

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

penalty was scored or not, 5-0?) Aldiss ends his survey with the bacterial murder of the Martians, though claiming referee Wells has blown the whistle on mankind by the end of the book. However, with the death of the invaders, one can hardly say they have won, though humanity certainly took home no silverware either. Surely, with the aliens 5-0 up, the referee finally shows his bias in favour of the earthlings and abandons the game – on the premise, no doubt, that the pitch was invaded by bacteria! Perhaps, on Aldiss's reading, the issue arising from *The War of the Worlds* should be an analysis of the replay – Wells's canon of writing from 1898 to 1945!

In 'How Far Can We Trust the Narrator of *The War of the Worlds*?', Patrick Parrinder puts the word of the narrator to the test and finds it wanting in accuracy. By dissecting the smokescreen of the book's opening paragraph, Parrinder reveals the falsehood of the assumption that the Martians planned their invasion "keenly and closely [...] slowly and surely" when in fact they are "in all probability, no more intelligent than we are." Similarly, Parrinder demonstrates that far from damaging the position of Christian mythology in Victorian society, the narrator himself appeals to God for protection against the invaders. The narrator's claim that the Martians' intellect is "unsympathetic" is also disputed by Parrinder, who reminds us that their feeling for each other is the opposite, cooperating in their work, rescuing their fallen comrades and expressing emotion through their jubilant and, later, wailing hooting noises. The fact that the Martians do not treat humanity kindly is no more to be expected than for humans to "treat wild rabbits, let us say, or rats" in a similar way. When discussing the intelligence of the Martians, Parrinder is less than convincing, however. He starts by questioning whether a larger brain-size (the Martians' are huge) really equates to higher intelligence. After all, "The engineers and assault troops sent to Earth are not central directing intelligences [...] and when on active service one would have thought all that grey matter something of an encumbrance." This criticism, however, ignores what Wells was to write in *Anticipations* (1902) about just those soldiers and engineers of the future who would, indeed, form the directive elite of society. If the Martians are more advanced than humans, their military personnel and engineers may well be the "central directing intelligences" of their society who, through colonising earth, are leaving their "People of the Abyss" behind to be "poisoned" by the death of Mars in the way that Wells's "New Republicans" will "poison" the "People of the Abyss" in the coming 20<sup>th</sup> century. As further evidence of

the Martians lack of intelligence (and, thus, humanity's relatively greater intellect), Parrinder cites the fact that the Martians were incurious about the humans they were fighting and did not attempt to preserve them in a museum, as the humans did with a Martian in the Natural History Museum. However, the Time Traveller in *The Time Machine* notes how incurious he became amongst the Eloi and, anyway, collecting artefacts in museums does not in itself demonstrate intelligence on the part of the collector, as Parrinder himself infers in his *Shadows of the Future* when discussing the Victorians' interest in lining up relics and classifying them, often in simplistic evolutionary scales, in their science museums. Overall, however, Parrinder's article is interesting and well thought out and probably constitutes the best essay in the volume. He concludes, persuasively, that "The narrator is overcome first by war fever and then by a ruthless and selfish determination to survive at all costs", as well as by the guilt of the deaths of the curate and the Spotted Dog landlord and the abandonment of his wife at Leatherhead and that these factors lead to a disturbed state in the narrator that distorts his retelling of the alien invasion he has witnessed.

Sylvia Hardy's paper, 'H.G. Wells and British Cinema: The War of the Worlds', discusses the practical relationship between Wells and the cinema, and his efforts to 'pacify' the "war of the worlds" going on between literature and filmmaking. Thus, rather than discuss the artistic interpretation of Wells's writing by filmmakers, Hardy reveals Wells's personal involvement with the cinema, from his contact with the pioneering R.W. Paul in 1896 and the signing of his first film-rights contract with Gaumont in 1914, to his final projected cinematic scheme – the incomplete filmscript entitled *The Way the World is Going* in 1946. Curiously, though Wells permitted the filming of his stories regularly throughout his life, Hardy notes that he showed little interest in them. His keenness only emerged when he had an active part in the filmmaking process and in 1934, with the production of *Things to Come*, "Wells became wholeheartedly and obsessively involved." Hardy demonstrates the tension between Wells and the film's makers, William Cameron Menzies and Alexander Korda, questioning the extent of Wells's role in the final version of the film and revealing his professionalism at showing a united front with Korda in publicising the film rather than making public the often stressful rivalry that existed between them and other members of the film-crew during the making of the film. Hardy's conclusion is that, though Wells wrote stories that allow for imaginative

reinterpretation for cinematic use, he was unable to write effectively directly for the screen and thus, the "war of the worlds" of filmmaking and literature continued to rage long after his involvement with both media ceased.

[Also of special interest to Wellsians is *Foundation*, no.65 (Autumn 1995) which commemorates the centenary of *The Time Machine* and is entitled 'Wells's *Time Machine* After 100 Years'. Back issues of *Foundation* can be ordered from Andy Sawyer, Science Fiction Foundation Collection, Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, PO Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA; email: <A.P.Sawyer@liverpool.ac.uk>.]

**Book Review:** *When the Sleeper Wakes: A Critical Text of the 1899 New York and London First Edition, with an Introduction and Appendices*, 'The Annotated H.G. Wells, 5', by H.G. Wells, ed. by Leon Stover (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000). xii, 465pp. \$55. [By John S. Partington]

In this critical text of H.G. Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes*, Leon Stover makes a bold attempt to read fiction in its contemporary context and reveal the author's 'overt' political message. Stover tends to stretch his case for Wells as a Saint-Simonian Socialist beyond belief, however, through a desperate use of footnotes – 263 in all, and some several pages long – though followed by a series of appendices which contradict his thesis. These appendices are mostly the author's introductions to reprinted editions of his book (1910, 1921 and 1924) and they all ridicule the idea of taking the novel as a serious statement of the future of society – just exactly what Stover is trying to do. Stover explains away these contradictions either by discovering a 'hidden' meaning between the lines of the introductions in question or by simply saying "This preface is troublesome because it seems to repudiate the author's intention" (in the case of his criticism of Wells's 1921 introduction). Nonetheless, despite Stover's frankly weird political agenda, this volume has it uses. Firstly, the republication of Wells's introductions and also his, now rare, 1912 article, 'The Labour Unrest', and the 1899 Wells interview, 'What I Believe', are a boon for researchers seeking easy access to some of Wells's lesser known pieces of writing.

And secondly, occasionally Stover does make an enlightened comment in his introduction or in a footnote to the text that can form a basis for further research. The book should come with a warning label, however, when made available to eager researchers cutting their teeth in the skills of interpretation. *When the Sleeper Wakes* is number five in Stover's six-part reassessment of Wells's science fiction – *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man* and *The First Men in the Moon* have also appeared and *The War of the Worlds* is due to follow shortly. These can all be order from the following address: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina 28640, USA (Order line in the USA: 1-800-253-2187).

#### Recent Books and Articles on H.G. Wells

Aldiss, Brian, 'The Referee of *The War of the Worlds*', *Foundation*, vol.28, no.77 (autumn 1999), pp.7-14

Baxter, Stephen, 'Rebuilding the Time Machine: The Science of H.G. Wells', <<http://www.sam.math.ethz.ch/~pkeller/BAXTER/Articles/HGWells.html>>

Baxter, Stephen, 'Wild Extravagant Theories: The Science of *The Time Machine*', *Paper for Picocon 13, Imperial College, 4 February 1996*, <<http://www.sam.math.ethz.ch/~pkeller/BAXTER/Articles/PicoconTalk.html>>

Boerst, William J., *Time Machine: The Story of H.G. Wells* (Greensboro, NC: Morgan Reynolds, 2000)

Bond, Patricia, 'H.G. Wells and Spade House', in *Spade House Nursing Home* (Folkestone)

Bradshaw, David, ed., 'Open Conspirators: Huxley and H.G. Wells 1927-35', in *The Hidden Huxley* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), pp.31-43

Brians, Paul, 'Study Guide for H.G. Wells: *The War of the Worlds* (1898)' (2 March 1995), <[http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~brians/science\\_fiction/warofworlds.html](http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~brians/science_fiction/warofworlds.html)>