



## Shadow Lovers: The Last Affairs Of H. G. Wells

By Andrea Lynn



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Nearing age 70, and in what would be the last decade of his life, H. G. Wells fell in love at least three times—once with the much younger Baroness Moura Budberg, and soon thereafter with two well-born Americans, Constance Coolidge and Martha Gellhorn, twenty-five and forty years his junior, respectively. These would constitute what Wells himself described as his “last floundering towards the wife idea” and demonstrate in many ways that Wells was driven less by his considerable intelligence than by his obsession to find his ideal lover – what he called his “lover-shadow.” In *Shadow Lovers*, Andrea Lynn has created a fascinating study of the very personal side of one of this century's greatest thinkers. This self-proclaimed Don Juan was said to have “radiated” energy: intellectual, emotional, physical, and sexual. Drawing on papers recently made public by the Wells estate, Lynn documents Wells' relationship with each of these *femmes fatales*. She also paints a vivid portrait of the early part of this century in the United States, Paris, and London. *Shadow Lovers* is the winner of the 2001 Society of Midland Authors Book Award for Biography.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Although H.G. Wells (1866-1946) was possibly the first and certainly one of the greatest science fiction writers in history, anyone seeking evidence of his literary labors will not find it in this volume. Instead, journalist Lynn invites readers to consider Wells as a romantic figure who happened also to be a man of letters a sort of 20th-century Byron. Quite unlike Byron, however, Wells is described as a "fat and homely, short and stocky man with [a] peculiarly high-pitched voice." Add to this the fact that the book only discusses Wells's conquests when he was between the ages of 66 and 70, and readers might reasonably expect Lynn's account to fall a few laces short of a bodice-ripper. But she is a gifted storyteller, and she somehow manages to capture the unaccountable charisma that made Wells (as he termed himself) a "Don Juan of the Intelligentsia." A world of international intrigue revolved around each of the three remarkable women (Baroness Moura Budberg, Constance Coolidge and the redoubtable Martha Gellhorn) Wells pursued in his later years, and Lynn, drawing on previously unpublished letters, tells their tales with great relish and considerable style. But with its limited focus, its tabloid intricacies and minutely rendered comings and goings, her book is likely to capture the attention only of true Wells devotees. The rest of the nation's readers can wait and hope that Lynn's keen eye will soon turn with equal gusto to a more broadly appealing subject.

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From Library Journal

In the last decade of his life, H.G. Wells fell in love with three women: British Baroness Moura Budberg and Americans Constance Coolidge and Martha Gellhorn, the future Mrs. Ernest Hemingway, who was some 40 years younger than he. In this new study of Wells's last years, journalist Lynn makes use of letters that the Wells estate had never before released. She reveals that the author of classics like *War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine* possessed an almost insatiable sexual appetite despite his advancing years. Until his last days, Wells was obsessed with finding his ideal love, what he referred to as his "love-shadow." Lynn's investigation is well done, but we have to ask whether we really want or need to know all the intricate details of an author's private life. After reading this, readers may agree that the Wells family had good reason to keep these aspects of his life from the public. For academic collections. Ron Ratliff, Kansas State Univ., Manhattan

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Review

"...makes for fascinating reading and intimate insight into some of the more interesting personalities of the time." -- *The Boston Globe*

"Lifts the lid on a treasure trove of unpublished material about . . . Herbert George Wells." -- *The Daily Express, London*

"Meticulously researched, engagingly written, and generous in spirit...I enjoyed this book enormously." -- *Patrick Parrinder, University of Reading, England*

"Shadow Lovers..contains a great number of juicy anecdotes and all manner of spicy and piquant stuff." --

*Washington Times*

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#### **Daniel McCullough:**

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