The *Transparent* Lie of H. G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*

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> "Every metaphysics begins with an anguish of the body which then becomes universal so that those obsessed *by frivolity* prefigure *authentically* tormented minds."
>
> (E. M. Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, p. 158, italics added)

The "anguish of the body" in nineteenth-century British fiction may begin with the trials and tribulations of physical deformity or social invisibility which mark the commencement of the *Bildungsroman*. Absent a confirmed patrimony or adopted, the orphan-figure searches for a name compatible with his body or its self-image. In children's literature, the fallen figure understandably comes to be obsessed with corporeal changes in size—an "anguish of the body"—that poses the same question for Lewis Carroll's Alice, "Who am I ?" Identity and social assimilation compete with the frivolity of growing up.

This disappearance of the traditional subject or its representational embodiment became a fugue in *fin de siècle* culture. Jaffers, the constable charged with the capture of an elusive experimentalist following the robbery of a vicarage is, like the author of this essay, a critic of the *absolute invisibility* of the Invisible Man. The law *sees* a crime, necessitating an intending, embodied, enacting subject, to be brought to book:

> 'What I'm after *ain't no invisibility*, its burglary. There's a house been broken into and money took.'
>
> (Wells, *IM* 40, italics added)

As Lionel Trilling's initially unre*mark*able "young man from the provinces" travelled a path from social anonymity—a metaphoric invisibility—to success or at least public recognition, so Griffin begins his life as an underpaid, socially invisible laboratory demonstrator at a sophisticated metropolitan research institution: the life of the faceless orphan in a scientific discipline.[1] He then journeys to the provinces with a secret formula for induced *invisibility*, only to "return" to the anonymity of the "Omnium"(s), the *transparency* (though not *invisibility*) of some collective singularity that *marks* a new institution, the urban department store. Replacing socio-economic determinism with scientific determinism, Griffin is paradoxically restored to a more traditionally consumed body among a patchwork of commodities on display in an Oxford Street emporium, dying into life as yet another variably specular object on offer for mass purchase or its competitor in inspiring belief, community panic. His trajectory thus reverses the more typical journey of Master Podnerevo in *Tono-Bungay*, from youthful apprenticeship to a chemist, to the blatantly commercial, metropolitan application of that knowledge, to the production of transparently empty tinctures lacking therapeutic value. Commerce in pseudo-scientific ideas, consumed by the masses as both desire and panic, would not be inconsistent with Wells' "scientific socialism."

This inverted pilgrimage (which precludes self-knowledge, there being no traditional "self" in models of transparency or social invisibility) is an experiment that ends with a mock visual re-vivification in the near X-ray image of Griffin's body in Wells' "Epilogue." Among the new "transparencies" of a *fin de siècle* culture were extrusive celluloid, enabling cinema as a viable medium; the cathode ray tube; and, of course, the Roentgen and Curies' X-ray image. Were he totally invisible, neither reader nor the Law could hold a sustainable belief in Griffin's ephemeral presence which depends upon the confusion of Being-in-Becoming with the residual traces of Becoming-in-Being.

He continually affects others, unlike Henry James' "lucid reflector" who has no identity save for the actions of other characters *reflected* by or in his responses.[2] James' narrative "body," is rather a mirror through which the actions of others are reflected, indicating a persistent objective *opacity*. Griffin's corporeal *transparency* has, by contrast, both immediate and durational social effects on his adopted communities that, in combination, constitute his Being-in-the World, even if not embodying traditional models of subjectivity. His "invisibility" is rather a co-dependent metaphor in which a community comes to believe, as if it were a religious faith. The "transparent body" served a similar, strategic role in the cultural life of the *fin de siècle*, with variations on the shapes assumed by its various cultural gestures and mediating incarnations.

Perhaps the best expression of Griffin's ambivalent ontological status occurs in the first chapter of *The Invisible Man* when the newly arrived visitor seeks the hasty delivery of temporarily abandoned personal effects to the "Coach and Horses Inn." When the intruder/guest is informed that he will have to wait for delivery of his possessions, Griffin "laughed abruptly, a bark of a laugh that he seemed to bite and kill in his mouth" (Wells, *IM* 9): in short, a sound interrupted. Speech is emitted as an interjection only to be foreshortened or muffled in a mouth that is the only visible part of a body otherwise covered with bandages, as if the anxiety of the wound silenced the word. The speaking subject is thereby, initially, constituted as a black hole—a "mouth effect" combining suffering and reason—more akin to Plato's cave or Alice's exaggerated neck in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland: "the centre of his face became a *black cavity*" (Wells, *IM* 36, ital. added). *Becoming* is established as a perceptual value.

This suffering channel simultaneously serves as a potential object of sympathy and an obstruction to the *becoming* of dialogic continuity. Such is a

far cry from genuine invisibility. Were he truly invisible, Griffin's body could not be designated as a non-totalized cavity, for any hole requires a demarcating boundary to signify its presence. Some defining liminal trace would have to remain visually present, against which a limited cavity appears. Griffin's emptiness is de-*noted* and therefore part of a notational system which, like most, is a blend of presence and absence. At his *eureka* moment, "invisibility" becomes a concomitant dependency of "transparency":

> 'One could make an animal—a tissue—*transparent* ! One could make it *invisible* ! All except the pigments. I could be *invisible*.'
>
> (Wells, *IM* 92, italics added)

Invisibility is thus here confused with the merely unreadable or indecipherable. But character, body, object, or text could be unreadable or indecipherable for a number of reasons while remaining perfectly visible yet resistant to cognition or continuous visibility, as Griffin and his formulas do throughout the novel. It is precisely this quality—the manipulation of vision and hence re-reading by others—which renders him an object of both community hatred and sympathy, just as his then mysterious resistance to understanding could be the consequence of a perceived incompletion. Either the remainder (the pigments) or a surplus of variable notational systems could occlude visibility, producing intermittent comprehension. Like his notebooks, Griffin could be unreadable or incomprehensible as a consequence of having no consistent notational system rather existing as an amalgam, some indecipherable mixture, as exemplified in the allegedly Invisible Man's diary perused by Vicar Bunting and Cuss. His notebooks—a kind of "owner's manual"—is as disguised as his body: both lack any interpretive *legend*, which literally or figuratively might *throw light* on some subject:

> 'There are no diagrams ?' asked Mr. Bunting. 'No illustrations *throwing light*—'
>
> 'See for yourself,' said Mr. Cuss. 'Some of it's mathematical and some of it's Russian or some other language (to judge by the letters), and some of it's Greek. Now the Greek I thought you—'
>
> (Wells, *IM* 52, italics added)

A representational discontinuity or elusive presence is not invisibility at all, but rather a transparency: we look *at* it and *through* it and see no meaning *as inscriptive* (and thereby consistently cognitive) meaning, but only a notational mixture of languages and numerical formulas; boundaries and holes; singular, imaginative creators and an automated production process that creates the illusion of the loss of individual control. There is a compulsion to both decipher the secret code and for Griffin and the young scientist, Ponderevo, in *Tono-Bungay*, to "contain all sorts of irrational and debatable elements that I shall be the clearer-headed for getting on paper" (Wells, TB 6). Irrationality is an unreadable and thereby "empty" container to be "gotten down," contained or embodied, so as to become visible, a synecdoche for a reproducible legibility. One could also "get it down" by internalizing one's notes as a digested "a-similation," the negation of simulation. The antagonistic notations could then *illuminate* each other as a *set* of the illegible and the enacted, yet lacking a link between the two mysteries.

Griffin's interjectional "bark," yet silenced (the aural/oral equivalent of the cognitively or visually interrupted), achieves something similar to the effects of domestic lighting upon space in the visual experiment of *The Invisible Man*. "The Jolly Cricketeers," the pub located adjacent to the regional tram line, allows light into its inner sanctums only intermittently by a system of "blinds" (Wells, *IM* 72) over low windows, producing an environment characterized by a light/dark contrast which can be partially manually controlled and

manipulated. Landscapes are dominated by black and white contrasts rather than chromatic nuance, the village itself appearing as a

> *network* of windows, beaded gas-lamps and shops with *black interstices* of roof and yard that made up the town at night.
>
> (Wells, *IM* 76, italics added)

Difference within sameness being crucial to the beaded constitution of any genuine network, exemplified in Derrida's infamous notion of the *grapheme*, there is an interstitial alternation of presence/absence; black/white; and fullness/emptiness that is collectively responsible for the generation of *meaning* in *The Invisible Man*. In a curious way the architecture of the novel resembles Griffin's body, riddled through and through "by interstices" (Well, *IM* 119) which could never be present in genuine invisibility.

But the meaning thereby somewhat mechanically generated (like that of Wells' "time machine" ?) would privilege a structural paradigm of oppositions, not mediation. The novel appears as a code dependent upon oppositions (solitude vs. crowds), some of which are either imaginary from the outset or are vulnerable to easy de-construction. But this semiotics of reading also informs Griffin's own theory of his subject (the reduction in the coefficients of resistance to light) as a "*network* of riddles, a *network* of solutions *gleaming elusively through*" (Wells, *IM* 89, italics added). If solutions "glimmer... through," invisibility is intermittent, negated, as revealed in a comparison of *networks* to *riddles*. The nature of any riddle (considered as a narrative genre) is that the solution to a conundrum is to be found *within* the statement, often by solving a pun involving some homonym: two words sound the same but have different meanings. The solution involves not any traditional application of knowledge external to the puzzle. Instead, we analyze a network of *internal* similarities and differences: the answer is "there," but we cannot "see" its

transparent obviousness as we look for a more *solid*, authentic solution. An example might be, "What is black and white and red (read) all over ?" The *invisibly* transparent answer is, of course, the daily newspaper.

Transparency is here being conflated with invisibility, the confusion of two forms of the negative to which perhaps Kant first called our attention: the negative of simple limitation and the negative of opposition. But the *set* of transparency and invisibility would illustrate the same problematic. If we consider *negative* notions like disorder or non-being from the starting point of being and order as the limits of some deterioration in whose interval all things would be included, it is obvious that transparency (a deterioration of opacity) would resemble invisibility as the deterioration of the body. Surely, the deteriorations (decadences) differ in *kind*, not merely in *degree*. Yet, Wells lumps them together in a marvelous sleight of hand, which takes no cognizance of either the duration or the presentational attitudes of transparent and invisible objects. A medium is abstracted into immediacy, inseparable from what is mediated.

We must, like Bergson, think of differences in *kind* independently of all forms of negation and opposition which invariably posit a general idea of order or Being which can only be imaginatively constituted in opposition to non-being.[3] Being is always, like one (but only one) formulation of subjectivity, opaque, non-transparent, and solid. But if the body is clothed and moves, it is visible, already partially obscured, as would be any number of its internal bodily functions. Would progressive *exposure* (photographic or of the criminal) be an approximate correlate of Bergson's iconic *duration*, insofar as each *exposure* is both (internally) incrementally different from itself and also different from any imaginably oppositional, Other ? Like Bergson's *duration*, the concept of *exposure* would create a virtual multiplicity—the perpetual *coming into Being* that achieves at the visual level what Bergson's *virtual*

multiplicity does at the temporal level.[4] Transparency would mark an intersection of visual continuity and visual heterogeneity.

Similarly, Wells creates a doubly fictional general idea of the One, an invisible man, with a detailed revelation of Griffin's productive methodology, in which *transparency* (both a negation—of an opaque subject—and the absence of negation, insofar as it transmits all light) is seamlessly elided with *invisibility* with no duration and no exposure. *Transparency* has duration, depending upon conditions which render an object *more* or *less* transparent, depending upon the perspective of the perceiver and the conditions governing both the mediating agent and the object viewed. Invisibility would have no *more or less*, no internal differentiation: an object is visible or not ! Transparency is, by contrast, the agent for an elusive (but present) gleam or body.

If a transparent object like glass is smashed into a powder of minute particles, the co-efficient of the resistance to light is lowered even further, and if those particles are then dissolved in another transparent substance (transparency squared, as it were) the result would be the invisibility of the glass *in* the water: "a transparent thing becomes invisible if it is placed in any medium of almost the same refractive index" (Wells, *IM* 91). But a "thing" is a *medium* only when it becomes an agent of transmission, by being partially (but not completely) emptied of its "thingness," thereby becoming both a channel and the variable obstruction to a channel, simultaneously. Of course, this is not genuine invisibility, but the illusion of invisibility—an optical illusion—which depends upon blind faith, the acceptance of the virtual, as do other belief systems.

The putatively invisible man who lends the novel its deceptive title seems simultaneously transparently passive (as a kind of empty or interrupted voice) and aggressive, as a murderer and robber, a continuous alternation in personality (a set) which is, in some way, self-cancelling. He exists rather as

an alternation of *effects* upon a community with no consciousness of that *effect* or if there is some consciousness, it seems responsive only to threats to its self-maintenance, as quasi-*automated* as we might expect from a scientific creation. There could thus be no "bad faith" or immoral intent, since in some way Griffin lacks intentionality, possessing only *needs*: food, cigars, money, and some secret sharer. The same would of course apply both to the lonely *Dracula* desirous only of a very bourgeois value, a *pied-à-terre* in London, or the monster in *Frankenstein*, similarly desirous *of* and resistant *to* companionship.

The "empty body," no matter how much blood or money it collects, remains humanly incomplete, as does our fiction of an invisible man. And one representation of this perpetual incompleteness, the absence of a ground, is a *transparency*, awaiting fulfillment by reader or community. This "figural transparency" is socially manifested as a radical detachment of social or corporeal continuity coupled with an almost compulsive need for socialization. One of the visions held by a witness to Griffin's behavior in Iping is that of a "'fistful of money' (no less) travelling without visible agency, along by the wall at the corner of St. Michael's Lane" (Wells, *IM* 69). The absence of *visible agency* is the operative idea, be it of people, money, or the random commodities on display in the modern department store (how did they get there ?): all share a random circulation. As with Dracula's climbing down a wall backwards, transparently visible through a blue flame, or similarly excreting money while being chased by the law in London, the absence of identifiable control or agency—be it the force of gravity or the protection of other containers—seems to generate meaning in certain familiar *fin de siècle* narratives. The loss of control from one perspective is an allegory of the absence of self-possession, or that uniquely British value, even etymologically, of *propriety*, in a secretion of secrets that is a prelude to universal knowledge. This involuntary, reflex behavior is nowhere better exemplified than when Griffin's sleeve (covering

an absent arm) smashes a glass into shards without his conscious awareness (*Wells*, *IM* 88), as if he were reproducing the act which brings him about: tiny glass fragments.

This production of textual meaning from contingent or antithetical alignments and their interstices is perhaps best understood in the heavily accented speech of one of Iping's residents early on who notices a nose that appears as rather pink:

> 'That's true,' said Fearenside. 'I knows that. And I tell'e what I am thinking. That marn's a piebald, Teddy. Black here and white there—in patches. And he's ashamed of it He's a kind of half-breed, and the color has come off patchy instead of mixing. I've heard of such things before. And it's the common way with horses, as anyone can see.'
>
> (Wells, *IM* 20)

The apparently naïve commentary upon Griffin's appearance is significant, for he is simultaneously viewed as an emptiness and a kind of interstitial "mixed-breed" fullness or excess emblemized in a chromatically self-cancelling *pied-ness*, a difference within sameness: unmixed patchwork. Griffin's favorite time is the pied-ness of "twilight" (Wells, *IM* 22). This existential "dappling" is somewhat akin to that of the harlequin-figure, familiar in the visual and performing arts of the European *fin de siècle*, often in fact paired ("pied") as in the figures of the early Picasso's "Saltimbanques" series. The clown of variable colors and shapes was a frequent companion in popular entertainment to the bismuth-whitened, colorless jongleur as his "double," a pied-ness within pied-ness (paired-ness), visible, for example, in Andre Dérain's portraits.

Although frequently overlooked by readers of Wells' novel, Griffin makes quite clear that he had an inherited head start in constituting the fiction of his own invisibility, for the allegedly "invisible man" was born as "*almost* an albino"

(Wells, *IM* 79, italics added) replete with the pink and white face and red eyes that characterize this abnormality in pigmentation. Yet "almost" is a synonym of "not quite"; his genetic handicap was not complete but left Griffin with a residual liminal residue that *attracts attention*. Commencing his life on the borders of pigmentation, resistant to a consistent *reading* or sympathetic understanding, Griffin is *always-already* an *almost*: neither Being nor the negation of Being, but *intermittently* the victim of a public *stare*.

Hence, the white bandages which initially define (even as they hide) Griffin's face in Iping are really a "cover" for an emptiness, much as Podnerevo's graphic skills in labelling, create "labelled bottles of nonsense" (*TB* 199) that cover a commercially naked wound. Like the historical pierrot-figure of the *Commedia dell Arte*, Griffin's presentational reality would be more accurately described as white-on-white.[5] He deploys science cosmetically to compensate for (at the same time that it adds to) a physical emptiness. In one incarnation, he is genetically-determined, and in the other, scientifically obscures social exposure by an experimentally-induced (social) mask—a positive negation—made more obvious when he seeks refuge in the shop of a dealer in theatrical costumes, another mask or bandage. He thus "doubles down" on his physical deficiency with his research, necessitating a kind of "double-reading," represented in his choice of the improbable Marvel as a *carnivalesque* (pied) partner and ultimate heir. Although he arrives in Iping carrying a genetic handicap that renders him vulnerable to prejudice, Griffin's research has displaced the handicap in such a way as to appear as the victim of an explosion, eliciting community sympathy. It is of course a marvelous cover story: the victim of nature tortures a community, by evolving from an inherited handicap, to a victim, to the perpetrator of a ruse that terrorizes a village.

Nor is Griffin the only chromatically challenged character in a very dappled novel, *The Invisible Man*. The beneficiary of his notebooks and research, the

tramp Marvel, presents a similarly "pied" or chromatically variable appearance as he roams about the countryside as the double of the Invisible Man:

> You must picture Thomas Marvel as a person of copious, *flexible* visage, a nose of cylindrical protrusion, a liquorish, ample, fluctuating mouth, and a beard of bristling eccentricity. His figure inclined to embonpoint, his short limbs accentuated this inclination. He wore a furry silk hat, and the frequent substitutions of twine and shoelaces for buttons, apparent at critical points of his *costume*, marked a man essentially bachelor.
>
> (Wells, *IM* 43, italics added)

With his mismatched shoes picked up along the rambles of an aimless life that prefigures Griffin's own wanderlust late in the novel, Marvel is in every way as "assembled" as is the scientifically- produced, prosthetic body of his benefactor, Griffin. Even Marvel's socks appear as an open/closed network, like that of window blinds: "his feet, save for socks of *irregular open-work*, were bare" (Wells *IM*, 43, italics added), but not invisible. Griffin and Marvel are in every sense "sympathetic" figures, even doubles, as physically aligned as *social invisibility* (neglect) with *transparency*, a vulnerability to multiple readings in communities where everyone else seems to have a profession, or class affiliation which as-signs them. The wandering tramp and the peripatetic scholar share similarly "self-made" bodies: a bourgeois model of subjectivity has visually disappeared into a black hole in one case and a costumed puppet in the other.

Charged names signifying the operation of a quasi-traneparent idiolect abound in Wells' navel. Griffin as an "Invisible Man" belongs to the same nominalist register as do proper names like "Fearenside;" the perpetually verbally bewildered "Cuss;" the hyper-reticent "Rev. Bunting" who wiles away his hours behind curtains and surplice; or even that other pied harlequin, the

sartorially mismatched, "Thomas Marvel." Wells mixes the names of mapped, physical locations (Iping) with fictional villages in West Sussex like "Bramblehurst," surely derivative of a real place, Midhurst. Genuine villages, fictional places, a kind of *portmanteau* hybrid, straddling fictional and real locations, are aligned on the same map, mixing individual with geographic nomination. So many of the proper names in Wells' novel seem to participate in a collective assemblage from which each character or location takes a name or is given a name, which presumes to be *proper*, while retaining traces of intervention or insertion into a network of nominal pre-suppositions which show *through*. "Where have I seen this, elsewhere ?" might be a critical response, just as it is in the perambulations of those who pursue the invisible man through a number of rural and urban sanctuaries.

Similarly, at least partially detachable from the urban "blind" of the crowds of Oxford Street's well-named Omnium Department Store and the anonymity (but not invisibility) of crowds, Griffin's body blends in. The alienated individual, pursued by representatives of the law, nonetheless discovers himself amidst a pile of the indeterminate "stuff" which constitutes the modern department store where differential objects are aligned so that bedding, food halls, and cosmetics co-exist on the same display plane as objects on sale. This random and artificial alignment of the dissimilar series creates the illusion of both some shared value and the freedom to choose (objects which are more or less the same). Extreme visibility is literally in-different to *in*visibility as the plethora of material objects blur into each other. Like the hodge-podge Marvel, our "Pied Man" successfully hides among the thematically discontinuous objects offered for consumption, for all shares the illusoriness of appearance in a commercial space dedicated to the superficial bandage, label, or badinage:

> The pale London dawn had come, the place was full of a chilly gray light that *filtered around the edges* of the window- blinds. I sat up and for a time I could not think where the ample apartment, with its counters, its piles of rolled stuff, its heaps of quilts and cushions, its iron pillars, might be. Then, as recollection came back to me, I heard voices in conversation.
>
> (Wells, *IM* 111, italics added)

Were he truly invisible, Griffin could of course not be tracked or chased by the law and its self-appointed surrogates in pursuit of various traces, edges, of presence. He rather exists as "all surface," the liminal, covering a radical absence of all save *effect*, but, that would, again metaphorically, not be different from one presentational reality of the British upper classes, social celebrity, or goods on display in a department store. Clothing and mannequins often hide an absence of body beneath some calculated surface by which the body beneath is altogether displaced in favor of the superficialities of external style or fashion. Were Griffin to appear at one of the Veneerings' (a collective even in name, existing as "all surface") parties in Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, he would be quite at home, with his carapace of sartorial bandages rather than the accoutrements of fashion. Or, at the other extreme, like the insignificant Jo' the Crossing-Sweeper of *Bleak House*, continually "moved on" by authority, yet "wanted" for the information he possesses, apparent anonymity has a way of becoming meaningful, *to some reader*.

Although Griffin's self-possession has a number of intriguing qualities, *invisibility* defined as total visual inaccessibility or, alternatively, the omission of the production of a representation, is surely not one of them. Hence the reader is presented with an elaborate lie functioning as a continuous trope from the title page onward. Yet, it is this lie—an ontological *transparency* represented as the "invisible" by those who simultaneously see and do not see him—that reveals a deeper truth. It endows the being that it defines with what

we might term an impersonal consciousness insofar as it can never feel itself to be either good or evil. These bodies are presented as deficiencies insofar as they cannot feel themselves *to be* the way other people are, but only the way that things in disarray (pieces of mismatched or non-coordinated clothing, a vicarage left in ruin after a robbery, a ransacked "collection" of random objects in a used costume shop where Griffin seeks shelter from pursuit) exist. Neither Griffin nor his double, Marvel, have attributes to which we might apply moral categories, ethical judgment, or social appraisal, but rather exist as a collection of hollow goods or appearances on display for perusal, gossip, or public consumption. This identity would resemble the modern Omnium Department Store on Oxford Street, filled with its generalized curiosities, "patchworks," which marks the terminus of a subject-less subject's journey.

There is also an inner kind of prestidigitation, in which, like the Russian Harlequin at a way station in route to Kurtz' kingdom in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, this personality tries to talk his way into *being* something. The process of coming into this peculiar kind of *being* from *non-being* seems to involve haste; if I do not secure some "self," I shall cease to exist altogether. Otherwise this fragile, synthetic construction of a body will fall apart. Of course, this is a characteristic "figure" of nineteenth and early twentieth-century science fiction, familiar to readers of *Frankenstein, Dracula*, and the dialogic swallow and statue of Wilde's "The Happy Prince." Perhaps the "body" and "consciousness" might be another significant "set," the incarnation of the claims made in this essay for the "set" of *transparency* and *invisibility*.

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This body-less body is not unlike those depicted in the case histories detailed in Freud and Breuer's seminal *Studies in Hysteria* (1892) : the patient continues to transmit symptoms even while being analyzed (on occasion under hypnosis, and hence having no control over their own bodies), suggesting a

continuing life of some historically traumatic event into the present. Griffin is represented in the text as similarly lacking a fully controllable corporeal body, yet he paradoxically maintains a curious *self*-possession sufficient to temporarily escape either comprehension or its corollary, *capture*. How can one have a "self" and not have a "self" simultaneously, save as a symptomatology ? Or is it rather that the traditional "self" is being redefined ?

What is being continuously narrated at both the beginning of the discipline of psychoanalysis and in H. G. Wells' science fiction novel is rather a perceptual *inaccessibility*, masquerading as *invisibility*: of something hidden from view in which the patient/victim is a co-conspirator, if not an author. And again, like Freud and Breuer's patients, the so-called Invisible Man initially appears at the Coach and Horses Inn at Iping as the victim of some "accident or o'pration" (Wells, *IM* 8), swathed as he is in white bandages that wrap or repress an inaccessible wound. His initial perceptual reality is that of a *medical case*. The ensuing narrative is, as would be commensurate with Griffin's apparent condition, that of the *victim* of some antecedent trauma, even as he victimizes an enlarged community of analysts by continually *taking something from them*. The patchwork of particulate plenitude (theatre costumes, goods on display, pebbles) and corporeal absence constitute yet another "set" in *The Invisible Man*.

This trope that tropes itself has abundant antecedents in the culture of *fin de siècle* Europe that shaped the variously curious bodies of what came to be known as the *avant garde*. It would seem that, to borrow from Wells' novel, there is a general invitation "to come and feel about for his body" (Wells, *IM* 78) during the so-called Decadence Movement. But what kind of body is it ? It cannot be felt and yet it is *there*, as a manifestation or consequence, a characteristic of another form of Being, perhaps.

Even as a student, Sigmund Freud observed an illness which could disguise

its symptomatic presence from both physician and patient. The coma which often accompanied "hysterical anaesthesia" was to Freud's eye, not evidence of some morbidity or paralysis, but rather of the double-nature of the complaint which can mime other "states" of consciousness.[6] It may resemble natural sleep or may be accompanied by such a reduction in respiration and circulation as to be taken for death. During these psycho-somatic "attacks," the division which normally separates the benign or remissive state of the "illness," from its acute or active manifestation is obscured, just as it is for Griffin. Because different phases of the "attack" can be substituted for each other, one symptom can be displaced by another. This allows different "symptoms" to be substituted, one for the other, so that a symptom behaves like metaphor does in semiotics. A physical symptom can be represented verbally and accessed by conversational analysis in such a way that the body belongs to two orders of existence simultaneously. It is manifested as an "attack," but continues (has duration) and may be symbolically displaced by (or onto) other symptoms which represent the attack:

> During the entire attack consciousness may either be retained or lost—more often, the latter. Attacks so often described are often linked together in a series, so that the whole attack may last for several hours or days.... Each phase of the attack or each separate portion of a phase may be isolated and *may stand for the attack* in rudimentary cases.
>
> (Freud I: 43, italics added)

For the early Freud, hysteria comes to behave "as though anatomy did not exist" or "as though it had no knowledge of it" (Freud I, 169), just as does anatomy for the Invisible Man. Of course, we are very close to the instantiation of what will become the Unconscious, later in Freud's career. He posits what is in effect a "second state of consciousness" (Freud I, 153) wherein, once

deposited, the experience can no longer be *abreacted*, but is, in essence, stored. The "secret agent" (some initiatory trauma) is therefore simultaneously present and absent, a kind of undercover presence, waiting to erupt into consciousness. Like the notorious demonstrator/anarchist "Professor" of Conrad's *The Secret Agent* with his hand on the detonator of a bomb as he walks down the street (a novel which Conrad had originally intended to be dedicated to H.G. Wells), the fugitive spirit is simultaneously an anonymous ordinary citizen and yet known to the authorities who need him as an informational source. As with Ego and Super-Ego in Freud's later regenerative "map-making," there is a kind of "open-ness" to each other. Griffin and Conrad's explosive personalities, as well as Freud's catatonic patients, appear as automatons with their respectively flexible versions of the *plastique* body.

This "second order of consciousness" (be it political or present at the dawn of psychoanalysis) is of course a nosological next-of-kin to a variety of *fin de siècle* models all of which share the structure of subjects imbedded within one another: Azam's "somnabulic" or "hypnotic consciousness;" Binet's "personality alterations;" Breuer's "hypnoid state;" Freud's early attempt to access the "truth" of dreams; Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Dorian Gray and Hallward's "Portrait" which displaces his life onto a second consciousness, only intermittently accessible in Dorian's childhood nursery. All are surely related to the various "counter-will" theories prevalent in *fin de siècle* Europe. What all of these models share is a will which is both resolute and yet powerless, not unlike that of Wells' invisible man, Griffin. A preliminary reduction or negation enables the emergence of a kind of counter-will which in almost every instance is produced by a re-marking of the body after it has been reduced to a "transparency," a provisional negation that may foreshadow other *fin de siècle* negations. The body is written down (denominated) only to then be "written up" (re-nominated) in a double maneuver. In concert these corporeal

negations enable philosophers, scientists, authors as well as quasi-mystics to produce what Freud called a "prosthetic God" (Superman) of the late nineteenth century. The remission of the body subsidizes a universal.

It is with the example of the notorious "Fraulein Elisabeth Von R." in which Freud attempted to relate pains of the body (in her case that of the leg and thigh) to emotional pain, that Freud fully denatures the human body. That part of the body was the precise location where her bedridden father—the father for whose care she forsakes a prospective lover—had rested his head. Freud then proceeded to map what was to become the "hysterogenic body": the left leg is afflicted when the conversation turns on her dead sister and the surviving brother-in-law. The right leg is afflicted with a twitching when the talk turns to her now deceased father. Freud's "treatment" (if indeed it is that) consisted of the careful elimination of possible organic "lesions" or causes by both checking for possible organic origins (gout, hypertension) but also purging the conventional body by traditional nineteenth -century remedies. The body, its tics, hesitations, slips, verbal displacements, metaphoric substitutions, and symbolic mis-representations of its history—a kind verbal harlequin—becomes a "talking body" in Freud and Breuer's early work. It becomes thereby accessible to the "talking cure" but requiring a physician as a necessary qualification, one of the "scientific" burdens attached to the discipline of psychoanalysis. The protagonist of Wells' *The Invisible Man* similarly has a body whose epidermis has been eliminated (much as would be achieved by an X-ray image), but a discursive, mouth-based "self" that throws off speech and random symptoms. He is simultaneously aggressive and passive, in response to community conventions, like attending church or paying bills.

* * *

Griffin's experiment, it must not be forgotten, was initially motivated by the

fear that the Professor under whom he worked might claim credit for his own discoveries regarding the "principle of pigments and refractions" (Wells, *IM* 91). He regards his supervising mentor, Professor Oliver, as a "scientific bounder" and "thief of ideas" (Wells, *IM* 91) with whom Griffin is unwilling to share credit for his new discoveries. In a *fin de siècle* and Edwardian culture in which plagiarism and the counterfeit production of value (Pater's distinction between *Plato and Platonism*; Freud's problem with Breuer and Charcot; Wilde's "*The Importance of Being Earnest;* and Gide's *Les Faux Monnaieurs*) came to challenge the notion of *à priori* cultural originality partially on grounds of Hegelian notions of biological and historical inheritance as well as the surpluses or *aufgehoben*,[8] Griffin works alone in fear of the plagiarist. Yet he simultaneously needs a companion, the tramp Marvel, as a custodian of his secret formula for producing invisibility, fearing the authoritative "secret sharer" as a fake while entrusting his theories to a harlequin tramp for safe keeping. The Invisible Man appropriates money which is not his on more than one occasion, yet enlists an unwitting "silent partner" of his resourcefulness even as he rails against the theft of his ideas.

Even though he desperately "must have a partner" (Wells, *IM* 84), as Griffin explains to his interlocutor, Kemp, he solves the problem of intellectual dissemination alone by literally internalizing the formula for the reduction of optical density to a refractive Degree O, while seeking *publicité*. If one definition of plagiarism might be "the deceptive dissimulation of property or intellectual ideas that are not those of the presumptive author," a kind of false reproduction, Wells' Invisible Man would escape that commercial threat, even while paradoxically finding a double/disciple in Marvel. The former demonstrator aligns *assimilation*, internalizing his formula (thereby making it resistant to the *copy*) and *enacting* it as a living, terrorizing demonstration, even as he looks for a pluralizing custodian. The empty albeit lively body is,

after all, not so far away from death. This is an internal inconsistency like that of today's corporations who appeal for *transparency*, even as they vigorously protect patents.

Wells was especially sensitive to accusations of false representation, and blatant commercialization of scientific tenets in the work of sociologists such as Herbert Spencer, for he had made precisely such claims. Accused of "scavenging" the work of others in his didactic, *A Modern Utopia*, by John Beattie Crozier, Wells, perhaps a precursor of the "public intellectual" of our own time, replied that all ideas were mixed to begin with, as if they were "in the air," and hence transparently available to all. During his own lifetime, Wells was forced, like many popularizers of ideas in the interests of public consumption, to defend himself against the charge of plagiarism, most notably in a case involving the Canadian historian, Florence Deeks, who claimed unsuccessfully that Wells had pirated her work, *The Web of History*, and passed it off as his *The Outline of History*. Although she was unsuccessful in her suit, the legal defense of his presumptive originality cost Wells dearly, so much in fact, that one of his publishers requested him to take out insurance against further liability.[9] He was both a plaintiff and defendant of accusations of *transparent dissimulations*, easily "seen through."

If George's Uncle Podnerevo, the mastermind behind the transparently fraudulent and compositionally corrupt umbrella group of products which give *Tono-Bungay* its name, would have had such legal advice perhaps he could have avoided the collapse of the enterprise and his own imprisonment. His own good name has been "hollowed out" by a super-inscription, a false claim, like that made for the product, Tono-Bungay. For, when queried about why he is being arrested, the reply to his nephew suggests that he is one more *fin de siècle* counterfeiter, enabled by asserting false claims:

> 'It's worse than that. I done something....
> They're bound to get it out. Practically they *have* got it out.'
> 'What ?'
> 'Writin' things down…I done something.'
>
> (Wells, *TB* 476)

The proliferation of the copy, the incompletely acknowledged "double," is of course enabled by a culture of *transparency* (perhaps initiated by the passage of Limited Liability provisions for corporations in 1857) which legitimated multiple authors or several stages (and hands) involved in the productive and *a-crediting* process, obscuring any identifiable, singular subject or author. Hence, the incarceration of the master of the multi-use patent medicine, Tono-Bungay, for "taking the place of another" in a financial transaction, seems appropriate. As Griffin remarks at one point in *The Invisible Man*, his "secret formula" for induced transparency cannot ever be revealed, for if such were the case, he would be held singularly liable for his not inconsiderable crimes. All ideas remain, as Wells was to argue of the production of socialism as well as narrative and commercial products, "Mixed to begin with" (Wells, *TB* 228). As with Freud's "traumatic event," there is an additional, life led *undercover* or *through* some "double" in European culture of the period between 1880 and 1915, which is incompletely accessible, for which an *intermittent transparency* might be an apt synecdoche. Seeing one *through* the other enables both the activation and elevation of *transparency* as a metaphor and the calculated abandonment of subjectivity, accompanied by myriad ways of "playing" with the induced deceptions. A transparent medium deploys strategic *blinds* (repressions that filter), alternately interrupting and abetting durational illumination. Family history speaks *through* the unconscious body, but illuminated as an *effect*, often after some durational "clearing," or analysis.

An example might be suggested in Monet's (1903) account of the process

by which his observations of nature were brought back to his studio and allowed to become more *transparent*, in preparation for his work on the ensemble at L'Orangerie that came to constitute *Les Nymphéas*, as narrated by the art historian, Pierre Georgel:

> Le travail à l'atelier favorise la décantation des impressions immédiates et leur fusion dans une vision globale, moins tributaire des particularités du temps et de lieu que celle des tableaux de chevalet ....[10]

The operative concept is revealed in the French, *décantation*, the settling or emptying out of the particulate matter of existence (referred to as the "corps" by Monet) or experience so as to achieve a more universal –which becomes thereby a synonym of *transparent*—effect, as in decanting wine. This process combined a reconfiguration of the physical object (to which one critic has attached the complex notion of *ressentiment*, to feel something as an after-*effect*) combined with an erasure of the particular. This *reduces opacity in order to create a clearing in which something previously hidden, takes shape*, as a manifestation of viewing the object or experience, differentially. In my own private experience of *Les Nymphéas* in fact—or at least in one of the panels—the viewer senses himself not looking *at*, but looking *up*, from the transposed position of a fish in the aquarium that was the home of the water lilies, as if the (decanted) fish's eyes had displaced his own in an act of *transference*, between viewing subjects.

These reflections on the sleight of hand which binds the transparent lie of invisibility to a timeless, yet hollow, universality should not blind the reader to Wells' radical negation of conventional notions of time and memory, no less than did Monet or Bergson's contemporaneous achievements. The reader of *The Invisible Man* almost forgets that before Griffin's rampage, a Mr. Henfrey, the village clock-mender, "took off the hands of the clock and the face" and

"extracted the works" (Wells, *IM* 13). An instrument of conventional time-keeping is dismantled, made transparent, as a mere face "backed" by a new measure of time to be launched by Griffin: "Day One of Year One of the New Epoch" (Wells, *IM* 134), a virtual Reign of Terror of the Invisible Man by which perhaps we could imaginatively date Wells' novel. As with the notion of A. C. E.; the re-setting of clock time after the French Revolution to mark its end on 18 Brumaire, (the second month of the autumn quarter of Year VII of the French Revolution hence "the fog"); or Saloth Sar's (a.k.a. Pol Pot's) reformulation of a revolutionary Khymer People's Republic's calendar in Cambodia, imagined utopias often have as unconventional a time scheme as the memories they try to erase. Like plagiarism, science fiction depends for its success upon a willingness to collectively forget the past. The *making* and *unmaking* of ordinary time may well mark a transparent intersection of science fiction and political revolution, which Wells' achievement surely bestrides.

* * *

The last quarter of the nineteenth century occasioned a quantum leap in the development of a new communicative medium, the photograph. Once fixed ("exposed"), a photograph presented an image of nature entirely self-inscribed by light as opposed to the creation of man or God. In one sense, Griffin's experiments with light would re-inscribe the self as a *self-inscribed incomplete transparency*, much as would say, micron photography which similarly during the *fin de siècle*, extended human vision beyond imagined possibilities, giving evidence of things no one could see with the naked eye. By the end of the nineteenth century, photography had moved "from providing a record of our visual experience" to become the most scientific proof of the reality of the invisible by virtue of chemically-induced *transparent mediums*, extrusive celluloid and silver nitrate solutions which revealed what had previously been hidden no less than did Freud's presumed revelations.[11]

But, if the new cameras and sophisticated cut glass lenses could expose what had previously been invisible secrets to advance our knowledge of a heretofore inaccessible natural world, it could also be enlisted for other, more spiritual purposes. Many theosophists believed that photography could reveal an invisible supernatural world of spirits to the trusting eye in such a way as to blur the difference between natural and supernatural. Lacking established rituals, Spiritualism came to be dependent upon a combination of demonstration and manifestation that might be jointly subsumed under the notion of the spectacle, perhaps more familiar in the French, *séance*. The spirits evoked sometimes left behind spiritual signs: musical instruments sailed through the air cacophonously or sounds and movements assailed the audience. These performances were often so spectacular that they were occasionally presented in theaters in the late nineteenth century (as Charcot "presented" his hysterical patients, posed in operating theatres). Photography was easily enlisted as the transparent medium of *manifestation* that carried with it a *set*: natural science and veracity informed by a metaphysical interest. Extra-terrestrial spirits seemed to appear in the finished portraits of relatives. A photographer, like the infamous William Mumler, in fact became (supposedly) a qualified "medium" who channeled supernatural influences into the camera.[12]

Photography became easily accepted as evidence of the supernatural, so that some photographers claimed to be able to produce "spirit" images simply by resting their hands on an unexposed plate. The resulting photographs revealed a reality that was presumably omnipresent, but invisible to the human eye unless mediated by an adept who revealed its "presence" as an *aura*, often shadowing a conventionally representational object, perhaps anticipating the collages of Photoshop. It may have been bad or fraudulent science, as a number of commentators have suggested regarding the Invisible Man's theory

of matching reductions in the coefficients of the refraction of light rays among two differential mediums. But perhaps, verifiability is entirely beside the point to the teadet of Wells' novel, as was often the case in *fin de siècle* cultural, religious, and scientific practice, as the work of Madame Blavatsky suggests.

Yet, we might rhetorically ask, how could a self-inscribed proper name that gives Wells' novel its title, be a distraction as well as a refraction that concentrates fear and belief, including that of the reader ? At the novel's end, Kemp feels for a pulse and finds none. All witnesses to Griffin's end saw, "faint and *transparent* as though it was made of glass" (Wells, *IM* 148, italics added), the "outline of a hand" which grew "cloudy and *opaque*, even as they stared" (Wells, *IM* 149, italics added). The transparent body becomes a genuine corporeal body in its characteristically intermittent opacity only upon death, the slow death of life-as- transparency. Rather than liberating Griffin, his *transparency* is an extension of his disability, for it confines him to solitude. Were he to emerge into a London fog for a walk, the moisture would create yet another silhouette, thereby rendering him more vulnerably alive as "a bubble... a greasy glimmer of humanity" (Wells, *IM* 114). The body as a lighter- than-air bubble (or airship), and Tono-Bungay, a commercial bubble, are similar representations of insubstantiality.

No wonder this "coming to life" is described as if it were incipient death: "the slow spreading of a poison...first a faint fogginess, and then growing rapidly dense and *opaque*" (Wells, *IM* 149, italics added). Griffin's death resembles the slowly emergent developing of another familiar transparency, the X-ray image, "beginning at the hands and feet and creeping along his limbs to the vital centres of his body" (Wells, *IM*, 149). At the moment of his death as the Invisible Man, Griffin "comes alive as a dim outline" (Wells, *IM* 149). Just as an X-ray image reveals the living body as if it were a skeleton in death, so Griffin comes to conventional life only when he has been apprehended

(apprehension, notation, being a form of non-Being). In the same way, a highly polished window would cease to be a "transparent pane of glass" at the moment we could see it come to life as glass (maybe by crazing), rather than as a mediating transparency. Its death (as a transparency) would be a kind of life (as a provisionally embodied opacity).

In the "Epigraph, the miraculous Marvel has become the proprietor of a little inn near Port Stowe, presumably purchased by his unauthorized inheritance of the stolen money left in his trust by an endangered, fugitive Invisible Man. There, he narrates the Legend of the Invisible Man to any guests who might listen, with mementos on display. Although in possession of the secret formulas for producing "invisibility" in the notebooks left in his custodial care by the deceased Griffin, the scientific executor remains unable to decipher them, even disavowing "the idea of *my* having 'em" (Wells, *IM* 149), another more obviously transparent lie of *The Invisible Man*.

Marvel, as alter ego of the Invisible Man, like his benefactor, never goes to church on Sunday morning (attended by the entire community), but rather studies Griffin's opaque notebooks—the holy text—in order to enhance the legend to customers of the public house. Through a witless disciple, Marvel, the "Epilogue" to *The Invisible Man* converts the diaphanously elusive subject of Wells' novel into a religious text, contributing to a local form of Spiritualism grounded in scientific research, but now reduced to a commercial advertisement. Guests to the public house are entertained by sharing exaggerated narratives of increasingly dubious authenticity, all in support of a thriving commercial enterprise. It has given the former tramp a genuinely solid financial "stake" in the future narratives of a country hostile to the subaltern.

If Invisible Man of *The Invisible Man* comes alive only in death (in which he ceases to be an effect or manifestation, but becomes a proper name, not

needing any "the"), then in Marvel's narrative, he assumes a narrative *aura* sufficient to attract consumers of narratives and alcohol. But this commercial *aura* is rather the opposite of the deployment of the term in Walter Benjamin's (1936) "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."[13] The lost *aura* for Benjamin was a consequence of the absence of need for personal attendance. One no longer had to be physically present in Chartres Cathedral, along with its presumably authentic, dedicated masses absorbing its atmospherics, but could experience it from a detached, empty perspective, in a reproduction. By contrast, Wells' *aura* is not lost, but has potential *duration* insofar as it can be easily manipulated as a social *effect* precisely because of its empty transparency. Desire and fear are re-enforced by the continuous need to supply a *body* of meaning sufficient to maintain community belief, myth-making, or commercial purchase.

Wells' *The Invisible Man*, from one perspective, offers a modern fugitive who is *all aura* with no corporeal substance, yet nonetheless, commands mass hysteria. Any reader can *see*, in his confusion of life and death, variably, the advent of a new faith (in dubious and unverifiable science); an age of terror; or a new commercialism. Benjamin's *aura* has been transformed into the *transparency* that subsidizes an infinite variety of "readings" through it. Marvel's inn at Port Stowe is now a theme park or museum of its unwitting donor (like "Disneyland"): a virtual Museum of the late Invisible Man.

It was not until the mid-1930's, that the so-called German refugee intellectuals—Horkheimer, Adorno, Arendt—called our attention to the relationship between fascism in Europe and the rise of an excessive consumer culture.[14] In both practices, an assortment of de-individuated individuals leading sleepy, alienated lives comes alive only in their response to the mass death-cult of empty celebrity or sophisticated, but deceptive commercial "branding," often using dubious scientific "findings." Wells, ever fearful of the

threat of fascism, expressed in numerous BBC interviews, may well have been prescient in thematically binding a transparently wasting physical illness ("consumption"), a death-cult, and mass *consumer*ism.

This *transparency* of Wells' *The Invisible Man* is of course synonymous with, if not delocalization, a new internationalism which these days has become a synonym for a demanded transparency, an "opening up," in financial services and banking. Yet, in late nineteenth-century Europe, the "Internationale" accompanied a more threatening ideology of the collective masses, as well as later, architecturally, the dream of a universal style. Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Mme. Blavatsky's Chakra, Dracula, and other diaphanous presences, lack a singular nationality that might decisively mark them. They are cultural and geographic travelers, "at home" virtually anywhere: Omnium(s).

Pater's controversial imaginary "Diaphaneitè" (1854), the curious sickly catalyst "on the fine edge of light" located in the *interface* between two cultures without entering into either domination or determination seems,[15] retrospectively, to have initiated a durational plague of transparencies lacking conventional bodies, perhaps culminating in Wells' *Tono-Bungay* (1909). Whatever strategic transparent lie constitutes the energizing, yet potentially deadly patent medicine (one active ingredient is strychnine !), it gives a "kick" (Wells, *TB* 201). Fungible in application, it is advertised in an incredible range of products: lozenges, cold remedies, ointments, hair tonics, antiseptics, by virtue of a secret formula, "invariably weakening...as sales got ahead" (Wells, *TB* 201). Podnerevo suggests that successful speculative financiers, recognizing the hollowness of their spiritual lives, "try to make their fluid opulence *coagulate out*" (Wells, *TB* 308), like Monet's *décantation*, into the compensatory solid bricks and mortar—veins and pigments—of the monumental: excessively elaborate homes. A last label written for Tono-Bungay surely applies to *The Invisible Man* with its resonance perhaps, in

Thomas Mann's later, therapeutically aery international heights upon the spectral, sickly residents of *The Magic Mountain*: "TONO-BUNGAY. Like Mountain Air in the Veins" (Wells, *TB* 195).

NOTES

1 Lionel Trilling, "Introduction" to Henry James, *The Princess Casamassima* (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 18.

2 This figure of narrative "transparency" is a kind of "virtual being," or in James' words, "a sufficiently clear being to represent the whole." See Henry James, "Preface" to *Roderick Hudson*, ed. Tony Tanner (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980, li).

3 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, translated by N. M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 2002), p. 68－73 ff. For Bergson, if we were able to divide the undivided depths of time, to distinguish within it the necessary multiplicity of differential moments eliminating all memory, we would pass from perception to matter. Hence, "the living body...is only a channel for the transmission of movements" reciprocated as transmitted action, voluntary or reflexive.

4 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. Trans. F.L. Podgson (New York: Kessinger Reprint, 1911), p. 21. My idea here would take exception to the interpretation of Gilles Deleuze in his *Bergsonism*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 1988), pp. 31ff. For Deleuze, augmentation and diminution are the only ways in which or by which space can be internally differentiated from itself or from other things and then, only in degree. After analytic cubism and "field theory," such an idea seems dated. Bergson's bias toward *intuitionism* would probably give credence to multiple forms of differentiations in kind and degree for both space and time. One of Bergson's persistent metaphors in addressing *duration* through a number of works was that of sugar dissolving through time in a glass. But Griffin's dissolution of glass fragments is not really so *different, in kind or degree*, but dedicated to spatial invisibility rather than temporal duration.

5 A good discussion of the importance of the Pierrot and its evolution from the *Commedia dell' Arte* tradition to the *fin de siècle* is to be found in Martin Green and John Swan, *The Triumph of Pierrot*: *The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination* (State Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 1993).

6 Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud in* 24 *Volumes*. Edited by James Strachey *et. al*. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953 – 1966) I: 43. What intrigues here is the perpetual displacement of symptoms (so that one takes the place of the other) over time. If so, what the physician is really examining is how the symptoms are *assembled*, a maneuver which lends the new diagnostically- composed body a prosthetic or mechanical aura which may be indistinguishable from any hypnosis used in the treatment. See my "Freud's 'Secret Agent' and the *Fin du Corps*" in *Fin De Siecle/Fin Du Globe*, edited by John Stokes (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 117 – 138.

7 Cited in Tom Gunning, "Invisible Worlds, Visible Media" in *Brought to Light*: *Photography and the Invisible*. Edited Corey Keller (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 60 – 61.

8 Robert Macfarlane, *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially pp. 158 – 211. Although not specifically addressed by McFarlane, biological inheritance (the repetition of an antecedent through time) came to be imagined as simultaneously liberating and restricting. Plagiarism would be, from one perspective, a kind of self-same inheritance of discourse. This irony is nowhere better represented that in Griffin's desire to protect his notes from unauthorized use by Professor Oliver, combined with a need to see them protected (for purposes of duplication ?) by Marvel. Although transparency could reproduce itself, invisibility (depending as it does upon receiver/perception) could not. Wells represented this same riddle of inheritance, the biological "copy" that both determines and liberates, in his novel, *Kipps*.

9 David G. Smith, *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1986), p. 195.

10 Cited in Pierre Georgel, *Les Nymphéas* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), p. 7. This process of sedimentation would, at least superficially, seem in some sense the opposite of Proust's description of the constitutive amalgamations of memory in the *Recherches du Temps Perdu*.

11 Michel Frizot, *A New History of Photography* (Cologne: Konemann, 1998), p. 282.

12 Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Virago, 1989). The popularity of late nineteenth-century spiritualism should not be regarded as separable from metaphysical or scientific enquiry, even historically. George Smathers, a relative through marriage of Bergson's wife, and an officer of the "Order of the Golden Dawn," had an interest in "layers of consciousness"

which corresponded to "degrees" of access to Spirit. Bergson's diagrammatic inverted (vertical) cone has an uncanny resemblance to the horizontal primary and antithetical bobbins upon which history is bound in Yeats' *A Vision*.

13 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1996).

14 Uncannily, Benjamin's last, albeit unfinished, work, the massive so-called "Arcades Project," dealt with the predecessor of the modern shopping mall, the covered glass arcades of Paris, inducing a gaze through showrooms. His sacrificial victim of capitalism is none other than Baudelaire who, like Griffin, ends his life on the streets, weaving poetry from scraps (conversation now commercialized) for sale in the anonymous covered bazaars. See Alex Ross, "The Naysayers: Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and the Critique of Pop Culture," *The New Yorker* (Sept. 15, 2014), pp. 88－94, for the reactions against consumer capitalism 1930－1950.

15 This "colourless, unclassified purity of life it can neither use for its service nor contemplate as an ideal"—escaping both immanence and transcendence—re-appears in a number of Pater's fictional and historically- foregrounded figures from "Sebastian van Stock" to Leonardo da Vinci, to the sacrificial Florian of *Marius the Epicurean*. See "Diaphanetè" in Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, edited by Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). This sickly "type" on the "fine edge of light" and absent any moral sense, has a corporeal lightness against which the presumed weightiness of an equally abstract "authenticity" emerged among European existentialist philosophers as an antidote to a proliferation of "hollow men."

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