

that 'literary intellectuals,' as he called them, were in the main ignorant about contemporary science. The British education system, he alleged, had traditionally favoured the classical humanities at the expense of the pure and applied sciences, and this despite the fact that the sciences were the engine of economic growth in twentieth-century Britain. This had led British intellectual life to be divided into 'two cultures' that apparently confronted one another with mutual incomprehension, not to mention with animosity, as was evidenced by F. R. Leavis's fiercely polemical 1962 response to Snow's argument.¹ As a quick Internet search demonstrates, these debates are still very much alive today. But as Stefan Collini has pointed out in a recent edition of Snow's lecture,² such arguments were scarcely new even in 1959, since Matthew Arnold and Thomas Henry Huxley had engaged in a similar debate in the late nineteenth century. While Arnold had famously argued in his *Culture and Anarchy* (1867-9), that culture is the 'pursuit of perfection' based primarily upon aesthetic examples taken from classical literature,³ Huxley countered him in a public lecture of 1880 ('Science and Culture'), by proposing that in the burgeoning industrial Victorian culture of his day, 'for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education.'⁴ This in turn led to a renewed defence of the literary humanities offered by Arnold in his Rede Lecture of 1882, 'Literature and Science.'⁵ As a recent study by Guy Ortolano has shown, already in their nineteenth- and especially in their twentieth-century manifestations, these debates had more to do with modern university curricula and with a broader clash between technocratic and humanistic versions of liberalism than with actual literary production,⁶ and in our own age, they continue in REF2014, which has been seen by some as crudely applying a natural sciences model of soci

humanities appeared at the bottom of the impact table (even if the actual numerical differences are in themselves relatively marginal).⁷

The contemporary significance of inquiring into biological discourses in literature around 1900 therefore lies in the fact that the public discourse during that period bears some structural similarities to that of our own historical moment. In both

displaced by Darwinian explanations of biological change that did not require recourse to metaphysical speculation. The paper delivered by **David Midgley** (Cambridge) discussed the dominant representative of Darwinism in Germany during this period: Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). Midgley's paper focused on two controversies surrounding Haeckel: the first his theory that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny; the second the allegation that Haeckel's theories concerning race fed into the discourses of National Socialism. While questioning the teleological narrative which posits a continuity between Haeckel and National Socialism, Midgley also showed the extent to which progressive German authors of the early twentieth century such as Alfred Döblin and Arnold Zweig spurned Haeckel's version of Darwinian mechanism in favour of the vitalism propagated by one of Haeckel's students: Hans Driesch (1867-1941). A similar historical picture emerged from the paper delivered by **Charlotte Woodford** (Cambridge). Woodford offered an examination of Wilhelm Bölsche's popular celebration of Darwinism, (1898), demonstrating how Bölsche's normative and deeply poetic vision of cellular life as infused by erotic forces informed the writings of Lou Andreas-Salomé, in

could easily be co-opted by the discourses of Victorian colonialism and later by National Socialism.¹²

The appropriation of scientific discourses for non-scientific purposes was the focus of papers by **Aisha Nazeer** (St. Andrews), **Michael Wainwright** (Royal Holloway, London) and **Marie Kolkenbrock** (Cambridge). While Nazeer argued that Rider Haggard's novel (1887) incorporated pseudo-scientific discourses about race in the manner of Arthur Gobineau in order to construct an orientalist vision of the Other, Wainwright explored the adoption of parasitology by social and literary discourses through the examples of John Ruskin and Bram Stoker. Kolkenbrock's paper revealed how discourses of bacteriology came to coincide with occultist preoccupations concerning the 'invisible enemy,' the 'haunted' and the 'infected' in selected works by Arthur Schnitzler (

Loughran and Cain focused on psychological discourses: for Loughran the epidemic of 'shell-shock' during the First World War was often understood in speculative psychoanalytic terms as revealing a hitherto overlooked 'primitive core' of the human being; while for Cain the psychological theories of Hugo Münsterberg, who taught both Gertrude Stein and T. S. Eliot at Harvard, are seen to have influenced the image of worn-out industrialised man depicted in Eliot's (1922). Lawson-Conquer examined the subject of synaesthesia in the works of Wassily Kandinsky, showing how this painter-poet's ideas drew

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