

advertising. Around Christmas time 1981, Channel 11 ran it as part of a series of like films, but from the vantage of a superior outlook, in which the offerings were classified as "camp", that is, films of trivial content done up in a high-handed or extravagant manner. Channel 11 is Chicago's TV outlet for the nation's Public Broadcasting System, run without commercials for the sake of high-toned Culture with a capital "C." The stance allows for laughing at uncultured things, and 'Things to Come' played in a series entitled, 'Summer Camp.' *Camp* is an American slang term for a homosexual brothel; and by extension applies to affected or ostentatious displays of behavior or vulgar art in which one is permitted to find amusing qualities of incongruity between form and content. In accord with this cultural policy, the station host pronounced 'Things to Come' in a mock homosexual voice "a film of no redeeming social value whatsoever." Hence fun to watch in complete safety, strictly for laughs.

21. 'Fiction about the Future' (1938). In Parrinder and Philmus, op. cit., pp.246-251. For another version, see 'Foretelling the Future.' In George Hay, ed., *Pulsar 1* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), pp.171-174.
22. *Ibid.*, p.225, but see pp.222-229 inclusively.
23. See Thomas D. Clareson, 'The Other Side of Realism'. In Clareson., ed., *SF: The Other Side of Realism* (Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971), pp.1-28.
24. See F.H. Doughty, *H.G. Wells: Educationist* (New York, George H. Doran, 1927).
25. For a full reading of 'Things to Come', see my forthcoming *Socialism and the Science Fiction of H.G. Wells*.
26. *The New Machiavelli* (London: John Lane, 1911), p.522.
27. See *Anticipations* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1901) and *Mankind in the Making* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904).
28. *The War That Will End War* (London: Frank and Cecil Palmer, 1914), p.11.
29. *Ibid.*, p.14.
30. *A Short History of the World* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp.253,254,257.
31. 'The Land Ironclads' (1903). In *The Short Stories of H.G. Wells* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1929), pp.130 and 133.
32. *Anticipations*, op. cit., p.213; *The Shape of Things to Come*, op. cit., p.350.
33. Leon Stover and Bruce Kraig, *Stonehenge and the Origins of Western Culture* (London: Heinemann, 1978). In *America as Stonehenge and the Indo-European Heritage* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1978). See also George Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens* (Brussels: Collection Latomus, 1958).
34. *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (London: William Heinemann, 1932), chap. 8.

From Puttenhanger to Polly: A Note on H.G. Wells's Comic Masterpiece

Christopher Rolfe

An author's choice of name for a fictional character is no less significant than that made by parents for their children. As parental choice is affected by, for example, family names, current trends, class considerations and aspirations, so an author's choice is coloured by what effect he is hoping to create with his character. The suitability of the name is a measure of its semiological effectiveness. A comparison of the holograph manuscript and typescript of H.G. Wells's *The History of Mr Polly*¹ reveals a fascinating metamorphosis of the book's title and the eponymous hero's name, providing an insight into this aspect of the creative process.

The first page of the manuscript has no heading other than the figure one. In the first sentence the protagonist's name appears as "Mr Puttenhanger". The sentence reads:

"Ole!" said Mr Puttenhanger. "Ole! Oh! Beastly Ole!"

And this is what the hero of Wells's most celebrated comic novel is called until p.26 of the (un-numbered) manuscript (p.32 of the first London edition; Nelson, 1910). Here, invited to go for a drink by his friend Parsons, the erstwhile Mr Puttenhanger's reply is written as:

"Short of sugar O'Man," said Mr Polly.²

The following is an attempt to trace the process whereby this change came about.

Wells passed the first sixteen pages of the manuscript to his wife Jane to type, with a note at the top of page one:

Three copies Please put quantity at end of every section

These first sixteen pages became numbers one to nine of the typescript and take the story to the end of section two of the published version. Wells obviously continued to write the novel using the name Puttenhanger (sometimes abbreviated to "Mr P."), until shortly before writing page twenty-six he received the first typed pages back from Jane for correction. In the approximately four inch space left at the top of the first page of the typescript, Wells penned in the book's provisional title, then "Chapter the First", and beneath this the title for the chapter. These lines are considerably emended and surrounded with working notes.

Initially, the book was to have been called *The Soul of Mr Puttenhanger*, and the first chapter was conceived of as the one which "Introduces the Soul". After writing this, Wells apparently went on to correct the text, deleting the first word "Ole!" and writing above it "Hole". Although the exclamation "Ole!" provides a striking beginning, and is certainly more in keeping with the character's speech patterns, Wells doubtless considered that an un-aspirated exclamation at the outset would confuse his readers. Any lessening of the impact of the book's shouted opening occasioned by this minor alteration is amply compensated for by Wells's alteration to the character's name. Here, at the fourth word, the emendations demonstrate his ultimately successful attempt to achieve a name that would signify the main

characteristics of his developing protagonist. The "u" is struck out and an "o" inserted above, making the name "Pottenhanger"; then the whole name is scribbled through and "Prolly" inserted above it; and finally the "r" of "Prolly" is deleted, arriving at "Mr Polly". The chronology of these alterations is conjectural, but it can be traced with some certainty.

Diagonally across the top left-hand corner of the typescript Wells wrote: "N.B. Change the name to Pottenhanger". This, presumably, was written after he had changed the "u" of "Puttenhanger" to an "o", and was a typing instruction. However, the Pottenhanger of this oblique sentence is scored through, and "Prolly" written beneath it. This crucial change obviously pleased Wells, perhaps its suggestion of "brolly" appearing to evoke more clearly the pathetic lower-middle-class aspirations of the world of Edwardian gentlemen's outfitting. Diagonally across the right-hand corner of the page the name is written three times, once spelt "Prolley", but this version is scribbled through. Satisfied, then, with Prolly, Wells returned to the title (these changes are made in a lighter ink, indicative of a later date, so it is fairly easy to follow their order). The words "Soul of Mr Pottenhanger" are deleted, and "Life of Mr James Prolly" inserted above. The hero now has a first name, one which, interestingly enough, is later to be given to the villain (the name Alfred does not appear until the scene of the funeral wake). It is probably at this point that Wells returned to the first sentence of the text, deleted the altered "Puttenhanger" (his wavy line begins at the "o" he had earlier put over the "u") and wrote "Prolly" above it.

The Life of Mr James Prolly, however, still did not suit; Wells crossed out "Life" and wrote above it "Experiences". Apparently he decided to leave it at that for a while, and the title *The History of Mr Polly* came to him later. For, when this final version of the book's title was written across the top of the typescript it was written in pencil. Perhaps having arrived at a stage in the manuscript when the hero's linguistic antics suggested those of a parrot, the final version of the name and also the title occurred to Wells simultaneously. Certain it is that at this time he is convinced of the suitability of the name. The "Prolly" at the top-left of the typescript is crossed out and "Polly" pencilled beside it. The "y" of this Polly continues unbroken to delete *Experiences of Mr James Prolly* and to repeat "Polly" above it. Finally, a pencilled line is struck through the "r" of the "Prolly" in the first sentence. The metamorphosis is complete. As if in celebration of this, to the left of the title the name Polly is written with ink in extremely large hand — quite clearly the equivalent of a shouted Eureka.

Having followed Wells's thinking on the matter, one can only agree that *The Soul of Mr Pottenhanger* and *The Experiences of Mr James Prolly* deserved to give way to the altogether more appropriate *The History of Mr Polly*. The first version of the title is burdened with moral portentousness; the interim draft is awkward, overlong and too sibilant for such a robust tale. The final version, however, achieves a nice balance between the proud ring of "History" and the implicit comedy of "Mr Polly". There is both a hint of irony and the suggestion of a deliberate shift from fiction's usual social emphasis. The attributes of the eponymous hero and the tone of the book are ideally encapsulated within the ultimate title.

Notes

1. Part of the Wells Archive held in the Library at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. I am grateful to staff of the Rare Book Room, especially Mrs Mary Ceibert, for generous assistance and a congenial atmosphere.
2. The retaining of the initial P here, after such a radical change of name, indicates an unusual preoccupation with the letter on Wells's part during the writing of the book. Mr Polly has two friends during his first job, Platt and Parsons, and the three young men like to think of themselves as "the three P's". That the alliteration pleased Wells as much as his characters, is indicated by the fact that at the funeral (Chapter IV) he originally had Mr Polly's Aunt Larkins called Mrs Perkins. As he read through page fifty four of the typescript, Wells's eye was caught by the fact that on one page there appeared Mr Polly, Mrs Perkins and Uncle Penstemon. Enough is enough; inserted between pages fifty three and fifty four is a typing instruction:

I have made *all* these surnames
begin with a P. so please alt
Perkins
to Larkins

Nevertheless, he could not, or did not wish to shake off the dominance of the letter P; for later in the novel we find the Potwell Inn is run by the Plump Woman, and her granddaughter's name is also Polly.

The Martians in Ecuador

Michael Draper

On October 30th 1938 Orson Welles broadcast a contemporary adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* in the United States. This event was to become one of the most famous or infamous occasions in radio history. The action had been transferred to New Jersey and was presented through a series of news-bulletins and interviews. Despite the network's repeated assurances that what they were broadcasting was fiction, over a million of those listening believed themselves to have been caught up in some enormous disaster. Many of them panicked and fled.