

The World Set Free:

H.G. Wells Legacy and Its Descendants

[Author: Miguel A. Sanchez-Rey]

H.G. Wells is considered by many to be the greatest modernist science fiction writer in English literature. Also a scholar in medicine and a diplomat. Considered to have had a tantalizing and scandalous personal early life, but also a revering public life pursuing social democracy in the early 20th century in Britain. Opposed to anarchism. An Oxford grad in medicine, his novels dealt with such themes as time-travel, a Martian invasion, etc. etc.

But most importantly was H.G. Wells' predictive power in anticipating conflict. His outspoken opposition against the fall-out of WW1 led to H.G. Wells' support for the League of Nations. Which though troublesome set the stage for the United Nations Charter. In many ways H.G. Wells' prediction of time-travel and First Contact hasn't yet been realized though his visionary take has influenced many writers since then. The Island Dr. Moreau dealt with heavy issues of animal pain and cruelty, and Dr. Moreau's pointless pursuits of a new freakish field of medicine. That said H.G. Wells has written more novels than said, but his focus was in the realm of sci-fi and its perils and promises

for invigorating public understanding in the field of the natural and social sciences.

H.G. Wells led to many descendants in the science fiction genre: Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury etc. etc. Descendants which model their science fiction using H.G. Wells template to further their visionary ideas of technological advances that dealt with metaphor and conflict. Metaphor and conflict that remained, nevertheless, an essential aspect to the theme and plots of their story-telling. But what they had in common, as in H.G. Wells, is in blending the technological sciences, with the natural and social sciences, in such a way that they could foresee futuristic society and conflict. Leading to the movie genre of Gene Roddenberry's Star Trek or George Lucas Star Wars. In all H.G. Wells set the stage for a new perspective on science fiction that goes far beyond Jules Verne or Mary Shelley's single novel, Frankenstein.

Everyone otherwise in H.G. Wells story-line is an it in the life of H.G. Wells and its descendants. The question is why is that case? They got carried by a world set free that wasn't meant to be. And in that sense H.G. Wells meant well but all of his descendants foresaw the flaws of H.G. Wells desire for a world state and a planet that adulates the sciences in such a way that the sciences can take political leadership in an aftermath of a catastrophic global conflict. Only ushering a planetary dictatorship that at the end remains not only hazy and uncertain but also with a hopeful message that is short-live.

And that is that the sciences can liberate humanity from the savagery of the state-of-nature of its primitive ancestors that will bring about lasting peace. For the sciences has brought many comforts and ease of mind, but very little of that comfort and ease of mind has been able to keep up with the accelerating pace of globalization and flaw/risky decision-making that has led to the dawn of the Scientific Age. And even if man has achieved the better angels of our nature, a truism persists and that is peace-of-mind may be found in technology

and science but pain and grief is an unresolved matter when force and extreme authoritarianism is what preserves and sustains a false sense of tranquility.

That is H.G. Wells remains a key figure in a genre of thematic science fiction. But has also been gripped by the ghostly apparition that lurks in the collective subconscious. A ghostly apparition that signifies/signified Post-Modernity's failure to achieve its stated objectives for a transcendental philosophy. Even in the realm of sci-fi. For sci-fi has seen its model as an example of progress and liberal politics, but having overreach itself it can no longer withstand the frantic pace of the sciences and for that reason sci-fi can no longer hold itself together as a self-contained literary movement.

With that in consideration, H.G. Wells is an inspirational figure but also a frightening Virgil in a genre of false story-telling.