

## The Invisible Man

In *The Invisible Man*, H.G. Wells both demonstrates and criticizes man's tendency to become moral or immoral with the acquirement of power. Like many books of the same era, he uses science as the instrument of retribution for the social crimes that have been committed.

Through invisibility, the Invisible Man gains triumph over science and from this, great power; he can steal, kill, and abuse anybody without fear of being caught, as he describes, "It's useful in getting away, it's useful in approaching. It's particularly useful, therefore, in killing." He also acknowledges the shortcomings of his invisibility, such as making sound and being easily imprisoned once caught, vulnerable qualities which eventually lead to his downfall.

The Invisible Man breaks into many people's homes, stealing money, and leading eventually to physical abuse and killing. When faced with power, such as invisibility, man becomes immoral and is willing to do anything for personal gain and enjoyment. The Invisible Man's nemesis, Kemp, brings up the immorality by saying, "But-! I say! The common conventions of humanity." The Invisible Man just reinforces his arrogance by rebutting with, "Are all very well for common people." He believes there is nothing wrong with doing anything for his own survival since he is superior. He also brings the situation one step further with his reign of terror, which he describes as, "Not wanton killing, but a judicious slaying." He now wants to have complete control over everybody through terror and wants to start "the Epoch of the Invisible Man." This shows his complete thirst for power.

The use of science to give man superpower can likewise be found in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Man should not create the invisible man or the invincible man since they are too powerful and this gives them the role of creator which, according to the society of the day, should only be a god's role. He shows how science can accomplish great things and also how it can cause great harm.

The harm that the Invisible Man's exploitation of power causes does not go unpunished. Wells demonstrates the social need for a sense of justice, as the Invisible Man is eventually captured and beaten to death for the terror he both created and wanted to create. If the Invisible Man had stayed sane and went without punishment then people would have believe that terrible actions might be worth doing. His death also signifies the end of the immoral science that is too powerful for man.

H.G.Wells brings up many points that are important in a society. He discusses the moral problems of mankind and its reaction to the power science can bring. He criticizes man's hunger for power and science by showing what havoc it can wreak. In the Epilogue he shows how man thinks of himself as moral but cannot make constructive use of the power at his hands. The person finally in possession of the Invisible Man's journals says, "I wouldn't do what he did; I'd just--well!" Wells is saying that we really do not know what to do with the power so we should not bother with it at all.

