Chapter 3

Ruralism Realized

H. E. Bates

With the reintroduction of R. M. Fox to the *NS* after the General Strike of 1926, there also comes a sustained interest in other working-class writers. Side by side with Fox's socialist contributions, the journal, with assistant literary editor G. W. Stonier increasingly in control (detailed last chapter), begins to publish stories by H. E. Bates about various aspects of working-class existence in the countryside. This proves to be a crucial development in *NS* literary history, ushering in a new rural realism where the dominant register is actuality and historical representation, unmediated by the mythic literary tropes of nymphs, witches, and rural fantasy of Georgianism. If such "lower-middle class naturalism" (to use Eagleton's phrase) had an urban focus before, it now expands to include a rural perspective. Bates announces its rise and consolidation in the *NS*. Equally significant is the fact that in the 1930s Bates becomes the English writer with the second largest number of short-story contributions to the journal in the period as a whole after V.S. Pritchett (both were surpassed by the Soviet Zoshchenko in the 1930s). This chapter is dedicated to examining Bates's contributions from the late 1920s onward. His trajectory begins in naturalism, overcomes its confines, and then introduces components of Georgian ruralism towards the end of the period, registering its persistence in British cultural production in the inter-ar years even as its cultural hold begins to crack with Bates himself.

With Bates, a new, realist mode of representing the countryside becomes dominant. The countryside comes alive with problems of social alienation, dejection, and oppression, leaving Georgian flight and rural fantasy far behind. The crucial impact of Edward Garnett (Bates's editor at Jonathan Cape) and of Russian fiction on Bates is traced in detail, as is Garnett's heavy-handed editing of Bates. Garnett pushes Bates to "realize" his characters and to situate

them in their daily actuality. Rural realism is sustained and developed in the 1930s. But it also gets tinged with a tone of romantic Hudsonian generality and timelessness, exemplified by "The Gleaner" (1932). England's "man made" countryside, which welcomes new scientific and technical inventions, is at times drowned out by notes of the "ascendancy of ugliness over beauty" and "ageless earth-figures." Still, Batesian commitment to ordinary rural life remains powerfully present. Like Fox, then, Bates's realism combines with romantic Georgianism to produce a peculiarly English amalgam: a ruralism realized, as Edward Garnett puts it below. So *NS* ruralism from 1913 to 1939 develops from prewar Georgianism and romantic medievalism to Batesian realism, ultimately substituting an ordinary rural actuality for a regressive fantasy. Bates is the most important signpost in this trajectory.

Nineteen twenty-six was a very important year for Bates, the year when he published both his first play, *The Last Bread*, and his first novel, *The Two Sisters*. *The Last Bread: A Play in One Act* was published by the Labour Publishing Company in its "Plays for the People" series. It came out days before the General Strike and was widely read during the miners' strike that followed.[1] Set in a "bare bedroom in the poorest part of a large industrial city," the play dramatizes the severe poverty and hunger of an unemployed household and the struggle over the last remaining piece of bread in the house. As Monica Ewer acknowledges in her short introduction to the play, "This is admittedly a grim little play, but not, I think, grimmer than reality. Of all tragedy that of the age-long struggle for existence is the one in which we are most concerned."[2] In view of the fact that Bates is best known for his countryside fiction, it is important to emphasize his initial interest in urban/industrial problems. This interest in industrialization and poverty does in fact resurface in his *Charlotte's Row* (1930), a novel set in a shoemaking factory town.

Two weeks after the appearance of *The Last Bread*, Bates's first novel, *The Two Sisters*, was published with the pioneering postwar publisher Jonathan Cape, having been rejected by eight previous publishers. This event marks the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship with Cape, mainly attributed to the fact that it employed the services of one of the most prominent publisher's readers and literary editors of the early twentieth century, Edward Garnett, of whom Henry Green wrote, "For about forty years he had a hand, and a very powerful hand, in most of the best that was written in England. A most retiring man, he spread his influence far and wide."[3] Garnett edited and was associated with the publication and promotion of leading writers, including Joseph Conrad, John Galsworthy, the Australian Henry Lawson, W. H. Hudson, Edward Thomas, W. H. Davies, Edith Nesbit, D. H. Lawrence (*Sons and Lovers* only), and the Irish Liam O'Flaherty and Sean O'Faolain, all of whom (excluding the first three) were at some stage published in the *NS*.[4]

Significantly, Garnett was also a great admirer of modern Russian literature and was married to the pioneering translator of Russian literature, Constance Garnett, who single-handedly translated (among others) Turgenev (fifteen volumes, 1894–1899), Dostoyevsky (twelve volumes, 1912–1920), and Chekov (fifteen volumes, 1916–1923).[5] Bates became good friends with Constance, sharing her love of the country and gardening, and her passion for Russian literature, especially admiring and being influenced by her work on Turgenev and Chekov.[6] He even dedicated his second collection of short stories, *Seven Tales and Alexander*

(1929), to her, inscribing her presentation copy with: "who by her poetic genius began influencing my life before I lived; to which genius and to her unfailing friendship no less, this book is a tribute."[7] Bates also developed a strong literary connection with Edward Garnett, who became his critic, editor, advocate, and public promoter, as Bates himself acknowledges in his portrait *Edward Garnett:*

> During all this time Garnett was doing for me that incomparable, rare and wonderful kind of service that Flaubert did for Maupassant. The youth from the country, happiest in the country, despising literary coteries and ideologies and schools, essentially an intuitive sensuous and not a thinking writer, was being carefully shaped, guided and nursed by the man of experience and sophistication from whom not all the cynicism and ingratitude of the literary world had taken the humanity and enthusiasm of new discovery.[8]

Clearly, Garnett not only played a decisive role in launching Bates's literary career but also tried to steer him in a particular direction, toward the "essential" and "economic" in expression and the "true" and "real" in conception. For example, in his foreword to *The Two Sisters*, Garnett contrasts Bates's novel with the "ordinary novel," which has "too many interests, activities and engagements, too much to attend to, too much to read and consider and too much to hear . . . . crowded with an excess of detail, with a plethora of information and a congestion of comments."[9] Garnett draws attention to episodes in the novel where Bates's "artistic economy" is clearly demonstrated and praises the novel for its "truth to essentials," especially beauty: "One longs to get back to essentials, especially to the essential of beauty. And the element of beauty that our utilitarian civilisation pushes out more and more with its 'tubes' and 'wireless,' with its newspapers and telephones and other disseminating, speeding-up mechanics of life, is an element that pervades *The Two Sisters*" (8). As Garnett's conclusion reaffirms, Bates can either go the way of "artistic economy" and the "essential," "the path of art endlessly difficult," or take the easy "path of facile achievement" (10).

Bates's method proved to be a sticking point and source of debate and conflict between him and Garnett in the late twenties, exactly when Bates's sketches and short stories were beginning to appear (with Garnett's help) in the *NS*, *Nation*, *Adelphi*, and *Manchester Guardian*. The matter came to a head when Garnett finally had the chance to read the manuscript of a second novel Bates had been writing for the past eight months. He rejected and condemned it in no uncertain terms as the product of the "facile demon" in Bates. The point was made to Bates in a letter Garnett wrote him on 5 September 1927.[10] The letter, worth discussing briefly, is extremely revealing not only because it gives a unique glimpse into the dynamics between author and editor but also for disclosing the way in which Garnett was trying to mold and shape Bates according to a clearly stated and detailed agenda of literary realism. Garnett told Bates not only what to write but how to write it as well. The following paragraph is worth quoting in full:

> But the most disconcerting thing is that you've written it in the facile, flowing, over-expressive, half-faked style, gliding over the difficulties, not facing the real labour of realistic painting. All that I've condemned in your bad sketches—the generalities, the vague cynicism, the washy repetitions and the lack of firm outlines and exact touches—You've written it, I repeat, in the bad Batesian facile manner that you can turn on like a tap to cover up deficiencies. (54, original form)

For Garnett, Bates's characters have not been "realized," "the real life in the farm" and its

"daily actualities" have been "dodged" (56). He criticizes him for not "giv[ing] us a close detailed realistic picture of farm life . . . . I tell you again, those people, *all* of them should have been drawn as solid and actual as an old kitchen dresser—at work in the fields and in the house' (56–7). Garnett is in fact telling Bates to draw people as accurately as inanimate objects are drawn, and adds: "*YOU*'ve got to realize them [. . . .] They've got to be objective" (58). Garnett accuses Bates of not having learnt anything from him, and, interestingly, he refers him back to the "Foreword" of *The Two Sisters:*

> And why, *why* when I've cut up your bad sketches into small pieces and thrown them in your face, why *why* you start in on this unreal, long-winded, romantic, cynical style *I* can't understand . . . . But you've stuffed in heaps, heaps and heaps of comments and reflections. If you had read page 9 of my Foreword you would see that instead of *"artistic economy"* you've "*overloaded"* the scenes *without* getting "truth to essentials". . . . The whole spirit to work in is, I repeat, truth to reality and realisation.[11] (58)

Garnett concludes the letter by making it absolutely clear that what he calls "Hardy romance and Conradesque methods" should be avoided. Most significantly, he offers Bates the Russians as a model to learn from and aspire toward: "But remember, it's the *essentials* and artistic economy that count—as Turgenev wrote in *Fathers and Children*, and as Tchehov wrote in *The Party*. It should be a story without a superfluous line—it's got to be *true*, *true*, *true*. Nothing but truth" (59, emphasis added).[12]

Bates seems to have learned this lesson well when, in his own book on the short story, published just after his most fruitful period of writing in the thirties, he writes that: "It is no longer necessary to describe; it is enough to suggest."[13] Writers like Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, and V. S. Pritchett seemed to him part of a new generation which has been "relieved" of what he sees as the "oppressive obligation" to "describe," with the result that their fiction (and short stories specifically) is "more simply, more economically, and more truthfully written." It is significant that fifteen years after Garnett's letter, his literary standards and valuations are very much alive in Bates's mind and seem to have played a major part in defining and determining his conception of the modern postwar writer.[14]

As the relationship with Garnett indicates, the late twenties were difficult and formative years for Bates, but he was at least safe in the knowledge that if he could get a short story or novel past Edward Garnett, it would certainly find a publisher. The process of making him into a less romantic, less Hardyesque, and more Russian-realist author was well under way when his stories started appearing in the *NS*, Desmond MacCarthy being one of the London literary editors bombarded by Garnett with pieces by Bates to publish. In all, in the late twenties, Bates published five short stories in the *NS*, some of which show his emerging distinctive style and unique way of seeing the interwar English countryside.

LATE TWENTIES: OPPRESSION AND DESIRE

On 14 May 1926, two days after the Trades Union Congress leadership had betrayed the solidarity of the trade union movement and called off the General Strike (leaving the miners to

stand alone for a further seven months), Bates wrote to Garnett that like his shoemaking grandfather Lucas, and unlike his Liberal parents, he himself was a socialist: "I make friends only among the poor. . . . The rest I feel bitter against and know they despise me."[15] On 20 May 1926, he wrote that "I . . . write stories about oppressed people.'[16] His first short story to be published in the *NS*, "Never," in June 1926, had as its central themes social oppression and the continuing desire for change.

This story has a sombre, suffocating atmosphere. The woman protagonist, Nellie, wants to go away, to leave her village for London, to rid herself of monotony and boredom and be free. Yet, she can't manage this: "Yes: it was all confused. She was going away: already she had said a hundred times during the afternoon. 'I am going away . . . I am going away. I can't stand it any longer.' But she had made no attempt to go."[17] Day followed day and little changed. But there was something different about the day in which the story is set; this time she is really leaving. The narrative captures her doubts and hesitations, desperation and desire to act in order to change the circumstances of her life: "Today she was going away; no one knew, but it was so. She was catching the evening train to London, was about to run away, to live by herself after all these years of imprisonment!" (292). As she prepares meticulously for her flight, she ritualistically and continuously repeats her desire to escape, "I am going away," and adds, "No one will believe I've gone. I'm considered too meek for anything extraordinary to happen to me" (292). In the end, she misses the last train to London and returns without even having had her absence noticed, hence the title, "Never," implying that she will never be able to escape. However, the title can cut both ways and can also mean that she will never give up or stop trying to leave, as suggested in the last sentence of the story where she reaffirms her wish for change: "Some day! . . . Some day!" (293).

The issue of unfulfilled but persistent desire also occupies a central place in another of Bates's *NS* short stories, "The Comic Actor." Here, even though the protagonist, "the poorest and most unfortunate farmer in the district," does have a comic, self-delusional, and dreamy edge to him, his strong yearning and desire to succeed as an actor is asserted in the story.[18] His pain and disappointment at failing is achingly present, and it is only by lying and pretending to have succeeded that he keeps his hopes (and illusions) alive: "Only by lying could he defend and soothe himself. Something thick and warm fell about his heart if he lied" (368).

A sense of *dejection* is ever present in Bates's *NS* stories, and that word is used to describe, for example, both Nellie's feelings at failing to escape her condition in "Never" and the feelings of one particular family and their train companions on their return from the seaside in "The Holiday," another *NS* piece: "There too were the reflections of the other occupants of the van, sitting and standing about her in dejected attitudes, watching the rain, eating, mournfully playing cards and talking in low whispers, as if sound were forbidden."[19] Here again longing for something that is elsewhere, unattain-able, or lost is also reaffirmed. While sitting on the train back from a family holiday, the main protagonist looks at his wife and infant child with an "air of resignation and perform[s] again all his old tricks for killing time" (363). His sense of loss is emphasized when, while looking at some advertisement, a barely audible note of injustice is sounded: "His eyes were constantly resting on the violent colours of the advertisement, and he remembered vividly the green sea, the windy evenings and warm days of the week that had passed. Many times he asked himself: Why should it ever end, where was the

justice of it?" (364). The end of the short story ritualistically reaffirms his desire to be elsewhere, where he could be happy, satisfied, and fulfilled:

> The weariness and strain of the journey slipped away, too, and he began to know no regret or worry but only a dull longing, resembling an ache, the longing for the sea again, the warm, dark nights, and the low noise of the waves over the murmur of the crowd. (364)

The psychology of Bates's characters is very much at the heart of his concerns in these short pieces. The individuals he depicts are in one form or another oppressed by their social and material circumstances. They are stuck and struggling, their desires consuming yet unfulfilled. Another dimension to their oppression and social imprisonment is that it is experienced individually not collectively. His characters are alone and lonely.

These issues are centrally addressed in another of Bates's *NS* short stories, "The Idiot." Here he depicts the tragic and painful mental separation of a so called "village idiot" named Taddo, for whom the surrounding environment is perceived as hostile and is experienced as a threat. He is mocked by the village boys in chapel, laughed at, and embarrassed. Taddo thus experiences what is a seemingly collective activity (the congregation of chapel goers) as a personal nightmare of "sweating and trembling with fear."[20] Here again "dejection" is used to describe the condition of one of Bates's characters. The story makes it clear that Taddo experiences his surroundings as a set of threatening forms and confusing shadows: "The chapel seemed very dark, full of green shapes which made soft collisions with each other. These and the words of the preacher, which he imagined to be accusing him, made him long to be outside again" (44). Taddo grows "even more afraid" and sees in the faces around him "only malice and hostility," and a terrifying image is used to describe his condition: "like a girl faced with rape" (44). While rushing out of the chapel in great horror, he mistakenly ends up with a shilling from the collection plate, is subsequently consumed by guilt, and returns it to the unsuspecting preacher. At the end, the actual thunderstorm outside and Taddo's own mental storm pass away and "the calming earth, the sweet air, the fresh-smelling trees and the stars appearing in the broken sky like inquisitive children, were all whispering to him: 'The Storm is over, the storm is over.'/And he began to sing" (44).

"The Idiot" is striking for its depiction of the world through alienated eyes. Taddo's inward life, his mental state, feelings, thoughts, fears, and panics are what the story is about. What could have been a sentimental, nostalgic story about the author's fond and funny memories of a "village idiot" turned out in Bates's hands to be a deep, psychologically realistic portrait of mental alienation seen through the eyes of the "idiot" himself.

The countryside that Bates represents in his fiction is alive with people, their social problems, and their relationship to their surroundings. As Glen Cavaliero argues in his impressive survey, *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel, 1900–1939*, for Bates the countryside means a peopled landscape: "The background of the Nene valley, beautifully described though it is, remains a background; people are more important in these novels [Bates's thirties novels] than landscape."[21] His countryside is a place that is lived in and experienced as lived (not merely imagined) by its inhabitants, an active, social space. Unlike many twentieth-century rural writers who came to the country to escape the strains of the city, like W. H. Hudson, H. J. Massingham, Edward Thomas, S. L. Bensusan, and the Georgian

poets, Bates was of the country and wrote about it as he saw it and without that Georgian "inrush of alien imagery: that set of ideas about the 'rural' and the 'pastoral,' filtered through a version of the classical tradition . . . a deep if conventional intellectual conviction: an eyeglass that was lifted, deliberately and proudly, to the honestly observing eye."[22] Crucially, Bates's countryside is unmediated by such a version of the rural tradition that generates a "part-imagined, part-observed rural England."[23] It can certainly be argued that his working-class origins coupled with his formative and defining encounter with Russian realism, with its strong emphasis on "artistic economy," "essentials,' and "truth," directed him away from the bourgeois fantasy world of the Georgians, their literary allusions, and timeless images of the countryside, away, indeed, from their "strange formation in which observation, myth, record and half-history are deeply entwined." Bates was thus, essentially, better placed to develop a "realist" way of looking at the countryside. Such a different conception of the countryside is clearly evoked in his novels and short stories and can also be seen at work in his essays and commentaries on the countryside published regularly in the *Spectator* in the 1930s, some of which were collected and published under the title *Country Life*. Here he distances himself unequivocally from the "largely poeticised or sentimentalised . . . rarely realistic or objective" interest in the countryside and affirms the (historical) fact that the English countryside is very much manmade:

> The countryside of England is, perhaps more than any other countryside in the world, man-made. Many of its most beautiful features—notably its woods, hedgerows and green fields—are the results of man-made systems of life, and today its character and beauty are no less man-made and man-sustained.[24]

Bates's conception of the countryside, clearly demonstrated in his novel *The Fallow Land* (1932), accounts for both "nature" and "society" within an active, changing history. While acknowledging the "charm of Springtime and the call of the blackbird" (vii), he is deeply concerned with "decent wages, decent sanitation, and decent education," "better rural housing, better agricultural wages, better farming" (vii), and the general improvement of the standards of living in the countryside made possible by "mechanical invention" and what he calls the "revolution science." He argues that the twentieth century, through the application of science (and he mentions: gas, electric light, systems of heat radiation, the motorcar, the railway engine, the concrete road, etc.), has qualitatively changed human existence and has had a tremendous impact on the countryside: "Science has made possible for us, of the twentieth century, the easiest, safest, most comfortable, most accessible, most equitable and most varied kind of country life that has ever been known in England" (vii). Crucially, Bates's narrative of a developing, improving countryside, brought about by "mechanical invention" and the expansion of schools and education, is clearly echoed in Williams's own family experience of things getting better in the same period: "The villages, now, were less oppressive and less deprived; there was the vote, there were the trains, there were the schools."[25] This is certainly a very different structure of feeling from the one expressed by the likes of Hudson and Thomas and their Georgian fellow travelers. The countryside here is not invented or imagined, but actual, historical, and social, and it is very much to Bates's credit that he could see it in those terms. The fact that he has a distinctive outlook on the countryside is also noted by Cavaliero, who argues that the rural novel in his hands changes and becomes something quite different:

"From being a genre, a specific literary product, it becomes a means of furthering genuine understanding of the countryman, his problems and attitudes."[26]

In the late twenties, Bates (born in 1905) was still in his early twenties and his journey was just beginning. But even as early as his *NS* pieces, his distinctive, emerging way of looking at the countryside is strongly registered. In the thirties, his relationship with the *NS* is consolidated by his friendship with the new literary editor David Garnett (Edward's son) and his contributions to the journal triple in number. In fact, he very much blossoms in the thirties. Of the summer of 1931, he himself writes: "I now began to write, in a way that had not seemed possible before, of my native valley and its sturdy, independent, downright people. I suddenly developed. There began a decade of country stories and books of description and discursive comment on country affairs [numbering more than forty in all]. The creative spirit, suddenly freed, had a whole new world of ecstatic exploration."[27] Indeed, with novels like *The Fallow Land* (1932), *The Poacher* (1935), *Spella Ho* (1938), and short-story collections like *My Uncle Silas* (1939) and *Thirty Tales* (1934, issued in Cape's popular The Traveller's Library), and through his regular *Spectator* column[28], Bates becomes a writer of widespread influence and popularity in Britain of the thirties, as much a part of the decade as Spender and Auden. It was indeed the power and potency of his early *NS* stories that pointed him towards developing a new fictional portrayal of the English countryside.

THIRTIES BLOOM

H. E. Bates published eight short stories in the *NSN* in the thirties. He also reviewed many books for the journal (through David Garnett)[29] and published seven essays on rural affairs and on the annual Chelsea Flower Show; his most famous piece is "The Lace-makers."[30] Countryside realism characterizes his thirties fiction, where he continues his engagement with country concerns which commenced in the late twenties under the guidance and encouragement of Edward Garnett.

There is, however, a slight shift in emphasis between his twenties and his thirties work. As Bates develops as a writer, he moves away from the stifled and dejected countryside individuals of the twenties to the spaces, places, and relations of the thirties, as the titles of his pieces indicate: from *The Two Sisters* (1926), *Catherine Foster* (1929), "The Idiot," "A Comic Actor," "Never," to *The Fallow Land* (1932), *Charlotte's Row* (1931), *The Poacher* (1935), and *Spella Ho* (1938).[31] This spatial and temporal change is also registered in his thirties *NSN* short stories: for example, "Harvest Moon" (two children's imaginative play during harvest), "Time" (a portrait of three "timeless" old men horrified at the sight of a stopped watch), and "On the Road" (an erotic encounter in the woods between two tramps).[32] Critics have certainly noted the "atmospheric" qualities of his fiction, what Dean R. Baldwin has described as "the intricate interplay of mood and scene in relation to character and plot."[33] Indeed, Bates's work certainly assumes a more generalized form in the thirties, which at times risks reducing humans to active figures in the landscape. A *New Statesman and Nation* [hereafter *NSN*] piece like "A Kentish Portrait," for example, though concerned with

describing Alfred (the narrator's new gardener), does employ a documentary generality: "He is in short very typical of his race and his kind. Indeed, he might be a caricature. But he exists in reality."[34] The tone of typicality is strongly sounded here. Alfred is a type; and he is as a result less individuated, given less personal and more general characteristics in order to conform with the writer's conception of a type. When compared with Pritchett (as we'll see), Bates's *métier* as a writer becomes clearer. He is concerned with countryside types, with generalities of character, while Pritchett employs a different narrative strategy: seeking specificities within recognized and active social generalities (of class, region, profession). It is my aim here to argue that the tone of generality, typicality, and timelessness in Bates's thirties fiction has its source in his growing engagement with the English rural tradition of W. H. Hudson and Edward Thomas.

This is made abundantly clear in Bates's "The Gleaner," his much admired *NSN* short story, described by the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer Geoffrey West as a "superb little study."[35] The story is written in a mourning, autumnal spirit. The old woman, whose every move, stare, and activity the narrator describes, is clearly a survivor of her race: "It is as though there is no one in the world except herself who gleans any longer. She is not merely alone: she is the last of the gleaners, the last survivor of an ancient race."[36] Paradoxically, she also "looks eternal."

Nothing distracts her from her labor: "There is no time for looking or listening or resting. To glean, to fill her sack, to travel over that field before the light is lost; she has no other purpose than that and could understand none." Her labor becomes her, and she does it so instinctually—moving "to some ancient and inborn system"—that she comes to look like a bird: "In her black skirt and blouse, and with her sharp white head for ever near the earth, she looks like a hungry bird, always pecking and nipping at something, never resting, never satisfied."

At the end, and as her eyes "fill with the stupid tears of age and weakness," she lifts the sack over the gate and heads home: "She looks more than ever eternal, an earth-figure, as old and ageless and primitive as the corn she carries" (546). The closing sentence of the story elevates her further into a biblical symbol of patience, submissiveness, toil, and ultimate deservedness: "Her tears have dried on her cheeks, and now and then she can taste the salt of them still on her lips: the salt of her own body, the salt of the earth" (546).

In complete contrast to modernist solipsistic psychologism, Bates here emphasises externality and objectivity. His naturalist eye frames the gleaner in her environment and records her activity truthfully. The fact of rural labor is strongly registered. So far so good, and so Bates.[37] However, while Bates had previously been satisfied with "realising" his characters (Garnett's phrase), here he goes a step further. The gleaner is objectified and made into a static, ahistorical, and religious icon. Thus, from a nameless representative of her kind, she comes to typify (even to be reduced to) the instinctive act of labor itself, and ends up becoming a symbol of the blessed meek who shall inherit the earth. Bates leaves no room for the gleaner's own individuality, her subjective life, and the specificity of her being.

Such objective recording, though significant as a literary form for its realist content, risks objectification, a reduction of humans to objects. This way of looking and style of writing was prevalent in another form of writing that became very important for Bates in the thirties:

English rural writing. In fact, both American naturalism and English ruralism are, with nineteenth-century Russian realism, major literary influences that shape Bates as a writer. In his autobiography, he picks out the following four names for special mention: W. H. Hudson and Edward Thomas, Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway. The Americans he praises for their revolutionary pictorial and suggestive writing style and ordinary subject matter, which, with Russian realism, constituted formative influences for Bates. As Walter Allen argues, Bates was describing his own literary method in *The Modern Short Story* (1941) when he said the following about Stephen Crane's style, as that

> by which a story is told not by the carefully engineered plot but by the implication of certain isolated incidents, by the capture and arrangement of casual episodic movements. It is the method by which the surface, however seemingly trivial or unimportant, is recorded in such a way as to interpret the individual emotional life below.[38]

Thus, on top of American naturalist technique, which remains a strong presence in his writing, is added English ruralism, to which, Bates was later to say "I owe the enrichment of my ability to put the English countryside down on paper."[39] This "enrichment" injects something new into his writing. The countryside as entity becomes a stronger object of representation than the subjects living in it, the environment overpowering. Bates comes to represent the countryside as a condition of existence hanging over and above its farmers, workers, gleaners, in short, its subjects. Conditions and atmosphere come to fill in for, substitute, and take over from the lived experience of people of the country. Or, put differently, countryside subjects become objects of the countryside.

As much is even admitted by a great admirer of Bates, Graham Greene, who had previously praised his "splendidly objective stories" and said, "Mr Bates is supreme among English short-story writers; and the work of most authors beside his appears shoddy, trivial or emotional." Greene even found it difficult to say whether Chekov or Bates was "the finer artist."[40] Yet, two years later, in his review of *Something Short and Sweet* (1937), Greene is critical of Bates for allowing a heavy country environment to dominate his fictive creations. "His people no longer stepped out of the story into the vast world of conjecture [and] . . . his characters are dominated and dwarfed by an undifferentiated sexuality."[41] In this new volume he, "turns off human beings with that air of routine from which his cows in calf, his fields of corn and laden fruit trees have sometimes suffered. Even Uncle Silas [Bates's famous creation] is a little diminished in the heavy air." Greene ends his review by saying, "This is a collection which Mr. Bates's admirers, of whom I am devoutly one, may prefer to forget," making it clear that Bates is employing, or falling into, a way of writing that has constrained the real world of his fiction. This shift of emphasis and perspective can be explained by the growing intellectual impact of Hudson's mythopoeic imagination on Bates.

English rural writing put pressure on Bates, and he had to read it, engage with it, and evaluate it. His judgment on it was positive, even when he criticized its sentimentalizing of the country. Though he didn't share its bourgeois fantasies and inventions, its magic and mysticism —there are no fairies or goddesses in Bates—he accepted those as complementary parts to the naturalist dimensions of the tradition—the meticulous observation and documentation of the ordinary. In his preface to Hudson's romance *Green Mansions*, where the main protagonist (Rima) is a bird-woman, Bates describes this process of "interlac[ing] romance and reality":

"His vision and his genius are in fact two-fold: on the one hand intensely mystic, on the other capable of the fidelity of the trained and experienced naturalist to the matters and creatures of earth."[42] The interlacing goes beyond fact and fiction. As much as mystic and poet act to complement naturalist in order to communicate "the picture of the natural world,"[43] so do observer and observed (man and nature) intermingle and become indistinguishable, become one, a union achieved by Hudson himself:

> The blue sky, the brown soil beneath, the grass, the trees, the animals, the wind, the rain, and the stars are never strange to me; for I am in, and of, and am one, with them; and my flesh and the soil are one, and the heat in my blood and in the sunshine are one, and the winds and the tempests and my passions are one. I feel the strangeness only with regard to my fellow-men.[44]

This is a pastoral vision of happiness, a mystical oneness with nature that is quasi-religious. It is preurban, preindustrial, even pre-Fall, what Hudson in *Nature in Downland* calls "a communion with nature."[45] There are no machines to disturb the harmonious unity here, no relations subjugating one man to the will of another. Humans are strange and unwelcome. Surprisingly, Hudson's petty-bourgeois idealism is endorsed by Bates when he comments: "Perhaps it would do us no harm to try, for a change, living as Conrad rightly maintained Hudson wrote: 'as the grass grows.'"[46] To live as naturally as the grass grows is to reduce man to a plant or a tree, to reduce human history to natural history, and to impose a natural process on the development of human society.

Bates is able to endorse such an idealist vision, even though his fiction is worldly, materialist, and realist, because he shares with English bourgeois ruralism a fundamental assumption about the history of humanity: industrialization is a mistake and should be reversed.[47] Though it does have benefits in the form of new scientific inventions that make life in the countryside less difficult, it is fundamentally flawed.

This issue is tackled head on in "The Machine," a (non-*NS*) short story first published in *John O' London's Weekly* (5 August 1938) and anthologized in *Under Thirty*.[48] It tells the story of Simmons (nicknamed Waddo), a factory worker who used to help on the narrator's farm when extra hands were needed at hay time, harvest, and threshing. He is energetic and industrious, quick and efficient, and has no time to waste or hang about. He despises the farmers' antiquated tools and "machineless world," giving them "the look of a giant for a degenerate collection of pitch-fork pigmies" (30). Addressing them, he makes his views about their methods of work very clear:

> Call yourself bleedin' farmers, and ain't got a machine in place. No binder, no hay-turner, no root-cutter. No tater-riddle, no nothing. Blimey, spit on me big toe, spit on it. Ain't you up-to-date? Here you are scrattin' about like old hens scrattin' for daylight, when a couple o' machines'd bring you right bang-slap up with the times. Machines—that's what you want. Save yourself time and money. See! They do away with the men. (30)

As the narrator comments: "The machine was his god," and, 'coming from the machines, he was like a machine." But he was more than that since he works, the narrator admiringly and proudly states, "with a mastery and precise beauty that no machine could ever show" (30).

One November day during the threshing season, Waddo was "feeding sheaves to the drum" when the rats started running out of the stacks and the farmers started smashing them about.[49] In

the excitement and mayhem that ensued, Waddo slips into the machine and is killed by it: "There was no answer; and in a world that stood still we knew that the machine had claimed him." Waddo's fate is the industrial worker's fate and is, by extension, the fate of industrial civilization. The machine will claim humanity sooner or later, and to survive we have to return to the "mastery and precise beauty" of preindustrial labor.

This position is clearly stated in his "Why I Live in the Country" piece published in *The Countryman* in the mid-1930s. Here he says that the first sound he heard while growing up in Rushden beside a boot factory was "the monotonous moan and whine and thunder of machinery."[50] Though machinery can be less noisy—like "the sound of a threshing machine, that constant rhythmical beat, a sound of soothing monotony"—its sound represented for Bates the suffering of humanity under the yoke of the machine:

> That sound became in fact a symbol: it came to represent for me the progress of industrial life, the *ascendancy of ugliness over beauty*, the assimilation by the town of the countryside. It was, though no one seemed to notice it, a sound of despair. It was not, as it seemed, the sound of a machine, but the cry of humanity itself in servitude to the machine. It was a cry I heard twenty-five years without ever getting used to it or indifferent to it: the sound in fact which drove me at last to forsake the town for the country. (Italics added)

Machines and the sounds of small-town industrialization sent him running away to the country. Together with the benefits of scientific inventions that transformed country life comes enslavement by machine, a price Bates is not willing to pay. In order to achieve Hudson's oneness and communion with nature, humanity has to abandon the city and reverse the process of industrialization, return to a (mythical) time when man belonged to nature.[51]

No wonder the gleaner looks birdlike (Hudson's favourite animal), "eternal," "ageless," an "earth-figure." And no wonder Bates's lace makers are eternal: "They are eternal figures who have sat there through centuries of sunlight doing nothing but work on those eternal patterns of leaves and flowers."[52] And what about the old man in "Time" who is generalized away with the following statement: "He was patriarchal. He resembled a biblical prophet, bearded and white and immemorial. He was timeless."[53]

These are some of the Hudsonian notes Bates strikes in his *NSN* pieces. Yet, thankfully, they are not the whole story, and Bates's realist preference for "land" over "earth" always gets reaffirmed, as the following distinction from *The Fallow Land* shows:

> The land was something more than the earth; the earth was something vague, primitive, poetic; the land was a composite force of actual, living, everyday things, fields and beasts, seed-time and harvest, ploughing and harrowing, wind and weather; bitterness and struggle; the land was an opponent, a master.[54]

In the conflict of literary modes of representation, American naturalism and Russian realism are strong opponents; and there are other stories in the journal where the bourgeois rural tone and asocial perspective is absent, where the environment furnishes no more than a background to social events and situations. "On the Road" (admired by Pritchett) is one such piece, where objectivity not objectification is the order of the day.[55] "A Flower Piece" is another, presenting two competing versions of rural girl-hood. Here, in keeping with his dictum to be faithful to everyday speech expressed in his essay "The Novelist's Ear,'"and clearly demonstrated in the "The Machine," child speech is very realistically conveyed, a technique also used to great

effect in “Harvest Moon,” another *NSN* short story.[56] “For the Dead” is yet another example where realism holds sway. It tells of the discomfort of two mourners at meeting each other in the cemetery and having to “pretend wretchedness.”[57] And finally, his last two *NSN* stories aren’t even country related. “The Waiting Room” resembles Pritchett’s “X-ray” in theme and anti-institutional emphasis: “She [the nurse] was impersonal, a real ice-maiden, with her head high up and a touch-me-not expression frozen on her face.”[58] And “The Man who Loves Cats” is a portrait of a perverted professor who has a feline demeanor; as he tells his female student, “Cats and women go together. They were made for the same thing—for petting and loving and stroking.”[59]

It is surely short stories like these that the Scottish working-class writer Fred Urquhart had in mind when he praised Bates’s realism and engagement with “commonplace character and situations,” adding that his fiction was of the utmost importance for the current class struggle in Britain. In his “The Work of H. E. Bates” (1939), worth quoting at some length, Urquhart attempts to convey the social significance of his writing and question the surprising neglect it has suffered at the hands of the admirers of Bloomsbury—the likes of John Lehmann who consistently refused to publish Bates in *New Writing:*

> H. E. Bates writes mainly of the country, of the English farming and labour-ing classes; occasionally of the industrial workers in small manufacturing towns. In an article of this length I have not space to examine the social significance of his work, but it strikes me as curious that many left-wing theorists who laud the work of his upper-class intellectual contemporaries have not paid greater attention to it. If his books were given to people whom the Marxists wanted to convert, they would have much more effect than plays in blank verse about mother-complexes and pseudo-homosexuality. An ordinary working man or woman would understand and appreciate the difficulties of Bates’s young farm-girls and stolid labourers much better than they would understand the spiritual hunger of the inhabitants of Bloomsbury. Two of his best novels, *The Fallow Land* and *The Poacher*, depict phases of English country life, knowledge of which is vital in the present class-struggle: the decay of the countryside and the industrialisation of the land.[60]

At the heart of the Batesian literary project is a commitment to ordinary rural life. Though anti-industrial and at times Hudsonian, his fiction unceremoniously reaffirms that the countryside is a legitimate object of realist fictive concerns. In this, he breaks with romantic Georgianism and challenges its patriotic myth of a timeless rural England.

NOTES

1. Another working-class author published by The Labour Publishing Company was Stacey W. Hyde. His collection of short stories, *Shopmates*, came out in 1924. For an informative account of the company and its relationship to the long-time *NS* contributor G. D. H. Cole and the Labour Research Department (originally the Fabian Research Department, which had strong guild socialist leanings), see Pat Francis, “The Labour Research Publishing Company 1920–1929,” *History Workshop Journal*, 18 (Autumn 1988), 115–23.

2. H. E. Bates, “The Last Bread: A Play in One Act,” Plays for the People (London: The Labour Publishing Company, 1926), iv.

3. H. E. Bates, *Edward Garnett*, rev. by Henry Green, *NS*, 30 December 1950, 675.

4. The amazing range of authors published under the imprint of Cape during Garnett's time there can be gleaned in a collection of short stories selected and introduced by him and entitled *Capajon: Fifty-four Short Stories Published 1921–1933* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933). What is striking about Garnett's selection is not only its geographical scope (Australia, South Africa, Britain, Ireland, and the United States), but also the fact that it includes nearly as many women as men contributors (ten women to fourteen men), as the following list shows: Mary Arden, Sherwood Anderson, Martin Armstrong, H. E. Bates, Kay Boyle, Louis Bromfield, Edmund Candler, Dorothy Canfield, A. E. Coppard, Ernest Hemingway, Laurence Housman, Sarah Orne Jewett, James Joyce, Aino Kallas, Henry Lawson, H. A. Manhood, Naomi Mitchison, Lorna Moon, Sean O'Faolain, Liam O'Flaherty, Katherine Susannah Prichard, Pauline Smith, Giovanni Verga, and Malachi Whitaker. "Capajon" was Cape's telegraphic address.

5. In his *DNB* entry on Constance Garnett, H. N. Brailsford, editor of the Independent Labour Party organ *New Leader* (1922–1926) and regular political contributor to *NS* in the thirties, writes, "To innumerable readers she revealed a new world and thanks chiefly to her translations the Russian classics exerted in the first half of the twentieth century a deep influence on English literature and thought." For more information on the neglected achievement of Constance Garnett, see Charles A. Moser, "The Achievement of Constance Garnett," *The American Scholar*, 57 (Summer 1988), 431–38.

6. In his own *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey* (London: Michael Joseph, 1941), Bates writes of Constance Garnett's translations as being "a superhuman achievement" (120), having "the most important influence on the English short story" (119); he singles out the Turgenev and Chekov translations for particular praise as "the most important literary events" between the 1890s and the end of the Great War (120).

7. Quoted in Peter Eads, *H. E. Bates: A Bibliographical Study* (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1990), 13.

8. H. E. Bates, *Edward Garnett* (London: Parrish, 1950), 20.

9. Edward Garnett, "Foreword," in *The Two Sisters* by H. E. Bates (London; Jonathan Cape, 1926), 7–10 (7–8). Further references are given after quotations in the text.

10. The long letter is quoted in full in Bates's *Edward Garnett*, 54–9. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

11. Garnett's "cutting up" and "throwing out" resembles his work on Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*.

12. George Jefferson, in his *Edward Garnett: A Life in Literature* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), writes: "Edward carried out an insistent campaign to bring the genius of Russian writers to the notice of English novelists and to the reading public" (163). Other writers who were encouraged to take the Russian realists as models were the Irish Liam O'Flaherty and Sean O'Faolain. Indeed, "what Sean O'Faolain was to call Edward's adoration of the Russian realists permeated his relationships as advisor, and he urged the Russian example upon them" (172).

13. Bates, *The Modern Short Story*, 24. Next quotations is also from page 24.

14. Considering Garnett's widespread influence and strategic cultural position, there are

(oddly enough) very few literary-critical studies of his work and editorial practices (and only a recent *DNB* entry by Richard D. C. Garnett, although there had been ones for his wife Constance and his son David Garnett). The studies that do exist tend to focus on his relationship with a single author, like Cedric Watts, "Edward Garnett's Influence on Conrad," *The Conradian*, 21(Spring 1996), 79–91; or Helen Baron, "Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* versus Garnett's," *Essays in Criticism*, 62 (October 1992), 265–78. A recent notable exception is James M. Cahalan, "Edward Garnett and the Making of Early Modernist Fiction," *Lamar Journal of the Humanities*, 17 (Fall 1991), 41–52, which deals with Garnett's insistence on compression and objectivity in fiction.

15. Unpublished letter quoted in Dean R. Baldwin, *H. E. Bates: A Literary Life* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1987), 66. Bates is even more neglected than Garnett is, and Baldwin's biography, with its extensive use of unpublished letters and other primary material, is very welcome indeed. Although Bates's major writings have been reviewed on publication, academic critics have scandalously neglected his work. The following are three notable exceptions: Walter Allen, *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); James Gindin, "A. E. Coppard and H. E. Bates," in *The English Short Story 1880–1945: A Critical History*, ed. by Joseph M. Flora (Massachusetts: Twayne, 1985), 113–41; and Dennis Vanatta, *H. E. Bates* (Boston: Twayne, 1983).

16. Unpublished letter quoted in Baldwin, *Bates*, 66.

17. H. E. Bates, "Never," *NS*, 26 June 1926, 291–3 (292). References are given after quotations in the text. "Never" was admired by V. S. Pritchett and included in his *The Oxford Book of Short Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

18. H. E. Bates, "The Comic Actor," *NS*, 29 June 1929, 366–8 (366). References are given after quotations in the text. "A Comic Actor" appeared in *The Best Short Stories of 1930: English*, ed. by Edward J. O'Brien (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930).

19. H. E. Bates, "The Holiday," *NS*, 1 January 1926, 363–4 (363). References are given after quotations in the text. For a comical, less existential conception of a holiday see the amusing depiction of Mr. Bat, a city clerk, and his wife in R. E. Warner, "Holiday," *NS*, 29 March 1930, 804–5.

20. H. E. Bates, "The Idiot," *NS*, 23 October 1926, 43–4 (44). References are given after quotations in the text.

21. Glen Cavaliero, *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel, 1900–1939* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 196.

22. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973; repr. London: The Hogarth Press, 1993), 255. Bensusan, prolific writer, and author of the popular Marshland stories, was a regular contributor to the *NS* on countryside matters (from birds to rural economy) since its foundation in 1913, throughout the twenties, and to the early thirties. H. J. Massingham was a pivotal figure in the "Back to the Land" movement, weekly contributor to the *Nation and Athenaeum* (1916–1924), the *Field* (1938–1951), and occasionally to the *NS* (roughly from 1914 to the late 1920s). For an assessment of his writings, see essay on him in W. J. Keith, *The Rural Tradition: William Cobbett, Gilbert White, and other Non-Fiction Prose Writers of the English Countryside* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1975). For a *NS* example of the countryside as healer of postwar wounds see R. H. Bruce Lockhart, "Behind a

War Mask," *NS*, 144 April 1928, 12–3. See also Sisley Huddleston, "The Shepherd's Call," *NS*, 26 January 1929, 495–6.

23. Williams, *The Country and the City*, 261. Next quotation is also from page 261.

24. H. E. Bates, "Foreword," in *Country Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943; repr. Bath: Chivers Press, 1989), v–viii (vi, vii). References are given after quotations in the text.

25. Williams, *The Country and the City*, 257.

26. Cavaliero, *The Rural Tradition*, 200.

27. Bates, *Edward Garnett*, 72.

28. Bates wrote the "Country Life" column from 26 April 1935 to 24 October 1941.

29. Dean R. Baldwin, in his *H. E. Bates: A Literary Biography* (Selinsquare: Susquehanna University Press, 1987), quotes an unpublished letter of 3 January 1933 by Bates asking Garnett for "some travel books and country books and flower books" to review (106).

30. His essays are "Crime by Blossoms," *NSN*, 27 May 1933, 684–5; "A Kentish Portrait," *NSN*, 28 October 1933, 513–4; "The Lace-makers," *NSN*, 28 April 1934, 637–8; "A Midland Portrait," *NSN*, 7 July 1934, 12–3; "A Country Pub," *NSN*, 25 August 1934, 237–8; "Chelsea," *NSN*, 25 May 1935, 749–50; "The Other Chelsea," *NSN*, 23 May 1936, 802.

31. *Charlotte's Row* is about the impact of industrialization on the countryside as experienced by a group of shoemakers; *The Fallow Land* spans the period between 1890 and 1920 in the life of a farming community; and *Spella Ho* is a fictive historical account of a house and the changes it undergoes between 1873 and 1931. A discussion of all these novels can be found in Baldwin's *Bates*.

32. H. E. Bates, "Harvest Moon," *NSN*, 2 January 1934, 84–5; "Time," *NSN*, 20 August 1932, 205–6; "On the Road," *NSN* (Literary Supplement), 28 February 1931, vii–x. "Time" was chosen for *The Best British Short Stories of 1933*, and "On the Road" for *The Best British Short Stories of 1931*. Bates was the British writer that appeared most in this annual anthology, publishing ten pieces in all.

33. Dean R. Baldwin, "Atmosphere in the Stories of H. E. Bates," *Studies in Short Fiction*, 21 (Summer 1984), 215–22 (216). For Bates's rejection of plot for atmosphere and characterization, see his "Joseph Conrad and Thomas Hardy," in *The English Novelists: A Survey of the Novel by Twenty Contemporary Novelists*, ed. by Derek Verschoyle (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), 229–44.

34. Bates, "A Kentish Portrait," 514.

35. H. E. Bates, *The Poacher*, rev. by Geoffrey West, *TLS*, 24 January 1935, 45. West was a friend of Bates and an associate of his (with Edward J. O'Brien and others) on the editorial board of the pioneering and short-lived British journal of the short story *New Stories* (Feb-March 1934—April-May 1936). For an informative bibliographical account of the magazine see Roy Simmonds, "Edward J. O'Brien and *New Stories*, " *London Magazine* 23 (November 1983), 44–54. O'Brien, who was American, also edited (with Russian translator John Cournos) *The Best British and American Short Stories* from 1922 until his death in 1941.

36. H. E. Bates, "The Gleaner," *NSN*, 5 November 1932, 545–6 (p. 545). Unless otherwise indicated, all references are from page 545. "The Gleaner" was anthologized in *The Best British Short Stories 1934*.

37. Part of Bates's realism, though, was an interest in the psychology of his character, as

my previous discussion of "Never" and "The Idiot" shows. He was a great admirer of Conrad after all.

38. Walter Allen, *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 262. Bates thought Crane was a pioneer. In his important "Stephen Crane: A Neglected Genius," *The Bookman*, (October 1931),10–11, he praises his depiction of the "brutality of war" and "ironical, remorseless, superbly detached" (10) style in *Red Badge of Courage* (1895) and his "tragic impressionism of New York slum life" (11) in his collection of short stories, *The Open Boat* (1898).

39. H. E. Bates, *The Blossoming World: An Autobiography*, 3 vols. (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), 2:99. He adds that "in the thirties, I must have read almost every word of Hudson and came away, as Galsworthy says, refreshed, stimulated, enlarged." It is worth noting that Hudson was a friend of Edward Garnett, who published his *El Ombu* (1902) while reader at Duckworth as well as his *Letters from W. H. Hudson to Edward Garnett* (London: Dent, 1925) later on. Garnett admired Hudson's honesty and casual style. He wrote a long article on him in the *Academy*, reprinted as "W. H. Hudson's 'Nature Books'" in *Friday Nights: Literary Criticism and Appreciations* (London: Cape, 1922). Of *El Ombu*, he made the following statement in a letter to R. B. Cunninghame Graham: "I have an excessive admiration for *El Ombu*. It remains in my memory as a masterpiece" (George Jefferson, *Edward Garnett: A Life in Literature* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), 78). Garnett also admired Thomas and wrote his *DNB* entry in 1927. For a recent edition of Thomas's poetry, see Edward Thomas, *The Annotated Collected Poems*, ed. by Edna Longley (Tarset: Bloodaxe, 2008).

40. H. E. Bates, *Cut and Come Again*, rev. by Graham Greene, *The Spectator*, 22 November 1935, 36–8 (38).

41. H. E. Bates, *Something Short and Sweet*, rev. by Graham Greene, *The Spectator*, 6 August 1937, 252. Next two quotations are also from this piece.

42. H. E. Bates, "Introduction," in *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest* (London: Collins, 1957), 11–16, (15). Bates ends his introduction by describing Hudson as "the supreme nature writer in English literature" (16).

43. W. J. Keith, *The Rural Tradition* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1975), 181

44. Quoted in Bates, "Introduction," *Green Mansions*, 12. Bates repeats this quote, though without the last sentence, in *The Blossoming World*, 100.

45. For Hudson's imposition of quasi-religious imagery and themes on nature, see Mervin Nicholson, "'What We See We Feel': The Imaginative World of W. H. Hudson," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 47 (Summer 1978), 304–22, (307). Also relevant is David Miller, *W. H. Hudson and the Elusive Paradise* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

46. Bates, *The Blossoming World*, 100.

47. Garnett also thought so, as his preface to *The Two Sisters* discussed earlier shows.

48. *Under Thirty: An Anthology*, ed. by Michael Harrison (London: Rich & Cowan, 1939), 29–36; Further references given after quotations in the text. This is a gem of an anthology since it includes samples of the work of thirty British writers under the age of thirty, with each short story preceded by an "Autobiographical Note."

49. According to the *OED*, a drum is "the cylindrical beater of a thrashing-machine."

50. H. E. Bates, “Why I Live in the Country—5,” *The Countryman*, 12 (January 1936), 494–9 (494). The following two quotes are from pages 494 and 495, respectively.

51. This is another version of what Williams in *The Country and the City* dubbed as the “escalator,” a process of mourning an older, now destroyed countryside that arguably leads back to Eden. In the twenties *NS*, such an ideal was sought in the medieval period, as the work of R. M. Fox testifies.

52. Bates, “The Lace-makers,” 637.

53. Bates, “Time,” 205.

54. H. E. Bates, *The Fallow Land*, 70, quoted in Glen Cavaliero, *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel 1900–1939* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 200.

55. Pritchett included it in his *Turnstile One: A Literary Miscellany from the* New Statesman and Nation (London: Turnstile Press, 1948).

56. H. E. Bates, “The Novelist’s Ear,” *Fortnightly*, 145 (March 1936), 277–82. Bates agrees with American critics of the contemporary English novel when they say that the language it employs is “stilted and lifeless” (279). Arguing that American dialogue is far more realistic than its weak and “synthetic” English counterpart, he clearly states that “the speech of everyday life is the novelist’s raw material” (279).

57. H. E. Bates, “For the Dead,” *NSN*, 30 December 1933, 869–70 (870).

58. H. E. Bates, “The Waiting Room,” *NSN*, 13 October 1934, 469–70 (469). Pritchett’s “X-ray,” discussed previously, was published in the journal two years earlier, on 30 July 1932.

59. H. E. Bates, “The Man who Loved Cats,” *NSN*, 13 March 1937, 406–7 (406). This is the last piece Bates published in the *NSN*.

60. Fred Urquhart, “The Work of H. E. Bates,” *Life and Letters Today*, 23 (December 1939), 289–93 (291–2).