

Thus, "Silly little people!" (apropos George and Marion), "I look back now with a curious remoteness of spirit ..." (of his social life as a man of wealth), "To think of that adventure is like dipping haphazard into an album of views" (of his flight in the airship with his uncle), "I have come to see myself from the outside, my country from the outside - without illusions" (of his final voyage down the Thames). There is a particularly moving moment at Wimblehurst when both George and his mother are described from the outside:

Poor proud, habitual, sternly narrow soul! poor difficult and misunderstanding son! it was the first time that ever it dawned upon me that my mother might perhaps feel. (I, 2:6)

This effect of describing scenes from a standpoint of exterior objectivity is very characteristic of the novel. Equally characteristic is its stoicism. At the conclusion of the story, weary and disappointed in love, George writes: "But the pain I felt then I have felt a hundred times; it is with me as I write. It haunts this book, I see, that is what haunts this book, from end to end ..." ⁵ Turning to the wider perspective of England, he continues:

It may be I see decay all about me because I am, in a sense, decay. To others it may be a scene of achievement and construction radiant with hope. I too have a sort of hope, but it is a remote hope, a hope that finds no promise in this Empire or in any of the great things of our time. (IV, 3:1)

It is this sense of the narrator as a traveller in time, as a dispassionate observer commenting with critical detachment on human affairs, that is the novel's predominant mood.

At an early point in the novel George observes: "It isn't a constructed tale I have to tell but unmanageable realities."⁶ Wells, then, is not writing 'a constructed tale' after the manner of *Mansfield Park* or *Middlemarch*. Not for him the perfect symmetry of Jane Austen or Henry James. He is attempting "unmanageable realities", a picture of the Victorian age in dissolution, of a society visibly crumbling to pieces. The device he adopts - that of an engineer attempting his "one novel", who sits amidst "white heats and hammerings, amidst the fine realities of steel - to think it all over in my leisure and jot down the notes and inconsecutive observations that make this book"⁷ - is ideally suited to his purpose. For the abiding impression one receives from a reading of *Tono-Bungay* is one of scientific detachment, of a practical man of science struggling to make sense of social forces beyond his control. "It is all one spectacle of forces running to waste," George writes.

Wells might have chosen to tell the story in the third person, as he does in *Ann Veronica* and *The History of Mr Polly*. Some instinct told him to avoid this. What he does in the person of George Ponderevo is to create a surrogate figure, a second self who presents an extraordinarily detached but loving

vision of England. Whilst humour, pathos and irreverence have their place in the novel its predominant mood is one of scientific detachment and stoicism. It is this voice - that of a sceptical engineer, "a hard and morally limited cad with a mind beyond my merits"⁸ - which animates the novel from first to last and makes it such an impressive and haunting work of art.

Notes

1. *Experiment in Autobiography*, 639.
2. Quoted in Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, *The Time Traveller: The Life of H.G. Wells*, 243.
3. *Tono-Bungay*, I, 1:2.
4. *Tono-Bungay*, III, 1:6.
5. *Tono-Bungay*, IV, 2:4.
6. *Tono-Bungay*, I, 1:2.
7. *Tono-Bungay*, I, 1:1.
8. *Tono-Bungay*, II, 4:10.

David Lake

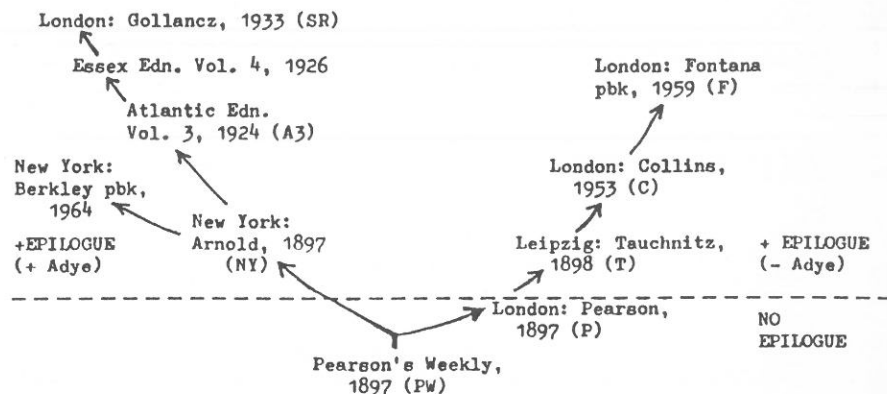
The Current Texts of Wells's Early SF Novels: Situation Unsatisfactory (Part 2)

IV

The current texts of *The Invisible Man* stand in a relationship to the early editions that is even more complex than in the case of *The War of the Worlds*; but I have examined all the editions, and can with confidence display the following stemma (see *Figure 2 overleaf*).

The publishing history begins with the appearance of PW, 12 June to 7 August 1897; but this is not the complete original text. It lacks five chapters (2, 8, 13, 22, 25) of the book editions, also two page-long passages in Chapters 4 and 10. And letters from Wells to his agent J.B. Pinker make it clear that PW is a cut version, and that Chapter 22 in particular existed in April 1897 before the serial began.¹¹ As the plot tends at times to be episodic, these cuts do not mutilate the story, though Chapter 22 contains a highly significant and proleptic dream of Griffin's (A3 p. 150).

Figure 2 The Invisible Man



Apart from the restoration of these cuts, and the addition of the Epilogue (which I discuss below), the first American book edition (NY) remains 'primitive'. It is readily available today in its Berkley paperback reprint. It cleaves fairly closely to the wording of PW in all the chapters where comparison is possible, And - what is most striking - so does A3. The whole 'American' line for this novel is 'primitive', whereas the British line, beginning with P, innovates extensively. In the first ten chapters I have counted only 15 substantive variants (usually of one word or two) between NY and A3; whereas there are as many between NY and the British line in just the *first* chapter; and most of these variants are innovations in P, the first British book edition. The same (dis)proportion is maintained throughout the text. As a result, surprisingly enough, the Atlantic is a 'primitive' text, whereas the Pearson-Collins-Fontana is a heavily revised one. Nevertheless, I agree with Wells's decision in 1924: I think the Atlantic text is the better one. The P-T-C-F text is especially unfortunate in omitting a few very significant lines early in Chapter 2, where Griffin's fire-lit spectacles are compared to "adverse railway signals" (A3, p. 11), and one crucial sentence (present even in PW) from Griffin in Chapter 19: "In all my great moments I have been alone" (A3, p. 124).

The Epilogue is Wells's one substantial afterthought, and contains an important variant, the only one which affects the plot. The British line (starting with Tauchnitz) has the one version, the American line the other. I believe that the Tauchnitz version is the earlier, and the NY version the later, in spite of the official publication dates, 1898 versus 1897 - which do not prove that the Tauchnitz printer's copy was later: Wells probably sent a copy of the T Epilogue, with new emendations, from London to New York

in late 1897. The NY version has a few more words, which I believe are insertions. The Tauchnitz fourth paragraph begins: "He subsides", but NY-A3 begins: "And then he subsides"; the T sixth paragraph, last sentence, begins: "Then he pulls one towards him, and begins to study it", whereas NY-A3 begins: "Then he pulls one towards him and opens it, and begins". The more leisurely style, I think, suits the leisurely mood of the Epilogue.

And then we have the second last sentence of the novel. T-C-F read: "And though Kemp has fished unceasingly, no human being ..." But NY-A3-Essex-SR read: "And though Kemp has fished unceasingly, and Adye has questioned closely, no human being ..." Surprise, surprise! Griffin shot Adye apparently dead in Chapter 27, and now, in the American Epilogue, he is alive and well and back at his police duties. So the question of which version of the Epilogue is later is a material one. I think it certain that the resurrection of Adye is Wells's final intention, because it is not a small point, and it survived through Essex and SR; and moreover Wells did catch and try to solve one other material question in SR. This is the problem of the date of Griffin's arrival in the village of Iping.

The approximate date is given in the first sentence of the novel, all versions: "Early in February". But an exact date appears in the first line of Chapter 3 (PW, Chapter 2), and in PW, P, NY, A3 and Essex it is "the 29th day of February". The error is particularly glaring in PW, where the discrepant dates are on the same first page of the novel, at the tops of the first and third columns. However, Wells only caught the error in time for the Tauchnitz edition, where he emended the Chapter 3 reading to "the 9th day of February". (If this is used as an argument that T must be *later* than NY, it suffices to retort that the same argument would prove T later than A3. Wells was often simply erratic in what corrections he transmitted or didn't transmit.) 9th February is consequently the reading in C-F; and it is also the reading in SR. (This is one of only two substantive corrections by Wells in SR.)

Unfortunately, Wells did not notice that his correction "9th" left another passage discrepant. This is in Chapter 4, all versions, except PW which omits. The villagers, suspecting Griffin of being on the run from the law, face the problem: "No crime of any magnitude from the middle or end of February was known to have occurred" (A3, p. 27). Since the crime in question could only have been committed by Griffin *before* his arrival, this suits "29th" but not "9th". There is nothing a critical editor can do, except suggest, in a rueful footnote, that the problem could be solved by reading, in Chapter 4, "middle or end of *January*."

SR is not a very good text for this novel, as it corrects only one substantive misprint in NY-A3, leaves others untreated, and makes seven more of its

own. The misprint correction is made already in Essex, to the reading in A3 p. 120, when Adye, attacked by Griffin, is hurled headlong with "the grip at his throat". The correct reading should be "a grip", as in PW and the British line, and Essex restores "a". So, with this and "9th February", it is clear that Essex and SR were checked by Wells. But not thoroughly: they should certainly not serve as future copy texts.

Wells's habit of continual revision is well seen in his versions of the (main story) ending. The last three paragraphs (= last two in the Pearson editions) occur in four different states: PW, P, T-C-F, and the American line. (There are only trivial differences of punctuation between NY, Berkley and A3, and none between A3, Essex and SR.) Wells was obviously seeking the most impressive possible ending, and he tried several rather different shots at it. The only verbal variant in the first part of the third-last paragraph is "brow" (PW-P-T-C-F) versus "beard" in the American line; obviously Wells's final intention is: "his hair and beard were white". From after "... anger and dismay", here are the four texts in full:

Pearson's Weekly, 7 August 1897 (PW)

dismay. The people shivered at the sight of him. Someone brought a sheet from the "Jolly Cricketers," and having covered him, they carried him into that house. And there on a shabby bed in a tawdry, ill-lighted bedroom, ended the career of the Invisible Man, ended the strangest and most wonderful experiment that man has ever made.

London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1897 (P)

dismay. The people shivered at the sight of him, and three little children, pushing forward through the crowd, were suddenly twisted round and sent packing off again. Some one brought a sheet from the "Jolly Cricketers," and having covered him, they carried him into that house. And there, on a shabby bed in a tawdry, ill-lighted bedroom, ended the strange experiment of the Invisible Man.

Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1898 (T), =C, F.

dismay. "Cover his face!" cried a man. "For Gawd's sake, cover that face!" Some one brought a sheet from the "Jolly Cricketers," and having covered him, they carried him into that house. And there it was, on a shabby bed in a tawdry, ill-lighted bedroom, surrounded by a crowd of ignorant and excited people, broken and wounded, betrayed and unpitied, that Griffin, the first of all men to make himself invisible, Griffin, the most gifted physicist the world has ever seen, ended in infinite disaster his strange and terrible career.

Atlantic Edition, Vol. 3, 1924 (A3), =Essex, SR; NY has comma after "Cricketers".

dismay.

"Cover his face!" said a man. "For Gawd's sake, cover that face!" and three little children, pushing forward through the crowd, were suddenly twisted round and sent packing off again.

Someone brought a sheet from the Jolly Cricketers; and having covered him, they carried him into that house.

I must say that it is hard to believe that, in this passage, the NY-A3 text is earlier than P or T. It looks much more as though, after experimenting with increased pomposity through PW-P-T, Wells had a fit of revulsion and cut back to the restrained and effective finale of NY-A3. Since I believe the T Epilogue preceded the NY one, there would have been time to send to New York a shortened version of the main story ending - very likely in the same packet. We see here the progress of good ideas: from the vague emotion of "The people shivered" to the precise detail of the man's quoted cry and the driving off of the children. But these two good details come together only in NY (=A3). Wells sometimes revised like this, drawing eclectically from more than one earlier version. It is a pity he did not do so more often; for by not doing so he has left us with many rival improvements through the text of this novel (and similarly in *First Men*). There is here some latitude for editorial judgment: without producing a definitely eclectic text, one might accept some good things from the P-T-C line; and certainly one could and should when P-T-C are right and A3-Essex-SR are wrong.

In one case, where A3-Essex-SR differ from all the other texts, I think their authority must be accepted, perhaps reluctantly. At the end of Chapter 27, after a fight with Griffin, two policemen are searching for Kemp. They enter the dining room, where Kemp was last seen. Then the first policeman says (all texts but A3-Essex-SR): "Doctor Kemp's a hero." But A3 makes him say, "Doctor Kemp's in here." Both readings make sense, but "hero" has more point given to it soon after, when the policemen find that Kemp has bolted through the window, and the chapter ends with: "The second policeman's opinion of Kemp was terse and vivid." In the earlier version, the second policeman's *opinion* was in contrast with the *opinion* of the first; in the revised version this contrast is lost. This looks like a deliberate change by Wells.

Another reading where A3-Essex-SR are on their own is a definite error. Chapter 26, "The Wicksteed Murder", adopts a reconstructive narration of a scene for which there is no surviving witness, and the fifth paragraph begins: "If our supposition that the Invisible Man's refuge was the

Hintondean thickets is correct ...", and Wells was evidently not satisfied with the emphasis. I think that in A3 he intended to say: "If our supposition is correct that ..."; but his ballooned phrase "is correct" probably was missed by the compositor, and the sentence was printed: "If our supposition that the Invisible Man's refuge was the Hintondean thickets, then we ..." And Essex and SR keep this verbless clause. An editor might print my conjecture, or revert to NY.

In another case, the whole American line is faulty, and the correct reading must be supplied from P-T-C-F. At the beginning of Chapter 20 Griffin, recounting his career to Kemp, says, in PW: "I had left the Chesilstowe college already." P-T-C-F improve slightly with "Chesilstowe College". But NY, followed by A3-Essex-SR, reads "Chesilstowe cottage". Chesilstowe has been mentioned in the previous chapter, certainly as an academic establishment, and there was no mention of any "cottage". This is clearly a typo produced by misreading the lower-case "college" in the copy (=PW) for NY. An editor should restore "Chesilstowe College", the reading of P and Fontana.

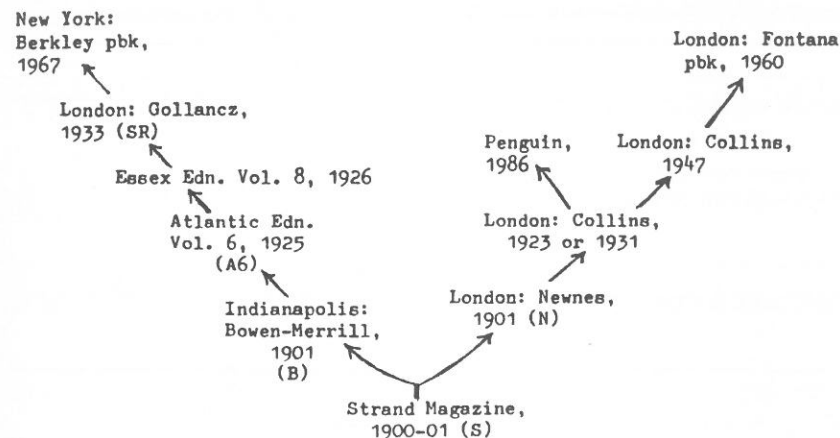
In one odd instance, I believe *all* the book editions are wrong, and we should revert to PW. This is in the first paragraph of Chapter 5, where the vicar and his wife are roused from sleep by the prowling of Griffin. The vicar was "putting on his spectacles, his dressing-gown, and his bath slippers" (PW) - but the books all read "his spectacles, her dressing-gown, and his bath slippers." Even the comment at the end of the chapter that the vicar and his wife were a "quaintly-costumed little couple" gives no reason to suppose that the vicar would deprive his wife of her dressing-gown. I think we should revert to "his dressing-gown".

But let us return now from the future ideal to the unsatisfactory present. The Fontana edition, the only recent British paperback, as of this writing is out of print, but may return, doubtless with all its own errors uncorrected. It has one egregious one on the second page of the story (p. 22), where the last line reads: "... hiding his face and ears with considerable emphasis ..." and the sentence does not make sense. In fact a whole line from the copy-text, Collins 1953, has been skipped, and the reading should be: "hiding his face and ears completely. She put down the eggs and bacon with considerable emphasis ..." The Fontana printers are guilty of line-skip also in their edition of *The First Men in the Moon* - the novel to which I now turn.

V

For *The First Men in the Moon*, the relationship of the texts is broadly similar to that of *The Invisible Man*, as Figure 3 will show:

Figure 3: The First Men in the Moon



Once more we have two branches of texts, American and British; but this time the British paperbacks are based not on a Tauchnitz, but on reprints of the first British book edition, published by George Newnes (N). However, the problems for a future editor are very similar, and if anything slightly more perplexing: for N and B-A6 represent rival revisions by Wells, both good but in different ways, of the basic Strand Magazine text (S). I say "B-A6" partly on the authority of David Hughes, who after detailed examination of the Bowen-Merrill edition, is sure that B (or a reprint of B) was the copy-text for the Atlantic Edition;¹² the few pages of B that I myself have seen in photo-copy confirm this judgment completely.

N and A6 differ in about 500 substantive readings, including one of nearly two pages, which entailed a re-chaptering. This cut was first made in B. Consequently S and all the British-line texts have 26 chapters, but the American-line texts only 25. In spite of the great number of variants, there is no significant difference in the stories of these versions. In detail, and on the whole, A6 is arguably the better text stylistically; but I regret very much that large cut in Chapter 6 (Chapters 6 and 7 in S-N) which shortens the description of the lunar dawn. Moreover, there is one instance of a misprint in B-A6-Essex-SR which can be corrected from S-N; and there are several other cases where A6 reproduces the base text S, but N has revisions which

are decided improvements. A future editor, while taking A6 as copy text, might well adopt some of these, give footnotes to others, and certainly print the long deleted passage of Chapter 6 in an appendix.

For this novel, it so happens that Essex and SR are of very little help. I have found only one passage where Essex gives definitely Wellsian revisions of A6, making consistent a revision already present in A6 from "mooncalf herds" to "mooncalf hinds".¹³ Elsewhere, Essex-SR do not correct A6's errors or weaknesses, and SR makes half a dozen new substantive errors of its own, including one or two glaring misprints. Consequently, in the discussion that follows I shall ignore Essex-SR.

And now, on the paperback scene, we have the new Penguin, which is on the whole an excellent reprint of N. The Fontana edition is out of print; and long may it remain so. It stands at the end of a long line of reprints, and therefore perpetuates their minor errors; but worse still, it commits 15 new substantive errors of its own, and in one place misses out a whole line of the Collins 1947 text, a clear case of eye-skip.¹⁴ Within the Cavorite spacecraft it has a "table" instead of the correct "bale" (p. 173), and says that Cavor seemed "infinite" instead of "infinitesimal" (p. 182). In short, it is a disgraceful text, and let us hope that we have seen the last of it.

The Penguin is based on an earlier reprint of N,¹⁵ and it has been carefully edited, even resorting to emendation. I have found only five substantive misprints, none serious.¹⁶ The emendations in several cases show no reference to A6, but, as might be expected, in some cases they coincide with it.¹⁷ In one case the emendation is plausible but unjustified: where Bedford talks of the "death stillness" of the lunar night, the Penguin (p. 104) prints "deathly stillness". All other editions have "death stillness", which is acceptable English. In two places in the second-last chapter, round brackets in S and N are very logically replaced with square brackets, in one case improving on A6.¹⁸ The only real drawback to the Penguin is its price: in Australia \$9.95. This is more than three dollars higher than American competitors. Moreover, while the Fontana was out of print, my colleagues and I switched texts to *The War of the Worlds* - Pan, \$5.95. We have decided to stay with this next year, and so save each student four dollars. Penguin seems to be pricing itself out of the textbook market. However, the Penguin *First Men* will have its uses in the future, if not as a class text, still as a handy reprint of a text worth perpetuating: the Newnes, which it will be pleasant to have in print alongside a new British edition based on A6.

It is to the problems of such an edition that I now turn.

There is one certain misprint in A6 which we can correct from N. Bedford, musing by the recovered spacecraft, thinks of the moment of the first landing: "if only this teeming world within knew of the full import of the

moment, how furious its tumult would become!" Thus S and N (Penguin, p. 131). But B-A6-Essex-SR read "... how curious its tumult would become!" It is certain that "curious" is an error in B, for the next paragraph goes on: "For if it did, the crater would surely be an uproar of pursuit" (N, A6; S has "... then the crater ..."). This is one of those cases where A6 mechanically reproduces an oddity in B, thus proving that B was its copy-text.¹⁹ An editor should emend "curious" to "furious".

Then there are the cases where A6 preserves the S text unaltered, but N has a revision, or possibly a correction of an error. For instance, the description of the thawing air and its effects on the sphere (Penguin p. 50; A6 p. 64). Here S and A6 read: "A huge landslip, as it were ... had splashed over us ...", and the next paragraph, only four lines further down, begins: "then some huge landslip in the thawing air had caught us ..." This repetition is removed in N, where the first sentence reads: "A toppling crag ... had splashed over us ..." This is not merely elegant variation: "toppling crag" is more visually accurate and vivid, and I think an editor might adopt it; if not, he should certainly footnote it. The trouble is that in preparing A6, Wells used B, did not consult N, and so overlooked some useful changes he had made twenty-four years previously. This is the same situation as in *Invisible Man*; but here there are more good variants in the first British book edition.

Another instance, where N may correct an actual error, occurs in the first description of a Selenite (Penguin p. 71; A6 p. 92). Here S and A6 read: "... a pair of goggles of darkened glass set very much at the side gave a bud-like quality to the metallic apparatus that covered his face". N and Penguin read substantially the same, except that they substitute "bird-like" for "bud-like". And surely "bird-like" makes very much better sense: the goggle-covered eyes are set on the side of the head like those of a bird; and in another passage (Penguin p. 89, A6 p. 119) Bedford comments on the difficulty of knowing which way the Selenites were looking, the same difficulty "as one has in the case of a hen or a fish". So the bird analogy makes sense, whereas "bud-like" could only apply to the goggles' shape, not to the whole "metallic apparatus that covered his face". (cf. also A6, chapter 23, where S and the American line read: "On either side are the little hen-like eyes.") Here, therefore, an editor should adopt the N reading.

The problem of rival improvements is neatly illustrated by readings in the first two paragraphs of Chapter 21/22, "The Astonishing Communication of Mr Julius Wendigee". In S, Bedford has a parenthesis; "(it is now about six weeks ago)", within which time he hurried to Wendigee's observatory "upon the St. Gothard" (sic). Neither the time nor the place is quite satisfactory, for the time seems too short for all the matter

of the next five chapters (Cavor's messages from the moon), and "St. Gothard" is contradicted one paragraph later, where we are told the observatory was "on the flanks of Monte Rosa" (Penguin p. 155) - a place 60 miles from the St. Gothard. Wells altered the time to "six months" in N, and changed "St. Gothard" (still thus in B) to A6's "Monte Rosa". I suggest that an editor might accept both changes.

However, there are many instances in which a revision in N ought not to be accepted. A crucial instance concerns the false name Bedford adopts after his return to earth. In S, the little joke appears: "I signed the letter 'H.G. Wells', which seemed to me to be a thoroughly respectable sort of name".²⁰ But in N Wells cut out the joke: "I signed the letter 'Blake', which seemed ..." (Penguin, p. 151). Happily, in A6 (following B) the joke is restored in a less blatant form: "I signed the letter 'Wells', which seemed ..." (p. 208). Here the B-A6 reading is the best of the three variants.

The large deletion, which runs Chapters 6 and 7 of S together into one chapter in B-A6, must of course be accepted. Wells aimed at brevity in his early American texts, and clearly he thought these preliminaries to the main adventure were too long, and some readers may agree. The cut comes brutally in mid sentence (Penguin p. 47, second paragraph): "I turned reluctantly from" and then everything is out till Penguin p. 48, fifth last line, where B-A6 resume with "the crater wall". The cut portion contains a fine description of sunlight creeping down the west wall of the crater "perhaps a dozen miles away". It certainly deserves preservation in an appendix.

And finally, I want to point to one reading where *all* texts of this novel are wrong. When Bedford is making his first confused leaps on the Moon, he remarks: "I had forgotten that on the moon, with only an eighth part of the earth's mass ..." This makes the Moon ten times too massive; and in the copy of A6 in the University of Illinois Library, a copy which had belonged to Wells himself, I found the pen correction "eightieth" at this place (A6, p. 76). It is not clear whether this "eighth" was a long-lasting misprint, running through all editions of the novel, or, more likely, an original slip by Wells which he noticed only long after the publication of A6, too late for a change in Essex or SR. But either way - and in spite of Essex-SR "eighth" - we should insert the author's belated correction in any new edition.

These, then, are the kinds of problems which face a future editor of Wells. Much more work needs to be done: mine is merely a first sketch, and in particular I have not examined the Atlantic galleys, or looked very hard at the Essex Edition. But these problems would be solved in time for the new British paperback editions that we may hope for after 1996. But then, at latest, an end should be put to the present scandalous situation, where for most of Wells's best science fiction there is available in Britain either no

paperback at all or only one edition, and that edition a superseded and/or partly corrupt one. Let us hope in the late 1990s for something like the present American scene, where for several of Wells's scientific romances, several paperbacks from different publishers are in competition - and the texts are good ones.

Acknowledgments

To work on Wells's texts in Brisbane, which is hundreds of miles from the nearest set of the Atlantic Edition, would have been impossible without the help of many individuals and institutions; and I cannot name everybody. I here express especial thanks to: the Rare Book Room of the University of Illinois Library and the British (Newspaper) Library for copious photocopies and permissions to quote therefrom; to the curators of the H.G. Wells Collection, Bromley Central Library; to the libraries of the Australian National University, Sydney University, and the University of New South Wales; to the publishers Collins, Gollancz and Penguin, who tried to answer my queries about their editions.

Also to Mr Don Fox of Yuleba, Queensland, for lending me his personal copies of early Wells editions; and, anything but least, to Professor David Y. Hughes of Ann Arbor, without whose data and corrections this article would have been much less accurate, and much more incomplete than it is.

Erratum

In Part one of this article, published in the 1988 *Wellsian*, we compounded one of the typographical errors cited. Page 6, second para, second line, should read "patent readjustments" - not "reasjustments."

Appendix

In the course of my work on *The First Men in the Moon*, I have noticed that Wells has made one error of physics, and one subtlety in his handling of the lunar landing. His argument, given to Cavor, that Cavorite could not have earthly applications is wrong; and he has silently arranged things so that his heroes land on the far side of the Moon. (References below are to the Penguin edition.)

#1. The Cavorite Error

Cavor makes his first Cavorite in a square (p. 22) thin, wide sheet (p. 24), and then apparently everything vertically above the sheet ceases to have weight, so that a column of air rising to infinity rushes up into outer space, other air is sucked in and also rushes up, and so the whole atmosphere might have been lost if the Cavorite sheet had not been loose and gone flying up also (p. 25). This is the reason why Cavor rejects any earthside applications,

"because of the air difficulty" (p. 30). But this argument rests on the false assumption that gravity emanates from the centre of the earth. It does not. There is nothing magical about the centre of the earth, which is merely the resultant direction of the gravitational pulls of all the particles of the earth. Newton proved this, long before Wells's time: see his *Principia* (1713 edn., Bk. I, Propositions 71 & 76). So a molecule of air above a flat horizontal Cavorite slab would not lose *all* weight unless from that molecule's position every part of the earth was hidden. In fact, zero gravity could occur only in the slab itself and in a tiny layer just above it; higher than that, the horizon at least would be in view, and the gravity-reduction effect would lessen rapidly as the air rose and more of the earth came into view around the slab's edges. By a height of 5 diameters of the slab, the effect would become negligible.

Figure 4 shows the situation. To simplify the reasoning, I have assumed a thin circular slab one metre in diameter.

Here it can be proved, using the volume formulas for sphere and cone, that at a height of 1 metre the 1 metre slab cuts out from view a cone (with a curved base) containing the centre of the earth, but leaving about .7 of the earth's volume "in view" around the edges of the slab, and so exerting gravity. Gravity here would therefore be .7 of normal, if the earth were homogeneous. But since the earth has more mass concentrated near the centre, we must apply a correction; by which gravity at this point 1 metre high would be about .5. This is the maximum reduction effect at this height; for a point not centred directly over the middle of the slab, gravity would be higher.

Similar reasoning gives gravities .984 normal at 5 metres, and .996 normal at 10 metres above the slab, and at these heights almost no correction is needed for the earth's inhomogeneity, since most of the massive core is now "in view". So - an appreciable lessening of gravity up to 5 metres, hardly anything above that. This would produce only a tiny tornado, earthside applications look very promising, and our heroes need not have gone to the Moon at all!

#2. The Farside Landing

For this the evidence may be found on pp. 39, 44, 48, 67, 122, 137, 138. The moon is "near her third quarter" (=last quarter) as the travellers head for it (p. 39), yet when they arrive the sun is *rising*. But a last quarter moon is a waning moon, and the sun then can be rising only on its far side. On the side facing earth, the sun is setting.

I will grant that this argument is shaky because we do not know how long the voyage lasts. Cavor says "We may be weeks" (p. 35), and in fact a voyage to the moon using only lunar gravity would be of this order. But the remark

Figure 4A: The slab and the horizon

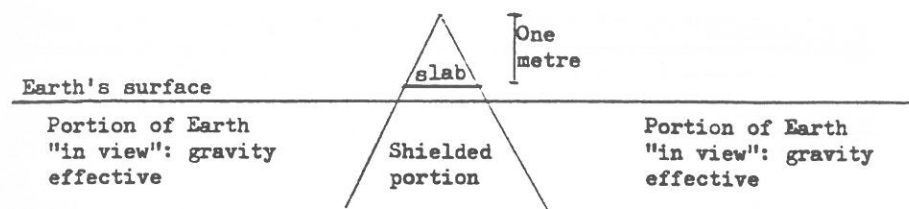
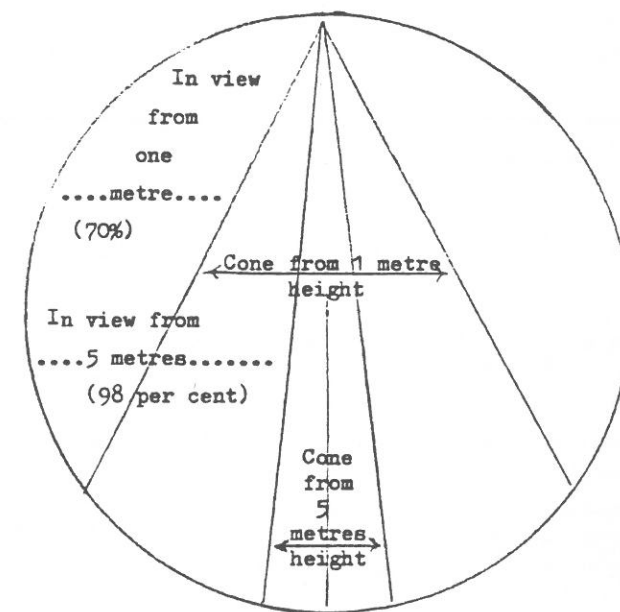


Figure 4B: The cone of shielding through the Earth



on p. 39 is "... as the moon is near her third quarter we are going somewhere towards her", which suggests that Wells imagined a trajectory to hit the moon's "third quarter" position - maybe after a whole lunar month.

And then there is other evidence. If the landing were on the moon's near side, the earth would be prominent in the lunar sky. Yet for Cavor and Bedford it never is. In the passage deleted in the American line, before

sunrise "Whatever light was about us was reflected by the westward cliffs" (p. 48). This would be untrue if a huge half Earth were hanging in the sky (about as bright as a full moon on earth). Again, a short while later, "the still dark sky was empty overhead" (p. 67): no sign of Earth. When the two men re-emerge onto the surface, they can even see the stars (p. 122) - but no mention of Earth.

And the beginning of Bedford's return voyage clinches the matter. When Bedford opens a window-blind, he sees "the huge crescent moon and the little crescent earth behind it" (p. 137). This is exactly the view one would get from a few thousand miles above the *farside* surface; you could not possibly see this from high over the near side. (Nor could a nearside take-off have carried Bedford over the far side: only gravity could curl the trajectory round the moon, and gravity has been altogether cut off by the Cavorite; the sphere has been simply rising on the tangent of the moon's rotational and orbital velocity, so that it is still roughly over the area it rose from.) Again, shortly after, Bedford has to navigate to "fly behind" the moon "and when I was past" it, to open the earthward windows and so get home (p. 138). A few lines further on he says the moon "had appeared in the sky in front of the earth". Nothing could be plainer than that - except, of course, an explicit statement that the landing was on the far side.

Why has Wells handled things like this? I think he did not want the Earth hanging in the travellers' sky because that would have weakened the effect of lonely desolation, so important especially in the chapter 'Mr Bedford Alone'. Again, if any smart person had tackled him over that wonderful daytime atmosphere in the crater - never seen by earthly telescopes - he had only to retort "But we can't see the far side". But why no clear avowal? Well, he also wanted Cavor to send radio messages from the moon - impossible from the far side; actually impossible through any significant thickness of rock, but that is less obvious if we imagine him at a shallow depth on the near side. Or his captors may have dragged him round to the near side, where he has rigged up a clandestine aerial system ... But there is no point in multiplying hypotheses. It may be best to say that Wells has combined some effects of "nearside" with some more important ones of "far side", and to splendid literary effect.

Notes

(continued from previous issue)

11 Letter of April 29, 1897 (Laz. II. 46) and Laz. III. 30 (written about May 1897), transcripts of which are in the University of Illinois Library.

12 Private communication, May 29, 1987.

13 A6 p. 227 has "herds" in the top line, but "hinds" in second paragraph. Essex makes it "hinds" in both places. On the same page of Essex (198) are four other substantive changes, three of them being definite (minor) improvements of wording; and all these changes are retained in SR. I must confess that I have not made an exhaustive study of the Essex edition; further scrutiny may show that Essex, not A6 or SR, should be adopted as copy text for *First Men*.

14 Fontana p. 229, line 15. After "important" Fontana skips to "mechanisms," omitting: "parts. Some, who I suppose deal with bell-striking". Cf. Penguin p. 174.

15 Here I had some help from the Penguin Senior Editor, who told me "we re-set from Sphere who, in the past, have off-set from the Collins text" (letter of 12 June 1987).

16 P. 18, third paragraph: "I know I was staking" (should be "knew"); p. 32, line 8, "he had" (should be "we had"); p. 114, the last two paragraphs should be one; p. 168, third paragraph, line 3, "in." should be deleted; p. 174, line 17, "delight is" should be "delight it is".

17 P. 117, line 10 upwards, "There were spears flying" as in A6, but S, N, read "There were spears flew"; p. 129, line 6 upwards, "in spite of" = A6, but S, N, read "spite of".

18 P. 186, line 7, "[man]", where S, N, A6 all read "(man)"; p. 188, line 9 upwards, "[?battle]", where S, N have "(?battle)" and A6 has simply "battle".

19 I owe this datum and induction to David Hughes. (See Note 12 above.)

20 *The Collector's Book* p. 225.

Afterword: Will the real Mr Wells?

Roger T. Stearn writes:

Who was the real Wells: H.G. at thirty years old, or fifty, or when? This apparently ridiculous question underlies the problem of a definitive edition again raised by Michael Draper's 'Editorial' and by David Lake's 'The Current Texts of Wells's Early SF Novels: Situation Unsatisfactory' in the *Wellsian* No. 11. David Lake apparently assumes the real Wells was H.G. in his fifties and sixties, when he prepared the Atlantic and Essex editions and the 1933 *Scientific Romances*, and that the definitive edition should be "Wells's final word."

This, however, is debatable. A work of fiction is the product of the writer at a particular time, at a particular stage in his life experience and evolution as a writer, and in a particular historical context. Every work of fiction is inevitably 'dated' and 'a period piece.' So a 'definitive' edition should be the *original* book edition (with errors corrected): that of the time of the work's creation, not the anachronistic tinkering of an older and changed man, in a different era.

David Lake replies:

In the second part of my article I express considerable dismay to have to accept Wells's final (American) version of *First Men*. But Roger Stearn is butting his head against a firm editorial dogma - an editor is bound to accept an author's final thoughts. Otherwise he's not an editor, but a 'corrector,' doing unto his author as Bentley did unto Milton. When an earlier version has considerable merit, then the only way out is to print *both* versions - as is commonly done with Keats' *La Belle Dame*, Wordsworth's *Prelude* 1805, 1850, and now latterly *King Lear* 1608, 1623. In fact this is my real solution for *First Men*: today I have been using, for literary purposes, both the final American version and the Newnes 1901 - Penguin 1986

Michael Draper adds:

Clearly Dr Lake is the expert, yet I have to confess my own sympathies lie with neither party in this dispute. If the aim of editing is to produce the most accurate and rewarding piece of reading matter possible, then it seems to me that literary rather than chronological criteria should guide the editor's choice of which version to work from, and the goal of a definitive text is a pedantic distraction from this decision, no matter whether it takes the form of the 'earliest' or 'final' version. Such a liberal policy may be accused of opening the flood gates of subjectivity, but the editor can after all state which version he or she is using and why it was chosen, giving an account of alternative readings in an appendix and leaving scholars with dissenting views to produce their own editions if they wish to. In the case of a Collected Works of Wells, an editorial committee could thrash out a consensus view on the best edition to offer the public - though, thinking of the likely members of such a committee, this could prove a lengthy business!

I am delighted to see that neither Dr Lake nor Dr Stearn has time for the presently fashionable pseudo-linguistic approach to literature which dismisses the author's intentions as 'irrecoverable,' and on this pretext treats all books as samples of the inauthenticity of language, to be played with and pulled apart as a dyspeptic infant plays with its food. Even the Mad Mullahs allow Salman Rushdie the dignity of meaning something, and something capable of arousing passion, even if one might quarrel with other aspects of their 'critical practice'.

Patrick Parrinder

A List of Contemporary Reviews and Articles on Wells

This list should be used as a supplement to that given by Ingvald Raknem, *H.G. Wells and his Critics* (1962), pp. 446-471. I have adopted the same format as Raknem, but items already listed by him are not included here. For a select list of writings about Wells, including a number of articles and reviews not listed below, see *H.G. Wells: A Reference Guide* ed. Scheik & Cox (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co) 1988.

1. Reviews

Textbook of Biology

Nature vol 47, 605 (Vol I); vol 49, 148 (Vol II).

Select Conversations with an Uncle

Academy; *Bookman* (London) viii (Jy 1895) 118; *Critic* xxv ns (11 Apr 1896) 253; *Publishers' Circular* lxii (15 Jn 1895) 662; *Literary World* xxvi (5 Oct 1895) 334.

The Time Machine

Nature lii (18 Jy 1895) 268; *Publishers' Circular* lxii (22 Jn 1895) 685; *Pall Mall Magazine* vii (Sept 1895) 153-5 (Israel Zangwill); *Observer* (3 Mar 1895) 7; *Sunday Times* (3 Mar 1895) 2; (28 Apr 1895) 2; *Literary World* xxvi (13 Jy 1895) 217; *L'Ermitage* xviii (May 1899) 3 81-2.

The Wonderful Visit

Pub. Circ. lxiii (12 Oct 1895) 421; *Sunday Times* (1 Dec 1895) 4; *Lit. World* xxvii (8 Aug 1896) 251.

The Stolen Bacillus

Pub. Circ. lxiii (14 Dec 1895) 675; *Observer* (8 Dec 1895) Suppl., 2.

The Island of Dr Moreau

Academy xlix (30 May 1896) 443-4 (Grant Richards); *Lit. World* xxvii (8 Aug 1896) 252; *Speaker* xiii (18 Apr 1896) 429-30; *Idler* ix (Jn 1896) 724 (Richard le Gallienne); Teodor de Wyzewa, *Le Roman contemporain a l'étranger* (Paris, 1900) 145-56; [For a letter from HGW to de Wyzewa, see Elga Liverman Duval, *Teodor de Wyzewa: Critic without a Country* (Geneva & Paris 1961), 150.]

The Wheels of Chance

Lit. World xxviii (23 Jan 1897) 28.

Thirty Strange Stories

Lit. World xxix (15 Oct 1898) 342-3; *L'Ermitage* xxv (Dec 1902) 464 (Henri Ghéon).