



H. G. Wells: The War of the Worlds

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With H.G. Wells' other novels, *The War of the Worlds* was one of the first and greatest works of science fiction ever to be written. Even long before man had learned to fly, H.G. Wells wrote this story of the Martian attack on England. These unearthly creatures arrive in huge cylinders, from which they escape as soon as the metal is cool. The first falls near Woking and is regarded as a curiosity rather than a danger until the Martians climb out of it and kill many of the gaping crowd with a Heat-Ray. These unearthly creatures have heads four feet in diameter and colossal round bodies, and by manipulating two terrifying machines – the Handling Machine and the Fighting Machine – they are as versatile as humans and at the same time insuperable. They cause boundless destruction. The inhabitants of the Earth are powerless against them, and it looks as if the end of the World has come. But there is one factor which the Martians, in spite of their superior intelligence, have not reckoned on. It is this which brings about a miraculous conclusion to this famous work of the imagination.

H. G. Wells: The War of the Worlds Details

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Becky says

As I was reading this, two thoughts struck me.

The first was that this book was less about Martians than it was about how humanity views itself as the "Kings of the Earth". Mankind has always had this annoying tendency to think that whatever serves us is good and right, despite whatever injury is done to the Earth and any other living creature on it in obtaining whatever it is that we want. The Martian invasion served only to open our eyes to this blindness and willful ignorance.

I appreciated some of the artilleryman's ideas on cohabitation, in so far as he compared the surviving humans to rodents or small animals -- the Martians (as the "New Kings of the Earth") will let us be, as we mean them no harm-- unless they run out of food, that is. Isn't this really how animals must see us? I think so. Too bad that's not true... Humans will hunt, kill and exploit for the sport of it, not just for survival.

The invasion in the book awakens us to the fact that there is always someone bigger, badder and meaner out there to hunt humans as if we are now the animals.

But I digress!

My second thought was that it was really odd that all 7 of the mentioned Martian cylinders landed in England. I mean, even if we expand this to include Ireland, Scotland and Wales, we are talking about an area of 151,502 square miles. Compare this to Asia at 17,700,000 square miles or even Europe at 3,930,000 square miles. (Figures are from Google.)

About 3/4 through the book, it's mentioned that other cylinders are probably wreaking havoc on other parts of the world. I suppose it must be assumed that they had some trajectory and that the cylinders were shot at the same time each day to follow it, but then why only aim at one area if world domination is your goal?

In this one particular, I could not suspend my disbelief to allow for 7 out of 10 cylinders to hit such a small area of the planet.

I am probably over-thinking this... I feel better after getting all of that off of my chest though! I did really enjoy the story itself, and would definitely recommend it to anyone. It's short enough so that it is not a daunting read, but it contains such a large story that it is immensely entertaining.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

I hadn't read this classic (1898!) science fiction novel since I was probably a teenager, and I didn't particularly care for it much back then, but I let myself get roped into a group read of it, partly because it's so short. And also my literary diet needs more classics. And you know? I'm glad I did.

The War of the Worlds is a lot more thoughtfully written than I had remembered. In between deadly heat

rays, huge tripod machines striding around the country killing everything in their path, and bloodthirsty Martians trying to take over Earth (starting with Great Britain), there's critique of colonialism, religious hypocrisy, and even how humans treat animals. The way people react in a crisis is given just as much attention as the Martians' actions.

Upping my rating from 3 stars to 4.5 on reread, partly in recognition of how advanced this book was for its time in some of its concepts, and the influence it's had on the SF genre.

February 2018 group read with the Non-Crunchy Classics Pantaloonless crew.

Jeff says

One of my favorite movies growing up was the old War of the Worlds movie – the '50's film, not the itty-bitty Tommy remake. I had to watch it each and every time it played on television. The same running dialogue would go on inside my head: "Cowardly dudes, don't wave that white flag, they're Martians, they're probably color blind or something."

"Oops, too late, you're toast."

Or "Maybe the A-bomb will work *this time*. Nope, you're toast."

I also liked to imitate the heat ray sound when I re-enacted the movie later:

"Dododododoodododoodleydo". It was a combination of a yodel and the sound the cat would make when its tail would get caught under the rocking chair.

"Dododododoodododoodleydo". Barbie's dream house is toast.

"Dododododoodododoodleydo". You can't use the Barbie car to escape, Ken, you sexless loser. *imitation explody sound as the Barbie car and Ken go up in a ball of flame*

"Dododododoodododoodleydo". GI Joe, Batman, a Rock 'em, Sock 'em robot, and a one-armed cowboy hurl a huge pillow from the sofa at the Martians, thus ending the invasion. Get your asses back to Mars, bitches.

For Wells, this was a pioneering book, its tropes were to be dug up and used over and over again. Wells does here as Wells does in his other books – throws in some social commentary: If the British lorded over much of the known world back then, foisted itself on "lesser" cultures, why could it not get it's comeuppance by being stomped around by a more powerful foe – in this case, obese, slow-assed, turd-like aliens from Mars.

This was a buddy read with those Pantless connoisseurs of fine, classic literature and is another example of a classic book that doesn't suck donkey balls.

Evgeny says

Ladies and gentlemen, I shall read you a wire addressed to Professor Pierson from Dr. Gray of the National History Museum, New York. "9:15 P. M. eastern standard time. Seismograph registered shock of almost earthquake intensity occurring within a radius of twenty miles of Princeton. Please investigate. Signed, Lloyd Gray, Chief of Astronomical Division" . . . Professor Pierson, could this occurrence possibly have something to do with the disturbances observed on the planet Mars?

Martians are coming!!! Run for your lives!!! Boo!!! Hey, what has Orson Welles got that I have not got? Now that I scared you let us go back to the review.

This is one of the best known science fiction stories of H.G. Wells (among with The time Machine and The Invisible Man) as well as the one of the first ones. In case you somehow missed it the book tells the tale of Martian invasion on Earth.

These guys decided Mars became too cold, but luckily they have a really nice cozy planet practically next door: our own Earth. They came and proceeded to beat the crap out of humans using so-called heat ray (which strongly reminds laser weapons, except that laser was not invented at the time of the book publication). And so the ~~fashion show~~

I mean total destruction of humanity began starting with British Islands (I found it strange that Martian decided this place was the best landing point; by pure laws of probability Russian Empire was the obvious candidate just because they had the largest territory).

Other than being the fist book that introduced the idea of alien invasion (since that time beaten to the death and beyond by pulp media)

and aforementioned laser there are quite a few interesting themes in here if you read carefully: colonialism - its ugly sides, religious hypocrisy, and relations between humans and animals - usually the former kill the later.

It might be the very first dystopian novel written way before the term came to be. I freely admit that the book is great, but personally I like both The time Machine and The Invisible Man better simply because I am not a big fan of dystopia. This is the only reason for one less star of the otherwise perfect rating.

P.S. Who would have thought Martians were anti-vaxers?

Carmen says

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as our own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable. It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days. At most, terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.

Hmmmm, how fucking amazing is this? Actually, the whole first chapter of this book, titled, "THE EVE OF WAR" is pretty amazing. Very enjoyable. The book loses something when it adopts our MC telling us about his experiences during the invasion, but Wells rescues himself with some breathtaking breakdowns of morality, ethics, war horrors, and survival. Not to mention class differences.

Wells is also, like Faber in *Under the Skin*, using aliens and science fiction to push a vegan agenda.

"You can't be serious, Carmen. H.G. Wells was not pushing a vegan agenda."

CARMEN: *sips coffee*

looks at you

Oh, yes, he absolutely was, and vegans of today who are interested in reading works of fiction which promote vegan lifestyles can enjoy both this book and Faber's book and perhaps incorporate them into a vegan book club. I mean, surely vegans must get tired of what can sometimes be self-righteous and pompous propaganda which exists in vegan non-fiction. Not to mention it is often fucking depressing, especially the books that talk about the suffering of animals in graphic detail. Even if something like veganism was not popular in Wells time and place, you can easily see how this is a vegan book.

The book makes some (what must be at the time: earthshattering) conclusions about humankind. This is a book like *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* which, when you read it now, it seems like old hat, but in its day must have just blown people away with its radical concepts.

Imagine humans NOT being the masters of all they survey. Imagine humans encountering beings smarter, stronger, and more ruthless than themselves, which see humans simply as ants, cockroaches, or rabbits - to be exterminated and/or eaten. That's what we are dealing with here, and it cannot be denied that Wells revolutionized and charged the genre of science-fiction much the way Mary Shelley did with her revolutionary, mind-blowing *Frankenstein*.

A lot of people read *FRANKENSTEIN* today and are disappointed. It's so old-fashioned. It's nothing like the media trained you to think it was. It's slow, it's old. You might read *WAR OF THE WORLDS* or *DRACULA* or *DR. JEKYLL* and feel the same way. But you have to understand that at the time, these

authors were completely slaying people's long-held beliefs and way of thinking. Some of the old sci-fi/horror classics hold up, and some don't. DR. JEKYLL is particularly weak IMO, but DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN hold up very well (IMO). I loved both and think they are still very arresting and relevant today.

So how does WAR OF THE WORLDS hold up? Amazing first chapter that blows you out of the water.

And we men, the creatures who inhabit this earth, must be to them at least as alien and lowly as are the monkeys and lemurs to us. The intellectual side of man already admits that life is an incessant struggle for existence, and it would seem that this too is the belief of the minds upon Mars. Their world is far gone in its cooling and this world is still crowded with life, but crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals. To carry warfare sunward is, indeed, their only escape from the destruction that, generation after generation, creeps upon them.

And before we judge them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races.

Think of everything humanity does to animals, and the genocide, war, and slavery it inflicts on other human beings. Wells keeps bringing this up throughout the novel in a rare show of clear-eyed thinking about humanity, especially for an Englishman in 1898.

Now, the book loses something when we start following our MC around and experiencing the invasion with him. But the book saves itself in a few ways.

One, Wells's writing.

Few people realise the immensity of vacancy in which the dust of the material universe swims.

...

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance.

He's got a lot of good writing in this book and some great turns of phrase.

Secondly, he decides not only to take down humanity's vanity and confidence, but also seeks to offer commentary on religion, class differences, and morality and ethics especially in the context of war. It's staggering how much he chooses to bite off here, but such takedowns engage the reader throughout the book.

He also doesn't skimp on the horror - not only the horrors and ravages of war, but the horror of the aliens and what they do to humans. It's honestly terrifying and Wells successfully scared me and made me disgusted.

I think he made his MC deliberately a member of the intelligentsia instead of a soldier, because - let me tell you - this book would have been completely different if told from the POV of someone who was a combat veteran. And that's on purpose. As the soldier he meets points out to him, after you've seen some shit then shit isn't as shocking.

"I saw what was up. Most of the people were hard at it, squealing and exciting themselves. But I'm not so fond of squealing. I've been in sight of death once or twice; I'm not an ornamental soldier, and at the best and worst, death - it's just death. And it's the man that keeps on thinking comes through."

The way Wells wraps up the book, the way he brings everything to a close, is also fucking brilliant. It may seem cliched or old hat NOW, but you have to realize it was mindblowing back then. Much like the concept of Jekyll/Hyde.

Now. I'm not saying that just because a book has cultural relevance and significance and is a classic in its genre that it's automatically good. Because I don't believe in that shit. Instead, I found myself actually enjoying and liking this book. That doesn't happen to me with every classic. Not every classic holds up. But classics that I enjoy and hold up for me (P&P, S&S, Frankenstein, Dracula, and Jane Eyre) don't please EVERYONE. I understand that old-fashioned books, language, and plotting can be boring and stupid to modern readers. And there are classics that come off that way to me, as well. So YMMV. I've certainly read classics that I've absolutely hated, and this might be one of those for you as well.

While reading this book it seemed achingly familiar to me. I think I've probably read this before. Maybe a decade ago or so, I don't know. It's also possible that this book is SO entrenched in pop culture that I just thought I'd read it, but I don't think so. But I'm going to list it here as my first reading since I can't specifically remember reading it before.

I like Wells's points here.

- His pushing of a vegan agenda; extraordinary for a man of his time.
- His takedown of religion and interpretation of God and what God entails. Not atheist, but a super interesting viewpoint of his time, cackling that 'God is not an insurance agent' and surmising that it's equally likely that humanity's new Martian masters also pray to God and expect God's protection.
- His portrayal as a curate (clergy) as a weak, spineless, helpless and selfish individual.
- His takedown and analysis of class differences, especially when the MC gets into a discussion with a soldier about humanity's future.
- His discussion of the horrors of war - not only what the enemy is inflicting upon you, but what war's victims end up doing to each other. His analysis of the terrible things people find themselves doing to survive, and if that can be forgiven or not when normality is restored.

Those who have escaped the dark and terrible aspects of life will find my brutality, my flash of rage in our final tragedy, easy enough to blame; for they know what is wrong as well as any, but not what is possible to tortured men. But those who have been under the shadow, who have gone down at last to elemental things, will have a wider charity.

I mean, take your pick, he just slays here with his cultural and social commentary. I find him lacking and tone-deaf on the plight of women, but I can't have everything. At least not from this author. >.< LOL

TL;DR - Hmmmmmmm. Reading the sci-fi and horror classics can be very illuminating and oftentimes rewarding. That was the case here. Even though I don't think this book is as strong structurally as FRANKENSTEIN or DRACULA (the plot meanders a bit), Wells certainly hammers home not only his revolutionary and life-changing ideas, but puts forth some true literary gems.

Although it isn't perfect, I am still giving it five stars. With some caveats.

Also, I want to restate that this won't be for everyone.

Strange night! Strangest in this, that so soon as dawn had come, I, who had talked with God, crept out of the house like a rat leaving its hiding place - a creature scarcely larger, an inferior animal, a thing that for any

passing whim of our masters might be hunted and killed. Perhaps they also prayed confidently to God. Surely, if we have learned nothing else, this war has taught us pity - pity for those witless souls that suffer our dominion.

Read with Non-Crunchy Cool Classic Pantaloonless Buddy Read group, February 2018

Fernando says

"Las obras de Mr. Wells pertenecen, sin duda, a un tiempo y un grado de conocimiento científico futuro muy alejado del presente, pero no completamente fuera de los límites de lo posible."

Julio Verne

Ya lo he afirmado en reseñas anteriores. La capacidad de anticipación a la tecnología y el futuro que tenía Herbert George Wells era ampliamente superior a la de Julio Verne a punto tal que el visionario francés lo admitía sin reparos.

Pero además de esta característica tan marcada en sus novelas, Wells nos alertaba sobre los posibles peligros que involucraba a la tecnología en poder de los hombres, sobre los riesgos de los avances científicos y los alcances de la ciencia sobre el planeta.

Sumado a esto, es importante reconocer también que Wells profundizaba en el costado psicológico del ser humano ante tantos cambios inesperados y en cómo el hombre tiene que lidiar con estos.

En tan sólo cuatro años, Wells había escrito cuatro novelas inolvidables: "La guerra de los mundos", "El hombre invisible", "La máquina del tiempo" y "La isla del Dr. Moreau", lo que demuestra su poderío narrativo que perdura aún hasta nuestros días.

"La Guerra de los Mundos" no es solamente un libro sobre la invasión de la Tierra a partir de la llegada de los marcianos. Tiene muchos elementos más que la hace una novela muy entretenida para ser tan corta y, como comentara anteriormente, nos muestra otro costado: el de la reacción del hombre ante la pérdida de su libertad.

A lo largo de la historia, hemos conocido acerca de las distintas invasiones y en todas ellas el patrón común es precisamente ese, el de la libertad perdida. Usualmente pondemos el ojo en el vencedor, pero no prestamos atención al vencido o dominado y en cómo influye en éste el hecho de ser sometido en todos los aspectos.

Es sobre esa faceta en donde Wells ahonda el desarrollo de su novela, porque para ser sinceros, si reemplazamos a los habitantes de la tierra, por ejemplo con un ejemplo cualquiera, por los polacos, luego de la invasión nazi en 1939 a Polonia, veremos que ese sufrimiento es exactamente igual al que nos cuenta el narrador de esta historia.

La opresión que viven los habitantes de la Tierra puede compararse a la de este pueblo o a cualquiera que haya experimentado un suceso similar.

Para ello y a la par de lo que sucede con la caída de los distintos cilindros a Inglaterra, Wells comienza a relatarnos las reacciones de los hombres que sufren el asedio y de cómo va esto trastocando su vida.

Durante el transcurso de la novela nos encontramos con grandes diferencias entre los seres humanos como sucede entre el narrador y el cura y también con el artillero. Distintas maneras de pensar nos llevan a un contrapunto interesante.

En primer lugar descubrimos que insólitamente la falta de fe y esperanza repercute totalmente en el cura, que es casualmente quien por su posición ante precisamente esa fe es quien más debe reconfortar al débil. En este caso no funciona y creo que se debe a una crítica que Wells entabla hacia la Iglesia como constitución.

Desconozco si era o no creyente pero pude notar que por momentos el narrador (que es tal vez un Wells encubierto) nos daba una imagen paranoica, frágil y temerosa de alguien que supuestamente debe mostrarnos

exactamente lo contrario.

En el caso del artillero, se desarrolla una personalidad completamente opuesta. La de aquellos hombres que bajo la influencia de la invasión a la que están sujetos intentan tomar partido para su beneficio o pactando secretas sumisiones a cambio de una traición a los suyos o en otros casos queriendo intentar una represalia que es imposible llevar a cabo y es ahí en donde el autor pone al descubierto nuestras defectos, ambiciones o debilidades como personas.

El punto del artillero es de todas maneras muy válido, pues éste pone de manifiesto que la supervivencia de los seres humanos está ligada directamente a que entendamos que, ante un dominio tan brutal como el que ejercen los marcianos, éstos estarán unidos o dominados. En nosotros está descubrir la verdad.

Un dato interesante que descubrí durante el tramo final de la segunda parte es que los marcianos comienzan a rociar toda la zona con una nube letal negra, principalmente en la ciudad de Londres que en ese libro equivale a la Nueva York de las películas de Hollywood, y este detalle me recordó a la de la nevada mortal con la que comienza la mítica historia gráfica de Hector Oesterheld en "El Eternauta". Tal vez, a partir de esta novela haya habido algún tipo de inspiración en el autor argentino para desarrollar su historia.

Para finalizar, simplemente dejo una pequeña reflexión e interrogante, ya que sabemos que esto es ficción, que la ficción es justamente la creación de mundos a partir de la realidad, que se han escrito muchos libros sobre el tema y que se filmaron centenares de películas pero, si un día nos despertáramos con la noticia de una invasión extraterrestre...

Tú, querido/a lector/a: ¿cómo reaccionarías?

Apatt says

“No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water.”

A beautiful opening to the book but I must say the Martians did a very poor job of scrutinising us human chappies and our little blue planet considering what transpires later. Ah, but I must not spoil the book even though I imagine most people reading this review (all three of them) already know how it ends. Which brings me to my next point, if you know the story of *The War of The Worlds* quite well already but have not actually read the book I urge you to read it, especially if you are a science fiction fan. I don't think there are many books in the pantheon of sci-fi as important as this one. This is the book that launched the alien invasion sci-fi trope and even manages to remain one of the best examples of it.

H.G. Wells was ~~literally~~* light years ahead of his time, the mind boggles to think what he was able to conceive in the 19th century; alien invasion, time travel, genetic engineering, all these when TV sets are still decades in the future. If historical importance is not much of an inducement for you and you are just looking for a thumping good read Mr. Wells is also at your service here. *The War of The Worlds* is often thrilling, skillfully structured and narrated with some unexpected moments of philosophising and surreal dialogue. I generally find that Wells wrote much better prose than most of today's SF authors do.

He even included some element of hard sf into his novels, here is an example from this book:

“It is still a matter of wonder how the Martians are able to slay men so swiftly and so silently. Many think

that in some way they are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber of practically absolute non-conductivity. This intense heat they project in a parallel beam against any object they choose, by means of a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition, much as the parabolic mirror of a lighthouse projects a beam of light."

Yes, you may already have a fairly good idea of *The War of The Worlds*' beginning middle and end without ever reading the book but you would miss Wells' marvelously immersive and visual storytelling and the subtexts embedded in the original texts. The scene of naval battle between the military's ironclads and the Martian tripods is vividly depicted and should please fans of military sf and general badassery. The slightly surreal chapter involving the artilleryman is a particularly interesting depiction of people who always seem to be brimming with ideas, plans and suggestions but never actually do anything.

The story of *The War of The Worlds* is so potent that Orson Welles' 1938 War of the Worlds 1938 radio broadcast "*became famous for causing mass panic, although the extent of this panic is debated*". Still, even moderate panic is an amazing achievement for a radio drama.

This book has of course been adapted into movies several times. Unfortunately a straight adaptation complete with the Victorian setting does not seem to have been made. The most recent adaptation being the 2005 Spielberg directed movie with Tom Cruise being the usual Cruisian hero, dodging Martian heat rays like nobody's business.

For this reread I went with the free Librivox audiobook version, very well read by Rebecca Dittman.

I hope to eventually read all of Wells' sci-fi and perhaps his more mainstream books also. Anyway, never dismiss H.G. Wells' sci-fi as old hat because he *invented* the hat and it is still superior to most of today's headgear.

* I have a bee in my bonnet about today's frequent (and incorrect) overuse of "literally".

A quick note about the ending:
(view spoiler)

Note:

- Update May 6, 2017: Now the Beeb is making a proper Victorian era adaptation, hurrah!

Denisse says

Read for the 2015 Reading Challenge: #41 A book by an author you've never read before *stupidly haven't read before I should say* **And for my 2015 Reading Resolutions: 5 classics (5/5) :D completed!!**

Excellent. Not just very interesting for all the technology and science it has, but outstanding in describing human behavior and criticizing Victorian society. **Very thrilling at parts, philosophically emotional at others and well written. Highly recommended for any sci-fi fan.** The ending might be a little *Deus Ex Machina* for some, but I love simple endings that make sense. Wells indeed a very good storyteller.

“En los últimos años del siglo diecinueve nadie habría creído que los asuntos humanos eran observados aguda y atentamente por inteligencias más desarrolladas que la del hombre y, sin embargo, tan mortales como él; que mientras los hombres se ocupaban de sus cosas eran estudiados quizá tan a fondo como el sabio estudia a través del microscopio las pasajeras criaturas que se agitan y multiplican en una gota de agua.”

Lo que mas me gusto de este libro es que **no solo es “un ataque alienígena” lo que esta describiendo el autor, si no que usa este concepto para explicar realidades del ser humano.** Si hoy aparece un autorillo con la misma idea general, solo estará escribiendo una divertida y entretenida historia con aliens, y ya. Puede que este bien escrito, puede que sus personajes sean buenos, pero carecen de cierta profundidad, profundidad que Wells maneja a la perfección con La Guerra de los Mundos.

Lo más interesante de esta historia es cuando fue escrita, porque impactan más ciertas acciones o pensamientos de los personajes. Justo cuando el hombre se sentía más invencible, viene Wells a desinflarles el ego. Hay tantas cosas tan buenas en este libro, no se ni como hacer la reseña.

El libro es una mezcla de muchas cosas, filosofía, supervivencia, intriga, tácticas de guerra, suspenso, desastre, incluso un poco de gore podría decir. Hay ciertas escenas bastante asquerosas de imaginar. Para ser un libro tan corto y rápido, cada trama se maneja muy bien porque no tiene ni una palabra de relleno.

Cada personaje equivale a una forma de pensar o actuar del humano, no esperen personajes para agregarlos a sus listas de **“fav-characters” “in-love-with-characters”** o en mi caso **“heros-i-love”**. Yo creo que Wells escribió esto mas para hacer recapacitar a la gente de esa época y leerlo ahora en 2015 es para entender la situación en la que se encontraban en ese tiempo.

La escritura es bastante intensa de una forma muy inteligente y sin sobredramatismo. Tiene unas descripciones muy buenas que a cualquier fan del *hard sci-fi* se le harán increíbles. Todo lo referente a la anatomía de los marcianos me encanto. La descripción del lado oscuro del hombre también esta muy bien escrita de forma muy psicológica.

“y en los marcianos tenemos la prueba innegable de la supresión del aspecto animal del organismo por la inteligencia”

A mi me gusta mucho la película con el Tom Cruise pero OJO; no le hace justicia, esa es la típica buena película americana, con el típico buen protagonista americano. Lean el libro!

Me encanta el final porque (view spoiler)

Mucho que decir, pero ya hice la reseña muy larga :(siempre me pasa D: Hay una razón por la que este es el mejor libro de aliens y es porque no solo es sobre aliens.

Recomendado, especialmente si traes ganas de un buen libro sci-fi. Pero pasa de el si no te va mucho la vena psicológica. Este NO es un libro de acción.

"Quizá el futuro les pertenezca a ellos y no a nosotros."

Bionic Jean says

Was H.G. Wells schizophrenic? I'm just wondering because his novels fall into 2 distinct groups. There are the gently humorous novels such as "*Kipps*" or "*The History of Mr Polly*" - and then there are his SF novels, of which **The War of the Worlds** is surely the most famous.

His prescience is startling. Not only was he writing in the pre-atomic age, but it is as well to remember that this book was written over a century ago (1898) which is even before powered flight (though only just!) I now want to read "*War in the Air*" to see if his imagination mirrored a potential reality as accurately as this.

The story-line is gripping, and (view spoiler) immensely powerful. H.G. Wells is particularly good at seeing the individual's experience set against the whole devastating picture, (shifting between the viewpoint character and his brother), which draws the reader into the story.

Adrian says

PLEASE SEE POSTSCRIPT

Well with GR telling me I haven't read any books this year (doh !), I thought I'd finish my first.

In all seriousness this is a re-read because I want to go on to Stephen Baxter's *The Massacre of Mankind*, which is part of one of this years numerous challenges (why do I do this to myself ?) Anyway GR says this is my 2nd read of this classic book (hah, what does GR know), whereas in fact it is probably my 5th or maybe 6th. To me it is certainly 4.5 stars and is enjoyable for so many reasons. The book itself is well written, as per usual from HG, it is not just a science fiction book but an in depth look or even examination of human nature and lastly I spent my childhood growing up and walking around the villages and countryside where the cylinders landed, so expected to see a Martian at any moment. How can I not like it, I know the roads the "writer" walks, cowers and scuttles along through the course of the story. Let's hope Mr Baxter can live up to this high standard with his authorised sequel.

PS I have added this postscript as some witty people have enquired if I was wandering the lanes and byways of this book with HG Wells. Now I maybe approaching my prime (cough cough) but I'm not Victorian ??

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

"I felt no condemnation; yet the memory, static, unprogressive, haunted me. In the silence of the night, with that sense of nearness of God that sometimes comes into the stillness and the darkness, I stood my trial, my only trial, for that moment of wrath and fear."

Hey, I finally get the addition of the rapidly growing red weed that's in one in favorite game of all time, SNES *Zombies Ate my Neighbors*. These martians weren't hunting cheerleaders though!

While the wording style is eloquent, beautiful, it fails to hold rapt focus. I think the main issue is the story is

so distant from characterization and mainly fills itself out by describing everything - martians, their instruments, the lands, the horrors, the pit.

There's a few pieces of dialogue but mainly the lone traveler is kept with the company of his own mind, but still the author tells us little. The character has a wife but little else is known besides his slightly philosophical nature and definite strokes of luck and fortune. He escapes much while others just happen to not make that same fortunate escape.

Being a classic written in another time, the science and plausibility isn't as advanced with its sketching as something today would be -- but it was incredibly inventive, especially for its time period. We've copied this work on art in so many ways since. Originality is something that shines for *The War of the Worlds* - we can only hope to be suitable imitators.

On the surface it is a story about the doom of man when the sky opens to release those vicious Martians - but the author enjoys later telling tales of how the human race is doomed and sort of deserves it because we have doomed others, the earth, and been unmerciful to the land, animals, and those tribes or peoples different from us. Wells raises the point of mankind ruthlessly wiping out others due to greed and savagery, without our current day giving it ample remorseful respect.

Bringing up animals, here is one quote among many that points the same theme out --

"...an inferior animal, a thing that for any passing whim of our masters might be hunted and killed. Perhaps they also prayed confidently to God. Surely, if we have learned nothing else, this war has taught us pity -- pity for those witless souls that suffer our dominion."

H.G. Wells keeps the philosophy strong by also taking pains to show that, while the Martians are a horrifying creation we have a right to fear, we ourselves are scary to animals and other races we've conquered.

Does compare the monstrosity of the Martians with mad of how we destroy the world or have taken no mercy in history on previous human tribes. When describing the horrors of the Martians feeding, the author then states, "The bare idea of this is no doubt repulsive to us, but at the same time I think that we should remember how repulsive our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit."

An interesting concept - especially because of the radio forecast that led to historic panic - and the creativity of its times. On the downside, the lack of characterization gives a lack of attachment for the reader other than sci-fi colored curiosity. Description only stays interesting up to a point.

I've seen that some find the ending anti-climactic, but I loved it. It's fitting, makes reasonable sense, was happy in its way, horrible in its way, suiting in its way.

"He had swept it out of existence, it seemed, without any provocation, as a boy might crush an ant hill, in the mere wantonness of power."

Joeji says

I acknowledge that I am one of the few people who actually enjoyed the recent "War of the Worlds" movie. The reason for this has to do more with the original book than Tom Cruise or Steven Spielberg's tendency to wittle everything, including alien attacks, down to simple family problems. In a lot of ways, "War of the Worlds" (2006) was a close to dead-on adaptation of the original Victorian novel.

Just a few words on why you should like, or if you don't like, respect "War of the Worlds" as a movie:

It avoids alien movie cliches:

1. There are no characters (Presidents, generals, etc.) who tell you what is going on on a global scale--all information is through rumors.
2. You do not see a major city destroyed nor any iconic landmarks.
3. Instead of humanity banding together to defeat a common foe, the characters and others they interact with are left increasingly fragmented and isolated.

That being said, Spielberg's "War of the Worlds" adapts much of the plot line and themes from the original novel. Instead of the 1950s version which pits a united front against the aliens (Cold War adapted), the original Victorian novel has a character travel isolated. Wells' narrator, like Tom Cruise, finds himself on a ferry-crossing, holed up with a panicked priest (who conflated with the artillery-man, provides us with a freaky Tim Robbins. Robbins even shares a few lines with the artillery-man). The ending is much the same, a kind of "Now what?" sense pervades. And of course, Morgan Freeman's opening and closings, are practically word by word from the novel.

The movie is also a great window into some of the novel's most important themes. "War of the Worlds," is a very Post-9/11 movie. There is the dust, the annihilation of things we find familiar, clothing floats from the sky in mimic of office paper...There is a pervading fear of complete and nonsensical annihilation. Whereas the 1950s adaption pits humanity against an enemy, the updated version worries itself with unknown enemies who spring from the ground. And, Spielberg, not one to be subtle, has Dakota Fanning ask Tom Cruise, "Is it the terrorists?"

That being said, the Victorian novel is a catalogue of Victorian anxieties. This is the age of colonialism, afterall, and suddenly England is beset by a much more powerful force, unexpected, and completely foreign. 'Reverse' colonialism? The aliens take England's resources, kill off its people, and even cover the landscape with alien plant-life.

And perhaps the most over-arching anxiety of all: Darwin. Here we have evolution at its cruelest; then consume us (drinking our blood like in Bram Stoker's Dracula). Just when humanity seems at its lowest, nature kicks in and saves the day. The ending seems anti-climatic now, but you have to remember that H.G. Wells did not have a pop-reference that included Will Smith destroying the mother-ship.

So my point is, "War of the Worlds" is an amazing book and good movie, and one can inform the other.

"This is not a war any more than it's a war between men and ants."

Paul Bryant says

This was not anything like the Tom Cruise movie so be warned. If you're expecting an action story about a divorced union container crane operator with a 10 year old daughter you ain't gonna find it here. They changed like 99% of everything around. As far as I could see there are only two things which are the same, one is that the Martians attack Earth in these COOL THREE LEGGED METAL 70 FOOT HIGH HEAT RAY KICK ASS DEATH MACHINES and two is that they die in the same way which I won't say here because that would be a giant spoiler but really it's a bit feeble but I guess could happen because they came from Mars which don't have bacteria. I don't do biology so I don't know if a whole PLANET can not have bacteria. Seems like also they couldn't have had YOGHURT as well, but HG Wells does not make this clear. Nor Stephen Spielberg either. Now this book version I think is not the book of the movie, I think it came first so that may explain why the movie is better, because really this book is lame. Yes more realistic because like the main guy is no Tom Cruise, but less action. What happens is that the Martians land and like fry everyone up with the DEATH HEAT RAY and send out the BLACK SMOKE to finish off anyone left alive and the main guy hops around and hides and eats really gross stuff and just sees stuff. As for instance he sees the army get a lucky shot in and kill the one single Martian but then like his buddies just wipe out the whole British army. Boom, heatray zzzzz – GONE! Oh yeah the book is set in England which I thought was strange. Why not America like the movie? Anyway just when the guy has realized that from now on we're just going to be MARTIAN FRENCH FRIES and kept in cages (when not heatrayed) then the Martians just like shrivel up and die. End of. So, in my opinion, I say watch the movie. Or you could go for the prog rock version, lol. Oh I guess I did give away the end. Okay, SPOILER – sorry. But everybody knows this story. It's like saying oh in the end Dracula dies with a steak in his arse. It's a known fact.

Joey Woolfardis says

Read as part of The Infinite Variety Reading Challenge, based on the BBC's Big Read Poll of 2003.

The War of the Worlds goes beyond the of-the-time popular military invasion fiction, which took away the standard protagonist/antagonist arc of single characters and popped whole countries or tribes in their place, and brings down to Earth a whole new enemy at a time when science fiction did not exist and science itself was oft thought of as fiction.

In Surrey, a professor is caught up in the invasion of Martians as they sweep through London and its surrounding boroughs after witnessing several explosion on the planet Mars at the Ottershaw observatory. We follow the un-named professor and his brother in first-person narrative, seeing through their eyes this invasion and the destruction caused.

The air was full of sound, a deafening and confusing conflict of noises-the clangorous din of the Martians, the crash of falling houses, the thud of trees, fences, sheds flashing into flame, and the crackling and roaring of fire. Dense black smoke was leaping up to mingle with the steam from the river, and as the Heat-Ray went to and fro over Weybridge its impact was marked by flashes of incandescent white, that gave place at once to a smoky dance of lurid flames.

The first thing one needs to reference is the radio adaptation of 1938, which was narrated by Orson Welles and caused panic due to its news-bulletin style: those listening thought it was the truth. Whilst reading the novel, there is no doubt that the imagery, style and prose of H.G. Wells purported this panic. It is written with such imagination that it's difficult not to imagine oneself standing on the side of a crater as Martians crawl sluggishly out of their spaceships.

It is not often that I can forgive a book its downfalls due to the time of its writing. (It's all very well to accept that, for the most part, racism and sexism and things of that ilk were at many times in history acceptable behaviour, but enjoying a book from a period with those things in this day and age is a thing I find difficult to do.) However, in the case of *The War of the Worlds* I think it is vitally important to read the book with the exact time and place it was written in history to be lodged within your mind alongside every word you read.

We have a primitive form of speculative fiction, the very foundations of what we now call science fiction. At the time, H.G. Wells was writing fiction that had scientific and imaginative leanings, but no-one would **dare** think that perhaps the fiction was not quite fiction after all. There is little mention of the Martians weaponry or technology except when it is in use: any modern-day writer of sci-fi would absolutely be telling you all about the nuts and bolts of the piece. We have primitive science, because that is what they had at the time of writing. Whilst the future may have been thought of, the idea of futuristic technology was as alien to them as the Martians and their technology are in the book.

So, the excitement of the scientific exploration of futures is not to be found here. But the imagination of Wells is so beyond almost everything else that was around at the time and coupling it with popular militarist fiction means that this is an extremely important novel in the progression of English fiction. It is not surprising that Wells was, like Darwin himself, stuck inextricably between the truth of science and the tradition of religion.

The story itself, if put in perspective-removed from its time period and thought of solely as a novel-is nothing special. The narrator is disjointed with his surroundings, the story disappointing in the way it ends and less dramatic and climactic than it could have been. The style of prose is lacking, the dialogue just standard and the characters just slight breezes on a warm day. In that, it would require a mere two or three stars: enjoyable, if a little boring. **But this is a novel that should be remembered for when it was written.**

The imagination of a scientific man who is at odds with what is right and wrong. The spectacular birth of a new genre of, not only writing, but of thinking, too. The fact that even though my oestrogen levels were almost at zero, the reunion at the end made me cry my eyes out because it was written so perfectly, so unexpectedly.

Of course, that film with that actor was better. Of course it was. We have perspective and technology now that means the original *The War of the Worlds* is pretty pathetic. It cannot possibly compete with our high standards of today, unless you have half a brain and take this novel for what it truly represents. Unless.

Susan Budd says

You would think that as Man grows in intelligence he would likewise grow in morality. But you would be wrong. Or at least, that is what history teaches us. About a hundred years before Harvard professor Robert Coles wrote his now famous article "The Disparity Between Intellect and Character," H.G. Wells made much the same observation.

At the end of *The War of the Worlds*, the unnamed narrator returns to his house and sees the paper he had been working on before the war began. "It was a paper on the probable development of Moral Ideas with the development of the civilizing process" (194). There's one for the wastepaper basket! As with much science fiction, the aliens in *The War of the Worlds* reveal more about us than about them.

Throughout the book, Wells compares Man with the lower animals. And it becomes increasingly uncomfortable. At the start, we are microbes under the Martians' microscope. We might be able to pass over the metaphor without much thought if only he didn't go on to compare us to monkeys, lemurs, dodo birds, bison, ants, frogs, rabbits, bees, wasps, and rats ~ animals we exploit or exterminate without compassion.

The narrator doesn't fail to make the connection between the Martians' treatment of humans and our treatment of animals. When he discovers that the Martians regard human beings as food, he is able to shift his perspective and see the human diet from the point of view of an animal that is typically regarded as food: "*I think that we should remember how repulsive our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit*" (139).

Moreover, it is not only animals that we destroy. Other humans are also fair game.

"And before we judge of them too harshly, we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?" (5).

If only moral growth went hand-in-hand with intellectual growth! But apparently evolution doesn't work that way. So a look at the Martians is a look into a mirror. It is also a look into our own future. And it is a future difficult to look upon. The Martians are ugly. And not just on the outside.

Evolution has turned them into little more than heads. Thanks to natural selection, their bodies function with marvelous efficiency. They need not eat, sleep, or engage in sexual intercourse. They communicate by telepathy. Through Darwinian adaptation, they lost what they did not need to survive and developed what they did need. And what they needed was intellect, not character. Heads, not hearts.

Is this where our species is headed? Wells was an advocate of Darwinism and if the Martians represent the future of Man, then *The War of the Worlds* must be read as a cautionary tale. The Epilogue supports this interpretation:

"If the Martians can reach Venus, there is no reason to suppose that the thing is impossible for men, and when the slow cooling of the sun makes this earth uninhabitable, as at last it must do, it may be that the thread of life that has begun here will have streamed out and caught our sister planet within its toils. Should we conquer?" (198-199).

Should we conquer? If we don't want to become blood-sucking heads without hearts we had better not! On the contrary, we had better learn compassion for those over whom our superior intelligence gives us power. "*Surely, if we have learnt nothing else, this war has taught us pity —pity for those witless souls that suffer our dominion*" (166).
