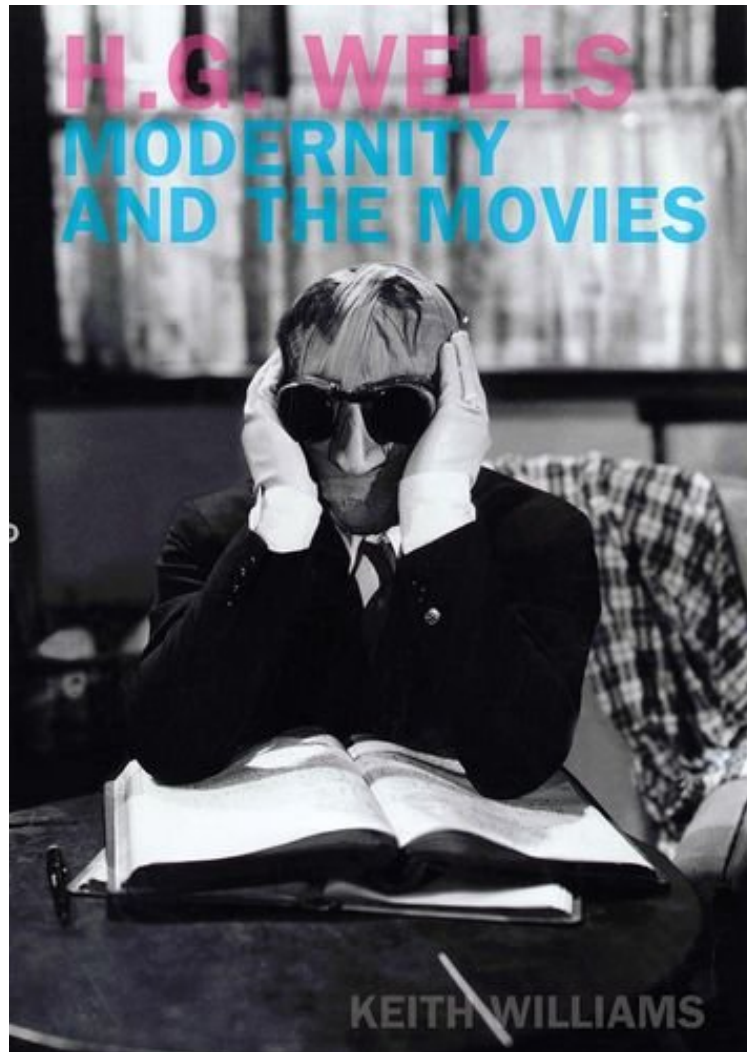


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## H. G. Wells, *Modernity and the Movies* (Liverpool University Press - Liverpool Science Fiction Texts Studies)

*Keith Williams*

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**Keith Williams : H. G. Wells, *Modernity and the Movies* (Liverpool University Press - Liverpool Science Fiction Texts Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised H. G. Wells, *Modernity and the Movies* (Liverpool University Press - Liverpool Science Fiction Texts Studies):

This book investigates Wells's interest in cinema and related media technologies, by placing it back into the

contemporary cultural and scientific contexts giving rise to them. It plugs a gap in understanding Wells's contribution to exploring and advancing the possibilities of cinematic narrative and its social and ideological impacts in the modern period. Previous studies concentrate on adaptations: this book accounts for the specifically (proto)cinematic techniques and concerns of Wells's texts. It also focuses on contemporary film-making 'in dialogue' with his ideas. Alongside Hollywood's later transactions, it gives equal weight to neglected British and continental European dimensions. Chapter 1 shows how early writings (*The Time Machine* and short stories) feature many kinds of radically defamiliarised vision. These constitute imaginative speculations about the forms and potentials of moving image and electronic media. Chapter 2 discusses the power of voyeurism, 'absent presence' and the disjunction of sound-image reproduction implied in *The Invisible Man* and its topical politics, updated in notable screen versions. Chapter 3 extends this to dystopian warnings of systematic surveillance, broadcasting of celebrity personae and 'post-literate' video culture in *When the Sleeper Wakes*, a crucial template for urban futures on film. Chapter 4 analyses Wells's belated return to screenwriting in the 1930s. It accounts for his 'broadbrow' ambition of mediating between popular and avant-garde tendencies to promote his cause and its mixed results in *Things to Come*, *The Man Who Could Work Miracles*, etc. Chapter 5 finally surveys Wells's legacy on both small and large screens. It considers whether, as well as being raided for scenarios for spectacular effects, his subtexts still nourish an evolving tradition of alternative SF, which duly critiques the innovations and applications of its host media.

"Wellsian scholars will appreciate *H. G. Wells: Modernity and the Movies* for its freshness and insight. The book also provides an excellent framework for a course on Wells that studies the interactions for his work in written and cinematic forms."-- *Science Fiction Studies*"Williams's study captures Well's interaction with cinema comprehensively."--*The Wellsian*"This book about the relationship between Wells and the cinema is thoroughly researched and full of interesting ideas. It is worth adding that the book has a section of nicely printed pictures: mainly illustrations that appeared in the magazine versions of Wells' short stories. These are quite fabulous, and one wonders to what extent early filmmakers might have been influenced by these figures as much as by the accompanying texts by the great writer."--*Early Popular Visual Culture*About the AuthorKeith Williams is senior lecturer in English literature at Dundee University and a recent consultant to BBC 4s trilogy of programs on the history of British science fiction, *The Martians and Us*.