

My understanding is, on the contrary, that Smith excluded Wells's letters to West from his 4-volume *Correspondence of H.G. Wells* (1998) because access to West's archives only became generally available after he had signed a contract for his project. Indeed, he was initially to have produced just a 2-volume edition, which was increased to four when the sheer quantity of Wells's letters came to be known. Were he to have included Wells's letters to West, as well as those to Henry James, George Gissing, Arnold Bennett and Olaf Stapledon, he could easily have produced eight to ten volumes of correspondence. Whatever the true situation, however, it is to be hoped that Smith will delve into the archive sometime in the future, in preparation for the publication of his eagerly awaited fifth volume of letters.

**Book Review:** *Post-traumatic Culture: Injury and Interpretation in the Nineties*, by Kirby Farrell (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). xviii, 422pp. [By John S. Partington]

As Kirby Farrell tells us in his preface to *Post-traumatic Culture*, "the mood I am describing is post-traumatic – belated, epiphenomenal, the outcome of cumulative stresses. It reflects a disturbance in the ground of collective experience: a shock to people's values, trust, and sense of purpose; an obsessive awareness that nations, leaders, even we ourselves can die." Whereas trauma commonly arises out of one-of or rare incidents, post-traumatic stresses appear to be cultural or societal problems that the individual is unable to counter. Although instances of the latter, such as job insecurity or wars of mass-destruction, are more often characterised as twentieth-century phenomena, Farrell's aim is to re-inform our notions of perceived or actual late-nineteenth century crises with a view to revealing the similarities of reaction to events, even when those events may be of a very different nature.

It will surprise no true Wellsian to discover that H.G. Wells fits into this study in both the 1890s section and the 1990s section, so appealing has Wells's writing been throughout the last hundred-odd years. In discussing *The Time Machine*, Farrell produces interesting contrasts with Wells's later thought. In writing the novella, "Wells creates his future by intensifying the post-traumatic symptoms latent in the

conventional world around him." Although the Time Traveller talks in terms of class-war when discussing the split in the human race by the year 802,701, Farrell prefers to look at the relationship between the Time Traveller and the Eloi and Morlocks for clues of late-Victorian post-traumatic stress. Hence, "The Time Traveller's pity towards the victimized Eloi and his outrage at the predatory Morlocks expresses a parental ambivalence toward the young." In light of Victorian thinking about children in the home, the workplace and the schoolroom, "The Eloi reflect anxieties about the dangers of inculcating too much submissiveness or not enough self-discipline, just as the Morlocks suggest fears of arousing uncontrollable hatred through too much severity." The excessive energy of the young, a prominent issue throughout Wells's writing career, suggests that "The novel imagines a parent figure among pseudochildren who are beyond the parent's control. Authority and nurture are alike in crisis." In the wake of the children's rights movement of the late-nineteenth century, there was much confusion amongst late-Victorians concerning the best way to facilitate the mental and physical growth of the child. Hence, the question for the Time Traveller – if he had saved "Weena from the Morlocks, what would he do with her in 1890s London? Exhibit her until she succumbed like Pocahontas? Given his painfully disproportionate power, how could he erase the suggestion of kidnapping?" – resonated throughout contemporary thinking on the rearing of children. And Wells's way of dealing with this post-traumatic problem? "As Holmes retires into a drugged torpor and Ayesha [in Rider Haggard's *She*] shrivels to dust, so in the end Wells dispatches his Traveller into the oblivion of time." With such an ending, Wells flees the question and, if by so doing his own sense of trauma is relieved, the post-traumatic culture of late-Victorian society is only intensified.

In his Epilogue, Farrell chooses, amongst other films, to look at *Island of Dr Moreau* (1996). In the revolt of the beast-folk against the manipulative Dr Moreau, Farrell sees many parallels with 1990s society. For instance, "Like many fundamentalists today, he [Douglas, the castaway on the island] seems to side with exploited 'bottom dogs,' yet his deepest faith is in the 'natural' status quo – which would preserve a caste system." Although traditional readings of the H.G. Wells novel have identified, in the beast-folk's revolt, a lower-class rejection of bourgeois religious values, Farrell prefers to see in the film a subtle advocacy of corporate oppression. By making Moreau so demonic, the viewer naturally sympathises with his animal victims, as Douglas does in

the film (or Prendick does in the 1896 novel). However, Farrell shows the conservatism of this conclusion when he explains that,

The beast-people's prophet figure, the 'Giver of the Law,' ruefully sums up the conflagration to the departing Douglas: 'We have to be what we are.' He seems not only to warn us against overreaching as Faust does, but also to confirm the status quo: 'Perhaps four legs is better anyway.' This implies that class is biological destiny, and the half-breeds and beast-people of this world had better get used to not walking upright.

The therapeutic value of the film is to make viewers feel righteous in their condemnation of Moreau's exploitation; however, this results in a legitimisation of class division and, although Moreau himself dies in the film, his class-brethren in corporate America and other post-industrial, western societies remain secure in their exclusive, luxurious lifestyles. The question posed is: what do we consider our priority, challenging inequality or maintaining social stability?

Between the novella, *The Time Machine* (1995) and the film, *Island of Doctor Moreau* (1996), Farrell analyses many other examples of post-traumatic fiction and film. Of significance to Wellsians is the fact that references to Wells and the influence of his thought drench the study. Hence, although specific focus on Wells's texts takes up just one and a half chapters of a 13-chapter book, the spirit of Wells exists throughout, just as his spirit permeates the culture of the whole twentieth century. This having been said, however, one word of warning is required. Farrell's text is a very deep and penetrating study and, consequently, very 'academic'. Although understandable to a general reader, the language and critical approach is often dry and may be indigestible to all but the most committed readers. As there are many such committed readers within the H.G. Wells Society, however, I am sure this study will find its way onto several members' shelves.

**Book Review:** *Foundation*, vol.28, no.77 (Autumn 1999), ed. by Edward James [Special Edition: 'H.G. Wells and *The War of the Worlds*'] [By John S. Partington]

*Foundation* has always been a home for high quality Wells criticism, and this special edition is no exception. It arises out of the H.G. Wells Society centenary conference of *The War of the Worlds* held at Royal Holloway College in September 1998. Five of the conference papers are reprinted as well as two other articles, eleven book reviews and five letters to the editor. In this review I will focus on just three of the essays, only mentioning the titles of John Huntington's 'My Martians: Wells's Success' and Charles E. Gannon's "'One Swift, Conclusive Smashing and an End": Wells, War, and the Collapse of Civilisation', due to lack of space for further discussion.

Brian Aldiss kicks off the collection with his 'The Referee of *The War of the Worlds*', discussing in a witty manner Wells's bias for or against the earthlings in the book. By contextualising the Martians' behaviour and technology in their late-nineteenth century setting, Aldiss reveals just how 'human' they are; he gives as examples the Martian cylinders' launch from big guns, the narrator's comparison of the Martians' behaviour to European genocide against the Tasmanians, and the genre of Anglophobe invasion stories within which *The War of the Worlds* fits, starting with 'The Battle of Dorking' (1871). On the other hand, however, Aldiss also demonstrates the Martians' superiority to humankind, as they come from "above us" and are "intellectually our superiors". In viewing Wells as the referee of the story, this fact gives the Martians the first goal. Goal number two goes a similar way when the narrator twists the Martian-human relationship from being like that between humans and lower animals to be like that between present and future humans: "To me it is quite credible that the Martians may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves" – the Martians' evolutionary advance upon us makes the score 2-0. According to Aldiss, the earthlings gift the Martians a third goal (perhaps an own goal?) by devolving in the face of the invading *Übermenschen* – they flee "as blindly as a flock of sheep" – and suddenly the score is 3-0 to the visiting side. By the time the Martians win a penalty – as a result of the Artilleryman abdicating his humanity by relishing his role as a resisting "rat" under Martian hegemony – the game seems all but won by the extraterrestrials. (The fact that the Martians have eliminated disease from Mars later earns them "a palpable goal" making the score 4-0 or, depending on whether the