

"There is the love of mankind displayed in the self-sacrifice of the Time-Traveller, Benham, and others who place the interest of the race before their own" (p.43). This is undoubtedly true of Benham, but can one speak of "self-sacrifice" in the case of the Time Traveller? How could his final departure affect the future of the race? Or again, on p. 65, we find:

"Significantly, in *The War of the Worlds*, an unnamed man, suggesting the typical Wellsian god-man and embodying those elements in which Wells sees the only salvation for the species, devises a plan to take to the sewers in an effort to escape the Martians."

But the context does not support this interpretation: the artilleryman does have splendid plans for the salvation of mankind, but, far from being a god-man, he is made to appear as an inefficient dreamer incapable of carrying out the simplest piece of work.

There are also a number of minor factual mistakes which should be rectified in another edition: Richard Hauer Costa is called Richard **Howard** Costa (p. XVII); Lady Harman's husband is called Lord Harmon (pp. 50-51) Prendick, the narrator in *The Island of Dr Moreau*, is constantly spelt Pendick (pp. 57-58); *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* becomes *The Autocracy of Mr. Parnham* (p. 100); and finally "mitigate against" is frequently used for "militate against", a misprint that would certainly have delighted Mr. Polly.

However, these are only minor blemishes which do not alter the high quality of this book. I would be tempted to argue that Wells's main weakness lay less in his not realizing that the greatness of man depended as much on his natural shortcomings as on his potentialities, than in his refusing to face the fact that art has a status of its own, independent from external systems of values. But of course, he never thought of himself as an artist and once he decided that fiction was to be subservient to his plans for a New World Order, his position became more and more ambiguous.

Short as it is, Borrello's book is a very interesting piece of criticism and a worthy contribution to the recent renewal of Wellsian studies. It is compulsory reading for all Wells enthusiasts, and, for the reader as yet unacquainted with Wells, a remarkably balanced introduction.

*J.P. Vernier*

## H.G. WELLS : EARLY WRITINGS IN SCIENCE AND SCIENCE FICTION (University of California Press, £8.00)

Two aspects of this book (*H.G. Wells : Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, Edited by Robert M. Philmus and David Y. Hughes, University of California Press, 1975, Berkeley) make this collection, with annotations and commentaries, equally entertaining and informative. One aspect shows us the development of H.G. Wells as a highly individualistic human being. The second reveals the workings of his mind as it produces his provocative explorations and beliefs. For an admirer of H.G. Wells, as well as for a serious student of his work, this book is essential for greater understanding. The authors, by their introductory and explanatory notes, have demonstrated their knowledge and appreciation of such early writings. They have avoided pedantry and have displayed their knowledge, appreciation and evaluations clearly and delightfully.

The book's preface states that "the primary purpose" is to "make available in one volume a selection of ... hitherto unreprinted writings of the 1880s and 1890s." The authors say that together these essays, reviews and fiction permit the reader to follow the outline of Wells's intellectual development." The pertinent commentaries very much assist the reader to this end.

The book plainly illustrates Wells's "distinction between two basic 'standpoints' towards phenomena, and especially towards things human," one standpoint being cosmically long-range and the other individualistically close-up. The remarks preceding the five sections reprinting his work "are meant to be suggestive and to guide the reader to perceive the coherence of Wells's thought." Although admittedly not "exhaustive" the remarks are astute and stimulating and certainly do "clarify Wells' vision of 'the poetry of science'." The authors' organization of the material follows a logical pattern and encourages insight and thus understanding about the young Wells.

### A Forthcoming Book:

## H.G. WELLS AND MODERN SCIENCE FICTION

*Edited by Darko Suvin  
Associate Editor, Robert M. Philmus*

This volume brings together essays by some of the foremost experts on H.G. Wells and science fiction. These scholars, representing seven countries and three continents, have in the main been working dependently of one another, but their studies display a collective unity that one would not ordinarily expect in an anthology of this kind.

Such coherence can partly be attributed to the interaction of ideas that occurred during a symposium on Wells held at McGill University in 1970 -- a symposium at which most of the contributions included here were first presented. However, that symposium revealed unanimity more than it created it. From the beginning, there was a consensus about what has become the implicit governing premise of this book: that modern science fiction originates in Wells.

In complementing one another with regard to that premise the contributions follow three basic approaches.

The first concentrates on the character of Wells's science fiction considered both in itself and as a general model for later writings in this genre. Tatyana Chernysheva explores the relation between that fiction and the fairy tale and folktale. David Y. Hughes, J.P. Vernier, and Darko Suvin discuss various aspects of the impact of the theory of evolution and Darwinism generally, and the teachings of Thomas Henry Huxley in particular, on the content and structure of Wells's science fiction of the 1890's. R.D. Mullen then goes on to make a case for Wells's later writings, which he argues, have been undeservedly neglected.