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Editorial

1995 has been a significant year for everyone interested in the life, work and thought of Herbert George Wells. The Symposium held at Imperial College in July – “*The Time Machine: Past, Present and Future*” – attracted over a hundred enthusiasts from all over the world. It is a testament to the continuing power of *The Time Machine* that over forty interesting and widely varying papers, plus panel discussions, addressed this one book. It would be impossible to outline any of these papers in sufficient detail in a brief editorial, but I can mention two outstanding contributions: one was an opening session, chaired by Brian Aldiss in which he discussed the continuing significance of *The Time Machine* with Doris Lessing and Stephen Baxter (whose *Time Ships*, a sequel to *The Time Machine*, had just been published) and the other was a stimulating lecture delivered by Elaine Showalter the following morning. Her comments on “*The Time Machine and the Death of Literature*” generated considerable discussion. The climax came with a dinner at Richmond, hosted by Michael Sherborne as a suitably dishevelled – and late-arriving – Time Traveller, and the Symposium ended with visits to Bromley Library and Down House. Patrick Parrinder and George Slusser are editing a book of conference papers which they hope will be published next year.

The other outstanding feature of this past year so far as the Society is concerned is the number of books by and about Wells which have emerged. Two of our Vice-Presidents have published major books: Patrick Parrinder's *H.G. Wells, Science Fiction and Prophecy*, and Michael Foot's *H.G.: The History of Mr Wells* are both reviewed in this issue. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the review of another of this year's important publications, J. Percy Smith's fine, illuminating edition of the Shaw–Wells correspondence, will have to be held over, and, for reasons of space I have decided to postpone until the next *Wellsian* a consideration of Alan Mayne's new edition of *World Brain*, and of the Everyman paperback series of Wells texts.

The papers included in this issue, like the Symposium itself, look both backwards and forwards, and they too indicate the wide range of current approaches to Wells studies. In “A Response to Tom Miller's 'H.G. Wells and Aldous Huxley'”, Kyle Patrick Hardin takes issue with some of the claims made in Tom Miller's paper published in the last *Wellsian*, whilst Gareth Davies-Morris's entertaining article provides an up-to-the minute account of Lou Pidou, the house Wells shared with Odette Keun in Grasse over sixty years ago. John Hammond's “The Significance of Weena” is an outcome of discussions at the Symposium, where debates about the role and importance

of Weena in *The Time Machine* produced widely differing views. Alex Boulton's wide-ranging paper examines Wells's "The Country of the Blind" in terms of recent post-colonial theory and shows the story to be both part of an ancient and continuing literary tradition and an ironic response to it.

S.H.

Contributors

Andrew Boulton is a postgraduate student and Fulbright scholar. His article is based on a recent research project

Gareth Davies-Morris lives in Marseilles. He has completed a master's thesis on the dialectic of Wells's scientific romances and is currently engaged in further research on this topic.

J.R. Hammond is President and current chairman of the H.G. Wells Society. He has written a number of books on Wells including *H.G. Wells and Rebecca West*.

Sylvia Hardy is a Research Associate of Nene College, Northampton, and is engaged in research on H.G. Wells.

Patrick Parrinder is Professor of English Language and Literature at Reading University. He is a Vice-President of the H.G. Wells Society and his most recent book on Wells, *H.G. Wells, Science Fiction and Prophecy*, is reviewed in this issue.

Kyle Patrick Hardin is a member of the Society who attended this year's Symposium. He lives in Grand Forks, Texas.

Michael Sherborne (formerly Michael Draper) is Head of English at Luton Sixth Form College. His edition of "*The Country of the Blind*" and *Other Stories* will be published in the USA in 1996 by Oxford University Press.

Kyle Patrick Hardin

A Response to Tom Miller's "H.G. Wells and Aldous Huxley"

Recently, the *Wellsian* (Winter 1994, No. 17) featured an article by Tom Miller entitled "H.G. Wells and Aldous Huxley". On page three, Miller writes that

[T.H. Huxley's] most important fictional treatment by Wells came in *The World Set Free*. . . . Huxley's manner of lecturing is brilliantly described as well as his impact on an audience, in Wells' account of a lecture by Professor Rufus. The identification must be beyond dispute as the lecture is set in Edinburgh, where Huxley delivered the lectures later published as *Man's Place in Nature*. . . .

It is certainly possible that Wells drew from his first-hand experience of T.H. Huxley's lecturing mannerisms, but to say that Professor Rufus is T.H. Huxley is at best a simplification, and ignores the other personality whom Wells drew from for the lecture in *The World Set Free*, namely Frederick Soddy.

There are many reasons to suspect that Rufus is at least in part Soddy. For one, Soddy's book, *The Interpretation of Radium* is the acknowledged inspiration for Wells's book about atomic war, and Soddy's book was itself based on his lectures on radium which he had delivered in Edinburgh. Even more convincing is Well's admission that his story owed "long passages to the eleventh chapter of [Soddy's] book." The best example of such a borrowing is Rufus's lecture. Below I have included two excerpts, one from Soddy's book and the other taken from Rufus's lecture in *The World Set Free*.

The art of kindling fire is the first step towards the control and utilization of those natural stores of energy on which civilization even now absolutely depends . . . With reference to the newly recognized internal stores of energy in matter we stand today where primitive man first stood with regard to the energy liberated by fire . . . At the climax of that civilization the first step of which was taken in forgotten ages by primitive man, and just when it is becoming apparent that its ever-increasing needs cannot indefinitely be borne by the existing supplies of energy, possibilities of an entirely new material civilization are dawning with respect to which we find ourselves still on the lowest plain – that of onlookers with no power to interfere. The energy which we require for our existence and which Nature supplies us with but grudgingly and in none too generous measure for our needs, is in reality locked up