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## Predicting the Future for a Victorian World: A Digital Exploration of “Domestic Studies in the Year 2000 A.D.”

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Predicting the Future for a Victorian World: A Digital Exploration of “Domestic Studies in the  
Year 2000 A.D.”

While “Domestic Studies in the Year 2000 A. D.” may be E. S. P. Haynes’s only piece of fiction, it captures two of his main ideologies in two very short stories. The stories adopt a dystopian view toward the future, looking ahead 87 years with two scenarios depicting average life in the year 2000. Both stories tackle decidedly controversial topics for the early twentieth century: individual freedoms and gender roles. The story found an appropriate home in the progressive periodical *The New Freewoman*, which heavily promoted the advancement of women, taking progressive stances on equality and feminism. Part one of the story deals with governmental control as it follows the conversation between a son and his father, Mr. Wobble, who is denied further medical assistance by the government. Part two plays with traditional gender roles, where Mr. Fanshawe discovers his wife, Mrs. Fanshawe, has several affairs with other men. These two stories challenge traditional Victorian ideals—one of governmental control and the other of gender constructs. The stories suggest a two-part consequence of these ideals. One, that if the traditional ideals are not rejected, the government can gain unwarranted power over individual freedoms, and two, that if they are rejected, men and women can hold more equal positions in society. Haynes’s use of irony prompts readers to

question the consequences of Victorian ideals, illuminating the problem of blindly following societal constructs and suggesting that if they are rejected, society will be better off.

Haynes's background with the law and with advocating for individual freedoms sheds light on his themes in "Domestic Studies." He practiced law at his father's solicitors' practice for 48 years after studying at Balliol College at Oxford. Apart from being a lawyer, Haynes campaigned for the Divorce Law Reform Union, drafting his own reform bills that would allow for easier methods to obtain a divorce (Cretney). Haynes was a strong supporter of women's suffrage, equal pay between sexes, and the end of job-based sex discrimination. While critical of organized religion, he recognized it provided an important protection to the individual and the family from the state (Cretney). He is better known for his essays on democracy, equal pay between sexes, and divorce law than for his fiction. Nevertheless, "Domestic Studies" echoes his ideologies on issues like gender discrimination and democracy. Mr. Wobble's story questions the government's role in a democratic society while Mr. and Mrs. Fanshawe's story questions gender roles constructed by society. Together, the two stories reveal Haynes's interest in rejecting Victorian ideals.

Modernism spurred a rejection of societal norms, namely from the Victorian era. "Domestic Studies" was published in *The New Freewoman* in 1913, amid the early stages of literary modernism. With the turn of the century, as writers adapted to modern life, they started "refashioning," the short story genre, often by rejecting popular literature and critiquing bourgeois ideology (Sacido 3). It is not surprising then, that Haynes's story joins the conversation on rejecting past institutions and ideologies. Periodicals catered to the masses—they were inexpensive and contained easily-digestible stories. But they also catered to public

interest, articulating contemporary issues and concerns through fiction. The short story was an avenue that reached the masses and an avenue through which writers could critique society, especially Victorian ideals. Jorge Sacido of the University of Santiago Compostela asserts that the short story allowed writers to introduce controversial topics like “inversion of gender roles and models, portraits of unhappy marriages, and disruption of patronizing attitudes” (3). Modernism urged writers to flip societal constructions on their heads and examine their implications. With the Victorian era barely behind him, Haynes and other modernists found issue with its lingering ideologies regarding gender and government. They found a way to express their discontent with these ideologies through the short story.

The form of the short story allowed writers more expression and innovation in rejecting Victorian ideals. Sacido emphasizes that “formal innovation” within the short story genre allowed writers to “articulate contemporary radical views” critical of the “political and moral values of Victorian ideology” (3). Perhaps it is the form of the short story itself that compelled Haynes to write “Domestic Studies.” The form allows for experimentation in presenting ideas and criticism. With a short story, Haynes could implicitly reject Victorian ideals of gender and government, weaving two fictional stories that merely disrupt ideals instead of explicitly critiquing them. Thus, fiction is a safer method of criticism that still reaches large audiences. The short story form also appeals to readers simply based on the length of the stories. Both parts of “Domestic Studies” are extremely short—about one to one-and-a-half column lengths in the periodical, so readers could finish both parts in under ten minutes. Haynes uses this genre as a condensed, illustrative form to help readers consider the toxicity of Victorian ideals.

The short story form provides a useful avenue through which Haynes reaches a large audience with a controversial, yet meaningful message.

Together, modernism and the rise of the short story provide Haynes a climate in which he can both rework traditional ideals and exploit them. In part one of "Domestic Studies," the conversation between Mr. Sydney Wobble and his son George is nostalgic as the father laments the government's decision to end his medical attention. Sydney and George discuss the changes made in health care and the government in the last 100 years. The anarchy established 100 years prior adopted the "Euthanasia Act of 1940" to eliminate criminals, the ill, and the elderly and ended all private medical practices, giving all control to the governmental department "the Medical Control Board" (117). Yet Mr. Wobble accepts his fate—death by euthanasia is ordinary in the year 2000. Mr. Wobble's casual compliance with the Medical Board's control over his life suggests that Haynes views current governmental power as a threat to individual freedoms. If the government controls how long its citizens live, there is little freedom in life. But the government in 2000 A.D. does not only control medical attention—Mr. Wobble remembers days when people "drank alcoholic preparations at meals," "owned houses and land in perpetuity," "read books that were excluded from the British Museum Catalogue," and even "wrote quite scurrilously about the Government" (117). These common practices are uncommon in the future, indicating Haynes's fear that the government would gain too much power over its people. Haynes is exploiting the Victorian ideal of governmental compliance and hinting that if this ideal is not rejected, the government will come to control the lives of the people it oversees.

A digital analysis of part one reveals that Haynes employs irony to reveal the danger in complying with governmental control over individual freedoms. The Voyant Tools application reveals that in this section's keywords and collocates, health is invariably connected with denial and negligence. The main keyword "medical" appears five times throughout this section and its collocates are at first deceiving; one collocate is "good" actually refers to a "good deal of pain" that is denied medical attention. Another collocate is "service," but clarification reveals that medical service is "reduced" and ended altogether. Thus, these seemingly positive collocates, "good" and "service," are contradictory to their meaning in the passage as a whole. Haynes employs positive diction in describing very negative circumstances. This effect emphasizes the irony of the story, that medical attention—something good that provides a service—is completely controlled by the government—something that results in pain and reduced attention. Haynes's use of irony reveals the danger in allowing the government to absorb freedoms and exercise control over its people's lives.

The second part of "Domestic Studies" reworks Victorian ideals of gender to suggest the possibility of greater equality between men and women. In the Victorian era, the woman acted as "both guidance and balm" to men, meant to be a "moral influence" to elevate and refine those around her. The idea of feminine sexual desire "troubled" those who upheld women to a high moral capacity (Adams 19). Mrs. Fanshawe, or Eliza, rejects these feminine roles and assumes traditionally masculine traits. She is the breadwinner of the family—a barrister that works in the "chambers in the Temple." And to the horror of her husband, whom she "had rescued in the days of her first professional success," she engages in "passionate" affairs with several other men (138). She displays a low morality and high sexuality, but also professional

success and hard work, rejecting societal ideals for women and morality. Her husband, Evelyn, likewise reverses gender roles, displaying traditionally feminine traits. For Victorian men, there was a standard that stressed “self-discipline, earnestness, and piety, along with older virtues of honesty, courage, and power” (Adams 19). But Mr. Fanshawe “so loyally looked after [Eliza’s] household and children for upwards of fifteen years.” He remains in the domestic sphere while his wife works in the professional sphere. And when he discovers the affairs, he “sob[s]” and “gurgle[s] the usual exclamations about deception, ingratitude, and infidelity” (138). His emotional outbreaks suggest instability and reliance on Eliza, demonstrating the opposite of self-discipline, courage, and power. While Eliza assumes traditional masculine traits, Evelyn adopts more feminine characteristics. These role reversals not only illuminate the rigidity of Victorian gender roles but suggest that gender roles are fluid across sexes.

The digital analysis for part two reveals that gender fluidity allows for greater equality between men and women. The keywords and collocates from this section show that Haynes deliberately uses more masculine words to highlight gender disparities in his society and thus they suggest the possibility of gender fluidity. Searches show the most frequent collocates are overwhelmingly masculine words associated with traditionally feminine attributes. Masculine words like “Mr.” and “Fanshawe” are connected to collocates that suggest femininity. The word “minutes” as a collocate for “Mr.” appears only twice, but in similar association; the two examples of the word “minutes” both refer to “five minutes” and “Mr. Fanshawe” specifically—one is “aeroplan[ing]” to Eliza’s office in five minutes and the other is “sob[bing]” for five minutes. The repetition of five minutes connects these two instances, thus equating hasty travel with an emotional outbreak. Mr. Fanshawe displays neither self-control nor power in

either of these cases, submitting to his emotions. While Mr. Fanshawe himself is masculine, his actions imply femininity. Haynes's ironic reversal of traditional gender attributes suggests that when gender constructs are rejected, previously denied opportunities open for both men and women. Men can own a space in the home while women can occupy a place in the work force.

Although the two parts of "Domestic Studies" tell different stories, they combine in efforts to reject Victorian ideals. Even with the origin of modernism and the rise of the middle class, societal views of moral conduct bled into the twentieth century. The "enchantment of the aristocracy" lingered with its "political influence" and also "in subtly pervasive norms of value, identity, and conduct" (Adams 15). As a solicitor and member of the middle class, Haynes felt the lingering ideals from the Victorian era, as evidenced from his efforts to reform divorce laws and support gender equality. And while Haynes wished to reform laws rather than destroy them altogether, his controversial stances most likely were labelled as anarchism. At the turn of the century, conservatives used the word "anarchism" to "practically every shade of radical opinion" (O'Donoghale 95). Anarchists in the Victorian era dedicated themselves to "causing the downfall of existing political and economic systems" and saw themselves as people who "no longer wished to obey the law" (95). In a way then, Haynes's attempts at reform (both political and societal) are attempts at anarchy. The stories suggest that the Victorian ideals his "studies" examine will affect the future. And the irony of both studies suggest that those ideals are harmful. "Domestic Studies" reveals Haynes's view that certain ideals and political structures from the Victorian age need to be reformed or destroyed to prevent a more destructive future.

Although Haynes wrote "Domestic Studies" in 1913 with a vision of the year 2000, the story still stands today. Fortunately, Haynes's hopes for the future as rejecting Victorian ideals



came true. The government does not control all medical services and gender roles are increasingly eroding in favor of gender equality. While the Victorian era no longer heavily influences society, we can still learn from Haynes's exercise of imagining the future. Like him, we can question what domestic life will be like in 83 years if we continue living the societal and political norms now established. This exercise can reveal which norms we should reject and which freedoms we should protect.

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