

ny of Treblinka concentration-camp survivors who categorically stated that Demjanjuk was *not* Ivan the Terrible. Of course it is easier to critique this case in hindsight after the Israeli court acquitted Demjanjuk than when Nickell was writing a year or so before the trial's end. Perhaps one could even argue that the acquittal is suspect on political grounds. However in this case, I think the author unwittingly illustrates his own admonition about the need to be vigilant against personal prejudice and wishful thinking.

Instructive value aside, Nickell's fluent conversational writing makes for easy reading and the format of the volume allows for short periods of relaxed perusing similar to reading a collection of short stories. The book is indexed and each chapter is followed by an interesting recommended-reading list.

Pamela de Maigret
427 North Bundy Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Journal of Scientific Exploration, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 294–296, 1994

0892-3310/94
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Jules Verne by Lawrence Lynch. Twayne Publishers (Macmillan Publishing Company), 1992, 127 pp. \$22.95 (c).

Before the modern era of science fiction, usually seen as starting in the 1920-1930s, a few preeminent individuals each produced a great body of work which exemplified central themes still evident in today's science fiction. Poe generally wrote fantastic tales, which would often take scientific miracles and excursions into morbid psychology to realize. Wells wrote from a multi-perspective point of view, in which perhaps possible, but far advanced, scientific knowledge could implement his visions. And Jules Verne produced many tales in which the science content is integral to the story and seems real because Verne was able to cleverly extrapolate from his deep contemporary understanding of science toward his visions of expected scientific progress—he emphasized scientific possibilities that encompass contemporary science but were not bounded by current capabilities.

Lawrence Lynch's admirable brief book discusses in five informative chapters episodes from Verne's life and gives reasonably complete accounts of his major works, the products of 40 years of devotion to themes in which scientific verisimilitude was Verne's dominant passion. Born in 1828 to fairly well-established parents in Nantes, France, Verne had an early life with some adventure, including attempts at age 11 to run away from home as a cabin boy on a schooner bound for the Indies. After this aborted episode Verne realized his dreams for adventure primarily in his writings. His first publication in book form (*Five Weeks in a Balloon*) appeared in 1863; in 1905 Verne died, having

just published two volumes, including *Lighthouse at the End of the World*. Between 1905 and 1919 Verne's son, Michel, finished and published some eight of his father's uncompleted manuscripts. In all, Verne had published nearly 70 major novels.

Verne's legacy can be measured in one respect from a UNESCO poll that shows Verne's works to be, after those of Lenin and of Agatha Christie, the most widely translated in the world. Most of these books remain in print; complete editions (about 65 titles) are available in French, but many fewer in English. My own Verne in English is a set of 15 volumes published by Vincent Parke and Co. in 1911. These English translations exhibit a problem mentioned by many commentators—the translations are often a bit flat and pedestrian compared to the verve and color of the original French publications. The appeal of Verne is thus enormous even against obstacles of some infelicities of translation.

Another measure of Verne's legacy is the number of current film adaptations. English language titles alone include six major films, running from Disney's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* to the same studio's version of *In Search of the Castaways*. Many feel that the best Verne film is Warner's *Around the World in Eighty Days*. The Verne films in English often capture some of his writing's key aspects—his skill in combining moods, characters, political contexts, current social concerns, prescience about environmental issues, and romantic adventure, well exemplified by *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and its Captain Nemo.

Lynch's book is a well-balanced and highly interesting discussion of Verne, his works, and his impacts. Many notable people have remarked that they were attracted to their own life's path under the influence of reading Verne—e.g., Gagarin is reported to have said that reading Verne made him devote his life to space endeavors.

All the major Verne works are analyzed and reviewed by Lynch, in an economical albeit both critical and affectionate fashion. Modern literary criticism often does not do well by Verne. He is accused of writing children's stories, of sensationalism, of sermonizing, of militancy, of over-production, of naiveté. As one consequence, Verne is not anthologized as much as one might expect, and literary critics clearly do not regard him as a great writer, of the calibre of Poe or even Wells, for example. But, as Lynch points out, Verne's works remain very popular, widely read, and have a persistent appeal because they reflect not only on science but also very directly on aspects of human nature that remain always fascinating but elusive to capture. In this regard, Lynch gives a very useful set of additional sources—bibliographies, books, articles—that discuss Verne and his works, and on which he has drawn.

One major source surprisingly not mentioned by Lynch is the magisterial volume, *The Trillion Year Spree—The History of Science Fiction*, by the enormously popular science fiction writer, Brian Aldiss. Aldiss' book, a very closely printed 511-page review, is well worth reading in concert with Lynch, even though the main discussion of Verne occupies only five pages, much less than the space allotted to Poe and Wells. Compared with Poe and Wells, Aldiss

is only moderately keen on Verne, from the vantage point of the current major genre of science fiction—so that Aldiss provides some very useful context in which to measure Verne. Interestingly, Wells and Verne acknowledged and assessed one another candidly in their own comments. Wells noted that Verne's anticipatory stories deal almost always with actual possibilities of invention, discovery, and imaginative but often very accurate forecasting. Verne in turn attributed to Wells' writings a degree of scientific knowledge far ahead of the present—but not entirely beyond the limits of the possible. These comments are paraphrased from the authoritative book by Peter Costello on Jules Verne, a source also extensively cited by Lynch. The relative emphasis of the two writers could probably not be expressed better. The span of prospective science appearing in these past works of Verne (and Wells) should clearly appeal to readers of this Journal, since that science and its contexts generally reflect extrapolations of contemporary science, and some estimates of the impacts of those extrapolations on society and on our understanding of what scientific explanation and exploration must confront.

I recommend Lynch's book for its appealing and informative overview of Verne and his major works. It is well written, discusses both the negative and positive features of Verne's writings (in Lynch's view, the positive must be said to strongly dominate), and will be a very useful companion to refresh the memories and enthusiasms of those who once read Verne and wish to recapture some of their earlier forays into imaginative adventure. I suspect that reading Lynch might even inspire newcomers to peruse Verne's works for the first delightful time. Surely no higher praise can be offered for this nice volume from Twayne's World Authors Series.

Bruno W. Augenstein
RAND Corporation
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

A Question of Intelligence: The IQ Debate in America, by Daniel Seligman, New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, 1992, 239 pp. \$16.95.

Let me give you an idea of the low esteem that eugenics currently has. At the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN) there were six innocuous American Library Association posters hanging in the UST library honoring Americans who have influenced our times. After about one year of obscurity, the Margaret Sanger poster was noticed by a right-wing student who reported this to Assistant Bishop Carlson who put pressure on the UST president who put pressure on the provost to order the chief librarian to remove the poster. She refused, the president waffled and within a short time the local twin cities newspapers ran