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# Real Romance Came Out of Dreamland Into Life

## H. G. Wells as a Romancer

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A thesis submitted in March 2007

For the degree of PhD

To the University of Durham

Supervised by Dr. Simon J. James

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17 OCT 2007

Department of English Studies



## Contents

<b>Declaration of Copyright</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Note on Texts</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Chapter I. Romance and Realism in Fiction: <i>H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter II. Romance Potentials in Wells's Early Non-scientific Novels</b>	<b>27</b>
i) <i>The Wonderful Visit</i> : Exposing the Process of Discourse Formation	<b>29</b>
ii) <i>The Wheels of Chance</i> : "You Ride Through Dreamland on Wonderful Dream Bicycles That Change and Grow"	<b>45</b>
iii) <i>Love and Mr Lewisham</i> : Lewisham's <i>Bildungsroman</i> of Growing From a Romantic Youth to a Realistic Adult	<b>58</b>
iv) <i>Kipps</i> : "Character Has You. You Can't Get Away From It"	<b>71</b>
<b>Chapter III. <i>The Time Machine</i>: "I Don't Want to Waste This Model, and Then Be Told I'm a Quack"</b>	<b>84</b>
i) <i>She</i> : A Journey to the Past	<b>92</b>
ii) <i>The Time Machine</i> : A Journey into the Future	<b>101</b>
<b>Chapter IV. Carnavalesque Romance: "They are Exercise of the Imagination in a Quite Different Field"</b>	<b>117</b>

i)	Some Characteristics of Carnavalesque Literature in Wells's Short Stories	119
ii)	<i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i> : The 'Comus Rout of Becoming and Changing	123
iii)	<i>The War of the Worlds</i> : "Swift Liquefaction of the Social Body"	146
iv)	<i>The Food of the Gods</i> : Deconstruction of the Little's World by the Futuristic Giants.	162
<b>Chapter VI. Romance of Utopia</b>		<b>171</b>
i)	Unachievable Monologism: <i>Anticipations</i> and <i>Mankind in the Making</i>	176
ii)	The Amateur Prophet: "A Man Who Has Concerned Himself With Education and Aspired to Creative Art"	193
iii)	<i>A Modern Utopia</i> : Wells's Utopianism in the Making	199
<b>Chapter VI. The Lost Romance</b>		<b>218</b>
i)	The Decay of Romance: <i>Tono-Bungay</i>	219
ii)	<i>The History of Mr. Polly</i> : "Romance and His Goddess Had Vanished"	232
<b>Conclusion</b>		<b>237</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>242</b>



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## **List of Abbreviations**

<i>Anticipations</i>	<i>Anticipations: of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought</i>
<i>DF</i>	<i>The Discovery of the Future</i>
<i>LM</i>	<i>Love and Mr Lewisham</i>
<i>FG</i>	<i>The Food of the Gods</i>
<i>LC</i>	<i>H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism</i>
<i>HP</i>	<i>The History of Mr Polly</i>
<i>Kipps</i>	<i>Kipps: the Story of Simple Soul</i>
<i>IM</i>	<i>The Invisible Man</i>
<i>DM</i>	<i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Mankind in the Making</i>
<i>MU</i>	<i>A Modern Utopia</i>
<i>TM</i>	<i>The Time Machine</i>
<i>TB</i>	<i>Tono-Bungay</i>
<i>WW</i>	<i>The War of the Worlds</i>
<i>WC</i>	<i>The Wheels of Chance</i>
<i>WV</i>	<i>The Wonderful Visit</i>

### Note on Texts

If not stated otherwise, regarding Wells's works, I quote from the Atlantic edition, *The Works of H. G. Wells*, 28 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1924-7). The first British and American editions are also consulted when there are conspicuous differences between the two editions that deem the attention of the study. In particular, apart from the Atlantic edition, the first editions of *The Wheels of Chance* (New York: Breakaway, 1997), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993) and *Anticipations: of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought* (London: Chapman, 1902) are consulted.

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to demonstrate that Wells's early works are the supreme fruits of his ambiguous and complicated reaction against, and interaction with, romance and realism in fiction. Wells's efforts concentrate on combating against and, at the same time, capitalising on the popular narratives that flooded the expanding *fin-de-siècle* mass market and the powerful influence of the continental and American Realists. In so doing, Wells eventually purports to revive and modify the English novel tradition from Chaucer to Scott and Dickens, and the romantic transformation of everyday life without losing a sense of reality.

By reading Wells's fictional and non-fictional works published between the 1890s and the 1900s, this thesis maintains that Wells is a novelist who could exploit romance contingencies in his fiction. Wells's early literary criticism demonstrates that his theory of the novel is preoccupied with the potential of the romance rather than with the strict realistic representation of everyday life advocated by Naturalists and Realists. His non-scientific romances reveal Wells's instinctive grasp of the romance potential. Wells's major scientific romances confirm his effort in writing within the established romance grammar and deconstruct the forms and themes of *fin-de-siècle* popular romances. Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of carnivalism and Foucault's theory of power are also applied to Wells's texts. This study contends that Wells's major scientific romances not only differentiate themselves from other popular narratives but also create a new genre: the carnivalesque romance. Wells's early twentieth century utopian projects continue the carnival theme, and develop the carnivalised narrative space in which the sociologist's logical speculation is mixed with the romancer's dream. Reading Wells's Edwardian novels, *Tono-Bungay* and *The History of Mr Polly* as marking a turning point in his literary career, the thesis advocates that when Wells ceased to be a romancer, his creative energy began to wane.

## **Chapter I. Romance and Realism in Fiction: H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism**

Mr. Hoopdriver was (in the days of this story) a poet, though he had never written a line of verse. Or perhaps romancer will describe him better. Like I know not how many of those who do the fetching and carrying of life – a great number of them certainly, – his real life was absolutely uninteresting, and if he had faced it as realistically as such people do in Mr. Gissing's novels, he would probably have come by way of drink to suicide in the course of a year. But that was just what he had the natural wisdom not to do. On the contrary, he was always decorating his existence with imaginative tags, hopes and poses, deliberate and yet quite effectual self-deceptions; his experiences were mere material for a romantic superstructure.<sup>1</sup>

This passage is from H. G. Wells's first social romance, *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll* (1896); here the omniscient narrator avers that Mr. Hoopdriver is a great romancer, and his romantic imaginings rescue him from his would-be miserable life as a mere drapery apprentice. Wells seems to suggest that deceptive aspects of the contemporary popular romance can play a positive role in the life of the late-Victorian working class. It clearly illustrates that Hoopdriver's transformation of his experiences into 'mere material for a romantic superstructure' is based on self-illusion. The statement also insinuates that self-deception is naturally expected to be exposed at a later stage of the story by the protagonist. The contradictory messages which this passage conveys reveal the author's ambiguous attitude to the rules of the romance genre.

The author's uncertain stance on the romance genre is more clearly revealed when the passage above is read in comparison with an extract from Charles Dickens's (1812-1870) *Household Words* (1849):

To show all, that in all familiar things, even in those which are repellent on the surface, there is Romance enough, if we will find it out – to teach the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil that their lot is not necessarily a moody brutal fact excluded from their sympathies and graces of imagination.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. G. Wells, *The Wheels of Chance; Love and Mr Lewisham* (New York: Scribner's, 1925) vol. 7 of *The Works of H. G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-7), 50. Subsequent quotations from this work are cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Dickens, *Household Words* (1894). This passage is quoted in Gillian Beer's *The Romance*, *The Critical Idiom* 10, ed. John D. Jump (London: Methuen, 1970), 74.



The messages Dickens wishes to convey in the playful statement are strikingly similar to Wells's narrator's examination of the beneficial function of Hoopdriver's 'imaginings at his heart.'<sup>3</sup> Here, Dickens highlights the 'grace of imagination' in the life of 'the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil.' The juxtaposition of 'grace' with the 'hardest toil' lays bare the author's implication that in the 'hardest' working situation, the imaginings in the workers' hearts are graceful. Similarly, the narrator of *The Wheels of Chance* states that were it not for romantic imaginations, Hoopdriver would end his life 'by way of drink to suicide.' The difference between Dickens and Wells, however, is that Dickens's passage does not express Wells's scepticism about romance writing or reading. Dickens contrasts the cruel reality of the workers with the grace of romantic imagination, and then highlights the fact that romance reminds the hardest workers that their lives do not have to be so cruel. Thus, the passage clearly reveals the author's predilection for romance in fiction.

By contrast, it is difficult to find Dickens's clear partiality for romantic imagination in Wells's passage. Wells's narrator does not doubt that Mr. Hoopdriver's 'real life is uninteresting' and if he faced it 'realistically' as Gissing's characters do, his life would end up miserably. These gloomy sentences indicate the author's criticism of the contemporary naturalists' preoccupation with realistic representation and of their deterministic outlook of life. They also point to Wells's acknowledgment that Gissing's naturalistic description of the working class is closer to their reality rather than to the world of romance and that the unrealistic romance can produce fantastic illusions. Wells's unclear attitudes towards naturalism and romance signify his attempt to be distanced from the naturalists' documentary representation of reality and from the romancers' self-deceptive story-making.

Wells's inconclusive position in discussing romance, realism and naturalism in fiction is due to the unique mood of the English *fin-de-siècle* literary market in which various literary philosophies compete with each other. The last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed English writers' self-conscious confrontation and vigorous interactions with the foreign literary school of realism and naturalism. These were introduced to the English literary market through

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<sup>3</sup> The title of the chapter from which the passage is quoted is 'The Imagining of Mr. Hoopdriver's Heart.'

translations of works by the French naturalist Emile Zola (1840-1902) the realist Gustave Flaubert (1821-80), and by the American writers of realism, Henry James (1843-1916) and William Dean Howells (1837-1920). Writers such as Walter Besant (1836–1901), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), Andrew Lang (1844-1912) and H. Rider Haggard (1856-1925) accused foreign literary philosophy as deterministic, disillusioning and depressing, and their fictions as indecent, filthy, and contaminating.<sup>4</sup> In spite of these writers' objections to French and American realistic fictions, during the last few years of the century, the continental novelists' unique style and philosophy also influenced a group of writers such as George Gissing, George Moore (1852-1933) and Arthur Morrison (1863-1945), who were named the New Realists of English fiction.

English writers' uneasiness with the dismal French fictions provoked contemporary writers' debate of the novel proper, which actually coalesced around the issue of romance and realism in fiction. Walter Besant's lecture on laws of fictions or guides for young authors ignited the controversy about the ideal of fiction writing and the author's role in the literary society by confronting romance with realism. Even though in his lecture 'The Art of Fiction' (1884), Besant does not focus strictly on differentiating romance from the novel, his so-called laws of fiction highlight the significance of inheriting high Victorian realism and its romantic contingency in fiction: transformation of monotonous everyday life into 'drama', the novel of entertainment and the novel as a didactic conveyor of middle-class morality.<sup>5</sup> He also practiced his laws in writing his romance. *Beyond the Dream of Avarice* (1895) can be seen as a romance of didacticism. The plot of this romance consists of loosely interwoven episodes about the great wealth left by a miser and his lost will. Besant steps into the narrative as a narrator, who is incarnated as a patriotic middle-class gentleman, supporting the patriarchal morality of the Victorian middle class.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> British writer's various reaction against French Naturalism and Realism between 1885 and 1895 is discussed in detail in William C. Frierson's 'The English Controversy over Realism in Fiction 1885-1895,' *PMLA*, 43 (1928): 533-50.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Besant, *The Art of Fiction: A Lecture; Delivered at the Royal Institution* (London: Chatto, 1884), 12-3; 24; 30.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, in *Beyond the Dream of Avarice* (London: Chatto, 1902), Walter Besant preaches the reader about the ideal relationship between a man and a woman in patriarchal terms: 'As she sat under him; as he stood over her; every one could understand here was obedient to the man she loved; that here was man creative and here was woman receptive; that out of her submission



By contrast, arguing against Besant, in 'The Art of Fiction' (1884) Henry James seizes on the idea of faithful representation of reality, the importance of the proper narrative form and the author's freedom from social and moral imperatives.<sup>7</sup> Even though he avoids expressing his strong disapproval of the romance genre, he strongly condemns narrative forms and aims advocated by romancers as the sign of the incompleteness of the genre. His contention that the author's careless digressions and interventions in the narrative are pernicious, and that the novel is 'assumed to be opposed in some mysterious manner to morality, and to amusement, to instruction,'<sup>8</sup> may be the expression of his discontents with the contemporary romancers' negligence of strict narrative forms and failure of representing reality. James's points target Besant's argument that the novel should convey the author's moralistic judgment through discursive narrative devices and it should be a dramatic (in some sense, romantic) modification of reality. James's essay, in effect, contains a pungent criticism of not only Walter Besant's social romances but also of Victorian realists such as Charles Dickens and William Thackeray (1811-1863). James's affection for the impersonalised narrative form and the faithful representation of reality is marked by the English naturalists' philosophy of the ideal novel as an enhanced representation of the documentary and the detailed depiction of everyday life. The preface to the third edition of Arthur Morrison's (1863-1945) *A Child of the Jago* (1896) encapsulates the precepts of English realism and naturalism. He claims that his novel ventures to present life as he sees it, and his tale is constructed by his characters' narratives; he does not thrust his personal opinions and emotions between their narratives and the readers.<sup>9</sup>

James's strong preference for strict aesthetic criteria is criticised by Stevenson's essay, which is famous for defending the romance genre. Reacting against James's aesthetics, in 'A Humble Remonstrance' (1884), Stevenson emphasises the fact that 'no art can compete with life.' He writes that 'man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half-shut his eyes against the dazzle

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would spring up her authority. What more can the world desire? What more did Nature intend?' (7).

<sup>7</sup> Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction,' *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Morris Shapira (London: Penguin, 1968), 84.

<sup>8</sup> Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction,' 23, 26, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Arthur Morrison, 'Preface to the Third Edition,' *A Child of the Jago* (London: Everyman, 1996), 6-8.

and confusion of reality.’<sup>10</sup> Stevenson’s argument crystallises the equation of romance with the genre of entertainment and escape; it is the genre of acts and events, not of character studies. In other words, it should be the novel of adventure in which characterisation and the plot should be simplified, and the author’s discussion of moral issues should be avoided:

Danger is the matter with which this class of novel deals; fear, the passion with which it idly trifles; and the characters are portrayed only so far as they realise the sense of danger and provoke the sympathy of fear. To add more traits, to be too clever, to start the hare of moral or intellectual interest while we are running the fox of material interest, is not to enrich but to stultify your tale.<sup>11</sup>

Stevenson’s conceptions are welcomed and intensified by his fellow popular romance writers, Andrew Lang and H. Rider Haggard. These writers promote and defend their idea of the romance of adventures, whose subgenres are Imperial Romance and Historical Romance. Also it is due to these romancers’ essays that Stevenson’s views about the escapist and entertaining quality of romance evolved into the epitomes of English *fin-de-siècle* popular romance genre. In ‘Realism and Romance’ (1886), Andrew Lang enhances Stevenson’s advocacy of the benefits of romance by contending that ‘the tendency of realism in fiction is often to find the Unpleasant Real in character much more abundant than the Pleasant Real.’<sup>12</sup> Here, in the school of Realists, Lang includes Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Anatole France and Henry James. Identifying James’s and Zola’s exhausting study of characters and their microscopic portrayal of reality as the main features of the school of Realists, Lang complains that such analysis makes one feel uncomfortable, intrusive and unmanly. Instead, he sees romance as the genre bringing healthy primitivism to the readers: ‘Not for nothing did Nature leave us all savages under our white skins; she has wrought thus that we might have many delights, among others “the joy of adventurous living” and of reading about adventurous living.’<sup>13</sup> Here, in Lang’s simplistically stubborn claims, the writers

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<sup>10</sup> R. L. Stevenson, ‘A Humble Remonstrance,’ *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays*, ed. Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999), 85.

<sup>11</sup> Stevenson, ‘A Humble Remonstrance,’ 87.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Lang, ‘Realism and Romance,’ *Contemporary Review* 52 (1886), 687.

<sup>13</sup> Lang, ‘Realism and Romance,’ 689.

outside the camp of romancers become national and public enemies and their morbidly realistic and naturalistic works effeminise the imperial citizens.

When Wells launched his literary career in 1895, the debates focusing on differences between realism and romance had been continued, and the conflict between the two camps had become more complicated. The writers of the new Realism, Gissing, Morrison and George Moore (1852-1933), and the aesthetic realism of James vied with the romantic novels of adventure for popularity in the years between 1895 and 1900. In spite of the new Realists' condemnations of romance as light popular literature, the English *fin-de-siècle* literary market is overflowed with a plethora of various kinds of romance.

The popularity of romances at the transitional period has been explained in terms of the 1870 Education Act, changes of publishing condition and the emergence of the huge and competitive market for light literature and the male romancers' revolt against the female dominated literary market.<sup>14</sup> The romance genre of this period, however, eludes any simple definition. As Peter Keating demonstrates, 'the complications of the term "romance" were to multiply into total confusion as late Victorian writers and novelists set to work on it.'<sup>15</sup> Gillian Beer also maintains that 'throughout the nineteenth century the idea of "the romance" was persistently revived and interpreted afresh by artists according to their individual needs.'<sup>16</sup> The result of the individual use of romance in fiction was to give birth to various sub-genres of romance: adventure stories, historical romances, sentimental romances, fantasies, ghost stories and detective stories, which are termed 'New Romance.'<sup>17</sup> The term 'New Romance' points to the fact that the common characteristics of *fin-de-siècle* romances are found in their persistent rejection of doctrines of the new Realists; they refuse to present the brutal reality of everyday life as it were, and to adopt the strictly aesthetic narrative device: a single point of view and strict scenic representation without authorial intervening voice in the narrative.

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<sup>14</sup> Elaine Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992); especially, about the *fin-de-siècle* male romances, see the chapter, 'King Romance,' 76-104.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 187- 1914* (London: Fontana, 1989), 344.

<sup>16</sup> Gillian Beer, *The Romance* (London: Methuen, 1970), 66.

<sup>17</sup> Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), 2.

The driving force of the revival of the romance genre in the *fin-de-siècle* English literary market is found in writers' realisation that conventional realistic representation is limited, and also in their desire to transcend reality and see more deeply into it than the rational and realistic mind. This is the 'proletariat qualities' of the romance genre as Northrop Frye perceives. According to Frye's illumination of the romance genre's dual quality, romance initially appears fairly straightforward and conservative in nature, and therefore it is considered as the literature of the ruling class. However, it also enshrines 'a restless roving impulse lying at the heart of it, which destabilises all notions of conservatism.'<sup>18</sup> In the postmodernist era, romance is revived as a resisting force against the reification of realism and modernism as Fredric Jameson elucidates. The Postmodernists' predilection for romance is motivated by their desire for freedom from the reality principle of the oppressive scenic representation and the exhaustive character study.<sup>19</sup> Revived between the demise of the great Victorian Realism practiced by Dickens, William Thackeray, George Eliot (1819-1880), Gissing and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), and the birth of Modernism, the *fin-de-siècle* romances, as critics perceive, were results of their realisation of the inadequacy of the old realists' paradigm.<sup>20</sup>

Even though Wells did not directly take a part in the debate, he cultivated his own idea of the novel proper by commenting on the works by New Realists and New Romancers. The Wells of the 1890s may be easily portrayed as a young romance writer who aspired to write realistic novels. However, Wells's desire was more complicated. Most of all, what he desired to achieve was to write fictions different from not only the great literary predecessors but also his contemporaries. In *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866)* (1934), Wells compares writing fiction in the already established literary genres to second-hand tickets; he writes that it may be 'convenient as admission tickets,' but if the writer is idly satisfied with the given

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<sup>18</sup> Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1971), 186; 202.

<sup>19</sup> Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), 104.

<sup>20</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998) 209; Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells*; Nicolas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin De Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999).

condition, he can not establish his own literary infrastructure.<sup>21</sup> In particular, Wells's critical essays and literary reviews written in the late Victorian period clearly evince that Wells wanted to be accepted as a novelist whose works are different from the popular romances and the works by the New Realists.

Wells's late-nineteenth century stance on the novel proper seems quite clear. The desire to produce new literature made him critical of the popular romances by Haggard, Lang, Stevenson, Marie Corelli (1855-1824) and the New Realists' novels by Gissing and Morrison. Dismissing the two extreme methods of representing realities, the ideal novel proper which he offers to the reading public is the lax freedom of form and the discursiveness and saturation in the author's personality. Wells strongly asserts that these features are detected in the tradition of the English novel of 'Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Mrs Gaskell, and Mr Meredith.'<sup>22</sup> What Wells chooses not to recognise in his theorisation of the ideal literary form is that, judged in comparison with the French Realists' novels and their English followers, the English novel tradition from Fielding to Dickens (and Thomas Hardy) has affinities to the romance genre rather than the realistic novels written in the continent. As Ian Duncan expounds, from Chaucer's verses and Shakespeare's dramas to the Victorian social novels of George Eliot, William Thackeray, Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy, 'the high achievement of British prose fiction was, in short, one of "romance" rather than "the novel."'<sup>23</sup> Duncan builds the genealogy of the English novel from Walter Scott to Charles Dickens through Ann Radcliffe on the grounds of the continuous romance transformation of the novel. Works by Walter Scott and Dickens are written on the boundary of romance and realism; their works are romantic transformation of historical events (in Scott's novels) or everyday life (in Dickens's novels).

In spite of his (somewhat unconscious) predilection for the romance tradition preserved in the history of the English novel, Wells's general stance on

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<sup>21</sup> In his *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866)* (London: Gollancz, 1934), 158. Subsequent quotations from this work are cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>22</sup> H. G. Wells, *H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, eds. Patrick Parrinder and Robert M. Philmus (Sussex: Harvester, 1980), 159. Subsequent quotations from this work are cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>23</sup> Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 3.

the romance genre is full of negative speculations. His idea of romance is basically influenced by the contemporary New Realists' prejudice against romance as popular literature, the icon of commercial narrative. Wells's literary reviews, which appeared in the *Saturday Review* from 1895 to 1897, demonstrate his vitriolic critique of the popular narratives and romances. Wells identifies the romance genre (mostly imperial, sentimental and adventure novels) with the popular novel, 'the novel of commerce' which also includes 'romance of all sorts, the fantastic story, idealistic novel and the novel of manners' (*LC*, 148). He did not believe in the popularity of a novel as the sign of its being a work of art: 'the comparative popularity to-day of scores of books whose relation to life is of the slightest, and whose connexion with Art is purely accidental' (*LC*, 74). Popularity is created mainly by the interrelation between the mindless readers, the cunning publishers and the flattering literary critics. Wells insists that the fatal crime of the novel of commerce is to distort reality (*LC*, 44). The romantic grammar, 'a cheerful alacrity,' faithfully observed by the popular novelists is only to produce an illusion to fill 'the gaps where the texture of unadventurous lives thins out to the blankly uneventful' (*LC*, 144). Consequently, the romance genre, which enjoyed huge success in the late-Victorian market, was the main target of his attack. H. Rider Haggard's 'blood and thunder' imperial romances, Marie Corelli's sentimental romances, Arthur Machen's (1863-1946) horror romances and the historical romances of Andrew Lang and Anthony Hope (1863-1933) are criticised for their neglect of reality, repetition in the plot and shallowness in the characterisation.

Furthermore, his pronouncement that 'the romance form prohibits anything but the superficialities of self-expression; and sustained humour, subtle characterisation, are impossible' (*LC*, 101-2) clearly exposes Wells's scepticism about not only popular romances but also of the romance genre itself. His negative opinion of the romance genre was persistent for his whole life.<sup>24</sup> He conceives that being essentially imaginative and superficial, romance is work fit for young writers. It is not a proper genre through which to see life clearly. When Wells praises Joseph Conrad's (1857-1924) *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) as 'the romance that is real' (*LC*, 92), he does concentrate on criticising Conrad's

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<sup>24</sup> See Wells's 'The Novels of Mr George Gissing' in *H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, 148; and also his *Experiment in Autobiography*, 309-10.

weakness in regard to style rather than on revealing what aspects of romance contribute to make Conrad's romance real. The only reason why Wells thinks of Conrad's romance as the real romance is that it succeeds in developing each character as an individual. Even though Wells clearly has asserted that superficial characterisation is one of the important sins committed by romancers, the one last paragraph allotted for the praise of Conrad's romance seems to be too small to argue for the greatness of the romance.

Wells's strong disapprobation of romance writing is most ironically demonstrated in 'A Servants' Hall Vision', the review of Frances Hodgson Burnett's (1849-1924) *A Lady of Quality* (1896). This title envisions the scene where a servant reads a popular romance in the servant area, and develops her fantasy (LC, 106). The review underscores the harmful illusions brought about by romance, which is well demonstrated by his concluding sentences: No poor "slavey", musing in her half-lighted basement upon the clouds up above the area railings, ever dreamed a more gorgeous or satisfactory vision' (LC, 109). What Wells wants to achieve in condemning the popular romance is to expose the delusions and distortion of reality which the romances invoke to attract the reading public. Wells's argument is not new since, as Flaubert asserts in *Madame Bovary* (1857), the sentimental romance was considered to do harm to the ignorant reading public. The features of romance, which 'drowns the voice of reason, it offers a dangerously misleading guide to everyday life, it rouses false expectation'<sup>25</sup> are severely criticised by Flaubert through Emma Bovary's degradation and her subsequent suicide. The harmful effect of romance is the very feature which is criticised by novelists since the birth of the novel in the eighteenth century. Wells's criticism of the commercial romances leads him close to aestheticism of realism. Also his emphasis of the careful characterisation and realistic representation are the novel proper which James so strongly advocates in 'The Art of Fiction.'

The fact that Wells consistently favours subtle characterisation in fiction and the faithful representation of reality does not lead to the easy conclusion that Wells can be categorised as an advocate of New Realism. With the same severe tone he adopts in the reviews of popular romances, Wells criticises the

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<sup>25</sup> Gillian Beer, *The Romance*, 14-5.

contemporary naturalists' and realists' obsession with the documentary representation of everyday reality and specifically the naturalists' deterministic worldview. Wells's main complaints were that naturalism reduced the art of fiction to mere reportage or documentation, which exaggerates animalistic elements of humanity and is devoid of the will to change. In the review of Morrison's *A Child of the Jago*, Wells acknowledges the author's craftsmanship by praising the author for representing the Jago 'with extraordinary faithfulness [and] a really artistic sense of effect' (LC, 116). However, Wells's review weighs more on the accusation of Morrison's Jago to be constructed on the author's narrow perceptions of society in two terms: the author's inability to see the space beyond the Jago and his over-reliance on the deterministic philosophy of naturalism:

He sees the Jago, is profoundly impressed by the appearance of the Jago, renders its appearance with extraordinary skill. But the origin of the Jago, the place of the Jago in the general scheme of things, the trend of change in it, its probable destiny – such matters are not in his mind (LC, 116-7).

These passages epitomise the reason why Wells has to refuse naturalism. The Jago, which is faithfully portrayed as it were by the author, is nothing but the appearance of the slum. The thoroughly realistic description does not allow the author to go beyond the limitation of the slum. The author's speculation about 'the origin' of the place and 'the trend of change' (LC, 117) in the broad historical and social context cannot be found in Morrison's petty scope of thought. Most of all, the absence of the will to change in Morrison's novel is the evidence of Wells's rejection of the deterministic world view of naturalism.

In *The Time Machine* (1895), Wells represents squalid life in the late-Victorian slum as a nightmarish and fantastic vision which is more disturbing than Morrison's description of the Jago. Wells's imaginative rendering of late-Victorian working class's degeneration into the monstrous Morlocks is striking enough to provoke public's consciousness of social inequality. The naturalists' concept of Darwinian nature is the cruel nature indifferent from human affairs. On the contrary, Wells highlights Darwin's assertion of chance mutation which is considered as quintessential for survival. Wells's statement that 'the fact is that



neither ignorance, wrong moral suggestions, nor parasites are inherited' (LC, 117) is addressed not only to Morrison but also to the contemporary obstinate naturalists' determinist philosophy. Throughout Wells's *oeuvre*, the theme of change signifies endless movements in time and space, which Morrison's confining space of the Jago cannot contain. The pre-determinately tragic life portrayed in his novel represents a far-too-narrow philosophy of naturalism. Here, the use of fantasy in Wells's scientific romance functions as the acknowledgement of contemporary social issues posed by Morrison, but it also draws the reader's attention to the unlimited possibilities of future change.

Wells's dislike of the depressing quality of George Gissing's novels is another reason why Wells cannot accept Gissing's pessimistic aesthetics. In *The Wheels of Chance*, Wells's narrator dismisses the Gissingian world as nothing but miserable. However, in reviews of Gissing's novels, Wells appears more cautious in approaching the tragic elements of naturalism. Wells argues that compared with Morrison's petty scale of the 'design,' Gissing's novels deploy the grand 'structural design and implications' (LC, 144). For this reason, the Gissingian depressing ending seems to be forgiven by Wells, and his novels gain the reputation of significant literature for Wells. However, the close reading of Wells's two essays about Gissing's works draws attention to the former's dissatisfaction with the novelist's obsession with the deterministic worldview.

In spite of his concrete friendship with Gissing, Wells could not accept his deterministic view of life. Gissing's gloomy portrayal of life is wittily termed as 'Gissingized' by Wells (LC, 36). In 'The Novels of Mr. George Gissing', Wells's discontent with the depressing quality of Gissing's novels drives him to complete his reading with his own misinterpretation of the final scene of *The Whirlpool* (1897). He considers the text as a turning point in Gissing's literary career since his previous works have contained nothing but description of tragic lives and the condemnation of life. Wells writes:

The clear change in the way of thinking that Mr. Gissing's Rolfe is formulating (while the Whirlpool should be devouring him) is no incidental change of one man's opinion, it is a change that is sweeping over the minds of thousands of educated men. It is the discovery of the insufficiency of the cultivated life and its necessary insincerities; it is a return to

the essential, to the honourable struggle as the epic factor in life, to children as the matter of morality and the sanction of the securities of civilisation. (LC,154)

The collapsing civilisation's urgent call for the necessity of educating children for the future reminds the Wellsian readers of the educationist Wells of the 1900s. Having searched for a positive scenario for the human future throughout his literary career, at the dawn of the new century he concluded that education is the most essential for the better future. This agenda is to be realised in *Mankind in the Making* (1903) and *Joan and Peter* (1919). His dissatisfaction with the naturalist's deterministic view of the human future as a tragic struggle against cruel Nature leads him to read Gissing's text into his own hope for change. On the contrary, Gissing's life-long pessimism clearly points to the fact that Wells misreads Gissing's text. In his letter to Wells, he comments on Well's optimistic outlook of the new century, dramatically expressed in *Anticipations* (1901): 'I must not pretend to care very much the future of the human race, come what may, folly and misery are sure to be the prevalent features of life.'<sup>26</sup>

Wells's complaint of the pessimistic view of life in works by Gissing and Morrison is not new since a similar tone to Wells's is also found in Lang's criticism of Russian and French Realism. Lang writes; 'I think that the Realists, while they certainly show us the truth, are fondest of showing that aspect of it which is really the less common as well as the less desirable. Perhaps mean people are more easily drawn than generous people.'<sup>27</sup> The preference for portraying 'mean people' is the romancer's main source of discontent with the realists. Similarly, Wells is also dissatisfied with Gissing's proclivity to see the world as the place that generates miseries and tragedies. As Beer illustrates, in the last two decades of the Victorian age, the movement towards romance was fuelled by the writers' desire to overlook the 'emphasis on the inescapable animality of man's fate' demonstrated in French Naturalism; and the conflict between romance and realism was represented as an opposition between individual free will and the limitations of a fate that is dictated by society.<sup>28</sup> Wells's criticism of the

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<sup>26</sup> George Gissing, *The Letters of George Gissing*, vol. 8, eds. Pierre Coustillas, Paul F. Mattheisen and Arthur C. Young (Athens: Ohio UP, 1992), 275.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Lang, 'Realism and Romance,' 687.

<sup>28</sup> Beer, *The Romance*, 73, 74.

overwhelming power of society, taken for granted by Morrison and Gissing, and his assertion of individual freedom testify to his penchant for romance.

Originally, Wells is far from fatalistic and pessimistic; instead he is an escapist and at the same time, a reformer. As a boy, Wells devoured adventure narratives and travel writings. The books which he read in his boyhood are narratives, 'full of exciting and terrifying facts' (*ExA*, 77-8). They are the adventure romances by Captain Mayne Reid (1818-1883) and James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851); travel narratives, biological books about exotic and extinct animals and Natural History. The narratives of escapism transferred the lower-middle class sick boy, who is confined to bed in the small house, to the world of fantasy: 'I had just discovered the art of leaving my body to sit impassive in a crumpled up attitude in a chair or sofa, while I wandered over the hills and far away in novel company and new scenes' (*ExA*, 76-7). The books of adventure and travel free the boy from the bodily confinement to the world of freedom and adventure. Also Wells makes his characters the great romance readers; Hoopdriver, Kipps, George Ponderevo and Polly. Characters like Lewisham and Ann Veronica are also the dreamers and romancers who believe in Socialism, Utopianism and the better future. Their discontent with reality and their desire for change, both on an individual and collective scale, are driven by romantic dreaming.

The difference between Lang and Wells is that Lang's condemnation of realism is caused by his discontent with modern civilisation, industrialisation, urbanisation and democracy, which he perceived as the triggers of the British Empire's downfall.<sup>29</sup> This uneasiness of his contemporary social conditions drove him to escape into the fictional or pseudo-historical past, as Haggard and himself did through their imperial romances and historical romances. For instance, Lang's romance, *A Monk of Fife* (1896) is fictitious narrative, which is supposed to be written by a young Scottish monk, who participates in the Hundred Years' War in France with the legendary heroine, Joan of Arc.<sup>30</sup> This romance is severely criticised by Wells.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, Wells dreams of escaping from the present into the future by destroying the old world and building a new future. Most of his

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<sup>29</sup> Joseph Weintraub, 'Andrew Lang: Critic of Romance,' *Literature in Transition*. 18 (1975), 6-7.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Lang, *A Monk of Fife* (London: Longmans Green, 1895).

<sup>31</sup> See Wells's 'On Lang and Buchan,' *H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, 83-87.

scientific romances such as *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) are set in the remote or near future.<sup>32</sup>

Wells's dislike of the narrative device of depersonalisation also indicates his propensity to escape and liberate his fictions from social and aesthetic constraints, and thus his desire to be distanced from the realists' narrative form. In his 1896 review of Gissing's *The Paying Guest* (1895), Wells appreciates Gissing's effort to achieve realistic representation, but at the same time he disagrees with the impersonalised narrative method that Gissing (and George Moore) employs in his novels. The playful statement, 'let your characters tell their own story, make no comment, write a novel as you would write a play. So we are robbed of the personality of the author, in order that we may get an enhanced impression of realities' (*LC*, 142), embodies his complaint of the doctrines of realism. The strict narrative form, which Wells terms 'the colourless theory of fiction', is a confining prison for the author. It is for this reason that Wells welcomes Gissing's attempt to convey his personal opinion in his narrative:

Certainly the peculiar delight of this delightful little book [*The Paying Guest*] is not in the truth of the portraiture – does not every advertising suburban photographer exhibit your Mrs Mumford and her guest with equal fidelity at every railway station? – nor in the plausible quick sequence of events, but in the numerous faint flashes of ironical comment in the phrasing that Mr. Gissing has allowed himself. So far the Le Gallienne view justifies itself. We congratulate Mr. Gissing unreservedly on thus breaking with an entirely misleading, because entirely one-sided, view of the methods of fiction. Thus liberated, his possibilities widen (*LC*, 142-3).

Wells considers Gissing's personal commentary on the narrative as the sign of the author's liberation from the confining literary theory of realism. As the last sentence in the quotation demonstrates, Wells interprets this narrative device as the means for widening the capacity of the narrative.

Comparing the naturalistic and realistic narrative method of Moore and Gissing with Richard Le Gallienne's (1866-1947) highly personalised narrative, Wells approves Le Gallienne's demand for personality, a 'strutting obtrusive personality' by calling his method 'the new heresy' (*LC*, 142), and the succession

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<sup>32</sup> One of Wells's major scientific romances, *The Invisible Man* (1897) is an exception since it is not set in the future.

of the traditional English literature. Le Gallienne's method is to endow the author or the narrator with complete freedom in the narrative. In *The Quest of the Golden Girl* (1896), Le Gallienne justifies his personal intrusion by excusing himself for writing romance and not the realistic novel:

As this is not a realistic novel, I do not hold myself bound, as I have said before, to account reasonably for everything that is done – least of all, said – within its pages. I simply say, So it happened, or So it is, and expect the reader to take my word.<sup>33</sup>

Le Gallienne perceives that a realistic novel restricts the author's freedom or even his power. Even though he does not clarify the title 'The Quest of the Golden Girl' and his assertion of the author's power signifies that the genre he is writing in is romance. Wells criticises *The Quest of the Golden Girl* for having the monologic tone of the author; yet, he does not refrain from praising the discursiveness in this romance, and thus he positions Le Gallienne as the successor of the great tradition of the English discursive novel.

The time traveller's refusal of the editor's demand for the story signifies that Wells's desire to have 'the ancient storyteller's privilege of telling events in a sequence of his choosing, without having to attend to quibbles, misgivings, or heckling from his audience.'<sup>34</sup> By maintaining that the author should be allowed to intervene in his narrative, to comment and to interpret it, Wells in effect depends on the romance narrator's power as a liberating force from the prison of realism and naturalism. Originated from folktales, traditionally romances are 'stories being told'<sup>35</sup> by the author or the omnipotent narrator. Standing behind the first-person narrators or the third-person narrators, romance writers present their personality in their narrative as a mediator between the story and the reader. Beer generalises the romance writer as the figure who is endowed with the privilege to preside over his narrative: 'We have to depend entirely on the narrator of the romance: he remakes the rules of what is possible, what impossible. Our

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<sup>33</sup> Richard Le Gallienne, *The Quest of the Golden Girl* (London: John Lane, 1897), 132.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Crossley, 'Taking It as a Story: The Beautiful Lie of *The Time Machine*,' *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine*, eds. George Slusser, Patrick Parrinder and Danièle Chatelain (Athens: U of Georgia P, 2001), 12

<sup>35</sup> Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1976), 45.

enjoyment depends upon our willing surrender to his power.’<sup>36</sup> They can even interpret the whole narrative for the reader and thus release the reader from making ‘full-scale “interpretations.”’<sup>37</sup> Frye notes that a romance author is like a god behind the characters’ actions and he can express ‘his will by some kind of oracle or prophecy which speaks of the ultimate outcome as predetermined.’<sup>38</sup> Likewise, Wells’s third-person narrators in the social novels predict the story and comment on the events and characters without any constraints.

The supreme examples of the romance writer are found in the narratives of Henry Fielding, Dickens and Thackeray. By favouring the narrative technique of these authors, Wells clearly departs from Henry James’s philosophy of the importance of the point of view in the novel, and consequently leads his novel writing to the area of romance. Wells conceives that the suppression of the author’s personality means, among other things, a renunciation of satire, irony, laughter, and tears’ (*LC*, 159), and these are the essential elements that fortify the narrative capacity. These are the humour, which Lang perceives as the essential element in the English novel tradition. He decries the absence of humour in works by Zola and his followers: ‘there is not much humour in their works, and little good humour bred of them.’<sup>39</sup> Like Wells, Lang also finds great humour in works by Thackeray, Fielding and Scott: ‘That is the difference between work like Thackeray’s, where there are abundant studies of the infinitely little in human nature. [...] Fielding and Scott have this humour.’<sup>40</sup>

The author’s free intervention in the narrative is what is criticised by Henry James and Morrison as the defect of romance and the Victorian high realist novels. These great English novelists’ works exploit the “anti-representational”<sup>41</sup> qualities of romance. Their works are different from the *fin-de-siècle* realist texts because they refuse to represent reality faithfully, preferring its romantic transformation. In ‘Le Roman Experimental’ (1880), Émile Zola (1840-1902) manifests that the novel of determinism is ‘experimental reasoning that combats one by one the hypotheses of the idealists and will replace novels of pure imagination by novels

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<sup>36</sup> Beer, *The Romance*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Beer, *The Romance*, 17.

<sup>38</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 107.

<sup>39</sup> Lang, ‘Realism and Romance,’ 687.

<sup>40</sup> Lang, ‘Realism and Romance,’ 687.

<sup>41</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 37.

of observation and experiment.’<sup>42</sup> In this manifesto of naturalism, Zola maintains that the novels of Naturalism are the product of the strict representation of life, evacuating the imagination from the narrative capacity of fiction. The romance is the text of creating reality and not reproducing life. Wells divorces his conception of the novel proper from the Zolaesque doctrine by expressing his disagreement with the pure documentation of life; hence, Wells’s stance is closer to the romance genre than to realism, and this leads his idea to be closer to romance writing. He applies his theory to his novel writing; not only to his scientific romances but also his social novels.

Wells’s sense of power as an author shows that he is also a romancer. For him, being an author means emancipation from the slavery of journalism and accomplishment of a strong subjectivity as the owner of his works. In the autobiography, he recollects the exciting moment when he published *The Time Machine*: ‘I should have a book out in the spring and I should pass from the status of journalist – “occasional journalist” at that, and anonymous – to authorship under my own name’ (*ExA*, 530). In order to achieve the author’s power in his work, Wells employs the autobiographical narrative structure in his social novels, which has become his favourite narrative form since *Tono-Bungay* (1909) and *New Machiavelli* (1913), or the omnipotent narrators in *The Wheels of Chance*, *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905) and *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910). The first-person narrative device enables Wells to saturate his narrative with his personality and to speculate on the ideas and the ideologies of his age. His favouring of the author’s free intervention in the narrative and the autobiographical narrative form led James to condemn Wells’s work as the shameful disregard of the art-form. In ‘In the Younger Generation’ (1914), he condemns *New Machiavelli*, *Marriage* (1912), *The Passionate Friends* (1913) as ‘very much more attestations of the presence of material than of an interest in the use of it.’<sup>43</sup> In the same essay, he also maintains that in Wells’s works one can only see stories about Wells himself: ‘The composition, as we have called it, heaven save the work! Is simply at any and every moment “about” Mr. Wells’s

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<sup>42</sup> Emile Zola, ‘Le Roman Experimental,’ *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, ed. George Becker (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1963), 172.

<sup>43</sup> Henry James, ‘The Younger Generation,’ *Henry James and H. G. Wells: A Record of Their Friendship, Their Debate on the Art of Fiction, and Their Quarrel*, ed. Leon Edel and Gordon N. Ray (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1958), 190.

own general adventure.’<sup>44</sup> Also, in his letter to Wells, James disapproves of the use of the autobiographical narrative form as an inferior method, which is only proper for writing romance: ‘accurst autobiographic form, which puts a premium on the loose, the improvised, the cheap and the easy. Save in the fantastic and the romantic [...] it has no authority, no persuasive or convincing force – its grasp of reality and truth isn’t strong and disinterested.’<sup>45</sup>

There is no doubt that James’s philosophy of depersonalising the author is influenced by the French master of realism, Flaubert. Regarding the depersonalised narrative device and the author’s voice, Flaubert unfolds his opinion: ‘The artist ought to be in his work like God in creation, invisible and omnipotent. He should be felt everywhere but not be seen.’<sup>46</sup> Flaubert’s author is the panoptical God; by supervising his entire narrative without being observed, the author becomes the true God, who has absolute power and acts as a sovereign to the characters. On the contrary, in the romance genre, like Le Gallienne’s narrator, the author is visible and loudly audible. Wells also wants God to be visible. ‘The Pose Novel’ (1894), presages Wells’s life-long preference of the visible author to the invisible author. Wells playfully apologises for his inability to be a god presiding over the narrative without being seen:

But some few there are who sit as gods above their private universes, and write without passion or vanity. At least, so I have been told. These be the true artists of letters, the white windows upon the truth of things. We by comparison are but stained glass in our own honour, and do but obstruct the view with our halos and attitudes. Yet even Shakespeare, the critics tell us – and they say they know – posed in the character of Hamlet (*LC*, 43).

In this passage, Wells clearly objects to Flaubert’s idea of impersonalisation. Here, Wells insinuates that there is such a text, which completely removes the author’s voice. In the entire essay, he asserts that the text is in effect the field in which the author’s wish can be tested, frustrated and sometimes fulfilled. It is the playground for the author, whose personality is freely exposed to the reader.

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<sup>44</sup> James, ‘The Younger Generation,’ 192.

<sup>45</sup> James, *Henry James and H. G. Wells*, 123.

<sup>46</sup> Gustave Flaubert, ‘On Realism,’ *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, ed., George J. Becker (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1963), 94.



Wells's assertion of personalisation of the author in his own narrative is not so far away from Hoopdriver's free imaginings, in which he can be a romantic hero. In this sense, the author is a dreamer and also a romancer.

The importance of the author's voice does not mean that the characters function as mere mouthpieces of the author. In fact, throughout his essays and works at the turn of the century, Wells is torn between conflicting desires. He desires to attain the author's freedom of digression and authoritative power of controlling his characters and the events; at the same time, he also hopes his characters to be free from the author's frame. Wells's reviews of Le Gallienne's *The Quest of the Golden Girl* and of Grant Allen's (1848-1899) *The Woman Who Did* (1895), demonstrate that even though the author's personal opinion and comment are essential in fiction, the author's personality should not deprive characters of their own unique personality. In 'Mr. Grant Allen's New Novel', Wells criticises the case in which a character functions as 'a mere lay figure who serves as a mouthpiece for the author's philosophy' (LC, 61). For instance, throughout *The Woman Who Did*, there is only Grant Allen's strong voice, which allows Herminia and Allan to speak only for the 'untrammelled liberty' of women.<sup>47</sup> Herminia's voice is perfectly identified with the omniscient author's voice, and the whole text functions as the male author's advocating for women's freedom.<sup>48</sup> In 'A Servants' Hall Vision,' Wells criticises the main character for being a mere marionette under the author's power: 'she never helps out by any action of her own the portrait which the author imagines is being drawn' (LC, 107). Here, the author's illumination of the heroine as a figure, who is confined within the frame of her portrait, epitomizes Wells's persistent assertion of the importance of characterisation in the novel.

What Wells is most concerned with is to convey the author's voice through an artistic form. The artistic form can be achieved through characterisation. His 1895 review of George Meredith's (1828-1909) *The Amazing Marriage* (1895) is essential in understanding Wells's conception of the artistic form:

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<sup>47</sup> Grant Allen, *The Woman Who Did*, introd. Sarah Wintle (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 26.

<sup>48</sup> Sarah Wintle, Introduction, *The Woman Who Did*, 15: 'the author's attitude towards her is problematic – a point underlined by the fact that, while she is sometimes only too capable of speaking for herself, she is a character in a novel whose author is speaking on her, and women's, behalf.'

But for the presentation of a human being, at least, [Meredith's] artifice of seeing through the eyes of characters is supremely effective. Otherwise you can have only the author's view. The theory of a scientific, an impersonal standpoint, is fallacious. The really logical scientific method would be to deal with Carinthia as so many pounds of bone, muscle, blood, and flesh, and state velocity, orientation, latitude and longitude, from moment to moment. But a soul is determined by its surfaces of contact with other souls (*LC*, 65)

In this review, Wells elaborates his idea of the ideal narrative device in which characters are introduced to the readers through other characters' voices. It also shows that Wells favours the way in which the identity of individual characters is demonstrated through their relationship with other characters. The representative example of this is marked in the representation of the Angel of *The Wonderful Visit* (1895), Griffin of *The Invisible Man* (1897) and the Sea Lady of *The Sea Lady* (1902); they are introduced to the reader through the other characters' observations as well as their evaluation of the main character. Wells's statement that a soul is determined by contacts with other souls prevents the author from overly controlling his characters.

A close comparison of his romances and essays published at the turn of the century with his later essays, 'The Contemporary Novel' (1911) and 'The Novel of Ideas' (1940), helps the reader to understand that Wells's theorisation of the novel in the 1890s and 1900s fluctuates between the art-form (it functions as restriction to the romance narrator) and the saturation in the author's personality (features of the romancer). In 'The Contemporary Novel' (1914), Wells argues that 'the novel I hold to be a discursive thing: it is not a single interest, but a woven tapestry of interests' (*LC*, 195). By maintaining that the novel should be a 'discursive thing,' Wells clearly insists that the author should be allowed to intervene in the narrative, to read the characters' minds and to provide the panoramic view of the whole narrative. The 'woven tapestry of interest' also subordinates Wells's advocacy of the author's digression and his limitless freedom to discuss human issues in the imaginative narrative.

Unlike 'The Contemporary Novel,' the literary reviews for the *Saturday Review* show that even though Wells feels uncomfortable with the colourless theory, he did not entirely discard elaborate narrative devices. In 'The New American Novelist' (1896), Wells keeps the balance between the seemingly

contradictory literary modes: the discursive tradition of the English novel, Zolaesque naturalism and Jamesian aesthetic realism. In this review, even though he comprehends the emergence of the new literary theory, which has begun to depart from traditional English novels,<sup>49</sup> Wells strongly believes that these different literary devices can be ideally negotiated: 'Yet, Falstaff shows that the charm of personality in a derivative form is still possible to a strictly dramatic method' (*LC*, 159).<sup>1</sup> Here, Wells suggests that the charm of the author's personality can be revealed through the character's voices, and the narrator's voice. Wells's attempt at reconciling English literary tradition with the new continental literary theory of suppressing the author's discursive intervention enables him to be conscious of the 'art-form' (*LC*, 61).

Linda Anderson argues that in his reaction against Jamesian aestheticism, Wells attempts to supply the individual characters with their own points of view, and the author with the digressive commentary.<sup>50</sup> Having been uneasy with Flaubert's and James's concept of the author as the panoptical god, Wells attempts to find alternative devices in which the author's voice and characters' voices can co-exist. In his early social romances - mainly *The Wheels of Chance*, *Love and Mr. Lewisham* and *Kipps* - the author's speculative self is present in the narrative as 'a character.' This narrative device is evaluated as a skilful use of authorial commentary in the novel by Wayne Booth.<sup>51</sup> Wells's romance narrators cannot enjoy the privilege of dominating the whole text. Instead, the narrative technique is interrogative. The texts' meanings operate in a field in which the author's voice is interrogated not only by the characters but also by the author himself. The author's wish to write a romance and wield super power over his narrative and characters are frustrated. In this sense, Wells's omniscient narrators in his social romances can be seen as an author, who returns from his grave as 'the situated author as principle of locality par excellence' as Seán Burke defines

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<sup>49</sup> Wells, 'The New American Novelists,' *H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, 159: 'There it is that these new novelists break most conspicuously from the tradition of the English succession of Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Mrs Gaskell, and Mr. Meredith.'

<sup>50</sup> Linda R. Anderson, *Bennett, Wells and Conrad: Narrative in Transition* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 114.

<sup>51</sup> Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983), 219: "An author who intrudes must somehow be interesting; he must live as a character. [...] The great narrators in this mode often look so much like gossips that mere gossips have often attempted to create great narrators."

authorship in the postmodern era.<sup>52</sup> Impersonality of the author implies a reassertion of the subject existing transcendently omnipotently and invisibly. Wells's refusal of the impersonalised author refers to 'the war waged on the transcendental / impersonal subject through whose putative construction totalities emerge.'<sup>53</sup> Wells's personalised and visible author is the *situated* author living in the text as a character. By refusing authorship as the universal god prevailing in high Modernism and Realism, Wells, in fact, goes back to the pre-Jamesian epoch of the romantics as a characterised author fully visible in the text.

Gordon N. Ray notes that 'the keystone of Wells's conception of fiction was realism.'<sup>54</sup> Ray's argument is correct in considering Wells's life-long disapproval of the popular romance as the novel of commerce. However, Wells's objection to the romance genre is caused primarily by his misunderstanding of potentialities of the romance genre, and by his failure in recognising his skilful use of the romance quality. Most of all, his vacillation between romance and realism in fiction creates Wells's own unique style which dominates his early works: scientific romances, social romances, utopian romances and sociological essays.

In this study, I endeavour to argue that Wells's early works are the supreme fruits of his ambiguous and complicated reaction against or interaction with romance and realism in fiction. In his early works (the texts written and published between *The Time Machine* and *Tono-Bungay*), Wells's efforts concentrate in fighting against and, at the same time, capitalising on the popular narratives that flood the ever-expanding mass market and the powerful influence of the continental and American realists. In so doing, Wells eventually purports to revive the English novel tradition from Chaucer to Scott and Dickens, and the romantic transformation of everyday life without jeopardising a sense of reality. Unlike the nineteenth-century European Realism practiced by Flaubert, Zola and Ivan Turgenev, the narratives of Scott and Dickens embed historical facts and everyday life in London and suburban areas in the author's romantic imagination. Scott's historical romance is imitated by *fin-de-siècle* imperial romancers, Lang

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<sup>52</sup> Seán Burke, ed., 'Introduction: Reconstructing the Author,' *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodernism: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995), xxviii.

<sup>53</sup> Burke, 'Introduction: Reconstructing the Author,' *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodernism: A Reader*, xxviii.

<sup>54</sup> Gordon N. Ray, 'H. G. Wells Tries to Be a Novelist,' *Edwardians and Late Victorians*, ed., Richard Ellmann (New York: Columbia UP, 1960), 107. 106-157.

and Haggard. Dickens's romance of everyday life is welcomed by Walter Besant, and is developed into late-Victorian and Edwardian comic novels. As Scott and Dickens did before him, Wells wrote his great fictions on the boundary between the novel (the term is equated with realism) and the romance. Not only the scientific romances but also the social novels reveal the undeniable fact that Wells is after all a romancer, or a novelist who could exploit romance contingencies in his fictions. It is in this sense that Wells is the successor of 'the great tradition' of the English discursive novel from Lawrence Sterne to Dickens. Wells's early literary criticism demonstrates that his theory of the novel is preoccupied with the potential of romance rather than with the strict realistic representation of everyday life advocated by the naturalists and the realists.

The second chapter of this study examines the way in which Wells's instinctive grasp of the romance potential is utilised in his non-scientific romances. In reading *The Wonderful Visit* (1896) as an allegorical comment on the Wilde trial, I argue that Wells criticises contemporary philistinism. Also, *The Wheels of Chance*, *The Love and Mr Lewisham* and *Kipps* will be examined to prove the fact that even though the representation of the lower-middle class life is realistic, Wells's social novels are strongly nuanced by the styles of the romance genre. The narrative engine in his social novels is created through the dynamic interaction between romance and realism; the romancer's freedom is frustrated and checked by the concerns of reality. Portraying the decent but vulgar low-middle class heroes' thwarted desire for emancipation from the insignificance imposed by their social class, his social novels employ romance qualities in terms of theme as well as narrative technique.

The third and the fourth chapters read Wells's major scientific romances in terms of Wells's effort in writing the romance which is written in the established romance grammar and deconstructs the forms and the themes of *fin-de-siècle* popular romances. In his Preface to *The Scientific Romances* (1933), Wells contends that his scientific romances belong to the genre of fantasy, which has held 'the reader to the end by art and illusion and not by proof and argument, and the moment he closes the cover and reflects he wakes up to their impossibility' (LC, 240-41). Employing fantastic elements, Wells can retain the readers' attention to the end of the story. However at the same time, Wells proclaims that his scientific romances 'reflect upon contemporary political and social

discussions,' and look at 'human feelings and human ways, from the new angle that has been acquired' (*LC*, 242). To achieve two aims which are to hold on to 'the political and social discussions,' and 'hold the reader to the end,' Wells employs the romance genre formulas (the combination of adventure plot and fantastic story) and simultaneously distances his romance from the genre itself. Wells's combination of realistic with fantastic elements is contrasted to the contemporary representative advocates of romance, Stevenson, Lang and Haggard. Thus, Wells proves his ability to embed 'reality into his novels without jeopardising romance.'<sup>55</sup>

Specifically, the third chapter compares the theme and form of *The Time Machine* with those of Haggard's *She* (1887) and argues that the former satirises and parodies the ideologies advocated by popular narratives. Furthermore, by deconstructing their established plot-making, Wells's scientific romances and fantasies are indeed radical and rebellious as far as the *fin-de-siècle* literary market is concerned. Also, Wells's aim to write fantastic romances which hold a mirror to reality, and his desire to create romances different from contemporary popular romances, enabled him to experiment with a new type of romance: the carnivalesque romance.

Wells's scientific romances defy any exertion at generic definition based on the romance genre; instead, they exhibit the characteristics of carnivalised literature, theorised by the Russian Formalist, Mikhail Bakhtin. The fourth chapter reads Wells's three scientific romances, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The War of the Worlds* and *The Food of the Gods* (1904) as carnivalesque romances. Any effort to pin down the first two as sub-genres of the imperial romance, the island story and the invasion story, fails to grasp what these works enshrine in the conventional romance narratives. The theme of these romances is to resist anything representing official culture; for instance, Christianity, the class system and even imperialism. *The Food of the Gods* has been put aside as less artistic than Wells's other early scientific romances, and considered as the means for conveying Wells's idea of utopianism. However it demonstrates Wells's exertion to write the romance in the vein of Rabelais' carnivalesque novel.

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<sup>55</sup> Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Richards, 1922), 27.

His twentieth-century utopian projects, *Anticipations*, *Mankind in the Making* and *A Modern Utopia* (1905) also create unique narrative spaces where the sociologist's logical speculation is mixed with the romancer's dream of changing society. These texts accentuate Wells's romantic views which can be found in his lifelong desire to demolish the current confining social order and to build a new world. Here, the carnival spirit, which flows throughout his early scientific romances, reappears in terms of the celebration of the death of the old world and the birth of the new. The carnival spirit is also marked by the narrative style of these projects, which break the boundary between the imaginative narratives and the sociological essays. This demonstrates Wells's playful acknowledgement that he assumes the role of the romantic prophet Carlyle, and not of sociological and philosophical thinkers like Spencer and Hegel.

In chapter six, *Tono-Bungay* and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) are examined in terms of the meaning of romance in modern society. Written in the close of the first decade of the twentieth century, these novels are the narratives tinted with the sense of loss, which is generated by the author's anxiety that the age of romance will end; thus the two novels display the author's nostalgia for romance in fiction.

## **Chapter II. Romance Potentials in Wells's Early Non-scientific Novels**

Wells's correspondence in 1895 and 1896 shows that whilst publishing his major scientific romances, *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, he was also preparing to publish works which were to be categorised as a genre different from his scientific romances. These are *The Wonderful Visit* (1895) and *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll* (1896). In his letters, Wells himself included two texts within the category of non-scientific romances: 'Of my published work it [*The Wheels of Chance*] is most like "The Wonderful Visit." It has no "scientific" element & it is entirely free from "horrors."' <sup>56</sup>

*The Wonderful Visit* deals with a fantastic story without any pseudo-scientific explanation. The narrator dismisses the nagging question of possibility and probability of his story; 'Explanations, I repeat, I have always considered the peculiar fallacy of this scientific age.'<sup>57</sup> The narrator, by using the writing of fantastic or unexplainable events as an excuse, conveniently draws the line between unexplainable fantasy and undeniable fact:

What had jolted these twin universes together so that the Angel had fallen suddenly into Siddenford, neither the Angel nor the Vicar could tell. Nor for the matter of that could the author of this story. The author is concerned with the facts of the case, and has neither the desire nor the confidence to explain them. Explanations are the fallacy of a scientific age (*WV*, 138-139).

A similar narrative technique is employed again in a more complicated way in *The Sea Lady* (1902) which was published seven years after *The Wonderful Visit*. The narrator avoids the troublesome burden of pseudo-scientific explanation about a fantastic figure, the mermaid, by posing as a mere reporter whose narrative is constructed from his interviews with witnesses of the mermaid. The narrator's seemingly objective narrative is replete with his doubts over the

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<sup>56</sup> Wells's letter to an unknown correspondent (2, January, 1896) in H. G. Wells, *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells*, ed. David C. Smith, vol. I (London: Pickering, 1998), 257. Also, see his letter to the editor of Blackwood's Magazine (29, November, 1895) in *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells*, 251.

<sup>57</sup> H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine, The Wonderful Visit and Other Stories* (New York: Scribner's, 1924) vol. 1 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols. (1924-7), 158. Subsequent quotations from this text will be cited parenthetically in the text.



extremely smart lady's seduction scheme.<sup>58</sup> However he avoids revealing his anxiety to the reader through his ambiguous stance in explaining whether the narrative is about a fantastic event or a well-planned hoax.

By contrast, Wells's scientific romances reserve at least one whole chapter for pseudo-scientific explanations: for instance, one of the chapters of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* – titled as 'Doctor Moreau Explains' – is given over to Moreau's scientific discourse in accelerating the process of evolution through tissue transplantation. *The Time Machine* also begins with the time traveller's small lecture to his dinner guests on the fourth dimension. *The Wonderful Visit* is similar to *The Sea Lady* in terms of the textual reliance on fantastic events without scientific features. In both texts, reasonable explanations are happily denied by the narrators on the grounds that they are too fantastic to be explained.

Appearing between the publications of *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Wheels of Chance* is another seminal text signalling Wells as a novelist. Wells's desire to write a novel which narrates the everyday, not fantastic events is firstly attempted in this social novel. Themes and narrative formats of *The Wheels of Chance* are repeated, transformed, developed in his later social novels, *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kipps*, *Tono-Bungay* and *The History of Mr. Polly*. They tell the stories of the protagonists' struggle of emancipation from every kind of social confinement, family, school, work and class systems, with the employment of an omniscient narrator or a digressive protagonist/narrator.

His early social novels exhibit main features of the romance genre. The narratives consist of the characters' and the implied authors' invocation of the romantic imagination. Wells's characters' inner imaginings – especially, Hoopdriver and Mr. Polly – are self-deceptions and at the same time a driving force to live. Also the narrative devices of the romance such as employment of chatty narrators and episodic plot-making and negligence of characterisation function to propel the continuation of the narrative.

In Wells's social romances, the romance qualities are never allowed to unfold, unchecked by the author's consciousness of reality. Reality wields its power over the protagonist's imaginings and also on the narrative force. Frye

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<sup>58</sup> Bruce Sommerville, 'A Tissue of Moonshine: The Mechanics of Deception in *The Sea Lady*,' *The Wellsian: Selected Essays on H.G. Wells*, ed. John S. Partington (Uitgevers: Equilibris, 2003), 123-30.

places reality and imagination as the extreme poles of fiction, which represent the realistic novel and the romance genre respectively:

The realistic tendency moves in the direction of the representational and the displaced, the romantic tendency in the opposite direction, concentrating on the formulaic units of myth and metaphor. At the extreme of imagination we find the themes and motifs of folktale, elements of the process that Coleridge distinguished as fancy, and described as “a mode of memory” playing with “fixities and definites.” At the extreme of realism comes what is often called “naturalism,” and at the extreme of that the shaping spirit wanders among documentary, expository, or reminiscent material, unable to find a clear narrative line from a beginning to an end.<sup>59</sup>

The fixities of reality and its consequent literary feature, realism, are challenged and formulated by the imaginative tendency whose literary form is romance. Wells’s social novels demonstrate imaginative forces of romance in telling stories of his protagonists’ confinement and emancipation. Even though Wells wished to write the novel – not the romance – and portray the lower-middle class protagonists’ everyday life, he refuses to be a realist and a naturalist. The uniqueness of his social novels is formulated in the author’s precarious but brave attempt to play on the boundary between realism and romance.

#### i) ***The Wonderful Visit: Exposing the Process of Discourse Formation***

*The Wonderful Visit* (1895), as Wells noted in the preface to the Atlantic edition of this text, employs ‘the method of bringing some fantastically possible thing into a commonplace group of people, and working out their reactions with the completest gravity and reasonableness.’<sup>60</sup> It is a fantastic story in the sense that the protagonist is an angel, who cannot be explained with scientific reasoning. It is also realistic since the main narrative is about the exotic figure’s adventure in

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<sup>59</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 37.

<sup>60</sup> Wells, ‘Preface to Volume I,’ *The Works of H.G. Wells*. 28 vols. (New York: Scribner’s, 1924-7) xxiii. Also see Bernard Bergonzi’s *The Early H.G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1961), 112.

an English countryside, Siddermorton, in the late Victorian period. The narrator of the text, however, does not draw a clear boundary between the fantastic and the realistic. Unlike Wells's early social romances, *The Wheels of Chance*, *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kipps* and *The History of Mr. Polly*, *The Wonderful Visit* does not have an omniscient narrator's or author's voice. The whole story is related by an anonymous narrator, who collects information about the Angel from the villagers and reconstructs the narrative in a half-fictional and half-nonfictional style. Restraining himself from clarifying whether the dubious guest of the Vicar is an angel or a young man called "Mr. Angel," the narrator, posing as a mere collector of information, leaves the intriguing question of the probability of the story to the reader's decision.

The blurred boundary between the fantastic and the realistic generates a narrative field, which allows the author to express his own severe comments on society without jeopardising his social status as an emerging author. When Wells wrote and published *The Wonderful Visit* – from May to September 1895 – he had already been received as an author by not only the reading public but also the critics due to the generally acclaimed romance, *The Time Machine*. Wells's correspondence to publishers written in the 1890s demonstrates that he was conscious of the reading public's positive responses, rather than the artistic values of his works. In a letter in which he was asking for the publication of *The Wheels of Chance*, Wells strongly persuades the editor of the magazine that the book will 'appeal to a certain section of the public.'<sup>61</sup>

John Huntington considers *The Time Machine* as an important book on the grounds that 'it manages to voice Wells's social aspirations and his deep social angers, while still maintaining the decorum required for its author to become a successful writer.'<sup>62</sup> Wells's skilful replacement of the class division in the late-Victorian society with the species difference of the remote future indicates that he can utilize fantasy elements of the romance genre in order to explore contemporary class issues without endangering his social position as an author.

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<sup>61</sup> In a letter to an unknown correspondent, he writes, 'The details of bicycle riding, carefully done from experience & the passing glimpses of characteristic scenery of the south of England, should, I think, appeal to a certain section of the public': Wells, *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells*, vol. 1. 257.

<sup>62</sup> John Huntington, 'The Time Machine and Wells's Social Trajectory,' *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine*, 97.

Likewise, the fantastic elements of *The Wonderful Visit* make it possible for Wells to describe and mock the chaos of *fin-de-siècle* England without the risk of being accused of attacking the social codes promulgated by the late-Victorian middle-class readership. The year 1895 was an eventful one in English history, and has been characterised by two events: the introduction of Max Nordau's (1849-1923) *Degeneration* (1892) to the English readers, and the trial and conviction of Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). Diagnosing *fin-de-siècle* geniuses in art and literature as degenerate, Nordau condemned Oscar Wilde as an English counterpart of French decadent artists.<sup>63</sup> The conviction and imprisonment of Oscar Wilde helped to justify Nordau's accusation and signalled the eternal triumph of the late-Victorian philistines. Written after the English translation of *Degeneration* and during Wilde's trial and conviction, *The Wonderful Visit* features two important events within the ambiguous narrative form. *The Wonderful Visit* demonstrates Wells's attack against Nordau's *Degeneration*, and as John Stokes briefly mentions, it also satirises and at the same time defends *fin-de-siècle* aestheticism by alluding to Wilde's conviction in the text.<sup>64</sup>

On the 1st of May, 1895 Wells wrote to Dent, saying that he had written 10,000 words of *The Wonderful Visit* and that 'I could probably let you have the complete story by the end of this month'<sup>65</sup> and in the early September of that year Wells published it.<sup>66</sup> In the same year, Oscar Wilde was convicted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April and imprisoned in late May. Even though there is no clear record of the exact date when Wells completed the romance, it is clear that *The Wonderful Visit* was written during the Wilde trials, and published after his imprisonment. What Wells achieves in this romance is to expose the late-Victorian philistines' hysterical reaction against everything unconventional.

To achieve this goal, Wells foregrounds the process of discourse formation. For instance, the narrator's collection of the villagers' various opinions about the Angel lays bare the social assumptions that if an object is unknown to the society, it should be defined and categorised by social authorities. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault argues that in nineteenth century pathology, 'the

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<sup>63</sup> Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, trans. George L. Mosse (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1993), 317.

<sup>64</sup> John Stokes, Introduction, *Fin de Siècle/Fin du Globe: Fears and Fantasies of the Late Nineteenth Century*, ed John Stokes (London: Macmillan, 1992), 4.

<sup>65</sup> Wells, *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells*, vol.1, 239.

<sup>66</sup> See J. R. Hammond's *An H. G. Wells's Chronology* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 26.

formation of objects' of discourse is carried out by such authorities as medicine, panel law, religious authorities, and literary and art criticism:

Medicine defines madness as an object; the panel law applies such notions as criminality and heredity to these objects. The religious authority practises the direction of conscience with a view of understanding of individual; literary and art criticism considers the work as a language that had to be interpreted.<sup>67</sup>

These authorities participate in formulating discourses within 'discursive relations' or 'discursive fields,' which consist of language, social institutions, subjectivity and power.<sup>68</sup> The subject, which is both observing and speaking of an object, is also governed by the discursive field. In the late nineteenth-century England, as Foucault continues to argue, journalism and literature were added to the authorities in discursive fields.<sup>69</sup> In *The Wonderful Visit*, the villagers are projecting onto the Angel their conventions such as their reading habits and class background.

It is in this sense that the villagers' opinion formation can be seen as a 'discursive field.' Relying on the concept of degeneration promulgated by Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), the village doctor, Dr. Crump, when he first sees the Angel, considers him as effeminate, mad, deformed and degenerate, and later he accuses the Angel of being a fraud or a criminal. Cesare Lombroso links the deformed body of man with criminality. Applying and developing Lombroso's idea, Nordau maintains that mental development is closely related to physical growth, and consequently, the deformed body signifies the tendency of degeneracy and madness.<sup>70</sup> Dr. Crump diagnoses the Angel as 'a mattoid' and finds the Angel's insanity in his deformed body: 'Marks of mental weakness. [...] I've just been reading all about it – in Nordau. No doubt his odd deformity gave him an idea' (*WV*, 155). The curate, Mendham, suspects that the Angel is a nineteen-year-old effeminate deranged young man, who 'might be a chorister or something of that sort' (*WV*, 175). His complaint that 'I am convinced

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<sup>67</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1989), 46.

<sup>68</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 46.

<sup>69</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 46.

<sup>70</sup> See George L. Mosse, 'Max Nordau and His Degeneration', introduction, *Degeneration*, by Max Nordau, trans and introd. George L. Mosse (London: U of Nebraska Press), xx-xxi. Also see, Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, 15-18.

there is something discreditable at the bottom of this business,’ and his demand for a simple explanation to the Vicar, ‘why not tell a simple straightforward story?’ indicates his hopeless endeavour to define the relationship between the Vicar and the Angel (*WV*, 163). Mrs. Jehoram, who is ‘the autocratic authority in Siddermorton upon all questions of art, music and belles-lettres,’ because her late husband was a minor poet, judges the Angel as a genius of music in disguise (*WV*, 213). The village’s aristocrat, Lady Hammergallow guesses that the Angel is the Vicar’s hidden son by projecting Nathaniel Hawthorne’s (1804-64) romance, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) into the situation. The landlord aristocrat, Sir John Gotch, considers the Angel as a socialist. He complains to the Vicar: ‘He has been buttonholing every yokel he came across, and asking them why they had to work, while we – I and you, you know – did nothing’ (*WV*, 250).

All of these interpretations of the Angel represent the nineteenth-century authorities which attempt to find objects of their discourse and categorise it, and then make it definable and visible. The Angel becomes the object of their discourses, and their act of interpreting the Angel is the ‘formation of object.’ For instance, as William Greenslade points out, Dr. Crump ‘looks in vain for a single suitable degenerate patient among the “thoroughly sane people” of the village.’<sup>71</sup> Hence, the text reinforces the context in which the village authorities search for the object of their discourse by juxtaposing the characters’ reading habits and class background with their judgement.

No matter how hard the characters attempt to define the identity of the Angel, the text presents their wondering and reasoning from a distance and thus demystifies the ideology of discourse formation. In contrast to Dr. Crump’s attempt to frame the Angel in the discourse of degeneration, the text describes the process in which the Angel is degenerated from a highly evolved creature to a human form after his short stay in the human world. The text asserts that the world of humans is degenerate or less-evolved in comparison with the land of the Angel, and thus it mocks Dr. Crump’s prejudice. The author also presents the Angel only as a fantastic figure from the land of angels, who does not exist in the human world and disappears without any trace at the end of the story. The fact that the Angel is a non-existent being in the human world indicates that the

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<sup>71</sup> William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 126.

discourses of the villagers can be seen to be based on nothingness or fantasy, and accordingly, they are mocked in the text by the author.

The author's attack on the ideology of the social discourses misguides critics to read the romance in terms of Wells's criticism of general social issues. The text's loosely connected criticisms of society are the main reason why David C. Smith considers *The Wonderful Visit* as one of Wells's unsatisfactory works. He contends:

The first, *The Wonderful Visit*, originated in a remark attributed to John Ruskin, that if an angel comes to earth most Englishman would simply want to bag it as a new species of bird. Wells's plot was no more substantial than that premise, although the angelic visit does allow him some worthwhile observations, speaking from a tramp character, on the state of England, English education, and other matters in which H. G. was interested.<sup>72</sup>

What Smith's criticism has missed is that this text can be read as a fable of the public's discourse formations broadly about the unknown and revolutionary, and more specifically about late nineteenth century aestheticism, decadent writers and sexual issues which had begun to emerge as public discourses through Oscar Wilde's scandal in 1895.

According to the biographies of Wells and his autobiography, he did not have a personal relationship with Wilde.<sup>73</sup> However, Wilde is known to have acknowledged uniqueness in Wells's prose and Wells paid tribute to Wilde in return. Wilde drew W. E. Henley's attention to Wells's essays and short stories.<sup>74</sup> In addition, according to David C. Smith's research, Oscar Wilde asked Robert Ross to send him Wells's recent books to read in Reading Gaol, and after Wilde's death, Wells played an important role in obtaining the funds to raise the monument on Wilde's grave in the Père Lachaise cemetery.<sup>75</sup> Wells also

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<sup>72</sup> David C. Smith, *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986), 63.

<sup>73</sup> Records about Oscar Wilde and his letters show that the emergent young writer Wells did not attract Wilde's attention so much. For instance, to Frank Harris's question about Wells, Wilde simply answers, 'A Scientific Jules Verne'; see Frank Harris's *Oscar Wilde: Including My Memories of Oscar Wilde by George Bernard Shaw and Introductory Note by Lyle Blair* (Westport: Greenwood, 1958), 279.

<sup>74</sup> John Batchelor, *H. G. Wells*, 8: 'Henley commissioned *The Time Machine* partly because Oscar Wilde had recommended Wells to his attention.'

<sup>75</sup> David C. Smith, introduction, *Select Conversations With an Uncle*, by H. G. Wells, ed. David C. Smith and Patrick Parrinder (London: U of North London P, 1992), 10-1; 16.

remembered that Oscar Wilde was one of those who liked his essay, *The Rediscovery of the Unique* (1891): ‘Harris broke up the type of that second article and it is lost, but one of two people, Oscar Wilde was one, so praised to him the *The Rediscovery of the Unique*, that he may have had afterthoughts about the merits of the rejected stuff’ (ExA, 359). Wells’s review of Wilde’s drama, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) testifies his high estimation of ‘humours dealing with [Victorian] theatrical conventions’ (LC, 27) remarkably demonstrated in Wilde’s play. Wells’s approval of Wilde as a literary figure is also shown in his proposal to include Oscar Wilde as a member in the Academy of Letters, which was surveyed by the Academy on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1897.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, Wells deplores the philistinism of the late-Victorian public opinion of literature. In his review, ‘Jude the Obscure’ (1895), Wells writes:

No novelist, however respectable, can deem himself altogether safe to-day from a charge of morbidity and unhealthiness. [...] They outdo one another in their alertness for anything they can by any possible measure of language contrive to call decadent (LC, 80).

This statement targets contemporary philistine authorities, who frame every artist – from Thomas Hardy to Wilde – as being acquainted with ‘morbidity’ and ‘degeneracy.’ There is another subtle allusion to the Wilde trial in the 1924 introduction to *The Island of Doctor Moreau* of the Atlantic edition. Wells revealed that in writing this romance, he had been thinking of the trial of Wilde:

“The Island of Doctor Moreau” was written in 1895, and it was begun while “The Wonderful Visit” was still in hand. There was a scandalous trial about that time, the graceless and pitiless downfall of a man of genius, and this story was the response of an imaginative mind to the reminder that humanity is but animal, rough-hewn instinct and injunction.<sup>77</sup>

This recollection clearly demonstrates that the Wilde trial and the writing of *The Wonderful Visit* were overlapped and the former immensely impacted the young writer, Wells.

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<sup>76</sup> Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis, eds., *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde* (London : Fourth Estate, 2000), 1002 n.

<sup>77</sup> Wells, “Preface to Volume 2,” *The Works of H. G. Wells*, vol 2 (New York: Scribner’s, 1924), ix.



Throughout *The Wonderful Visit*, the formation of the contemporary discourse of aestheticism and decadence, strengthened by Oscar Wilde's trial, is implied in the villagers' various opinions about the Angel. The discussion between Mrs. Jehoram and Mrs. Mendham indicates the reference to Oscar Wilde's conviction:

"I always distrust the Vicar," said Mrs Mendham. "I know him."

"Yes. But the story is plausible. If this Mr. Angel were someone very clever and eccentric - "

"He would have to be *very* eccentric to dress as he did. There are degrees and limits, dear" (*WV*, 213)

"You see, dear," said Mrs Jehoram, putting down the opera-glass. "What I was going to say was, that possibly he might be a genius in disguise."

"If you can call next door to nothing a disguise."

"No doubt it was eccentric. But I've seen children in little blouses, not at all unlike him. So many clever people *are* peculiar in their dress and manners. [...] No - I cling to the genius theory. Especially after the playing. I'm sure the creature is original. Perhaps very amusing. In fact, I intend to ask the Vicar to introduce me."

[...]

"I'm afraid you're rash" said Mrs Mendham. "Geniuses and people of that kind are all very well in London. But here – at the Vicarage."

"We are going to educate the folks. I love originality. At any rate I mean to see him."

"Take care you don't see too much of him," said Mrs Mendham. "I've heard the fashion is quite changing. I understand that some of the very best people have decided the genius is not to be encouraged any more. These recent scandals...."

"Only in literature, I can assure you, dear. In music..."

"Nothing you can say, my dear," said Mrs Mendham, going off at a tangent, "will convince me that that person's costume was not extremely suggestive and improper."

(*WV*, 214-15)

These two quotations demonstrate that Wells deliberately insinuates Wilde's conviction in the text without mentioning his name. Their conversation revolves on several issues: eccentricity in dress, a genius in disguise, a genius in music and the recent scandals in literature. Mrs. Jehoram's reference to clever people in outlandish dresses and with eccentric behaviours echoes Nordau's condemnation of Oscar Wilde as the 'English representative among the [degenerate and decadent] "aesthetes."' In particular, Nordau reviles Wilde's eccentric costume as

a symptom of hysteria and degeneracy.<sup>78</sup> Mrs. Mendham's conservative statement that 'some of the very best people have decided the genius is not to be encouraged any more,' and Mrs. Jeroham's assurance that the recent scandals are in the milieu of *littérateurs*, and not in that of the musicians, clearly imply the Wilde case.

The Angel's ambiguous sexuality also suggests the *fin-de-siècle* decadent aesthetes' wilful violation of the philistines' conventional ideology of clear-cut sexuality: masculinity in men and femininity in women. The narrative seems to confirm the Christian idea of angels as holy and asexual beings as clearly mentioned in the Bible. According to the explanation of Wells's angel, which echoes the gospel of St. Mark,<sup>79</sup> in the world of angels the division between males and females does not exist: 'there is neither pain nor trouble nor death, marrying nor giving in marriage, birth nor forgetting' (*WV*, 127). However, by parodying St. Mark's statement, Wells embeds dubiousness and ambiguity with regard to the matter of the sexuality of angels, which is marked in literature. Wells's narrator makes it clear to the reader that the Angel of his narrative is not the holy creature described in the Bible. It is the angel of Art; it is 'neither the Angel of religious feeling nor the Angel of popular belief' (*WV*, 141). It is the sensual figure depicted in Italian Renaissance painting and sculpture: 'the Angel of Italian art, polychromatic and gay' (*WV*, 143). The angels of Italian Renaissance are sexually ambiguous: depending on the perspective, they can be seen as masculine females and at the same time as effeminate males. Against the author's intention, Gabriel's answer to Adam's question in John Milton's (1608-1674) *Paradise Lost* (1667) generates the ambiguity about Angel's sexuality rather than the plain answer.<sup>80</sup> Wells develops the illusiveness of the literary angel's sexuality in his playful representation of the Angel in this romance.

The manner in which *The Wonderful Visit* presents him to the reader shows that the Angel is an effeminate male rather than a masculine female. When the narrator explains the difference between the Angel of religion and the Angel of his narrative, he specifies that the former has a female sexuality and the latter a

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<sup>78</sup> Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, 317.

<sup>79</sup> (Mark, 12:25): 'For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.' See *The Bible: Authorised King James Version with Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), 62.

<sup>80</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Essex: Pearson Education, 1988), Book VIII, 614-29.

male sexuality. The angel of religious feelings is 'alone among the angelic hosts in being distinctly feminine' (*WV*, 141-2). On the contrary, the narrator presupposes that 'the Angel the Vicar shot' is male by giving him a male pronoun: 'He comes from the land of beautiful dreams'; 'at best he is a popish creature' (*WV*, 143). It is also described that he has never seen women. When he sees Mrs Mendham and her daughters, the Angel says, 'How grotesque, [...] And such quaint shapes !' (*WV*, 145). His ignorance of "the ladies" insinuates that his world is devoid of females and this produces the dynamic of a sexuality initiated only by males. During his sojourn in the village, he falls in love with Delia. This also leads the reader to believe his gender to be male.

Even though it is not expressed in the text explicitly, Mendham's suspicion of the discreditable relationship between the Vicar and the Angel suggests homoerotic attachment. Here is the Curate's conversation with his wife:

"This hunchback is certainly one of the strangest creatures I've seen for a long time. Foreign looking, with a big bright coloured face and long brown hair ... It can't have been cut for months!" The Curate put his studs carefully upon the shelf of the dressing-table. "And a kind of staring look about his eyes, and a simpering smile. Quite a silly looking person. Effeminate."

"But who *can* he be?" said Mrs Mendham.

"I can't imagine, my dear. Nor where he came from. He might be a chorister or something of that sort."

"But why should he be about the shrubbery ... in that dreadful costume?"

"I don't know. The Vicar gave no explanation. He simply said, 'Mendham, this is an Angel.' "

"I wonder if he drinks... They may have been bathing near the spring, of course," reflected Mrs Mendham. "But I noticed no other clothes on his arm."

The Curate sat down on his bed and unlaced his boots.

"It's a perfect mystery to me, my dear" (Flick, flick of laces.) "Hallucination is the only charitable—"

"You are sure, George, that it was *not* a woman".

"Perfectly," said the Curate.

"I know what men are, of course."

"It was a young man of nineteen or twenty," said the Curate.

"I can't understand it," said Mrs. Mendham (*WV*, 175-6).

Behind the dialogue between Mendham and Mrs. Mendham, the text implies a homosexual relationship between the Angel and the Vicar. Until the end of their conversation, the couple remain puzzled, as Mrs Mendham's statement reveals: 'I can't understand it.' Yet, by making the simple couple ponder, the author leads the readers to notice the connotation of the unspeakable affair between two men, which is skilfully embedded into the text by Wells.

Mendham's induction that the Angel could be a chorister boy is also a textual reference to decadent literature's tendency to write about homoerotic love. The dubious relationship between the Vicar and the Angel – or a chorister boy – is the subject-matter of the short story, 'The Priest and the Acolyte,' anonymously published in the decadent magazine, *The Chameleon* (1894).<sup>81</sup> The narrator of *The Wonderful Visit* describes the Angel as 'slight of figure, scarcely five feet high, and with a beautiful, almost effeminate face,' and to be 'robed simply in a purple-wrought saffron blouse, bare kneed and bare-footed' (*WV*, 141). His appearance and attire are similar to those of the acolyte: 'a small white figure – there, with his bare feet on the moon-blanchéd turf, dressed only in his long white nightshirt.'<sup>82</sup> Even though there is no evidence that Wells read the story, with Mendham's speculation, 'a chorister boy', the description of the effeminate and young acolyte's dress and appearance are similar to the way in which the Angel's attire and appearance are described in *The Wonderful Visit*.

The narrative also presents the Angel as the decadent artist. The French aesthetes' influence on their English counterparts is noted in the villagers' opinion of the Angel as a 'foreigner' or 'Frenchified' (*WV*, 191). The music the Angel plays with the violin is also described as something mysterious, and a sound, which does not have a specific form (*WV*, 183-4). According to Nordau, this mysterious element is considered as a characteristic of decadent aestheticism. He deplores the situation that the mystic and symbolic decadent work is admired by the upper class: 'in the tendencies of contemporary art and poetry, in the life and conduct of the men who write mystic, symbolic and 'decadent' works, and the attitude taken by their admirers in the tastes and aesthetic instincts of fashionable society.'<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> 'The Priest and the Acolyte,' *The Chameleon* (London: Gay and Bird, 1894), 29-47.

<sup>82</sup> 'The Priest and the Acolyte,' *The Chameleon*, 34.

<sup>83</sup> Nordau, *Degeneration*, 15.

According to Linda Dowling, in late Victorian society, 'the decadent dandy' was considered as the parallel to the masculinity of the 'new women.'<sup>84</sup> Through George Harringay's comment on the Angel's appearance, the text implies that the Angel's long curly hair is a strong reference to the features of decadent dandyism: 'It's the effeminate man who makes the masculine woman. When the glory of a man is his hair, what's a woman to do? And when men go running about with about with beautiful hectic dabs' (*WV*, 223). Harringay's complaint reflects the uneasy late Victorian response to the chaotic states of contemporary sexuality. With the frequent mentioning of the Angel's costume as 'a peculiar costume,' 'a very defective costume' (*WV*, 161), his long and curly hair could also be a strong allusion to Oscar Wilde's own provoking Dionysian locks as, for instance, excessive hairstyles.

However, the Angel's dandy-like costume is not under the attack of the author. The Angel's simple dress is contrasted to the typical late-Victorian costume represented by the gentlemanly outfit of the Vicar and the Curate Mendham. In order to do this, Wells provides a directory of the items which the Angel is to wear: 'a shirt, rippled down the back (to accommodate the wings), socks, shoes – Vicar's dress shoes – collar, tie, and light overcoat' (*WV*, 147). Also, Wells juxtaposes the scene, in which the Curate Mendham's conversation with his wife (quoted earlier in this chapter) takes place, with the scene of the Curate's undressing. By describing the process in which Mendham unclothes in detail, and by contrasting the Curate's contempt against the Angel's simple attire with his own endlessly layered garments and all the accessories such as the boots, the collar and the studs (*WV*, 175-6), Wells expresses his detest of the late-Victorian culture of over-dressing.

Furthermore, Wells believes that like the confining social institutions, the clothes also restrict human freedom. For instance, in *Joan and Peter: The Story of an Education*, Wells comments on women's dress in the Victorian age as restricting. In this novel, Wells affirms that the over-dressing is the cause of Dolly's death. When she falls into the sea by accident, she was 'tugged back by

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<sup>84</sup> Linda Dowling, 'The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890s,' *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 33 (1979): 435, 444.

her clothes,' and until she dies, the dress is described as 'a leaden burden.'<sup>85</sup> Through Dolly's reasoning, Wells contemplates: 'Could she get some of them off? Not in this rough water. It would be more exhausting than helpful. Clothes ought to be easier to get off; not so much tying and pinning.'<sup>86</sup> Like Dolly's dress, Angel's Victorian garment becomes his prison and threatens to suffocate him. When putting on the vicar's coat, the Angel feels pain on his wings. Also the Angel 'looks less radiant in the Vicar's clothes, than he had done upon the moor when dressed in saffron' (*WV*, 147). After wearing the vicar's suits for a while, the Angel's wings, the symbol of freedom become degenerate, and thereby he is wrapped by the human world as he desperately exclaims: 'This world [...] wraps me round and swallows me up. My wings grow shrivelled and useless. Soon I shall be nothing more than a crippled man' (*WV*, 254). Hence, the narrative allegorises the Victorian garment as the prison confining the Angel in the human world.

Nordau suggests that it is the duty of philistine physicians and elitists to recognise the degenerates that contaminate society at a glance and banish them from the healthy body of the community: 'It is the sacred duty of all healthy and moral men to take part in the work of protecting and saving those who are not already too deeply diseased.'<sup>87</sup> Considering him to represent 'the Man of Science',<sup>88</sup> the healthy and moral physician propounded by Nordau, Dr. Crump thinks that he is the person who can prevent the Angel from corrupting the healthy villagers. The local doctor's attempt to find evidence of the Angel being a clever impostor reveals the limitation of his understanding:

"Oh! But come!" said the Doctor. "You'll tell me next your official robes are not white and that you can't play the harp,"

"There's no such thing as white in the Angelic Land," said the Angel. "It's that queer blank colour you get by mixing up all the others."

"Why, my dear Sir!" said the doctor, suddenly altering his tone, "you positively know nothing about the Land you come from. White's the very essence of it"

[...]

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<sup>85</sup> H. G. Wells, *Joan and Peter I*, (New York: Scribner's, 1927) vol 23 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 23 vols (1924-7), 80, 81.

<sup>86</sup> Wells, *Joan and Peter*, 80.

<sup>87</sup> Nordau, *Degeneration*, 556.

<sup>88</sup> This is the title of chapter, XIII of *The Wonderful Visit*.

“Look, here,” said Crump, and getting up, he went to the sideboard on which a copy of the *Parish Magazine* was lying. [...] “Here’s some *real* angels,” he said. [...]

“Oh! But really!” said the Angel, “those are not angels at all”

[...]

“If these are angels,” said the Angel, “then I have never been in the Angelic Land.”

“Precisely,” said Crump, ineffably self-satisfied; “that was just what I was getting at”

(*WV*, 95-6).

This scene demonstrates that the two interlocutors live in different worlds, and accordingly, they can not comprehend each other. Since the doctor has no insight to understand the world of fantasy, he thinks of what the Angel said, ‘then I have never been in the Angelic Land,’ as evidence to accuse the Angel of being deranged, or as a clever fraud. Here, the doctor speaks the language of the ‘authority’ of the human world, and the Angel answers the doctor’s question by using the knowledge of his fantastic world. What is ‘natural’ to the world of the man is “unnatural” to the world of the Angel. This also is noted in the second trial of Wilde:

Gill: Is it not clear that the love described related to natural love and unnatural love?

Wilde: No.

Gill: What is the ‘Love that dare not speak its name’?

Wilde: [...] It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it.<sup>89</sup>

From the perspective of the human world, the Angel is not ‘natural’, so in the world of the law, art is not ‘natural.’ Accordingly, like the Angel, who should be removed from the land of the humans, the artist, Wilde, should be ‘mocked’ and put ‘in the pillory.’<sup>90</sup> Like Wilde, the Angel has to choose one between two options as Dr. Crump concludes: ‘either clap you into a prison, if you go back on your story, or into a madhouse if you don’t’ (*WV*, 245). Here, Dr. Crump repeats Nordau’s solution to the degenerate decadent: ‘The normal man, with his clear-mind, logical thought, sound judgement, and strong will [...] leaves to the impotent degenerates at most the shelter of the hospital, lunatic asylum, and

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<sup>89</sup> Chris White, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1999), 57.

<sup>90</sup> Chris White, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality*, 58.

prison, in the contemptuous pity.’<sup>91</sup> The late-Victorian penal authority diagnoses Wilde’s scandal as a symptom of moral subversion, which the healthy middle class should face and fight against.

The Angel’s banishment from the village clearly hints at Wilde’s downfall, which was unfairly executed by the narrow minded Victorian public. At the beginning of the story, there are hints that the narrative accuses society of hatred against anything different from their rules. The following passages imply that society’s attempt to eliminate the eccentric creatures should be considered a criminal act:

In the name of Science. And this is right and as it should be; eccentricity, in fact, is immorality – think over it again if you do not think so now – just as eccentricity is one’s way of thinking is madness (I defy you to find another definition that will fit all the cases of either); and if a species is rare it follows that it is not Fitted to Survive. The collector is after all merely like the foot soldier in the days of heavy armour – he leaves the combatant, alone and cuts the throats of those who are overthrown (*WV*, 127).

Here, the narrator derides Nordau’s and his fellow scientists’ false accusation of *fin-de-siècle* aestheticism. The rare and eccentric species mercilessly crushed by the soldier-like scientists represents the artist falsely condemned and banished by the philistines. Like the eccentric species, the Angel – and Wilde – are defined as degenerate, mad and immoral, and are ‘overthrown’ by authorities of society: specifically, science and religion.

In this romance, Wells adopts the journalistic style of contemporary newspapers. Journals of the late nineteenth century function as a major authority, which makes use of the Wilde trial as the discursive formation in support of middle-class morality. In *Talk on the Wilde Side*, Ed Cohen examines how the middle-class press formulated Oscar Wilde’s public image as an ‘unspeakable’ degenerate figure of immorality.<sup>92</sup> According to Cohen, the newspapers foreground the significance of ‘telling a story’ in order to increase their circulation. The new style introduced to the late nineteenth-century journalism is

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<sup>91</sup> Nordau, *Degeneration*, 541.

<sup>92</sup> Ed Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side*, (New York: Routledge, 1993), 135. As to the middle-class press’s characterisation of Wilde as an effeminate artist, Regina Gagnier also mentions: ‘it was the middle-class press that convicted him [Wilde].’ Regina Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986), 95.



to 'establish an emotional relationship to the audience by drawing upon personalised narration, vivid language, evocative detail, and most important of all, sensational subjects.'<sup>93</sup> In this process, the facts are necessarily mediated by the apparatus of representation so that their truth is intimately connected to their significance and their marketability. Thus, the newspapers create a saleable story based not only on facts but also on fictional imagination.

*The Wonderful Visit*'s narrative style imitates the late Victorian newspaper's way of reporting news, and at the same time, deconstructs it. From the beginning of the romance the narrator is situated between facts and fantasy: what actually has happened and what he has imagined. The narrator claims that his narrative is based on the 'cardinal fact of the case' by providing the correct date when the Angel faces the Vicar for the first time: it is 'on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1895' (*WV*, 139). Yet, how the Angel comes to fall into the world of humans is never fully explained by either the characters or the narrator. The narrator draws a clear line between what he can explain and what he cannot: that is the demarcation between the fantastic supernatural event and the routine of the human world. His insistence upon the 'cardinal fact' is juxtaposed with his admission of the existence of the unexplainable events. It is the fantastic figure who causes the social authorities to engage in producing their own interpretation. If the middle-class press creates the notorious image of Oscar Wilde and the decadent by remaining silent on the subject of sodomy, Wells reveals the farcical aspects exhibited by late-Victorian society through his silence about the fact that the fantastic agent does exist among the public.

As disciplinary discourses support middle-class morality, the journals warned the reading public against the danger of the decadent artist and Wilde's harmful influence on the public. Nevertheless, *The Wonderful Visit* criticises the philistine readers to unjustly accuse Thomas Hardy as being degenerate, morbid, and unnatural. Thomas Angel and Delia Hardy, which are the names engraved on the tombstones of the Angel and Delia, are suggestive of the name of Thomas Hardy. Hardy was forced to give up writing novels due to the ill-reception of his *Jude the Obscure* (1895) on account of its unconventional approach to sexuality, and this is deplored by Wells in his review which is written for the *Saturday*

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<sup>93</sup> Ed Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 131.

Review in the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 1896.<sup>94</sup> The name, 'Thomas Hardy' also implies the unspeakable name, Wilde, who is deprived of his right to produce his "unconventional" works by the philistine audience. (LC, 30).

In *The Logic of Fantasy*, John Huntington argues that this romance can be seen as 'a reconsideration of [civilisation, rather than] satire on it,' and since the world that the Angel comes from is not a concretely realised antithesis of the human world, the reconsideration remains an ideal.<sup>95</sup> As Huntington points out, the Angel's land remains a pure fantastic world in the text. Yet, what he does not notice is the importance of the pure fantasticality of the Angel and his land; this fantastic element aims at demystifying the formation of discourse about the Angel, and accordingly, satirising contemporary reactions to Oscar Wilde's scandal and decadent poses.

## ii) *The Wheels of Chance*: "You Ride Through Dreamland on Wonderful Dream Bicycles That Change and Grow"

Signalling a departure from Wells's scientific romances in terms of theme and narrative techniques, *The Wheels of Chance* is written in the tradition of 'discursive' and picaresque English novels, such as works by Lawrence Sterne, Henry Fielding, William Thackeray and Charles Dickens. Throughout his literary career, Wells defended the discursive narrative technique, which is the main characteristic of pre-Jamesian English novels. *The Wheels of Chance*, which is his first social novel, testifies his favour of the aestheticism of discursive and digressive English novels.

Discursiveness is a main narrative technique of Wells's social novels featuring the lower-middle class shopkeepers, Mr. Hoopdriver, Arthur Kipps and Mr. Polly. The narrators of *The Wheels of Chance*, *Kipps* (1905) and *The History*

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<sup>94</sup> See Wells's review of *Jude the Obscure* in *H.G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, 79-82.

<sup>95</sup> John Huntington, *The Logic of Fantasy: H.G. Wells and Science Fiction* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), 26

of *Mr. Polly* (1910) intervene in their narratives, and comment on the characters and events. Associating Wells's employment of omniscient narrators and their frequent digressions with his 'protest against the suppression of the author's personality by the realists,' Parrinder argues that 'to some extent, Wells is a forerunner of the "self-conscious" fiction of recent years.'<sup>96</sup> While the digressions of *Kipps* and *The History of Mr. Polly* draw the readers' attention to the fact that they are reading fictions, the digression of *The Wheels of Chance* develops the 'self-conscious' romance into the level of metafiction. Patricia Waugh summarises the characteristics of metafiction thus:

Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text.<sup>97</sup>

Waugh's definition of metafiction can be applied in the reading of *The Wheels of Chance* in the sense that Wells's narrator never fails to remind the readers of the difference between the fictional world and the real world. He also ceaselessly questions the genre of romance in its relationship to other late nineteenth-century literary genres from naturalistic and realistic novels to popular romances such as imperial romance, historical romance and the detective story.

In *The Wheels of Chance*, the author's self-conscious commentaries on contemporary literary genres are demonstrated through the characters' attempts at fulfilling their imaginations and the subsequent failures to achieve it.<sup>98</sup> The main characters attempt to realise their fantasies in the real world through their own daring adventures. Hoopdriver plans to spend his fortnightly holiday travelling through the countryside by bicycle, and in doing so, he puts into practice his endless daydreams of adventures, which he developed from his reading of popular adventure romances. In particular, Hoopdriver imitates the imperial romances of

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<sup>96</sup> See Patrick Parrinder and Robert M. Philmus, 'Literary Criticism for the *Saturday Review*', in *H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, by H. G. Wells, 52.

<sup>97</sup> Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction* (London: Methuen, 1984) 2.

<sup>98</sup> About the dynamic relations between the characters' fantasies and the reality principle as the economic condition, see Simon J. James's 'Money and Narrative: Dickens, Gissing and Wells', diss., Cambridge UP, 1997.

Haggard, the historical knight-errantry romances of Dumas and the Sherlock Holmes tales of Conan Doyle. Jessie tries to *live her own life* imitating the heroines of new women novels. Jessie's fictional worlds have been built with the help of George Egerton (1859-1945), Grant Allen and Olive Schreiner (1855-1920). What they aspire to achieve through their adventure is the world of romances in which their dreams can be realised. However, the text demonstrates that even though romance temporarily allows a certain freedom in which the authors can create as they desire, reality tries to precondition and put limitations on their fiction. The conflict between the imaginary world and reality is represented as the difficulties of writing romance.

For Hoopdriver, the holiday means freedom from his work and it signifies the World of Romance. Here, like the hero-adventurers of imperial romances who travel to an exotic world, and escape from their daily constraints, the draper assistant escapes from late nineteenth-century disciplinary reality to the world of adventure and freedom (*WC*, 21). In addition, he is endowed with the freedom which enables him to be a detective hero, a knight of the medieval romance, and an adventurer/coloniser of the imperial romance. Hoopdriver's 'holiday' or the world of romance does not merely make it possible for the hero to escape from the drudgeries of work, but it enables him to be born of a better self:

Mr. Hoopdriver for the time was in the world of Romance and Knight-errantry, divinely forgetful of his social position or hers; forgetting, too, for the time any of the wretched timidities that had tied him long since behind the counter in his proper place. He was angry and adventurous. It was all about him, this vivid drama he had fallen into, and it was eluding him (*WC*, 105).

Confronting Bechamel, who plays a villain in Hoopdriver's romance, Hoopdriver for the first time strips off the garment of 'the habitual servile,' the clothing of the shop-clerk (*WC*, 105). Thus, the holiday creates the space in which the old character is dead and the new one is born.

As his adventure progresses, Hoopdriver's holiday becomes transmuted into the text whose author is Hoopdriver himself. In fact, the narrator introduces him to the reader as a romancer: 'Mr. Hoopdriver was (in the days of this story) a poet, though he had never written a line of verse. Or perhaps romancer will describe

him better' (*WC*, 50). His dreams dreamt behind the counter while trade was slack are written into the form of popular romance through the extraordinary adventures he goes through during the holiday. Thus, for him having a holiday is identified with the act of writing romance.

Hoopdriver's 'imaginings' are, however, limited to the scope of his reading. Since he is a lower middle-class draper, his reading area is confined to popular romances which the library of this workplace provides for the workers. The narrator informs the reader that Hoopdriver's reading list is Conan Doyle, Alexander Dumas and Rider Haggard. Hoopdriver himself lists the collections, which the library of his shop provides:

The fact is – I've read precious little. One don't get much of a chance, situated as I am. We have a library at business, and I've gone through that. Most Besant I've read, and a lot of Mrs. Braddon's and Rider Haggard and Marie Corelli – and, well – a Ouida or so. They're good stories, of course, and first-class writers, but they didn't seem to have much to do with me. But there's heaps of books one hears talked about, I *haven't* read (*WC*, 202).

His roles in the world of romance are confined to the protagonists of these romances. He is transformed into a detective like Sherlock Holmes, an adventurer of the Empire fighting with African natives like Allan Quatermain, a knight of Dumas and Andrew Lang protecting his lady. The writers he has read are popular romancers, whose propaganda and lack of artistic and realistic elements are severely criticised by Wells in his literary criticism.<sup>99</sup> Limited by his narrow reading habits, he cannot understand the world of fiction in which Jessie has lived: the world which New Women writers such as Olive Schreiner and George Egerton create. He understands Jessie's endeavour to be independent and her desire 'to be Unconventional – at all costs' as far as the limitation of his imagination allows: 'escape from an undesirable marriage' (*WC*, 141).

If Hoopdriver plays the role of the imperial romance hero, and Conan Doyle's detective hero, the impulsive eighteen-year-old Jessie Milton, who elopes with the middle-aged art critic Bechamel, embodies images of the heroines of

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<sup>99</sup>Wells's severe criticism of the popular romances is well expressed in his articles, 'Joan Haste', 'Popular Writers and Press Critics' 'More Haggard', 'A Servants' Hall Vision' in *H.G. Wells's Literary Criticism*.

New Woman novels. Jessie is portrayed as a young woman of independent spirit having a self-reliant character. Escaping from the late-Victorian disciplinary institution, the middle-class family, Jessie dreams of her wish-fulfilment: living an independent life by writing. As Hoopdriver's holiday becomes his own text, her escape from the suffocating hypocrisy of the middle-class family institution is transmuted into her own romance. She reveals her dream to Hoopdriver: "I want to write, you see," said the Yong Lady in Grey, "to write Books and alter things. To do Good. I want to lead a Free Life and Own myself. I can't go back. I want to obtain a position as a journalist'" (WC, 140). Jessie's wish to live her own life and a 'Free Life' is the language of Grant Allen's Herminia, who struggles to liberate herself and her daughter from the slavery of marriage. Having read New Women novels such as *The Woman Who Did* and Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) Jessie ventures to incarnate the new women heroines.

Hoopdriver's limitation of his 'imaginings' is also found in the case of Jessie as a romancer. The narrator marks Jessie's limited world view from her reading habits: 'She is unawakened. Her motives are bookish, written by a haphazard syndicate of authors, novelists, biographers, on her white inexperience' (WC, 79). Wells did not approve the artistic qualities of *The Woman Who Did* and *A Story of an African Farm*.<sup>100</sup> Jessie's limitation of reading and her inexperience cause her to be trapped into eloping with the romantic villain, Bechamel, and to play a helpless gothic romantic heroine, who is confined in a castle by a powerful and tyrannical gothic villain. Ironically, the girl who professes to decry conventionality is trapped in the most conventional form of the romance genre: the Gothic Romance.

Bechamel's original role, which he chooses when he embarks on the romantic adventure with Jessie, is a mentor who can awake 'Passion' suppressed beneath Jessie's conscious. The text books which he has studied make it possible for him to deceive her and to persuade her to elope with him. His role changes from a romantic villain, who can be easily found in the late eighteenth-century Gothic Romances of Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), Horace Walpole (1717-1797) and James Hogg (1770-1835), to an epic hero. Like a romantic villain, he can

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<sup>100</sup> About Wells's criticism of Olive Schreiner, see H. G. Wells, 'An Unsuspected Masterpiece (Authoress Unknown),' *Select Conversations with an Uncle* (London: U of North London P, 1992), 58 -60.

threaten the innocent virgin Jessie: “‘I *have* you ... You are mine. Netted – caught ... I have you in my hand ... In my power, Do you hear – *Power*’” (WC, 104). Releasing himself from his aging wife, who restrains his sexual freedom with her ‘particular moral views’ (WC, 101), the gothic romance villain attempts to satisfy his sexual desire by kidnapping a pure young girl. Furthermore, the middle class intelligent writer also imagines himself as an epic hero. He justifies his marital infidelity by the epic code: ‘he felt it was heroic of him to resolve so, it was worth doing if it was to be done. His imagination worked on a kind of matronly Valkyrie, and the noise of pursuit and vengeance was in the air’ (WC, 101).

What these three romantic characters have in common is their attempt to satisfy their desire which can not be satisfied in their real world; and the text reveals that their desire can be indulged in the fictional world, especially in the romance. In fact, the world of romance can make this wish fulfilled. Qualities of the romance which enable the reader to close his eyes against the harsh reality are expressed as ‘self-deception’ by the author of *The Wheels of Chance*: ‘Self-deception is the anaesthetic of life, while God is carving our life’ (WC, 53). God’s act of carving human life represents the painful and pre-determined life favoured by the naturalist and the New Realist novelists – Zola, Morrison and Gissing. In this statement, the author compares the romance writing and reading with the act of numbing or relieving the pain of their life.

However, the ‘anaesthetic of life’ strongly suggests the temporariness; it can not completely cure the pain inflicted by God and life. Thus, the text demonstrates that the wish-fulfilment of their desire offered by the fictional world is denied by reality principles of which the readers are persistently reminded by the narrator. Throughout these chaotic adventures, the narrator is always conscious of reality and reminds the main characters of the constraints produced by reality principles such as social class, money, returning home or to work and conventionality. Even though Hoopdriver imagines himself as a romantic gentlemanly hero, the narrator never fails to present him from a realistic view point: ‘Out of Manchester, a Man. The draper Hoopdriver, the Hand, had vanished from existence. Instead was a gentleman, a man of pleasure with a five-pound note, two sovereigns and some silver at various convenient points of his person’ (WC, 20). In the world of romance, the lower-middle class labourer can be a gentleman with independent

means. Yet, the narrator or the author reminds the reader that the freedom is allowed within the scope of the amount of money Hoopdriver has. Also, the gentleman's garment does not change the true identity beneath it. Bechamel immediately recognises that Hoopdriver is a 'greasy proletarian' (*WC*, 38). A happy ending as a utopian solution is denied; the "holiday" ends and Hoopdriver has to go back to his confining reality. At the end of the story, he is again imprisoned in the drapery shop.

Also, even though Hoopdriver can temporarily forget his real self – a drapery apprentice – during his adventure, his body and language never forget his real self outside the romance. His clumsy dismounting disgraces him in his first encounter with Jessie (*WC*, 24-5). Also, his gesture and words repeat the '*clichés*' of the shop: "No trouble. 'Ssure you," said Mr. Hoopdriver mechanically, and bowing over his saddle as if it was a counter' (*WC*, 41). 'Imaginings' cannot remove his long implanted habit of 'the Hand', which has become his instinct: 'Mr. Hoopdriver's hand fluttered instinctively to his lapel, and there, planted by habit, were a couple of stray pins he had impounded' (*WC*, 192).

Like Hoopdriver, Jessie's romance writing is thwarted by her own lack of knowledge of the world. Money is one of the agents limiting to write her own romance: "Money!" said Jessie. "Is it possible - Surely ! Conventionality! May only people of means – Live their own Lives? I never thought ...'" (*WC*, 211). Her realisation shows the limitations of the middle-class girl, to whom money has not been any problem. Even though she claims that she is not conventional, it is her conventionality which prevents her from suspecting that Hoopdriver can be her social inferior. In her romance, there is no space for a lower middle-class man: 'His English was uncertain, but not such as books informed her distinguished the lower classes' (*WC*, 145). Hoopdriver's questions also expose her limitation:

That's drapery. And you tell me to be contented. Would *you* be contented if you was a shopgirl?" She did not answer. She looked at him with distress in her brown eyes, and he remained gloomily in possession of the field (*WC*, 199-200).

Jessie's encouragement of Hoopdriver to get the further education and her praise of his bravery are not from her true understanding of him, since in her world of both reality and imagination, the shopgirl and the shopman do not exist. Thus,



once she realises Hoopdriver is not a rich man from South Africa, she has to end her romance.

The reader is consistently reminded of the fact that the author exists outside the world of romance. In *The Wheels of Chance*, the narrator is the author of the text. He is the god-like figure who orchestrates the whole narrative. Whenever the stories are interwoven by the characters and become chaotic, the narrator, as the agent outside the world of fiction, attempts to put them in order and under control.

We leave the wicked Bechamel clothing himself with cursing as with a garment – the wretched creature has already sufficiently sullied our modest but truthful pages, – we leave the eager little group in the bar of the Vicunna Hotel, we leave all Bognor as we have left all Chichester and Midhurst and Haslemere and Guildford and Ripley and Putney, and follow this dear fool of a Hoopdriver of ours and his Young Lady in Grey out upon the moonlight road (*WC*, 115).

As this passage shows, the role of the narrator in *The Wheels of Chance* is not merely that of a chronicler, but also of an organiser. By using the present tense, the narrator renders his act of writing visible; and this device functions to differentiate the plot from the story. According to E. M. Foster's definition, 'a story is a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence.' Plot is manipulation of the story; 'it suspends the time-sequence, it moves as far away from the story as its limitations will allow.'<sup>101</sup> In the realist novels of Flaubert, Zola and James, the author's hand of plot-making is invisible. In Wells's text, the author is a visible and powerful romancer presiding over the character. Like an omniscient narrator in the romance genre,<sup>102</sup> who is privileged to have 'a great designing power, especially in their plot structures,'<sup>103</sup> the author of *The Wheels of Chance* is a creator and a god for the characters, and thus, their romance writing is also under the author's power.

Even though the author of the text seems to be a harsh god to the characters, he cannot completely disentangle himself from undeniable facts, from his own reality. He is only an agent who is looking for a proper method to narrate the lives of the lower middle-class workman as they were. His aim is to make the middle-

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<sup>101</sup> E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Edward Arnold, 1947), 116.

<sup>102</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 107.

<sup>103</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 46.

class readers, who stand on the customer side of the counter, know more about a mere draper's life. Initiating the story, the narrator assumes the reader is female middle-class costumer (like Jessie Milton) to the drapery shop: 'If you (presuming you are the sex that does such things) – if you had gone into the Drapery Emporium [...]' (*WC*, 3) Ending his narrative, he reveals his goal in writing about Hoopdriver's bicycle holiday: 'But if you see a mere counter-jumper, a cad on castors, and a fool to boot, may come to feel the little insufficiencies of life, and if he has to any extent won your sympathies my end is attained' (*WV*, 231). His concept of realistic representation does not include the impersonalised narrative device, which, Wells perceives, focuses only on recording appearances of their miserable lives.<sup>104</sup> Wells believes that a novel is *realistic* when the author can map the character's psychological geography; present him from not only without but also within the mental bounds and locate him in the social context by commenting on his reaction to social forces. Wells's narrator maintains that the naturalist writer cannot prove the *real man* beneath the draper's appearance: 'our first examination of the draper reveals beneath his draperies--the man!' (*WC*, 8)

Narrating Hoopdriver's adventure, the narrator consistently exposes the limitation of realistic and naturalistic modes of representing reality. From the first chapter, announcing that 'literature is revelation' (*WC*, 5), he playfully discards styles of 'the conscientious realist' (*WC*, 5). 'The scientific approach with dispassionate explicitness' (*WC*, 5) – alluding to Zolaesque realistic representation – can only show the bruised and wounded legs of the character. However, the all-knowing narrator's revelation switches the text from a naturalist tone to the mood of optimistic romance. 'The revelation is made' when the narrator can tell the readers that the wounds and bruises on Hoopdriver's legs are made from his 'nightly struggle' to learn how to ride a bicycle (*WV*, 7). Like the Time Traveller's time machine and the Martians' war machines, the bicycle is a vehicle signifying freedom that transports Hoopdriver from the prison of reality to the world of romance. If it has to be written in the line of naturalism, the battered legs of Hoopdriver should be caused by his harsh working condition, and the narrative should lead to a tragic ending. By deserting the naturalists' expectation

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<sup>104</sup> See Wells's "A Slum Novel" in *H.G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, 115-118.

of the predetermined miserable ending, the text opens the world of adventure and dream to the readers.

Again the author criticizes the Realists' and Naturalists' narrative method to document mere appearances of the characters' lives. The reality that flies can land on a bicycle rider's nose is an unavoidable fact because Hoopdriver, like his other fellow humans, has his own nose: 'Nothing can be further from the author's ambition than a wanton realism, but Mr. Hoopdriver's nose is a plain and salient fact, and face it we must' (*WC*, 35). After having admitted the inconveniences caused by the 'wanton realism,' the narrator tells the reader of Hoopdriver's mind which is occupied by happy feelings of being free from all the work he has left behind:

Yet you must not think that because Mr. Hoopdriver was a little uncomfortable, he was unhappy in the slightest degree. In the background of his consciousness was the sense that about this time Briggs would be half-way through his window-dressing [...] And the shop would be dusty, and, perhaps, the governor about and snappy (*WC*, 36).

Even though he joyfully exposes the shortcomings of realism and naturalism, the author does not have any intention to ignore reality; instead, he is fully aware of it. The reality which Hoopdriver and the readers must face can be revealed in a tone of naturalism. Hoopdriver explains his hopeless situation as a draper to Jessie:

It's not a particularly honest nor a particularly useful trade; it's not very high up; there's no freedom and no leisure – seven to eight-thirty every day in the week; don't leave much edge to live on, does it? – real workmen laugh at us, and educated chaps like bank clerks and solicitor's clerks look down on us. You look respectable outside, and inside you are packed in dormitories like convicts, fed on bread and butter, and bullied like slaves. You're just superior enough to feel that you're not superior. Without capital there's no prospects; one draper in a hundred doesn't even enough to marry on (*WC*, 199).

Hoopdriver fully understands the inescapable reality: his life is to be an endless continuation of slavery. It is also repeated by Minton, the most Gissingian character in *Kipps*: "'Ow are they to get shops of their own? The 'aven't any Capital! How's a draper's shopman to save up five hundred pounds even? I tell you it can't be done. You got to stick to cribs until it's over. I tell you we're in a

blessed drain-pipe, and we've got to crawl along it till we die.'"<sup>105</sup> The bitter statement calmly calls the readers' attention to the *fact* that Wells himself admitted in his autobiography: 'What percentage of those who are bound apprentices to drapers, go on to comparative success I do not know, nor what their vital statistics are, but it is beyond all question a meagre distressful life they lead and exceptionally devoid of hope' (*ExA*, 147).

It is because of the reality principles that the narrator neither fulfils his wish to write a romance nor guarantees the characters' wish-fulfilment by completing his narrative with a happy ending. As can be seen in the title of the text, '*The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll*,' the author professes his clear intention to write a romance. "Chance", meaning accidents and coincidence, signifies the mode of the plot in the text. In the convention of romance writing – from the medieval romance to the contemporary popular romances – the plot consists of laxly interwoven episodes and adventures. The 'idyll' also refers to the genre of romance which mainly features a love story taking place in a pastoral atmosphere. Unfolding a series of romantic – at least in Hoopdriver's imagination – adventures between Hoopdriver and Jessie, the text clearly evokes the codes of the romance genre.

The undeniable fact disallows a happy ending preconditioned by the romance genre. Hoopdriver's holiday ends and Jessie has to go back to her old life of the 'convention.' The romantic farewell with Jessie, of which Hoopdriver has been dreaming during the adventure, simply does not happen in reality. Hoopdriver imagines a romantic ending of his story:

The two women weeping together, and a knightly figure in the background dressed in a handsome Norfolk jacket [...] Then, leaving, he would pause in the doorway in such an attitude as Mr. George Alexander might assume, and say, slowly and dwindlingly, 'Be kind to her - *be* kind to her,' and so depart, heartbroken for the future (*WC*, 137).

Here, Hoopdriver imagines that he plays the role of Guy in Henry James's play, *Guy Domville* (1895), whose melodramatic and unrealistic quality is severely criticised by Wells (*ExA*, 535-6). In reality, Hoopdriver is despised by Mrs.

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<sup>105</sup> H. G. Wells, *Kipps* (New York: Scribner's, 1925) vol. 8 of The Works of H. G. Wells, 27 vols. (1924-7), 50. The subsequent quotations from this work will be cited parenthetically in the text.

Milton and Miss Mergle. When he leaves Jessie, clumsiness of his body disgraces him: “his foot turned in the lip of a rabbit hole, and he stumbled forward and almost fell” (*WC*, 230). Also, Jessie does not understand Hoopdriver’s real situation – ““I did not know,” she whispered to herself with white lips. “I did not understand. Even now – No, I do not understand”” (*WC*, 230).

The romantic tone of the narrative, however, does not lose its power even at the end of the story: ‘To-morrow, the early rising, the dusting, and drudgery, begin again – but with a difference, with wonderful memories and still more wonderful desires and ambitions replacing those discrepant dreams’ (*WC*, 232). The narrator’s final comment on Hoopdriver’s future is again balanced with pessimistic and optimistic tones. Fact and reality do not allow the narrator to liberate Hoopdriver from the routine of ‘drudgery.’ However, the author paints the pessimism with a faint romantic tone: there must be a change in his life. Hoopdriver’s romantic imaginings will be replaced by clear desires and a newly awakened desire for the better future. Hoopdriver’s holiday ends with the author’s ambiguous attitude towards proper methods of presenting a lower middle-class workman.

With comments on his own narrative that run throughout the text, the narrator continues to remind the readers that what they are reading is representation of reality not the reality. He creates a fictional world and simultaneously he demystifies its illusions. In his digression, he reflects upon his writing process:

If it were not for the trouble, I would, I think, go back and rewrite this section from the beginning, expunging the statements that Hoopdriver was a poet and a romancer, and saying instead that he was a playwright and acted on his own play (*WC*, 51).

In this statement, the conflict between the time of the story of Hoopdriver’s holiday and the time of composing the novel is clearly highlighted. The story is narrated in the past tense, and the time of writing is in the present tense.

The narrator’s speculation on the illusory qualities of the fictional world leads to the text’s revelation of the fact that the people are governed by fictional illusion imposed by social discourses:

But now we are taught and disciplined for years and years and thereafter we read and read for all the time some strenuous, nerve-destroying business permits. Pedagogic hypnotists, pulpit and platform hypnotists, book-writing hypnotists, newspaper-writing hypnotists, are at us all. This sugar you are eating, they tell us, is ink, and forthwith we reject it with definite disgust (*WC*, 78).

This passage exhibits the text's metafictional elements in the sense that the narrator foregrounds not only the illusiveness of the fictional world but also fictitious aspects of reality. Reality is formed and influenced by various discourses of social disciplinary institutions such as school, church, literature and journalism, which Louis Althusser categorises as one of 'Ideological State Apparatuses.'<sup>106</sup> In *The Wonderful Visit*, through the voice of the 'respectable Tramp,' Wells criticises that school 'pithies' [brain washes] people. The Tramp explains about the school system to the Angel:

They take 'em young into that school, and they says to them, 'come in 'ere and we'll improve your minds," they says, and in the little kiddies go as good as gold. And they begins shovin' it into them. Bit by bit and 'ard an dry, shovin' out the nice juicy brains. Dates and lists and things. Out they comes, no brains in their 'eads, and wound up nice and tight, ready to touch their 'ats to anyone who looks at them (*WV*, 210)

The Tramp's mapping of the national school system is chilling. The school is an ideological institution which hypnotises people for the benefits of the ruling class. In *The Wheels of Chance*, his criticism of the ideological institution is expanded to all the social disciplines, and this is to be recapitulated as 'a zeitgeist, a congestion of acquired ideas, a highways fast of fine, confused thinking' (*WC*, 98) by the narrator. Since literature, as the ideological institution, governs the consciousness of the public, the narrator warns the readers not to trust what is written in the books. This also leads readers to read *The Wheels of Chance* itself in terms of fictional illusion as a discourse, an ideological institution of the nation.

The narrator also invites readers to complete the narrative: 'So the story ends, dear Readers. [...] And of what came of it all, of the six years and

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<sup>106</sup> According to Louis Althusser's theory, such institutions as 'Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, cultural ventures' are part of the Ideological State Apparatuses; see 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)', *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: NLB, 1971) 137.

afterwards, this is no place to tell. In truth, there is no telling it, for the years have still to run' (*WC*, 280). The story starts in 'the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1895', and the future of Hoopdriver is beyond the scope of the narrative time. Garret Stewart maintains that in the novels of Jane Austen (1775-1817) and Mary Shelley (1797-1851), the readers 'are schooled co-participants in that work of plotting, which takes its bearings in the present modulations, rather than the mere promise, of response.'<sup>107</sup> The open ending of *The Wheels of Chance* invites the reader to complete the story, which will be written in the future by them. By raising the questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, the narrator expresses the instability of the real world.

In *The Wheels of Chance*, Hoopdriver's romantic imaginings almost come true during his holiday. Only in his holiday, he can be a gentleman with independent means and rescues a damsel in distress. However, as his holiday should eventually come to an end, Hoopdriver's wish can be fulfilled only within the boundary of the romance. In this romance, by rendering the features of romance checked and bothered by reality, Wells foregrounds the difficulties of writing romance. The narrative testifies to the existence of undeniable reality principles by admitting that even the powerful plot-making hand of the author cannot make Hoopdriver's dream come true after the adventures he has had during the holiday. At the same time, it complicates the narrative and leaves the author's stance on romance and realism ambiguous by avoiding asserting harmful aspects of the romances and by exaggerating their comforting functions.

### iii) *Love and Mr Lewisham: Lewisham's Bildungsroman of Growing From a Romantic Youth to a Realistic Adult*

While *The Wheels of Chance* can be categorised as a comic novel touching the would-be miserable lower-middle class protagonist's life in a light and playful way, *Love and Mr. Lewisham: The Story of a Very Young Couple* (1900) is a social novel, in which the author attempts to describe the lives of the lower-

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<sup>107</sup> Garrett Stewart, *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), 114.

middle class in a realistic way.<sup>108</sup> This novel is one of the works Wells remembers to be written with a great care and thus to be ranked as 'a work of art.'<sup>109</sup> As Wells's critics agree, the text is closer to the realistic aestheticism of James, George Moore and George Gissing than Wells's favourite pre-Jamesian novelists.<sup>110</sup> In the realistic portrayal of the young man, Mr. Lewisham, the author's intervention in the narrative is restrained. Compared with his other social novels, *The Wheels of Chance*, *Kipps* and *The History of Mr. Polly*, the narrative of this novel is more focalised on the protagonist, Lewisham's point of view than the narrator's digression, and thus, to a certain degree, it observes James's principles of realistic representation from a single perspective. In addition, the description of Lewisham's desperate struggle to survive in society seems to owe something to Gissingian aesthetics. A contemporary reviewer is discontent with Wells's gloomy portrait of Mr Lewisham: 'He [Wells] is evidently coquetting with the decadent school and may be deemed an apt pupil, for a more morbid, sordid, hopelessly dull and depressing dissection of characters it were difficult to conceive.'<sup>111</sup>

The text's strong realistic flavour is caused by the author's endeavour to write a novel, not a romance. Wells equates the romance genre with the genre of imagination and youth; and the novel with the mature genre (*LC*, 148). In writing his autobiography, Wells remembers that *Lover and Mr. Lewisham* is the novel, which should be differentiated from his youthful works of romance:

I set out to write novels, as distinguished from those pseudo-scientific stories in which imaginative experience rather than personal conduct was the matter in hand, on the assumption that problems of adjustment were the essential matter for novel-writing. *Love and Mr. Lewisham* was entirely a story about a dislocation and an adjustment (*ExA*, 488).

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<sup>108</sup> See his letter to Arnold Bennett: 'I want to write novels and before God I will write novels. They are the proper stuff for my everyday work, a methodical careful distillation of one's thoughts and sentiments and experiences and impressions', Harris Wilson, ed., *Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells: A Record of a Personal and a Literary Friendship* (London: Hart-Davis, 1960) 45.

<sup>109</sup> Wells, 'Preface to Volume 7,' *The Wheels of Chance, Love and Mr Lewisham*, vol. 7 (New York: Scribner's, 1925) of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols. (1924-7), x. Also see 'Preface to Volume 2', *The Works of H.G. Wells*, vol. 2, ix: "'Love and Mr Lewisham'" is indeed one of my most carefully balanced books.'

<sup>110</sup> In his book, *H.G. Wells* John Batchelor defines it a 'novel', 37; Bergonzi characterises it as 'a strictly realistic novel' in *The Early H.G. Wells*, 5.

<sup>111</sup> Patrick Parrinder, ed., *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1972), 82



The author's wish to write a novel in the vein of a Jamesian single point of view and Gissingian realism causes the novel to have fewer elements of romance. In fact, the whole narrative unfolds the process in which harmful or undeserving romantic dreams are wisely discarded by the protagonist. The novel's narrative most effectively demonstrates this process through the representation of Lewisham's growth from a *romantic* youth to a *realistic* adult.

Reading the text by considering Lewisham's growth as its main theme, this text can be read in terms of *Bildungsroman*: a type of the novel that deals with a young man entering into a life with a youthful ambition for the future, his hard struggles with realities and his eventual compromise with the society.<sup>112</sup> According to Georg Lukacs, the genre of the *Bildungsroman* can be developed to the state of 'the novel of education' (*Erziehungsroman*). As Lukacs illuminates, 'its theme is the reconciliation of the problematic individual, guided by his lived experience of the ideal, with concrete social reality.'<sup>113</sup> Its goal is to demonstrate 'the development of qualities in men which would never blossom without the active intervention of other men and circumstances' and thus the novel serves as 'a means of education.'<sup>114</sup> Features of *Bildungsroman* or the novel of education in *Love and Mr. Lewisham* are represented as the process in which Lewisham's romantic fantasy of his love affair with Ethel is disillusioned. The characteristics of *Bildungsroman* are also marked by the textual demonstration in which Lewisham reconciles his forfeited dreams of the bright future with the social condition.

Equipped with the power of omniscience, the narrator initiates the story by initiating the fatal confrontation between Lewisham's romantic dreams: 'Greatness' and 'Love.' He 'introduces Mr. Lewisham' as an eighteen year old youth who has idealistic and self-deluding ambitions for the future career, which the narrator calls 'Greatness,' but who is totally inexperienced in 'Love.'<sup>115</sup> Both Greatness and its antagonist, Love, are romantic visions of the life in the sense that its realisation itself is at odds with reality. Lewisham's 'Schema' and the overly strict timetable highlight their unachievability. The narrator's exclamation,

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<sup>112</sup> For definition of the genre, refer to *Encyclopaedia of the Novel*, ed. Paul Schellinger (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1988), 118 – 123.

<sup>113</sup> Georg Lukacs, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: Merlin, 1971), 132.

<sup>114</sup> Lukacs, *The Theory of the Novel*, 135.

<sup>115</sup> H. G. Wells, *The Wheels of Chance, Love and Mr Lewisham* (New York: Scribner's, 1925) vol. 7 of *The Works of H. G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-7), 241.

‘But just think of the admirable quality of such a schema,’ discloses his ironic comments on the unrealistic quality of Lewisham’s future plan (*LM*, 243). His description of the way, in which the time-table is attached on the wall, hints that the possibility of its realisation is vague: ‘Attached by a drawing-pin to the roof over the wash-hand stand, which – the room being an attic - sloped almost dangerously, dangled a Time-Table’ (*LM*, 243). The paper, in which Lewisham’s impossibly ambitious plan for the future career is drawn, has been carried by him throughout the whole narrative, until in the last chapter it is torn and put into the rubbish bin provided by Ethel.

The opening chapters also noticeably illustrate that Lewisham has ‘the unexplored and disciplined region’ in his mind (*LM*, 247). The weakness of his schema – his failure to include love in his future scheme - is to be the cause of the downfall of his plan for ‘Greatness.’ Love is introduced into Lewisham’s mind through Horace’s phrase ‘the untameable mother of desire’ (*LM*, 247) without his notice; and when he sees Ethel from the window of his room. The narrator’s tantalising description of her is the revelation of Lewisham’s fatal attraction to her, and the anticipation of his life-long engagement with her: ‘Looking acutely downward he could see a hat daintily trimmed with pinkish white blossom, the shoulder of a jacket, and just the tips of nose and chin’ (*LM*, 245). Throughout the story, Lewisham is forced to choose between the love stirred by Mother Nature and the possibility of fulfilling his potential. His vacillations are the driving force for the continuation of the narrative. Until the text reaches the final two chapters, its action demonstrates that the ambitions for the career and his sexual drive cannot be compromised. The confrontation of the two forces – Greatness and Love – seems to end with the latter’s triumph as Batchelor argues: ‘by abandoning his austere life-plan, and settling down with Ethel and the coming child, Lewisham has fallen into his appropriate role.’<sup>116</sup>

However, the growth of Lewisham is represented through the process of abandoning not only the serious and over-ambitious ‘schema’ of self-education but also the romantic dream of idealistic love. He has become mature by going through a series of disillusionments of his romantic ambition of ‘Greatness’; also, his growth is achieved through his understanding of realistic love. His muffled

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<sup>116</sup> Batchelor, *H. G. Wells*, 43

answer to Miss Heydinger's interrogation of whether he loves Ethel is the testimony to his recognition of the delusion of romantic love:

"You love her. You can sacrifice –"

"No. It is not that. But there is a difference. Hurting *her* – she would not understand. But you – somehow it seems a natural thing for me to come to you. I seem to look to you. – For her I am always making allowances –"

"You love her."

"I wonder if it *is* that make the difference. Things are so complex. Love means anything – or nothing. I know you better than I do her, you know me better than she will ever do. I could tell you things I could not tell her. I could put all myself before you – almost – and know you would understand – only –"

"You love her"

"Yes," said Lewisham lamely and pulling at his moustache. "I suppose ... that must be it" (*LM*, 508-509).

Here, Lewisham gives up his romantic dream of love. Lewisham's love with Ethel is based on the sense of responsibility and the emotional connection between them. The wish not to 'hurt *her*' is the meaning of love to the mature Lewisham. Until this point of the narrative, Lewisham's life is similar to Wells's life before his divorce from his first wife, Isabel. Wells, as he recollects in his autobiography, liberated himself from the domestic suffocation: 'I was trying to undo the knot I had tied and release myself from the strong, unsatisfying bond of habit and affection between us' (*ExA*, 424). His elopement with his second wife, Amy Catherine Robbins, is the very act of releasing and the commencement of romantic adventure. By contrast, in Lewisham's life, this is not allowed. The way for another adventure is denied him; and as the schema drawn at his youth is torn apart in the final chapter, his premature love with Ethel is denied by his finalising comment that 'love means anything – or nothing' (*LM*, 509).

The time of the first and last chapters also manifests Lewisham's growth from the stage of romantic idealism to realisation of its vanity. The narrative begins with late March and early April, and ends with late September. In the first few chapters, the narrator paints the delightful spring with a pastoral tone: 'It was a Wednesday half-holiday late in March, a spring day glorious in amber night, dazzling white clouds and the intensest blue, [...] a rousing day, a clamatory insistent day, a veritable herald of summer' (*LM*, 245-6). A half-holiday and the

arousing spring afternoon signal the beginning of the narrative, and Spring has been characterised as the season of romance since before Geoffrey Chaucer's (1343-1400) romances *The Canterbury Tales*. It begins with the season of awakening, April.<sup>117</sup> Wells read Chaucer's works in his adolescence and they influenced his literary world as he mentions in his 1924 preface to the Atlantic Edition<sup>118</sup> and also as marked in Mr Polly's fascination with Chaucer's book in *The History of Mr Polly*. Thus, the theme of awakening of desire, expressed in Chaucer's romances, is well adopted and exploited by Wells as he commences the narrative of romance and love.

On the contrary, the bleak September morning of London in the chapter, 'Concerning a Quarrel,' is contrasted to the first chapter's idyllic liveliness: 'The quality of his surroundings mingled in some way with the quality of his thoughts. The huge distended buildings of corrugated iron in which the Art Museum (of all places!) culminates, the truncated Oratory all askew to the street, seemed to have a similar quarrel with fate' (*LM*, 466). Here, the idyllic setting at the beginning of the text is replaced by the deadly entangled, mutilated and barren cityscape of autumn. According to Frye, romance is the mythos of summer, and irony and satire which are adopted in place of realism, is the mythos of winter.<sup>119</sup> Applying Frye's categorisation in deciphering the beginning and the ending of Wells's text, one can induce that *Love and Mr. Lewisham* begins within the genre of romance, or romantic comedy, and ends as a novel of realism and naturalism.

Lewisham's romantic desire for his love and future career is a 'desiring machine' in Peter Brooks's term: it is the narrative engine, which 'creates and sustains narrative movement.'<sup>120</sup> The desire can be the protagonist's ambition and sexual wishes. The end of narrative is consummated through success or failure of the wish-fulfilment. In Lewisham's case, the narrative desire is the conflict brought by the two desires; and the bitter awareness of its unachievability

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<sup>117</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert A. Pratt (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 1:

When that Aprill with his shoures sote  
The droghte of March hath perced to the rote,  
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,  
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;

<sup>118</sup> H.G. Wells, 'A General Introduction to the Atlantic Edition,' *The Works of H.G. Wells* (New York: Scribner's, 1924-7), xiii.

<sup>119</sup> Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 162.

<sup>120</sup> Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 39.

terminates the operation of the desiring machine. In *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, romance is the desire for sustaining the plot and realism is an indicator of its end.

The continuation of the narrative is sustained by Lewisham's failure to grasp reality or his romantic characteristics. Awakening of romance in Lewisham's mind is caused by not only Mother Nature's whispers but also a literary text, Horace's *Odes*, which he mechanically reads as a textbook. The phrases written in *Odes*, 'Urit me Clyceræ nitor (The beauty of Glycera inflames me)'; 'Tu, nisi ventis/Debes ludibrium, cave (Take care you don't become the wind's plaything)' are prophecies that Lewisham will fall in love (*LM*, 244, 249). Yet he reads them without understanding since he is living in his own romantic world consisting of Greatness, in which the concept of love is absent: 'To judge by the room Mr. Lewisham thought little of Love but much on Greatness' (*LM*, 242). The text portrays Ethel as being associated with deceitfulness and trickery. Lewisham's romantic love with her is possible because he cannot see the real Ethel. When he is attracted to Ethel's mysterious charm, he fails to see that Ethel is cheating on Lewisham by writing compositions for her cousin, Frobisher ii, and by pretending not to know about him. All he sees in the encounter is 'her half-open lips' (*LM*, 253).

Until the early stage of his marriage, Lewisham plays the role of a knight. At their first encounter, Ethel's compliment that Lewisham is chivalrous makes him exalted with excitement: 'He was chivalrous! The phrase acted like a spur' (*LM*, 255). He also imagines that marriage with Ethel is the only way to rescue her from the frauds – her step father, Chaffery, and her boss, Lagune. The chapter 'Lewisham's Solution' demonstrates that his romancing with reality reaches the apex. Here is Lewisham's romantic delusion:

His anger at Lagune and Chaffery blinded him to her turpitude. He talked her defences down. "It is cheating," he said. "Well – even if what you do is not cheating, it is delusion – unconscious cheating. [...] Why should they want you? Your mind is your own. It is sacred. To probe it! – I won't have it! I won't have it! At least you are mine to that extent. I can't think of you like that – bandaged. And that little fool pressing his hand on the back of your neck and asking questions. I won't have it! I would rather kill you than that."

"They don't do that" (*LM*, 381).

This scene reveals the romancer Lewisham whose reasoning is blocked by his imagination. The discrepancy between fantasy and reality becomes wide. Lewisham imagines that Ethel is caught by the tyrannical stepfather, Chaffery and the fraudulent boss, Lagune. In his imaginary world, she plays the role of a distressed damsel in a romantic quest. In addition, in Lewisham's romantic way of thinking, Lagune's thought-reading of Ethel is construed as his abusing her as if she were a prostitute. The scene in which Ethel is bandaged and Lagune's hands are on the back of her neck is only Lewisham's imagination. Ethel's resisting voice, 'They don't do that' cannot reach the romancer, Lewisham's ear since he is staying in the world of knight-errantry romance. Here, the text modifies a prototypical romance narrative of recovery of the heroine's true identity: 'a discovery about the heroine's identity, normally one which makes her a free citizen instead of a prostitute or slave.'<sup>121</sup> This chapter juxtaposes Ethel's practicality with Lewisham's romantic side. Lewisham cannot recognise Ethel's 'turpitude' and fails to see that she is 'practical – making suggestions arithmetical' (*LM*, 385). Finally, for the romancer Lewisham, 'all the world vanished before that great desire,' (*LM*, 384) and hereby, 'Lewisham's Solution' is a utopian solution in the sense that he lives in the world of romance, and loses the hold to reality.

The narrative itself follows romance grammar. Ethel is in danger of degraded to become a prostitute or a slave; to make a guinea a week and to pay sixteen shillings every week, and to avoid falling into the position of a servant of Chaffery's sister, she has to work for Lagune, and that is why she desperately needs a rescuer; a knight. Lewisham's marriage with Ethel is the act of rescuing the heroine from the danger of being a slave or a prostitute, and of making her a free citizen. However, unlike the romantic comedy, Lewisham's romance does not end with a comic ending, marriage. Instead, the romantic tone – 'an atmosphere of dust and morning stars' – gives a way to painful apprehension of reality – 'the light of every-day' (*LM*, 452). At the final chapter, he can see his damsel's real characteristics: 'No wonder she seemed shallow ... She has been shallow. No wonder she was restless. Unfulfilled ... What had she to do? She was drudge, she was toy ...' (*LM*, 517).

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<sup>121</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 75.

The language Lewisham uses also goes through the change from the romantic to the realistic. As a protagonist in the idyllic romance, he can fabricate elaborate languages of a pastoral poet:

The trees are all budding,” said Mr. Lewisham, “the rushes are shooting, and all along the edge of the river there are millions of little white flowers floating on the water (*LM*, 286).

When he starts his married life and faces the uncertain future, he can comfort himself and Ethel by proclaiming: ‘All the world is against us – and we are fighting it all’ (*LM*, 403). His optimistic blueprint of the future ‘under the sympathetic moonlight’ is the romantic dream of the idealist and socialist (*LM*, 115). After a series of disillusioning moments, Lewisham’s languages lose their romantic tint. To Miss Heydinger, he confesses his anxiety: ‘the world is a stiffer sort of affair’ and he corrects her by saying ‘My life’s too complex. I can’t manage it and go straight. I – you’ve overrated me’ (*LM*, 511). Here he not only realises the harshness of reality but also gives up his previously idealistic outlook on the future.

The narrator’s voice also changes from a romancer to a realist novelist. At the beginning of the narrative, as a romancer, the narrator uses digressions to provide panoramic views of the character’s mind to the readers. At the end, the romancer’s narrative becomes a realist’s impersonalised narration of the protagonist’s mental landscape. In the first chapter, the omnipotent narrator presides over Lewisham’s consciousness. Lewisham is placed in an ironical perspective, and his boyish self-deception is clearly exposed to the readers through the narrator’s patronising voice. As the title of the chapter, ‘Introduces Mr. Lewisham’ clearly illustrates, the male, novelist narrator, who is presumed to be older and wiser than Lewisham, deprives Lewisham of his own voice. Accordingly, the readers are persistently reminded that they can see and hear Lewisham through the narrator’s voice. By narrating what Lewisham cannot realise, the narrator dictates the freewill of Lewisham at his adolescence. In other words, Lewisham becomes an object of the tyrannical narrator’s gaze and evaluation.

However, as the concern of the text shifts from Lewisham's youthful inexperience to his growth as a responsible adult, the narrator holds back his tyrannical judgement, and Lewisham expresses his independent opinion through his voice. The 'I' used by the narrator to comment on Lewisham's youthfulness, is given-up as the narrative reaches its end. The chapter, 'Concerning a Quarrel' is filled with Lewisham's speculation about his married life and destiny without the author's intervention: the protagonist's struggling and conflicting psychic geography is unfolded directly to the readers.

Furthermore, the entire final chapter is written from Lewisham's point of view. Even though the apprehension in Ethel's mind is revealed, it is perceived by the protagonists, and the garrulous narrator does not try to draw a clear map of Ethel's mindscape. Also, the narrator gives the protagonist the chance to make a final comment on the narrative:

"Yes, it was vanity," he said. "A boy's vanity. For me – anyhow. I'm too two-sided ... two sided ? ... commonplace!

"Dreams like mine – abilities like mine. Yes – any man! And yet ... - The things I meant to do!"

His thoughts went to his Socialism, to his red-hot ambition of world mending. He marvelled at the vistas he had discovered since those days.

"Not for us – Not for us.

"We must perish in the wilderness – Some day. Somewhen. But not for us...

"Come to think, it is all the Child. The future is the Child. The Future. What are we – any of us – but servants or traitors to that? ... (LM, 516)

Here, the narrator's voice becomes weak, and the reader hears only the protagonist's conflicting voices. The tension between 'love' and 'Mr Lewisham' still exists within himself. Lewisham's idea, 'The future is the Child', is expressed more clearly and monologically in Wells's 3 years later work, *Mankind in the Making*. In this book, Wells insists upon the importance of the birth of healthy children: 'from the mean pursuit of his immediate personal interests, from the gratification of his private desires ... they [the new republicans] are finally concerned with the birth and with the sound development towards still better



births, of human lives.’<sup>122</sup> Appearing in the narrative form, this idea is presented through the protagonist’s inner conflict: Lewisham vacillates between his regret of giving up the ‘boy’s vanity’ and his self-consolation with ‘the child’ for the future. As he confesses, Lewisham’s conscious is comprised of ‘two worlds,’ and the story ends without providing the resolving points in the conflict between these two worlds.

In describing the process of Lewisham’s growth, the text avoids unclear direct judgment on whether it means ‘the crowning victory’ or ‘withdrawal’ to him (*LM*, 513; 495). The omniscient narrator does not provide his personal comment on Lewisham’s decision to give up the chance to achieve his potential, and instead to choose the way of becoming a husband and a father. The narrative concentrates on dramatising Lewisham in a variety of circumstances, and in so doing, it enables the reader to appreciate his situation from a distance.

Lewisham’s struggle is observed by such minor characters as Chaffery and Miss Heydinger. Of Lewisham’s decision, Chaffery expresses admiration regarding Lewisham’s ‘Will power’ thus:

The spectacle of your vigorous young happiness – you are having a very good time, you know, fighting the world – reminded me of the passing years. To be frank in self-criticism, there is more than a touch of the New Woman about me, and I feel I have still to live my own life (*LM*, 496-7).

His statement implies that Lewisham’s marriage betokens his brave challenge to the world: his struggle to survive in modern society. However, Chaffery’s envy is also presented to the reader from an ironical perspective since Chaffery’s reason to ‘live my own life’ can be achieved only by forsaking his role as a head of household (*LM*, 497). His irresponsible act means the absence of a father figure or an authority in English society at the turn of the century.

Unlike Chaffery, Miss Heydinger is an agent providing a negative voice to Lewisham’s decision. She reminds Lewisham of his potential to do “great things”:

“Even now,” she said, “you may do great things – If only I might see you sometimes, write to you sometimes – You are so capable and – weak. You must have somebody –

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<sup>122</sup> H. G. Wells, *Mankind in the Making* (London: Chapman, 1904) 19; 34. Subsequent quotations are cited parenthetically in the text.

That is your weakness. You fail in your belief. You must have support and belief – unstinted support and belief. Why could I not that to you? It is all I want to be. At least – all I want to be now. Why need she know? It robs her of nothing. I want nothing – she has. But I know that with you ... It is only knowing hurts her. Why should she know?" (LM, 510)

Her exhortation produces a tension with Chaffery's compliments of Lewisham's married life. However, like the irresponsible head of family, Chaffery, Heydinger's statements entail her dishonesty. She in effect persuades Lewisham to deceive his wife, and justifies this act with an excuse of helping him to achieve his potential. Thus her moral relativism invites the reader to be distanced from her remarks.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, *Love and Mr. Lewisham* has the form of 'the novel of education.' It deals with the process in which Lewisham is transformed from a self-deluding adolescent to a responsible father figure in society. However, while 'the novel of education' portrays 'the reconciliation of the problematic individual with concrete social reality,'<sup>123</sup> the reconciliation between the protagonist and the social reality in this text remains uncertain. Even though Lewisham has just passed his adolescence, his inner struggle is still in continuation. The narrative ends with Lewisham's final statements about the meaning of being a father who is to continue the struggle for survival as a head of family. It interprets the Darwinian concept of natural selection in an optimistic sense. Even though Lewisham's premature sexual desire spoils his future career of 'Greatness', the sexual instinct poured into the protagonist's mind by Mother Nature is an essential force, which enables the human race to continue.

The story of Mr. Lewisham is similar to Jude's life in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. Jude's sexual desire damages the potential of his career. As Wells writes in his review of *Jude the Obscure*, he was strongly impressed with the way in which Hardy represents a lower-class intelligent man's dilemma between sexual desire and the ambition of the future career: 'Mr Hardy, with an admirable calm, has put forth a book in which a secondary, but very important, interest is a frank treatment of the destructive influence of a vein of sensuality upon an ambitious working-man' (LC, 80).

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<sup>123</sup> Lukacs, *The Theory of the Novel*, 132.

Both of them see sexual desire in terms of Darwin's Evolution Theory: Natural Selection. Nevertheless, even though both novelists were interested in evolutionary theory, their interpretation of Darwin's theory was different. Hardy writes tragedies, and sees evolution in terms of a stoical and natural apathy: the Schopenhauerian concept of the will to live. Wells views it from aspects of the Nietzschean Superman (or Overman) and accentuates Will Power – struggle for survival - in human confrontation with nature. Like Lewisham, Hardy's protagonists, Jude and Sue struggle to fight against the world. They consider themselves as the precursors of a new order of society: a proletariat intellectual and a new woman. However, their will to live is frustrated by the author's pessimistic view of Darwinian nature. The death of their children (murdered by little Father Time) leaves Jude and Sue without descendants. The protagonist's death without leaving his successors for the future reflects Hardy's Schopenhauerian view of life. As Beer notes, though the individual may be of small consequence in the long sequence of succession and generation, Hardy in his works adopts the single life span as his scale.<sup>124</sup>

Wells believed more in the Nietzschean concepts of the Superman and Will to Power, rather than in Schopenhauer's starkly pessimistic verdict of world as an affair of ceaseless striving and suffering. In *Mankind in the Making*, Wells professes that he does not agree with Schopenhauer's negative view of life:

But to minds temperamentally different from his, minds whose egotism is qualified by a more unselfish humour, it is possible to avail one's self of Schopenhauer's vision, without submitting one's self to his conclusions of an ampler will, our lives as passing phases of a greater life, and accept these facts with joyfully to take our places in that larger scheme with a sense of relief and discovery, to go with that larger being, as a soldier marches, a mere unit in the larger being of his army and serving his army, joyfully into battle. (*MM*, 16)

Wells's joyful affirmation of life is well displayed in these phrases. His definition of an individual life as a part of the larger scheme of life confirms the Darwinian concept of the immense scope of time and space encompassing individual beings

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<sup>124</sup> On Hardy's pessimistic interpretation of Darwin's Theory of Evolution, see Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1983) 239.

in the nature. The happiness of humans is not in taking pleasure within their own life span, but in making the world better for future generations, which is ‘the idea of organic evolution’ (*MM*, 16). Even though Lewisham learns the bitterness of life and confirms Chaffery’s outlook on the world as mere representation of Will to ‘Lying,’ he still remains a responsible head of household. As Beer notes, it is Lewisham’s (or Wells’s) acknowledgement that the change in life can not be achieved in a romantic dream of socialism, but in the hope of the future, the wilful acceptance of responsibility for the continuation of the human race: the child.<sup>125</sup> The final scene in which he tries to ‘write’ and expects the birth of his child is clearly the author’s romantic interpretation of Darwinian natural selection and Nietzschean affirmation of life.

#### iv) ***Kipps*: “Character Has You. You Can’t Get Away From It”**

Like *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul* can also be categorised as a *Bildungsroman* on the grounds that the main narrative is about the growth of “a Simple Soul” Arthur Kipps. However, in the matter of choosing the method of narration, the two texts differ. While the *Bildung* of Mr. Lewisham is narrated in the vein of realistic representation and the author’s digression and intervention in the narrative and the characters’ mind is restricted, the main narrative of *Kipps* is structured in the form of romance. The author of *Kipps* does not attempt to present the story of Kipps in a realistic or naturalistic way.

The narrative of Kipps’s *Bildung* is sealed within the world of romance. Franco Moretti condemns English *Bildungsromanen* from *Tom Jones* to Dickens’s novels as inferior to its continental counterparts. He savages the English *Bildungsroman* as being structured in a fairy-tale form narrating ‘heroes’ confirmation of the middle-class values with little daring and a dim self-consciousness.<sup>126</sup> However, romances and fairy-tales had been the backbone in

<sup>125</sup> Gillian Beer, introduction, *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (London: Penguin, 2050) xvi.

<sup>126</sup> Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 1989), 191.

transformation of English novel.<sup>127</sup> It is maintained that in the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, English *Bildungsromanen* denied the harmonious development of individuals towards upward social mobility and the 'fundamentally comic Bildungsroman moved in the direction of moral fable, satire, and tragedy, registering in these shifts increasing doubts about the liberal ideology it had been so well-suited to articulating.'<sup>128</sup> Unlike these writers, Wells utilizes the sense of romance and humour of the traditional English *Bildungsroman*. Wells's skilful use of romance in transmuting the would-be miserable reality of Kipps into romantic fantasy enables the text to be placed in the tradition of the English *Bildungsroman*. Here, the romance elements, which are perceived as fairy-tale features by Moretti, function as an essential style for telling the story of the protagonist's emancipation. In *Kipps* the romance elements create a unique narrative environment for presenting the lower-middle class protagonist's struggles with his reality. In this sense, Wells's contemporary American realist, William Dean Howells's accusation that this novel is inferior to the novels of realism signifies this critic's failure to grasp the author's adroit use of romance, in the tradition of the English novelist's depiction of the lower-class, working man's life.<sup>129</sup>

The narrative of *Kipps* is consistently built on the romance structure. Particularly, it invokes the archetypal romance narrative of 'the exposed-infant theme.'<sup>130</sup> The narrative structure of this fiction is a variation of the 'stories of mysterious birth, oracular prophecies about the future contortions of the plot, foster parents, adventures which involve capture by pirates, narrow escapes from death, recognition of the true identity of the hero and his eventual marriage with the heroine.'<sup>131</sup> *Kipps* is composed of the loosely connected quests of 'the honest simpleton of Romance.'<sup>132</sup> In the early part of *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, which describes Lewisham's sexual awakening, Wells already proves his ability of creating the mood of idyllic love. In the first chapter of *Kipps*, the idyllic love of

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<sup>127</sup> Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel*, 3.

<sup>128</sup> Patricia Alden, *Social Mobility in the English Bildungsroman: Gissing, Hardy, Bennett, and Lawrence* (London: UMI, 1979), 129.

<sup>129</sup> Patrick Parrinder, ed., *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, 130.

<sup>130</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 8.

<sup>131</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 4.

<sup>132</sup> Peter Vansittart, introduction, *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul*, by H.G. Wells (London: Everyman, 1993), 1.

an adolescent romantic hero is more clearly employed in the description of Kipps's love for Ann Pornick. Secrets and hidden stories revolve on the birth and the parenthood of the young Kipps. The old Kippses endeavour to forbid Kipps from befriending his neighbouring children because according to old Kipps's speculation, these neighbours are inferior to them: 'they feared the "low"' (*Kipps*, 5). These features are variations of the archetypal romance plot: the life of a high-born idyllic hero. Eventually, the plot proves that Kipps is the offspring of a gentleman even though his mother is a servant. After a series of adventures and trials, including the test of his faithfulness to the childhood heroin, the protagonist reunites with his true love and lives happy ever after. To make it possible for the hero to achieve his wish for liberation from social institutions, the narrator, who is endowed with the power of the discursive and digressive romance narrator, uses miracles and coincidences in his narrative.

Wells's appeal to the romance plot is more distinctively revealed when it is compared with the earlier version of *Kipps*, *The Wealth of Mr. Waddy: A Novel*. Harrison Wilson notes that it is an anti-sentimental romance: 'In a sense, *The Wealth of Mr. Waddy* is Wells's *Joseph Andrews* or *Northanger Abbey*. Superficially, all the essential trapping of the sentimental novel are there [...] But Wells throws all askew by making reality, not sentimentalism, dictate the plot.'<sup>133</sup> The story about Mr. Waddy's life and Muriel's scheme of inheritance, which is a satire of late-Victorian popular sentimental romances, is not included in the final version of the novel. In *Kipps*, the surprise inheritance of Mr. Waddy's wealth is the most fantastic element. It not only rescues him on the brink of bankruptcy but also confirms Kipps's identity as a high-born idyllic hero (even though it identifies him as illegitimate). In *The Wealth of Mr. Waddy*, these elements of the idyllic romance are absent. This novel does not contain the Dickensian romance plot device, secrets of the mysterious born child. Also, as the subtitle 'A Novel' shows, it is written as a novel, by which the Wells of the 1890s consistently meant the genre of realism.

In the text, Wells's greatness lies in his ability to juxtapose a series of escapes into the world of romance with the subsequent returnings to the confining reality. For instance, the freedom of his childhood is replaced by the confinement

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<sup>133</sup> Harris Wilson, introduction, *The Wealth of Mr. Waddy: A Novel*, by H. G. Wells (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1969), iiv.

of apprenticeship, and the escape into the middle class through the help of the sudden inheritance is subsequently followed by the middle class norms which are represented as the rules of costumes and social manners. In every stage of Kipps's life, the romantic codes of coincidence release him from the stifling disciplinary reality, represented as social manners, regulations, time-tables, social classes, family, work-place and school. Kipps's growth is presented in incessant movements from confinement to freedom or escape, connected in a series of small adventures.

The first chapter, 'The Little Shop at New Romney,' tells of the young Kipps's endeavour to free himself from the old Kippses' family regulations and the disciplines of school. For young Kipps, his adopted parents, his aunt and uncle are 'the immediate gods of this world [their small shop] like the gods of the world of old, occasionally descended right into it, with arbitrary injunctions and disproportionate punishments' (*Kipps*, 5). Mrs. Kipps forces him to observe certain manners at meals. Kipps's friendship with Sid Pornick and love of Ann Pornick are possible only through 'the sin of disobedience' (*Kipps*, 7). His school is also a confining social institution imprisoning him in a time-table and curriculum. The adult Kipps remembers that his schooldays were the days of 'an atmosphere of stuffiness and mental muddle,' which is the image of school as a suffocating ideological institution (*Kipps*, 12). His freedom from the cramped 'Academy' can be possible in holidays with Sid and Ann, and the games with them, which form the world of adventure romances: 'far adrift from reality' into imaginary worlds of 'smugglers and armed men' (*Kipps*, 15). Kipps's romantic imagination helps him to tolerate the strict regulations of Shalford's drapery shop. When the disciplinary institution becomes unbearably harsh reality to Kipps – 'The whole glaring world was insupportable' (*Kipps*, 120) – the author of romance wields his magic to save him by a plot device: coincidence. By having Kipps collide with the playwright Chitterlow the author disentangles the protagonist from drapery slavery. The author calls Chitterlow 'Fortune': 'And there it was that Fortune came upon him, in disguise and with a loud shout, the shout of a person endowed' (*Kipps*, 84). 'Fortune' does not only connote Kipps's unexpected inheritance but it also encapsulates the romance plot device: chance and coincidence. It is a romance solution, the device of romance, which is despised by the realists.

By demonstrating the process in which Kipps is saved by romantic solutions, the text comments on the novels of Realism and Naturalism. The narrator wittily avoids the possible accusations of the plot as unrealistic and inartistic by vociferously admitting that Kipps's inheritance is 'the most amazing coincidence in the world' (*Kipps*, 122) and by giving no more excuses for this event. The author's criticism of naturalism is more comically conveyed to the reader through the characterisation of Chitterlow. The text demonstrates that he claims to be like Zola but his philosophy is far from the naturalist's idea of literature. Chitterlow loudly proclaims that he is a fatalist. He philosophises the doctrine of naturalism to Kipps: 'I'm a fatalist. The fact is, character has you. You can't get away from it. You may think you do, but you don't' (*Kipps*, 105). In his interpretation, character is like the social institution which imprisons the self and from which the character can never escape. He is also a follower of Zolaesque realism: 'I don't believe in made-up names. As I told you. I'm all with Zola in that. Document whenever you can. I like them hot and real' (*Kipps*, 124). However, Chitterlow's philosophy of fatalism and pre-determinism is ridiculed by Wells. Facing the remarkable coincidence, Chitterlow contradicts himself by confessing that he believes in coincidences in reality: 'I believe in coincidences. People say they don't happen. I say they do. Everything is coincidence' (*Kipps*, 125). Through Chitterlow's confused and contradictory remarks, the author refuses realists' obsession with documentary representation of reality and naturalists' philosophy of pre-determinism. Chitterlow becomes excited with finding his and Kipps's names in the newspaper: 'Seen properly. Here you are. Here's one! Not a bit of it! See? It's you! Kipps! You're there. *I'm* there. Fair *in* it! Snap!' (*Kipps*, 125). This reverses the novel proper maintained by realists and naturalists. The names and events in the newspapers do not confirm the world as reality of causation, but it is another form of fiction, which conveys most incredible coincidence to Kipps. Chitterlow's statement generates the irony that Kipps and Chitterlow are in the world of fiction, especially the world of romance where coincidences and miracles are possible.

The romance plot saves Kipps once more when he is defrauded of his wealth by the young Walshingham. The unexpected success of Chitterlow's play enables the protagonist to lead a comfortable life by keeping his bookshop. Completing



the romance of the simple soul, the narrator describes increasing fortunes of Kipps as the romance hero's final triumph after his successful quest:

People in Australia, people in Lancashire, Scotland, Ireland, in New Orleans, in Jamaica, in New York and Montreal, have crowded through doorways to Kipps's enrichment, lured by the hitherto unsuspected humours of the entomological drama. Wealth rises like an exhalation all over our little planet, and condenses, or at least some of it does, in the pockets of Kipps (*Kipps*, 445).

The wealth collected from every corner of the world is reminiscent of the treasure of romance. Interestingly, the countries and the cities are either former British colonies or are currently parts of the empire, which used to be the main grounds for the adventurers of imperial romance to prove their heroism and valour. Thus, the money piled up in the doorway to Kipps's enrichment symbolises the final reward given to the hero after a successful adventure.

The most precious reward for Kipps is his manhood which he finally and safely achieves at the end of the novel:

Kipps was coming to manhood swiftly now. The once rabbit-like soul that had been so amazed by the discovery of 'chubes' in the human interior and so shocked by the sight of a woman's shoulder-blades, that had found shame and anguish in a mislaid Gibus and terror in an Anagram Tea, was at last facing the greater realities. He came suddenly upon the master thing in life – birth (*Kipps*, 436).

Here, the narrator recapitulates the whole narrative in terms of Kipps's growth. Transmutation of the rabbit in the cage into the master of his life indicates that Kipps is not a slave trapped in the social institutions any more. Kipps's bookshop in Hythe is Kipps's own paradise like Mr. Polly's Potwell Inn. It is the Kippses' Eden, a retrieval of their pastoral childhood in New Romney. Here, Kipps becomes the master of his own world.

Even though the romancer Wells seems to want to finish the narrative with a comic finale, the realist Wells does not allow the easy Utopian solution. Unlike Dickens's Bildungsroman, *Great Expectations* (1860-1), *Kipps* ends with the uncertain future of the protagonist. Dickens's hero, Pip grows up morally and financially. On the contrary, the final scenes demonstrate that Kipps has not

grown up intellectually, but still remains a simple soul. *Great Expectations* contains autobiographical narrative. This means that Pip has his own independent voice to articulate his emotions and thoughts. Wells's narrator however does not allow Kipps to have his own voice; his story is told by the omniscient and patronising narrator. Most of all, Wells's text emphasises that even though Kipps has gone through a series of trials, he remains a simple soul. At the beginning of the story, when Kipps desires for the life of the middle class, he is described by the narrator as 'the creature of the outer darkness blinking into unsuspected light' (Kipps, 46). The closing comment of the narrator demonstrates that Kipps has not changed: 'Out of the darkness beneath the shallow weedy stream of his being rose a question, a question that looked up dimly and never reached the surface' (Kipps, 449). The image of a creature emerging from the darkness and the unanswered question arising from the darkness signify the uncompleted voyage of life.

Uncertainty over Kipps's future and his incomplete liberation are detected in his relationship with the parent figures in the narrative. The fatherless romantic hero, Kipps is consistently handed over to false agents, who play the role of his parents. In school it is the principal, Mr. Woodrow; in Folkestone Drapery Bazaar, it is the tyrannical businessman, Mr. Shalford. In the upper-middle class society, Coote becomes his teacher/father, who according to the narrator is a mere a 'weak human being' (Kipps, 176). The final figure is Helen Walshingham, who functions as a condescending mother figure: 'There was a touch of motherliness in her feelings towards him' (Kipps, 247). The narrative seems to show the process in which Kipps liberate himself from all the counterfeit parental figures, Kipps 'keeps' his simplicity and becomes the patriarch of his own life.

Outside the frame of the narrative, there is another father figure, whose power over Kipps is much stronger than any other character: the omniscient narrator. Throughout the text, the narrator authoritatively exposes himself as a controller of the whole narrative. He predicts future events for instance: 'And he began a friendship with Sid Pornick, the son of the haberdasher next door, that, with wide intermissions, was destined to last his lifetime through' (Kipps, 8). He comments on his own narrative tone: 'I have refrained from the lightest touch upon the tragic note that must now creep into my tale' (Kipps, 266). Most importantly, he professes that he knows everything about Kipps: 'Men, real Strong-Souled, Healthy Men, should be, I suppose, impervious to conversational

atmosphere, but I have never claimed for Kipps at these high levels' (*Kipps*, 279). Having emphasised that he is the most privileged person who can chronicle Kipps's life, the narrator reveals his desire for strong authorship in his narrative.

Kipps's discontent that Chitterlow uses his name in his play is also directed at the author:

Then he suddenly, in a tone of great sadness, and addressing the hearth, he said, 'My name's Kipps.'

"Eh?" said Chitterlow.

"Kipps," said Kipps, smiling a little cynically.

"What about him?"

"He's me." He tapped his breastbone with his middle finger to indicate his essential self.

He leant forward very gravely towards Chitterlow. "Look 'ere, Chitt'low," he said.

"You haven't no business putting my name into play. You mustn't do things like that.

You'd lose me my crib, right away." (*Kipps*, 109)

This scene implies the power relations between the author and his character. Kipps's assertion that he is a *real* person who has his own 'essential self,' and his feeble threat that Chitterlow does not have right to put him in his play without his permission are the representation of Wells's ambiguous stance on the extent to which the author's power can be allowed. Wells's desire to dominate his marionettes<sup>134</sup> and to endow the characters with their own independent voices<sup>135</sup> is allegorised in Kipps's protestation. The author's dilemma of controlling the characters is well demonstrated in his short story, 'The Devotee of Art' (1888). This story is about the dream of a devoted artist, Alec, in which his desire to be inspired to produce the most artistic portrait causes the portrait to come alive and threaten to overthrow his creator. The portrait shouts at him: 'you are mine.'<sup>136</sup> In *Kipps*, Wells seems to subdue Kipps's voice. The feeble protest of Kipps does not reach the author's conscience, as the drunken Chitterlow's mind is preoccupied with finding the newspaper from which he gets the name, Kipps. This signifies the author's desire to ignore his character's complaints.

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<sup>134</sup> See Wells's essay, 'The Pose Novel,' *H. G. Wells's Literary Criticism*, 42: 'I conceive him always taking the best parts, like an actor-manager or a little boy playing with his sisters.'

<sup>135</sup> Wells, 'A Servants' Hall Vision,' *H. G. Wells Literary Criticism*, 107.

<sup>136</sup> Wells, 'The Devotee of Art,' *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells*, ed. John Hammond (London: Phoenix, 2000), 715

The author is similar to the fake parent characters of the novel in the sense that he is explicitly possessive and patronises Kipps. He wants to be a powerful figure free from any kind of restraints. Hence, the text deals with not only the protagonist's wish-fulfilment for disentanglement but also freedom of the author. The story-teller of romance is a god-like agent, who can indulge in limitless freedom of speech and is privileged to dominate the whole story tyrannically. Wells's narrator is a romancer, who utilises his god-like privileges. For instance, he can rescue Kipps twice on the verge of poverty. At the same time, he places Kipps in a humiliating situation, and confines his freedom. In addition, the narrator can see Kipps from his inside and outside. The discursiveness and digression are what Henry James strongly opposed and what enables Virginia Woolf to criticise Wells as committing the 'sin' of 'talking at.'<sup>137</sup> In so doing, however, the author enjoys reminding the reader of his presence.

The author's freedom, however, is continuously checked by reality. He is presented as a literary figure writing a novel under the pressure of the contemporary literary phenomena of 'colourless theory' and the marketplace of the consumer society. The narrative is replete with the turn of the century's social discourses which refer to the issues of degeneration, socialism, Nietzsche's "Over-man", the new woman, and literary phenomena – debates about naturalism, romance and realism. Each discourse has its own mouth-piece. The intelligent socialist, Masterman criticises the upper class as being degenerate. The playwright, Chitterlow, who desires to 'hit on something', expresses his wish to be a writer like Ibsen and Zola and to surpass them. Middle class women dream about leading an independent life by writing books as their careers.

These discourses float around Kipps, who is merely a simple soul, and therefore cannot understand them very well. Thus, they are targeted to the reader rather than to Kipps by the narrator. However, the narrator only transmits the various opinions to the readers, and refrains from enforcing his own judgement. The narrator is one of the characters, whose opinion of society exists as only one of the voices in the stories. His voice competes with other characters' voices. For instance, through the characters' casual conversations about writing novels and

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<sup>137</sup> Parrinder, ed., *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, 244.

becoming a writer, the author implies that his novel can be a result of copying another writer and at the same time the writer's creation:

"It's Luck," said Buggins, "to a very large extent. They just happen to hit on something that catches on, and there you are!"

"Nice easy life they have of it, too," said Miss Mergle. "Write just an hour or so, and done for the day! Almost like gentlefolks."

"There's more work in it than you'd think," said Carshot, stooping to a mouthful.

"I wouldn't mind changing for all that," said Buggins. "I'd like to see one of these here authors marking off with Jimmy."

"I think they copy from each other a good deal," said Miss Mergle.

"Even then (chup, chup, chup)" said Carshot, "there's writing it out in their own hands." (*Kipps*, 77)

This passage presents the three characters' different opinions concerning being an author without the author's direct intervention. The narrator does not agree with any of these characters' speculations. The joke of this passage depends on the implied author who knows there is hard work in the life of an author; and his protestation is hinted under the characters' routine dinner-time chatting.

The narrator protests against these characters' misjudgement of his job, endeavouring to describe his class from the viewpoint of a writer:

Everybody hates house-agents, just as everybody loves sailors. It is, no doubt, a very wicked and unjust hatred, but the business of a novelist is not ethical principle, but facts. Everybody hates house-agents because they have everybody at disadvantage. All other callings have a certain amount of give and take, the house-agent simply takes. All other callings want you; your solicitor is afraid you may change him, your doctor cannot go too far, your novelist – if only you know it – is mutely abject towards your unspoken wishes (*Kipps*, 348).

Comparing the job of writing novels with other trades, from solicitors to grocers, the narrator situates himself in the world of commercial society, and describes himself as an individual living under social competitions. He is a mere tradesman, who is afraid that the readers thrust aside his books. In this sense, he is not different from other characters in his novel (and especially *Kipps* as a bookseller at the end of the story) and, in the same respect, he is not free from society. Here,

the narrator defends his class against the other characters' accusation of his job to be easy and simple.

The narrator's refraining from supporting a specific side in *Kipps* is contrasted with the authorial voice in Marie Corelli's *The Sorrows of Satan* (1895). Critics have compared *Kipps* with Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*.<sup>138</sup> However, the unexpected inheritance of Kipps and his suffering caused by money is also echoed in the main theme and story of *The Sorrows of Satan*. In the earlier version of *Kipps*, *The Wealth of Mr. Waddy*, Wells satirises the contemporary sentimental novels through Muriel's addiction to popular novels, and her determination to see life in distorted image she acquires from her reading of popular romances. While she inserts herself into Mr. Waddy's household on the purpose of inheriting Waddy's fortune, she is reading *The Sorrows of Satan*.<sup>139</sup> In *Kipps*, through a shop girl's cynical comment on money, the author implies that he had Corelli's late Victorian romance in his mind when he was writing this romance:

No fear. Not for Money," said Pearce. And the girl in the laces, who had acquired a cynical view of Modern Society from the fearless exposures of Miss Marie Corelli, said, "Money goes everywhere nowadays, Mr Kipps (*Kipps*, 142).

*Kipps* is an excellent satire of Corelli's book. It deconstructs her moralistic messages that unexpectedly or undeservedly acquired wealth corrupts the innocent human. On the contrary, the money given to Kipps functions as a liberator; it happily rescues Kipps from the prison of the apprenticeship. Thus, Wells's story decries philistinism in Corelli's monologic preaching about morality. Even though Marie Corelli adopts the first person protagonist/narrator, and thereby seems to practice the impersonalised narrative form, by presenting an idealised middle-class female writer, Mavis Clare, she puts forward one strong voice representing the middle class. Through Mavis Clare, who can be considered as the double of the author, Corelli expresses her own class's ideological opinion about religion, and tackles all other cotemporary social discourses such as the new woman, socialism, the Decadent, and the degenerate aristocrat. Being conscious of her readers, she in effect comforts them, confides in them, lectures, and advises.

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<sup>138</sup> Batchelor, *H. G. Wells*, 45; Parrinder, *H.G. Wells*, 106.

<sup>139</sup> H. G. Wells, *The Wealth of Mr. Waddy: A Novel* (London: Southern Illinois UP, 1969), 20.

Unlike Corelli's romance, *Kipps* does not have an agent who can represent the author's ideological point of view, but displays various contemporary issues through the voices of the characters. Finishing his narrative, the narrator insists upon the truthfulness of the story: 'That was two years ago, and, as the whole world knows, the 'Pestered Butterfly' is running still. It was true' (*Kipps*, 445). This statement suggests that the readers implied by the narrator live in the same world of romance with Kipps and his friends, including the narrator. Introducing himself as 'an old and trusted customer' of Kipps, he continues:

The bookshop of Kipps is on the left-hand side of the Hythe High Street coming from Folkstone, between the yard of the livery-stable and the shop window full of old silver and such-like things – it is quite easy to find – and there you may see him for yourself and speak to him and buy this book of him if you like. He has it in stock I know. Very deliberately I've seen to that. His name is not Kipps, of course, you must understand that; but everything else is exactly as I have told you. (*Kipps*, 448)

The detailed description of the shop and its location is clearly intended to emphasise that the story of Kipps, the simple soul, is his true history. However, the reader, who can find Kipps and his bookshop 'on the left-hand side of the Hythe High Street', is the implied reader and not the actual reader. The actual readers are wisely reminded of their reality: they are reading a 'modern folk-tale' of a simple soul, Kipps. In this way the narrator's final statement enables the readers to distance themselves from the text. *Kipps* is one of Wells's great achievements as an author; balancing between the romance genre and realism. It is in this novel that he can produce a faithful picture of the Edwardian lower-middle class's life.

Chitterlow's statement, 'character has you. You can't get away from you,' produces double meanings, suggesting that Wells plays on the boundary between realism and romance. The text depicts Kipps failing to escape his character, 'the simple soul' and shopkeeper. Hence, like a tragic character in the naturalistic and realistic fictions, he becomes a life-sentenced prisoner *kept* in the prison of character. However, since he can *keep* his character, he can manage to free from being imprisoned in another prison, the middle class, and at the end, he can be happy within the limitation of his own character. Thus, he *keeps* himself and lives in his own small Eden.

Wells's non-scientific novels examined in this chapter are testimonies to the fact that Wells can explore the potential of romance in creating his own unique narrative field. *Kipps* and *The Wheels of Chance* prove Wells to be a great alchemist who can amalgamate fantastic elements with the sense of reality not only in his scientific romances, but also in social novels. This attempt to fuse romance with realism is carried once again into his writing of *The History of Mr Polly* (1910). In these social novels, while being faithful to the reality of the lower-class protagonist, Wells can exploit qualities of romance to transform the would-be Morrisian and Gissingian tragic narrative into cheerful and witty criticism of society. Here, Wells proves that he is the rightful successor of the great tradition of the English novel from Sterne to Dickens. When his instinct for romance is required in writing scientific romances, he draws his energy in satirising and parodying the theme and the content of the contemporary popular romances; *The Time Machine* is the fruit of his endeavour to distance itself from conventional adventure romances and to produce a new genre.



### **Chapter III. The Time Machine: “I Don’t Want to Waste This Model, and Then Be Told I’m a Quack”**

In spite of his severe condemnation of late-Victorian popular adventure romances, Wells’s early scientific romances – from *The Time Machine* to *The First Men in the Moon* (1901) – follow the adventure romance paradigm. These romances consist of adventure narratives in which the main characters are stranded in an alien environment, and must cope with its dangers and struggle to survive. It is mainly for this reason that Wells’s scientific romances have been characterised as adventure stories following the norms of Robinsonade,<sup>140</sup> and the male quest romance.<sup>141</sup> Wells is also called ‘the modern Defoe.’<sup>142</sup>

Adventure tales, from Daniel Defoe’s (1610-1731) *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to the spy novels of John Buchan (1875-1940), were written in close relation to the empire’s political circumstances. They engender the current imperial ideology: actions, missionary, military and mercantile. In particular, ranging from boys’ adventure tales of G. A. Henty (1832-1902) to Rider Haggard’s romances for adults, late-Victorian and Edwardian adventure romances fantasise heroic deeds at the fringes of the empire, and in so doing, serve to boost the spirit of exploration in the time of waning adventure. It has been continually suggested that imperial romances divulge anxieties about the decline of the empire. Exploring gothic themes of imperial romance, Brantlinger suggests that the late-Victorian and Edwardian anxiety about the declining power of their nation is well reflected in three major themes of imperial romance: ‘individual regression or going native; an invasion of civilisation by the forces of barbarism or demonism; and the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world.’<sup>143</sup> However, their practitioners at the turn of the century endeavoured to ignore the disappointing reality of the empire by creating a fantasy-world full of adventures and heroic dares.

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<sup>140</sup> Paul K. Alkon, *Science Fiction Before 1900* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 17.

<sup>141</sup> Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, 76-104. Also see her article, ‘The Apocalyptic Fables of H.G. Wells,’ *Fin de Siècle/Fin du Globe: Fears and Frontiers of the Late Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Stokes (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 69-84.

<sup>142</sup> Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London: Routledge, 1980), 227.

<sup>143</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988), 230.

Frye notes that romance is the story told to ‘entertain or amuse,’ and ‘this means that they are told to meet the imaginative needs of the community, so far as structures in words can meet those needs.’<sup>144</sup> Imperial romance utilises the entertaining qualities of the romance genre. The paradigm of romance, which they adopt in constructing the world of fantasy, functions to gratify the community consisting of the author, the characters and the reader. It helps to satisfy their desire for freedom from restraints of time and place. Haggard’s hunter adventurers, Rudyard Kipling’s (1865-1936) loafers in ‘The Man Who Would Be King’ (1888) and Arthur Conan Doyle’s (1859-1930) explorers in *The Lost World* (1912) travel as far as imaginary worlds, beyond the constraints of time and space. They are agents who vicariously satisfy the readers’ daydreams for freedom and power. The romance formula – the pre-determined plot meandering towards the ubiquitous happy ending as realised by powerful, superior and triumphant heroes – enables the readers to enjoy the heroes’ predicament and precarious journey in their comfortable armchair. Also, as noticed in Stevenson’s defence of romance writing, they are written to amuse and beguile the reader. In ‘About Fiction,’ Haggard also claims that romance is an ideal genre to satisfy ‘a weary public’ who ‘calls continually for books, new books to make them forget, to refresh them, to occupy minds jaded with the toil and emptiness and vexation of our competitive existence.’<sup>145</sup>

In addition, imperial adventure stories are ‘kidnapping’ romances in Frye’s terms. From folk tales and medieval romance to imperial romance and even Hollywood romantic comedies, to a varying degree romance has advocated the ideology of an ascendant class. This trend had prevailed in the late Victorian imperial romance. Frye characterises Rider Haggard, Kipling and Buchan as practitioners of the ‘kidnapping’ romances on the grounds that their works ‘incorporate the dreams of British Imperialism.’<sup>146</sup> British Imperialism is an idea born and broadly used in the age of the empire’s expansion from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. It is the nineteenth-century British policy of seeking, or at least not refusing, an extension of the British

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<sup>144</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 6.

<sup>145</sup> Rider Haggard, ‘About Fiction,’ *Contemporary Review*, 51 (1887), 174.

<sup>146</sup> Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 56-7.

Empire in directions where trading interests and investments require the protection of the flag.<sup>147</sup> Robert Young elucidates the term, imperialism:

It is characterised by the exercise of power either through direct conquest or (latterly) through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a similar form of domination: both involve the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies.<sup>148</sup>

The ideology of imperialism is ‘the idea’, about which Marlow speculates in *Heart of Darkness* (1899): ‘an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow before, and offer a sacrifice to.’<sup>149</sup> Prospering in the period of imperial expansion and the lurking anxiety about the empire’s uncertain future, imperial romances have no space for Marlow’s anti-imperialistic speculations. Instead, they create the perfect English gentlemen or boy heroes, who are ‘products of phantasies in which the values of ‘Britishness’ were felt to be under threat of loss and destruction.’<sup>150</sup> By sending them to British colonies scattered all over the world, romances accentuate the wish-fulfilment of freedom and adventure, which only these colonial spaces can satisfy. In doing so, they hold up the imperial agendas of geographical expansion and efficient control of the empire.

In order to consummate the ideal combination of entertaining qualities with the ideology of expansion and preservation of the empire, the authors needed the advantages provided by the romantic genre. In the study of Haggard’s imperial romance and the empire, Wendy Katz illuminates this close kinship between the empire’s agenda of expansion and the form of romance:

Romance is a literary form characterised by freedom and expansiveness. These two attributes of romance suggest a natural kinship not only between romance and the geographical immensity of the imperial world, but also between romance and the mood of imperial Britain as a whole, reacting against the restraints of markets, tariffs, and

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<sup>147</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* Second ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989).

<sup>148</sup> Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 27.

<sup>149</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke (Peterborough: Broadview, 1995), 66.

<sup>150</sup> Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), 57.

competitive nation-states. Romance characters can be free from place, time, or history whenever their authors are so inclined.<sup>151</sup>

Using the excuse of writing romance, the writers can wield their imagination and free themselves from the constraints of time and of the place. When they cannot find genuine lands marked on the map, they find recourse to delve into the earth and soar into extraterrestrial spaces. The complaint of McArdle in *The Lost World*<sup>152</sup> that blank spaces on the map have been completed is happily ignored when the romance writers launch their heroes into the world of the fantastic. As Richard Philips notes, 'as *terra incognita* disappeared from European maps, writers of adventure stories retreated from realistic to fantastic, purely imaginary space.'<sup>153</sup>

Wells's scientific romances belong to the category of these fantastic romances. The Time Traveller's journey into the future and the exploration of the moon by Bedford and Cavor continue to utilise two main attributes of the imperial romance: 'expansiveness and freedom' to use Katz's terms in the quotation above. Nevertheless, Wells's strong self-consciousness regarding the shallowness of the popular adventure romance forces his scientific romances to differ from that of his contemporaries, in terms of their thematic fabrication. That the imperial romances blindingly subordinate imperial ideology and appeal to the ignorant readers was the main reason for Wells's strong objection to this popular form of fiction. For this reason, the adventure narrative employed in his scientific romances can be comprehended as the ironical or satirical version of the imperial adventure narratives. Green divides the nineteenth-century fictions into three groups according to the degree of the authors' engagement with imperialism:

Some writers (like Defoe) understood the empire to be a place where adventure took place, and men became heroes. Some (like Swift) refused to understand empire in any such favourable terms. Some (most serious novelists) refused to understand it at all as a subject for fiction.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Wendy Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 44.

<sup>152</sup> Conan Doyle, *The Lost World and Other Thrilling Tales*, ed. Philip Gooden (London: Penguin, 2001), 15: 'The big blank spaces in the map are all being filled in, and there's no room for romance anywhere.'

<sup>153</sup> Richard Philips, *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure* (London: Routledge, 1997), 77.

<sup>154</sup> Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, 37.

Green places Wells's adventure romances in the vein of Defoe's Robinsonade. However, unlike Green's definition of them as Robinsonian adventure tales, they share more affinities with Swiftian satires since Wells persistently criticises imperial ideology. Also, in the 1933 preface to *The Scientific Romances*, Wells acknowledges his predilection for Swift's satiric prose (LC, 242). Also, his short story, 'Aepyornis Island' (1894) is a severe satire of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. In other words, even though Wells adopts the tropes of adventure romance in his composition of scientific romances, these romances can be read as satires of not only the contemporary adventure stories' superficiality, repetitive plot and stereotyped characterisation but also of their complacent attitude towards the fantasy of power.

In *The First Men in the Moon* Wells self-consciously condemns imperial ideology and the empire's popular adventure romances by narrating how Bedford's greedy dream of colonisation of the moon is frustrated by the resident natives, the Selenites. Here, the largely accepted myth of the English race's superiority and the inevitability of British colonisation of the other worlds are questioned and derided. The world of adventure in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is a nightmarish version of the colonial settings depicted in Haggard's and Henty's romances. Haggard's Africa and Henty's India function as the typical 'Oriental' in Said's terms;<sup>155</sup> these places docilely wait for the white explorers to freely exploit their people and land. In Moreau's island, the evolutionary hierarchy between human and animals is splintered. Thus, the moon, the nameless island and the future world are the monstrous spaces, which not only frustrate the protagonists' desire for colonisation but also traumatise them even after their successful return to the Western world. Wells's romances cannot be assimilated to the Conradian anti-romance since the anti-romantic elements of Wells's romances do not contain Conradian nostalgia for the lost spirit of true adventure. The anxiety about the waning adventures is marked in the anti-romanticist, Marlow's narrative in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* (1900). However in Wells's texts, the possibility of speculation on the true adventure itself is disallowed.

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<sup>155</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 190: 'The Oriental was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe.'

*The Time Machine* is structured as a typical adventure narrative. The unnamed scientist and adventurer's extraordinary voyage to the future seems to signal the possibility of conquering new territory which has not been visited by any late-Victorian imperial adventurers; the story is about conquest of time and more specifically, the future. With *The First Men in the Moon*, this romance has the potential to develop into a story of explorations of a new territory and its subsequent colonisation. However, it deserts the romance readers' expectation of a fantastic adventure. *The Time Machine* is an 'invention', as its subtitle implies, because it signals a new genus in the literary world heralding the start of Science Fiction, and also because it deconstructs the norms and ideologies of the popular narrative of imperial romance.

One of the reasons for the immense popularity of imperial romance in this period can be said to be its theme of wish-fulfilment: 'romance is always concerned with the fulfilment of desire, [...] particular desires of a community and especially to those desires which cannot find controlled expression within a society.'<sup>156</sup> Imperial romance is the genre in which romance is combined with adventure narratives. One of its themes, which enable this genre to differentiate itself from other contemporary literature of realism and naturalism, is that of wish-fulfilment or the desire for power. The romance of the Empire satisfied the desire for power, while the realist and naturalist fiction of the period nullified it. The concept of power in imperial romance is related to the yearning to be free from both domestic and colonial reality. Imperial romance shows that, equipped with knowledge of modern technology and skill in government, imperial adventurers may easily control the indigenous people of an undeveloped region. At the same time, away from domestic concerns, they indulge their fantasy of freedom. Even Kipling's loafers, Carnehan and Dravot could enjoy the privilege of being on the throne among the indigenous people in Kaffiristan.

The reason, why this 'desire for power' is the main theme of late-nineteenth century imperial romances, lies in the contemporary socio-political situation and with the public's interest. When Wells launched his literary career and Haggard was at the height of his (from the 1880s to the 1900s), there were a considerable number of concerns about the socio-political problems both within and outside of

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<sup>156</sup> Gillian Beer, *The Romance* (London: Methuen, 1970), 12-3.

the metropolis and the imperial adventure romance was one of the popular genres that dominated the literary market. Late Victorians began to notice symptoms of degeneration of the race in their cities and worry about the legitimacy and efficiency of English rule abroad.<sup>157</sup> Authors writing in the tradition of realism and naturalism – Arthur Morrison, George Gissing and Thomas Hardy – painted gloomy pictures of the squalid living condition of the working class in the cities and rural areas. In contrast, the advocates of romance such as Haggard, Andrew Lang, George Saintsbury (1845-1933)<sup>158</sup> and Stevenson, consider the trend of realism and naturalism as being effeminate and morbid, and insist that the story about healthy primitivism and adventure can cure this morbid state of the over-civilised reader in the metropolis.<sup>159</sup> For instance, in ‘Realism and Romance’ (1886), Lang champions the adventure romances of Haggard and Stevenson over these realistic novels by arguing that from these romances readers will get all the pleasure they can out of the ancestral barbarism in their nature.<sup>160</sup>

The healthy barbarism or primitivism in the adventure romance was what many contemporary readers wanted to hear, and accordingly these writers could satisfy the hunger of the market for such tales. Children and adults indulged in those tales of exotic imperial adventure, in part because these adventure narratives denied the creeping doubts of English fitness surrounding the empire, and allowed them to ‘escape realism and naturalism.’<sup>161</sup>

Associated with the changing conditions of the literary marketplace, this propensity led the imperial adventure romance to popularity in the book market, so that their practitioners could expect to become very wealthy.<sup>162</sup> For Haggard, a

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<sup>157</sup> William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880 – 1940*, 30.

<sup>158</sup> George Saintsbury, ‘The Present State of the English Novel,’ *The Collected Essays and Papers of George Saintsbury: 1875-1920*, vol. III (London: Dent, 1923), 120-128.

<sup>159</sup> Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin-de-siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996) 92.

<sup>160</sup> Andrew Lang, ‘Realism and Romance,’ 689.

<sup>161</sup> In his *Rider Haggard: His Life and Works* (London: Hutchinson, 1960), Morton Cohen mentions the popularity of adventure romances of this period: ‘Readers flocked to [romance] to escape realism and naturalism, and a flood of romance fiction emanating from the New School of Romance satisfied them. [...] In the late nineteen eighties and nineties, many writers, young and old, tried their hands at romance’ (230).

<sup>162</sup> The emergence of the one-volume novel and short stories in whose form imperial romances were published, was caused partly by the change of trade contract between publishers and circulatory libraries, which signalled publication of cheap-priced one volume popular romances. For a brief account of this, see Robert Fraser’s introductory book about imperial romance, *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling, and Conan Doyle* (Plymouth: Northcote, 1998), 14.

staunch imperialist and Wells, a cynical critic of late Victorian society, both of whom wrote in order to be liberated from unpromising circumstances, writing romances based on imperial adventure functioned as a starting point to make their name known, and earn money by writing. In his autobiography, Wells confesses that exploration of '[possibilities of fantasy] is the proper game for the young man, particularly for young men without a natural social setting of their own' (*ExA*, 309-310).

Haggard's fictions celebrate English adventure heroes and applaud England's imperial endeavour abroad. Especially, his African adventure romances, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *Allan Quatermain* (1887) and *She* (1887), have a straightforward formula: characters are presented as categorised into stereotypes such as superior English adventurers – Allan Quatermain, Sir Henry Curtis, and Captain John Good, noble savages such as Umslopogaas and Igonis, and atavistic cannibalistic savages. Throughout a series of adventures, the heroes find unknown territories, face physical dangers, are situated in making choices between courage and cowardice, and finally they always emerge victorious. In this simplified fictional world away from England and its domestic problems, Haggard's heroes fulfil their desire for power.

The straightforward formula of Haggard's romance is the foremost object of Wells's criticism. Wells contends that Haggard's 'blood-and-thunder romances' are repetitive in their plot, character, and story (*LC*, 55). In addition, Haggard's imperialist attitude of English superiority is Wells's main target: 'It must fill very little boys' heads with very silly ideas about the invulnerability and their privileges of the Englishman abroad. The books are pandering to the gross egotism and egotistical patriotism of the British small boy' (*LC*, 98). Haggard's African novels are also satirised in Wells's *The Wheels of Chance*. In his lie to Jessie, Hoopdriver dramatises himself as Haggard's hunter: he kills lions and chases Negroes. Wells's satire is found in Jessie's comment on Hoopdriver's improvised story of a Negro hunting at night: Jessie asks Hoopdriver, 'how one could track black men at night,' and to this Hoopdriver can't answer.<sup>163</sup> This scene satirises Allan Quatermain, and his group's tracking of Massai who kidnap Flossie in *Allan Quatermain*.

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<sup>163</sup> In the Atlantic Edition, these passages do not appear. Here I consult the first edition of the text. *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idle* (New York: Breakaway, 1997), 230.



This chapter will examine Wells's employment of the tropes of adventure stories by comparing *The Time Machine* (1895) with Haggard's *She* (1887) in the context of imperial romance. In particular, it will explore how the two romances present the theme of the desire for power. By tracking this theme detected in Haggard's *She*, the chapter will look at the way in which *The Time Machine* deconstructs Haggard's theme of fantasy of power. It will also contend that the text distances itself from the contemporary concern about power by denying any concrete conclusions and abandoning the reader to ambiguities.

### i) *She*: A Journey to the Past

*She* tells the story of a perilous but imperative journey to a mysterious place in Central Africa where 'three modern Englishmen' complete the mission commanded by their ancestors, prove their superiority, and accordingly, justify the white race's dominance over non-whites (*She*, 73). The justification of their superiority leads the novel to its theme of supremacy, which was the main anxiety of the period when *She* was published. As previously mentioned, the period between the 1870s and World War I is marked not only by actual imperial expansion, but also by doubt about the British imperial capability of controlling its vast empire. Hobsbawm illuminates that this doubt stems from contemporary anxiety about the loss of the 'will to rule': 'Would not the very wealth and luxury which power and enterprise had brought weaken the fibres of those muscles whose constant efforts were necessary to maintain it? Did not empire lead to parasitism at the centre and to the eventual triumph of the barbarians?'<sup>164</sup> Through the story in which the adventures of English civilisation, dominated by patriarchal norms, attempt to subjugate a queen living in the matriarchal society in a mysterious region of Central Africa, *She* channels the contemporary concern about the will to power, the desire for efficient control.

Like Doyle's *The Lost World*, *She* narrates a journey to the past. The apprehension of the human origin and the 'missing link,' which had nagged the public's consciousness since the publication of Charles Darwin's (1809-1882)

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<sup>164</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1874-1914* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 83.

*The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), is well reflected in these romances. In *She*, the matriarchal African society governed by the white queen, Ayesha, is portrayed as the 'origin' or at least 'past stage' of the modern patriarchal English civilisation. Encountering the origin of the human race is not pleasant, as articulated by Lord John's statement in *The Lost World*: 'Ape-men – that's what they are – Missin' Links, and I wish they had stayed missing.'<sup>165</sup> The textual demonstration of *She* clearly points to the fact that the 'primitive' is the unknown maternal origin of the 'civilised', the origin of which must then be carefully sealed off from the present. This source, to which the modern English adventurers Holly and Vincey should return, is located in the centre of the mysterious unknown Africa. It is described as a space which is full of 'relics of long dead and forgotten civilisation,' embodying the fossilised past of the present civilisation (*She*, 70). In this sense, the English adventurers' journey to Africa symbolises a revisitation to their past, and furthermore, this story becomes a narrative about confrontation between the 'present' civilisation and its 'past'.

*She* dramatises Ayesha, She-Must-Be-Obeyed as the primitive origin of English civilisation, and Leo Vincey as its civilised progeny. The text portrays the Vincey line as not only a symbol of English civilisation but also a rightful inheritor of the Roman Empire. The process of the Vinceys' settlement in England can be interpreted as the formation of European or at least English civilisation. The marriage of Kallikrates, the Greek priest, and Amenartas, the Egyptian princess, represents the unification of two roots of European civilisation, and the process in which the Vinceys settle in England – from Egypt to England through Rome and France - parallels the way in which English civilisation was formed.<sup>166</sup> On the other hand, Ayesha, who has existed since the origin of the Vinceys, symbolises Eve, the mother of humanity, and represents that past of the modern civilisation persisting in the present. Modern European civilisation cannot be completed since it has a mandate which has not been consummated: to seal off the past threatening the present by slaying the past agent, Ayesha. As Leo

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<sup>165</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World and Other Thrilling Tales*, 151.

<sup>166</sup> In *Mobilising the Novel* (Uppsala: Uppsala UP, 1997), Johan A. Høglund argues, 'Leo's lineage is traceable through all the major empires and significant moments of English History as well as Western history, from the ancient Egyptian, through the Greek and Roman empires, to Charlemagne and eventually Britain' (65).

declares, 'I am going to set the matter at rest once and for all,' this mission should be done not only for his family, but also modern European or at least English civilisation (*She*, 54).

The mission demonstrates the modern English empire's desire for power, as implied in Armenartas's message and old Vincey's letter. Leo's forefathers order him to avenge his murdered first ancestor. However the ultimate goal, which Leo should complete, is to steal the secret of power, which the mysterious immortal queen is supposed to have, to slay her, and to control the world. Old Vincey writes:

Choose, my son, and may the Power who rules all things, and who says "thus far shalt thou go, and thus much shalt thou learn," direct the choice to your own happiness and the happiness of the world, which, in the event of your success, you would one day certainly rule by the pure force of accumulated experience (*She*, 39).

Old Vincey's letter emphasises achieving power through 'experiencing' and 'learning': he orders the empire's son to go out into the world, to experience and to achieve a power with which the imperial man can control the world. Amenartas also emphasises achieving power rather than consummating revenge: 'a brave man be found among them who shall bathe in the fire and sit in the place of the Pharaohs' (*She*, 41). Like old Vincey, Amenartas implies that the ultimate aim of the mission is achieving power and ruling the world, which is represented as '[sitting] in the place of the Pharaohs.' Holly also accepts the fact that the knowledge of eternal life enables its possessor to control the world: 'the person who found it could no doubt rule the world. He could accumulate all the wealth in the world, and all the power, and all the wisdom that is power' (*She*, 123).

The text depicts the desire for achieving power in two ways; the power can be acquired by controlling the mysterious unknown edge of the empire and by establishing a white modern patriarchal civilisation through the subjugation of the past maternal power.<sup>167</sup> In order to achieve these goals, the adventurers, agents

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<sup>167</sup> In *White Skins / Black Masks* (London: Routledge, 1996), Gail Chang-Liang Low reads Haggard's adventure stories in terms of 'the strategic overlap between gender and genre in the fantasy of 'savage' empowerment', and views these stories as a process in which the power of savage female rulers such as Queen Nyleptha of *Allan Quatermain*, and Ayesha of *She* are 'empowered', or killed by white male adventurers (62-4). Similarly, Elaine Showalter and Rebecca Stott argue that *She* demonstrates the male author's or adventures' desire for destroying

from modern English civilisation, attempt to make the unknown better known by means of writing about 'the Other.' At the same time, they attempt to repress the supernatural female power by destroying the possessor or by inheriting the possessor's empire.

In order to justify the Western heroes' suppression of absolute female power, the text emphasises the tyrannical aspects of Ayesha's governing method. Ayesha's control of the Amahagger is based on 'terror' which she can inflict on the natives (*She*, 178). Ayesha's power can be seen as the 'super' power of a 'feudal' sovereign in Foucault's terms. According to Foucault, before the Enlightenment, the sovereign wielded an absolute authority over the people 'by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power letting its anger fall upon the guilty person.'<sup>168</sup> Holly's narrative indicates that Ayesha's power is a dangerous and threatening element to Western civilisation, and thus it should be 'wrapped up' and 'put away' (*She*, 116). It is compared with the terrifying and all-powerful dictator, the Roman heathen emperor Nero, who would 'illuminate his gardens with live Christians soaked in tar' (*She*, 219). The comparison of Ayesha's dictatorship with the pagan emperor Nero's atrocity to Christians reminds the reader of the terror which might be brought out by the heathen queen Ayesha's conquer of British Christian civilisation. Holly does not forget to call the reader's attention to the danger of despotism, because her control of the English Empire would be possible 'at the cost of a terrible sacrifice of life' (*She*, 255).

Therefore, the text distances modern civilisation from Ayesha's supernatural despotism by contrasting it with English democracy which is based on the principle of mortality. Holly explains the superiority of English democracy.

The one [Queen Victoria] under whom we lived was venerated and beloved by all right-thinking people in her vast realms. Also, we told her that real power in our country rested in the hands of the people, and that we were in fact ruled by the votes of the lower and least educated classes of the community (*She*, 254).

Holly's explanation emphasises the election system. The government and its leader chosen by people signify the principle of mortality of democracy. To

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female power: see Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy*, 83-89, and Stott's *The Fabrication of the Late-Victorian Femme Fatale* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 88-125.

<sup>168</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991), 55.

Ayesha's suggestion of providing him a chance to enjoy an eternal life, Holly emphasises mortality: 'I will live my day and grow old with my generation, and die my appointed death, and be forgotten' (*She*, 250).

Leo's growth as an imperial adult also functions to distance the modern civilisation from the threatening power of Ayesha. Leo, who is introduced as the icon of physical fitness and a proper education, is prepared to prove his superiority as a progeny of English civilisation, like Tom Brown, who is 'a brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman, and a gentleman, and a Christian.'<sup>169</sup> Leo's growth is located in the change of his appearance. In the preface, the frame narrator suggests that Leo's physical beauty is the sign of his mental weakness.<sup>170</sup> Leo's beautiful appearance resembles that of Kallikrates, and this causes Ayesha to consider Leo as an incarnation of him. The act of her burning the embalmed corpse of Kallikrates denotes that Leo loses his present identity; furthermore this points to the fact that he is in danger of 'going native.' When he resists the temptation of eternal life and power, his golden hair is turned into 'grey and snow white' and "he looked twenty years older' (*She*, 295). This change indicates that Leo grows up an adult. Leo's mental development is also found in the scene where he learns the lesson of the text, mortality: 'I had rather die when my hour comes' (*She*, 296). Leo finally succeeds in resisting 'going native', and achieving mental strength. When Holly and Leo are escaping from the tunnels, Leo rescues Holly from danger, and this makes Holly think himself as being a child (*She*, 305). The last scene of their escape from the cave of the pillar of fire, which indicates the womb, presents Leo's rebirth as an imperial man, who is mentally reserved and also physically strong.

*She* presents Ayesha's rule as unnatural since her immortality is against the law of nature, and her knowledge of eternal life is usurped from the ancient philosopher, Noot, who, like Leo and Holly, refused her offer of eternal life. The signatures of Leo's ancestors' upon the shard confirm the fact that previous 'individual' empires, which have been based on mortality, should be inherited by a rightful heir. Thus, the 'species' of empire is preserved and accordingly achieves its survival. The record implies that the rightful heir is the British

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<sup>169</sup> Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (London: Penguin, 1997), 73.

<sup>170</sup> 'There appears to be nothing in the character of Leo Vincey [...] Was that ancient Kallikrates nothing but a splendid animal beloved for his hereditary Greek beauty?' (*She*, 15)

Empire, and its agent, Leo, who is a progeny of one of the ancient families in England. Furthermore, the Amahagger call Leo 'Lion', which is the emblem of England. In this sense, Ayesha's submission to Leo at the gate of the pillar of fire is represented as the British Empire's takeover of the usurped empire of Ayesha.

The vivid scene which describes the death of Ayesha can be seen as a textual device to reassure the reader of the safe removal of the dangerous or even conterminous element. It is the act of 'abjection' by the male protagonists in Julia Kristeva's terminology.<sup>171</sup> The more horrific the description of the death scene is, the more comforted the readers are. The scene is so vividly described that Haggard's efficient disposal of Ayesha is repeated when Arthur Machen terminates his fictional *femme fatale*, Helen Vaughan in a most hideous death: 'The blackened face, the hideous form upon the bed, changing and melting before your eyes from woman to man, from man to beast, and from beast to worse than beast, all the strange horror that you witnessed, surprises me but little'<sup>172</sup>

The act of abjection is also represented as the male protagonists' refusal of the mother's body. By rejecting the maternal body, which has attracted male subjects since their birth, they enter the world of their father. Thus, the death of Ayesha, who is also represented as the origin of civilisation and the maternal body, is the act of 'abjection' performed by male characters, and their feeling of disgust is an essential process to put away the abject, Ayesha, from modern civilisation. The male hero's successful rejection of the maternal power enables the text to complete the image of the British as the natural heir of ancient civilisations.

In observing the codes of imperial romance, Haggard seems to succeed in enabling his heroes to satisfy their desire for power. However, in *She* one detects a counter-narrative which deconstructs the narrative of fantasy of power. It is expressed in the male narrators' – Holly and the anonymous editor – failure to write a reliable narrative about the mysterious *femme fatale*, Ayesha, and her empire.

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<sup>171</sup> In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), Julia Kristeva argues that 'abjection' is the act of abjecting and rejecting the threat from 'an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable' (1). It is expressed as a human's reaction such as vomiting, nausea, and spasm, when a human confronts excessive products of body such as dung, an item of food the man hates to eat, or a piece of filth, all named as 'abject' by Kristeva.

<sup>172</sup> Arthur Machen, *The Great God Pan* (London: Creation Books, 1996): (120).

The act of recording the imperial adventurers' experience is imperative in maintaining the vast empire.<sup>173</sup> In *She*, the meaning of recording is to make the unknown territory known. Leo's response to his father's letter demonstrates the imperial young man's duty to explore the mysterious: 'We have been looking for a mystery, and we certainly seem to have found one' (*She*, 39). Leo's statement reflects contemporary Victorians' efforts to remove their fear of the "unknown world" by making it better known.

Brantlinger argues that late-Victorian scientists and scholars were disturbed and fascinated with mysteries lurking in the fringes of the empire: 'Impelled by scientific materialism, the search for new sources of faith led many late Victorians to telepathy, séances, and psychic research. It also led to the far reaches of the empire where strange gods and 'unspeakable rites' still had their millions of devotees.'<sup>174</sup> Holly is fully conscious of his duty as a scholar/adventurer. Throughout his narration, he compares his colleagues in Cambridge to 'fossils': 'my experience is that people are apt to fossilise even at a University if they follow the same paths too persistently' (*She*, 83). His duty is not only to go out to collect information about the unknown world but also to publish the new discovery: 'it has become a question whether we are justified in withholding from the world an account of a phenomenon which we believe to be of unparalleled interest, merely because our private life is involved' (*She*, 13). Therefore, to 'introduce the world of Ayesha and the Caves of Kôr' to the Western world becomes a symbolical act of adding new information to the imperial archives as well as to the public.

However, despite this endeavour to record the 'unknown world,' a counter narrative of frustrating this effort is implied through the anxieties about incapacity to express or record. The anonymous editor as well as Holly complains of his inability to convey mysteries of the unknown world to the public. In the preface, the editor complains about the elusiveness of Holly's narration: there is 'some gigantic allegory of which I could not catch the meaning' (*She* 15). The editor's complaint is due to Holly's failure to examine the world of Ayesha. In his letter to

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<sup>173</sup> In *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), Thomas Richards notes the importance of collecting information from every corner of the empire and building the perfect imperial archive: 'The narratives of the late nineteenth century are full of fantasies about an empire united not by force but by information. [...] From all over the globe the British collected information about the countries they were adding to their map' (1, 3).

<sup>174</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*, 228.

the editor, Holly regrets that he and Leo did not obtain more information from Ayesha: 'Who was she? How did she first come to the Caves of Kôr, and what was her real religion? [...] These and many other questions arise in my mind [...]' (*She*, 14). In addition, throughout the narrative, Holly confesses his inability to describe his remarkable experience. He continues to write: 'indescribable on paper', 'How am I to describe it? I cannot – simply, I cannot!', '[...] were such as surpass my powers of description' (*She*, 134, 159, 166). The object whom he tries to describe is Ayesha, but she remains the 'indescribable' being at the end of the story. Consequently, the text itself which is written for the purpose of making the unknown world better known proves a failure.

*She* ends with the attempt to eliminate the threat of past onto present. The text not only kills off Ayesha but also seals off the cave which contains the body of the ancient queen, and thus it separates the past from the present. Nevertheless, entombment of the dead past is ultimately unsatisfactory. Ayesha is not 'slain' by a 'brave son' as the Shard of Amenartas commands but killed by an unexpected accident, which rescues the English Empire from her invasion as well as prevents the adventurers from going native. The modern English adventurers are enchanted by Ayesha's attractiveness, and they declare themselves to be subjected under her power. Leo acknowledges his powerlessness in facing the fatal attraction of Ayesha: 'I am in thy power, and a very slave to thee. How can I kill thee? – sooner should I slay myself' (*She*, 253). After returning from their adventure, Holly recollects his adventure is not over: 'A story that began more than two thousand years ago may stretch a long way into the dim and distant future' (*She*, 314). Fascination with the story of Ayesha led to the publication of its sequels such as *Ayesha – The Return of She* (1905) and *She and Allan* (1921). In *She and Allan*, Allan Quatermain deplores Ayesha's death and implies that she will revive: 'Lastly, I saw the story of her end, and as I read it I wept, yes, I confess I wept, although I feel sure that she will return again.'<sup>175</sup> In addition, *She* shows a series of commitments among male characters to reading, judgement and action. Leo's father writes to his son, Leo: 'Read and judge for yourself. If you are inclined to undertake the search [...]' (*She*, 39). Holly writes to the editor: 'Will you undertake the task [of publishing the story]? We give you complete freedom,

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<sup>175</sup> H. Rider Haggard, *She and Allan*, ed. Andrew Sandes (London: Hutchinson, 1956), xi



[...]' (*She*, 14). The editor leaves the final judgement to the readers: 'Here also I am not able to answer, but must leave the reader to form his own judgement on the facts before him' (*She* 16). These commitments suggest that through the act of reading, the story invites the reader/adventurer to launch another 'unbelievable but real African adventure', and re-open the sealed cave where the ancient queen, Ayesha is buried (*She*, 13).

The failure to remove the threatening supernatural power is closely related to the author's anxiety about the empire's uncertain future. Even though Ayesha has supernatural power, she cannot see the future: 'I can show you thee what thou wilt of the past. [...] I know not all the secret yet – I can read nothing in the future' (*She*, 155). Therefore, *She*, the story about the past rather than the future ends with the narrator's disturbing vision about the 'blackness of unborn time':

When the *final* development ultimately occurs, as I have no doubt it must and will occur, in obedience to a fate that never swerves and a purpose that cannot be altered, what will be the part played therein by that beautiful Egyptian Amenartas, the Princess of the royal race of the Pharaohs, for the love of whom the Priest Kallikrates broke his vows to Isis, and, pursued by the inexorable vengeance of the outraged Goddess, fled down the coast of Libya to meet his doom at Kôr? (*She*, 314).

Holly used to be a 'rational man' who did not believe in spiritualism or supernatural events. However, through his extraordinary adventure, he comes to have faith in supernaturalism and rebirth (*She*, 162). The italicised 'final' means that the narrator still dwells in the world controlled by not only linear time but also circular time. In 'The Gendering of History in *She*', Patricia Murphy reads *She* in terms of the confrontation between the concept of linear time and circular time.<sup>176</sup> Aligned with male historicity, the concept of linear time is represented as an imperial ideology of Christianity and mortality. On the other hand, the concept of circular time is related to pagan religion and female ahistoricity. As Alan Sandison argues in *The Wheel of Empire*, imperialism, Darwinism and Christianity in Haggard's stories are closely interwoven in terms of the idea of

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<sup>176</sup> Patricia Murphy, 'The Gendering of History in *She*,' *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 39.4 (1999): 747-772.

progressivism.<sup>177</sup> Holly's belief in progressivism based on the concept of linear time is checked by his experience of the event ruled by the concept of circular time. In this sense, his vacillation between these contradictory ideas enables the text to be read as 'fantastic' in Todorov's terms. Todorov defines the term thus: 'the fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event.'<sup>178</sup> Holly's hesitation expressed at the end of the novel leads *She* to conclude with a disturbing vision of the enigmatic future, and simultaneously gives the readers freedom to judge the truthfulness of Holly's narrative. Consequently, the text invites another adventure in search for the answer for the future, and the task of the next mandate seems to be undertaken by the Time Traveller in *The Time Machine*.

## ii) *The Time Machine: A Journey into the Future.*

Even though Haggard's African trilogy – *King Solomon's Mines*, *Allan Quatermain* and *She* – have elegiac tones and reveal the author's anxiety about the empire's fate, the main concern of these romances is the author's wish-fulfilment fantasy.<sup>179</sup> It has been argued that Haggard's disappointing experiences in the colonies in Africa and the loss of his first love contribute to the melancholy tone of this work.<sup>180</sup> As a life-long imperialist, Haggard was bitterly disappointed with the British government's decision to retreat from Transvaal. This event was remembered as a shameful decision on the part of the government in his autobiography, *The Days of My Life* (1926): 'no lapse of time ever can solace or even alleviate.'<sup>181</sup> As he evinces in his early and late political essays, he never gave up his belief in English superiority over the coloured races and the necessity

<sup>177</sup> Alan Sandison, *The Wheel of Empire: A Study of the Imperial Idea in Some Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Fiction* (New York: St. Martin's, 1967), 26, 42.

<sup>178</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic*, trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve UP, 1973), 25.

<sup>179</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, introduction, *She: A History of Adventure*, by Rider H. Haggard (London: Penguin, 2001) xxii; see also Norman Etherington, *Rider Haggard* (Boston: Twayne, 1894), 55.

<sup>180</sup> For Haggard's disappointing experience in the colonies and with his first love, see D. S. Higgins's, *Rider Haggard: The Great Storyteller* (London: Cassell, 1981) 17-38. About Haggard's melancholy, see Dennis Buffs, introduction, *King Solomon's Mines*, by Rider Haggard (Oxford, Oxford UP, 1989), xix.

<sup>181</sup> Rider Haggard, *The Days of My Life*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, 1926), 194.



of English colonisation of African native territory.<sup>182</sup> In this context, the romance form enables him to simplify the complexities of reality and to express imperial ideals.

While Haggard's *She* narrates the adventure of the band of imperial brothers in a mysterious part of Central Africa which symbolises the early stage of modern civilisation, Wells's first romance *The Time Machine* is about an inventor-traveller's voyage to the future; here the future world is imagined as a 'far-off unknown region,' on which no late-nineteenth century English adventurer has ever stepped.<sup>183</sup> It has been observed that the plot and the theme of *The Time Machine* echo the legends of the Holly Grail of the medieval romance and Arthurian romance,<sup>184</sup> and the spiritual journeys of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim* and those of the knights of medieval romance.<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, Robert Fraser notes that with *The First Men in the Moon*, this romance is situated in the 'true transition between quest romance and science fiction in England,' and enables the later science fiction authors to 'continue to rework and reshape quest motifs in epic of space and intergalactic space.'<sup>186</sup> Patrick Parrinder maintains that the scientific romances of Wells lead science fiction writers to exploit the themes of expansion and conquering in their novels of galactic empires.<sup>187</sup> However, even though Wells builds the narrative structure and theme within the framework of the quest romance, he vigorously mocks blunt advocacy of imperialism.

Predominantly, the Time Traveller's journey to the future shows many characteristics of adventure stories. Firstly, *The Time Machine* is concerned with portraying that heroic image of the Time Traveller.<sup>188</sup> The story begins with the

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<sup>182</sup> Rider Haggard, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours: or, Remarks on Recent Events in Zululand, Natal, and the Transvaal* (London: Trubner, 1882), 26.

<sup>183</sup> For Wells's new twist (in *The Time Machine*) on Haggard's concept of the travel to the past demonstrated in *She*, see Paula Cantor and Peter Hufnagel, 'The Empire of the Future: Imperialism and Modernism in H.G. Wells,' *Studies in the Novel* 38.1 (2006): 37-56.

<sup>184</sup> John R. Hammond, *H. G. Wells's The Time Machine: A Reference Guide* (London: Praeger, 2004) 70-72. Also his article, 'The Time Machine as a First Novel: Myth and Allegory in Wells's Romance,' *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine* (Athens, U of Georgia P, 2001), 3-11.

<sup>185</sup> Frank Scaffella, "The Rebirth of a Scientific Intelligence," *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine*, 44.

<sup>186</sup> Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance*, 79. See also Marina Warner, Introduction, *The Time Machine*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (London: Penguin, 2005), xvii.

<sup>187</sup> Patrick Parrinder, *Science Fiction: Its Criticism and Teaching* (London: Methuen, 1980), 82: 'Considered as territory ripe for colonization, the universe may appear as a virgin land empty save for a few shiftless natives, the galactic empires of the pulps are echoed at a higher level by the 'expansionist' convictions of such writers as Wells, Stapledon, and Heinlein.'

<sup>188</sup> V. S. Pritchett, 'The Scientific Romances in H. G. Wells's Fiction,' *H. G. Wells: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 38: In this article,

primary narrator's description of the Time Traveller who 'was expounding a recondite matter to' his dinner guests: 'His grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated.'<sup>189</sup> The image of a serious scientist who is eager to explain new theories, which 'controvert[s] one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted', is paralleled with the imperial adventurers of *She* who are learning the mysterious secrets of the past, and who judge the truthfulness of it (*TM*, 3). In this context, it can be argued that all of these 'heroes' of *She* and *The Time Machine* are 'Oedipus figures,' who endeavour to solve riddles of the human destiny. 'The rock shaped like a negro's head and face', which Holly and his group encounter in their arrival in Africa, is compared to 'the well-known Egyptian Sphinx' by Holly (*She*, 66). Holly believes that it is 'a gigantic monument fashioned by a forgotten people out of a pile of rock that lent itself to their design' (*She*, 66). The memorial 'forgotten people' means that this emblem is related to the past events, and knows the mysteries of the past. The 'white sphinx' of *The Time Machine* can be seen as a figure embodying the riddles of future generations: the *missing link* between the Victorian England and the world of the Eloi and Morlock. In other words, both of them symbolise emblems of 'warning and defiance to any enemies who approached' their territory (*She*, 67) and have witnessed the human affairs and their mysteries since the ancient time. Thus, the Time Traveller is represented as an 'Oedipus' figure and shares the image of the nineteenth century adventurer.

*The Time Machine* also illustrates that the Time Traveller dramatises himself as an adventurer, and in doing so, he emphasises the importance of the spirit of adventure. For instance, when he stops the time machine, he states: 'I had cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk – one of the risks a man has got to take!' (*TM*, 26) In addition, when he rescues Weena who is drowning, he mentions the Eloi's indifference: 'It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their

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Pritchett complains about Wells's obsession with dramatising 'heroes' in his romances: comparing with 'the sober figure of the great Gulliver, that plain, human figure', Pritchett argues that Wells – with Kipling, Shaw, and 'the pseudo-orthodox Chesterton', - was 'too fascinated by [his] own bombs [heroes].'

<sup>189</sup> H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine, The Wonderful Visit and Other Stories* (New York: Scribner's, 1924) vol. 1 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-8), 3. Subsequent quotations will be cited parenthetically in the text.

eyes' (*TM*, 54-5). This narration contrasts the Eloi's indifference and inactivity with the Time Traveller's active and heroic behaviour. This contrast is also observed in *She*. When Billali is drowning, the Amahaggar did not "stir a finger to help him," and Holly rescues him with 'a couple of strokes' (*She*, 126). From these two episodes, we can see the adventures' heroic acts in contrast to the natives' cowardice or indifference. Both heroes' physical and moralistic superiority means that late-nineteenth century Englishmen are positioned higher on the ladder of evolution, and hence the texts participate in the contemporary discourse of English racial superiority.

The Time Traveller also describes himself as a figure superior to the residents of the future world, the Eloi and the Morlocks, who are characterised as decadent and degenerate descendants of the late Victorians. For instance, the Eloi's assumption that the Time Traveller arrives out of the sun in a thunderstorm can be interpreted as the Time Traveller's embodiment of the image of a god-figure as well as the Eloi's low intelligence (*TM*, 31). By taking the role of a school master surrounded by children, the Time Traveller presents himself as a quasi-parental authority. Similarly, the Time Traveller describes the Eloi as 'little hosts' or 'children' whose intellectual level is 'one of our five-year-old children' of Victorian age, and reluctantly admits the Morlocks to be 'our own descendants' (*TM*, 22, 31). The Eloi resemble children who are dependent on adults, as in Weena's dependency on the Time Traveller. In addition, the Morlocks, who steal his time machine, are described as disobedient children.<sup>190</sup> On the contrary, the Time Traveller, who is physically strong and is armed with his knowledge of Marx, Carlyle and Darwin, is dramatised as an 'authority' who is prepared to patronise and rule those 'inferior' childlike future generations.

Furthermore, the world of the Eloi and the Morlocks is portrayed as a nineteenth-century primitive society. Nineteenth-century anthropologists linked the concept of lesser breed or inferior races to children. Daniel Bivona pinpoints this argument: 'notions of the "barbaric", the "uncivilised", the "primitive", the "childlike," the alien in time and alien in space overlap constantly in the Victorian

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<sup>190</sup> About the Time Traveller's relationship with the Eloi and the Morlocks as a parent-children relationship, see Kirby Farrell's "Wells and Neoteny," *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine* (Athens: of Georgia P, 2001), 65-75.

imagination of the late nineteenth century.’<sup>191</sup> The behaviours of the Eloi resemble those of the natives of primitive society. For instance, the figure of the Time Traveller surrounded by a group of the Eloi, who examine the Time Traveller by touching him, is similar to that of the nineteenth century adventurers who first encounter the Amahagger. Holly describes this scene: ‘they gathered round us and examined us with curiosity but without excitement’ (*She*, 87). Moreover, like the Amahagger living amid the ruined relics of the great civilisation Kôr, the Eloi are living amid the ruins of English civilisation. The image of ‘ruinous splendor,’ ‘the derelict remains of some vast structure’ built with granite and ‘masses of aluminium,’ ‘a vast labyrinth of precipitous walls’ echoes the marvellous cave of Kôr, which makes Holly wonder, ‘how it was ever executed at all without the aid of blasting-powder or dynamite’ (*TM*, 36; *She*, 132).

While the Eloi can be seen as ignorant natives living in the paradise of an exotic land, the Morlocks invite comparison with cannibalistic and dangerous tribes of a primitive society. The vivid scene of the Time Traveller’s descent to the Morlock’s subterranean world represents his journey not only towards the late nineteenth-century areas of urban poverty, but also into the African jungle. Publication of General William Booth’s *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890) functioned as an “African parallel” involving the very heart of the British Empire, London.<sup>192</sup> The appearance of the Morlocks also invokes the contemporary discourse of the missing link. Late nineteenth-century anthropology imagined the missing link to be between humans and apes in ‘primitive’ races, who were assumed to represent earlier stages in evolution than civilised men. The Morlocks are described as creatures situated between human and animal. They are ape-like creatures, coloured grey and compared to ghosts, human spiders, rats, and lemurs, and at the same time they have “some” intelligence: they can maintain their machinery and trap the Traveller inside the white sphinx. Furthermore, the scene of his excursion to the Morlocks’ jungle-like underground world was echoed in Joseph Conrad’s description of Marlow’s travel to “the heart

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<sup>191</sup> Daniel Bivona, *Desire and Contradiction: Imperial Visions and Domestic Debates in Victorian Literature* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990), 77.

<sup>192</sup> Booth parallel the African jungle with the heart of London: ‘While brooding over the awful presentation of life as it exists in the vast African forest, it seemed to me only too vivid a picture of many parts of our land.’ Quoted in Carlo Pagetti’s ‘Change in the City,’ *H. G. Wells’s Perennial Time Machine*, 123.

of darkness.” In *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Marlow describes his journey to the inner station: ‘We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness.’<sup>193</sup> The thudding sound from the complete blackness, the Time Traveller’s discomfort in the darkness, and the Morlock’s eyes hidden beyond the shadows reappear in the impression of Marlow, the European traveller, in his encounter with the thick forests and the mysterious drum sound made by barbarians (*TM*, 68-69). The similarity of the two texts’ description of the ‘others’ (Wells’s Morlocks and Conrad’s barbarians) signifies that Wells’s presentation of the Morlocks is not very different from the late Victorians’ preconception of the primitive tribes at the edge of the empire.

Comparing Wells’s text with the 1960 George Pal’s film adaptation, Joshua Stein points out the subversiveness of Wells’s original text. The subversive aspects of *The Time Machine* come from his willing of the violation of the codes of popular adventure romances.<sup>194</sup> As a heroic figure possessing superior power, the Time Traveller seems prepared to wield his authority over the inferior ‘races.’ However the text portrays the Time Traveller as a ruler who finally fails to control them. In late-nineteenth century colonial discourse, ‘primitive races’ in colonies are characterised as Ariel-like ‘irresponsible, amiable’ mischievous natives and as Caliban-like indigenes, who have ‘animal strength and passion,’ and it also insists that these ‘underdeveloped’ races should be ‘controlled by educated developed human intellect [like Prospero].’<sup>195</sup> In this sense, the relationship between the Morlocks, the Eloi and the Time Traveller represents that of Caliban, Ariel and Prospero. However, while Prospero succeeds in controlling Ariel and Caliban, and at the end of the play, retrieves his dukedom, the Time Traveller returns to the past as a ‘dethroned’ Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>196</sup> The Morlocks steal the time machine, which symbolises authority and freedom of movement for the Time Traveller. Similarly, the Eloi refuse the teaching of the ‘schoolmaster’ traveller, and prefer to play. The Time Traveller endeavours to communicate with

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<sup>193</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 185.

<sup>194</sup> Joshua Stein, ‘The Legacy of H. G. Wells’s *The Time Machine*: Destabilisation and Observation,’ *H. G. Wells’s Perennial Time Machine*, 150-159.

<sup>195</sup> A. C. Hadden, *The Study of Man* (London, 1898) 63, quoted in Trevor R. Griffiths, “‘This Island’s Mine’: Caliban and Colonialism,” *Post-Colonial Theory and English Literature: A Reader*, ed. Peter Childs (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999), 44.

<sup>196</sup> Patrick Parrinder, *Shadows of the Future: H. G. Wells, Science Fiction and Prophecy* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1995), 49.

the Eloi by teaching them English, but his effort to convey his thoughts meets with 'a stare of surprise or inextinguishable laughter' from the Eloi (*TM*, 35). In addition, unlike the late nineteenth century white adventurers, who are equipped with superior weapons such as revolvers, strong knives, and medicines like quinine, the Time Traveller is unprepared. He admits:

'I had come without arms, without medicine, without anything to smoke [...] even without enough matches. If only I had thought of a Kodak! I could have flashed that glimpse of the Under-world in a second, and examined it at leisure' (*TM*, 71).

As an Oedipus-figure, the Time Traveller does not succeed in solving the riddle of the future world completely. Like Holly who, as an academic scholar, collects information about the unknown regions of the world, the Time Traveller is a nineteenth-century figure of a scientist/anthropologist and attempts to make the unknown future world known.<sup>197</sup> However, the text demonstrates that he fails to interpret the future history of humanity, since the human future he explores lacks any satisfactory means of verbal communications and well-preserved historical evidence. The perfectly embalmed mummies in the cave of Kôr are contrasted to 'shrivelled and blackened vestiges of what had once been stuffed animals, desiccated mummies in jars that had once held spirit, a brown dust of departed plant' in the Palace of Green Porcelain (*TM*, 84). To make matters worse, even though there are a few items best preserved such as minerals and some machinery, the Time Traveller is not 'a specialist in mineralogy' and has 'a certain weakness for mechanism' (*TM*, 84). This lack of knowledge deprives him of a chance to subjugate the Morlocks: 'I fancied that if I could solve their [the machines'] puzzles I should find myself in possession of powers that might be of use against the Morlocks' (*TM*, 85).

Furthermore, Holly, who also attempts to record all the information about the Amahagger society and She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed, has informants such as Ustane and Billali, and the translator, Ayesha who can enable him to know about the forgotten history of Kôr. On the other hand, the Time Traveller is not provided

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<sup>197</sup> In 'The Time Machine and Victorian Mythology,' *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 2001), Sylvia Hardy argues that Wells's Time Traveller is represented as sharing the characteristics of the nineteenth-century "anthropological mythographers" who try to decipher the origin of the human by observing the primitive society and reconstructing the society of the primitive nation (86).



with a written record or its translator. This is observed from his complaint: 'I saw an inscription in some unknown character. I thought, rather foolishly, that Weena might help me to interpret this, but I only learned that the bare idea of writing had never entered her head' (*TM*, 82). In addition, from the Palace of Green Porcelain which the Time Traveller thinks of as 'historical galleries, or a library', the Time Traveller cannot acquire any information about the missing history between late-nineteenth century English civilisation and the future generation. Books containing historical records are decaying and rotten (*TM*, 87). The lack of an interpreter and well-preserved documents means that the text frustrates the Time Traveller's effort to know about the future world.

### Reading as the Act of Rewriting

By comparing *The Time Machine* with *She*, the previous section examined the way in which Wells deconstructs the imperial romance's theme of the desire for power. For Wells, however, the act of deconstruction is not his final aim. In *H. G. Wells*, Patrick Parrinder speculates, 'Wells's stories are derived [...] by selecting a focus within his "reconstruction" of the whole physical, organic, and human frame.'<sup>198</sup> The process of reconstruction is discussed in terms of order. However, Wells's principle of order is based on 'non-static quality', which means 'the ideal of perfection is itself changing.'<sup>199</sup> This concept of change is applied to the structure of *The Time Machine* and its theme. Hence, the deconstruction of *She*'s theme leads to the reconstruction of Wells's own subject, the theme of change.

Frank McConnell argues that Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and Samuel Smiles's (1812-1904) *Self-Help* (1859) define the 'two voices of Wells's imagination, the scientific analysis of cosmic futility, and the middle-class, absurd but admirable insistence on the possibility of hope, the power of Will.'<sup>200</sup> *The Time Machine* embodies the ideas of free will and determinism, and it dramatises

<sup>198</sup> Patrick Parrinder, *H. G. Wells* (Edinburgh: Oliver, 1970), 6-7.

<sup>199</sup> In *H. G. Wells, Discoverer of the Future: The Influence of Science on His Thought* (New York: New York UP, 1980) Roslynn Haynes explain Wells's concept of order through the reading of Wellsian utopian ideals: 'Wells regarded order as itself partaking of a kinetic quality, not a stasis: order means, for him, ordered change' (p, 22).

<sup>200</sup> Frank McConnell, *The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), 30.

the importance of change through the Time Traveller's narrative and the text's narrative structure which signifies the possibility of corrective behaviour. This is contrasted to *She* which is dominated by a deterministic world view. Holly wonders that 'Who would have believed that the writing on the potsherd was not only true, but that we should live to verify its truth, and that we two seekers should find her who was sought, patiently awaiting our coming in the tombs of Kôr?' (*She*, 243). This statement can be interpreted that the fate of the modern seekers has been already determined, and the prediction made by the past deprives humans of their free will. On the other hand, in *The Time Machine*, the perception of change is recurrent. As the Time Traveller comprehends the truth of the future society – the 'real' relationship between the Eloi and the Morlocks – he urges the necessity of change, which is derived from the Darwinian precept of change and struggle for survival.

In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin illuminates the role of change in the law of Nature: 'the conditions of life are supposed to have undergone a change, and this would manifestly be favourable to natural selection, by giving a better chance of profitable variation occurring; and unless profitable variation does occur, natural selection can do nothing.'<sup>201</sup> He also associates the concept of change with the idea of struggle for survival

For as all the inhabitants of each country are struggling together with nicely balanced forces, extremely slight modifications in the structure or habits one inhabitant would often give it an advantage over others; and still further modifications of the same kind would often still further increase the advantages.<sup>202</sup>

Wedding the Darwinian concept of change with his idea of 'intellectual versatility,' the Time Traveller insists, 'It is a law of nature we overlook; that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. [...] There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change' (*TM*, 100). Thus, the need for change emerges as an essential element in developing *The Time Machine's* theme.

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<sup>201</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, ed. Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), 68-9.

<sup>202</sup> Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 69.

The text dramatises the conflict between a deterministic world-view and free will, and highlights the individual's effort or will to change and struggle. According to the gloomy and pessimistic essay, 'Of a Book Unwritten' (1898), the human future is pre-determined to extinction due to the undeniable fact that 'the earth is ever radiating away heat into space.'<sup>203</sup> In spite of this depressing vision, Wells does not offer a place for divine providence. Instead, as well expressed in the Time Traveller's desperate assertion of change, he believes that human destiny lies in the individual's own hands. Darwin's philosophy that things are in continuous process, in a state of becoming, disturbed Haggard and made him seek reconciliation between providence and the Natural law of chance adaptation. Melancholy tones running through Haggard's imperial romances are due to the author's bitter realisation that the world is dictated by the cruel whims of Nature and the struggle for survival.<sup>204</sup> His depressed tone was, however, detected and laughed at by the young critic Wells: 'For does Mr. Haggard feed entirely on raw meat. Indeed, for lurid and somewhat pessimistic narrative, there is nothing like the ordinary currant bun, eaten new and in quantity.'<sup>205</sup> The Time Traveller's narrative of the human degeneration and his apocalyptic vision is not pessimistic because he can embrace the idea of becoming and the will to change.

The Time Traveller's insistence on change is also detected in Wells's early scientific essays and the utopian novel, *A Modern Utopia* (1905). In 'Zoological Retrogression' (1891) and 'The Extinction of Man' (1898), Wells warns against the complacency of the contemporary civilisation by introducing the idea of degeneration in Natural history. In 'Zoological Retrogression', Wells contends that the idea of evolution has begun to be replaced by 'the enormous importance of degeneration as a plastic process in nature.' He concludes this essay with a solemn warning: 'there is no guarantee in scientific knowledge of man's permanence or permanent ascendancy.'<sup>206</sup> The concept of 'natural man' and 'artificial man', which appear in 'Human Evolution: An Artificial Process' (1896),

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<sup>203</sup> H. G. Wells, 'Of a Book Unwritten,' *Certain Personal Matters: A Collection of Material, Mainly Autobiographical* (London: Lawrence, 1898), 170.

<sup>204</sup> Sandison, *The Wheels of Empire*, 45.

<sup>205</sup> Wells, 'The Literary Regimen,' *Certain Personal Matters: A Collection of Material, Mainly Autobiographical*, 75.

<sup>206</sup> H. G. Wells, 'Zoological Retrogression,' *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, eds. Robert M. Philmus, David Y. Hughes (Berkeley: U of California P, 1975), 159; 168. See also Wells's 'The Extinction of Man,' *Certain Personal Matters*, 173-179.

is suggested by Wells as an alternative to the degeneration of civilisation. In this essay, Wells explains these two concepts:

That in civilised man we have (1) an inherited factor, the natural man, who is the product of natural selection, the culminating ape [...], and (2) an acquired factor, the artificial man, the highly plastic creature of tradition, suggestion, and reasoned thought. In the artificial man we have all that makes the comforts and securities of civilisation a possibility. That factor and civilisation have developed, and will develop together.<sup>207</sup>

This quotation suggests that Wells views human ‘artificiality’ as a factor of the development of civilisation. In *A Modern Utopia*, Wells develops the concept of ‘artificial man’ into the idea of ‘kinetic utopia.’ Wells’s modern utopia offers the solution to causes of human degeneration which is suggested in *The Time Machine*. It continues to remind the people of the necessity to struggle for existence. At the beginning of the narrative, the unnamed narrator states that the utopia based on modern conception ‘must be not static but kinetic.’ The ‘kinetic’ utopia means the utopia which ‘must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages’ (*MU*, 5). In order to build the kinetic utopia, the conflict existing in the contemporary society should be accepted: utopians are going to ‘adopt no attitude of renunciation towards it [conflict], to face it in no ascetic spirit, but in the mood of the Western peoples, whose purpose is to survive and overcome’ (*MU*, 6).

The plot of *The Time Machine* has been viewed as ‘the plot of Evolution’ – evolution backwards.<sup>208</sup> In addition to the plot-making, this romance exploits Darwin’s philosophy of evolution in its narrative structure. As Beer notes, ‘Darwinian theory [...] has no place for stasis,’<sup>209</sup> and the refusal to remain stable is represented as the narrative of becoming and change in Wells’s text. First, the theme of change is demonstrated through the Time Traveller’s narrative of his experience. The Time Traveller continues to answer the current ‘riddle’ thrown up by his experiences of the future world by revising his previous conclusion. But at the same time, his conclusion produces another riddle which deconstructs the

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<sup>207</sup> H. G. Wells, ‘Human Evolution: An Artificial Process,’ *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, 217.

<sup>208</sup> John Lawton, introduction, *The Time Machine*, by H.G. Wells (London: Everyman, 1995) xxxii.

<sup>209</sup> Beer, *Darwin's Plots*, 1.

previous one. For instance, whenever he finishes an explanation, he does not forget to tell the guests that his conclusion is half-true or wrong: 'Very simple was my explanation, and plausible enough – as most wrong theories are!'; 'I felt pretty sure now that my second hypothesis was all wrong'; 'It may be as wrong as explanation as mortal wit could invent' (*TM*, 43; 74; 101). At the end of his narration, he denies the truth of his journey to the future world: 'Take it as a lie – or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race until I have hatched this fiction' (*TM*, 112). This final comment serves to leave the truthfulness of his experience to the judgment of the reader.

This process of modification leaves the Time Traveller's narrative itself open. In addition, at the end of the story, he disappears and there remains only his tale which he confides to the dinner guests and the flower he brought from the future world. The tale whose teller is absent cannot be confirmed as truth or false and hereby it is hard to verify the truthfulness of his extraordinary journey. Furthermore, the flower, which may function as an evidence of the journey, cannot be categorised by late nineteenth-century taxonomy. Thus, the ownerless tale and the uncategorisable flower identify *The Time Machine* as the inscrutable tale, and leave the readers as well as the traveller's dinner guests in ambiguity.

The theme of change is also represented through the frame narrative structure. The traveller's narrative is not told directly to the reader, but it is narrated by the primary narrator three years after the Time Traveller's disappearance. Wells deliberately conveys this fact to the reader in the final sentence of the main narrative: 'The Time Traveller vanished three years ago. And everybody knows now, he has never returned' (*TM*, 117). This is an effective device to bring the reader to a sudden realisation of the fact that the script they have been reading was written after the Time Traveller had narrated his adventure to his dinner guest. The time gap signifies that the text is structured through the frame narrator's memory, and this destabilises the entire narrative constructed by the narrator as well as the Time Traveller, causing the reader to raise a doubt regarding the whole event.

This narrative structure allows the Time Traveller's vision of the future to be represented from various points of view. The theme of change in the Time Traveller's narrative is repeated in contradictory opinions about the future

expressed by the Traveller and the narrator. Even though the first narrator believes the Time Traveller's journey to be true, he does not agree with the traveller's interpretation of his experience. At the end of *The Time Machine*, the primary narrator points out that the Time Traveller is pessimistic about the future of man: 'He [the Time Traveller] thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilisation only a foolish heaping that must inevitably fall back upon and destroy its makers in the end' (*TM*, 117). On the contrary, the narrator does not see the advancement of mankind in such a gloomy vision. The narrator states, 'I cannot think that these latter days of weak experiment, fragmentary theory, and mutual discord are indeed man's culminating time. [...] To me the future is still black and blank – is vast ignorance' (*TM*, 117). Instead, he sees the hope in humanity from the flowers which Weena gave to the Time Traveller: 'gratitude and a mutual tenderness still live on in the heart of man' (*TM*, 118).

In fact, throughout the text, it is hinted that the protagonist's adventure is made up by a very cunning and creative story teller. The author warns that the entire narrative of the Time Traveller might be a fiction fabricated by his imagination and his discontent with late-Victorian England. Even before the protagonist relates his extraordinary adventure to the dinner guests, the text hints at the fictionality of his story. According to the frame narrator, it is impossible for him and the readers to fully understand who the Time Traveller is: 'you never felt that you saw all round him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness' (*TM*, 15). This remark encapsulates the elusiveness of the Time Traveller's story. Also, the text is inundated with the phrases signifying the lies and the fictionality of the narrative such as 'Some Sleight-of-hand trick or other' 'or is this a trick?', 'too clever to be believed' (*TM*, 9, 14, 15).

Thus, the author invites the reader to read the text more actively. The Time Traveller's warning to his dinner guests, 'You must follow me carefully,' can be regarded as the author's warning to the reader (*TM*, 3). The frame narrator mentions the difference between reading and hearing, and hereby reminds the readers of their act of reading:

In writing down I feel with only too much keenness the inadequacy of pen and ink – and, above all, my own inadequacy – to express its quality. You read, I will suppose attentively enough; but you can not see the speaker's white, sincere face in the bright circle of the little lamp, nor hear the intonation of his voice. You cannot know how his expression followed the turns of his story! (*TM*, 21-2).

This complaint emphasises the act of writing of the frame narrator: the fact that this text is dictated and remembered by him and thus is filtered by his conscious thoughts. In doing so, the frame narrator asks the reader to make a careful examination of the frame narrative, which is in effect the text itself. In this sense, the complicated narrative technique and the theme of change allow Wells to end his first romance by leaving the various possibilities for an interpretation of the future world to the reader. Finally it enables the reader to add their own modification to the Time Traveller's and the primary narrator's interpretation of the future world by inviting the readers to the act of reading as that of re-writing.

The act of re-writing is also achieved by filling the narrative gaps produced through the narrator's fragmented record. *The Time Machine* establishes the arena in which realistic, objective and scientific narrative tones compete with elusive and impressionistic mood. Specifically, the text is mixed with the matters of reality and fantasticality, and this mixture is deliberately manipulated by the frame narrator and the time traveller. For instance, the frame narrator, who is supposed to be a logical observer and recorder, fails to picture the exact image of the time machine. The small duplicate of the time machine and the actual time machine are never clearly described by the frame narrator.<sup>210</sup> He can only picture these machines in part, but he cannot present the whole image and the materials consisting of them. For instance, the small model of the time machine is simply described to be made out of 'a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small clock [...] There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance' (*TM*, 10). Likewise the time machine is also presented to the reader through the narrator's fragmented impression: 'parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal' (*TM*, 14). Here, the exact shape and components of the time machine is left to the reader's imagination, and the text requires of the reader's active participation in reading.

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<sup>210</sup> Paul Alkon, 'Was the Time Machine Necessary?' *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine*, 27-38.

*The Time Machine*, the future-oriented story, is the result of the author's will to liberate himself and his romance from the contemporary genre expectations. In the review of this romance, a contemporary critic, R. H. Hutton, comprehends Wells's intention to write a romance about the future:

As a matter of choice, the novelist very judiciously chooses the Future in which to disport himself. And as we have no means of testing his conceptions of the Future, he is of course at liberty to imagine what he pleases. He is rather ingenious in his choice of what to imagine.<sup>211</sup>

The author is free in fabricating his conceptions of the future society because the critics cannot raise questions in regard to the truthfulness of events that haven't happened. Also he can actively criticise the form and theme of the past-oriented romances inundating the mass market by throwing this starkly contrasting story to the readers, who are familiar with the popular romance form.

In *Anticipations* (1902), Wells draws the reader's attention to the future and the possibility of change.

In the conjunction with the wide vistas opened by geological and astronomical discovery, the nineteenth century has indeed lost the very habit of thought from which the belief in a Fall arose. It is as if a hand had been upon the head of the thoughtful man and had turned his eyes about from the past to the future. In the past thought was legal in its spirit, it derived everything from the offences and promises of the dead. (*Anticipations*, 251)

*The Time Machine* conveys Wells's intention to criticise the existing trend of contemporary romances, which are content with dealing with the events related with the present and the past. *She* can be seen as a story about the past, deriving the present human lives from 'the offences and promises of the dead.' Thus, after the mission from the past has been consummated at the end of story, the threat of old Vincey does not leave the contemporary reader's consciousness: 'if you betray my trust, by Heaven I will haunt you' (*She*, 23). The final scenes of *The Time Machine* exhibit the apocalyptic vision of the earth and human civilisation. Consequently, Wells's 'openly prophetic narrative rhetoric' seems to contain a

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<sup>211</sup> Patrick Parrinder, ed., *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, 34-5.



deterministic world view, and to describe ‘the ruins of Richmond, the “rich world” on the outskirts of London made possible by nineteenth-century industrialism, that spells the doom of humanity.’<sup>212</sup> However, throughout the text, Wells embeds the hints of the possibilities of constructing a better future through the theme of change.

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<sup>212</sup> Patrick Parrinder, ‘From Rome to Richmond: Wells, Universal History and Prophetic Time,’ *H. G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine*, 114, 120.

#### **Chapter IV. Carnavalesque Romance: “They are Exercise of the Imagination in a Quite Different Field”**

In his Preface to *Scientific Romances*’ (1933), which is one of few essays containing Wells’s theorizing of his own scientific romances, he ventures to construct the new genealogical origin of his scientific romances:

These stories of mine collected here do not pretend to deal with possible things; they are exercises of the imagination in a quite different field. They belong to a class of writing which includes the *Golden Ass of Apuleius*, the *True Histories of Lucian*, *Peter Schlemil* and the story of *Frankenstein*. [...] My early, profound and lifelong admiration for Swift, appears again and again in this collection, and it is particularly evident in a predisposition to make the stories reflect upon contemporary political and social discussion (*LC*, 240; 242).

Revolting against the public’s attempts at categorising his romances as Vernian fantasies of ‘invention’ and ‘possible things’ (*LC*, 240, 241), Wells positions his romances in the tradition of the Menippea, gothic romance and Swiftian social romances. He locates the uniqueness of his romances in the combination of political and social discussion with the narrative of fantasy. The ultimate aim is to provide the reader with ‘the new angle’ through which to look at ‘human feelings and human ways’ (*LC*, 242).

To wed fantastic stories with philosophical, political and sociological speculations is not an idea improvised to defend his romances thirty-two years after his last major scientific romance, *The Food of the Gods* (1903) was published. His review of George MacDonald’s (1824-1905) *Lilith* (1895), which appeared in the *Saturday Review* in 1895, presages Wells’s idea of a good fantasy romance demonstrated in the ‘Preface to *Scientific Romances*’:

In *Lilith* he has returned to the vein of his delightful Phantasies, and the book is a perfect jungle of exuberant extravagance, complicated with metaphysics, whilst allegory runs in and out of the tangle, and unexpected gay-coloured flowers of digression are seen amidst the thicket of story. The leading idea, a mathematical conception full of romantic possibilities that no one has cared to touch, has been lying unused for years, but to-day is the day of metaphysical fiction (*LC*, 232).

Here, Wells acknowledges MacDonald's attempt at embedding speculation about metaphysics into the narrative of fantasy with 'unexpected gay-coloured flowers of digression.' His fascination with metaphysical fiction and his effort to place his romances in the tradition of the Menippean and Swiftian satire are associated with his desire to differentiate his romances from other popular narratives. Due to his complicated desires, his romances elude any kind of generic definition. Defying the critics' attempts at categorising them as generally established genres such as imperial romance, gothic romance and invasion romance, Wells's early scientific romances exhibit the characteristics of a genre written in the vein of carnivalesque literature.

According to Bakhtin, carnivalesque literature is the genre which embodies the characteristics of carnivals performed in the Medieval Age.<sup>213</sup> The essence of carnival of this period is in its attempt to refuse norms imposed by the authority:

Carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order: it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that immortalised and completed.<sup>214</sup>

When literature attempts to apply the main features of carnival (the feast of becoming, change and renewal) to the narrative form and the theme, it is called carnivalised literature. In this literary form, the theme of becoming is represented as ambivalent images, the image of the grotesque body, and refusal of the social orders of the old world.

The carnival spirit has been preserved from the Classics through Renaissance literature and social adventure novels to Romanticism and modernism. The degree of carnivalisation in each author of every literary movement – Enlightenment, realism, critical realism, pure adventure – is subordinated to the own special artistic tasks connected with its literary movement. Even though each sounds different, the presence of carnivalisation

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<sup>213</sup> For Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque literature, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984); *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryle Emerson (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984), the chapter 2; 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,' in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryle Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981).

<sup>214</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984), 10.

defines them as belonging to one and the same generic tradition.<sup>215</sup> In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin summarises the fundamental trait of carnivalesque literature: 'this carnival spirit offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realise the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things.'<sup>216</sup> In brief, what is asserted by carnivalised literature is to show the potential of the new world through the process of becoming, which is represented in images of the threshold, the public square and the ambivalent acts of carnival.

Wells expresses either directly or indirectly that he has an interest in literary works categorised as carnivalised literature by Bakhtin: Socratic Dialogue, Swiftian satire, the *Menippea*, Rabelais's comic romance,<sup>217</sup> Voltaire and the English literary tradition – Shakespeare, Sterne and Dickens. As carnivalised literature, Wells's romances focus on destroying the finalised world view of the dominant cultural values through various images of becoming and unfinalisability.

#### **i) Some Characteristics of Carnavalesque Literature in Wells's Short Stories**

Wells's short stories exhibit the features of carnivalesque literature when they consistently parody and deconstruct themes and ideologies of popular romance. As a seminal work in the history of colonialism and colonial literature,<sup>218</sup> the main theme of *Robinson Crusoe* is nation building. Crusoe's narrative demonstrates that with the Bible and his guns, he succeeds in implanting the hierarchical order of Western civilisation in the new world, his island. Building the nation is completed when Crusoe establishes his identity by subjugating not only Nature but also the other races represented by Man Friday, the cannibal. The theme of nation building has become a leitmotif in adventure novels from English adventure novels, R. M. Ballantyne's (1825-1894) *The Coral Island* (1858), Captain Marryat's (1792-1848) *Masterman Ready or the Wreck in the Pacific* (1841) to the post-colonial novel J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986). While in the novels

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<sup>215</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 160.

<sup>216</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 34.

<sup>217</sup> See Polly's fascination with Rabelais's comic novels in *The History of Mr Polly*.

<sup>218</sup> For instance, in *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), Peter Hulme reads *Robinson Crusoe* as "a colonial romance" (200-8).

by Ballyantyne and Captain Marryat, the theme of colonisation is faithfully observed, in Coetzee's *Foe*, it is mocked and parodied. Wells also utilises and satirises this theme in his island story, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896).

'Aepyornis Island,' spectacularly deconstructs the theme of Defoe's novel. Here, the protagonist does not have any desire or intention to control nature and to build his own nation. Early carnivalised literature, the Menippean satire parodies the epic genre. The way in which the epic is satirised and parodied is called 'carnivalisation' by Bakhtin on the grounds that the high literature filled with gods, high born heroes and their heroic dares are replaced by low-class protagonists' earth-bound adventures.<sup>219</sup> If the epic is the grand banquet organised by kings and aristocracies, Menippean literature is the peasants' festival, and in so doing, the Menippean satires deconstruct all the hierarchies and ideologies of the epic. In this sense, the epic is the literature of officialdom and the Menippea is the literature of carnival literature. Also, since the act of parodying itself impregnates the other's voice (the voice parodied), carnival literature is double-voiced, and hereby the literature of polyphony. Embodying the characteristics of the Menippean satire, 'Aepyornis Island' is a carnivalisation of *Robinson Crusoe*.

The protagonist of Wells's short story complains about the boredom and loneliness of the castaway's life. He muses that 'when I was a kid I thought nothing could be finer or more adventurous than the Robinson Crusoe business, but that place was as monotonous as a book of sermons.'<sup>220</sup> This statement is directed at Robinson Crusoe's reading of the Bible and his consequent repentance; it mocks Defoe's textualisation of the act of reading the Bible with the purposes of celebrating Protestantism, the main ideology of eighteenth-century English bourgeois society. For the nameless narrator/protagonist, to read the Bible, which is substituted by 'a book of sermons' in Wells's story, is only as boring as it is to live alone on the deserted island. Instead, like Mr. Bedford in *The First Men in the Moon*, the protagonist reads newspapers: 'Wonderful things these newspapers! I never read one through thoroughly before, but it's odd what you get up to when you're alone, as I was' ('Aepyornis Island,' 57). To find pleasure by reading the newspaper is the act of secularisation of the Christian ritual of reading the Bible.

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<sup>219</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 133.

<sup>220</sup> H.G. Wells, 'Aepyornis Island,' *The Complete Short Stories of H. G. Wells*, ed. John Hammond (London: Phoenix, 1998), 58. Subsequent quotations from this work are cited parenthetically in the text.

Also, unlike Defoe's hero, who spends most of his time in building his own nation or civilisation on the island, Wells's hero occupies himself in entertaining himself by ornamenting the island and lying to his Man Friday: 'I amused myself, too, by decorating the island with designs worked in sea-urchins and fancy shells of various kinds. [...] I used to tell him lies about my friends at home' ('Aepynornis Island,' 60). Ornamentation and lying are opposite to Crusoe's practicality, and generate pure aesthetic pleasure. These acts may connote Parson's defiant act against anything 'tidy, tasteful, correct'<sup>221</sup> which he defines as the bleakness of the middle-class's tastes in *The History of Mr Polly*. Both the attempts of Parsons and the nameless protagonist in this short story demonstrate the feeling of excitement which can be achieved by violating the regulations imposed by authority (even though the protagonist in 'Aepynornis Island' is not conscious of this).

He cannot dominate the inferior race, which in this fable is wittily replaced by the extinct bird named Man Friday. Instead, his life on the heaven-like island is threatened by the ungrateful bird:

It was the brutal ingratitude of the creature. I'd been more than a brother to him. I'd hatched him, educated him. A great gawky, out-of-date bird! And me a human being – heir of the ages and all that. [...] When he caught me up it he had a regular Bank Holiday with the calves of my legs. [...] Think of the shame of it, too! Here was this extinct animal mooning about my island like a sulky duke, and me not allowed to rest the sole of my foot on the place. I told him straight that I didn't mean to be chased about a desert island by any damned anachronisms ('Aepynornis Island,' 61).

These passages reveal the way in which the Robinsonade hierarchy is deconstructed on multiple levels. For the bird, the protagonist is a creator, father and teacher. The protagonist has hatched, fed and educated the bird like Crusoe did Man Friday. Friday's ingratitude to his master signifies a rebellion, a malicious challenge against authority. Furthermore, this animal is an 'out-of-date' and extinct bird; and the protagonist is the 'heir of the ages.' The hierarchies not only between races – English and the cannibal – but also between human and animal are utterly reversed. The bird's attempts to have a Bank Holiday banquet

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<sup>221</sup> H. G. Wells, *The History of Mr Polly*, Vol. 7 (New York: Scribner's, 1926), of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-7), 27. Subsequent quotations are cited parenthetically in the text.

with his master's body and the narrator's comparison of the bird with 'a sulky duke' are effectual representations of the ruined hierarchy. As he clearly concludes, the relationship between them is 'damned anachronisms.' The double-voiced narrative is decorated by the images of carnival: feast, the bird's bank holiday, the world of upside down, the fantastic situation of a man's living with an extinct bird. These features carnivalise the would-be simple satire of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Another short story, 'Jimmy Goggles the God' (1898) is replete with ambivalent images of carnival king rituals. In carnival, those who are slaves in officialdom are enthroned and their crowning leads to mockery and consequent decrowning. The moment of crowning coexists with the expected decrowning. In 'Jimmy Goggles,' the unnamed story-teller, who is an idle and fraudulent seaman, is deified by the heathens of an island in the South Sea. 'Jimmy Goggles' is the name of a diving-dress, which is ridiculed by his co-frauds in the form of crowning the carnival king: 'And every blessed day all of us used to drink the health of Jimmy Goggles in rum, and unscrew his eye and pour a glass of rum in him.'<sup>222</sup> In the island, the protagonist in the diving-suit becomes a god and is worshipped by the natives. The object of the natives' deification is not him (the human inside the suit) but the diving dress, named Jimmy Goggles, which is an object mocked by him and his co-frauds. Hence, the protagonist in the clownish diving suit incarnates the slave king. The god has a clownish appearance: he was a 'false god no doubt, and blasphemous,' and also he was a god, who had been 'guyed in that stinking silly dress! Four months' ('Jimmy Goggles the God,' 485). The scene of his escape is the telling scene of decrowning of the carnival king: 'I was out of it all – going home to Banya along the coast, hiding in bushes by day, and thieving food from the villages by night. Only weapon, a spear. No clothes, no money. Nothing' ('Jimmy Goggles the God,' 486).

The entire narrative of this story is also furnished with the essential feature of carnivalised literature: feast or festival. In the Sanderses' brig, the treasure hunters feast with 'jokes and drink' sprinkled by the hope of being wealthy ('Jimmy Goggles the God,' 478). The island is a carnivalesque space where the natives sing and dance to show their respect to their false god. The islanders are

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<sup>222</sup> Wells, 'Jimmy Goggles the God,' *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells*, 478. Subsequent quotations from this work are cited parenthetically in the text.

extraordinary successful in harvest, hunting and war, and the protagonist feasts with their offerings.<sup>223</sup>

Parodying the officially established grammar of the colonial romance, and deconstructing the supreme image of romantic heroism, 'Aepyornis Island' and "Jimmy Goggles the God" not only satirise the romances of officialdom but also presage carnivalesque features of Wells's major scientific romances like *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The War of the Worlds* and *The Food of the Gods*. Throughout his major scientific romances, Wells develops the features of the carnivalesque literature into a new genre.

## ii) *The Island of Doctor Moreau*: The 'Comus Rout' of Becoming and Changing

### The island as the site of grotesque carnival

*The Island of Doctor Moreau* is written in the convention of the island story. This romance might be categorised as a direct descendent of *The Tempest* and *Robinson Crusoe*. However, Wells's romance does not observe the themes developed in these conventional island stories. Instead, his text is a carnivalisation of the traditional island story. It parodies and deconstructs themes of the shipwreck-on-the-island romance: nation building and colonisation.<sup>224</sup> Prospero and Crusoe successfully colonise the previously unknown land and add it to the empire's archive. By contrast, Wells's heroes, Moreau and Montgomery not only fail to build their own nation but also lead the island to chaos.

When critics read English literature such as Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the space of the island is conceived as a microcosm of

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<sup>223</sup> 'They won a battle with another tribe – I got a lot of offerings I didn't want through it – they had wonderful fishing, and their crop of pourra was exceptional fine' ('Jimmy Goggles the God,' 484).

<sup>224</sup> In analysing Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island*, in *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge, 1989), Pierre Macherey identifies Island stories with nation building (p. 243-4).



England.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, as Linda Dryden contends, the island in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* reflects *fin-de-siècle* London.<sup>226</sup> Montgomery's cynical statement that 'I'm dammed [...] if this place is not as bad as Gower Street – with its cats' (*DM*, 59) and Prendrick's chilling realisation of the similarity of Londoners – especially, the working class – with the Beast People clearly evince that Wells ventures to project London onto the island (*DM*, 171).

However, to perceive the island merely as a representation of England or London can miss the point that the island might be said to represent these spaces but it is the representation of them seen through a screen which transforms the island into a second world outside England. In other words, it reflects what happens in England or even in the whole of human society, but it does so in an upside-down way; it is the space of carnival outside officialdom.

Moreau's island functions as the theatre where various carnivals are performed. The carnival practiced on this island, however, is not Bakhtinian joyful festival; instead it is a grotesque orgy. Soon after publishing this book, in a letter to Elizabeth Healey, Wells himself wishes that this dark portrayal of the human civilisation is to be recognised as more than a 'festival of 'orrors'.<sup>227</sup> In this statement, Wells makes it clear that his story is not a simple exhibition of the horrible stories written for entertaining the reading public; instead, it is a satire of the life of humans, which is efficiently asserted through striking carnival images.

Prendick's comparison of the vivisection conducted by Moreau with a 'Comus rout':

These sickening scoundrels [Moreau and Montgomery] had merely intended to keep me back, to fool me with their display of confidence, and presently fall upon me with a fate more horrible than death, with torture, and after torture the most hideous degradation it was possible to conceive – to send me off, a lost soul, a beast, to the rest of their Comus rout. (*DM*, 63)

In Greek mythology and John Milton's masque *Comus* (1634), Comus is the god of festivity; he transforms humans into hybrid monsters by making them drink

<sup>225</sup> Gillian Beer, 'Discourses of the Island,' *Literature and Science as Modes of Expression*, ed. Frederick Amrine (Dordrecht: Kulwer, 1989), 20.

<sup>226</sup> Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (London: Macmillan, 2003), 168.

<sup>227</sup> Wells, *The Correspondence of H.G. Wells*, 261: 'I hope you've read *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, and I do hope that you don't think [it] merely a festival of horrors.'

from his enchanted cups. In Prendick's speculation, Moreau's experimentation is equated with the Comus orgy; and in Moreau's spree, Prendick becomes the carnival king, who is about to be degraded into animality. The 'sickening scoundrels' are the carnival mobs who are to crown the slave king, Prendick, through fooling him and to decrown him through degrading him to the bestial stage. By wedding Comus's orgy with Prendick's degradation into the animal-human hybrid monster, Wells deliberately textualises the images of grotesque carnival in Prendick's horror-stricken narrative. Thus, as it is noticed by the contemporary critic Augustin Filon, the whole text is replete with 'the spectacle of this orgy with its combination of bestial instinct and civilised vice.'<sup>228</sup>

Prendick's first encounter with the Beast People's law-saying ritual is vividly described as if it is carnival singing and dancing: 'All three began slowly to circle round, raising and stamping their feet and waving their arms; [...] Their eyes began to sparkle and their ugly faces to brighten with an expression of strange pleasure' (*DM*, 50). Undoubtedly grotesque as it is, the image of the sparkling eyes tinted with 'an expression of strange pleasure' intimates the joyousness experienced and felt by the Beast People.

The carnival on Moreau's island reaches its climax with Montgomery's Bank Holiday.

"Drink," cried Montgomery; "drink, ye brutes! Drink, and be men. Dammy, I'm the cleverest! Moreau forgot this. This is the last touch. Drink, I tell you." [...]

"Sing," I heard Montgomery shout; "sing all together," 'Confound old Prendick,' ... That's right. Now again: 'Confound old Prendick.' [...] Each went howling at his own sweet will, yelping insult at me, or giving whatever other vent this new inspiration of brandy demanded. (*DM*, 139-140)

Montgomery orchestrates the Comus orgy by encouraging the Beast People to drink. While Comus transforms humans into hybrid monsters, Montgomery insists that he can convert the monsters into humans. This scene enshrines carnivalesque ambivalence. The festive atmosphere of drinking and singing is paralleled with mockeries and insults as Montgomery orders the Beast People: 'sing all together, "Confound old Prendick."' Montgomery, who presides over

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<sup>228</sup> Patrick Parrinder, ed., *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1972), 56.

this feast, elevates himself as ‘the cleverest’, and celebrates his liberation from Moreau’s power. Hence, he becomes a king among the beast folk. The Beast People are also elevated to be ‘men’, who can go howling ‘at [their] own sweet will.’

Montgomery’s bank holiday ends with the ritual of fire:

I heard a yelling from many throats, a tumult of exultant cries, passing down towards the beach, whooping and howling and excited shrieks, that seemed to come to a stop near water’s edge. The riot rose and fell; I heard heavy blows and the splintering smash of wood, but it did not trouble me then. A discordant chanting began. [...] Up the beach by the boathouse a bonfire was burning, raining up sparks into the indistinctness of the dawn. (*DM*, 141-142)

The dramatic depiction of the Beast People’s excited yelling and screaming, and the carnival fire signals the acme of Montgomery’s bank holiday. However, in this passage, the carnival ritual of singing, dancing and the bonfire, which should be cheerful, only produce a grotesque atmosphere. Singing can only make sounds of ‘a yelling from many throats’ and ‘shrieks.’ The tune of the song is merely a discordant chanting.

For the Beast People, the ‘riot’ is a truly carnivalistic ritual. Brian Aldiss has argued that they resemble the late-Victorian proletariat.<sup>229</sup> The deformed and monstrous bodies of the Beast People are not so different from those of the contemporary East End factory workers, which appear in Gissing’s novel, *The Nether World* (1889). Gissing describes the bestial body of the poverty-stricken Victorian proletariat:

Observe the middle-aged women; it would be small surprise that their good looks had vanished, but whence comes it they are animal, repulsive, absolutely vicious in ugliness? Mark the men in their turn: four in every six have visages so deformed by ill-health that they excite disgust; their hair is cut down to within half an inch of the scalp; their legs are twisted out of shape by evil conditions of life from birth upwards.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Brian Aldiss, introduction, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, by H. G. Wells (London: Everyman, 1993), xxxi.

<sup>230</sup> George Gissing, *The Nether World*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 109.

The animal-like and viciously ugly women and the men of twisted legs in Gissing's novel reappear in the bestial image of Wells's *Beast People*:

They had fat heavy chinless faces, retreating foreheads, and a scant bristly hair upon their heads (*DM*, 49).

I noticed then the abnormal shortness of their legs and their lank clumsy feet. [...] The three creatures engaged in this mysterious rite were human in shape, and yet human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal (*DM*, 50).

As Baldick argues, in late-Victorian naturalism and realism, the monsters that are considered as denizens in the world of gothic or fantastic romances reappear in the portraits of the urban poor.<sup>231</sup> For the *Beast People*, Montgomery and Moreau symbolise the authorities equipped with whips and guns. They stand as the god figure and the masters to the *Beast People*. Thus, the fact that the *Beast People* kill the two masters means the annihilation of the authorities.

Even though the carnival practised on Moreau's island is not the cheerful and joyful festivity theorised by Bakhtin, the entire text is furnished with characteristics of carnivalised literature. Prendick's narrative is constituted with scenes of feasting, singing, dancing and drinking. Wells's scientific romances emphasise the physicality and materiality of humanity more than spirituality and intelligence. The *Time Traveller* and the *Invisible Man* ask for a meal before they relate his stories to his dinner guests and to Kemp. The *Time Traveller* rejects the Editor's request for the story: 'I want something to eat. I won't say a word until I get some peptone into my arteries. Thanks. And the salt' (*TM*, 15). Likewise, the *Invisible Man* postpones revealing secrets of invisibility after consuming food, drink and smoke: 'Give me some food and drink,' 'Give me some whisky' (*IM*, 106), 'I am starving' (*IM*, 107), 'For God's sake, let me smoke in peace for a little while! And then I will begin to tell you' (*IM*, 110). The *Time Traveller's* adventure in the world of the *Eloi* and the *Morlocks* begins with the *Eloi*

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<sup>231</sup> Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteen-Century Writing*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 190: 'While a Mary Shelley or, say, a Nathaniel Hawthorne can show us an isolated transgressor or a lone pitiful monster in more or less allegorical form, a novelist like Gissing who depicts a complex urban society in some intricacy will be able to expose more fully that interlocking of causes and of personal circumstances which constitutes the social production of monstrosity. Realism, in short, can flesh out and provide detailed evidence of those monstrous processes which in a symbolic or Romantic mode of fiction usually appear only as mythic patterns.'

vegetarian banquet. The Morlocks hunt the Eloi for their food. The Martians in *The War of the Worlds* invade the earth for a good meal<sup>232</sup> Thus, in Wells's works, eating, the quintessential and physical desire of a human being, is more emphasised than any other mental activities.

In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, motives of hunger and strong appetite prevail. The driving force of the narrative is the desire for food. Prendick's narrative begins with the insinuation of cannibalism at the shipwreck scene, and the main conflict in Moreau's little community is triggered by Montgomery's releasing of rabbits. In particular, Prendick's desire to eat and drink is emphasised throughout the text. One of the first remarks he makes when he is rescued by Montgomery is 'May I have solid food?' (*DM*, 8) Also, the protagonist frequently complains about lack of food and blood during his adventure. The text is inundated with such phrases referring to his hunger: 'I felt all the wretcheder for the lack of a breakfast. Hunger and a shortage of blood-corpuscles take all the manhood from a man', 'The food contributed to the sense of animal comfort I experienced', 'So I lay still where I was until I began to think of food and drink', 'Where can I get something to eat' (*DM*, 26, 60, 65, 68). The main tool of dominating the beast folk is to control their gastronomic urges by prohibiting them from eating 'Flesh and Fish' (*DM*, 72) and tasting blood. The Leopard Man's tasting blood breaks the order of the island and 'the whole balance of human life in miniature' (*DM*, 122) starts to crumble.

At the level of form, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is built on the images of the threshold and the public square, which are also the elements comprising narratives of carnivalesque literature. Reading Dostoevsky's carnivalesque novels, Bakhtin lists the places in which the main actions of Dostoevsky's characters are carried out: 'the threshold, the foyer, the corridor, the landing, the stairway, its steps, doors opening onto the stairway, gates to front and back yards, and beyond these, the city: squares, streets, facades, taverns, dens, bridges, gutters.'<sup>233</sup> The threshold symbolises the boundary between inside and outside; and accordingly it signals that the narrative will move on to the crisis and the turning point. They are adopted by carnivalesque novels to imply the events and the characters that are at points of crisis, at turning points and catastrophes. The images of the threshold

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<sup>232</sup> Brian Aldiss, introduction, *The War of the Worlds* (London: Penguin, 2005), xxiii.

<sup>233</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 170.

and the public square also connote the borderline between sanity and insanity; death and life; degradation and elevation; existence and non-existence; reality and phantasmagoria. The images of threshold, the ship, the island, the edge of water and the rail are the main spaces embodying the text, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

The chapter titles of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* indicate that the whole story is built on the motif of standing on the threshold: 'In the Dingey [dinghy] of the "Lady Vain"', 'The Man who was going Nowhere,' 'At the Schooner's Rail,' 'The Man who had Nowhere to Go,' 'The Locked Door,' 'The Hunting of the Man,' 'A Parley,' 'A Catastrophe,' 'Montgomery's "Bank Holiday"', 'Alone with the Beast Folk,' 'The Reversion of the Beast Folk,' and 'The Man alone.' These titles encapsulate themes of carnival literature such as the moment of decision, crisis time and becoming.

Prendick's narrative textualises the image of threshold and liminal arenas, which stand for the space of becoming and the crisis. Before Prendick happens to sojourn on the island, the main events happen on the ships: the dinghy of the shipwrecked ship, the *Lady Vain*, and the schooner, the *Ipecacuanha*. The boat is the liminal space situated between life and death. Outside the ship is death: the dinghy of the *Lady Vain* is followed by sharks. However, the ship itself symbolises a dualistic meaning since even inside the boat, life is threatened by a cannibalistic act:

It was, I think, the sixth before Helmar gave voice to the thing we all had in mind. [...] I stood out against it with all my might, was rather for [...] perishing together among the sharks that followed us; but when Helmar said that if his proposal was accepted we should have drink, the sailor came round to him. (*DM*, 5)

The unspeakable event of cannibalism is understated in Helmar's suggestion. Prendick is forced either to agree to kill one of the survivors or to throw himself into the sea, which means suicide. Hence, the boat is the space of the threshold, where 'decisions should be made, the forbidden line is overstepped, and where one is renewed – survived – or perished.'<sup>234</sup> In this romance, the cannibal act is the forbidden line, which should be trespassed if one wants to survive.

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<sup>234</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 167.

The dialogue between characters also takes place on the threshold. For instance, as the chapter title 'At the Schooner's Rail' shows, the place where Prendick and Montgomery talk about Montgomery's past is the rail of the ship, the *Ipecacuanha*. The Rail itself represents the borderline between life and death, and it implies that beyond the rail, the character will face decrowning and the consequent mockery. In the next chapter titled 'The Man Who Had Nowhere to Go', it turns out that the title, 'At the Schooner's Rail' is a prediction of Prendick's predicament; as the title implies, the next day Prendick is to be forced to face death and is mocked by the captain (*DM*, 9-10).<sup>235</sup>

Montgomery's 'strange attendant,' M'ling is also described as a figure standing on the threshold: 'An uncouth black figure of a man, a figure of no particular import, hung over the taffrail, against the starlight' (*DM*, 22). When Prendick sees M'ling first, he is impressed with the ominous inhumanity in the eyes of M'ling: 'I did not know then that a reddish luminosity, at least, is not uncommon in human eyes. The thing came to me as stark inhumanity' (*DM*, 21). His elusive identity which is located somewhere between human and beast, adds to the mood of precariousness surrounding the image of the figure standing at the threshold.

When Prendick is chased by Moreau and his Beast People on the island, he finds himself standing at the edge of the island, 'at the margin of the water'; it is between the sea and the land: 'I walked to the very edge of the salt water' (*DM*, 81). 'Margin' and 'edge' accentuates the images of threshold and liminality. Furthermore, the text intensifies the liminality of the island itself. The island is described as 'the edge of things' (*DM*, 139) and as being 'off track to anywhere' (*DM*, 29).

The image of threshold is closely related to the carnival rituals: mocking at crowning and decrowning. The text hosts the rituals of mocking at a carnival king through elevation or degradation, and crowning or decrowning. The king of carnival is a figure embodying ambivalences because he comes from the lower class of officialdom: slaves and clowns. Hence, their crowning and decrowning are performed to the derision of the crowd. The captain of the *Ipecacuanha*

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<sup>235</sup> The chapter titles of the Atlantic Edition are slightly different from those of the first edition of the text. 'The Man Who Had Nowhere to Go', the title of the chapter V in the first edition is replaced by 'The Landing on the Island' in the Atlantic Edition. In this paragraph, I consult a text based on the first edition: H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993).

swears that he is the king of the ship: 'I tell you I'm captain of the ship – Captain and Owner. I'm the law here, I tell you – the law and the prophets'; 'Law be damned! I'm king here' (*DM*, 15; 21). He elevates himself from captain to kingship. However, his elevation is presented to the reader as an ambivalent procedure. He is a clownish drunken king speaking 'so much vile language' (*DM*, 17). He is immediately decrowned by Prendick, who commands him to "shut up" (*DM*, 16).

In the introduction of the story, the frame narrator, Prendick's nephew, states that the *Ipecacuanha* has been missing, and that Prendick was rescued in an open boat belonging to the schooner.<sup>236</sup> According to this information, the reader can conjecture the fact that the ship may have been shipwrecked and, accordingly, the captain including his crew may be dead. Thus, the captain's oath can sound like a dead man's. In addition, given the fact that the name of the captain, John Davis is strikingly the same as that of the drunken captain in Stevenson's *The Ebb-Tide*, (1894) in which he is humiliated by Attwater, the readers, particularly those who were already familiar with Stevenson's story, can deduce that Wells's captain's decrowning is already preconditioned.

The three humans and all the Beast People on the island also go through the process of elevation and degradation. Through Moreau's vivisection, the animals can be crowned to become humanised but after his death, they become degenerate. Moreau presides over the Beast People as a king and a god, but is killed by his creatures.<sup>237</sup> Montgomery attempts to succeed the throne of Moreau, but is killed by one of the violent beast folks in the process. Prendick is not an exception to the ritual of decrowning. He is an upper-class gentleman: he is 'the private gentleman' who 'had taken to natural history as a relief from the dullness of [his] comfortable independence' (*DM*, 11). Therefore, his social hierarchy is higher than any of the other characters in the story.<sup>238</sup> However, he is degraded to plead for his life to the captain of the *Ipecacuanha*, and he is also mocked by the captain: 'Then I realised I was in that little hell of mine again, now half-swamped. [...] I

<sup>236</sup> In the Atlantic Edition, the introduction by the frame narrator, Charles Edward Prendick is omitted. Here I also use the first edition of the text; Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993), 3.

<sup>237</sup> In John Frenkenheimer's 1996 film, *The Island of Dr Moreau*, Marlon Brando, who stars as Moreau, wears a clownish costume when he appears himself in front of his beast folk. This also indicates the carnival king: the slave/clown king.

<sup>238</sup> Margaret Atwood's introduction, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Penguin, 2005), xv.



saw [...] the red-haired captain mocking at me over the Taff rail [...]' (*DM*, 27). This passage shows how Prendick's status is degraded to become a decrowned king, who is mocked by others. Also, he is derided by the Beast People when they enjoy Montgomery's bank holiday (*DM*, 139-40). His degradation continues to the stage in which he is nearly bestialised during the final periods of his staying on the island.

Contradictory images such as laughter and death, grotesqueness and joyfulness are also the characteristics of carnivalesque literature. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the act of laughing and the threat of death are intertwined. When Prendick witnesses the two other survivors of the *Lady Vain* sinking into the sea, he hears his own laughter: 'I remember laughing at that and wondering why I laughed. The laugh caught me suddenly like a thing from without' (*DM*, 5). Here the juxtaposition of death and jest is distinctively highlighted. The laugh 'from without' denotes not only self-mockery but also the state of being mocked by others. The tragic deaths of Moreau and Montgomery also coexist with the jovial moods of festival: bonfire, dancing and singing. Montgomery's last desperate call to Prendick for help reaches his ears in the chaotic mood of festival: 'Up the beach by the boathouse a bonfire was burning, raining up spark into the indistinctness of the dawn. Around this struggled a mass of black figures' (*DM*, 142).

The law-saying scene is double-voiced and ambivalent in the sense that it parodies Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) and the religious ceremony in the official church. Taking the theme of *The Jungle Book* into account, the meaning of the law-saying in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* becomes clearer. In *The Jungle Book*, the law of the jungle succeeds in keeping the hierarchy between human and animals. For instance, as the narrator mentions, 'The Law of the Jungle, which never orders anything without a reason, forbids every beast to eat Man.'<sup>239</sup> This helps Mowgli to be classified as human in the jungle and not as an animal. In Kipling's story, the Law, which prevents the beasts from eating men, also serves to maintain their own identities as animals. Similarly, even though the laws in Wells's romance are not formulated by Moreau himself to exercise his authority on the Beast People, they function to control the humanised beasts'

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<sup>239</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book* (London: Martin Secker, 1980), 19.

bodies by deceiving them into believing that they are human. Consequently the laws have partially succeeded in suppressing the beast instinct. However, the laws of Moreau do not accomplish the drawing of a lucid borderline between human and animal; instead they blur the boundary. While participating in the Beast People's law-saying ritual, Prendick experiences the knowledge that the beast instinct comes through his human skin: 'a kind of rhythmic fervour fell on all of us; we gabbled and swayed faster and faster, repeating this amazing law. Superficially the contagion of these brute men was upon me, but deep down within me laughter and disgust struggled together' (*DM*, 73).

The unclear boundary is distinctively marked in the idea of the ever-changing body. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* has been discussed in terms of the textual meanings of the body: specifically, the monstrous body of the Beast People. Critics have argued that through the representation of the body as becoming chaotic or monstrous, Wells purports to reveal the falseness of the ideology of the Western civilisation.<sup>240</sup> However, what is emphasised in the text is that by juxtaposing the concept of the artificiality of the soul with the materiality of the body, the text lays bare the material aspect of the body; this materiality is closely related to the body of becoming and thereby it triggers the theme of change.

Foucault conceptualises the body as the arena upon which medicine and other disciplines such as school, religion, prison, army and medicine can wield their power and knowledge.<sup>241</sup> It is the locus of discourses of regulation and control. Through vivisection, Moreau exerts his power over the body of the Beast People. Moreau and his experiment symbolise the power of medicine as Moreau himself calls his island 'a biological station – of a sort' (*DM*, 32). To the beast folk, Moreau is not only a god, a teacher, a master but also a medical doctor. Moreau, like a scientist-priest, believes in the progress of human civilisation through science: 'I remember the green stillness of the island and the empty ocean about us as though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me' (*DM*, 94).

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<sup>240</sup> As to the reading of the body of the Beast People as the chaotic body, see Kelly Hurley's *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996). In *In Frankenstein's Shadow*, Chris Baldick argues that '*The Island of Doctor Moreau* is not just a travesty of religion's conflict with instinct, or of divine creation and its cruel injustice; it is a fable which directs painful probings at the contemporary miscreation of the world that we call human' (p. 156).

<sup>241</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 136-141.

The island is presented as a docile body (perhaps a female body) lying in front of the scientist, Moreau and welcoming his entrance. It seems to have been waiting to be conquered by the Western scientist. Even though Moreau has had to suffer from a series of bitter failures, he still does not give up the hope to conquer 'the stubborn beast flesh' (*DM*, 96).

However, the Beast People are continuously changing (in fact degenerating) into the chaotic body: 'I have been doing better; but somehow the things drift back again, the stubborn beast flash grows, day by day again [...] I mean to do better things still. I mean to conquer that' (*DM*, 96). The confident scientist's phraseology such as 'doing better' and 'conquer' is undermined by the languages of the resisting body, 'the stubborn beast flesh.' The ever-changing body is the carnival body in terms that it defies the control of authority.

The Beast People are not only the bodies of becoming but also those of hybridity. As Moreau explains, the Beast People are made by means of tissue grafts from several animals: they are 'monsters manufactured' through the process of implantation of several 'fragments' from other animals' bodies (*DM*, 89). The body consisting of the multiple layers of fragmented tissues from other animals, as Halberstam points out, indicates the transgressed boundaries between the body and skin: 'Skin houses the body and it is figured in Gothic as the ultimate boundary, the material that divides the inside from the outside. [...] Slowly but surely the outside becomes the inside and the hide no longer conceals or contains, it offers itself up as text, as body, as monster.'<sup>242</sup> In Moreau's beast folk, here is no decisive boundary between the skin and the body. Hence, when they degenerate into animals, they become hybrid monsters.

The detailed description of the monstrosity of the Beast People's body is intended by the author to enhance the effect of grotesqueness. The vivid visualisation of the grotesque body is one of the essential features of carnivalesque literature which emphasises the materiality of the body; mainly focusing on portraying the 'material lower bodily stratum' such as genitalia, buttocks, anus, belly and breasts.<sup>243</sup> The lower stratum of the body is related to the on-going process of becoming: 'it is not a closed, complete unit; it is unfinished,

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<sup>242</sup> Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (London: Duke UP, 1995), 7.

<sup>243</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 26.

outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits'<sup>244</sup> The celebration of the grotesque body in the medieval carnival is a resistance against the concept of the classical body celebrated by the Renaissance, which is smooth, closed and finished.

Prendick's perspective represents the Victorian upper- and middle-class readers' viewpoints since the text depicts Prendick as an upper-class gentleman with independent means. From his point of view, the body of hybridity and becoming is the grotesque body, which arouses 'a queer spasm of disgust' (*DM*, 29). The object of abhorrence is not only the Beast People's grotesquely deformed appearance, but also their animal stigma, which stubbornly appear on the man's skin achieved by Moreau. Human civilisation has endeavoured to remove the animal stigmata through social institutions such as education, religion, morality and philosophy. When the *Ipecacuanha* approaches Moreau's island, the captain David proclaims, 'We'll have a clean ship soon of the whole biling' of 'em. [...] We're clearing the ship out, cleaning the whole blessed ship out. [...] This ship ain't for beast and worse than beasts, any more' (*DM*, 23; 24; 25). In the first edition, the captain's speech is different: 'This ship ain't for beast and cannibals, and worse than beasts, any more.'<sup>245</sup> Here, his mention of cannibal is a strong implication of Prendick's act of cannibalism in the dingy of the *Lady Vain*. According to late-nineteenth century anthropology, beasts, cannibals and primitive natives are all categorised as the living proof of the origins of human or Western civilisation.<sup>246</sup> Thus, the 'clean ship' connotes the captain's (and the Westerners') desire to have a clean and complete civilisation that is safely distanced from its origin.

The optimistic nineteenth-century belief in the perfect combination of the human body with its soul is derided in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. In its dialogical answer to late-Victorian progressivism, the text asserts the imperfectability of the combination of the body and soul. Their ideal union is simply disallowed in this text. Moreau has a firm confidence in the so-called artificial modification:

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<sup>244</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 26.

<sup>245</sup> See *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993), 20.

<sup>246</sup> Daniel Bivona. *Desire and Contradiction*, 79.

The possibilities of vivisection do not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis. A pig may be educated. The mental structure is even less determinate than the bodily. In our growing science of hypnotism we find the promise of a possibility of replacing old inherent instincts by new suggestions, grafting upon or replacing the inherited fixed ideas (*DM*, 90-1).

However, even though Moreau is positive about creating the human body out of the animal body, he complains about the difficulty of implanting intelligence into the animals' brain and head: 'but it is in the subtle grafting and re-shaping one must needs do to the brain that my trouble lies. The intelligence is often oddly low, with unaccountable blank ends, unexpected gaps' (*DM*, 98). Moreau's grievances are double-voiced since his optimism is similar to T. H. Huxley's (1825-1895) scientific optimism. In 'Evolution and Ethics: The Romanes Lecture' (1893), Huxley argues that 'in proportion as men have passed from anarchy to social organisation, and in proportion as civilisation has grown in worth, these deeply ingrained serviceable qualities [animal-like proposition such as a tiger's anger and an ape's cunning] have become defects.'<sup>247</sup> Even though Wells's scientific optimism is highly influenced by his teacher Huxley,<sup>248</sup> by demonstrating that Moreau's attempt at grafting intelligence into the animal's brain is frustrated, the text highlights the materiality of the body.

The text dramatises Moreau's failures by contrasting the grotesque materiality of the animal body with his belief in the perfect unification of the body and intelligence. Peter Hitchcock develops Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque materiality of the body: 'The grotesque of the body is not a pure negativity but a warning about any system of thought that renders the body either abstract or easily perfectible'; 'it conspires against the codes of order and rationality issued by the head. It wants nothing of discipline and regularity; it prefers, inestimably, the excessive processes of waste, procreation and decay.'<sup>249</sup> It is not the compliant body, but it is the body revolting against bourgeois society's rules of discipline. Moreau names the animalistic features, 'the stubborn beast flesh,' and this clearly

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<sup>247</sup> T. H. Huxley, 'Evolution and Ethics: The Romanes Lecture,' *Evolution and Ethics: And Other Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1925), 51-2.

<sup>248</sup> See Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, *The Time Traveller: The Life of H. G. Wells* (London: Weidenfeld, 1973), 55-59.

<sup>249</sup> Peter Hitchcock, 'The Grotesque of the Body Electric,' *Bakhtin and the Human Sciences*, eds. Michael Mayerfeld Bell and Michael Gardiner (London: Sage, 1998), 85.

refers to the materiality of the body. It accordingly functions as a counter argument against the discourse of the progressivism of Victorian science (*DM*, 96).

The hybrid bodies of the Beast People also deconstruct the hierarchy of officialdom. The Beast People are made out of more than one animal. Here is Prendick's catalogue: a creature made of Hyena and Swine, a satyr-like creature of Ape and Goat, a Mare-Rhinoceros creature, a Bear and Bull man (*DM*, 104-5). Thus, in the hybrid body of the Beast People, the hierarchical order in the pre-evolutionary theory of taxonomy becomes vague. While the animals are evolved near the state of human, the human characters go backwards evolution. Prendick proclaims that Montgomery degenerates to the state of animal: 'he [Montgomery] had been with them [the Beast People] so long that he had come to regard them as almost normal human beings – his London days seemed a glorious impossible past to him' (*DM*, 105). Prendick also goes through the process of regression into the bestial stage: 'my clothes hung about me as yellow rags, through whose rents glowed the tanned skin. My hair grew long, and became matted together. I am told that even now my eyes have a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement' (*DM*, 163). The text puts forward the body changing according to the change of circumstance.

### **The narrative "in a state bordering on hysterics"**

In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the narrative is structured on radical movements. Constructed on the basis of uncertain memories of the unreliable protagonist, the narrative consists of 'disconnected impression[s]' (*DM*, 9). Prendick narrates his experience a few years after his return to the English civilisation. Thus, the narrative is formulated as the memoir of Prendick:

My mind must have been wandering, and yet I remember all that happened quite distinctly. I remember how my head swayed with the sea, and the horizon with the sail above it danced up and down. But I also remember as distinctly that I had a persuasion that I was dead. [...] I fancy I recollect some stuff being poured in between my teeth (*DM*, 5-6).

In the passage above, Prendick repeats the expression, 'I remember.' He often uses this phrase for the purpose of putting emphasis on the truthfulness of his story. It also underscores the physical and psychological distance between the hysterical situation where the narrator was on the brink of death and the time when he recollects his experience from a distance. The phrases, 'I fancy I recollect' signify the narrative act of hesitation. Thus, against the narrator's intention, his repeated use of the phrase produces doubts about the matter of the reliability of his narrative.

Also, the text deliberately dramatises Prendick as an unreliable narrator by stating that he is considered demented by the public, which makes Prendick anxious.<sup>250</sup> In the epilogue of his narrative, Prendick also clearly mentions that he is conscious of his own image as a madman: 'I had to act with the utmost circumspection to save myself from the suspicion of insanity. [...] No one would believe me, I was almost as queer to men as I had been to the Beast People' (*DM*, 170). Ironically, his emphasis that he is not insane renders his entire story a madman's confession; it is a narrative written to persuade the public of his sanity. Prendick finishes the chronology of his extraordinary adventure on Noble's Isle with his signature: 'Edward Prendick.'<sup>251</sup> This indicates the narrator's strong wish that the reader accepts the text as his confession; his experience is genuine and thus he is not mad. In other words, the signature is the seal of truth of his narrative. Hence, the text understates the disturbing possibility that the whole narrative is unstable since it is carried on the threshold between sanity and insanity.

It is due to the instability that Prendick is a carnival king, who is doomed to be decrowned and mocked as a madman: 'a person who is alone in his knowledge of the truth and who is therefore ridiculed by everyone else as a madman.'<sup>252</sup> Prendick's narrative implies his anxiety that after the publication of his manuscript, he will be in danger of being labelled as demented. Throughout his narrative, he takes pains to emphasise that he is different from other characters:

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<sup>250</sup> Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993) 3. In the introduction to the text, the frame narrator makes the noticeable statement that psychologists have supposed that Prendick is 'supposed demented.'

<sup>251</sup> The name of the protagonist stated at the end of his narrative is also omitted in the Atlantic Edition.

<sup>252</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 151.

A blind fate, a vast pitiless mechanism, seemed to cut and shape the fabric of existence, and I, Moreau by his passion for research, Montgomery by his passion for drink, the Beast People, with their instincts and mental restrictions, were torn and crushed, ruthlessly, inevitably, amid the infinite complexity of its incessant wheels (*DM*, 123).

Here, even though Prendick includes himself among the members of the disintegrating society, he avoids mentioning his sins. Instead, he presents himself as ‘a mild-tempered man’ (*DM*, 17) and an abstainer; when the brandy is offered to him by Moreau and Montgomery, he somewhat proudly professes that ‘The brandy I did not touch, for I have been an abstainer from my birth’ (*DM*, 34). When he hears Moreau explaining about his research, he poses himself as an ethical and moralistic man by accusing Moreau for his cruelty to the animals: ‘where is your justification for inflicting all this pain?’ (*DM*, 92). Also, he is not hesitant to condemn Moreau as ‘irresponsible, so utterly careless: ‘His curiosity, his mad, aimless investigations, drove him on [...]’ (*DM*, 123). In doing so, Prendick characterises himself as a reliable narrator and a respectable citizen; and this attempt is the sign of his fear of being branded as a madman.

The narration of the person, who has been standing on the threshold, also leaves the reading of the text unstable. In *The Croquet Player* (1937) which was published forty years later than *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Wells plays a game with the reader regarding the trustworthiness of the narrator. The text raises questions of the reliability of the narrator, who, like Prendick, is traumatised by his extraordinary experience. Dr. Finchatton warns the narrator not to trust what Frobisher has told him:

He’s told you practically everything – but as though he showed it through a bottle glass that distorted it all. And the reason why he has made it all up into that story [...] is because the realities that are overwhelming him are so monstrous and frightful that he has to transform them into this fairy tale [...] in the hope of expelling them from his thoughts.<sup>253</sup>

Likewise, in another shipwreck story, *Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* (1928), Blettsworthy’s experience on the island turns out to be the hallucinations of a

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<sup>253</sup> H. G. Wells, *The Croquet Player*, ed. John Hammond (Nottingham: Trent, 1998) 38.



madman. Through Prendick's self-isolation in the last chapter, the text leads the reader to grasp how horrible his experience was. Through the reading of Prendick's narrative with *The Croquet Player* and Mr. Blettsworthy in *Rampole Island*, one can deduce that the author situates Prendick's entire narrative in the ambiguous mentality (between sanity and insanity) and thereby, effectuates the instability of the narrative.

One of the most essential elements of the carnivalesque narrative technique is the narrative of becoming, and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* ends with the state of becoming by communicating Prendick's carnivalesque narrative with the officialdom narrative and consequently by refusing to make a final statement. The frame narrative device employed by the author strengthens the instability of the text. The frame narrative of this romance is the introduction, which is written by the protagonist's nephew, Charles Prendick. The frame narrator's remark, that he is 'the undersigned, his nephew, heir,'<sup>254</sup> accentuates the fact that he is a legitimate heir of Prendick. Accordingly, he can safely assert that he has authority for the publication of Prendick's memoir: 'there seems no harm in putting this strange story before the public, in accordance, as I believe, with my uncle's intentions.'<sup>255</sup>

This introduction also intends to provide accurately official evidence about the circumstances of Prendick's narration and the diagnosis of his mental breakdown:

He [Prendick] gave such a strange account of himself that he was supposed demented. Subsequently, he alleged that his mind was a blank from the moment of his escape from the *Lady Vain*. His case was discussed among psychologists at the time as a curious instance of the lapse of memory consequent upon physical and mental stress.<sup>256</sup>

This comment warns the late-Victorian readers not to trust what is narrated by Prendick. Depending on the authority of psychologists, the frame narrator frames Prendick's unbelievable experiences in the world of carnival within the discourse of officialdom. Here, the conjunction, 'subsequently' strengthens the

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<sup>254</sup> See 'Introduction' in the first edition of the text: Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993), 3.

<sup>255</sup> Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993), 3.

<sup>256</sup> Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, (London: Everyman, 1993), 3.

tone of authoritativeness. The word is the signifier of ‘pseudo-objective motivation’ in Bakhtinian terms.<sup>257</sup> It is employed in the novel to conceal another’s speech as well as the author’s subjective opinion and to pretend to be the voice of the ‘current issue’ or ‘someone else’s language’, which in this quotation is equated with the language of the authority. After the investigations on the island, Noble’s Isle, the authorities of officialdom conclude that there will not be any harmful effect caused by the publication of Prendick’s narrative, and decide to publish it. Thus, the frame narrative appears to complete its mission of sealing off the harmful text.

However, interestingly, the frame narrator refrains from providing his final statement on whether Prendick’s experience is true or not:

There is at least this much in its behalf: my uncle passed out of human knowledge about latitude 5° s. and longitude 105° E., and reappeared in the same part of the ocean after a space of eleven months. In some way he must have lived during the interval. And it seems that a schooner called the *Ipecacuanha*, with a drunken captain, John Davis, did start from Africa with a puma and certain other animals aboard in January 1887, that the vessel was well known at several ports in the South Pacific, and that it finally disappeared from those seas (with a considerable amount of copra aboard), sailing to its unknown fate from Banya in December 1887, a date that tallies entirely with my uncle’s story.<sup>258</sup>

Like the Time Traveller in *The Time Machine*, who has returned from the unknown ever-remaining-mysterious future, Prendick comes back from the space which the authorities cannot locate. The second chapter’s title, ‘The Man Who was Going Nowhere,’ symbolically supports the mysteriousness of Moreau’s island. The Time Traveller disappears at the end of the story and consequently there remains nobody who can testify the truthfulness of his journey to the future. Similarly, when Prendick’s manuscript is found, he has already died and the *Ipecacuanha*, whose captain and crew are the only witnesses of Prendick’s whereabouts, has disappeared into nowhere. Hence, Prendick’s narrative is a dead man’s confession and the mysteries remain unsolved. As mentioned in the

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<sup>257</sup> Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel,’ *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981), 305.

<sup>258</sup> Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Everyman, 1993), 3.

quotation above, two main carnivalesque spaces, the *Ipecacuanha* and Moreau's island disappear into the world of mysteries.

As these places do, Prendick's narrative signifies the space of carnival. As Prendick, as a trajectory, transgresses the boundaries of officialdom and carnivaldom, his narrative can be seen as an agent, which transgresses these boundaries. The unsolved mysteries renders officialdom's endeavour to frame the narrative of carnival unsuccessful.

### **Desire for splintering the frame of authority**

Bakhtin's idea of carnival and carnivalesque literature becomes the object of Umberto Eco's vitriolic criticism. According to him, 'carnival can exist only as an authorized transgression.'<sup>259</sup> Even literary 'revolution' attempted by 'Rabelais or Joyce' is only 'acceptable when performed within the limits of a laboratory situation (literature, stage, screen [...]).'<sup>260</sup> Eco's idea is similar to Foucault's idea of the universality of panoptical social structure: 'There is no real escape from the current empire of the gaze into a more benign heterotopic alternative.'<sup>261</sup> For Foucault and Eco, carnival is the temporary liberation from the officialdom authority.

The carnivals defined by Eco and Foucault are easily found in the works by the late-nineteenth century naturalists and realists. The proletariat festivals described in the novels by Arthur Morrison and George Gissing are the transitory

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<sup>259</sup> Umberto Eco, 'The Frame of Comic "freedom".' *Carnival*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 6.

<sup>260</sup> Eco, 'The Frame of Comic "Freedom",' *Carnival*, 6-7.

<sup>261</sup> Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994) 416. In *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1997), Foucault ends his argument with the gloomy manifesto of the firmly networked power structure, and the portrait of subjects trapped in it: 'When one carries out from a cursory reading of positivism, one sees the emergence of a whole series of figures – hidden by it, but also indispensable to its birth – that that will be released later, and, paradoxically, used against it. In particular, that with which phenomenology was to oppose it so tenaciously was already present in its underlying structures: the original powers of the perceived and its correlation with language in the original forms of experience, the organisation of objectivity on the basis of sign values, the secretly linguistic structure of the datum, the constitutive character of corporal spatiality, the importance of finitude in the relation of man with truth, and in the foundation of this relation, all this was involved in the genesis of positivism' (199).

freedom of the poor within the frame of the authority.<sup>262</sup> In Gissing's *The Nether World* (1889), the narrator's portrayal of the workers' bank holiday does not have any relationship with the Bakhtinian carnivalesque freedom. Gissing's narrator states, 'A day gravely set apart for the repose and recreation of multitudes who neither know how to rest nor how to refresh themselves with pastime.'<sup>263</sup> This statement implies that Gissing's carnival is organised by the authority to refresh the workers in order to use their labour force again. Thus, carnivals appearing in the naturalist novels are not a revolutionary force but a tool of reinforcement of the social frame. The carnivals in the stories of Gissing and Morrison show that the main characters' lives go back to normal or become worse after their bank holidays.

The carnivalesque images utilised by Wells's scientific romances differ from the carnivals depicted in the novels of Gissing and Morrison. Wells's romances concentrate on drawing the reader's attention to the theme of becoming and the deconstruction of the frame rather than reinforcing the unbreakable frame of the established social order. The images of the 'splintering frame' or small movements of the characters within the frame are Wells's favourite medium for conveying his idea of change (*ExA*, 495). Wells's frame is fractured by continuous movements of his characters and narratives. For instance, most of his romances are about the trajectory invading the world of the painting through the frame. The trajectory disturbs the stability and the balance of the painting which the frame has precariously preserved. Prendick, the Martians, and the giant children are examples of trajectories.

*The Island of Doctor Moreau* portrays the process in which the social structure is deconstructed through breaking up the balance between the society's power systems through the participants' small movements. The Beast People, the residents on the island, are initially governed by the panoptical power structure, which is represented by Moreau and his Law. The Leopard Man's nocturnal act of tasting blood is punished by the symbols of power, Moreau's whip and gun. The scene, in which the Leopard Man is questioned by Moreau, animates Foucault's notion of the super-power of the sovereign. Moreau's statement of 'We must

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<sup>262</sup> George Gissing's chapter, 'Io Saturnalia,' *The Nether World*, ed. and introd. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 104-112 and Arthur Morrison's 'Lizerunt,' *Tales of Mean Streets*, ed. Anita Miller (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1997), 13-31.

<sup>263</sup> Gissing, *The Nether World*, 104.

make an example' and the scene of the public trial in the 'shallow natural amphitheatre' illustrates the strong power structure and the Beast People's helplessness under it (*DM*, 112-3). When the three humans and the beast folk chase the Leopard Man, the Wolf-Bear says to Prendick: 'None escape' (*DM*, 90). This means that the densely structured net of power frustrates the subjects' will to be free. In addition, the Law represents the surveillance society. The beast folk are controlled by the Law that they could not understand, and it is the Law that "held them from the brief hot struggle and a decisive end to their natural animosity" (*DM*, 123). Thus, the island of Moreau, which displays 'the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason, and fate, in its simplest form' (*DM*, 122), is the society of discipline and surveillance in Foucault's terms.<sup>264</sup>

However, the romance exhibits the way in which the 'balance' is gradually broken. The view seen through the window of the room of Moreau's house suggests that the frame is breakable: 'Through the window I saw one of those unaccountable men in white lugging a packing-case along the beach. Presently the window-frame hid him' (*DM*, 37). This scene shows the precarious balance between the frame and the picture. The window symbolises the gazing, but the gazer cannot see the scene outside the frame. Hence, the power of the gazer is restricted by the frame, but at the same time, the frame is a permeable boundary. Here the frame, which hides the moving agent, can be interpreted as the symbol of limiting the scope of the gaze, and thereby the inability to control all the subjects through the omnipotent vision. Furthermore, the agent of the movement is 'unaccountable,' and this signifies that it is the object which exists beyond the authorial discourse of taxonomy.

Wells's frame is not like the frames of a painting because it does not imprison a suspended moment. The frame itself is not firmly built, but porous: Wells's frame allows a trajectory to transgress its boundary, and disturbs the precariously preserved balance within the frame. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the trajectory is Prendick. He is an intruder from the world outside the island. He causes the beast folk to raise the questions concerning the hierarchy between them

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<sup>264</sup> In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault argues that 'Our society is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance. We are neither in the amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine [...] the pomp of sovereignty, the necessary spectacular manifestations of power, were extinguished one by one in the daily exercise of surveillance' (217).

and humans. Prendick's reprimand of the Beast People's submissiveness sounds like a prophet's sermon to slaves. He provokes the revolutionary emotion of the Beast People: 'You who listen! Do you not see these men still fear you, go in dread of you? Why then do you fear them? You are many' (*DM*, 83). His remark throws the idea of revolt against Moreau's authority to the Beast People as marked in Prendick's speculation: 'They may once have been animals. But I never before saw an animal trying to think' (*DM*, 86). Here, Prendick cannot realise that his semi-heroic address to the Beast People may cause them to think of the fragility of the authority. He is also a transmitter or a bridge in the sense that he returns to 'mankind' and publicises his disturbing narrative to English civilisation. Thus, the carnival space (the island) and officialdom (England) are not spaces closed to each other. Instead, they are open to and communicate with each other.

The symbols of the panoptical power structure are also destroyed. The text deploys the process in which the laws are gradually disobeyed by the strong animal instinct of the Beast People. After Moreau dies, Prendick attempts to control them by deceiving them into believing in the existence of the omniscient gaze of Moreau's soul, and this also fails. Prendick's proclamation of 'the painful disorder of the island' (*DM*, 123) is the bourgeois narrator's painful realisation of the breaking up of the social order.

Prendick ends his gloomy narrative with a faint hint of 'hope': 'I hope, or I could not live. And so, in hope and solitude, my story ends' (*DM*, 172). However, the hope, which, Prendick perceives, can be found in heaven, only insinuates that there is no hope in the world of the human. It is because of the absence of hope that *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is the carnivalesque romance of reduced laughter. Bakhtin maintains that 'in carnivalised literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, laughter is as a rule considerably muffled – to the level of irony, humour, and other forms of reduced laughter.'<sup>265</sup> However, more correctly, even though this gloomy tale does not display carnivalised literature's main features such as the joyful denial of officialdom culture, it lays bare the theme of becoming and changing through the vivid demonstration of ambivalent images.

Through the recurrent images of crowning and decrowning, the threshold space, ambivalences and parodisation, the text asserts one of the quintessential

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<sup>265</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 164-5.

themes of carnivalesque literature: a feast of becoming. Like the spirit of the medieval carnival, the carnivalesque element of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is found in its resistance to stability and in its favouring of becoming and changing. The theme of becoming, represented in the form of the images of carnival rituals, threshold and the porous frame, contains the quintessential theme of carnival: the destruction of the old established order. The theme is developed into the theme of the carnival as the time of catastrophe in *The War of the Worlds*.

## ii) *The War of the Worlds*: “Swift Liquefaction of the Social Body”

*The War of the Worlds* adopts the genre of the future war narrative, which began with the publication of Sir George Chesney's (1830-1895) *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871). In *Anticipations* (1902), Wells acknowledges Chesney's prophecy about the near future in this romance by including this text in the group of future histories in fictional form.<sup>266</sup> As *The Battle of Dorking* does, Wells's romance deals with the imaginative war, reflecting conflicts among the contemporary European imperial powers. In this comparison, the Martians are the fantastic projection of the supremely disciplined fighting-machine, Germany. In fact, Wells's narrator himself compares the Martians' invasion to Germany's: 'Many people had heard of the cylinder, of course, and talked about it at their leisure, but it certainly did not make the sensation that an ultimatum to Germany would have done.'<sup>267</sup> Thus, the theme of the romance can be regarded as a warning against late-Victorian imperial complacency.

Unlike *The Battle of Dorking*, however, *The War of the Worlds* does not explicitly demonstrate the concern about economic and political tensions among the European imperial powers, but it focuses more on its fantastic aspects. For

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<sup>266</sup> See the footnote of Wells's *Anticipations: Of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (London: Chapman, 1902), 2.

<sup>267</sup> H.G. Wells, *The Invisible Man, The War of the Worlds, A Dream of Armageddon* (New York: Scrimner's, 1924) vol. 3 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-8) 253. The subsequent quotations from this work are cited parenthetically in the text.

instance, the Martians are agents coming from extra terrestrial space, and the object that falls into danger of extermination is not England but the human species. Given that the Martians could be allegorised as the primitive and atavistic tribes living on the fringes of the empire,<sup>268</sup> the text is construed as a gothic invasion story or a reverse colonisation narrative in terms that the oppressed other – represented by the Martians - invade their suppressor.

As Patrick Brantlinger points out, late-Victorian invasion scare stories – both future war stories and gothic invasion stories - are narratives deeply ‘symptomatic of the anxieties that attended the climax of the British Empire.’<sup>269</sup> The anxiety marked in Wells’s invasion narrative, however, has more dense connotations than Brantlinger speculates; and the complicated themes embedded in the narrative serve to differentiate *The War of the Worlds* from other contemporary popular romances. Instead of appealing to the public’s anxiety about the uncertain future of the empire, this romance concentrates on narrating in detail the process in which the old established civilisation is destroyed by the marauding invader; and the total destruction of the old world is described in an exhilarated tone. Thus, the meaning of war in this romance is essential; war serves as the space of threshold and the time of crisis, where and when the human civilisation is scandalised and mocked. The Wellsian meaning of war is identified with the moment of crisis in Bakhtinian terms; it symbolises ‘breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man, moments of death and revival, of change and renewal always led.’<sup>270</sup>

In addition, displaying the world upside-down and mass destruction of late-Victorian civilisation, the text’s main concern is to provide the readers with the chance to speculate upon the social issues of imperialism, jingoism, utopianism and religion. In order to do this, Wells employs the narrative form of the “social-adventure story,” which is one of the frequently used narrative devices of carnivalised literature. It infuses ‘the posing of profound and acute social problems’<sup>271</sup> in the adventure plot. Textualising the familiar contact among people during carnival, carnivalised literature produces social-adventure narratives.

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<sup>268</sup> In *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 108, Steven Arata argues that *The War of the Worlds* portrays the Martians as not only the coloniser but also as the colonised.

<sup>269</sup> Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*, 227-8.

<sup>270</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 9.

<sup>271</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 103.



Philosophical and sociological speculations are implanted in the adventure plot, and are represented as the characters' polyphonic dialogues.<sup>272</sup> Their universalism of ideas is combined with their carnivalistic dynamism and motley colours. Like the threshold and public square narrative, the social adventure narratives do not provide Victorian middle-class readers with abstractly philosophical or religiously dogmatic resolutions.

### War as the site of carnival

Bakhtin illuminates the role of catastrophes in Renaissance literature:

Let us stress in this prophetic picture the complete destruction of the established hierarchy, social, political, and domestic. It is a picture of utter catastrophe threatening the world. [...] The author predicts a flood, which will drown all mankind, followed by a terrible earthquake. Then a gigantic flame will appear, and finally calm and gladness will once more descend upon earth. In this picture we dimly see the threat of a universal crisis, of a fire that is to burn the old world, and of the joy brought by a world renewed.<sup>273</sup>

The catastrophe, which Bakhtin takes as an example of deconstruction of the established social hierarchy, is war in this invasion narrative. The natural disaster such as the 'gigantic flame' and the 'terrible earthquake' are replaced by firing, and bombing. The narrator of *The War of the Worlds* describes the first attack of the Martians:

About six in the evening, as I sat at tea with my wife in the summer-house talking vigorously about the battle that was lowering upon us, I heard a muffled detonation from the common, and immediately after a gust of firing. Close on the heels of that came a violent rattling crash, quite close to us, that shook the ground; and, starting out upon the lawn, I saw the tops of the trees about the Oriental College burst into smoky red flame, and the tower of the little church beside it slide down into ruin (*WW*, 261).

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<sup>272</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 123.

<sup>273</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 237.

The sound of ‘a muffled detonation,’ ‘a gust of firing’ and ‘a violent rattling crash [...] that shook the ground’ resonate natural catastrophes described by Bakhtin in the quotation above. This scene efficiently demonstrates the contrast between the petty bourgeois’s peaceful teatime and the sudden disaster, which breaks the peace at one blow. These passages also insinuate that the sudden and unexpected attack will have a profound impact on human society, and that the attack will lead to destruction of the entire social order. The Martians’ abrupt attack functions like the natural calamities described in the short story, ‘The Star’ (1899), and the romance, *In the Days of the Comet* (1906). In these works, the natural disaster caused by a comet’s collision with the earth destroys the old social order and builds a new world.

The role of the war as a destroyer of the old social order enables the author to concentrate on describing how all hierarchies – social classes in human civilisation and even the Darwinian evolutionary ladder – are smashed. Here, the war is welcomed by the author, who has wished to destroy the established social system. Consequently, the author’s tone of describing the massive destruction of rural England and London sounds excited. At these points, Wells’s future war story differs from Chesney’s *The Battle of Dorking*.

The popularity of future war stories from 1871 to 1914 is due to the mood of patriotism and the expanding literary mass market. Discontent with the empire’s political situation (especially, the government’s negligence of military preparation against other imperial rivalries) was one of the main themes in the future war stories of the late Victorian period. This mood entails the author’s desire to see the old government spectacularly destroyed by the more powerful and better-prepared rival countries, Germany, France and America. Together with patriotic anxiety, the increase of literacy and the reading public’s rising demand for information about coming things boosted the popularity of the future war story.<sup>274</sup>

As I. F. Clarke points out, Chesney’s *The Battle of Dorking* is a ‘dedicated, didactic and decisively realistic kind of fiction.’<sup>275</sup> This story is permeated with the author’s anxiety about (and warning against) the complacency of late-Victorian society. In this story, the war between England and Germany is

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<sup>274</sup> I. F. Clarke, ‘Introduction: The Paper Warriors and their Fight of Fantasy,’ *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914*, ed. I. F. Clarke (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1995), 15.

<sup>275</sup> I. F. Clarke, ‘The Battle of Dorking: Second Thoughts,’ *Extrapolation*, 40:4 (1999), 282.

presented to the reader through the narrator's melancholy and edifying tone. Even though the text demonstrates that the unnamed narrator, who fights against Germany as a volunteer soldier, narrates his experience to his next generation, the story is told to the contemporary English middle-class reading public, and the tone of the story is to warn against the extinction of the English Empire. For this reason, the narrator does not hide his nostalgia for the empire's glorious past. The narrator ends the story with patriotic mourning for the demise of the empire:

Truly the nation was ripe for a fall; but when I reflect how a little firmness and self-denial, or political courage and foresight, might have averted the disaster, I feel that the judgement must have really been deserved. [...] My old bones will be laid to rest in the soil I have loved so well, and whose happiness and honour I have so long survived.<sup>276</sup>

The author strongly disapproves the government's policy. However, this critique comes from his patriotism; the strong wish for his empire to be powerful enough to defend itself from any kind of threat from the outside. Thus, the text does not represent the war as a medium of deconstruction of the old established social order or hierarchy. Instead, through the deployment of the narrator's wish to be buried in his home country, this passage emphasises his patriotic enthusiasm.

Therefore, the text focuses on exhibiting the importance of preservation of the social hierarchy. During the war, the social hierarchy between servants and masters is firmly observed. The narrator recollects how Travers's servant did his duty during the chaos of the war: 'the good old servant [Wood] had done his duty, at least – he had brought his master home to die in his wife's arms.'<sup>277</sup> Even though the father and the son are killed by the German invasion, the English social hierarchy, which is symbolised by the hostess Mrs Travers and the servant Wood, keeps its place even though their empire crumbles down.

In *The War of the Worlds*, the narrator does not show nostalgia for the lost past. Even though the scene of the Martians' merciless attack and people's panic-stricken flight in the street is chaotic enough to show the miserable condition of human beings and their vulnerability, the narrative does not seem to sound melancholy. The old civilisation is persistently considered to be in the brink of

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<sup>276</sup> George Tomkyns Chesney, 'The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer,' *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914*, ed. I. F. Clarke (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1995), 73.

<sup>277</sup> Chesney, *The Battle of Dorking*, 68.

demolition by Wells. Even in his 1924 preface to this romance he expresses his desire to replace the old world with the new: 'Our civilisation, it seems, is quite capable of falling to pieces without any aid from the Martians.'<sup>278</sup> The narrator describes the Londoners' flight in the chapter 'Exodus from London':

By three, people were being trampled and crushed even in Bishopsgate Street, a couple of hundred yards, or more, from Liverpool Street Station; revolvers were fired, people stabbed, and the policemen who had been sent to direct the traffic, exhausted and infuriated, were breaking the heads of the people they were called out to protect (*WW*,331).

At first glance, this scene appears to show that sudden catastrophe can fully expose the helplessness of human civilisation when it is facing massive destruction, and that the barbarous aspects of their civilisation had been hidden under the thin veneer of culture. However, the narrator's attitude towards the chaotic scene does not contain his anxiety about dissolution of the social order in the sense that the description is coated by the narrator's war fever and excitement. In other words, as John Huntington argues, this scene shows 'Wells's own willingness to let the whole thing go smash.'<sup>279</sup>

The most frequently recurring motif of Wells's early scientific romances is the destruction of the old social order. It may be that the wrecked ship, the *Lady Vain* of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, which alludes to Queen Victoria and her old social order, and the upper-class protagonist Prendick's gradual degeneration to the bestial stage, are not pitied by the author. The English countryside terrorised by Griffin in *The Invisible Man* also represents the old world. Even his first social novel, *The Wheels of Chance* imagines Wells to massacre his petty-bourgeois neighbours through Hoopdriver's dream, in which Hoopdriver smashes the English countryside: 'in another moment the houses were cracking like nuts, and the blood of the inhabitants squirting this way and that. The streets were black with people running' (*WC*, 72). In *The War of the Worlds*, the civilians who are 'trampled and crushed [...] stabbed,' and the policemen who are 'breaking the

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<sup>278</sup> Wells, 'Preface to Volume 3', *The Works of H.G. Wells*, vol. 3 (New York: Scribner's, 1924-7), ix.

<sup>279</sup> John Huntington, 'My Martians: Wells's Success,' *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction*. 77 (1999), 27.

heads of the people' are described as examples of the falseness of the old human civilisation, and the narrator's ghoulish details are decorated by the author's own excited gloating.

Furthermore, the street which is full of fleeing civilians is represented as the stage in which all social classes are mingled. In the chapter titled as 'The exodus from London', the narrator lists the various social classes in flight in detail: 'three girls like East End factory girls'; 'a blind man in the uniform of the Salvation Army'; 'sturdy workmen'; 'wretched unkempt men clothed like clerks or shopmen'; 'haggard women [...] well dressed'; 'one man in evening dress'; and 'the Chief Justice' (*WW*, 338-343). The crowd chaotically mingled with different social classes is a portrait of the 'swift liquefaction of the social body' (*WW*, 331). As Wells illustrates in *In the Days of the Comet*, England was divided into two worlds, luxurious upper class and the factory workers of the East End: 'There were in England and America, and indeed throughout the world, two great informal divisions of human beings – the Secure and the Insecure.'<sup>280</sup> Considering London as a strictly divided class society, we can observe that the street scene filled with all kinds of social classes represents the deconstruction of the social hierarchy.

Another example of destruction of the existing hierarchical order is the strong sense of dethronement expressed by the narrator throughout the text:

For that moment I touched an emotion beyond the common range of men, yet one that the poor brutes we dominate know only too well. [...] I felt the first inkling of a thing that presently grew quite clear in my mind that oppressed me for many days, a sense of dethronement, a persuasion that I was no longer a master, but an animal among animals, under the Martian heel. With us it would be as with them, to lurk and watch, to run and hide; the fear and empire of man had passed away (*WW*, 160).

In this romance Wells implants multiply layered meanings in the Martians: they symbolise the colonised, the coloniser, a highly developed super race, and an atavistic tribe living outside the metropolis. This enables the reader to notice that the narrator's sense of 'dethronement' not only shows his sense of losing his place as a master to other animals in the animal kingdom, but it also implies his anxiety

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<sup>280</sup> H. G. Wells, *In the Days of the Comet and Seventeen Short Stories* (New York: Scribner's, 1925) vol. 10 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols. (1924-7), 122-3.

about the end of the empire. As the same token, “the poor brutes we dominate” implies not only other animals but also the human races that are considered as inferior to English civilians.

The Martians’ sudden downfall also enhances the textual sense of dethronement. At the end of the romance, the earth is saved not by the ingenuity of its inhabitants, but by the Martians’ lack of a proper immune system. The seemingly invincible Martians’ death at the hands of the most humble creature in the Darwinian hierarchy, clearly allegorises the sense of dethronement. The Martians, who are crowned at the beginning of the story by decrowning the human, are also decrowned in the end. Wells’s early essays, “Through a Microscope: Some Moral Reflections” and “The Extinction of Man,” presage the scenario of the crowning and decrowning of both humans and the Martians. Like ‘transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water’ (*WW*, 213) under a microscope, humans are wiped ‘out of existence with a stroke of his thumb.’<sup>281</sup> Also, the text proves that the Martians’ short conquest of human civilisation is only the ‘eve of the entire overthrow’<sup>282</sup> since they are killed by bacteria, the humblest creature in nature. Thus, in the world of Wells’s romances, there is no place for the permanent masters.

After dramatising the total annihilation of English civilisation from the top authority to the factory workers, the text hints at the potentiality of renewal.<sup>283</sup> Like his other disaster stories, ‘The Star’ and *In the Days of the Comet*, which end with the birth of a global brotherhood, *The War of the Worlds* provides a similar finale. There has been a modification of the view of humankind’s future:

It may be that in the larger design of the universe this invasion from Mars is not without its ultimate benefit for men. It robbed us of that serene confidence in the future which is the most fruitful source of decadence, the gifts to human science it has brought are enormous, and it has done much to promote the conception of the commonweal of mankind. [...] The broadening of men’s views that has resulted can scarcely be exaggerated (*WW*, 449-50).

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<sup>281</sup> Wells, ‘Through a Microscope: Some Moral Reflections,’ *Certain Personal Matters*, 244.

<sup>282</sup> Wells, ‘The Extinction of Man,’ *Certain Personal Matters*, 179.

<sup>283</sup> Brett Davison, ‘Wells, the Artilleryman and the Intersection on Putney Hill,’ *The Wellsian: Selected Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed. John S. Partington (Amsterdam: Equilibris, 2003), 88: ‘The British Empire and all that it stood for, grand and small – from the ruler-ship of much of the Earth to brass bands in Hyde Park – is finished. It is however there that he sees the seeds of eventual renewal.’

As the quotation shows, three major benefits are introduced in the human world. The new technology has been learned from the debris of the Martian machines, the view of the future has been broadened, and the world has begun to cooperate for the improvement of the commonweal of mankind. Through the exhibition of a series of carnivalesque rituals, the narrator completes his narration with the hope of change, which will be beneficial to the human future; and in this way, the theme of renewal is implied.

Wells's *The War of the Worlds* is a carnivalesque romance in the sense that the space of war represents the site of carnival, and the war is represented as the space in which all established hierarchies are destroyed. In comparison with *The Battle of Dorking*, Wells's romance displays the author's concern about destruction of the established social order more than warning against contemporary complacencies. In this sense, *The Battle of Dorking* is the literature of officialdom. Bakhtin's concept of the official feast can be usefully applied in categorising the literature of officialdom:

The official feasts of the Middle Ages, whether ecclesiastic, feudal or sponsored by the state, did not lead the people out of the existing world order and created no second life. On the contrary, they sanctioned the existing pattern of things and reinforced it. The official feast asserted all that was stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy, the existing religious, political, and oral values, norms, and prohibitions.<sup>284</sup>

Official literature supports the glorious past of the society and its stability.

### **The carnivalised sense of dialogue**

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, taking the *Menippea* as an example of carnivalisation in literature, Bakhtin states:

We have uncovered in the *menippea* a striking combination of what would seem to be absolutely heterogeneous and incompatible elements: philosophical dialogue, adventure and fantasticality slum naturalism, utopia, and so forth. We now can say that the clamping principle that bound all these heterogeneous elements into the organic whole of a genre, a

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<sup>284</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 9

principle of extraordinary strength and tenacity, was carnival and a carnival sense of the world.<sup>285</sup>

Like Menippean literature, *The War of the Worlds* attempts to combine philosophical speculations of utopia, religion and human civilisation with the adventure plot. Also, the author's philosophical and political ideas are presented through individual characters' actions and their limited points of view. Specifically, in this romance, Wells endeavours to demonstrate the idea of replacing the old society with a better future through various voices, and at the same time, he does not give a strong voice to a specific agent. The sociological and political issues flowing throughout Wells's stories are presented without highlighting the author's monologic voice: 'Passionately concerned about a wide variety of issues in the Victorian political and social order, Wells's stories, complex, ambivalent and changing, looked more at the effects of the scientific world upon his characters than advocating science for its own sake.'<sup>286</sup> The "complex, ambivalent and changing" text is another expression of the same aspect of this romance that can be found in carnivalised literature.

In *The War of the Worlds*, the Menippean combination of philosophical speculations with an adventure plot is conveyed to the reader through the narrator's double voices and his dialogues with other characters, the Curate and the Artilleryman. From the beginning of the romance, the narrator attempts to find the cause of the Martians' invasion from the Darwinian perspective. He insists that the relationship between the Martians and humans is governed by the same rule, the law of the struggle for survival: 'Their world is far gone in its cooling and this world is still crowded with life, but crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals. To carry warfare sunward is, indeed, their only escape from the destruction that generation after generation creeps upon them' (*WW*, 215).

The text draws the reader's attention to the assumption that the Martians are only creatures living in the Darwinian world. Consequently they are the victims of the pitiless law of Nature, and in this sense their invasion can be justified. This is applied to the human future, as the narrator implies in the epilogue: 'when the

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<sup>285</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 134.

<sup>286</sup> Patricia Kerslake, 'Moments of Empire: Perceptions of Kurt Lasswitz and H. G. Wells,' *The Wellsian: Selected Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed. John S. Partington (Amsterdam: Equilibris, 2003), 71.



slow cooling of the sun makes this earth uninhabitable, as at last it must do, it may be that the thread of life that has begun here will have streamed out and caught our sister planet within its toils' (*WW*, 450). Even though this statement implies that human conquest of the other planets may be attempted in a different way from what the Martians have done to humans, it also admits that all creatures living in space are governed by the law of struggling for survival.

The Darwinian worldview leads the narrator to refuse the Curate's blind faith in God, and to consider the possibility of building a better world based on the law of struggle for survival. The Curate thinks of the Martian's attack as 'the beginning of the end,' which has been ordered by the Lord, and considers the Martians as 'God's ministers.' To this blind faith in God, the narrator answers:

What good is religion if it collapses at calamity? Think of what earthquakes and floods, wars and volcanoes, have done before to men. Did you think God had exempted Weybridge? He is not an insurance agent (*WW*, 302-1).

The narrator's exhortation indicates that natural disasters and wars have nothing to do with God and religion. In addition, the Curate's demolished church signifies that the Christian religion collapses in the catastrophe as do other social authorities.

Here, through the narrator's scepticism about the existence of God, Wells criticises Marie Corelli's obtuse faith in the supernatural power of God, whose existence is strongly insisted on in her scientific romance, *The Romance of Two Worlds* (1886). In the prologue, she condemns the nineteenth century protest against the possibility of their [angels'] existence':

Were he, in wrath, to cast destruction upon them, and with fire blazing from his wings, slay a thousand of them with the mere shaking of a pinion, those who were left alive would either say that a tremendous dynamite explosion had occurred, or that the square was built on an extinct volcano which had suddenly broken out into frightful activity.<sup>287</sup>

The image of Corelli's angry angel, who slays thousands of people with a single hand, is clearly reincarnated in the invincible Martians. The fact that the agents,

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<sup>287</sup> Marie Corelli, *A Romance of Two Worlds* (London : Methuen, 1922), 3-4.

who invade and destroy English civilisation, are extra-terrestrial beings not angels, is the author's critique of Corelli's belief in the existence of God, and her stubborn attempt to persuade the reader to fear God's anger. In this sense, the Curate's fear is reminiscent of Corelli's Christian ideology. By ridiculing the Curate's naïve interpretation of the Martian's attack as Lord's punishment for the sins of humankind, Wells's romance clearly places a powerful objection in the path of Corelli's claim for Christianity and spirituality.

Deserting the faith in religion, the narrator is ready to accept the Artilleryman's suggestion which philosophises the law of struggle for survival to build the better future. The Artilleryman criticises the old English civilisation as a petty bourgeois life consisting of 'Royal Academy Arts,' 'drawing-room manners,' 'skedaddle' and 'ackadaisical ladies' (*WW*, 417; 418; 421). Instead, he suggests: 'We form a band – able-bodied, clean-minded men. We're not going to pick up any rubbish that drifts in. Weaklings go out again' (*WW*, 171). His idea is recurrent in the works containing Wells's sociological speculations of the human future: it is one of the main themes of such works as *The Discovery of the Future* (1900), *Anticipations* (1901) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905).

The philosophical dialogue between the three characters is presented to the reader through the threshold narrative. First, the narrator's strong disapproval of the Curate's belief in God is weakened at a later stage of his adventure. After having killed the Curate, and crawled from the ruined house, the narrator prays to God: 'now I prayed indeed, pleading steadfastly and sanely, face to face with the darkness of God' (*WW*, 410). He also insists that he 'talked with God' (*WW*, 410). When he mentions the cause of death of the Martians, the narrator repeats what the Curate gibbers: 'For a moment I believed that the destruction of Sennacherib had been repeated, that God had repented, that the Angel of Death had slain them in the night' (*WW*, 439). Here, the narrator's account of the cause of the Martian invasion and their death demonstrate two aspects: natural selection and the revenge of God.

In his scientific romances, Wells exhibits his gift of wedding non-confirmative and polyphonic discourses on society and science with the imaginative narrative. The narrative of *The Time Machine* houses discourses on Darwinism, socialism, and utopianism. *The First Men in the Moon* imbues the adventure narrative with Wells's sociological speculation on the 'World State.' In

addition to scientific romances, the pure fantasy romance, *The Wonderful Visit* (1895) displays the carnivalistic contact between the high and the low, and the stupid and the wise through the dialogue between the tramp philosopher and the Angel. This device of combining philosophical discourse with the imaginative story is used by the author to achieve the carnivalised sense of familiarisation. In the carnival square, there are free contacts among individuals who used to be separate in officialdom. Bakhtin explains this concept: 'A free and familiar attitude spreads over everything. All this that were once self-enclosed, disunited, distanced from one another by a non-carnivalistic hierarchical world view are drawn into carnivalistic contacts and combinations.'<sup>288</sup>

In *The War of the Worlds*, the narrator's conversation with the Artilleryman exhibits features of the carnivalised dialogue as he acknowledges: 'in the days before the invasion no one would have questioned my intellectual superiority to his – I, a professed and recognised writer on philosophical themes, and he, a common soldier; and yet he had already formulated a situation that I had scarcely realised' (*WW*, 420). The war-situation, in which all social hierarchies are destroyed, makes it possible for the normal soldier to have a conversation with the recognised philosopher. Like the Menippean literature, Wells's romance also 'places a person in extraordinary positions that expose and provoke him, it connects him and makes him collide with other people under unusual and unexpected conditions precisely for the purpose of testing the idea and the man of the idea, that is, for testing the "man in man."'<sup>289</sup> The narrator's unexpected collisions with the Artilleryman and the Curate are provided to test the narrator's philosophy.

Another carnival element of their dialogue is that the carnival ritual of crowning and decrowning is represented through the Artilleryman. When the narrator encounters him on Putney Hill, the Artilleryman proclaims that he is a king, 'This is my country' (*WW*, 412), and he treats the narrator as if he is his inferior. Later on, however, the text reveals that he is a mere dreamer who does not have a serious intension to practise his plan, and consequently he is treated as a fool or at least a comic-hero by the text. In so doing, he is decrowned and simultaneously mocked by the author and the reader. Furthermore, their

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<sup>288</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 123.

<sup>289</sup> Bakhtin, *Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 105.

relationship is presented as a comical farce as Richard Law points out: 'They reincarnate a farcical pair found in Shakespearean comedy and farther back in Roman comedy, i.e. the braggart soldier (*miles gloriosus*), and his foolish sidekick.'<sup>290</sup>

The narrator's story is related to the reader in the form of the double perspectives or the double-voiced narrative. Parrinder suggests that 'reading *The War of the Worlds* as a confessional text written by a traumatised survivor who remains understandably demoralised and disoriented by his experiences.'<sup>291</sup> Like Prendick of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, who suffers from his nightmarish experience, and secludes himself from other human communities, the narrator of *The War of the Worlds* can not be free from what he has gone through during the Martian invasion. However, unlike Prendick, who focuses more on narrating his adventure than evaluating his experience, the philosopher and narrator of *The War of the Worlds* deliberately juxtaposes two contradictory chronotopes: the chronotope of his adventure, and that of his writing. In this romance, there exist two selves of the narrator. One is the philosopher who is writing down his adventure six years later; and the other one is the adventurer who struggles to survive under the Martian attack.

The two different chronotopes conflict with each other and in this process the narrative becomes ambiguous. The six-year-later narrator continues to monitor and justify his past behaviour. During the Martian invasion, 'three things struggled for possessing of my [the narrator's] mind: the killing of the curate, the whereabouts of the Martians, and the possible fate of my wife' (*WW*, 409). He attempts to justify his killing of the Curate by excusing himself: 'I did not foresee; and crime is to foresee and do. And I set down as I have set all this story down, as it was. There were no witnesses – all these things I might have concealed. But I set it down, and the reader must form his judgement as he will' (*WW*, 409). Ironically, this statement strongly exposes not only the narrator's guilty conscience in confessing his sin but also his desire to conceal what really happened at the moment. In addition, he confesses that the death of the Curate

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<sup>290</sup> Richard Law, 'The Narrator in Double Exposure in *The War of the Worlds*,' *The Wellsian: Selected Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed. John S. Partington (Amsterdam: Equilibris, 2003), 100.

<sup>291</sup> Patrick, Parrinder, 'How Far Can We Trust the Narrator of *The War of the Worlds*?' *Foundation*, 77 (1999), 17.

‘gave me [him] no sensation of horror or remorse to recall; I saw it simply as a thing done, a memory infinitely disagreeable but quite without the quality of remorse. I saw myself then as I see myself now’ (*WW*, 409). This remains unclear until the end of his narration.

Concerned that he has postponed searching for his wife, the narrator provides only a vague explanation: ‘It is a curious thing that I felt angry with my wife; I cannot account for it, but my impotent desire to reach Leatherhead worried me excessively’ (*WW*, 300). It is only a pretext that his desire to see his wife is thwarted by the war regardless of how eagerly he wants to see her. However, another reason has already been hinted. It is his ‘war-fever’ (*WW*, 265), which causes him to leave her in Leatherhead: his aspiration to see what the Martians have done to the humans. Taking these two obscure excuses into account, one can see that the impotence of his desire to see his wife is checked by another – perhaps stronger – desire to see the Martians. He does not sacrifice the desire for a moralistic purpose. The narrator’s assumption of morality is shattered. Hence, the narrator’s attempt at self justification is construed as the confession of his ambiguous morality.

These double perspectives render the text’s final statement undecided, and accordingly, the story ends as the narrative of becoming. The final scenes of the text are full of ambivalent images. In the epilogue, the narrator concludes his narration with the scene in which he and his wife live among the dead. The Martians are killed by bacteria, but the war is not over. The future of humanity is still uncertain. As Haynes claims, ‘despite the final optimistic hope for a new world from the ruins, there is no effective counter-impression to that of confused, self-centred men fleeing in confusion before the advance of an efficient technological power.’<sup>292</sup> Darko Suvin points out that at the end, the bourgeois framework is shaken, but neither destroyed nor replaced by any alternative.<sup>293</sup> The narrator concludes his narration: ‘I cannot but regret, now that I am concluding my story, how little I am able to contribute to the discussion of the many debatable questions which are still unsettled. In one respect I shall certainly provoke criticism’ (*WW*, 447). He also implies his narration is the result of

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<sup>292</sup> Roslynn Haynes, *H. G. Wells: Discoverer of the Future* (New York: New York UP, 1980), 74.

<sup>293</sup> Darko Suvin, ‘Wells as the Turning Point of the SF Tradition,’ *Critical Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed. John Huntington (Boston: Hall, 1991), 27.

extreme mental trauma written: 'I must confess the stress and danger of the time have left an abiding sense of doubt and insecurity in my mind' (WW, 450).

Wells's protagonist's optimistic idea concerning the future of humankind is questioned and revised throughout his adventure. The combination of philosophical speculations on life and death with an adventure plot is located in another carnivalesque novel, Voltaire's (1694-1778) *Candide* (1759). Throughout his adventure, Candide's positive notion that 'everything is for the best,' which is learned from his master, Dr. Pangloss, continues to be on trial.<sup>294</sup> Like that of Candide, the adventurer narrator's optimism is continuously questioned and put on trial. Throughout his dialogues with the Curate and the Artilleryman, he asserts hope for mankind. However, at the same time, his assertion is confronted with his interlocutors' strong voices. *The War of the Worlds* differs from *Candide* because the narrative of this romance is double-voiced. The narrator has two selves: the adventurer and the philosopher. The epilogue of the text implies that the second self of the narrator is traumatised by his experience, and has not fully recovered from the trauma. The epilogue ends with his ambiguous comment: 'And strangest of all is it to hold my wife's hand again, and to think that I have counted her, and that she has counted me, among the dead' (WW, 451). To hold his wife's hand indicates that the narrator still believes in hope for humanity's future, but at the same time, the expression, 'among the dead,' keeps disturbing his hope. Thus, the readers of *The War of the Worlds* close the novel with ongoing speculation about the philosophical question of hope for the human future. In this way, in *The War of the Worlds* 'nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always in the future.'<sup>295</sup> The tone of the story is deliberately unsteady, ambiguous and mocking, permeated with elements of socio-political and literary polemic.

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<sup>294</sup> Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism* (London: Penguin, 2001), 2.

<sup>295</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 166.

### iii) *The Food of the Gods: Deconstruction of the Little's World by the Futuristic Giants.*

The giants in *The Food of the Gods* are imagined as the colossal figures combined by the Martian and their machine. The narrator's attitude towards the cyborg body created by the Martians' biological body and the mechanical body of their machines is ambiguous. He describes them as frightening to humans, but at the same time, as signifying the ideal futurity.

It was one of those complicated fabrics that have since been called Handling Machines [...] Its motion was so swift, complex, and perfect that at first I did not see it as a machine, in spite of its metallic glitter. [...] At first, I say, the Handling Machine did not impress me as a machine, but as a crab-like creature with a glittering integument, the controlling Martian, whose delicate tentacles actuated its movements, seeming to be simply the equivalent of the crab's cerebral portion. [...] In this way the curious parallelism to animal motions, which was so striking and disturbing to the human beholder, was attained (*WW*, 376).

At the first glance, the narrator cannot distinguish the body of the Martians from their Handling Machines. This is because the Martians' biological body and the machine's technological body are united perfectly into a whole unit. In this phrase, the text seems to demonstrate that the blurred boundary between the biological body and the mechanical body disturbs the narrator. However, this also contains the narrator's admiration and acclamation of the giant machine's efficiency and the dextrous controller, the Martian<sup>296</sup>

While the narrator's attitude towards the monstrosity of the Martian machines is ambiguous, the giants in *The Food of the Gods* are portrayed as the beautiful and desirable form of the future human. Wells's clear intention of portraying the giants in this romance as possessing positive qualities is wedded with the optimistic tone of the narrative. Hence, the readers can see that this romance does not deploy the turn-of-the-century's anxiety about the future, which

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<sup>296</sup> In 'One Swift, Conclusive Smashing and an End: Wells, War and the Collapse of Civilisation.' *Foundation* 77 (1999), Charles E. Gannon also argues that the futurity of the Martian body is not just the object of the narrator's abhorrence. Instead, the narrator "examines scenarios of the human or quasi-human lineage changing and being changed in a vast cosmos in ways that at first may seem monstrous, but are later seen as being necessary and in their way, admirable" (43).

is the main concern of Wells's romances published before the start of the new century. Instead, this romance focuses on criticising contemporary English society's littleness, and suggests the way in which humankind can formulate a better future. The optimistic voice dominating this romance causes critics to view it as the work marking the transition from Wells's scientific romances to his fiction about the future'<sup>297</sup> and being "used not to entertain but to teach."<sup>298</sup> Wells himself admits in 'Preface to Volume V' (1915) of the Atlantic Edition that this romance is 'the forcible juxtaposition of [the] hard ideas and [the] grotesque story.'<sup>299</sup> Thus, this romance has been read in terms of the author's manifesto for a better society rather than his artistic form; the text appears to signal the end of carnival and become the text of monology.

However, this romance demonstrates that Wells's idea of deconstruction of the old world and reconstruction of the new world is expressed through the carnivalised sense of world. The carnivalised sense of the world is represented as the contradictory images of littleness and gigantism and also by painting a picture of the upside-down human world. To demonstrate the deconstruction of the existing social order of England, Wells uses the images of Gargantua and Pantagruel, who are the famous giants of Rabelais's carnivalesque novel. The text exhibits all the images of carnivalesque excessiveness such as massive animals and humans, their hunger, and eating and drinking.

### **The creation of the carnivalesque world**

In *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910), the narrator lists what Mr. Polly eats for his lunch in detail:

He had eaten three gherkins, two onions, a small cauliflower head, and several capers with every appearance of appetite, and indeed with avidity; and then there have been cold suet pudding to follow, with treacle, and then a nice bit of cheese. [...] He had also had three big slices of grayish baker's bread, and had drunk the best part of a jugful of beer (*HP*, 5).

<sup>297</sup> David C. Smith, *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal*, 73.

<sup>298</sup> John Batchelor, *H. G. Wells*, 67. W. Warren Wagar also argues that 'Wells's formidable ear for dialogue all but vanished whenever he tried to put utopian aspirations into the mouths of his fictional creations.' W. Warren Wagar, *H. G. Wells: Travelling Time* (Middletown, Wesleyan UP, 2004), 110.

<sup>299</sup> H.G. Wells, 'Preface to Volume V,' *The Food of the Gods, The Sea Lady* (New York: Scribner's, 1915) vol. 5 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, vol 28 (1924-8), ix.



The long detailed list of the foods which Mr. Polly has had for his lunch is intended to make a critical comment on those who the narrator calls 'the moralist' (HP, 9). According to the narrator, 'to the moralist I know he [Mr. Polly] might have served as a figure of sinful discontent, but that is because it is the habit of moralists to ignore material circumstances – if, indeed, one may speak of a recent meal as a circumstance – seeing that Mr. Polly was circum' (HP, 9). From this comment, one can induce that it is against the moralist's norm for the narrator to emphasise materiality over spirituality; the ceremonial aspect of eating and drinking over the ascetic culture of officialdom. In these passages, Wells in fact accentuates the Bakhtinian celebration of carnivalism. Bakhtin writes:

The [feudal] transcendental ascetic world view had deprived them [public] of any affirmative value of [eating and drinking], had taken them as nothing more than a sad necessity of the sinful flesh, such a world view knew only one formula for making such processes respectable, and that was the feast – a negative form, hostile to their nature, dictated not by love but by enmity.<sup>300</sup>

As Bakhtin points out in the quotation above, Rabelais's carnivalesque world affirms the lofty importance of eating and drinking as the power which serves to resist the officialdom culture of fasting, restraints and asceticism. Similarly, Wells's message in *The History of Mr. Polly* also ridicules the abstinent culture of Edwardian officialdom.

*The Food of the Gods* dramatises the theme of building the new world through the carnival images of feasting and the consequent excessiveness. While Wells does not build the world of the carnival to expose the falsity of contemporary official culture in this romance as he did in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Food of the Gods* creates the world of Gargantuan animals, and Pantagruel humans, which grow up by feeding on 'the food of gods,' and stand against the norms of officialdom. Hence, throughout the text, the norms of littleness, restraint, fasting and asceticism promulgated by the authorities in society are contrasted to the bigness, growth and excessiveness, and the hunger and feasting created by the rapid growth.

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<sup>300</sup> Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel,' *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, 185.

The government organises institutions such as the 'National Temperance Association' and its branch, 'Temperance in Growth and a National Society for the Preservation of the Proper Proportions of Things' against excessive growth.

<sup>301</sup> The names of these organisations point to the fact that the official authorities endeavour to produce the discourse emphasising principles of proportion, restraint, fasting, and temperance. The terminologies, 'temperance' and 'proper proportions' exemplify the ruling class's desire to control the body of people; and the people whose body should be controlled by the authorities are proletarians. The growth of the giant children on a massive scale is equated with 'a proletariat of hungry giants,' (*FG*, 106) and 'a gigantic parasite' (*FG*, 184) by the leaders of society. Thus, the narrative makes it clear that the act of organising such institutions represent officialdom's anxiety about the uncontrollable growth of the lower class.

The giant creatures' growing hunger for eating and feasting, their excessive size conflict with the norms of proportion imposed by the old and established society, and their existence in the world of the little people drives the quiet English society into chaos. The first half of the text describes how the giant animals destroy the hierarchies not only among animals but also between animals and humans. Humans are stung to death by the giant wasps; pigeons are devoured by them (*FG*, 36); a child is kidnapped by a Gargantuan chicken (*FG*, 45-6). The narrator describes the scenes of chaos simply but effectively: 'A picnic party was dispersed at Aldington Knoll, and all its sweets and jam consumed, and a puppy was killed and torn to pieces near Whitstable under the very eyes of its mistress' (*FG*, 36). They intervene in the peaceful petty-bourgeois picnic time as the Martians launch their sudden attack on the human world during a peaceful teatime.

However, in this romance the havoc caused by the massive wasps is described in a farcical tone; the narrator's tone sounds excited, not tragic when he details the grotesque scenes of the torn dead carcass of the puppy and its distressed mistress. The narrator describes the most disturbing scene with an ambiguous tone that hovers between the comic and the horrific, in which the

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<sup>301</sup> Wells, *The Food of the Gods, The Sea Lady* (New York: Scribner's, 1925) vol. 5 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols. (1924-7) 106-7. Subsequent quotations are cited parenthetically in the text.

Podbourne doctor in his buggy is almost consumed by the giant rats. The scene is witnessed as 'a nightmare transformation of the familiar road' by a brickmaker:

The black figure of the doctor with its whirling whip danced out against the flame. The horse kicked indistinctly, half hidden by the blaze, with a rat at its throat. In the obscurity against the churchyard wall, the eyes of the second monster show wickedly. (FG, 58)

Observed from a certain distance, this scene contains vivid images: blackness and fire; kicking and dancing. In these images, grotesqueness and joyousness are intertwined. Moreover, the horrible event that the doctor experiences is presented to the reader in a farcical tone, and from the perspective of the hungry rats, his horror can be regarded as a joyful feast. After the doctor successfully flees from his predators, the rats enjoy their feast: 'When the fire was out the giant rats came back, took the dead horse, dragged it across the churchyard into the brickfield and ate at it until it was dawn, none even then daring to disturb them' (FG, 59). Rats, which are ranked in the one of the lowest levels on the ladder of the kingdom of animals and the human, can threaten their superiors and feast themselves on a horse. As Peter Kemp points out, altogether with 'grisly bits of mortuary detail about those who have fallen prey to various hypertrophied predators, [...] are itemised with loving attention, as when a doctor is savaged.'<sup>302</sup> The reader senses the author enjoying writing this scene, and he also can guess his satisfaction in smashing the hierarchy of petty bourgeois society. The animals' revolt against the social order and the principle of food chains in the animal kingdom reveals the theme of Rabelais's carnivalesque novel: 'the feast of the popular giants—consuming the old feudal culture.'<sup>303</sup>

Concerning the grotesque body, Bakhtin maintains that 'the grotesque images preserve their peculiar nature, entirely different from ready-made, completed being. They remain ambivalent and contradictory; they are ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of classic aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed.'<sup>304</sup> The ever-growing bodies in

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<sup>302</sup> Peter Kemp, *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape: Biological Imperatives and Imaginative Obsessions* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 71.

<sup>303</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 215.

<sup>304</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His world*, 25.

*The Food of the Gods* are like the hybrid bodies thoroughly detailed in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The War of the Worlds*. All of these are the bodies of the grotesque, which are formulated by the author with the deliberate intention to shock representatives of officialdom. In particular, *The Food of the Gods* highlights how the people of officialdom are overwhelmed by the giant bodies. To the little people living in the little world, the ‘Gargantuan Birds’ (FG, 45) and the ‘Pantagruel’ (FG, 122)<sup>305</sup> children look monstrous. For instance, from the viewpoint of the Vicar of Eyebright, one of the boomfood children, the young Caddles is ‘ugly – as all excessive things must be’ (FG, 161). The official authoritative discourses consider the excessive growth as ‘a case of General Hypertrophy’ and something ‘abnormal’ (FG, 163). The doctor of Eyebright links the over-growth to the case of ‘grave moral and intellectual deficiencies’ by getting support from ‘a most gifted and celebrated philosopher, Max Nordau’s law’ (FG, 151). The Vicar, Lady Wondershoot, and the Doctor stand for the representative discourse of the old established social order.

The text’s carnivalised sense of the world is marked in the emphasis of the positive force of growth. As Rabelais presents the gigantic size as the symbol of greatness, *The Food of Gods* also portrays the excessive size as having the power of destroying the old world. For instance, Mr. Bensington’s dream reveals the main theme of this romance:

He dreamt he had dug a deep hole into the earth and poured in tons and tons of the Food of the Gods and the earth was swelling and swelling, and all the boundaries of the countries were bursting, and the Royal Geographical Society was all at work like one great guild of tailors letting out the equator (FG, 13).

Through Mr. Bensington’s prophetic dream, Wells visualises what Bakhtin names the leading themes of bodily life: ‘fertility, growth, and a brimming-over abundance.’<sup>306</sup> Pouring in tons of the food of gods in the deep hole of the earth is the act of sowing. Pregnancy and growth are represented as the swelling of the earth. The bursting boundaries of the countries symbolise giving birth through

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<sup>305</sup> From such expressions as Gargantuan and Pantagruel employed by the narrator, we can see that Wells had Rabelais memorable story of two giants in his mind when he wrote this romance. Hence, it can be said that this romance shares the carnivalesque elements Rabelais exhibits.

<sup>306</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 22.

destruction of the old world. Thus, gigantism is associated with the greatness: 'behind the grotesque shapes and accidents of the present, the coming world of giants and all the mighty things the future has in store – vague and splendid, like some glittering palace seen suddenly in the passing of a sunbeam far away' (*FG*, 102).

The most carnivalesque scene of the text is found in the young Caddles episode. It symbolically shows that the giant force drives away the old established social order. The giant Caddles' babyish playing brings havoc to the little village:

Gathering enterprise from impunity, he began babyish hydraulic engineering. He dived a huge port for his paper fleets with an old shed door that served him as a spade, and [...] he devised an ingenious canal that incidentally flooded Lady Wondershoot's ice-house, and finally he dammed the river [...] with a few vigorous doorfuls of earth – he must have worked like an avalanche [...] (*FG*, 181-2).

The scale of his play described in the quotation textualises the theme of excessiveness. The giant child's innocent play, which results in an immense inundation for the adults of the little world, is written in a comical tone. In addition, a series of events caused by the excessive growth of not only the young Caddles but also the vegetation of the village drives the tyrannical aristocrat, Lady Wondershoot out of England to Europe. This farce is the symbolical scene of the annihilation of the old world with the new force. The young Caddles's play is compared to the act of 'engineering' by the narrator; in fact, he builds the dam, and this causes floods and literally washes away the feudal orders. Caddles's game illuminates that the coming force (engineer class armed with new technology) will overthrow the obsolete social order. This fantastic representation of Wells's ideas is demonstrated in 'Locomotion in the Twentieth Century,' the first chapter of *Anticipations*. This scene also predicts what is to happen to the little world when the giant generation marches into war against the old little world at the end of the romance. The farce is the carnival in which the orders of officialdom are joyfully denied and the new world is sombrely welcomed.

*The Food of the Gods*, which was published in the early twentieth century, soon after the death of Queen Victoria, develops the idea of a superman as the ideal future human being. This is contrasted to the presentation of the cyborg

bodies of the Martians and the hybrid bodies of the Beast People. Abandoning the sceptical voice of the narrator of *The War of the Worlds*, this text welcomes the emergence of the giants who consist of educated middle-class elites. In this text, Wells suggests the ideal image of the future human. Young Caddles' death clarifies this gesture. Before the story reaches the climax, the text shows the death of young Caddles. The text does not allow him to have intelligent parents such as Professor Redwood and the engineer, Cossar. The new forces, which are doomed to build the new world, are composed of the educated offspring of the class of engineers and scientists: the emerging elite middle class. The giant children of the professional middle class are developed into Samurai later in *A Modern Utopia* (1905) which immediately succeeds *The Food of the Gods*.

The departure point of this romance from Bakhtinian carnivalesque literature is in Wells's idea that the new force for the utopian future should consist of the upper and middle-class elites. While Bakhtin champions the force from the proletariat, Wells does not trust the mass whom he perceives as the uneducated and ignorant. One striking example appears in the episode of a newly released prisoner in *The Food of the Gods*. Without having an opportunity of knowing the real importance of the Boomfood children, he falls under the spell of the politician, Caterham's propaganda: 'He had come back to a world in crisis, to the immediate decision of a stupendous issue. He must play his part in the great conflict like a man – like a free responsible man' (FG, 207). This passage raises the question of the definition of 'a free responsible man.' From the voice of Caterham, [which] was the one single thing heard' to the ignorant ex-prisoner (FG, 206), the newly released prisoner finds his role in Caterham's political agenda: 'they must all unite to "grasp the nettle" before it was "too late"' (FG, 207). Thus, Wells displays his idea of the importance of education, and the future world governed by a new stratum composed of the educated middle class.

The new world built by the new elite class, which is strongly suggested in *The Food of the Gods*, is transformed into the idea of rulers in future utopian projects such as *A Modern Utopia*, *In the Days of the Comet* and Wells's non-fictional writings, *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*. What differentiates this romance from Wells's other utopian project is that this romance shows the world in the process of transformation or at the transition. This romance is

situated between Wells's scientific romances published in the late-nineteenth century and his early-twentieth century utopian novels.

The Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalised sense of the world is centred on the idea of becoming and renewal. As has been discussed in this chapter, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The War of the Worlds* focus on the theme of becoming and the deconstruction of the old world. Compared with these two romances, *The Food of the Gods* concentrates more on formulating the possible form of the future world. Thus, Wells's romances published during his early ten year literary career demonstrate the process from becoming through deconstruction to reconstruction.

It seems that *The Food of the Gods* ends by signifying the giants' construction of the new world. However, it is only an implication. There is not any concluding comment from the narrator on their fate. Like Wells's other romances, this text leaves the future to the reader's imagination. The narrator of the text seems to know the result of the war because the text assumes that the narrator has witnessed the whole events since the birth of the Boomfood. There is no doubt that the narrator understands the potential power of the food of gods, but he does not put forward his opinion. Instead like the narrators of *The Wonderful Visit*, *The Invisible Man* and *The Sea Lady*, he collects all voices and episodes, and he transforms them into his own narrative action. His narrative itself is based on movement and the story itself ends with movement. Hence, the question of the future world as the replacement of the old by a new power remains unsolved, and becomes an agenda of Wells's utopian projects. As this chapter has attempted to argue, the three romances are narratives about movement and becoming. In brief, Bakhtin's 'carnival is the essentially mobile refusal of the strict spaces of official culture.'<sup>307</sup> It refuses every form of closed structures, and puts its accents on its potential mobility, which is strongly asserted in Wells's first utopian project, *Anticipations*.

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<sup>307</sup> Tim Cresswell, 'Imagining the Nomad: Mobility and the Postmodern Primitive', *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity*, eds. George Benko and Ulf Strohmayer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 367.

## **Chapter V. Romance of Utopia**

In *In the Days of the Comet*, Willie Leadford's narrative ends with the scenes of Beltane Carnival bonfire, the death of his mother and his marriage. The images of death, fire and marriage embody this romance's core theme: death of the old world and birth of the new world. This romance also captures the colours of optimism and utopianism which are distinctively displayed in Wells's new-century fictions and essays. Being mainly dystopian romances, his earlier scientific romances focus on drawing gloomy sketches of the late-nineteenth century English civilisation. On the contrary, romances after *The Food of the Gods* purvey the author's hopeful messages about constructing a better world. As he recollects almost thirty years later, *The Food of the Gods* and *In the Days of the Comet* present 'human will and government, under fantastic forms' (*ExA*, 654).

The causes of the seemingly abrupt change of his tone in depicting and diagnosing contemporary society and its major issues have been much discussed by the critics.<sup>308</sup> Wells's immense success as a scientific romance writer and his improved health have been counted as the foremost reasons. In his autobiography, in a hopeful mood, Wells himself recollects the period when he started to write *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901), the first book of his early-twentieth century utopian projects: 'In this newly built Spade House I began a book *Anticipations* which can be considered as the key stone to the main arch of my work' (*ExA*, 643). Here, Wells's allusion to the newly-built house points to the fact that *Anticipations* is about reconstructing a new world out of the ashes of the old world, and this positive tone flows throughout his early-twentieth century romances and sociological essays, especially throughout the series of utopian projects: *Anticipations*, *The Discovery of the Future*, *Mankind in the Making* and *A Modern Utopia*.

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<sup>308</sup> David C. Smith, *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal*, 90: 'He is physically located and settled in his new home at Sandgate. His marriage was successful and about to be crowned with a first child. Apparently the move to the sea air had alleviated his medical problems, if not clearing them away completely. Wells used his new location, and the freedom which it, and money, gave him, to devote his life generally to working out his world view in the first decade of the new century.'



The change of attitude, however, is not a sudden and unexpected shift. Instead, the new century's utopian projects continue the spirit of carnival, which has been fully exploited in his earlier scientific romances. The carnival spirit flowing throughout carnivalesque literature is the literary embodiment of the sentiments of shifts and changes; of death and renewal, which are demonstrated by an all-annihilating and all-renewing force, and celebration of the joyful relativity of all hierarchical and authoritarian structures. As discussed in the previous chapter, Wells's scientific romances activate the characteristics of carnivalesque literature by starkly depicting the disintegrating old world order and by engaging the various images of change in the narrative of becoming. While Wells's scientific romances focus on exploiting the carnival codes of changes, death and annihilation, the carnival spirit of his utopian projects is found in the celebration of renewal.

Through the refusal of any kind of motives for stabilisation and the celebration of the moment of the deconstruction of the established social structure, carnival becomes the utopian space for the people previously suppressed by the authority and government. Bakhtin's advocacy of destabilisation through the carnival rituals is considered to embrace anti-Utopianism since it denies any kind of system and stability, which is the key element comprising the idea of Utopianism.<sup>309</sup> However, the very idea that during the time of the feast, the participants effectively annihilate the inherited hierarchical and authoritative structures, replacing the established traditions with 'a free and familiar mode of social interaction based on the principles of mutual cooperation, solidarity, and equality'<sup>310</sup> encapsulates Bakhtinian Utopianism; and these features of carnival are the backbones for Wells's Utopianism.

In particular, Bakhtinian carnival is a festive time for the low class, peasants in rural area and the urban proletariat. Thus, it is created from the bottom, and it is the low-class's utopian sphere of abundance and freedom. Wellsian carnival shares Bakhtinian notion in that it purports to break down all inherited social structures and the authoritative systems in politics and culture. However, it departs from Bakhtin's theorising in that *Anticipations, The Mankind in the*

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<sup>309</sup> Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics* (California: Stanford UP, 1990), 94-95.

<sup>310</sup> Michael Gardiner 'Bakhtin's Carnival: Utopia as Critique,' *Bakhtin Carnival and Other Subjects* (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1993), 33.

*Making* and *A Modern Utopia* venture to formulate utopian spaces for the middle and lower-middle class, covering from shop men to doctors and lawyers. Wells himself never sympathised with the lower class. He writes in his autobiography, even when he was a school boy, he lacked 'enthusiasm for the Proletariat ideal': 'I did believe there was and had to be a lower stratum, though I was disgusted to find that anyone belonged to it' (*ExA*, 94). Being a carnival of and for the middle stratum, Wells's utopian scheme desires to break down authorities above the middle class, and to control the growth of the ignorant proletariat, whom he despises as the class of the 'Abyss' in *Anticipations*.

Above all, the ideal world, which Wells dreams of, is a utopian state for the lower-middle class characters inhabiting his social romances. They are the wage workers like Kipps, Hoopdriver and Mr. Polly, and also the genius young men without the benefit of high social background like Mr. Lewisham and George Ponderevo. Wells blames society for disallowing the lower-middle class to achieve higher education. The ideal education system proposed in *Mankind in the Making* is for his lower-middle class characters. These characters are also components of Wells's persona since their life stories dramatise certain stages of Wells's life. For instance, Wells the drapery assistant is incarnated in Kipps, Hoopdriver and Polly. Also, Wells the science student is represented as Mr. Lewisham, and Ponderevo. Thus, their utopia can also be Wells's utopia. In order to create an ideal space for them, Wells refuses all the conventional social order: political, economical, and social. The labour socialist movement, capitalism, democracy and monarchy fall into the objects to be criticised and condemned by him. Through this rejection, Wells proposes to substitute the old society with the New Republic, which should be organised by the new middle class, which is composed of 'mechanics and engineers,' who are also 'educated and intelligent efficients.'<sup>311</sup>

The tradition of British scientific romances is paralleled with 'the tradition of essay-writing which is itself Romantic, always speculative, often futuristic, frequently blessed with an elegance of style and a delicate irony.'<sup>312</sup> Wells's *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making* belong to this tradition of essay-writing.

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<sup>311</sup> H. G. Wells, *Anticipations and Other Papers* (New York: Scribner's, 1924) vol. 4 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-7) 94; 86.

<sup>312</sup> Brian Stableford, *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950* (London: Fourth Estate, 1985) 6.

Wells's desire for establishing a utopia for the middle and the lower-middle classes renders the textual space an arena of the author's sentimental dreaming. It is for this reason that A. J. P. Taylor claims that there is no distinct boundary between Wells as a thinker and as a romancer: 'Wells, the thinker and prophet, was the same: he could work miracles, or at any rate wanted to work them. Here again he had the right patten and often the right imagination.'<sup>313</sup> Wells's three non-fictional works, *Anticipations*, *The Discovery of the Future* and *Mankind in the Making*, are influenced by Thomas Carlyle's hortatory work, *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841).<sup>314</sup> In these texts, Wells personifies himself as a prophet who warns, exhorts, preaches and educates the public. Bearing in mind Carlyle's claim for the man of letters to become a powerful type of public presence,<sup>315</sup> Wells plays the role of a prophet hero with the expectation that his presence and opinions will be powerfully and authoritatively conveyed to the readers. Associating the authorship of modern romance writers – Walter Scott and Dickens – with Carlyle's celebration of the author as a modern hero, Ian Duncan argues that Charles Dickens's most autobiographical work, *David Copperfield* (1850) is 'the author's romance of his own identity.'<sup>316</sup> If Dickens casts himself as a romantic hero in his autobiographical novel, Wells features himself as a prophet of the human future, and endeavours to transform the merely would-be utopian texts into the carnivalesque narratives of the author's romance. His sociological thoughts are subjective dreaming instead of logically speculated arguments;<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, 'The Man Who Tried to Work Miracles,' *Critical Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed. John Huntington (Boston: Hall, 1991), 128.

<sup>314</sup> Patrick Parrinder, 'Introduction,' *The Discovery of the Future*, by H.G. Wells (London: PNL P, 1989), 7

<sup>315</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-worship* (New York: AMS, 1974): 'Hero-gods, Prophets, Poets, Priests are forms of Heroism that belong to the old ages, make their appearance in the remotest times; some of them have ceased to be possible long since, and cannot any more show themselves in this world. The Hero as *Man of Letters*, again, of which class we are to speak today, is altogether a product of these new ages [...]' (154), '[...] Man-of-Letters Hero must be regarded as our most important modern person' (155).

<sup>316</sup> Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel*, 196.

<sup>317</sup> J. P. Vernier, 'H.G. Wells, Writer or Thinker? From Science Fiction to Social Prophecy,' *Wellsian* 3 (1980) 24: 'they were ideas born not of a rational process of thinking but of instinctive likes and dislikes.' See also, David. C. Smith's *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986) 127: 'H. G Wells was a profoundly personal writer. In his fiction, as well as in his prescriptions for the future, he is always at ease in using the personal pronoun, the autobiographical experience, the individual idiom.'

thus it is difficult to distinguish Wells, the sociological thinker from Wells, the creative writer.<sup>318</sup>

*A Modern Utopia* does not exhibit the carnival spirit so explicitly since it is more about the protagonist narrator's speculation about the social structure of utopia. However, by implanting the voices which revolt against the tyrannical view of the protagonist, Wells continues to apply the spirit of carnival in plotting the story. In addition, in this text, returning to the imaginative narrative devices, especially the romance of fantasy, Wells criticises and parodies his predecessors' utopian romances, and hereby produces a double-voiced text. *A Modern Utopia* is written in the vein of utopian fictions rather than sociological and philosophical essays. Since Thomas More (1478-1535) wrote *Utopia* (1515), utopian literature has had a hybrid narrative form which utilises the benefits provided by the genre of fantasy. Wells also uses the fantasy narrative to preach his utopianism, and the attempt was welcomed by the contemporary critic, Sydney Olivier (1859-1943). In the review of *A Modern Utopia*, he acclaimed Wells's skilful use of the imaginative narrative device in attracting more Proletarian attention: 'But Mr. Wells as an imaginative story-teller is steadily winning their [middle-proletarian] ear; and they take improvement kindly if it comes in romantic form.'<sup>319</sup>

The most famous *fin-de-siècle* utopian romance, William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) represents the author's dream of socialist utopianism, faithfully following the tropes of the romance genre. John Goode's contention that 'romance for Morris becomes a power for seeing the future in the present' is well observed.<sup>320</sup> Romance provides the spacious narrative field in which utopian speculators evolve their free imagination. Likewise, Wells can re-activate his ability as an imaginative writer in producing the hybrid genre as he professes in 'A Note to the Reader': 'I am aiming throughout at a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussions on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other' (*MU*, xlvii). Even though Wells has professed to discard the fictional forms of prophecy at the beginning of *Anticipations*, whenever he wants to avoid strictly scientific logic, which has been required in sociological and political

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<sup>318</sup> In 'Wells and the Literature of Prophecy,' *Wellsian*, 9 (1986), Patrick Parrinder names Wells's futuristic work as the literature of prophecy, and Wells's literary career comprises of the two selves: 'the intuitive thinker' and 'the creative thinker' (8).

<sup>319</sup> Parrinder, ed., *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, 111.

<sup>320</sup> John Goode, 'William Morris and the Dream of Revolution,' *Literature and Politics in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Lucas (London: Methuen, 1971) 239.

treatises, he can freely divert the reader's attention to the fact that he is a creative writer. In writing *A Modern Utopia*, Wells once again proves that he is talented as a romancer.

i) **Unachievable Monologism: *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*.**

At the beginning of *Anticipations*, Wells vociferously proclaims that he is about to draw a picture of the coming future in a new literary style. As he clearly mentions in both the footnotes and the text of *Anticipations*, the reason why he has decided to adopt the genre of sociological writing is that unlike fictional narrative, which 'becomes more and more of a nuisance,' sociological essays can convey 'quite serious forecasts and inductions of things to come,' and they are 'frank inquiries and arranged considerations' (*Anticipations*, 3). What Wells calls 'speculative inductions' refers to the methodology of sociological and political writings which he conceives as 'political forecasts'<sup>321</sup> which were practised by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and other political writers. In the footnote, Wells distinguishes fictional prophecy from the scientific and sociological forecast of the future in detail:

Fiction is necessarily concrete and definite; it permits of no open alternatives; its aim of illusion prevents a proper amplitude of demonstration, and modern prophecy should be, one submits, a branch of speculation, and should follow with all decorum the scientific method. The very form of fiction carries with it something of disavowal; indeed, very much of the Fiction of Future pretty frankly abandons the prophetic altogether, and becomes polemical, cautionary, of idealistic, and a mere footnote and commentary to our present discontent.<sup>322</sup>

In this wordy defence of what he calls a branch of speculation with scientific method, Wells points out two main weaknesses in prophesying the future in fictional form: it is definite, blocking any other alternatives, and it also produces illusions rather than truth. Here, what Wells is aiming at is to hatch a scientifically

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<sup>321</sup> Wells's Atlantic edition does not contain this footnote. For the reference of this, see the footnote of Wells's 1902 edition of the text: *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (London: Chapman, 1902), 1.

<sup>322</sup> Footnote to the 1902 edition of *Anticipations*, 2.

argued sociological essay with open-endedness, which can invite various opinions from the readers. Also, his desperate effort to argue for the non-fictional mode of the future forecast points to the fact that he wants to be recognised as a thinker not a romancer by the reading public.

According to Bakhtin's theorisation of the genre, political or sociological writings are categorised as the genre of "Scientific or philosophical treatise"<sup>323</sup> in which the author's strong monological voice is crucial. Bakhtin argues that monologic 'principles go far beyond the boundaries of artistic creativity alone; they are the principle behind the entire ideological culture of recent times.'<sup>324</sup> Monologic principles arrange the argument into a single rational order of totalitarianism by presenting definitive truth and transparent languages which serve to amputate unfinalisable and multiple unforeseen possibilities.

Wells's desire to practise 'the frankness and arranged considerations' reveals his intention to produce a monological text, following traditional philosophical and sociological writing styles. Compared with literary genres such as epic, romance and novel, the scientific or the philosophical treatise pursues a monologic perception of truth. Bakhtin criticises philosophers (for instance, Kant and Hegel) for enforcing monologism. In theoreticism, which is Bakhtin's earlier term for monologism, 'everything has a meaning relating to the seamless whole, a meaning one could discover if one only had the code.'<sup>325</sup> Monologism displays the one-sided and limited nature of a situated perspective of the observer. It also aims at finalising perceptions, and thus does not allow one viewer's perspective to be corrected or dialogised by others' viewpoints. Accordingly, the author imposes his views of the world on his characters and readers, and from the reader's part, only passive acceptance is expected by the author. The more dogmatic such a discourse hopes to become, the more it effaces the nuances and the world of the Other.<sup>326</sup> For this reason, modern monologic philosophers are called 'the great synthesizers.'<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, trans., Vern W. McGee, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1986), 90.

<sup>324</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 80.

<sup>325</sup> Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, 28.

<sup>326</sup> Bakhtin's concept of monologism is examined in detail in Iris M. Zavala's essay, 'Note on the Cannibalistic Discourse of Monologism,' *Bakhtin Carnival and Other Subjects: Selected Papers from the Fifth International Bakhtin Conference University of Manchester, July 1991*, ed. David Shepherd (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 261-76.

<sup>327</sup> Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, 236

John Huntington has noticed Wells's wish to write monologic texts in both fiction and non-fictional essays. He claims that *Anticipations* and *The Discovery of the Future* (perhaps, with *Mankind in the Making*) are distinguished from his scientific romances in the sense that they tend to seek single answers and solutions.<sup>328</sup> Accordingly, Wells's thought falls inevitably into a totalitarian and synthesising scheme, which he expects to help remove vagueness and ambiguity from his argument. However, Wells's very attempt at providing 'single answers' frequently betrays the original purpose. Twelve years after the publication of *Anticipations*, he confesses his failure even though the tone is playful. In the 1914 preface of the text, Wells admits that the text has 'ignorances, several rash and harsh generalizations,' and immediately, he makes excuse that 'an occasional trick of harshness and moments of leaping ignorance are in the blood of H. G. Wells.'<sup>329</sup> Consequently, the trick is found whenever Wells attempts to smooth over the text's eventfulness.

Wells tries to resolve conflicting ideas floating around his argument into one finalised monologic conclusion. The four utopian works published in the dawn of the new century – *Anticipations*, *The Discovery of the Future*, *Mankind in the Making* and *A Modern Utopia* – exhibit Wells's persistent effort to find the best solution for conflicts between State control and individual freedom. Wells's blueprint of the future has been criticised as the thoroughly planned society, which is totalitarian, repressive, hierarchical and authoritative. For instance, Wells's conception of New Republic and World States is satirised in Aldous Huxley's (1894-1963) *Brave New World* (1932). This accusation, however, somewhat over-simplifies Wells's idea of Utopia. In his scientific romances which were published in the turn of the century, *The First Men in the Moon* and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), Wells provides his negative opinions about the perfectly controlled society. The former, as Hillegas rightly points out, is a parable of the frightening power of science, and of the nightmarish world which

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<sup>328</sup> John Huntington, *The Logic of Fantasy: H. G. Wells and Science Fiction* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), 116.

<sup>329</sup> H.G. Wells, 'An Introduction to the 1914 Edition of "Anticipations",' in *Anticipations and Other Papers* (New York: Scribner's, 1924), vol. 4 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-7), 276.

science can bring to the human future.<sup>330</sup> These works disclose Wells's concern about harms which the perfectly governed society will bring to the human. Also they contain his anxiety about limitations and shortcomings of his own utopianism. In particular, the fact that the former was published in the same year when *Anticipations* started to be serialised and that it contains vivid descriptions of the nightmarish totalitarian society of the Selenites, testifies that George Orwell's effortless characterisation of Wells's utopianism as the product of his naïve scientific optimism is a hasty interpretation.<sup>331</sup> A close reading of his early utopian works draws one's attention to the fact that Wells actually endeavours to find (but in pain) an idealistic world in which society is ideally controlled and its individual members enjoy their freedom.

The theme of liberating suppressed people and guaranteeing their freedom is most vividly asseverated in the opening chapters of *Anticipations*. It is replete with images and languages of breaking the codes of established convention. Wells describes Britain as going through great changes and in the transition stage from the old order to the new. The established class system, morality, family structure, technology, science and political machine are considered as being on the way to the chaotic and heterogeneous phase. *Anticipations* predicts that the contemporary social order is to disintegrate and to be reborn as the new world which is ruled by new orders and fresh people. Thus, this text can be read as the continuation of Wells's carnivalesque romances.

At the beginning of *Anticipations*, Wells concentrates more on destroying the old power structure and it is strongly subordinated to his prophesy of the development of the transportation system. In this prophecy the progress of the railway is considered as the trigger for breaking up boundaries: 'The old antithesis [between the city and the country] will indeed cease, the boundary-lines altogether disappear' (*Anticipations*, 56). In the matter of the disappearing boundaries he agrees with Herbert Spencer, the late-nineteenth century Social Darwinist. Spencer perceives the contemporary government and its parliament as

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<sup>330</sup> Marks Hillegas, *The Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians* (New York: Oxford UP, 1967), 54.

<sup>331</sup> George Orwell, 'Wells, Hitler and the World State,' *Critical Essays* (London: Secker, 1960), 92-8.



commanding 'an unlimited authority than the authority of a monarch,'<sup>332</sup> and wielding their sovereign superpower by intervening in human affairs whenever they want to. Similarly, Wells considers that the old British government, class and education system function as metaphorical agents of bounding and blocking the mobility of the lower part of society. Boundaries correspond to the State's control of the individual freedom of movement, and they are also the symbols of hierarchies not only between urban and rural areas but also between classes.

As a technocrat, Wells celebrates the improvement in transportation and telecommunication technology as the sign of removing the borders and the barriers. These passages carry the evidences which arrestingly reveal Wells's acclaim for the development of transportation:

And presently the rules of the game, so to speak, would be further altered and the unifications and isolations that were establishing themselves upset altogether and brought into novel conflict by the beginnings of navigation, whereby an impassable barrier became a highway (*Anticipations*, 190).

Improvement in transit between communities formerly for all practical purposes isolated, means, therefore, and always has meant, and I imagine, always will mean, that now they can get at one another. And they do. They inter-breed and fight, physically, mentally, and spiritually (*Anticipations*, 191).

Here, such vocabularies as 'unifications, isolations and establishing,' which represent social stability, are undermined by the languages designating violation of the stability: 'upset, conflict and highway.' Stephen Kern has observed that at the turn of the century, new technologies of communication (telephone and telegraph) and transportation (locomotion, airplane, and bicycle) had an effect of 'dramatic transformations in the sense of distance,' and this functioned to flatten the social hierarchies.<sup>333</sup> The images of demolition of the boundaries, collapse of the established social orders and annihilation of the social and geographical distances evince the fact that in the new-century utopian projects, Wells continues to employ the carnival spirit.

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<sup>332</sup> Herbert Spencer, 'Man versus the State,' *Political Writings*, ed. John Offer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 77.

<sup>333</sup> Stephen Kern. *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983), 315-6.

It is easily detected that Wells's optimistic mood in diagnosing technological development embodies the cheerful force of carnival, especially when it is compared with pessimistic notes of Wells's contemporaries. *Degeneration* (1895) is the temple of Max Nordau's bitter diatribe against the decadence of the *fin de siècle*. Nordau offered evocative descriptions of the neurotic effects of technological inventions in the metropolitan city on the individual lives. For instance, he deplores that in his times, 'steam and electricity have turned the customs of life of every member of the civilised nations upside down, even of the most obtuse and narrow-minded citizen, who is completely inaccessible to the impelling thoughts of the times.'<sup>334</sup> The similar discontent of urbanisation is detected in Wells's *Anticipations*. The uncontrolled expansion of the city and increase of population in the urban centres cause the city to have an ugly face. However he does not agree with Nordau's extremely pessimistic attitudes towards urbanisation of the nation. He expresses his discontent with the way in which Gissing describes London in [*The*] *Whirlpool*. Objecting to Gissing's idea of 'the nineteenth-century Great City' as 'attractive, tumultuous, and spinning down to death,' Wells professes that new forces in transportation will bring 'the complete reduction of all our present congestions' (*Anticipations*, 39). For Wells, the technologically highly developed city signifies the new world, which has been and will be superseding the old country.

Wells's carnival spirit is not only confined to the liberation of the formerly suppressed class from the old hierarchical society, but also concentrates more on building a new world through the newly grown force of the middle class. More specifically, the very proposal of the ideal society constructed by the middle class situates Wells's stance somewhere between liberation and control, and in their precarious harmonisation and balance. The languages of liberation are juxtaposed with those of control:

Correlated with the sudden development of mechanical forces that first began to be socially perceptible in the middle eighteenth century, has been the appearance of great masses of population, having quite novel functions and relations in the social body, and together with this appearance such a suppression, curtailment, and modification of the older classes, as to point to an entire disintegration of that system (*Anticipations*, 61-2).

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<sup>334</sup> Nordau, *Degeneration*, 37.

In this statement, Wells insists that growth of the new class and the consequent liberation of the new social force will create the better future by controlling, suppressing, curtailing and modifying the older classes. These contradicting desires for freedom and restriction occupy the heart of Wells's speculation about building the ideal society. Also, these conflicting wishes become the driving initiatives of the narrative.

Wells's middle-class carnival attempts to find its place in the tradition of sociological and philosophical debates about individualism and collectivism, and to achieve reconciliation concerning these contradictory agendas. Wells's *Anticipations*, *Mankind in the Making* and *A Modern Utopia* are written in response to other philosophers' concepts of an ideal society: from the ancient Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle to the modern sociologist, Spencer. As he clearly acknowledges in the autobiography, Wells was influenced by Plato's speculation about the ideal society (*ExA*, 138). However Wells's real interest is in criticising, combing and capitalising on the various opinions of the ideal State, and through this process, he wishes to produce the best plan to establish Utopia. In other words, even though he was fascinated with Plato's philosophy, he modified it into a new idea of his own. In the autobiography, Wells emphasises his attempt to cast Plato's 'invincibly established' philosophy into his own interpretation, which he termed the 'melting pot': 'Here was the amusing and heartening suggestion that the whole fabric of law, custom and warship, which seemed so invincibly established, might be cast up into the melting pot and made new' (*ExA*, 138). Wells's idea, which has been 'made new' by moulding Plato's philosophy into the new frame, also indicates that he desired to manufacture his own philosophy through his interpretation of Plato and the reading of other works. In Wells's philosophic theory, Plato's doctrine of building a totalitarian utopia is modified with Aristotelian politics which gives relatively more consideration to individuality than Plato.<sup>335</sup> Furthermore, Wells confronts and challenges the ancient philosopher's teaching through the application of Spencer's preference for individual freedom over State control.

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<sup>335</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1948), 7: 'the polis is prior in the order of nature to the family and the individual', "The goodness of every part must be considered with reference to the goodness of the whole.'

Recently, John S. Partington argues that during the first few years of the new century, Wells proposed to construct a well-planned and controlled society in which individuals can enjoy the maximum of freedom, and he consistently developed his proposals.<sup>336</sup> The well-planned society with individual freedom can be seen as the result of Wells's attempts to wed two extreme politics (Platonic totalitarianism and Spencerian individualism) on the grounds of Hegelian dialectic monologism. According to Hegel, 'the method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself' which deals with forms of consciousness each of which in realising itself at the same time resolves itself, has for its result its own negation – and so passes into a higher form.<sup>337</sup> The 'inner self-movement' to the higher form finally reaches its 'absolute reality: that is the truth.'<sup>338</sup> By confronting the two different opinions and negating each other, Wells attempts to formulate his own idea, and expects it to be a higher form of truth. However, one can notice that Wells tends to over-generalise his argument whenever he tries to draw dialectic conclusions, and this gives doubt to any positive reading of Wells's utopian proposals.

In Wells's utopian projects, Plato's influence is found in his speculation about the government's perfect control of people. In Plato's speculations, government, state and law represent strong guide lines by which the individuals are efficiently controlled. For instance, regarding problems of education, Plato's Athenian claims that education has proved to be a process of attraction, of leading children to accept right principles as enunciated by the law and endorsed as genuinely correct by men who have high moral standards and are full of years and experience.'<sup>339</sup> Moreover, he strongly objects to children's attempt at experiment and to their creativity: 'this fellow [who has introduced some novelty or doing something unconventional] is the biggest menace that can ever afflict a

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<sup>336</sup> John S. Partington, *Building Cosmopolis: The Political Thought of H. G. Wells* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003): 'During the first few years of the twentieth century, he produced a series of books dealing with social policy in industrialized society and, despite starting with rash overgeneralizations, Wells developed welfare proposals which provided all with a role in society, protecting the individual whilst ensuring a highly educated population to promote the wellbeing of the state as a whole' (6).

<sup>337</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, 'Introduction: Notion of Logic,' *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Humanities, 1969), 53-4.

<sup>338</sup> Hegel, "Introduction: Notion of Logic," *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 54.

<sup>339</sup> Plato, *The Laws* Trans. Trevor J. Saunders (London: Penguin, 1970), 95

state, because he quietly changes the character of the young by making them despise old things and value novelty.<sup>340</sup>

Wells's idea of education displays his desire to modify Plato's philosophy:

The child must learn not only from preacher and parent and book, but from the whole of frame and order of life about it, that truth and sound living and service are the only trustworthy ways to either honour or power, and that, for the unavoidable accident of life, they are very certain ways (*MM*, 285).

In this passage, Wells seems to support Plato's State control of individuals by means of the education system. Wells agrees with Plato in terms of the legal prescription being a leading guideline of education. Wells proposes to produce an ideal power network in educating the next generation. Developing Plato's idea of the essential role of convention and moral men in the State's education scheme, Wells's proposal covers all the possible power structures from family through schooling to religion and literature, and tries to construct a very firm frame in order to control the unavoidable accident of life. The "very certain ways", which serve to prevent the 'unavoidable accident of life,' connotes that the ideal state should be a perfectly controlled society.

This quotation, however, imparts a counter argument, which undermines the advocacy of strong State control. Even though the 'unavoidable accident' can be checked through deliberate control, the sentence cannot eliminate the anxiety of its very existence from the reader's mind. This leads to the author's tacit acknowledgement of the fact that the newly-built boundary may not be a perfectly-framed network of power. While arguing for deliberate control, Wells concedes that the new power can produce the only general framework within which the 'unavoidable accident' will continue to happen. In insisting upon constructing the well-controlled and planned education system, Wells also emphasises the impossibility of creating perfect regulations. Wells's argument encloses counter arguments and thus becomes ambivalent.

Unlike Plato's objection to an individual's attempt at change, Wells maintains that all individual children should be encouraged to be creative, imaginative and constructive. For instance, in his argument about the ideal

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<sup>340</sup> Plato, *The Laws*, 283.

schooling of the New Republic, Wells mentions: ‘A school that shall be, at least, so skilfully conducted as to supply the necessary training [...] without either consuming all the leisure of the boy or destroying his individuality, as it is destroyed by the ignorant and pretentious blunders of to-day’ (*Anticipations*, 232-3). In this statement, criticising contemporary schooling for ignoring the individuality of the child, Wells lends weight to the importance of providing them with “the necessary trainings,” which means the general framework of control.

The art teaching should be conducted without destroying the child’s creativity and his individual uniqueness: ‘It is the business of the school to teach drawing and not to teach “art”, which, indeed, is always an individual and spontaneous thing, and it need only concern itself directly with those aspects of drawing that require direction’ (*MM*, 229). Wells minimises the power of school by connoting that drawing is the general direction guided by school curriculum and art is achieved by individual creativities. Teaching should be restricted to provide the child with the guideline, and the art is the expression of the child’s free will. Therefore, the individual creativity and imagination should not be restricted by the rigid framework of education. Wells’s emphasis on individual uniqueness in education is contrasted to Plato’s denunciation of the spirit of experiment. While Plato insists upon an exhaustively framed education system, Wells asserts that individuality should be prior to the totalitarian system.

Considering Wells’s emphasis on individual creativity, one can infer that Wells agrees with Spencer in that he gives priority to individualities over State control. Unlike Spencer, however, Wells reminds his readers of the existence of the frame and the boundary; thus he proposes the necessity of restricting unlimited freedom of the individual. First, he sets up boundaries around high mobility which otherwise could be dangerously chaotic:

Railway travelling is at best a compromise. The quite conceivable ideal of locomotive convenience, so far as travellers are concerned, is surely a highly mobile conveyance capable of travelling easily and swiftly to any desired point, traversing, at a reasonably controlled pace, the ordinary roads and streets, and having access for higher rates of speed and long-distance travelling to specialised ways restricted to swift traffic, and possibly furnished with guide-rails (*Anticipations*, 9-10).

Within the scope of one sentence, such vocabularies meaning high mobility as 'higher rates of speed,' 'swiftly,' 'highly mobile,' 'travelling' and 'traversing' are juxtaposed with words such as 'a reasonably controlled pace' and 'guide-rails' which signify tools of restriction.

While Spencer conceives the society which should be free from all kinds of the fortress of state disciplines, Wells's alternative to the contemporary governmental system is to reconstruct the State which does not completely oppose mobility but which wishes to control its flows. The State can at least create the fixed well-directed path for the movement to flow through freely inside it. The contrasting imagery can be understood on two accounts. It implies the author's acknowledgement of his desire for a completely free society on the one hand, and on the other hand, it insinuates that the author aspires to remind the reader that every society needs a sort of control. As the railway travelling means the high speed mobility on the rail, 'a transitory empire over the earth' (*Anticipations*, 9), so limitless liberty is checked by boundaries of regulations. Hence, the ideal future world envisaged by Wells embodies the new form of boundaries.

The beginning of *Anticipations* intimates that Wells has Spencer in mind: he makes it clear that he believes human progress to be achieved through competition or struggle for survival. As Spencer is strongly against the idea of 'State-ownership of railways,'<sup>341</sup> Wells argues that the development of the railway system is due to competitions among railway companies instead of governmental control: 'it is very doubtful if the railways will ever attempt any very fundamental change in the direction of greater speed or facility, unless they are first exposed to the pressure of our second alternative, competition' (*Anticipations*, 12). Furthermore, in *Anticipations*, Wells emphasises that competition between railway companies is mainly influenced by the law of Nature. This remark is different from his more solidly sociological piece of anticipations, *New Worlds for Old* (1908). Here he maintains that most of the trades in the nation should be dominated by the State monopoly not by individual competitions: 'All new great monopolistic enterprises in transit, building and cultivation, or example, must from the first be under public ownership.'<sup>342</sup> In this book, Wells clearly concedes his preference for Socialism over Spencerian *laissez faire*. Yet, this statement also

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<sup>341</sup> Spencer, 'Man Versus the State,' 100.

<sup>342</sup> H. G. Wells, *New World for Old* (London: Constable, 1908), 164.

reveals that Wells in the turn of the century does not easily put aside the Spencerian emphasis of individual struggle for survival. Thus, the Wells of this period is more flexible (or indecisive) in the matter of State control and individual freedom.

Concerning the problem of the Urban Poor' (*Anticipations*, 69), Wells and Spencer agree. Both of them perceive this class as the 'creatures not energetic enough to maintain' their life<sup>343</sup> and they are the Abyss, who fail in struggling for survival, and are situated 'in a finally hopeless competition against machinery that is as yet so cheap as their toil' (*Anticipations*, 69). Hence, according to both thinkers, the urban poor deserve to die. Nevertheless, Wells differs from Spencer in the method of dealing with the Abyss. Spencer contends that the fate of the poor should be left in the hands of Nature. He is strongly against the assumption that 'all social suffering is removable, and that it is the duty of somebody or others to remove it'<sup>344</sup> and that 'evils of all kinds should be dealt with by the State.'<sup>345</sup> On the contrary, according to Wells, even though the problem of the Abyss was 'out of human control' in the past, it will be checked and controlled by the State: 'the New Republic, as its consciousness and influence develop together, will meet, check, and control these things' (*Anticipations*, 242-3).

Furthermore, Wells is influenced by Spencer's idea that the current social structure gradually develops from the homogeneous states to the heterogeneous. In *Progress: Its Laws and Cause* (1882), Spencer suggests that it is natural that civilisation progresses from simple and homogeneous circumstances to the complex and heterogeneous. According to Spencer, 'the transformation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous is that in which progress essentially consists.'<sup>346</sup> Furthermore, he claims that in the evolution of nature, 'the latest and most heterogeneous creature is man.'<sup>347</sup> His argument implies that the progress of civilisation can be measured by how centrifugally the society has developed.

Like Spencer, Wells diagnoses that contemporary civilisation is on the continuous 'move from homogeneous to heterogeneous conditions' (MM, 116). Human morality, class system and labour-structure grow to be heterogeneously

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<sup>343</sup> Herbert Spencer, 'Men versus the State,' 81.

<sup>344</sup> Spencer, "Men versus the State," 8.

<sup>345</sup> Spencer, "Men versus the State," 90.

<sup>346</sup> Herbert Spencer, *Progress: Its Law and Cause: With Other Disquisitions* (New York: Fitzgerald, 1882) 234.

<sup>347</sup> Herbert Spencer, *Progress: Its Law and Cause*, 236.



multifarious. For instance, while 'the kingdoms of the past were just one little culture to which all must needs confirm', the coming twentieth century will 'possess no universal ideals' (*Anticipations*, 122-3). Wells perceives that the world is in the transitional stage from homogeneously dogmatic social order to the heterogeneously various orders, which take life as 'already most wonderfully arbitrary and experimental' (*Anticipations*, 123).

However, Wells's ideas differ from Spencer's in the point that he places restraints on the unlimited progress of civilisation towards the heterogeneous culture. He prophesies that even though the current social phenomena go through the stage of heterogeneity, they will coalesce into a homogeneous culture: 'I conceive the growing sense of itself which the new class of modern efficient will develop, will become manifest in movements and concerns that are now heterogeneous and distinct, but will presently drift into co-operation and coalescence' (*Anticipations*, 238). For Spencer, the tendency of being homogeneous is only caused by the unnecessary intrusion of the authoritative power, and thus this inclination is the violation against the law of Nature. On the other hand, Wells foresees that the process of homogenisation is part of the Natural order because at a certain stage of the heterogeneity, the disorderly developed civilisation 'will become more and more homogeneous in their fundamental culture, more and more distinctly aware of a common "general reason" in things, and of a common difference from the less functional masses and from any sort of people in the past' (*Anticipations*, 125).

Another area in which Wells disagrees with Spencer is marked in that Wells's highlighting of individual uniqueness does not mean that he gives priority to unmappable individuality. A close reading of the passage quoted above, which contains the author's emphasis on individuality, illuminates his desire to create an ideal system to control the individual space: 'If we are to get the best result from the child's individuality, we must leave a large portion of that margin at the child's own disposal' (*MM*, 309). From this statement, three distinguished words are marked: 'the best result', 'individuality' and 'disposal.' In this argument, Wells makes it clear that the individuality should remain intact at the child's disposal. Simultaneously, this remark reveals that the liberty bestowed on children is undermined by the condition that it is for getting the best results from the future

generation. Accordingly, this sentence strongly implies that individuality itself is controlled. Here is another example:

Individuality is experiment. While in matters of public regulation and control it is wiser not to act at all than to act upon theories and uncertainties; while the State may very well wait for a generation or half a dozen generations until knowledge comes up to these – at present – insoluble problems, the private life *must* go on now, and go upon probabilities where certainties fail (*MM*, 67).

This quotation places clear significance on the fact that private life should be left free as an object of experiment as long as there are no certain rules to govern the individual personality. This phrase asserts that when society acquires the tool to solve the present “insoluble problems” caused by the currently unmappable personal life, it can map the social member’s private life. Thus, the desire for mapping private lives and that for freedom which can be achieved by the existence of the uncertainties regarding privacies remain as conflicting voices sounded by Plato and Spencer respectively.

Wells’s attempt at the compromise of Platonism with Spencerism is clearly exhibited in the allusion to a mould and wax. A mould stands for the framework of authority (the governmental system of family, school, religion and so forth) and wax represents the plasticity of citizens (the next generation). This comparison has already been adopted by Plato and Spencer in arguing about the relationship between the State and its individuals. Plato admits the fact that his mould (as a theory) can be modified in relation to situations in reality. In *The Laws*, the Athenian disputes that the legislators’ idea of the ideal state can be ‘a dream, or modelling a state and its state out of wax.’<sup>348</sup> However, he claims that the law-givers should do their best to create the best mould: ‘when you are displaying the ideal plan that ought to be put into effect, the most satisfactory procedure is to spare no detail of absolute truth and beauty. [...] You see, even the maker of the most trivial object must make it internally consistent if he is going to get any sort of reputation.’<sup>349</sup> The thoroughly detailed “truth and beauty” indicates the image of the perfectly built mould, which can manufacture ideal citizens. On the contrary, Spencer condemns the idea of modelling as an artificial way of

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<sup>348</sup> Plato, *The Laws*, 217.

<sup>349</sup> Plato, *The Laws*, 217.

formulating the State: 'incorporated humanity is very commonly thought of as though it were like so much dough which the cook can mould as she pleases into pie-crust, or puff, or tartlet. The communist shows us unmistakably that he thinks of the body politic as admitting of being shaped thus or thus at will.'<sup>350</sup> The idea that like wax or dough a citizen can be shaped as the mould of authority wishes is abhorred by Spencer since it is dependent on "an erroneous conception of a society as a plastic mass instead of as an organised body."<sup>351</sup>

Wells does not agree with Spencer's assumption that the human is like the body or organism: 'to those who being still plastic can understand the infinite plasticity of the world' (*MM*, 393). The plasticity of the human suggests the importance of building a cast which can mould the plastic human into the ideal member of society. However, his mould is not a Platonian mould because it is not a rigidly formed cast. In the chapter 'Political and Social Influences' in *Mankind in the Making*, he ventures to compromise the two conflicting concepts, Plato's perfect mould and Spencer's human body as organism:

In every developing citizen we have asserted there is a great mass of fluid and indeterminate possibility, and this sets and is shaped by a mould. It is rarely, of course, an absolutely exact and submissive cast that ensures; [...] it is only very rare and obdurate material – only, as one says, a very original personality – that does not finally take its general form and direction in this way. And it is proposed in this paper to keep this statement persistently in focus [...] while we examine certain broad social and political facts and conventions which constitute the general framework of the world in which the developing citizen is placed" (*MM*, 238 - 239).

This passage exhibits the confrontation between the indeterminate possibility of every developing citizen and the mould of plasticity. The emphasis is placed upon the fact that the cast should not be absolutely exact and accurate. Furthermore, this account acknowledges the existence of 'a very original personality,' which is not to be moulded in the cast. The statement that 'very rare and obdurate material' can be free from the frame of the cast connotes that the mould is not a rigidly formed container but the flexible cast. It is not only about the general framework

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<sup>350</sup> Spencer "Man versus the State," 137.

<sup>351</sup> Spencer, "Man versus the State," 137.

out of which citizens are moulded but it also demonstrates that the text admits the fact that the frame has tiny holes.

In this quotation, Wells synthesises the Platonic concept of the perfectly controlled society with the liberalism of Spencerian individual freedom. In so doing, he attempts to achieve totalitarian monologism. Nevertheless, ironically, Wells's argument remains ambiguous. The very attempt to compromise the rigid frame and the fluid individuality of each citizen does not resolve into a new solution, which is expected in Hegelian Dialectics. However, as the last sentence of the passage above reveals, the original personality which slips through the mould does exist in juxtaposition with the general framework and remains intact by the power of the frame. Furthermore, as the same passage demonstrates, Wells contradicts himself by arguing that his text keeps individual uniqueness in focus and at the same time examines the general framework of social institutions which mould the ideal citizens. Thus, the argument cannot find a resolving point.

Here is Wells's ambiguous conclusion about the conflict between individual freedom and the State control:

When we do not know what is indisputably right, then we have to use our judgments to the utmost to do each what seems to him probably right. The New Republican, in his private life and in the exercise of his private influence, must do what seems to him best for the race (*MM*, 67-68).

In these phrases, the author admits that unanswerable problems exist at the present regarding the problem of morality. However, he deliberately avoids finding the solution by stating that it is beyond his ability. He leaves the moral judgement of the right behaviour to the reader's judgement by suggesting that the reader should identify himself as a New Republican. As his argument shows, once the reader becomes a New Republican, his nature allows himself to act for his race and then all the problems of morality will be settled. Within two ambiguous sentences, the author reminds the reader of the existence of insoluble problems, and at the same time, avoids providing a solution.

The harder Wells tries to produce a monologic conclusion, the vaguer the meaning is. For instance, in arguing about sexual morality, Wells confuses himself in his attempt to compromise the freedom of sexual morality with the

State control of it. First, Wells perceives that confusions in moralities drive the public to escape from confining moral standards: 'We are moving towards a time when, through this confusion of moral standards I have foretold, the pressure of public opinion in these matters must be greatly relaxed, when religion will no longer speak with a unanimous voice, and when freedom of escape from disapproving neighbours will be greatly facilitated' (*Anticipations*, 117). The relaxed norm of morality, however, is regarded as 'the present social chaos', and it needs to be controlled by 'any considerable body of citizens [...] that will be practically unanimous in upholding any body of rules of moral restraint [...] with wide reaching authority' (*Anticipations*, 118-9). Wells does not give an answer to the question of 'how much they will have kept or changed of the deliquescent morality of to-day when in a hundred years or so they do distinctively and powerfully, emerge [...]' (*Anticipations*, 125). He eschews the reason why he 'cannot speculate now' (*Anticipations*, 125) and his immediate conclusion that 'they will certainly be a moral people' (*Anticipations*, 125) is a utopian solution in the sense that it is a mere illusion of the dialectical conclusion, not an advanced result coming from negations of the two opposite agendas.

The utopian solution is achieved through over-generalisation or oversimplification. Concerning the matter of the problems in the current social matters, Wells provides optimistic solutions: 'They [the new middle-class elites] will have developed the literature of their needs, they will have discussed and tested and thrashed out many things, they will be where they are confused, resolved where we are undecided and weak' (*Anticipations*, 125). Wells does not specify the issues which are confused, undecided and weak. Hence, the whole sentence is merely an empty signifier because it produces only illusions, which deceive the reader into believing that the author has resolved the contradictions. Wells's attempt to realise sovereign monologism only yields form without content.

The vacant signifier, which does not contain its signified, is the Wellsian tool of smoothing the eventfulness of his argument. The most intriguing issue, the conflict between individual freedom and system, is almost always concluded in this way. In *The Discovery of the Future*, Wells's void argument is recurrent without any improvement: 'the knowledge of the future we may hope to gain will be general and not individual; it will be no sort of knowledge that will either hamper us in the exercise of our individual free will or relieve us of our personal

responsibility' (DF, 381).<sup>352</sup> In delineating the future of human civilisation, Wells evacuates individual freedom from the panoptical mapping. However, while completing the sentence with 'our personal responsibility,' he leaves his argument generalised and unfinalised.

## ii) The Amateur Prophet: "A Man Who Has Concerned Himself With Education and Aspired to Creative Art"

Contemporary reviewers of *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making* made efforts to draw a monologic conclusion in defining the genre of Wells's texts. They read the two texts in terms of either philosophical speculations or the genre of fictional writing. For instance, a reviewer condemns *Anticipations* to be 'seen as purely the construction of a single brain working narrowly and arbitrarily as any novel could be.'<sup>353</sup> On the contrary, another reviewer attempts to appreciate Wells's ability as a social thinker: in reviewing *Mankind in the Making*, the critic notes that 'we may briefly distinguish the present volume from Mr. Wells's previous work by characterising it as thought rather than imagination.'<sup>354</sup> The fact that both reviewers exhibit contradictory opinions clearly announces the difficulty of a monologic reading of Wells's texts. Furthermore, they also illuminate that even though Wells proclaimed that his texts were written in the tradition of speculative philosophy, and he hoped that the readers would accept them as such, his texts were read to be an undefinable genre trapped somewhere in between imaginative narratives and scientific treatises.

The difficulty in defining the genre of Wells's texts is due to Wells's desire to produce experimental works, which are different not only from his previously published scientific romances but also from the contemporary political and

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<sup>352</sup> Wells, 'The Discovery of the Future,' in *Anticipations and Other Papers* (New York: Scribner's, 1924) vol. 4 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols (1924-7).

<sup>353</sup> 'Unsigned Review' (12, November, 1901) in *Westminster Gazette*, *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Patrick Parrinder, 86.

<sup>354</sup> 'Unsigned Review of *Mankind in the Making*,' (26 September, 1903) in *Academy and Literature*, *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Patrick Parrinder, 90.

sociological writings. In the preface to *Mankind in the Making*, Wells makes it clear that in the three texts, he has attempted to deal with social and political questions ‘in a new way and from a new starting-point’ (*MM*, v). The claim of the new starting point can be considered in its relation to Wells’s emphasis on imagination, creativeness, experiment, constructiveness and future-oriented thought.

In *The Discovery of the Future*, Wells confronts ‘the legal or submissive type of mind’ with the ‘legislative and constructive’ future-oriented type of mind (*DF*, 358). Through the juxtaposition of the two extremes, Wells urges the importance of the future-oriented type since it can attack and alter the established orders of things. Considering Wells’s continuous preference for destroying the established order of the community, one can infer that the writing style he practices in the three texts exhibits the author’s desire to follow the conventions of monological political writing, and at the same time, his wish to experiment with his own writing style. For this reason, he sometimes entreats the readers to think of him as a creative writer, who has concerned himself with ‘education and aspired to creative art’ (*MM*, vi). In so doing, he foreshadows the way in which he wants to differentiate himself from other specialists in sociology and politics. The statement also means that the differentiation brings him ‘a freedom of mental gesture that would be inconvenient and compromising for the specialist’ (*MM*, vi; vii).

The author’s assertion of himself as a creative writer de-centres his texts in the generic field of political writings. The author frequently proclaims that the texts are only imperfect sketches of the future. Wells declares that *Anticipations* ‘will build up an imperfect and very hypothetical, but sincerely intended forecast of the new century’ (*Anticipations*, 3). After a few chapters, he emphasises the clumsiness of his forecast by vociferously affirming that the text is only ‘a smudgy, imperfect picture’ (*Anticipations*, 127). In *Mankind in the Making*, he claims that his discourse has been ‘a premature and experimental utterance’ (*MM*, 32). In addition, he highlights the fact that he is not a specialist in sociology and politics: he nominates himself as a creative writer who is ‘remarkably not qualified to assume an authoritative tone in these matters,’ and the whole project is also ‘a business for some irresponsible writer outside the complications of practical politics’ (*MM*, v-vi). Wells’s obstinate and incessant proclamations that

he is an amateur sociologist and his texts mere hypotheses raise questions regarding not only with authoritativeness of the works but also the author's seriousness.

Wells is sceptical about achieving monologic sovereignty in argument. For instance, he claims that he does not believe that there is absolute truth (*MM*, 2): 'It is not the opinion makes the man; it is not the conclusion makes the book. We live not in the truth, but in the promise of the truth' (*MM*, 342). The truth is the idea of a code dogmatically established, which Wells has wished to break away from. The truth means the act of finalising the conclusion; and the emphasis of the only one truth refers to the monologic perception of reality, which achieves its goal by excluding others' voices. Wells's disbelief in absolutely monologic truth is well found in the tendency of playful hesitation which is frequently detected in *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*. Wells begins his first prophetic thesis, *Anticipations* with a long and wordy sentence:

It is proposed in this book to present in as orderly an arrangement as the necessarily diffused nature of the subject admits, certain speculations about the trend of present forces, speculations which, taken all together, will build up an imperfect and very hypothetical, and sincerely intended forecast of the way things will probably go in this new century. (*Anticipations*, 3)

Wells's message is simple: he purports to provide a generalised but sincere anticipation of the coming future. Adding many adjectives and adverbs enforcing the contradictory meanings in this one sentence, Wells complicates the would-be simple and straightforward sentence into a stretched and confusing complex of phrases. The interpolated modifiers such as 'diffused, certain, imperfect, hypothetical, probably' enhance uncertainties and ambiguities.

This gesture of hesitations is so prevalent in the entire text that Wells's argument in effect exposes his *honest doubt*. The phrase such as 'at certain considerations which point to the by no means self-evident proposition' clearly demonstrates that the author does not have so much confidence in his contention (*Anticipations*, 65-6). His would-be strong assertion is undermined by such phrases as 'I imagine,' 'imagination,' 'I do not know,' 'most certainly,' 'it seems,' 'I will presume' and so on. Even within a single sentence, there are more than two phrases, indicating the author's lack of confidence:



[...] to speculate what definite statements, if any, it may seem reasonable to make about the individual [...] (*Anticipations*, 91)

For that emergent community, whatever it may be, it seems reasonable to anticipate [...] (*Anticipations*, 81)

Improvement in transit between communities formerly for all practical purposes isolated, means, therefore, and always has meant, and I imagine, always will mean, that now they can get at one another" (*Anticipations*, 191).

These examples illuminate that Wells is half-hearted and is not convinced in his argument. For instance, the first two quotations embody double uncertainties. The author is not confident about the objects of anticipation: 'definite statements' and 'emergent classes.' Also he is not sure whether his prediction is logical: 'it seems reasonable.' The phrases are wordy and verbose. In the first quotation, one sentence has 'may' and 'seem' which imply uncertainty. The third quotation marshals variations of the verb, 'mean': 'means'; 'has meant'; 'will mean.' Wells's excessive use of pleonasm, different vocabularies of the same meaning, weakens and distracts what he desires to assert in his texts. In doing so, he can obscure the meanings. The hesitation postpones the narrative act of closure and finalisation. Wells's texts display difficulty in completing his argumentation. He frequently finishes paragraphs with '...'. This demonstrates unfinalisability. With 'hesitation, flirtation, and suspense', this defers making the final statement, 'the sovereign act of nomination.'<sup>355</sup> Wells's employ of wordy and hesitant pleonasms is contrasted with Spencer's decisive and authoritative tones: 'It is settled beyond dispute,' 'doubtless,' 'it is out of questions.'<sup>356</sup> Compared with Wells's hesitating expressions, Spencer's assertion, leaning on monologic form of writing, does finalise his argument. Hence, Wells's self-interrogating remonstrance can not reach the status of monologism.

When logical speculation is required and he does not have so much confidence in it, Wells puts it aside with sleight of hand. For instance, when he wants to avoid discussing what 'conspicuous advertisements [will] play in the

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<sup>355</sup> D.A. Miller, *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Transitional Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981), 46.

<sup>356</sup> Spencer, *Progress: Its Law and Cause*, 234; 244; 245.

landscape' in the twentieth century, his playful narrative technique, which has been used in his romance-composition, replaces the scientific or philosophic speculation: 'But I find my pen is running ahead, an imagination prone to realistic constructions is struggling to paint a picture [...] altogether prematurely' (*Anticipations*, 55). In the circumstances when he has to discuss sensual issues like sexual morality and the stable family system for the next generation, he compares a physically healthy man 'addicted to love-making that had no result in offspring' with a golfer, who is 'hitting little balls over a golf-link': 'Both would probably be wasting the lives of other human beings – the golfer must employ his caddie' (*Anticipations*, 262). This comparison sounds like a romancer's little joke, rather than a political writer's serious argument.

Wells calls himself a prophet, whose role he exaggerates by employing the phrases, which mainly invoke romantic ambitions and heroism. The statement that 'we write abominably, under pressure, unhonoured and for bread, none the less we are making the future,' emphasise the role of a prophet (*MM*, 389–390). The image of a prophet, who is writing for the bright future of the next generation and thus sacrifices himself, incarnates the image of a romantic hero. In order to criticise obsolete systems of the contemporary Western civilisation, and to exhort the public in complacency, Wells chooses to remain in the tradition of the romantic prophets Blake and Shelley.<sup>357</sup> As a science student in London, Wells devoted himself to enriching his knowledge in Socialism by reading the literature of the various periods from Shakespeare through Shelley and Blake to Carlyle, and the books about or by the prophets, Buddha, Mahomet and Confucius (*ExA*, 240-1). The poets of Romanticism and the heroic prophets are the main agents Wells wants to imitate and emulate in his essays of prophecies. Here, Wells de-authorises himself as a social thinker, and replaces the authoritative thinker with the romantic Bards.

Decentring his texts from other authoritative political writings signals the building of a new frame. Wells positions his argument on the threshold between authoritative discourse and persuasive discourse, in Bakhtin's terms. Bakhtin avers that "the history of an individual ideological consciousness" is usually determined through the struggle and the dialogic interrelationship of 'authoritative

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<sup>357</sup> Michael Draper, 'Wells, Blake and the Prophetic Vision,' *Wellsian*, 9 (1986), 12–17; Patrick Parrinder, 'Wells and the Literature of Prophecy,' *Wellsian* 9 (1986), 6–11.

discourse' and 'persuasive discourse.'<sup>358</sup> Like monology, authoritative discourse does not merge with other types of discourse, and is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. On the contrary, persuasive discourse refers to words of 'half-ours and half-someone else's,'<sup>359</sup> and is freely developed, applied to new material, new conditions. The lack of authoritativeness, the author's playful acknowledgement of his amateurism and the romancer's voice contribute to formulate the texts as the battlefield in which authoritative discourse and persuasive discourse compete with each other.

The persuasive discourse consistently prevails in the literary vein of Wells the romancer: particularly in the early stage of his career, in the late nineties and the early twentieth century. His romantic strand does not allow him to be satisfied with one absolute truth or one universal opinion. By underscoring the fact that his anticipations of the ideal society of the future are drawn by a creative writer, Wells justifies his argument's ambiguity and the lack of Spencerian monologism. However, at the same time, he paves the way for a new genre: the genre created by a writer standing on the threshold between a romancer and a thinker. Wells's early-twentieth century non-fictional prophecies of the future foreground his feeling of unachievability of monologism. Read alongside Spencer's strongly monological essay, Wells's argument tends to exhibit characteristics of imaginative writing. Wells's speculation leads to an uncertain prediction rather than a prophecy. Explaining Bakhtin's concept of monologism in human science, Caryl Emerson explains that the uncertain prediction demonstrates the 'characteristic of the novel, which speculates in categories of ignorance.'<sup>360</sup> For instance, the hesitant and playful tones in Wells's sociological writings, point to the fact that the texts embody the features of imaginative narratives more than those of the monologically contended sociological and political essays. The unachievable monologism and the traits of the imaginative narrative works embedded in his texts place Wells's text on the boundary between an imaginative writing and a sociological essay. These features also insinuate the author's

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<sup>358</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, 342–3.

<sup>359</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, 345.

<sup>360</sup> Gary Morson, and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaic*, 424.

difficulty in making a final statement, which ultimately leads the text to embody the quality of becoming.

### iii) *A Modern Utopia: Wells's Utopianism in the Making*

In *Origins of Futuristic Fiction*, Alkon demonstrates the reason why the novelists of utopian literature conceptualise the idea of utopia in the imaginative narrative form. Alkon distinguishes sociological forecast from literary prophecy. The former comes from religious prediction as a form of Biblical interpretation and thus, its narrative tone is retrospective and authoritative. On the other hand, futuristic fiction is based on irresponsible invention.<sup>361</sup> In brief, imaginative narrative permits the writer to be irresponsible in formulating their idea of an ideal society, but also authorises them to explore possibilities, together with the indication of complexities and contradictions, which is not allowed in political and sociological writings. In unfolding their fantasy of an ideal society, More and Morris make use of these advantages provided by the imaginative narrative form. Interestingly, the fact that fictional narrative can complicate the futuristic prophecy through contradictions, illusions and satire encouraged Wells to launch into non-fictional essays of mapping the future, *Anticipations*, *The Discovery of the Future*, *Mankind in the Making*. However, in *A Modern Utopia*, Wells returns to the imaginative narrative form: to the genre of utopian romance.

Wells's return to the romance genre is triggered by his desire to establish a literary form which is suitable to convey his conflicting ideas. Thus, *A Modern Utopia* initiates the epic journey to a utopian land with the author's explicit discomfort with the previous and contemporary utopian literary genre from Plato's *Republic* to Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1895).<sup>362</sup> In the preface to the Atlantic edition of the text, Wells defines this work as 'an experiment in form'.<sup>363</sup> In 'A Note to the Reader' of the 1905 edition, Wells complains that 'no one had handled [a general picture of utopia] in a manner to satisfy my need' (*MU*, xiv).

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<sup>361</sup> Paul K. Alkon, *Origins of Futuristic Fiction* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1988), 60-1.

<sup>362</sup> William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, ed. David Leopold (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003)

<sup>363</sup> Wells, 'Preface to Volume 9' in *A Modern Utopia and Other Discussions*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924) vol. 9 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols. 1924-1927.

Wells's alternative to these previous utopian narratives is a crossbred text embodying philosophical discussion and imaginative narrative form.

By merging these different narrative genres, Wells in fact purports to generate a utopian fiction which is impregnated with nothing but complicated contradictory viewpoints. *A Modern Utopia* is a 'confused book' whose argument has only 'thrown a quality of insincerity over the whole' (*MU*, 329). Its narrative is constructed in the 'conflicting form' (*MU*, 330). The conflicting form is a testimony to Wells's acknowledgement that monological speculation is not a proper form for the efficient demonstration of conflicting and multiple ideas.

Critics have endeavoured to establish a generic definition of *A Modern Utopia*. Patrick Parrinder points out that it is a fiction of 'meta-Utopia' rather than one written in the tradition of utopian fictions since the text is 'the self-conscious revision and updating of an earlier text or textual tradition.'<sup>364</sup> The text defies all the generic categorisations in the historical, the philosophical and the literary context.<sup>365</sup> The endeavour to classify this elusive text as a specific literary genre can be judged to read the text against Wells's intention. However, regardless of what Wells originally designed in this work, looking askance at the fantastic elements and political speculations of More's *Utopia* and Morris's *News from Nowhere*, Wells fully exploits the rules of the romantic fantasy genre.

Generic consideration of utopian literature leads to the term, 'utopia' which contains two key meanings: 'non-existent place' and 'ideal society.' According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, it refers to 'an imaginary, indefinitely-remote region,' whose politics, laws, customs and conditions are 'ideally perfect.'<sup>366</sup> Hence, utopian literature is a narrative about a place, which does not exist (thus, imaginary) and 'utopianism is generally identified with unrealistic speculation.'<sup>367</sup> Thus, utopian fiction does belong to the romance genre as Morris subtitles his romance, *News from Nowhere* as 'Utopian Romance.'

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<sup>364</sup> Patrick Parrinder, *Shadows of the Future*, 100.

<sup>365</sup> Harvey N. Quamen, 'Unnatural Interbreeding: H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia* as Species and Genre' *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 33 (2005): 'A Modern Utopia is a carefully drafted document that distances itself from both realist fiction and realist philosophy. The text self-consciously accentuates itself as unique: neither characteristically Victorian nor freshly Edwardian. *A Modern Utopian* locates itself between genres and between literary periods, shamelessly borrowing from each and all. Invoking evolutionary theory while stressing the inadequacies of strict Darwinism, the text maintains its distance from scientism as well as from sociology. Wells's creation defies the traditional signifying systems of literary genre, criticism and philosophy' (77).

<sup>366</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Second ed. Vol. xix (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989).

<sup>367</sup> *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995) 893.

The free imagination guaranteed by the romance genre plays a vital role in Morris's utopian speculations in *News from Nowhere*: especially in representing the unrepresentable present from the futuristic point of view and in reading the future.<sup>368</sup> As Michael Sherbone claims, the interbred narrative form of romance and political writing is dextrously utilised by Wells in order to 'relieve and challenge [Platonic] absolutism.'<sup>369</sup> More importantly for Wells, the romance genre is useful because he can reveal the artificiality and fantasticality of utopian speculations.

In particular, in *A Modern Utopia*, the features of romance are dominant in the Voice's imagination of the utopian society. The narrative of the Voice is a demonstration of the theme of romantic wish-fulfilment. In both footnotes and the main text the Voice continues to compare his idea of utopia with his predecessors' philosophies, and efforts to achieve authority in competition with other utopian speculations. In so doing, the Voice's narration displays authoritative monologism more strongly than Wells's other sociological essays such as *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*. However, the protagonist's fabrication of the ideal society in accordance with his sweet wish is also distanced, mocked and criticised by the Other's dissenting voice. By demonstrating the way in which the Voice's monologic speculation about a utopia is undermined by other minor voices, the text comments on the utopian literary genre.

### **"This moral monster State my Frankenstein reasoning has made"**

In 'The So-called Science of Sociology' (1906), Wells shows his scepticism of the assumption that Sociology can be scientific: 'there is no such thing in sociology as dispassionately considering what is, without considering what is intended to be. In sociology, beyond any possibility of evasion, ideas are facts.'<sup>370</sup> Conscious that Sociology cannot be scientific and monologic, Wells writes *A*

<sup>368</sup> See Matthew Beaumont's essay, 'News from Nowhere and the Here and Now: Reification and the Representation of the Present in Utopian Fiction,' *Victorian Studies* 47 (2004): 33-54

<sup>369</sup> Michael Sherborne, 'Wells, Plato, and the Ideal State,' *The Wellsian: Selected Essays on H.G. Wells*, ed. John S. Partington (Uitgevers: Equilibris, 2003), 195.

<sup>370</sup> H.G. Wells, *An Englishman Looks at the World: Being a Series of Unrestrained Remarks upon Contemporary Matters* (London: Cassell, 1914), 203.

*Modern Utopia* with 'the heretical metaphysical scepticism upon which all [his] thinking rests,' and he refused to follow 'the established methods of sociological and economic science' (*MU*, xlv). The imaginative narrative structure in *A Modern Utopia* is self-consciously adopted by Wells so as to show the artificiality of the romance form in Utopian literature and the impossibility of achieving monologism. Hence, Wells continues to experiment with the genre by standing on the threshold of the two extremes: the romance of Utopia and meta-commentary of Utopianism.

When *A Modern Utopia* was published, reviewers read it in comparison with Morris's *News from Nowhere*. In particular, comparing Wells's depiction of the strict governmental system with Morris's 'fairyland where every one does what he likes and everything goes right by nature,'<sup>371</sup> R. Mayer shows his anxiety that Wells's modern utopia is an over-controlled and totalitarian dystopia: 'that monstrous card-registry, containing the thumb marks of the whole human species [...] has something of the effect of a nightmare. And, with regard to the Samurai themselves, is there not somewhat too much regulation?'<sup>372</sup> The Voice's modern utopia is conceived as a perfectly controlled panoptical society, which is positioned at the opposite to Morris's fairyland in which the proletariats can indulge in their individual freedom without any serious restriction from the government.

The modern utopia which the Voice imagines is the World State in which maximum freedom of individuals is slightly less important than State control of excessive freedom. Comparing Plato's *Republic* and Spencer's 'Man versus the State' with his idea of utopia, the Voice alleges that his utopian speculation is an attempt at reconciliation of the contradictory opinions: individuals' complete obedience to the State and abolition of State control. The Voice's proposition is that the State should guarantee the individual's liberty; but the liberty should not intervene in the other members' private rights. He philosophises reconciliation: 'equally strong in the normal civilised man is the desire for freedom of movement and the desire for a certain privacy, for a corner definitely his, and we have to consider where the line of reconciliation comes' (*MU*, 35). However, the Voice's logic weighs more the importance of State control than individual freedom and

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<sup>371</sup> Parrinder, *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, 12.

<sup>372</sup> Parrinder, *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, 115-6.

protection of individual privacy. The Voice prefers to endow more power to the State than to the individual; he claims that 'in a modern Utopia, which finds the final hope of the world in the evolving interplay of unique individualities, that the State will have effectually chipped away just all those spendthrift liberties that waste liberty, and have attained the maximum general freedom' (*MU*, 32). This remark seems to emphasise individual freedom and preservation of personal uniqueness. Yet, in this statement, the Voice, in effect, concedes the priority of the State control over the spendthrift freedom. The chilling phrase, 'effectually chipped away' reveals the Voice's strong support of State control and the necessity of forming a powerful government.

The Voice's oxymoronic assertion of the importance of individualities and the necessity of State control of individuals is double-voiced since it embodies his reaction against Morris's *News from Nowhere*. Even though the Voice claims that the old utopias housed the generalised description of its residents, he acknowledges that Morris's Utopia is an exception. However, from the Voice's point of view, Morris's *Nowhere* does not have the proper rules to regulate individual liberty, and thus Morris's utopian social system is vulnerable to the threat of anarchism. For this reason, the Voice engages most of his speculations in suggesting ideal methods of control: they are highly developed information technologies for controlling the nomadic population of the World State.

The modern utopia endows its citizens with maximum freedom of movement. As the Voice argues, the old utopias are built in a comparably small land protected by a strong barrier. The modern utopia, however, does not have such boundaries because it is a migratory world: 'The population of Utopia will be a migratory population: not simply a travelling population, but migratory' (*MU*, 44-5). The Voice's statement that 'to Sir Thomas More we should seem a breed of nomads' indicates that compared with the old utopias, the modern utopia is the world of free movement (*MU*, 45). Due to its high level of mobility, the Voice's utopia becomes the world of travellers; consequently it is in danger of becoming unsettled and disordered. Conscious of this risk, the Voice suggests that the efficient method to govern the world of nomads should be thumb-mark registration and numbering which are represented as various images of sight and observation: 'this organised clairvoyance' 'this quiet eye of the state' and 'its field of vision' (*MU*, 148, 149). The Voice persuades the readers, who have been



accustomed to the Spencerian and Morrisian utopianisms and to support for individualism that this system is useful for tracing and hereby regulating the mobility by locating each person wherever he or she goes: 'it must have devised some scheme by which every person in the world can be promptly and certainly recognised, and by which anyone missing can be traced and found' (MU, 97). The essential feature, which distinguishes the modern utopia from the previous ones, is that the former has developed a new governing method: it has various governing systems ranging from the system of punishment through fixation to that of surveillance through monitoring the citizen's movement. The new system does not position people in a fixed space and limit their movement any more. Instead, it allows them to move freely and at the same time trace their movement.

Thus, the Voice's ideal world is the surveillance society, which fully activates tools of observation. It is organised in the clairvoyant system: the eye locating anything movable; the eye of the State; the field of vision. According to Foucault, 'side by side with the major technology of the telescope [...] there were the minor technologies of multiple and intersecting observations, of eyes that must see without being seen.'<sup>373</sup> 'Seeing without being seen' is Wells's favourite symbol of power. In his essays and fictions, 'Through a Microscope,' 'The Star,' 'The Crystal Egg' and *The War of the Worlds* are all about observation, conquering and control. At the beginning of *The War of the Worlds*, the narrator states that 'human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's. [...] they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water' (*WW*, 41). Like the Martian's eyes who observed people on the earth, the modern utopian government keeps its eyes on every movable being. The Voice's advocacy of controlling every single movement of people is contrasted to Wells's loud welcome of breaking the geographical and social boundaries in *Anticipations*. The difference of this utopian novel from Wells's other works is that here Wells, posing behind the Voice, seems to welcome the efficient observation system for monitoring individuals.

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<sup>373</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 171.

Like Foucault's 'network of gazes' and 'special 'nesting' of hierarchized surveillance,' the modern utopian gazes are also organised in a hierarchical order.<sup>374</sup> The process, in which individual mobility is checked, is done in a well-organised chain of command. The private numbering system and the thumb-mark registration are checked by the local institution, and then the information is sent to the central registers housed in Paris. On the level higher than the eyes, there is a brain: 'Now an eye does not see without a brain, an eye does not turn round and without a will and purpose' (*MU*, 154). The brain is composed of men and women of will, who are 'behind all this material order, this perfected communications, perfected public services and economic organisations' (*MU*, 155). Later, the Voice's travelogue confirms that the brain is composed of the class of governors, the Samurai. As David Hughes insists, the narrator's utopia is represented as the image of an organism which 'requires body parts and functions'<sup>375</sup>: eyes, a brain, and the body. The idea of the State as the organic body, however, does not embrace the Darwinian concept of the body of an organism in which the boundaries and hierarchies are blurred. Together with the categorisation of the utopian citizen in four classes, the image of the organic body whose components are hierarchically ordered from the upper stratum to the lower stratum refers to a stabilised hierarchical society.

The modern utopia is also operated by a highly organised system of surveillance. The essential characteristic of this supervision and observation system is, as David Lyon argues, that 'organisations generally satisfy themselves about trustworthiness by producing surveillance data on strangers.'<sup>376</sup> The modern utopian surveillance structure is alert to the existence of the two strangers, and the Voice exalts in the strict control: 'I have compared the system of indexing humanity we have come upon to an eye, an eye so sensitive and alert that two strangers cannot appear anywhere upon the planet without discovery' (*MU*, 154). The modern surveillance technology is compared with the naive controlling method of the modern utopia's double, the earth: 'In the typical modern State of our own world, with its population of many millions, and its extreme facility of

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<sup>374</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 171–2.

<sup>375</sup> David Y. Hughes, 'The Mood of a Modern Utopia,' *Critical Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed., John Huntington (Boston: Hall, 1991), 70.

<sup>376</sup> David Lyon, *Surveillance Society: Monitoring Everyday Life* (Buckingham: Open UP, 2001) 22.

movement, undistinguished men who adopt an alias can make themselves untraceable with the utmost ease' (*MU*, 49). Through this comparison, the Voice highly evaluates the modern Utopian control system on the grounds that it can trace every movement and that the system is a much more developed way of governing than establishing the barrier and guarding the boundaries.

In addition to the surveillance device, the modern utopian government employs methods of classification and fixation. According to the Voice's double's explanation, 'the social theorists of Utopia' classify people in four classes according to the 'differences in the range and quality and character of the individual imagination' (*MU*, 135): the Poetic, the Kinetic, the Dull, and the Base. The classification of classes also represents the efficient control system. In *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*, Wells maintains that individual uniqueness, creativity and imagination must be free from any form of governmental controls. In *A Modern Utopia*, private temperament is under the State's observation, and thus the Voice actually purports to build a totalitarian State. The Voice justifies the necessity of the classification: 'for political and social purposes things have long rested upon a classification of temperaments' (*MU*, 135). The political and social scheme is more important than individual freedom, and if necessary, individual characteristics can be categorised and controlled.

Power fixes and distributes each member consisting of the whole body of society, and through this fixation, it controls the entire State. The confinement of the Failure class in a remote island is the representative example: 'In remote and solitary regions there enclosures will lie, they will be fenced in and forbidden to the common run of men, and there, remote from all temptation, the defective citizen will be schooled' (*MU*, 129). Michel de Certeau claims that 'administration [of power] is combined with a process of elimination" and here the 'waste products' such as 'abnormality, deviance, illness, death, etc' should be eliminated from the healthy part of the community.'<sup>377</sup> The modern utopia's four-class system and the isolation of the group of the Failure from the healthy body of society requires a strong power system run by means of exhaustive classification and elimination.

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<sup>377</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkley: U of California P, 2002), 94.

The well-controlled society is the fantasy of the Voice. In fact, posing as the author and the character of his own imaginative architecture (the modern utopia), the Voice wants to enjoy all the miracles he makes in the world of his imaginative utopia. Troubles and difficulties, which he may encounter in his journey, are dealt with and sorted out with absolute convenience. For instance, without any specific and logical explanation, he and the Botanist are transferred to the utopian world which is supposed to be situated beyond Sirius. The protagonist and his companion do not have to worry about getting lost because this utopia is the double of the earth. It has 'the same continents, the same islands, the same oceans and seas' as the earth (*MU*, 14). Problems in communications with the utopians also cannot hinder the two travellers' investigation of the utopian civilisation: 'We may suppose [their] language to be our own to understand. Indeed, why should we be in Utopia at all, if we could not talk to everyone?' (*MU*, 17) Thus, the travellers in *A Modern Utopia* do not have the same difficulty as the Time Traveller has with the Eloi and the Morlocks.

Also, the protagonist's utopian double is one of the Samurai class. He is the better self of him in every aspect as he exclaims: 'My better self [...] He is a little taller than I, younger looking and sounder looking' he has missed an illness or so, and there is no scar over his eye. His training has been subtly finer than mine; he has made himself a better face than mine' (*MU*, 220). Hoopdriver dreams the better self in his imagination. As a playwright, performer and audience in his imaginary play, Hoopdriver casts himself as returning to his native village 'in a well-cut holiday suit and natty gloves' (*WC*, 52). The better self is also imagined and desired by Wells himself. Wells, the 'Pose' novelist, attempts to create a better version of himself: 'How admirably I strutted in front of myself! And I and the better self of me that was flourishing about in the book. [...] I made him with very red hair – my hair is fairly dark – and shifted his university from London to Cambridge' (*LC*, 41). Likewise, the Voice indulges himself in creating his more desirable version of himself. The modern utopia is the architecture of the Voice's imagination, which he himself constructs and in which he can happily live. Since it is the product of his imagination, it is only possible through his adoption of the romance genre.

**“Why should a modern utopia insist upon slipping out of the hands of its creator”**

Having commenced his story in the clumsy frame narrative form, the frame narrator of *News from Nowhere* abandons this method for the sake of narrative convenience:

But, says he, I think it would be better if I told them in the first person, as if it were myself who had gone through them; which, indeed, will be the easier and more natural to me, since I understand the feelings and desires of the comrade of whom I am telling better than any one else in the world does.<sup>378</sup>

Here, the narrator's real intention to identify himself with the protagonist is not clear. However, vague as it is, the author's reluctant gesture itself lays bare the author's desire to differentiate his voice from the protagonist's. The frame narrative is a useful device which enables the author to be distanced from the text. This may be the reason why since Plato created Socrates, utopists have favoured to hide behind the screen of their proxies. They want to be cautious in criticising their contemporary governmental system and in picturing the future.

Morris's *News from Nowhere* is noisy with dissenting voices sounded by individual characters and the optimistic tones sometimes are darkened by the characters' inner anxieties (even though they are presented without serious conflicts). Like Morris, Wells also constructs *A Modern Utopia* in the frame narrative device and embeds different voices in the story. The difference between Wells and Morris is that Wells efficiently exploits the frame narrative and adroitly complicates the dissenting voices within and without the frame narrative. In so doing, he produces 'the conflicting form' of utopian speculations (*MU*, 33).

The most conventional plot of utopian literature is the adventure narrative structure. It is due to the well-established narrative tradition that the traveller's visit to the utopian land does not cause any trouble to the utopian society. The travellers are considered simply as messengers or adventurers, not mysterious aliens. For instance, in *News from Nowhere*, the protagonist, William Guest,

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<sup>378</sup> Morris, *News from Nowhere*, 5.

introduces himself as ‘a being from another planet’<sup>379</sup> in order to avoid explaining how he comes to the land of Utopia. However, the excuse does not produce any questions to the utopian residents and they simply consider him as a foreigner, who will ‘go back to the people he has come from, and may take a message from us which may bear fruit for them, and consequently for us.’<sup>380</sup> Thus, his presence in Nowhere does not disturb the social order, but rather it is easily harmonised with the utopians.

Faithfully following the convention of utopian literature, Wells’s protagonist in *A Modern Utopia* also tells the utopian clerk that he and the Botanist ‘came from another world’ (*MU*, 144). The Voice’s assertion is double-voiced since it is a parody of Morris’s Guest’s improvised statement. *A Modern Utopia* emphasises the mysteriousness of the Voice and the Botanist by portraying them as being completely unknown to the utopian science and technology of control. Hence, they are disturbing to the modern utopian well-ordered field of vision:

Here, for the first time in the records of Utopian science, are two cases – not simply one but two, and these in each other’s company! – of duplicated thumb-marks. This, coupled with a cock-and-bull story of an instantaneous transfer from some planet unknown to Utopian astronomy (*MU*, 210).

These aliens’ explanation of how they have come to the utopian land and the location of the earth are questions which are only unanswerable to the current utopian logic and science. This statement highlights the disturbing aspects of existence of the two aliens. This is contrasted to Guest’s easy harmonisation with the residents of the utopian England in *News from Nowhere*. In Wells’s novel, their unexpected visit is distressing to the utopian citizen because their unchecked arrival in the modern utopia indicates the point where the gaze of power is blind. It is unwelcome evidence proving the weakness of their controlling system: ‘The gaze of power transfixes objects but also thus becomes blind to a vast array of things that do not fit its categories.’<sup>381</sup> The Voice and his companion are elements escaping the sight of power, and agents disquieting the utopian order.

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<sup>379</sup> Morris, *News from Nowhere*, 47.

<sup>380</sup> Morris, *News from Nowhere*, 116.

<sup>381</sup> De Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, trans. T. Conley (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997), 147.

The Botanist, the Voice's interlocutor, is the main figure representing the Other's voice which challenges and resists the sovereign reign of the Voice. The Voice's emphasis on 'two cases' indicates the existence of two views, and thereby serves to satirise other utopian texts' simplicity and monologism. In the romances of Morris, More and Bellamy, there is only one traveller and, consequently, the text has one dominating voice. The Voice consistently insists that the modern utopia is an imaginary world conceived by him, and he claims ownership of his text: 'this moral monster State my Frankenstein of reasoning has made' (*MU*, 210). Accordingly, as he boisterously proclaims, within his narrative he is a Godlike figure and the only authority. However, as the Voice and the Botanist disturb the fine order of the modern utopia, so the Botanist is an alien figure challenging the imaginative architecture of the Voice's monologic Utopianism. To the Botanist's resisting presence, the Voice complains that 'it's strange! But this figure of the Botanist will keep in place. I do not know what put him into my head' (*MU*, 24). This complaint shows that like the utopian officer, who cannot figure out how the two aliens came to his Utopia; the Voice does not know why the Botanist is chosen as his companion.

When he is irritated by the Botanist's frequent disagreement and intervention, he comforts himself by reminding himself that it is his 'book, and that the ultimate decision rests with' him (*MU*, 62). However, as his narrative progresses, the Botanist's voice becomes louder, and subsequently, the Voice feels anxious of losing his dream of the ideal society: 'Why should a modern Utopia insist upon slipping out of the hands of its creator and becoming the background of a personal drama – of such a silly little drama' (*MU*, 228). Here, the power of the narrator as a god in his own imaginative architecture becomes weak due to the Other's presence, and the Other insists upon his utopianism so loudly that the author's imaginary world is threatened.

Moreover, at the very moment when his picture of the modern utopia is almost completed, it is destroyed by the Botanist's violent action: "He waves an unteachable destructive arm. My Utopia rocks about me" (*MU*, 316). The annoyance the Time Traveller feels when he fails to teach the 'unteachable' Eloi is echoed in this sentence. Like the Time Traveller's Eloi, the Botanist is unteachable, and thus is not the kind of object, which can be easily dominated by the authority. For this reason, the same frustration coming from the Traveller's

loss of authority in the world of the future generation recurs in the Voice's feeling of loss. Thus, the process of destruction of the monologic authoritativeness is marked in the failure of the Owner of the Voice's maintenance of authority over his companion.

Even though the Botanist is not supposed to get "personal expression in this book," as the frame narrator insists, the reader can 'gather much of the matter and something of the manner of his interpolations from the asides and the tenor of the Voice' (*MU*, 4). This statement is essential for the reader to prepare for grasping the conflicts between two distinctive voices. The Voice wants his utopia to be a well-disciplined society. On the other hand, the Botanist's utopia is romantic and emotional. Throughout his narrative, the Voice's philosophical speculation on the disciplinary utopia is challenged by the Botanist's romantic utopia. Even though the Voice criticises his companion's utopia for being filled with little dramas of love, the romantic utopia the Botanist envisages is not the sort which can be easily despised and ignored by his antagonist. The Voice's complaint that 'it is open to him to write his own Utopia' means that the modern utopia is only his scheme (*MU*, 62). The Botanist's utopia is an "amorous utopia" and in his own world he has his own authoritative voice, as Huntington argues: 'I want to hear him as an authentic voice of the Lover-Shadow, a submerged voice that rational ideals of the utopian world cannot satisfy.'<sup>382</sup>

The Botanist represents another authentic voice flowing throughout Wells's *oeuvre*. Frustrated love is a recurrent theme in Wells's other romances. In *The Food of the Gods* (1903), the giants' utopian scheme includes realisation of the romance between the giant Edward and the giant princess. One year after the publication of *A Modern Utopia*, the Botanist utopia reappears in the next utopian fiction of Wells, *In the Days of Comet* (1906). Even though the comet brings the Change to the world, the real utopia of the protagonist is achieved after Willie Leadford has resolved his frustrated love for Nettie. The two romances demonstrate that the Botanist's voice in this romance has a distinctive tone.

The importance of the Botanist's voice is found in his role as an interlocutor of the Voice. In the autobiography, being proud of the book as 'one of the most vital and successful of my books', Wells remembers that it was his first approach

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<sup>382</sup> John Huntington, 'H. G. Wells: Problems of an Amorous Utopian,' *Critical Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed. John Huntington (Boston: Hall, 1991), 171.



to 'the dialogue form' (*ExA*, 658), which is explicitly demonstrated in the Voice's meeting with his utopian Samurai self. However, it is only an adaptation (not modification) of the conventional narrative form of the utopian literary genre from the dialogues between Socrates and his disciples in *The Republic* to William Guest's discourse with the old Hammond in *News from Nowhere*. In the Socratic dialogue in *The Republic*, two or three characters are placed in a hierarchical order: a teacher and his disciples. The dialogue shows the process in which the teacher's dogma is accepted by his disciples. In this narrative device, any conflict and intercommunication are not detected. Wells's text, however, radically departs from his predecessors by constructing the Voice's entire narrative on the basis of his talk with the Botanist, who is not only his friend but also his antagonist. The dialogues between the Voice and the Botanist demonstrate conflicts and discordances between them. The two characters interrogate each other without creating a stable centre. Accordingly, Wells's text is built upon a battlefield of different opinions and disagreements.

From the beginning of his narrative, the Voice makes it clear that he and the Botanist have 'fallen into a talk of Utopias' (*MU*, 14). This means that his narration is assumed to be initially directed to the Botanist. When the Botanist suddenly stops having a dialogue, the whole utopia cannot help disappearing. The event means that the text itself emphasises the importance of dialogue and the existence of the Other. The Voice's utopia is conscious of the Other's utopia, and only with the help of the Other, his utopia can be created. In this sense, the utopia envisioned by Wells is similar to Bakhtin's concept of 'to be.' Bakhtin maintains that 'to be means to communicate. [...] A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary: looking inside himself, he looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another.'<sup>383</sup> Wells's utopia is like Bakhtin's concept of the person, who "has no internal sovereign territory," and thus it can be realised only through the interrelationship between the "I" and "another", which are represented as the Voice and the Botanist respectively. In this sense, the frame narrator's final comment on the Voice's tyrannical suppression of the Botanist that 'I cannot separate these two aspects of human life,

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<sup>383</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 287.

each commenting on the other' (*MU*, 330), shows that the entire narrative consists of communications among the participants.

The Voice's narration ends with his optimistic proclamation that in the future, the Utopia becomes the world (*MU*, 328). However his optimism is destabilized by the frame narrator's comment on the Voice's characteristics. He calls the Voice 'this impatient dreamer, this scolding Optimist, who has argued so rudely and dogmatically' (*MU*, 328). He also points out that the modern utopia is imagined only by the Voice, and consequently it is only a personal opinion:

This Utopia began upon a philosophy of fragmentation, and ends, confusedly, amidst a gross tumult of immediate realities, in dust and doubt, with, at the best, one individual's aspiration. This so-called Modern Utopia is a mere story of personal adventures among Utopian philosophies (*MU*, 329).

Through this statement, he acknowledges that there are others' voices, and they are dreaming of their own utopias.

Having completed the text, Wells appends the philosophical paper, 'Scepticism of the Instrument.' In this paper, which he suggests that the reader compares with the main text of *A Modern Utopia*, Wells argues for the absence of absolute truth in sociological thinking. He claims that 'a concrete image for the whole world of a man's thought and knowledge' is 'a large clear jelly, in which at all angles and in all states of simplicity or contortion his ideas are imbedded, [and] a great multitude of things may very well exist together in a solid jelly, which would be overlapping and incompatible and mutually destructive, which projected together upon one plane.'<sup>384</sup> This insistence points to the fact that Wells's concept of wholeness is not a smooth and conflict-free monologic world. Instead, it should be embedded in a various dimensions and let them conflict each other. In *A Modern Utopia*, the existence of the other's voice completes the whole project of an imperfect modern utopia.

Like *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*, *A Modern Utopia* demonstrates the author's endeavour to convey his conflicting and unfinalisable ideas to the reader with efficiency, and this leads to his experimentation with a

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<sup>384</sup> H. G. Wells, 'Scepticism of the Instrument,' in *A Modern Utopia and Other Discussions* (New York: Scribner's, 1924) vol. 9 of *The Works of H.G. Wells*, 28 vols. (1924-7), 350-1.

new literary form. The frame narrator explains to the readers the reason why the speculation on the Utopia should have a fictional form at the risk of confusing the reader, 'making the argument hard to follow, and throwing a quality of insincerity over the whole' (*MU*, 329). Concluding his criticism of the Voice's narrative, the frame narrator provides the answer: it is because human thought cannot be explained in one opinion or dimension. It can be unfolded only in 'conflicting form' (*MU*, 330). The frame narrator's acknowledgment is repeated by Wells. In 'The Scepticism of the Instrument', Wells denies the optimistic belief in 'objective reality of classification,' 'the final absolute truth of things.'<sup>385</sup> The absolute validity of logic refers to supreme monologism in Bakhtinian terms, and Wells's doubt of the absolute truth is generated by his scepticism of monologism. In his sociological essays, *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*, this tendency is revealed as a playful, hesitating, irresponsible and uncertain prophesy. In the same way, in order to demonstrate his conflicting ideas in his imaginative narratives, *A Modern Utopia* textualises various points of view of the three characters: the Voice, the Botanist and the frame narrator.

In 'The Owner of the Voice', the frame narrator emphasises the uniqueness of the text's narrative method: 'the entertainment before you is neither the set drama of the work of fiction you are accustomed to read, nor the set lecturing of the essay you are accustomed to evade, but a hybrid of these two' (*MU*, 4). Here, Wells makes it clear that *A Modern Utopia* will be distinguished from other utopian literature and essays because it will display characteristics of both fiction and sociological essays. According to Hillegas, the originality of the form, which Wells finally achieved [in *A Modern Utopia*], is 'a kind of discussion novel without all the characters [in the manner of Peacock and Mallock, the Socratic dialogue, and the straight narrative].'<sup>386</sup>

While More's *Utopia* and Morris's *News from Nowhere* are faithful to their imaginative narrative form by narrating the stories in past tense, *A Modern Utopia* is written mainly in the present and subjunctive tense. The Voice's narration is assumed as a lecture, which is addressed to audiences in a lecture room, and thus

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<sup>385</sup> Wells, 'Scepticism of the Instrument,' 339; 344.

<sup>386</sup> Mark R. Hillegas, *The Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians* (New York: Oxford UP, 1967), 64.

it exhibits the features of sociological essays or lectures. Here, Wells attempts to utilise the characteristics of argumentative essays.

The present tense and the subjunctive tense used in the text signal the author's endeavour to assert that his argument is in the process of becoming and the narrative interminable.<sup>387</sup> At the beginning of his narration, the Voice claims that his utopia will be different from the romances of Utopia composed before 'Darwin quickened the thoughts of the world' (*MU*, 7). The conspicuous difference between his text and other utopian works defined by Wells is that his modern utopia is in the process of ceaseless becoming: 'the Modern Utopia must be not static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages' (*MU*, 7). In order to highlight the utopia in the process of becoming, which will not have reached its completion, the author composes *A Modern Utopia* mainly in the present and the subjunctive tense.

The past tense employed by More, Morris and Bellamy symbolises the stability of the society. It indicates that the adventure and the experiences have been done, and the narration is merely a reconstruction of what has happened. The past tense means that the building of utopia has been completely accomplished. The present tense enhances the process in which the characters are experiencing the event. The narration in present tense can be changed and deferred in accordance with the possible digressions and detours of the journey. In other words, the past tense represents a written text, and the present tense indicates the process of writing. It is the text which is being written. For instance, his narration starts with his description of the scene where he and his companion wander in the Alps: 'You figure us upon some high pass in the Alps' (*MU*, 14). While the two protagonists are travelling in utopia, the utopian society is unfolding in front of the audience in the lecture room or the readers in their armchairs. The audiences hear the Voice's narration and at the same time, they can see the characters move around the utopian country on the screen which is installed in the lecture room.

Since the book is being composed while they are travelling, there are digressions, detours and sudden realisations. For instance, concerning with meeting his utopian double, the Voice states: 'When I came to this Utopia I had

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<sup>387</sup> Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, 23.

no thought of any such intimate self-examination' (*MU*, 220). This indicates that his speculation on utopia has changed or progressed as his experience progresses; the narration can take a route which the traveller has not planned to take. Thus, the present tense narration lays bare the fact of becoming and the process of formulation; it enhances the process of creation.

In addition, such expressions as the 'possibilities of time and space,' 'Here and Now' and 'hypothesis' emphasise the potentiality and unfinalised nature of Wells's speculations (*MU*, 6). It is in this sense that as Romolo Runcini argues, 'Wells's writing is not realistic but hypothetical,' and 'absolute truths are held at a distance.'<sup>388</sup> According to Bakhtin, 'the present, in its so-called "wholeness" (although it is, of course, never whole) is in essence and in principle inconclusive; by its very nature it demands continuation, it moves into the future, and the more actively and consciously it moves into the future, the more tangible and indispensable its inconclusiveness becomes.'<sup>389</sup> Wells's employment of the present tense and the near future tense convey the theme of *A Modern Utopia*, which is inconclusiveness and continuation of his speculation of utopia. In other words, Wells's idea of a utopia is not the place where actual events are supposed to have happened and experienced by a main character, but a space of potential which is awaiting for a test by the reader's active participation in imagining or consuming the utopian space. In this sense, it indicates the understanding of unfinalisability, and it also refers to the ceaselessly breaking boundary: here, the future is open and the present embodies multiple possibilities of future.

Late Victorian and Edwardian readers faced the new century with mixed feelings: anxiety about the uncertain future and optimistic expectation. Wells's four utopian projects examined in this chapter provide confused readers with the chance of mapping their future. Throughout these texts, to some extent, Wells's argument is continuously in the vacillation and indecisiveness between the desire of disentanglement from the power structure and the wish for constructing a perfectly planned system. His narrative drive in these utopian projects is the desire to find the clue for reconciliation of the divided wishes. John Carey notes

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<sup>388</sup> Romolo Runcini, 'H. G. Wells and Futurity as the Only Creative Space in a Programmed Society,' *H. G. Wells under Revision: Proceedings of the International H. G. Wells Symposium*, eds. Patrick Parrinder and Christopher Rolfe (London: Associated UP, 1990), 159.

<sup>389</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel,' *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, 30.

that at the turn of the century Wells continued to be torn between 'system and freedom, and continued to be. But from about 1910 system began to prevail.'<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Mass: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1930* (London: Faber, 1992), 147.

## **Chapter VI. The Lost Romance**

While launching a series of heroic attempts to produce sociological and political writings about social issues and Utopianism, the Wells of the 1900s still utilizes his ability as a romancer. *The First Men in the Moon*, *The Food of the Gods* and *Kipps* prove that Wells is still a romancer. His two novels, *Tono-Bungay* and *The History of Mr Polly*, however, signal the moment that Wells begins to take off the garment of a romancer. In these works, Wells still manages to wield his ability as a romancer in liberating his protagonists from their confining lives. However, these works differ from his previous social novels in that there is more marked nostalgia for the lost romance in modern society.

In spite of Wells's praise of the narrative methods and the thematic approach to everyday life practiced by Victorian and Edwardian Realists, Wells's scientific romances and social novels can not be read on a par with Victorian and Edwardian Realist novels. It has been maintained that it is with Modernism that Wells's Edwardian social novels uphold stronger connections,<sup>391</sup> and that they anticipate poststructuralist and postmodernist writings.<sup>392</sup> They are also conceived as unique enough to "pillage any tradition or antitradition in the service of his convenience."<sup>393</sup> For all of these attempts to define the genre of Wells's works, Wells's desire to represent the human condition in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, with his own uniquely artistic style leads his early works to reflect the complicated literary milieu in the first decades of twentieth century. In the first few decades, English literature observed the power game between Edwardian Realism and Modernism. Savaged by Woolf, Wells was closer to the novelists of Realism: Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) and John Galsworthy (1867-1933). However, Wells's novels are written under the influence of the romance rather than in Edwardian Realism. The thwarted desire to change reality with romantic imaginations is more influential in these texts written in the transitional

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<sup>391</sup> John Hammond persistently emphasises that Wells's works are different from the Edwardians Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy and suggests reading Wells's works in terms of modernism. *A Preface to H. G. Wells* (Essex: Parson Education, 2001), 163. Also see *H. G. Wells and the Modern Novel* (New York: St. Martin's, 1988).

<sup>392</sup> Sylvia Hardy, 'H.G. Wells the Poststructuralist', *Wellsian* 16 (1993) 2-23; Daniel Born, *The Birth of Liberal Guilt in the English Novel: Charles Dickens to H.G. Wells* (Chapel Hill; U of North Carolina P, 1995); Larry W. Caldwell, "Time at the End of Its Tether," *H.G. Wells's Perennial Time Machine*, 139.

<sup>393</sup> W. Warren Wager, *H.G. Wells: Traversing Time* (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 2004), 225.

time, 1909 and 1910. The strong mood which flows throughout Wells's works of this period is the sense of loss caused by the author's bitter realisation of the end of romance. These are elegies for the demise of romance in the modern world.

i) **The Decay of Romance: *Tono-Bungay***

It has been observed that *Tono-Bungay* is 'Wells's artistic turning-point; he would never expend such plans on a work of fiction again.'<sup>394</sup> Materials for this novel encompass most of the episodes appearing in Wells's previous social novels from *The Wheels of Chance* to *Kipps*. Mr. Hoopdriver's romantic dream and fantasy are reincarnated in Edward Ponderevo's success in commerce; Lewisham, a science student, appears as George when the latter is a London student. Kipps's childhood is also in George's idyllic love with Beatrice in Bladesover. The conflict between romance and reality, which flows throughout the previous novels, is regenerated in this novel but also in the different social and literary context: the culminating period of Capitalist society and the dawn of literary Modernism.

In his autobiography, Wells wishes this novel to be placed in the great tradition of the English discursive novels, on 'Dickens-Thackeray lines' (*ExA*, 639). Yet, at the same time he desires to distance his text from the nineteenth-century realists' works: 'the majority of Dickens's novels were novels with a purpose, but they never deal with any inner confusion, any conflicts of opinion with the individual characters, any subjective essential change' (*ExA*, 496). The character's inner confusion is well demonstrated in the characterisation of George Ponderovo and in his futile attempts at containing the incomprehensible and indescribable reality in the narrative frame. This is the main factor which makes this novel differ from Victorian high realists and Edwardian novelists. Also the attempt to ingrain the inner confusion into the character's mind and to depict the character's vigorous reaction against the outer world enable the text to presage the narrative technique and the themes of the high Modernist texts such as James Joyce's (1882-1941) *Ulysses* (1922), T. S. Eliot's (1888-1965) *The Waste Land* (1922) and Scott Fitzgerald's (1896-1940) *The Great Gatsby* (1925).

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<sup>394</sup> Patrick Parrinder, introduction, *H.G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, 20.



As Bryan Cheyette rightly maintains, *Tono-Bungay* is the text which proves that Wells can incorporate ‘simultaneously both Charles Dickens and T. S. Eliot. The fact that the title *Tono-Bungay* was eventually chosen – signifying neither an easy “realism” nor an avant-garde “modernism” – indicates that the novel is not easily categorisable.’<sup>395</sup> More precisely, Ponderovo’s autobiographical narrative is haunted by the failure and incapacity to live with a strong sense of subjectivity in the modern world. This incapability triggers the sense of loss, which is the dominating emotion of Modernist literature in the 1920s. Reading Conrad’s *fin-de-siècle* adventure romance *Lord Jim* as narrative construction that registers the shift from realism to modernism, Jameson suggests that the main characteristic of modernist works is utopianism, the futile desire for compensating the sense of loss. Jameson also argues that this characteristic is a contrast to the Wellsian apocalyptic view of the future, which is devoid of the modernists’ utopianism; consequently Wells’s scientific romances cannot be included in the canon of Modernism.<sup>396</sup> For James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, the element of myth they desperately seek symbolizes their nostalgia. Similarly, Conrad deplores the loss of romantic ideals. Likewise, *Tono-Bungay* is the narrative of loss: the demise of romance in the modern England. George and Edward are residents in the world of Romanticism, and their ideologies clash with the chronotopes of modernism and Edwardian realism, which were the prevailing literary phenomena in the early twentieth century England.

The rise and fall of Edward Panderevo is based on the Napoleonic romance. He has emerged from the lower-middle class and has become a tycoon in commerce. His mind is filled with romantic fantasies and the hope of achieving wealth. He considers his life and business as realisation of his romantic fantasy. The myth of Napoleonic success encourages Edward to defy the obsolete Victorian tradition and convention: ‘my uncle had no respect for Bladesover and Eastry – non whatever.’<sup>397</sup> He fancies himself as a Napoleonic hero and, sometimes, the Miltonic Adam: It’s a bit like Adam and Eve, you know. Lord! What a chap old Milton was! He did not believe in them” (*TB*, 104). Aunt Susan

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<sup>395</sup> Bryan Cheyette, introduction, *Tono-Bungay*, by H. G. Wells (New York: Oxford UP, 1997) xiii-xli.

<sup>396</sup> Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 231.

<sup>397</sup> H. G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay* (New York: Scribner’s, 1925) vol. 7 of *The Works of H. G. Wells* (1924-7) 85. Subsequent quotations are cited parenthetically in the text.

also compares them to the prelapsarian couple: 'Poor old Teddy! Poor old Adam and Eve we are!' (*TB*, 467).

For Edward Ponderevo, success in commerce means realisation of his romantic ideal. It is 'the Romance of Commerce', as he calls it, and he identifies George and himself with 'brigands' and conquerors (*TB*, 87). Armoured with their fake medicine, the two adventurers have begun by conquering England and then subjugating the British Isles:

Section by section we spread it over the whole of the British Isles; first working the middle-class London suburbs, then the outer suburbs, then the home countries, then going (with new bills and a more pious style of 'ad') into Wales, a great field always for a new patent medicine, and then into Lancashire. My uncle had in his inner office a big map of England, as we took up fresh sections of the local press and our consignments invaded new areas, flags for advertisement and pink underlines for orders showed our progress. [...] we subjugated England and Wales (*TB*, 199-200).

The languages and allusions employed by George to describe the process of expanding their business to England and Wales is that of imperialism and imperial adventure romance. For imperialists, filling the gap on the map is the act of collecting data about the unknown land and colonising it. Similarly, Edward's map filled by flags and underlined with pink lines is the representation of colonisation. Edward's dream of expanding his business from London suburbs through the outskirt areas to the remote colonies signifies the very realisation of Imperial dream. Commerce is 'a romantic exchange of commodities and property' and '[i]magination' (*TB*, 179).

Edward's whole life consists of imitations of the Napoleonic legend and Nietzsche's concept of the 'Overman idee' (*TB*, 356). The most representative example is his love affair which imitates those found in Frédéric Masson's (1847-1923) *Napoleon and the Fair Sex* (1894) and Anthony Hope's *God in the Car* (1894) (*TB*, 358-9). George summarises Edward's success in business by appealing to the romantic theme of wish-fulfilment: 'In those measurelessly long hot afternoons in the little shop at Wimblehurst he had talked and dreamt of the romance of Modern Commerce. Here surely was his romance come true' (*TB*, 348). The romantic ideal and imagination function to gear Edward to soar onto the

ladder of social hierarchy. Consequently, his bankruptcy and subsequent death denote the demise of romance and the end of the narrative.

However, Edward's romanticism is severely criticised by George. He perceives that Edward's business is composed of only bubbles, and that the romance of Edward is only an illusion. He links commerce to romantic imagination, bubble and illusion. Edward, the romantic dreamer, is only the victim of his own (or to some extent society's) obsession with heroism in commerce as George asserts; "my uncle would have made a far less egregious splash if there had been no Napoleonic legend to misguide him" (*TB*, 357). In addition, the text also asserts the elusive quality of commercialism by equating advertising with the romantic imagination in terms of its deceptiveness. Ewart cynically compares advertising with poetry writing: 'What I like about it all, Ponderevo, is its poetry. [...] And it is not your poetry only. It's the poetry of the costumer too. [...] Like a fairy-tale ...' (*TB*, 207-8). Advertisement is the poetry composed through the perfect combination of the advertiser and the costumers. It is also 'a fairy-tale' in its fakeness. Ewart's statement that 'You are artists. You and I, sir, can talk, if you will permit me, as one artist to another' (*TB*, 209), is a trenchant criticism of the skill of lying. The fairy-tale and poetry are all products of imagination; they do not have a realistic basis and they are for deceiving and misguiding the public.

Like Ewart (and Wells) George also disapproves of advertisement and commercialism on the grounds that they are agents of lying. Eight years before the publication of *Tono-Bungay*, Wells expressed his discontent with the effect of advertisement in *The First Men in the Moon* (1901). Mr. Bedford's narrative of his experience of reading advertisements in the copy of *Lloyds' News* is illuminating:

A gentleman of private means is willing to lend money,' I read. I knew that gentleman. ... No doubt some simple soul was sagely examining those knives and forks, and another triumphantly riding off on that bicycle, and a third trustfully consulting that benevolent gentleman of means even as I read. I laughed, and let the paper drift from my hand.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> H.G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon and Some More Human Stories* (New York: Scribner's, 1925) vol. 6 of *The Works of H. G. Wells*, 28 vols. (1924-7), 52-3.

Here, advertisement is the symbol of concealment and manipulation of reality. The newspaper is supposed to record and document reality as it is. Its advertisements, however, annul this intention by decorating what the advertiser wants to sell with fictional elements. Like literature as a social discourse, the advertisement produces a discourse, which dominates the ignorant public with a 'simple soul.'

In *Tono-Bungay*, Wells's anxiety about advertisement's distortion of reality is further developed. Reality is gradually distanced and cut off from the city dwellers, and eventually replaces reality itself. In the capitalist society, reality becomes "a mere circulation of unreliable signs."<sup>399</sup> When George is muddled and confused by Edward's request for his participation in the Tono-Bungay business, what catches his attention is the advertising phrases in the street: 'And then my eye caught the advertisements on the south side of "Sorber's Food", of "Cracknell's Ferric Wine", very bright and prosperous signs, illuminated at night, and I realised how astonishingly they looked at home, how evidently part they were in the whole thing' (*TB*, 183). The distressing effect of these phrases is the fact that the world is run by those who actively produce false information: businessmen and their admen. As George realises, these men are in the parliament and rule the country: 'After all, - didn't Cracknell himself sit in the House?' (*TB*, 183).

For this reason, George positions himself as a realist; and his narrative is a novel (not a romance). He persists that he is a chronicler of the *real* history of himself, his uncle, and the business of Tono-Bungay. For instance, in narrating the dramatic event of how he helps Edward to escape to France, he emphasises the difference between the romantic stories filling the popular magazines and his novel:

I know that in popular magazines, and so forth, all such occasions as this are depicted in terms of hysteria. Captains save their ships, engineers complete their bridges, ... I suppose that sort of thing works up the reader, but so far it professes to represent reality, I am convinced it is all childish nonsense. School boys of fifteen, girls of eighteen and literary men all their lives, may have these squealing fits (*TB*, 482-3).

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<sup>399</sup> Simon J. James, 'Pathological Consumption: Commodities and the End of Culture in H. G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay*,' *Consuming for Pleasure: Selected Essays on Popular Fiction*, ed. Julia Hallam and Nickianne Moody (Liverpool: Media Critical and Creative Arts, 2000), 58.

Here, George functions as the mouthpiece of Wells the *Saturday Review* critic. Almost fifteen years before the publication of *Tono-Bungay*, Wells bitterly criticised 'the novel of commerce' as illusory and juvenile. Also in his *fin-de-siècle* scientific romances, unrealistic and fantastic stories and utopian solutions of the popular magazine stories and romances are under his attack. For instance, in *The War of the Worlds*, through the narrator's fanciful imagination<sup>400</sup> and his consequent disillusionment, Wells gives a subtle comment on the unrealistic quality and deceptiveness of romance. Like Wells, George asserts that reality is different from romance, and his narrative is a realistic representation of Edward's and his lives. Beginning his narration, George insists that he is 'writing something in the nature of a novel' (*TB*, 3); and his attempt at writing is to contain "unmanageable realities" in the form of a novel (*TB*, 8).

Wells's final judgement about romance as a purveyor of illusion is clearly asserted in the Mordet Island episode, which is a parody or a satire of imperial adventure stories like Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Haggard's *King Solomon's Mine* and a modification of the theme of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This episode modifies and develops his short story, 'The Treasure in the Forest' (1894), whose storyline and theme are much more like Stevenson's *The Ebb Tide*. This story narrates the treasure-hunting episode of 'the stranded British wastrels.'<sup>401</sup> Anti-heroic characters' greedy adventure and their death show that Wells does not believe in the pure (or heroic) adventure without capitalist greediness; he was a severe critic of New Imperialism. Through the quap expedition in *Tono-Bungay*, George realises that 'there's no romance about the sea in a small sailing-ship as I saw it. The romance is in the mind of the landsman dreamer' (*TB*, 439).

For all the condemnations of the romance genre, George does not realise that what he is writing is the story of the romance which is frustrated by the reality principle. The text links romance with deception and illusion, which deserve to be criticised. Yet, simultaneously, the romance is attractive enough to allure the adventurers to indulge in their sinful act. George remembers his

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<sup>400</sup> 'My imagination became belligerent, and defeated the invaders in a dozen striking ways; something of my schoolboy dreams of battle and heroism came back. It hardly seemed a fair fight to me at that time' (*WW*, 40).

<sup>401</sup> H.G. Wells, 'The Treasure in the Forest,' *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells*, ed. John Hammond (London: Phoenix, 1998), 92-100.

boyhood with 'a faint sense of adventure added to the pleasure of its beauty' (*TB*, 32) and he expresses his nostalgic desire for the lost boyhood 'free imaginative afternoons' (*TB*, 33). Interestingly, the attractiveness of adventure is closely associated with a sense of guilt: 'We thought stealing was sinful; we stole incidental apples and turnips and strawberries from the fields indeed, but in a criminal inglorious fashion' (*TB*, 32).

Throughout the entire narrative, contradictory feelings concerning romance are repeated, failing to find any resolving point. Edward can fulfil his romantic dream of success in the commercial world by means of his fraudulent medicine Tono-Bungay. Gordon-Nasmyth, the informant of the Mordet Island expedition smells like a 'queer blend of romance and illegality' (*TB*, 293). It is George himself who plunges into the adventure of romance and deception with an ambiguous feeling of wish-fulfilment: 'So it was quap came into our affair, came in as a fairy tale and become real' (*TB*, 306). Like his boyhood plays of stealing apples and strawberries, the expedition for the quap is 'stealing' as he ironically acknowledges (*TB*, 306). He justifies his decision to join Edward's fraudulent business by saying that 'my heroes in Plutarch may be no more than such men [frauds and conmen]' (*TB*, 184). George's self-justification connotes that the twentieth-century conmen in commerce can be idolised as a heroic figure by future chroniclers.

In spite of the verbose excuses according to which his narrative is a realistic representation of the great days of Tono-Bungay and his critical comments on Edward's idea of the romance of commerce, George himself is a romancer and desires to be a romantic hero in modern England. As a boy, like Wells himself, George is a great reader of romances about fictional and non-fictional heroes (*TB*, 31-2; *ExA*, 393). If Edward's hero is Napoleon and his philosophy of life is Nietzsche's 'Overman *Idee*', George's heroes are Plutarch's heroes. In fact, romantic blood flows in the veins of Edward, George's father (his name is also George) and George himself. They are the Napoleonic hero, the vagabond, the sceptic, and the idealist. George understands that his father is adventurous even though he is irresponsible with his family; especially with his hard-working mother. His father is like Wells's other dreamers, Hoopdriver, Chafferey and Mr. Polly. As Wells remain taciturn about Chafferey's irresponsible behaviour to desert Ethel and her mother, George does not blame his father for having left him a

fatherless child. Instead, he identifies himself with his father's side. Hence, reacting against his mother's side, 'a hard woman [his mother]' and her cousin, Nicodemus Frapp, 'the Good Hard Working Man' and Christian, George believes that he has inherited his father's and uncle's romantic spirit of defiance against the 'closed and complete system' (*TB*, 11): 'My mother who did not love me because I grew like my father every day – and who knew with inflexible decision her place and the place of everyone in the world – except the place that concealed my father – and in some detail mine' (*TB*, 18).

George's personality is originally romantic. His life story is similar to Edward's in the sense that his life demonstrates the process in which his romantic ideal is challenged and cruelly denied by the harsh reality. In this sense, his characterisation is closer to Mr. Lewisham than to Kipps and Polly. Like Kipps, Ponderevo spends his idyllic childhood in Bladesover. His life-long love with "the Honourable Beatrice" is painted with romantic overtones.

"You are my humble, faithful love?" she demanded in a whisper, her warm flushed face near touching mine, and her eyes very dark and lustrous.

"I am your humble, faithful love," I whispered back.

And she put her arm about my head and put out her lips, and we kissed, and boy though I was, I was all atremble. So we two kissed for the first time.

'Beeee-e-e-a-trice!' – fearfully closed.

My lady had vanished, with one wild kick of her black stockinged leg (*TB*, 43).

In this moment of the awakening of love or even sexuality, the language is suggestive of the imagery of Pre-Raphaelite and medieval romances.

Once again George plays a romantic hero's role as a rescuer of the damsel in distress when he encounters Beatrice in his manhood. Reflecting that he 'behaved as though we were living in a melodrama,' and he "pitched the key high in romance," George acknowledges the fact that he is romantic (*TB*, 413). He sometimes repeats Lewisham's romantic ideals: 'Here we are with the world before us! Start clean and new with me. We'll fight it through!' (*TB*, 514). However, when his romantic love is frustrated by reality and Beatrice's realistic philosophy of life, George's narrative reaches its dead end. Beatrice's distressed exclamation that 'you try to romance and hector, but you know the truth. I am a little cad' (*TB*, 515) denotes that the maintenance of romance is impossible in the

modern world regulated by rules of vulgar plutocracy. Thus, love or romance, expressed in George's language, becomes mere futile sexuality: 'Love, like everything else in this immense process of social disorganisation in which we live, is a thing adrift, a fruitless thing broken away from its connections' (*TB*, 507). Their love ends with George's feeling of complete futility.

The text highlights that people in modern society are socially invisible. George portrays himself as a lonely and isolated man.<sup>402</sup> His characteristics are reminded of the protagonists who inhabit the Modernist novels: Joyce's Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom and F. Scott Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby and Nick Caraway in *The Great Gatsby*.<sup>403</sup> In portraying George, Wells reinforces the theme of social invisibility of *The Invisible Man*. The invisibility of Griffin signifies the themes of alienation in the modern industrial society: meaninglessness in the mass consumerist society.

The text makes it evident that even before he discovers the secret of invisibility, Griffin feels like an isolated outsider among other people: 'It was all like a dream that visit to the old place. I did not feel then that I was lonely, that I had come out from the world into an isolated place' (*IM*, 127). Griffin's bleak description of his attendance at his father's funeral and the feeling of 'detachment' in the street of his childhood village, which now becomes modernised into a town, are the representative testimony of his self-isolation:

I remember walking back to the empty home, through the place that had once been a village and was now patched and tinkered by the jerry builders into the ugly likeness of a town. Every way the roads ran out at last into the desecrated fields and ended in rubble heaps and rank wet weeds. I remember myself as a gaunt black figure, going along the slippery, shinny pavement, and the strange sense of detachment I felt from the squalid respectability, the sordid commercialism of the place (*IM*, 127)

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<sup>402</sup> Max A. Webb, 'The Missing Father and the Theme of Alienation in H.G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay*,' *English Literature in Transition*. (18) 1975. 243-7; John Allett, 'The Durkheimian Theme of Suicide in *Tono-Bungay*,' *Wellsian*, 13 (1990). Linda R. Anderson, 'Self and Society in H.G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay*,' *Critical Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed., John Huntington (Boston: Hall, 1991), 53-66.

<sup>403</sup> For instance, in 'Traces of *Tono-Bungay* in *The Great Gatsby*,' *Journal of Narrative Technique* 10 (1980), Robert Roulston observes that *Tono-Bungay* was F. Scott Fitzgerald's favourite novel, and that the themes, plot and characterisation of *The Great Gatsby* is influenced by *Tono-Bungay* (68-76).



Through Griffin's sense of isolation, these passages demonstrate Wells's negative attitude towards the process of commercialisation and modernisation of English rural areas. The presumably peaceful village and field are 'desecrated' and covered with rubble. This is the very image of the modern city as the wasteland. In the world of tawdry and self-indulgent commercialism, there is no place for the 'shabby, poverty-struck' protagonist. He is an isolated and unobserved figure, rejected by the society of 'squalid respectability.'

His actual invisibility symbolises social invisibility. His dream of being buried alive without being noticed by others connotes this theme:

Suddenly I was being forced towards the grave. I struggled, shouted, appealed to the mourners, but they continued stonily following the service. ... I realised I was invisible and inaudible, that over whelming forces had their grip on me. I struggled in vain. I was forced over the brink, the coffin rang hollow as I fell upon it, and the gravel came flying after in spadefuls. Nobody heeded me, nobody was aware of me. I made convulse struggles and awoke (*IM*, 150).

This dream vividly conveys Griffin's fear of being unrecognised and alienated by his fellow man. In fact, this dream is a prediction of the ending of the romance, which describes the scene in which the invisible man is cruelly murdered by the mob: 'Down went the heap of struggling men again and rolled over. There was, I am afraid, some savage kicking. Then suddenly a wild scream of 'Mercy! Mercy!' that died down swiftly to a sound like choking' (*IM*, 200). In both spaces of dream and reality, the invisible man dies and is buried in social indifference.

Even though in *Tono-Bungay* Wells does not explore the theme of social invisibility as he does in *The Invisible Man*, through the short description of George's life as a London science student, Wells re-invokes the theme. Living in London as a nameless science student, George for the first time grasps the idea of living in the metropolis. He realises that he is neither visible nor significant enough to attract the other Londoners' attention: 'In the first place I became invisible [...] In the next place, I became inconsiderable' (*TB*, 136). Here, Wells employs the symbol of invisibility of Griffin in order to convey George's sense of isolation and insignificance in the metropolitan jungle. In particular, the feeling of being 'inconsiderable' is reactivated in Ralph Ellison's (1913-1994)'s novel of post-war American Black identity, *Invisible Man* (1952). Here, the protagonist

conceives himself as being invisible and transparent with a feeling of unimportance in a community dominated by white people.

The anonymity of the metropolitan citizen is clearly contrasted to his publicity in Wimbleshurst where 'one was marked as 'clever', one played up to the part' (*TB*, 135). In London, an individual becomes an unrecognised figure of "a great slow –moving crowd" (*TB*, 138), and is depicted as a mere dot like the figures in the paintings of the Impressionist Camille Pissarro's (1830-1903) urban French life. George becomes an urban explorer, strolling around the concrete jungle:

With this was a growing sense of loneliness, a desire for adventure and intercourse. I found myself in the evenings poring over a map of London [...] on Sundays I made explorations, riding omnibuses east and west and north and south, and so enlarging and broadening the sense of great swarming hinterland of humanity with whom I had no dealings, of whom I knew nothing. ... (*TB*, 137)

The lonely adventurer exploring the gigantic urban sprawl without making a real contact with his fellow citizens marks the *flâneur* of modernist literature. This concept refers to a man of the city, who is born with the birth of the modern city; hence it is the term epitomising modernity.

Beatrice's comparison of George and herself with the dead is a desperate outcry which signifies identity crisis: 'We're dead. Or all the world is dead. No! We're dead. No one can see us. We're shadows. We've out of our positions, out of our bodies – and together. That's the good thing of it – together. But that's why the world can't see us and why we hardly see the world' (*TB*, 430). Such phraseology as "dead", "shadow", "out of our position" and "out of our bodies" are the metaphors adopted by Wells to draw the portraits of Edwardians and their feeling of loss and insignificance. Ewart, George's aesthete friend, also attempts to philosophize on the meaning of existence: 'the real trouble of life is, Ponderevo, isn't that we really exist. [...] the real trouble is that we *don't* really exist and want to' (*TB*, 208). Ewart woefully realises that modern men are not so significant to be recognised as autonomous subjects in society. They are only invisible wanderers.

Examining the meaning of Griffin's invisibility, Frank McConnell suggests that 'To be a hero or to become a hero, is to be or become visible: to be noticed by others, to be seen to be there.'<sup>404</sup> The heroism provided by romance can render the characters visible. Even though he is not conscious, George perceives romance to have a theatrical effect. As a boy, he acts like one of the heroic figures in the epic world:

Trespassing' was forbidden, and did the 'Retreat of the Ten Thousand' through it from end to end, cutting our way bravely through a host of nettle beds and barred our path and not forgetting to weep and kneel when at last we emerged within sight of the High Road Sea. [...] Well, - if I met those great gentlemen of the past with their accents carelessly adjusted I did at least meet them alive, as an equal and in a living tongue (*TB*, 34).

He performs as one of the Spartan soldiers, and, in this way, he makes himself visible. He imitates the ancient heroes' acts and living tongs; in so doing he positions himself as a hero. As Edward imitates Napoleon, here George plays the roles of the epic heroic figures of the past. When he has a *romantic* love affair with Beatrice as an adult, he also becomes an actor on the stage: 'I behaved as though we were living in a melodrama' (*TB*, 413). Like Edward's affair with 'the Scrymgeour lady,' George defines the love between Beatrice and himself as 'romantic love' (*TB*, 296). The main trait of romantic love is the stage effect, and here, once again, romance means visibility: 'At bottom it was disingenuous; it gave my life the quality of stage scenery, with one side to the audience, another side that wasn't meant to show and an economy of substance' (*TB*, 401). The quality of stage scenery is the fantasy which the invisible and isolated modern men secretly dream in their minds; it is visualisation of the fantasy to be recognised as a subject by the others.

When Uncle Edward, George's hero dies and George's romance with Beatrice fruitlessly ends, the narrative has to terminate 'like a play one leaves, like a book one closes' (*TB*, 498). As soon as the audiences leave the theatre and the reader closes the book, there is a sudden realisation of the fictional quality of the play and the book. George (and Wells as well) insists at the beginning of the

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<sup>404</sup> Frank McConnell, *The Science Fiction of H.G. Wells* (Oxford and Oxford UP, 1981), 114.

book, that his narrative of his life and Uncle Edward's is a novel, which he implies is the genre of realism and the antithesis to the romance. Like Wells's claim in 'The Contemporary Novel', George adopts this specific genre because he believes that the novel can house 'unmanageable realities' (*TB*, 8). However his stance on novel writing is clear in that his style is far from Jamesian aestheticism and Victorian New Realism; 'I've reached the criticising, novel-writing age, and here I am writing mine – my one novel – without having any of the discipline to refrain and omit that I suppose the regular novel-writer acquires' (*TB*, 8). Also the novel narrates the lives of modern adventure heroes; 'an old and degenerating system, tried and strained by new inventions and new ideas and invaded by a growing multitude of mere adventurers.'<sup>405</sup> Ponderevo insists that his narrative has a lax form: 'all mixed up with the other things' (*TB*, 8), and he is a lax and undisciplined story teller. With these features, the story about modern adventurers, who attack the old and disintegrating social system, proves that the text is written in the vein of romance. The narrative engine is driven by the desire for romantic liberation from confining aestheticism of realists and naturalists.

However, Dickensian romantic solution and romantic transformation of reality are not allowed in Wells's texts. The text is about failed romantic attempts rather than celebrations of their success. Thus, his narrative is haunted with a sense of loss: '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 ...' (*TB*, 518). The text is an elegy for the loss of romance. Thus, Edward's death (interestingly, his name echoes the Edwardian period) indicates the end of the period and at the same time the end or the decay of romance.

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<sup>405</sup> H.G. Wells, 'Preface to Volume XIII,' *The Works of H.G. Wells* (New York: Scribner's, 1924-7), ix.

i) ***The History of Mr. Polly*: “Romance and His Goddess Had Vanished”**

After the heroic attempt of writing the panoramic and realistic “novel” in *Tono-Bungay*, in *The History of Mr Polly*, Wells comes back to his familiar genre: the comic novel or the realistic romance. If George Ponderevo’s narrative is a requiem for the death of romance,<sup>406</sup> this text is a celebration of the romantic utopia regained. It is the realisation of the author’s desire to create the carnivalesque world for people whose desire for freedom is thwarted by social systems. However, like Ponderevo’s narrative, the story of Polly also signals the end of the romance in modern society: the sense of loss, sterility, alienation and despair haunts the narrative.

*The History of Mr Polly*, as Wells himself admits in his preface to the Atlantic Edition in 1924, is ‘his happiest book.’<sup>407</sup> Changing his pessimistic attitude towards romance, in this text Wells re-invokes romance contingency. The narrator’s statement that “if the world does not please you, *you can change it*” (*HP*, 212) echoes Hall Caine’s (1853-1931) phrases which Wells quoted in “The Sawdust Doll” to critique the unrealistic quality of romance. In this essay published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1895, Wells writes: “If life is ugly”, says a writer who is distinguished by a popularity among hundreds of thousands “it is our duty to make it pleasant in fiction” (*LC*, 44). Wells did not believe that Hall Caine and his romances have any artistic quality,<sup>408</sup> and thus this statement is considered by Wells as the epitome of the romance quality in terms of distortion of reality. Hence, Wells’s use of his statement in *The History of Mr Polly* implies the author’s understated acknowledgement that he appeals to the romance code.

Furthermore, the narrator of *The History of Mr Polly* asserts that reality is only ‘the paper wall of everyday circumstances [...] that hold so many of us

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<sup>406</sup> It is also argued that influenced by C. F. G. Masterman’s *Condition of England* (1909), *Tono-Bungay* does not only contain Wells’s bitter analysis of the condition of English civilisation, but it also contains the optimistic hint of the future change. See John Batchelor’s *H. G. Wells*, (p. 79), and David Lodge’s ‘*Tono-Bungay* and the Condition of England,’ *H. G. Wells: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (p. 110-139).

<sup>407</sup> Wells, ‘Preface to Volume XVIII,’ *The History of Mr Polly* (New York: Scribner’s, 1924).

<sup>408</sup> In ‘Joan Haste’, *H.G. Wells’s Literary Criticism*, Wells places Haggard’s *Joan Haste* (1895) in the same group of the works of Hall Caine, and in so doing condemns these novelists as devoid of any literary merit: ‘it is indeed a melancholy book, full of forcible foolishness, a jerry-built story with a stucco style, and it fully justifies Mr Haggard’s Position beside Messers Hall Caine and Crockett as one of the most popular writers of our time’ (57).

securely prisoned from the cradle to the grave' (*HP*, 212). Even though he cannot change the whole world for the poor Polly as he does for Willie Leadford in *The Days of the Comet*, he can liberate Polly from the stifling lower-middle class life at least; here once again after *Kipps*, the narrator becomes the *deus ex machina*, and the romance plot becomes a device for liberating the protagonist. At this point, Wells comes back to the narrator of *Kipps*. As he allows the Kippses to have enough income and their small bookshop at the end of the narrative, for Polly's wellbeing, Wells can manage to create the utopian world, the Potwell Inn, in which Polly can live happily ever after. However, because the utopia is only for Polly, and the utopian state of life is achieved in so an unrealistic way, the text can be seen as the story of illusion; it is the romance of Mr. Polly, instead of the history of Mr. Polly.

The text exhibits the features of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque romance. John Batchelor notes that this romance is 'comic, romantic, utopian, farcical and "Condition of England" novel,'<sup>409</sup> and these features are the very main elements of carnivalesque literature. The books Polly reads with the purpose of escaping from cramped lower middle-class life are romances and novels Bakhtin categorises as the literature of carnival: those by Boccaccio, Rabelais, Chaucer and Shakespeare. Main events of the narrative are the funeral banquet and the wedding feast and holidays. Polly wants to avoid any kind of social system: school, work and even marriage. The best time for him is holiday, which is indeed carnival because during this time he can disentangle himself from the shackles of the disciplinary world, and even though it is temporary, he can forget his social status. The languages deformed in Polly's way are also those of carnival: Billingsgate. Polly does not only violate spelling but he also defies the rules imposed by officialdom: 'his only rule was not to be misled by the spelling. That was no guide anyhow. He avoided every recognisable phrase in the language, and mispronounced everything in order that he should be suspected of whim rather than of ignorance' (*HP*, 27-8). Like the small and suffocating shop, which imposes him to follow a certain manner, language (its regulations enforced by

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<sup>409</sup> Batchelor, *H. G. Wells*, 92. Kevin Swafford also briefly mentions that the main characters' defiance of middle-class respectability exhibits characteristics of Bakhtinian carnivalesque literature: 'Aesthetics, Narrative and the Critique of Respectability in *The History of Mr Polly*', *Wellsian*, 28 (2005): 14-27.

authority) is a prison for Polly. His desire to escape the prison of language causes him to violate the rules governed by the authority.

The languages of romance and carnival literature fascinate Polly. The text demonstrates that their rebellious charm contaminates Polly, and it renders him to be a maladjusted shop clerk of officialdom: 'Polly had been drinking at the poisoned fountains of English literature, fountains so unsuited to the needs of a decent clerk or shopman' (*HP*, 97-8). Yet, Polly's indulgence in adventure narratives, romance, and travel literature is neither an alternative to his bleak and disciplinary life nor a simple vehicle of escaping from it. Polly attempts to realise his ideal in his life and the text endorses this attempt. Hence, the narrative of Polly's life comprises a series of episodes which unfold Polly's desperate attempts to establish the world of carnival by challenging and refusing the officialdom culture.

For all these carnivalesque elements, Wells's modern romance acknowledges that it is impossible to regenerate the Rabelaisian carnival text. The banquets of his wedding and his father's funeral are not like the extravagant feast of Rabelais's giant heroes. Instead they isolate and suffocate Polly: during his father's funeral party, he has to 'battle with the oncoming depression' (*HP*, 81) and the guests at his wedding party are noisy and greedy. Wells reminds the reader that the Rabelaisian carnivalesque utopian is too idealistic and fictional:

He was haunted by the memory of what was either a half-forgotten picture or a dream; a carriage was drawn up by the wayside and four beautiful people, two men and two women graciously dressed, were dancing a formal ceremonious dance [...] They might have come straight out of happy Theleme, whose motto is: "Do what thou wilt". [...] Mr Polly, dear heart! Firmly believed that things like that could and did happen – somewhere. Only it puzzled him that morning that he never saw them happening. [...] And so dreaming of delightful impossibilities until his heart ached for them, he was rattled along in the suburban train to Johnson's discreet home and the briskly stimulating welcome of Mrs Johnson. (*HP*, 86-7)

These passages capture Polly's grievous realisation that the Rabelaisian utopia exists only in literature, in the form of the romance. The utopia envisioned by Rabelais and Polly is the world in which the motto, 'Do what thou wilt' regulates the people; it is the world in which people do not have to go to school, do not have

to work like a slave in the Drapery shop and do not have to confine their lives to the system of marriage. However, the text demonstrates that Polly (and perhaps the readers) can only imagine it by reading them. It is only 'a half-forgotten picture or a dream.'

Even though this passage carries the gloomy messages that the romance world is only filled with the 'delightful impossibilities', the narrative of Polly in fact demonstrates the impossibility and the textual utopian solution. Despite the fact that throughout the text the comic tones prevail and that the narrative also allows Polly to eventually construct his private utopia, the text deliberately captures the impossibility and fictitiousness of the happy ending of Polly's story. In particular, the end of the narrative enforces the sense of 'delightful impossibilities.' Like *Kipps*, the narrative of Polly ends with unsolvable puzzles of the mystery of life. In the closing scene of the text, Polly compares himself to a child playing in a nursery, who 'hurt[s] themselves at times' (*HP*, 279). There is no plan in human life and it is difficult to predict in which direction it is moving. The narrator depicts the perfect states of life by invoking the image of the mother's womb:

It was a safe and inclosed and fearless as a child that has still to be born. It was an evening full of quality, of tranquil, unqualified assurance. Mr Polly's mind was filled with the persuasion that indeed all things whatsoever must needs be satisfying and complete (*HP*, 277).

The mother's womb is the symbol of eternal happiness; it is the original happy state of quietude, and one desires to return to it. Here, Polly, who perceives himself as the child in a nursery, experiences the peace and happiness. The happiness is so perfect that he assimilate himself to a baby in the mother's womb: 'a child that has still to be born' (*HP*, 277). However, returning to the original state before birth is not possible in reality. Thus the description of the perfect serenity and harmony in the passages above insinuates meaning of impossibility and enhance the theme of 'delightful impossibilities.'

The passage also juxtaposes the images of the perfect state of the mother's womb with the peaceful serenity and the image of the dusk. The sublime tranquillity of the evening enshrines the mood of death, which is also the symbol



of eternal peace. The topic of Polly's conversation with the fat woman is tinted by the sense of death. To the fat woman's last comment on death, 'You got to die someday,' Polly can give her a comic answer: 'Come here always, when I am a ghost' (*HP*, 281). However, the mood flowing over their conversation is loaded with the feeling of apocalyptic visions of the future.

The sense of ending is intensified by Polly's sterile married life and Miriam's tears, which are somewhat melodramatically narrated in the previous chapter. The utopia is only for Polly: in this story, there is no expectation for the next generation. Polly, Miriam and the fat woman in the Potwell Inn do not have children. In this sense, the narrative about Polly's life ends somewhat like George Ponderevo's novel and also *The Time Machine*. At the end of *Tono-Bungay*, George deplores the futility of his and his uncle's life (and to an extent English civilisation):

It is a story of activity and urgency and sterility. I have called it Tono-Bungay, but I had for better have called it *Waste*. I have told of childless Marion, of my childless aunt, of Beatrice wasted and wasteful and futile. What hope is there for a people whose women become fruitless? I think of all the energy I have given to vain things (*TB*, 519).

Compared with *Kipps* and *Love and Mr. Lewisham* in which the narratives end with the theme of birth, the life stories of Polly and George end with themes of death. The image of sunset and death signifies that *The History of Mr Polly* is the romance which signals the end of the carnivalesque romance.

## Conclusion

Despite the fact that Wells wrote several fantasies and comic novels after *The History of Mr Polly*, his attempt at realising romance contingency in his fiction began to give way to his discursive novels and political writings. *Tono-Bungay* and *The History of Mr Polly* are Wells's last attempt to write fiction which combines romance and realism. In these novels, Wells endeavours to employ romance features as the engine to generate the narrative. However, as I argue in the previous chapter of this study, Wells's attitudes towards romance in fiction in these novels reveal his anxiety about the end of the romantic period. In spite of George's cynical equation of romance with modern commercialism, and of his condemnation of the genre, *Tono-Bungay* is haunted by the sense of loss: the thwarted dream of romance. Likewise, Wells's last endeavour to liberate the lower-middle class hero from his cramped life in *The History of Mr Polly* ends with the strong sense of futility.

In this thesis I do not include Wells's other major novels of this period, *The War in the Air* (1908) and *Ann Veronica* (1909). Like the other early works, these two novels also have a strong flavour of romance. However, it seems that in these novels, Wells does not care to delve into the matter of the romantic imagination and its conflict with realism. *The War in the Air* is a work containing characteristics of Wells's early works; not only the scientific romances but also his social novels and utopian projects. By interweaving the author's social commentary with the imaginative narrative of the future (like in *A Modern Utopia*), he tells the story of the lower-middle class man (like Hoopdriver, Kipps, Polly and Lewisham) in the imaginative future war story (like his scientific romances). The major difference between this work and Wells's other early texts, which I examine in this thesis, is that this text only contains the author's condemnation of the harmful effect of romance. The German prince, Karl Albert's romantic ideal and imagination are only opposed by the author and the main character. His Napoleonic heroism is considered as dangerous imagination, which almost drives the entire world to total destruction. Thus, it is sympathised by neither the author nor Bert Smallways.

*Ann Veronica* does not possess Wells's self-conscious confrontation of romance with realism. While the narrative focuses on Ann Veronica's struggle

against middle-class values, it demonstrates the way in which she has to give up the romantic ideal (her liberation from man's power) because of the undeniable reality (money). However, she compromises her thwarted ideal with middle-class morality. Once Ann has decided to compromise her ideals with social values and morality and she bravely chooses Capes as her lover, the narrative loses its tension between romance and realism, and it conveys the author's monologic preaching on the need of a woman's freedom and independence in society. Furthermore, the ending of this novella is strikingly monologic and romantic compared with Wells's other works published in this period. Ann's happy life with her husband and reconciliation with her family is too melodramatic; it seems to look back to the periods of Dickens and Jane Austen. As in the endings of *Kipps* and *Love and Mr Lewisham*, Ann Veronica expects a baby, which signifies a Wellsian favouring of Darwinism: the continuation of the human race and preparation for the better future. However, the narrative tones closing the stories of *Hoopdriver*, *Lewisham* and *Kipps* are unstable; they are torn between the aborted romantic dream and the reluctant acceptance of reality. This feature does not exist in Veronica's mind at the finale of the narrative. Also, Kipps's and Polly's anxiety about uncertainties of the future is conveniently removed from the comfortable and warm middle class household of Ann Veronica.

As Wells's career moves on to the middle and last stages, his ability as a romancer diminishes. *The War in the Air* and *Ann Veronica* anticipate this change. In the former, his comment in a subjective manner upon the Edwardian social and political issues (such as imperialism and nationalism) foreshadows his theorisation of the novel (in 'The Contemporary Novel') as 'the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of moral and the exchanging of manners, the factory of customs, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas' (LC, 204).

Reading *The War in the Air* next to *The World Set Free: A Story of Mankind* (1914) clearly shows that at the later stage of his career Wells becomes more like a social commentator who uses the fictional form as a medium for conveying his opinion of social issues. In *The War in the Air*, Wells plays double roles. He is the imaginative writer who is working on the story of the life of the fictional character, Bert during the international warfare; and he is also the historian and prophet of the future war and politics. Wells's precarious balance between the two roles is

broken in *The World Set Free*. In this work, he does not focus on representing an imaginary character; consequently, his work points to Wells as a historian more than as a romancer or a novelist.

As Wells himself acknowledges in 'The Novel of Ideas', his 1940 preface to *Babes in the Darkling Wood* (1940), *Ann Veronica* is the early type of the dialogue novel or the novel of ideas in which the characters say 'things I [Wells] wanted to put into shape by having them said' (LC, 218). From this remark, one can conclude that Wells's idea of the Novel of Dialogue is not the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism. Instead, his idea supports strong monologism because the dialogue between the characters is imbued into their minds by the author. It is like the conversations between two characters on the stage, which are directed by the stage manager and the author. According to Bakhtin, the drama genre is monologic even though it is composed of the conversations among two or more than two participants. It is a monologic genre because there are not dialogical relations between the author and the character; they can neither dispute nor agree with each other. This forms the monologic context in which 'the person who goes about his business unaware that he is being watched.'<sup>410</sup> The dialogue forms between the characters Wells particularly favours in his late works are presented in the monologic context because his characters join the conversation provided and observed by the author. The characters are mere purveyors of Wells's ideas; thus there is no dialogic conflict between them. In this sense, Wells's categorisation of *Ann Veronica* as the novel of dialogue predicts Wells's gradual transformation from the novelist to the social thinker or even the preacher.

The Romanian captain in *Tono-Bungay* accuses the English novel of lacking artistic quality:

Eet is all middle-class, youra England. Everything you look at, middle-class. Respectable! Everything good – eet is, you say, shocking. Madame Grundy! Eet is all limited and computing and self-seeking. Dat is why your art is so limited, youra fiction, our philosophia, why you are all so inartistic. You want to nothing but profit! What would you? (TB, 322)

Through the captain's criticism of inartistic qualities of English novels, the author actually condemns commercialism in the contemporary literary market. The

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<sup>410</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 189.

middle class, who consists of the major reading public in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, did not accept any literary works exceeding their moralistic standard. Through the 'the Weary Giant Theory'<sup>411</sup> and the characterisation of Mr. Stanley, Ann Veronica's father, Wells also mocks their shallowness. Their reading materials are the popular romances written for entertainment. Here, his discontent with the enormous popularity of the romances and the Edwardian publishing conditions for the mass-production of the popular narrative are clearly marked.

However, these passages contain more complicated understatements: the author's subtle disagreement with the foreign captain who savages the English novel in general. While Wells wrote *Tono-Bungay*, Wells was vigorously engaged in controversies on the novel proper with James and Conrad. Throughout the 1900s, Wells gradually disengaged himself from James's aesthetic of a single point of view and Conrad's idea of literature as an art.<sup>412</sup> It has been argued that by incarnating Conrad in the characterisation of the Romanian captain, Wells does pay his tribute in the manner of jokes or satire of his foreign colleague for his dedication of *The Secret Agent* (1907) to him.<sup>413</sup> Instead, by emphasising the captain's broken English, Wells adds the comic touch to his comment, and ridicules his over-simplified idea. In the quotation above, Wells distances himself from this foreigner's opinion; and by doing this, he shows that he has more emotional ties to the English novel tradition: the transformation of romance with a strong hold of reality. Wells once again acknowledges that his idea of the novel proper cannot be completely independent of the tradition of romance; and this awareness drives him to publish his final masterpiece, *Tono-Bungay*.

Summarising his literary career and works from the 1895 to 1924, in the preface to the Atlantic Edition (1924), Wells vociferously but ambiguously claims that his works are not 'Works of Art. It is far truer to call them Journalism than

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<sup>411</sup> See Wells's 'The Contemporary Novel,' *H. G. Wells Literary Criticism*, 192.

<sup>412</sup> In 'Conrad, Wells, and the Two Voices,' *PMLA* 88.8 (1974): 1949-65, Fredrick R. Karl records the process in which the friendship between Conrad and Wells ends. Interestingly, he points out that from the beginning Conrad did not agree with Wells's aesthetic values displayed in his scientific romances, and thus from Conrad's side, the end was anticipated.

<sup>413</sup> See Andrea Barrett, introduction, *Tono-Bungay*, by H. G. Wells (New York: Modern Library, 2003) xiv; see Edward Mendelson, introduction, *Tono-Bungay*, by H.G. Wells (London: Penguin, 2005) xx, in these introductions, the critics read Wells's insertion of Conrad as the captain as a friendly joke between the two writers or Wells's simple satire of Conrad.

Art.’<sup>414</sup> Distinguishing his works from high-brow literature promulgated by Henry James and his twentieth-century disciples, Modernists, Wells actually defines his works as the work of middle-brow, the literature of escapism and commercialism.<sup>415</sup> However, as his texts at the turn of the century prove, what Wells actually achieves in his scientific romances and social romances is his heroic attempt to produce a literary form amalgamating the matter of journalism and romance with the manner of art.

In the same preface, Wells raises questions regarding his creativity: ‘What is the drive in me?’ ‘What has it got to do with the spectacles without?’<sup>416</sup> Regardless whether Wells was conscious or not, his creative ‘drive’ at the turn of the century was the ‘drive’ of romancing. However, as I have argued in this study, since *Tono-Bungay* and *The History of Mr Polly*, this drive had given the way to his desire to become a social thinker writing in the form of fiction or non-fictional essay.

In the preface to the fifth volume (1925) of the Atlantic edition of his works, Wells admits that his personality is originally romantic: ‘Temperamentally he is egotistic and romantic, intellectually he is clearly aware that the egotistic and romantic must go.’<sup>417</sup> This statement provides an explanation regarding the change in Wells’s literary career, which happened after *Tono-Bungay* and *The History of Mr Polly*. When he was a romancer, he could produce various fictional works. When he attempted to let the side of the romantic and egoistic go, the creative energy diminishes. The *fin-de-siècle* Wells was a romancer, and it is the romancer Wells that could introduce unique works to the world.

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<sup>414</sup> Wells, ‘Preface to the Atlantic Edition,’ *The Works of H. G. Wells*, vol.1 (New York: Scribner’s, 1924) xi.

<sup>415</sup> On romance, the journalistic *belles lettres* and middle-brow commercial literature, see William J. Scheick’s *The Ethos of Romance at the Turn of the Century* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1994) 15, 18-9, 22.

<sup>416</sup> Wells, ‘Preface to the Atlantic Edition,’ *The Works of H. G. Wells*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner’s, 1924) x.

<sup>417</sup> Wells, ‘Preface to Volume 4,’ *The Works of H. G. Wells*, vol 4 (New York: Scribner’s, 1924-7), ix.

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