

our natural individualism and to overestimate the degree of forced civilisation required for a tenable world civilisation. Criticisms such as this seem to me not only illuminating, but entirely invalid.

Stover's strength, however, is also his weakness. Viewing literature wholly as ideological fable, to be readily decoded into statements of its author's convictions, he focuses exclusively on Wells' utopianism, overlooking his subject's counterbalancing scepticism and his disposition, within the earlier fiction particularly, to challenge some of his own favourite ideas. While, therefore, I can agree with much of what Stover has to say about such later works as *Things To Come* or *Russia in the Shadows*, the attempt to portray Wells' early fiction as sinister propaganda seems to me to be misconceived.

Stover is perhaps the only reader to conclude that the mad scientist, Dr Moreau, is not just someone for whom we are meant to feel some reluctant respect, but the out and out hero of the book. Similarly, the narrator of *The Time Machine* becomes a sentimental dupe at whom we are intended to sneer, and the Time Traveller himself, a ruthless superman on the Carlyle model, his relationship with Weena that between a superior being and a dispensable pet animal - this despite the Time Traveller's evident affection for Weena and his clear statement that he "even tried a Carlyle-like scorn of this wretched aristocracy-in-decay. But this attitude of mind was impossible". Stover supplies a footnote of over 400 words glossing the first of these two sentences as though the second did not exist.

Some of use have suggested that the Time Traveller and the narrator of *The Time Machine*, like Moreau and Prendick, and other paired characters in Wells' fiction, represent two aspects of their author, and that Wells' fiction is (among other things) a way of coming to terms with the conflicts they embody. When Stover notices that Wells has more than one view, however, he simply discards one which does not support his thesis. Having announced that Wells did not believe in human rights, he has somehow to account for Wells' passionate advocacy of them, so tells us, "He fooled neither his readers not himself with the usual compassion babble ... In later life Wells resorted to that very double-talk he despised so much on Soviet propaganda".

At times, indeed, there is a perceptible battle between Wells' concise and entertaining text - an open interplay of events, characters, symbols and narration - and the single minded commentary running beneath it, hammering at the same

points over and over, at times paraphrasing and signposting unnecessarily, at other, overstating the case. It may be, for example, that in *The Time Machine*, Filby is a recollection of Bernard Shaw and that the narrator and Hillyer are the same person, but these can only be tentative hypotheses. Stover has no grounds for asserting they are the truth, let alone that the "shy man with a beard is none other than William Morris". Just occasionally, the annotation is plainly inaccurate. Oscar Wilde did not recommend Wells to Henley on the basis of "A Slip under the Microscope". The reference to a "crossing" in *The Time Machine* has nothing to do with highway robbery, but alludes to street-sweeping (as in Dickens' *Bleak House*). A "bank holiday" is a public holiday, not just one for bank employees. "Wimbledon House" may have been a "famous" architectural landmark in its day, but I grew up near that part of London without ever hearing of it and I doubt whether it still exists.

Stover says his editions are "for classroom use", but their handsomely-produced hard-backed format makes them expensive compared to the Oxford and Everyman editions, and the general reader may find the annotation disproportionate. Dedicated Wellsians, scholars and higher education libraries would seem to be the most appropriate purchasers, for whatever their limitations, these combative editions take Wells seriously in a way which he himself would have approved of and are backed up by formidable scholarship. As always, serious students of Wells would be foolish to ignore 'Stoverism'.

Michael Sherborne

### Wells and Shaw

J. Percy Smith, ed. *Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells*. Toronto: Toronto UP, 1995  
242 pp, index. £20.80. ISBN 0 9020 3001 7

In the late 1940s, the University of Illinois created a great and remarkable archive through the efforts of Gordon N. Ray, then dean of the Arts College of the University in Urbana. This archive is the H.G. Wells Collection located in the Rare Books Room of the library. The University of Illinois has continued to collect Wells items, as well as adjacent and ancillary materials that fit into his time span. Today there are probably close to 5,000 outgoing letters from Wells, and perhaps 25,000 incoming letters. These numbers include business correspondence, so the total amount of general interest to scholars is perhaps half that number. A good finding guide is available for visitors. No accurate count of the holdings exists, however.

Ray wished, apparently, to call attention to the new acquisition. Four volumes of Wells correspondence were announced. Within two years, three of them had appeared - the Wells/James correspondence, the Wells/Gissing correspondence and the Wells/Bennett correspondence. These three volumes are of considerable use to scholars. The best edited is the Wells/James number, although even here a few minor items escaped the editors. The other two are useful, but they have lacunæ. These difficulties are being overcome by the magisterial large volume set of correspondence edited by Pierre Coustillas and others. Every significant library should own all these volumes.

The fourth announced volume was never published at Illinois. It is, essentially, through other auspices, the volume under review. Professor J. Percy Smith, Professor of Drama at the University of Guelph has beautifully edited this new volume. It is physically and textually the best of the four. An immense amount of work went into this volume, which is the first of several volumes announced dealing with Shaw and other persons, and other issues. This volume gives us for the first time the complete written correspondence of the two men, including several fugitive items which are only available in part in the Lawrence edition of Shaw correspondence. All scholars will welcome the new book, and find a useful place for it on their library shelves.

The book is very heavily edited, and every literary allusion tracked down and noted. In fact, it is so heavily annotated that the reader is occasionally distracted, especially so as proper names are printed in bold type. This is editing for students, and well done indeed, but perhaps slightly excessive for professional writers.

The book is "Selected Correspondence" and one means of selection is to not include any of the newspaper correspondence of the two men. The book treats the two individuals completely from a literary perspective, which some will find incomplete, as the two were such political correspondents as well. Shaw and Wells debated in the press a number of times - over vivisection, Russia (several times), H.A. Jones, modern science and scientific interpretation among other matters. The letters from these exchanges would have extended our view of both of these individuals, who were important in their own time in so many different ways.

Students will want to study the debates over Russia, in particular, which occurred from 1914 to 1918, and later in the 1930s, in a number of different venues. One letter, in particular, from H.G. Wells in 1914, appeared in the Daily Chronicle and

the North Mail under the title "On Russia, Muddleheadedness and Some Mention of Mr Shaw." Reading these pieces causes this writer to again think through the Shaw/Wells relationship. Percy Smith focuses on their friendship - but it was a friendship similar to that with a hedgehog - better conducted at some distance. These two men did like each other; they also disliked each other, and they were very wary of one another. What might be a good idea, now that we have this lovely volume, is to think about another book in which one might determine whether the proper name is Wellshavian or Shawells?

David Smith

### Technology and the World Brain

H.G. Wells. *World Brain*. Introduction by editor Alan Mayne. London: Adamantine Press, 1994. £15

180 pp index. ISBN 0-7749-0114-6

One of H.G. Wells's most fervently held beliefs was that the future of mankind depended on the extent to which men and women throughout the world were not only prepared to understand one another but also able to do so - as he puts it in *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*, man's "social being must be rebuilt" if he is "to take his place in a collective world fellowship." If this sort of fellowship is to be achieved, Wells believed, education and communication must be recognised as essential, and in the 1930s he devoted his energies to promoting the idea of a World Encyclopaedia as a means of disseminating information and, ultimately, creating a shared understanding of the world, and *World Brain* was designed to play a part of this project. In this book, Wells sets out a new concept of an encyclopaedia; the idea of a row of volumes, constantly in need of revision and updating, has been transformed into a vision of a centralised store of information which would provide what he calls "a sort of mental clearing house for the mind" (112).

The new Adamantine edition of *World Brain*, edited by Alan Mayne, reproduces the contents of the original book, with the exception of three of the five brief appendices which wisely have been judged to be ephemeral and uninteresting for the modern reader. Mayne has written a lengthy Critical Introduction - it takes up more than a third of the volume - which aims, he tells us, to show "in what ways the basic ideas of *World Brain* are relevant today" and also "to indicate how they have become easier to implement because of recent advances in computing, information technology,