

Secondly, all the chapters added since his death should be removed and replaced by an account which will take us up to the end of the Second Millennium in a recognisably Wellsian spirit. If the publishers cannot find anyone else to do the job, there are, I must point out, a number of writers and historians in the Wells Society who would be more than willing to lend a hand. Enough said?

Sylvia Hardy

The "Definitive" *Time Machine*

H.G. Wells. *The Definitive Time Machine: A Critical Edition of H.G. Wells's Scientific Romance with Introduction and Notes by Harry M. Geduld*. Bloomington (Indiana UP) 1987. \$27.50 hardcover, \$10.95 paperback.

As David Lake points out in his review of this book for *Science Fiction Studies* (Vol 15, 1988), the most significant aspect of Harry M. Geduld's *The Definitive Time Machine* is, that it is not definitive - there are a number of textual errors. Geduld assumes, apparently unquestioningly, that the Atlantic Edition of *The Time Machine* is the definitive text, whereas in fact, as David Lake makes clear in his 1988 *Wellsian* article, Wells made several substantive corrections in both the later Essex Edition and in the 1933 collection, *The Scientific Romances of H.G. Wells*. Geduld's explanatory notes are also misleading. The most prominent example is his claim in Note 1, p. 91, that in an earlier version of *The Time Machine* the Time Traveller was given the name Bayliss, but this is clearly a confusion. Again it was Professor Lake who demonstrated (in an article in the 1980 *Wellsian*, 'The Drafts of *The Time Machine*') that Bayliss was the name Wells gave to one of the dinner guests, a character first designated as 'the red haired man'; this was in later drafts changed to Bayliss, and in the final version he was re-named Filby.

In other respects, however, Professor Geduld's book does have a great deal to recommend it. The various versions of *The Time Machine* are brought together in one volume, and for the first time the chapter of the 1894 version which Wells omitted from the published text is made available to the general reader. The other appendices (VIII-XII), are less easy to defend - or even account for. They are all of peripheral interest, and the parallels with Beowulf adduced in Appendix XI seem particularly strained. On the plus

side, there is a very informative and succinct introduction which, in the space of twenty-four pages brings together discussion of the biographical and literary influences on the gestation of *The Time Machine* together with an account of its publication and reception, plus a helpful account of the structure of the story, analysed thematically in relation to some recent critical commentary. The notes, too, are in general both helpful and interesting.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to see for whom the book as a whole is intended. Whilst some of the footnotes seem superfluous for the mature reader - is it necessary to provide a gloss on 'lichen' (Note 4 p. 116) or 'crustacea' (Note 16, p. 116), for instance? - others, particularly when Geduld engages in dispute with Frank McConnell's 1977 edition of *The Time Machine*, seem recondite (See Note 19, p. 99). In general I feel that this book could be very useful to students because it does bring together in one volume a great deal of valuable background material which has until now only been available in a number of sources. I would, on the other hand, want to qualify this recommendation with the warning that when the notes do not confine themselves to clarification of factual details but attempt to explain the reader's response to the text of *The Time Machine*, the comments are often naive because they rest on a number of unquestioned assumptions and literary judgements - Note 1 on page 91 provides a good instance of this.

Michael Draper

Wells and the Modern Novel

J.R. Hammond *H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel*. London (Macmillan) 1988, 224 pp. £29.50

Even if he were not the founder of the H.G. Wells Society, John Hammond would have earned a distinguished place for himself in the field of Wells Studies as the author of several invaluable books. His *Annotated Bibliography* (NY: Garland, 1977), *H.G. Wells Companion* (London: Macmillan, 1979) and *H.G. Wells: Interviews and Recollections* (London: Macmillan, 1981) are all volumes which any serious student of the Great Man will have consulted with gratitude; more recently JRH has gone on to compile *The Man with a Nose, and Other Uncollected Short Stories of H.G. Wells* (London: Athlone Press, 1984). Without his quarter-century of campaigning, it is likely that

Wells's reputation would not have crept upward quite so inexorably as it has. Room for further promotion remains, however, and to this end we are now offered *H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel*, not a reference work or a compilation this time, but a book with a thesis: namely, that Wells, far from being a minor practitioner of realist fiction, was actually "a transitional figure between realism and modernism." Four introductory chapters advance the proposition generally; ten 'case studies' discuss particular books in the light of it.

The idea is a persuasive and important one which deserves to be developed with systematic rigour. Unfortunately, as a freelance author rather than an academic, this is just what John Hammond is not in a position to do, and I have to confess that I therefore found the book stimulating but disappointing. It lacks definition of terms and a clear explanatory framework. It would have been helpful to have working definitions of realism and Modernism, and some system of classifying prose narrative more sophisticated than the all-embracing term 'novel.' Lacking these context-markers, we are lost at sea and buffeted by overwhelming questions. Are we to assume, despite the examples of Tolstoy and George Eliot, that Realism is a naive, inadequate form of literature, compared to Modernism? Is Modernism the authentic voice of the twentieth century or merely one group of trends among many in modern fiction, which has been given priority by the institutions of higher education because its complexity and self-referential qualities make it suitable for academic study? What does Wells's recourse to 'pre-Realist' models of fiction - the discussion, the fake documentary, various kinds of romance and fantasy - tell us about the development of fiction in the present century? How do Wells's ideas about faith, myth, history, narrative, symbol and language, or his ground-breaking treatments of scientific perspective, political idealism, technological upheaval, mechanised warfare, conflict between classes and species, social dislocation, feminism, socialism and so on, compare with equivalent elements in, say, Lawrence, Joyce, Kafka, Lessing or Bellow? John Hammond does his best to supply such cross-references but, in the absence of a systematically developed argument or clearly established contexts, they lack focus and are more of a distraction than an asset: eg. "*The History of Mr Polly*, in common with Joyce's *Ulysses*, is rich in literary and mythological allusions."

The absence of a properly developed thesis mars the 'case studies' as well as the introduction. The books chosen for attention range from the great (*The Time Machine*) through the second and third rate (*Men Like Gods*) to the abysmal (*The Brothers*), assembled chronologically rather than by quality or, as might have been helpful, by genre. The omission of *The Bulpington of Blup*

is surprising - whatever its limitations, it is, after all, the one novel where Wells launches a direct attack on Modernism. *The Wheels of Chance* or *Kipps* might have shown us Wells straining at the limits of traditional realism. On the other hand, if the idea was to draw attention to Wells's later fiction as an underrated body of experimental work, something might have been made of *The Shape of Things to Come* or *All Aboard for Ararat*. Perhaps the most valuable part of the book is indeed the discussion of Wells's more neglected works, which is never less than thought-provoking and reaches a strong finish in a stimulating account of *You Can't Be Too Careful*. From this book comes the almost contemporary-sounding line "It is only in the past few years that the sciences of Significs and Semantics have opened men's eyes to the immense inaccuracies and question-begging of language." I say "almost" contemporary, because any student of semantics in the 1980s would immediately seize on the word "men's" as an expression of the sexist assumptions of the period - and no doubt Wells would have welcomed the observation.

If *H.G. Wells and the Modern Novel* does not belong in the same indispensable category as John Hammond's earlier works, to which it might be seen as a kind of extended supplement, it nonetheless contains many shrewd observations, and, in biting off rather more than it can chew, it whets our appetite for further works on the same topic. In short, the book offers original generalisations and insights which later scholars will refine - a practice which has genuine value and to which Wells himself was certainly not averse.