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Why I Stole H. G Wells Time Machine

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WHY I STOLE H.G. WELLS’ TIME-MACHINE

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Why? Well, it wasn’t just because I wanted to go back in time for the usual reasons people give, say, to straighten out history by talking to someone important, like Napoleon or Julius Caesar. No, I’ve never cared much whether historians got it right or not. So, you might ask: did I go back in order to change the way my life is now, say, by killing my granny? No, not at all.

No, I went back in time to re-smoke my last cigarette. I wanted again, as I did then, to sit in my favorite soft chair, with my old dog, to lean back, and blow delicious cigarette smoke toward the ceiling. I wanted to relive a pleasurable—no, the most pleasurable—moment of my life.

I knew exactly where I wanted to go, 224 Elmwood Drive, St. Louis, Missouri. And I knew to what day, September 17, 3:30 PM, 1966. And, as I’ve already said, I knew why. But there was still the question of how. By what method would I go back in time? I knew that matter transportation, where the body is dissembled in one time and place and then re-assembled in others, was possible. Hard, yes, but possible. My study of Einstein equations on space-time warping clearly showed that.
But after a considerable amount of research, I concluded that my sudden re-assemblage on Elmwood Drive might frighten the children and dogs. I would have to buy, make or rent a time-machine. A crucial consideration here was the size of the machine. The wormhole I had in mind for my trip back in time would only accommodate a machine the size of a bicycle. My search started, as you might expect, with googling “time-machine.” Disappointment! There was a lot of discussion about the feasibility of time-travel. But no time-machine the right size to rent or buy. Nothing.

Then it came to me. Why not, I told myself, steal the time-machine constructed by H. G. Wells in 1895, then housed in a London museum. Being constructed on the frame of a bicycle, it was the perfect size for the wormhole I had selected.

Time travelers, to be successful, need a lot of luck. Or a convergence of favorable conditions. Mine came when my time to steal the Wells’ machine coincided with a period of severe under funding at the museum. This had resulted in all the guards being replaced with mechanical guard dogs. I simply walked in, short-circuited the dogs, mounted the time-machine, turned it on and disappeared by going back in time a couple of days.

I needn’t bore the reader with all the details of my first trip through the wormhole to smoke that last cigarette. Suffice it to say many past events, public and private, passed in front of my eyes, the Vietnam War, for example, and a chilling conference with my old English teacher.

So, how was it to re-smoke that last cigarette? It was wonderful, everything I knew it would be. But did I learn anything new about time-travel from it? Indeed I did. Before I returned to re-smoke my last cigarette I knew exactly what was going to happen.
I knew, before I lit up, what the experience is before it happened because I remembered how it happened before. I had complete recall.

All I have to do now, to gain complete ownership of the machine, and, consequently, absolute control of my life, is to go back to the past and erase all the evidence that H. G. Wells, and his time-machine, ever existed. Right?

So here I am, getting ready to go, smoking a cigarette. It may be my last one.

(H.G. Wells) Word Count: 615