

In response to my criticism of "'The Andreasson Affair" and "The Time Machine": Was H.G.Wells an Unwitting Contactee?' (Awareness Vol 9 No 3), the author of that article, Brian J. Burden, has supplied me with the following observations, in a letter dated 22 July 1981:

'Regarding the Wells article - whoever typed the stencils for "Awareness" made a small garble on page one; it doesn't, however, materially alter the sense, and there is nothing I would wish to change in the general thesis.

'I don't object to criticism, or to the total rejection of my argument, but there are certain ground rules which ought to be observed:

'1. Be sure that you understand what is being said before you attack it. Thus, as an "alternative" to my argument, you suggest that both Wells and Mrs Andreasson experienced some sort of eruption from the Jungian unconscious. My article doesn't exclude this possibility. If you go back to it you will find that I haven't attempted to define contactee experience. (Incidentally, Jung's theories are scientifically unproven too.)

'2. Credit the writer with having done his homework. If you want to know about Wells and drugs, a reading of the collected short stories will be sufficient to show Wells's extreme interest in the subject.

'3. Think around some of your rationalisations. If Mrs Andreasson's experience came from the pages of The Time Machine then the people who put her through hypnotic regression were either incompetent or crooked. Is this likely, ask yourself.

'4. So you don't think human minds are collectively affected by certain universal forces at certain periods of history. Fair enough, there's no scientific evidence. But there are many people who do hold this view - Arthur Koestler among them; I happen to share his view.

'5. It is illogical to try to defeat an argument by smashing up a pattern and then by minutely examining each separate fragment seeking to prove that the pattern didn't exist in the first place. Lawyers use this trick, but it is a ploy, not a legitimate instrument of logic.

'Might I suggest a reading or re-reading of Country of the Blind. It is, among many other things, a salutary warning against committing oneself to rigid belief-systems.'

My answers to the above points are:

1. By his own admission the author does not define what a contactee experience is. Other alternative explanations might not be excluded by the author, but such explanations are ignored in his article. Presumably one has to be a mind reader before one can 'understand what is being said'.

2. Just because Wells knew a lot about drugs doesn't mean to say he used them. Even if he did use drugs it doesn't prove he was a contactee.

3. It is an unfortunate fact that most hypnotic regression cases involving UFO percipients reveal the inexperience of the experimenters, mainly because this is such a complex area of study. If Mrs Andreasson was influenced by 'The Time Machine' it doesn't follow that those involved with her case were 'incompetent or crooked'.

4. It depends on what you define as 'certain universal forces'. Many universal factors can influence human behaviour, e.g. environment, age, race, sex, status, etc.

5. If the pattern is valid then its component parts should bear this out. Science has been so effective because the manifestations of nature have been dealt with in an increasingly specialized way. Anyway a relationship between 'The Time Machine' and 'The Andreasson Affair' can hardly be called a pattern.

None of Brian's points give any substance to his own thesis that H.G.Wells was an unwitting contactee. Primarily 'The Time Machine' is a clever adventure story which speculates upon the fate of mankind. His theme seems to be influenced by the political ideology of the period rather than by drugs or extraterrestrials. Conversely 'The Andreasson Affair' is an emotional dream-like story with religious overtones and is probably the articulation of Mrs Andreasson's personal preoccupations in a manner that her conscious mind can accept and deal with.

Perhaps Brian Burden & A.Koestler are right, we are ruled by 'certain universal forces'. But isn't this the trap of 'rigid belief-systems'? To avoid such traps we have to be critical in our analysis of the data we are confronted with. Brian's thesis is imaginative, but it has the strength of gossamer when examined even in a very superficial manner. ALL communications to: Nigel Watson, Westfield Cottage, Crowle Bank Road, Althorpe, South Humberside, DNI7 3HZ.