherine and his legitimate family, now with the current mistress. He suffered only in reputation, but Catherine and his lovers suffered much more. Amber, for instance, became pregnant by Wells, and apparently loved him, but realising that marriage to him was out of the question, she married another man who was prepared to accept the child. Wells meanwhile was boasting with Arnold Bennett that the affair went on after the marriage, which was apparently untrue<sup>6</sup>.

It is very important to see Wells’s proselytizing in the cause of free sexual relations for women in the light of these adventures. At the time when contraception was hardly available, pleas for free love only too often meant the sexual exploitation of the woman. Wells’s relations with Amber and Rebecca West both resulted in children, who were brought up by the women.

In spite of his permissive ideas about sex, Wells was always extremely sentimental about women. In all his affairs and flirtations one side of him clung to Catherine and their marriage. She gave him a degree of stability and support, which helped him to keep going in public life. But when this side of Wells’s life, the hard won, precarious, but ultimately sustaining marital compromise, goes into the novels, it comes out as a conventional domesticity. Even the struggling Ann Veronicas become dutiful wives, as rebellion and independence submit to the inexorable laws of motherhood.

All Wells’s spirited modern women are encumbered by the same combination of freedom and domesticity. Ann Veronica, Isabel in *The New Machiavelli* and Lady Harman in *The Wife of Isaac Harman*, all believe in women’s emancipation, all also concede that:

A woman wants a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself. She wants that and needs it more than anything else in the world. It may not be just, it may not

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<sup>4</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb – members of the Fabian Society, and co-founders of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams* (London: Unwin, 1916), 94.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Ussher, *Neo-Malthusianism. An Enquiry to That System with Regard to its Economy and Morality* (London: Gibbings & Co., 1898), 84.

be fair, but things are so. It isn't law, nor custom, nor masculine violence settled that. It is just how things happen to be. She wants to be free – she wants to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man; but only God, who made the world, can alter things to prevent her being slave to the right one<sup>7</sup>.

*The New Machiavelli* (1911) is one of Wells's longest and most ambitious novels. It is written in the first person, and the reader has also to be prepared for digressions on any subject. *The New Machiavelli* was a bold statement of the rights of women in the new century. The political framework existed merely to allow the author to disagree with all parties, and advocate in place of their programmes, amongst other intemperate notions, ideas about endowed motherhood<sup>8</sup> and woman's place in society which were nonsense, not dangerous nonsense, but trouble-making for all that.

The novel was first serialized in the *English Review*, edited by Ford Madox Ford (then Hueffer)<sup>9</sup> (1873–1939), from May to November 1910. Macmillan, Wells's contracted publisher, had declined to publish the novel because of its controversial subject matter, and Wells refused to make the changes requested by Frederick Macmillan. Heinemann and Chapman & Hall also refused the novel. It was eventually published in January 1911 under the imprint of John Lane. *The New Machiavelli* sold well. In autumn 1911, Wells wrote to his brother: "my last book has sold nearly 23,000 which is nearly double and predecessor"<sup>10</sup>.

On 3 March Henry James wrote to Wells, thanking him for "a copy of the *New Machiavelli*"<sup>11</sup>. James wrote:

you being for me so much the most interesting and masterful prose-painter of your English generation (or indeed of your generation unqualified) [...] I seem to feel that there can be no better proof of your great gift – *The N.M.* makes me most particularly feel it<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli* (London: Penguin, 2005), 204.

<sup>8</sup> Endowment of Motherhood was a plan for state support for mothers and children, first advocated by Wells in his Fabian tract *Mankind in the Making* (1903).

<sup>9</sup> Ford Madox Ford was an English novelist, poet, critic and editor of journals: *The English Review* and *The Transatlantic Review*.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The Correspondence of H.G. Wells*. David C. Smith, ed. 4 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998), vol. 2, 305.

<sup>11</sup> Leon Edel, Gordon N. Ray, eds., *Henry James and H. G. Wells. A Record of their Friendship, their Debate on the Art of Fiction, and their Quarrel* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1958), 126.

<sup>12</sup> Leon Edel, Gordon N. Ray, eds., *Henry James*, 127.

James admired Wells's "capacity for chewing up the thickness of the world in such enormous mouthfuls"<sup>13</sup>. But this time, James, who greeted each of Wells's books, in the postscript expressed his mild criticism:

I think the exhibition of 'Love' as 'Love' – functional Love – always suffers from a certain inevitable and insurmountable flat-footedness (for the reader's nerves, etc.) which is only to be counterplotted by roundabout arts – as by tracing it through indirectness and tortuosities of application and effect – to keep it somehow interesting and productive (though I don't mean reproductive!). But this again is a big subject<sup>14</sup>.

May Sinclair (1863–1946) and H.G. Wells admired and discussed each other's novels, and at times they buoyed each other up against reviewers' criticisms for their lack of reticence. In 1911, Sinclair publicly defended the *English Review* which had been criticised for serializing Wells's "erotic" novel, *The New Machiavelli*, and which was currently under attack by the *Spectator* for an unspoken article by Frank Harris<sup>15</sup>.

It was, of course, useless to deny that *The New Machiavelli* had a sexual base. The sexual relations between men and women had come to dominate Wells's mind, and censure was going to divert him from this study. It was going to be an important topic in his books.

Remington, who tells the story, is a young man of independent means who goes into life with all the enthusiasm and idealism typical of Wells himself. He goes to Cambridge, comes into contact with Fabianism and is taken into the society of young socialists. The picture of the intellectuals of the time is most convincing, and many of the characters are said to be recognizable – in particular, the Baileys are said to be portraits of the Webbs. Remington goes into Parliament, and then becomes a Tory, one of the younger, reforming Tories. The most interesting part of the novel is that which deals with Remington's marriage to Margaret. The third part, called *The Besetting of Sex*, tells the story of his love affair with Isabel, a young Cambridge bluestocking who works for him politically, and of the way in which they make a common wreck of their lives.

*The New Machiavelli*, is in part based on autobiographical details of Wells's own life, his affair in 1908 with Amber Reeves, a brilliant Cambridge graduate. It is a cry of anger against the oppressive conventions of society. The story of Remington's relations with Margaret has little in common with

<sup>13</sup> Leon Edel, Gordon N. Ray, eds., *Henry James*, 127.

<sup>14</sup> Leon Edel, Gordon N. Ray, eds., *Henry James*, 129.

<sup>15</sup> Hrisey Dimitrakis Zegger, *May Sinclair* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976), 55.

incidents in Wells's life; but through the narrative Wells is always present, and there are incidents and remarks based on personal experience. This was partly the reason for the campaign against this book. Wells's personal involvement may account for the variable nature of his portrayal of his female protagonists.

In the early days of his political career Remington had been persuaded, largely by the Baileys, to marry Margaret. They met in Staffordshire. Margaret was twenty, and Remington was twenty-two. She "impressed [him] as a dainty blue flower might do, come upon suddenly on a clinker heap"<sup>16</sup>. She was intelligent, beautiful, idealistic and ready in every way to help Remington in his work. Yet there was something lacking in their relationship. The two were different souls. Margaret "was cultivated and moral, and [he] [...] was never either of these things. She was passive and [he was] active"<sup>17</sup>. Remington's feelings for Margaret, his uneasiness, his desire for other women are all described painstakingly. Remington complains: "There was no kindred between us and no understanding. We were drawn to one another by the unlikeness of our quality, by the things we misunderstood in each other. I know a score of couples who have married in that fashion"<sup>18</sup>. There were so many differences between the two, almost "a catalogue of differences between two people linked in a relationship that constantly becomes more intolerant of differences"<sup>19</sup>. Remington says:

I was tough-minded, [...] primary and intuitive and illogical; she was tender-minded, logical, refined and secondary. She was loyal to pledge and persons, sentimental and faithful; I am loyal to ideas and instincts, emotions and scheming. [...] I liked naked bodies and the jolly smells of things. She abounded in reservations, in circumlocutions and evasions, in keenly appreciated secondary points<sup>20</sup>.

Margaret failed to understand her husband, in the sense that she did not challenge her ideas and intellect, that is considered an essential element in marriage of equality. "Her way of taking life diverged from me more and more"<sup>21</sup>, Remington explains. "And into all these things with the manner of

<sup>16</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 131.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 196.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 206.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 207.

<sup>20</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 206.

<sup>21</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 212.

a trifling and casual incident comes the figure of Isabel Rivers”<sup>22</sup>. The passage describing Remington’s meeting with Isabel is most likely a variation of Wells’s own discovery of a student of his, whose fate it was to break up his first marriage and then become his wife: “My first impressions of her were of a rather ugly and ungainly, extraordinarily interesting schoolgirl with a beautiful quick flush under her warm brown skin, who said and did amusing and surprising things”<sup>23</sup>.

Remington’s confessions of his “illicit loves”, and his allusions to the occasions when “he dipped so low as inky dismal sensuality of the streets”<sup>24</sup>, are also Wellsian self-revelations.

Remington meets Isabel, a younger girl, and gradually they fall in love. She has greater vitality than Margaret, and on their first meeting she seems more attractive. Remington tells the story of his love affair, and of the sudden revelation that it was impossible to enjoy irresponsible happiness without hurting others. At last it becomes clear that he and Isabel must choose whether to give up their association or to run away together. The choice is presented not as a choice between Isabel and Margaret, but as one between Isabel and career, and when at the end he chooses Isabel, we know that the idealism of youth has been thrown aside for something which may not last very long.

With Isabel, things were different. Remington says:

I think that mere beauty and passion would not have taken me. But between myself and Isabel things were incurably complicated by the intellectual sympathy we had, the jolly march of our minds together. That has always mattered enormously. [...] I had never for years met anyone with whom I could listen so easily and fully. She gave me, with an extraordinary completeness, that rare, precious effect of always saying something fresh, and yet saying it so that it filled into and folded about all the little recesses and concerns of my mind with an infinite, soft familiarity<sup>25</sup>.

It is interesting to note that Wells suggests that the fault lies more with the woman, hence his criticism of Margaret. The differences in “mental textures”<sup>26</sup> of Remington and Margaret were many, and went deep, and Remington’s enumeration of them resembles the disharmony between Wells and

<sup>22</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 213.

<sup>23</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 213.

<sup>24</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 184.

<sup>25</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 340–341.

<sup>26</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 206.



his first wife. Remington recounts Wells's personal experiences and observations. According to Remington, a woman "is no longer a mere physical need, an aesthetic byplay, a sentimental background; she is a moral and intellectual necessity in a man's life"<sup>27</sup>.

What is noticeable is that the crisis which faces the heroes and heroines in *The New Machiavelli* was precisely the one which faced Wells and Amber Reeves. Thanks to the prim relations which existed between men and women, thanks to the conduct of their enemies and friends, thanks to the pitch of scandal which the affair had reached, they had either to break off the affair or suffer disgrace and destruction.

Amber and Wells, after a long agony and excitement, submitted to the conventions, and years later Wells was still lamenting their conformity or their cowardice, or rather lack of courage which was needed to challenge and scatter the all-pervasive Victorian sexual oppression. In *The New Machiavelli*, a politician, Richard Remington, sacrifices a promising career for an adulterous love affair that drives him into exile abroad. Remington, like an earlier exiled politician, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), sets about writing a political treatise. But, unlike Machiavelli, he finds he cannot leave the individual life of sex and the passions outside the study door. He decides that any vision of the good life of the emotions is worthless.

It is this gradual discovery of sex as a thing collectively portentous that I have to mingle with my statecraft if my picture is to be true [...] I began life ignoring women, they came to me at first perplexing and dishonouring; only very slowly and very late in my life and after misadventure, did I gauge the power and beauty of the love of man and woman and learnt how it must needs frame a justifiable vision of the ordered world. Love has brought me to disaster, because my career had been planned regardless of its possibility and value. But Machiavelli, it seems to me, when he went into his study, left not only the earth of life outside but its unsuspected soul<sup>28</sup>.

Central to Wells's doctrines of male-female relationships is his understanding of the duality of love. Wells stresses the importance of two people loving each other at the level of the mind as well as the body, a concept he uses as a basis for his comments on Capes' relation to his first wife in *Ann Veronica*. "I loved her and made love to her, and I don't think she quite loved me back in the same way. [...] I worshipped her and subdued myself"<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 317.

<sup>28</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert George Wells, *Ann Veronica* (London: Penguin, 2005), 246.

The air of unreality apparent in the outspokenness of the love-affair between Ann Veronica and Capes at times makes it seem almost like a parody of a romance. Wells is far more successful when he treats of the same theme in *The New Machiavelli* in the relationship between Remington and Margaret, and later Isabel Rivers. Isabel stresses that they are mates<sup>30</sup>, and there are long discussions between her and Remington on their affair and its effects on those close to them, and on their political work.

Work is considered by Wells as important as a sexual relationship. In both cases the dual nature of love, that is fulfilment both physically and spiritually, is deemed necessary for a true and satisfactory relationship.

Theories of free sexual relationships are propounded by Wells in *The New Machiavelli*. He is outspoken on the complexity of this issue, on which there are no universal standards. Basically, Wells's theory is that a society in which the laws assume all men and women think and act in the same manner, totally overlooks the physical and psychological differences between the genders in questions of sexuality, and between individuals within people of the same sex. Isabel Rivers is an independent young woman, New Woman,<sup>31</sup> who claims the right to make her own decisions as to her course of life, and is willing to flout her sexual freedom in the face of society.

The chapter *The Besetting of Sex* in *The New Machiavelli* is an elaboration on Wells's theories of sexuality and male-female relationships. The protagonist, Remington, a politician in the first "Suffragette" Parliament, is even returned to Parliament on a ticket for the 'Public Endowment of Motherhood.' As a member of the Eugenics Society<sup>32</sup>, he was concerned about the falling birthrate, and that any increase in population was coming from the lower classes. The Endowment of Motherhood was a new system of social organization which was based on the theory that any developed civilized state has to be concerned about the quality of the children that are born into the world. It was to effectuate a modernization of the family.

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<sup>30</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 369.

<sup>31</sup> The phrase "the New Woman" first appeared in Sarah Grand's 1894 article "The New Aspect of the Woman Question" published in the *North American Review* to address what was wrong with the thinking behind "Home-is-the-Woman's-sphere". The stereotype of the New Woman was soon circulating around England: a female subject, educated at Girton College, Cambridge, riding a bicycle and smoking in public, subverting traditional definitions of womanhood and fights for the "emancipation" of women.

<sup>32</sup> Eugenics: the pseudo-science of improving 'racial stock' through social engineering. Conceived by the social Darwinist Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911) in 1869, Wells considered its merits, but it was largely discredited as a result of Nazi applications in Germany.

The only conceivable way out from our impasse lies in the recognition of parentage, that is to say of adequate mothering, as no longer a chance product of individual passions but a service rendered to the State. Women must become less and less subordinated to individual men, since this works out in a more or less complete limitation, waste, and sterilization of their essentially social function; they must become more and more subordinated as individually independent citizens to the collective purpose. Or, to express the thing by a familiar phrase, the highly organized, scientific state we desire must, if it is to exist at all, base itself not upon the irresponsible man-ruled family, but upon the matriarchal family, the citizenship and freedom of women and the public endowment of motherhood<sup>33</sup>.

Wells implies that solving the birth problem in this manner would also solve women's problem, as marriage laws would be made which would prevent them from being a subject to the individual man. It should be pointed out that Wells was far from alone in promoting such ideas, although he went further than many of his contemporaries. He linked the question of the endowment of motherhood to that of childlessness, alleging that the life of the childless couple is "a hopeless effort to sustain an incessant honeymoon"<sup>34</sup>. "Marriage and the begetting and care of children", Wells continued, "is the very ground substance in the life of the community"<sup>35</sup>.

Contemporary society was very concerned about the decline in the birthrate, particularly among the upper and middle classes – a result of the increased birth control. They saw that this would mean an enormous increase in the number of working-class children, and feared that this would in the next generation lead to a lowering of moral and intellectual standards in the population.

In sexual matters, Wells went further than any of his characters. For a few years after his second marriage, he asked to be released from his marriage vows, so that he might have his passades more freely; and his mistresses meant so much to him that he would even place their photographs on his mantelpiece beside that of his wife<sup>36</sup>.

Wells probably inserted Margaret's letters to Remington because he had a bad conscience; for her complaints against him are such as Wells's wife could justifiably have made; and Margaret, in these letters, probably speaks

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<sup>33</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 325–326.

<sup>34</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 325.

<sup>35</sup> Herbert George Wells, *The New Machiavelli*, 325.

<sup>36</sup> Ingwald Raknem, *H. G. Wells and his Critics* (Trondheim: Allen & Unwin, 1962), 116.

for Jane Wells, who suffered like her. She had to suffer his seeking the company of other women, and even to receive his mistresses<sup>37</sup>.

In his feminist texts, Wells distinguishes clearly between male ideals of marriage and womanhood, and emancipated female characters who are aware of what they are doing, but consider it their right and privilege to lead the kind of life they wish to, and are prepared to take the consequences. Wells insists that significant problems lie beyond the marriage ceremony, and does not assign it the conclusive position that 19<sup>th</sup>-century novelists did. Wells is apt to inform us about the man's faith in and high expectations from marriage to a physically alluring, feminine woman, or to his proper social choice. But, even if he attains such a match, none of Wells's central male protagonists can maintain it.

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<sup>37</sup> Ingwald Raknem, *H. G. Wells*, 92.