

Temporal Paradoxes and Narrative Experimentation: H.G. Wells Scientific Romance.

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Abstract

H.G. Wells, a pioneer in science fiction and speculative fiction writer who contributed significantly to the genre with his pioneering exploration of scientific ideas and societal commentary. This paper explores Wells' novels through the thematic concept of postmodernism and scientific romance, highlighting how his works challenge traditional narrative structures and engage with contemporary scientific advancements. By analysing the ideas in such incredible science fictions such as, *The Time Machine* and *The Invisible Man*, this paper explores how Wells mixes scientific curiosity with imaginative storytelling to create narratives that resonate with both his contemporary time period of Victorian-era. Through a comparative study of Wells' narratives and postmodern literary techniques, this paper aims to illuminate the enduring significance of his works in the context of modern literary theory and scientific discourse.

Keywords: Science, fantasy, utopian & Dystopian, Time Travel and Space, speculation, science and technology, Environment, and future world.

Introduction.

George Herbert Wells, (H.G. Wells) and also known as the father of science fiction born on September 21, 1866 in England. Wells has earned the reputation in the field of literary world through the incredible works of science fictions, short stories, and other literary works during the time period of early modernism and late Victorian era. The time period in which H.G. Wells lived it was the period of great transition and instability in England as well as in the whole world. The main effects and the transition started after the publications of Charles Darwin's the

theory of biological evolution; *On the Origin of Species*, which published in (1859) such theoretical work immensely impact on the mind of young authors, among them the most crucial and important author who is known for scientific romance is, H.G. Wells. His most notable scientific works such as, *The Time Machine* (1895) *The Invisible Men*, (1897) *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896). These all such great works are on the thematic concern of speculation, imagination, utopian and dystopian and fantastical approach of narrative style and commitment.

The relationship between fantasy and science fiction is quite different because the fantastical world is merely speculation regarding something could be imagined and not possible in physical appearance but the other hand science fiction based on the contemporary era of science and technology. However, despite these two different genres in the field of literary world some authors linked it together because both genres based on imaginary world, strange creatures, and forced beyond those experienced of the real world. The thematic concern of both genre is escapism form the harsh reality of the contemporary world. Science fiction revolves around the introduction of science, tools and technology that speculate the world into an imaginative world. Each and every one science fiction authors and sci-fi story built on the thematic concern of technology, its uses, and the harmfulness of technology to society and the biosphere. The main themes that revolve in the scientific romances are time travel, artificial intelligence, invasion of alien, superpower, magic, and the exploration of extra-terrestrials. No doubt the aim of science and technology is to move the society towards a betterment but the famous science fiction writers such as, H.G. Wells and other his predecessors of science fiction authors like Mary Shelley their concern is pessimistic while introducing the machine into the literary world of literature. The main reason of the pessimistic nature towards science and technology that whatever the current world has doing it would directly impact on the future generation and on the planets.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1818), elaborates the story of a Swiss scientist, Victor Frankenstein, a young and curious scientist who creates a sapient creature in an unconventional and untraditional experiment which was not a good result of science and technology. After Mary Shelley the most important figure in the field of scientific romance is H.G. Wells. *The Time Machine* which published in 1895 is a very famous science fiction that begins with a conversation of time and how it could travel even in the past, or into the future. The time traveller, protagonist of the story, explains the concept of time and space Infront of some companion at the dinner table but the companion did not accept his notion that

through a machine a man could travel hundreds of years back or forward in future. The time traveller explains things. “There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except our conscious moves along it,” (Wells, 12). H.G. Wells through a character elaborates the scientific concept of three-dimensional theory and imagine the things in a speculative manner for the curiosity of future world. The narrator who was also the part of dinner guest analysing each and every activity of the time traveller who was deeply pondering on such device and mechanism that could fetch the information from past or the future. “The thing the Time traveller held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework...” (Wells, 18). Here through the narrator of the story we got that the protagonist had a gadget like machine and he also considers it as time machine that could travel for the purpose of exploring things in a very precise manner. The one of the characters among the guest, the psychologist who kept on argument regarding the machine and its function, The narrator says, “The time traveller looked at us, and then at the mechanism.” (Wells. 19) The protagonist’s fantasy power and high imagination pondering about the scientific and tools mechanism and he says, “I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future Time, and disappear,” (Wells, 20). The protagonist believes in science and technology and had also curiosity regarding the exploration more things which are hidden and also wants to know the conditions of future world, its culture, species, living style, standardization and the utopian world.

The contemporary world especially, the Victorian England during the time period of Queen Elizabeth II from 1837 to 1901. During this period, Britain was transformed from a predominantly rural, agricultural society into an urbanization and industrial one. It was the time of great revolution of industrialization and science and technology, such as the railroads and steam printing press introduced into the market and this era also known as the time of prime and England witnessed as the rapidly changing nation among the world. There was also a struggle going on between high and low class, working class and women were exploited by the hands of elite class and patriarchal system. The Victorian literature debate the issues of exploitation and the rights of women and this era has completely different thematic concern from the pre-era of romanticism. Printing played an important role for spreading the literary text cheaply and easily throughout the country and that gave an opportunity to the working-class men and women for their contribution into the literary realm.

This main aim of this research paper is to explore the fantastical concepts of science fictions during the early modern period and particularly H.G. Wells’s scientific romances that are on

the based of speculative and utopian society written in high imagination and fantastical style of narrating. In *The Time Machine*, when the time traveller reached into far future and he finds the two species of human being one is Eloi and the other one the Morlocks. The main thing is here, how Wells's fantasy power explores the things and they connected with the contemporary world of power, exploitation and partiality within a society on the bases of class divisions and the dominance in Victorian. Wells's conceptual innovation leads him towards beyond the boundaries of hypothesise and confess himself and society as well regarding the believe in science, technology and innovation and the idea of time travelling became the thematic concern of his scientific romance. No doubt Wells was so curious and speculated regarding scientific advancement but he also was a great social commentator and he raised all those issues in his fiction such as in *The War of the World*, he used the fantastical imagination invasion of earth by Martian and alien being that tried to overcome the whole world. His main concern to show the British imperialism and social scenario of contemporary England of late Victorian and early modern time period.

The exploration human nature in Wells's fiction and he also blended it with fantasy and imagination scenario to explore human psychology and behaviour, for examples the invisibility of the protagonist in *The Invisible Man*, leads to the curiosity of exploration, power, invisibility and the power of science and technology in modern time period where the protagonist could escape and remain himself in seclusion from the society through some devices and any other techniques. Wells's main intend to emphasise on the importance, uses and impact of science and technology. H.G. Wells has created and combined the fantastical world with the possibilities of science and technology in future time and he is also speculating for the future world through the combination of future societies and invasion of Alien, extra-terrestrial bodies, advancement in science and technology etc. Such amazing conceptual thoughts stimulates the inquisitiveness for Wells and for other young authors or scientist for exploring more and more things regarding beyond the world and a being like human that might create a problem for the species on the earth.

In postmodern era, such hypothetical and speculative science fictions, based the thematical concern of utopian society and on other crucial issues like environmental problems and its impact on the upcoming future generation became the source of economy and entertainment for the modern generation because almost all science fictions shown on big screen in the form of filmy world. The main purpose and beyond to aware the world regarding science and technology, environmental related issues, explorations beyond the physical world, utopian

world, alien or any other species' invasion and to explore more planets through the experiments of science and technology which are still hidden and not explored so far. The main purpose of this research paper to explore things that are shown and blended by H.G. Wells in his scientific belief and hypothetical fantasies in his all-science fictions. There are lots of sci-fi films based on literary text from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* 1818 to the present time.

Science fiction as already disused this is a modern genre in the field of literature, deals with thematic concern of science and technology, fantasy, horror, magical realism, utopian world, time travel, and the evolution. Such rewards goes to H.G. Wells, Charles Dawin who pay the way for other science fiction writers such as, Aldous Huxley who is best known for, *Brave New World* (1932), Philip Dick, H.P Lovecraft, Olaf Stapledon etc. By 21th century, science fiction has become much more than a literary genre includes books, movies, television, computer games, web series etc. Marry Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne and the most famous writer Robert Louis Stevenson's' *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and Wells's earlier fictions.

The Invisible Man another scientific romance by H.G. Wells with a deep thematic concern that has universal effect. The message is crystal clear that the scientific discovery should be done in the social and ethical limitations and it should be the beneficial for humanity instead of harm the social norms and nature. No doubt Science has enormous scope and significance but sometimes the scientific tools, techniques and the experiments, if not made well, may bring catastrophe like Atom bomb and nuclear weapons as used in World War I and II. In this novel, *The Invisible Man* and Mary Shelley's *The Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus*, too bring disaster one became the mad scientist and the second one invisible by the experiment of scientific creations and experiment. Such wrong experiments and discovery sometime put a=bad impact on the surrounding and on social ethics. For examples ,Griffin, the protagonist in *The Invisible Man* is a scientist and an intelligent researcher who discovers a formula to make himself invisible from the society by mixing up opium with another drug that makes his blood boil and then the processing his body in a radiator engine, initial his motif of discovering something unique in the science and technology of modern era but later Griffin becomes selfish, arrogant and power hungry, by using his techniques he becomes invisible and takes the opportunities of using this discovery for evil purposes, like murder and other brutality those are not feasibility into the society. For instance, at the opening scene of the novel, "The stranger came early in February, one wintery day, through a biting wind and a driving snow, the last snow of the year...". (Wells. 21). It is the description of the protagonist coming at Mrs. Hall

home in a very strange and discomfort manner and drastic weather with pathetically conditions that allow him into the house for someday as a free of cost because the owner of the house did not know the intend of the invisible man, she on the bases of humanity welcomes him with kind and passionate nature but the protagonist did not care of the society because for the sake of selfishness and the appetites of power and intelligence. “The poor souls had an accident, or an operation or something” said Mrs. Hall (Wells, 25). Wells explanations regarding the welcoming and serving the protagonist is quite loveable but his intention is different because the protagonist wrapped himself to pretend like that as Mrs. Hall was thinking, actually nothing happened with him.

In this science fiction Wells’s intend which is quite attractive to read for the readers because of its astonishing characteristics. The scientist and the intention of fantasy and science fiction authors have one notion to do work on such crucial things which solve the problems and mysterious of the world and it will be beneficial for society. Some believe that these mysteries of the past no longer benefits but it is very important to exploration future world with help of past hidden mysterious. *The Invisible Man* is a science fiction with a profound significance and deep pondering regarding the past as wells as future world and the use of scientific experiments. The purpose of this research paper to know the intention and imagination of Wells for the universe in the context of past and future world. Day by day the visibility of Invisible man revealed by Mrs. Hall and other who encounters him. “I have told the circumstances of the stranger’s arrival in Iping with certain fullness details in, order that the curious impression he created may be understood by the reader.” (Wells, 43). The intention of the narrator that reader and the researcher must know the intention and the pretend of the stranger man who wants to hide himself from rest of world through a scientific methods and new techniques that discovered by himself as a scientist.

Initially Mrs. Hall welcomes her with quite passionate that a poor man is wondering helplessly but later with the passage of time she discovers the activities and intention of the stranger who does not care the social norms, rules, social responsibilities and religious, as she describes, “The stranger did not go to church, and indeed made no difference between Sunday and the irreligious days, even in costumes.” (Wells, 43). As already discussed, the selfish nature of the stranger, invisible man his intention was quite different regarding his attitude and commitment. Well’s imagination and fantastical creation such characters keeping the scenario of the modern world and rapidly transition of the time period from Romanticism to Victorian and modern to

postmodernism interlaced with a high speculation. When it clarifies to Mrs. Hall about something bad in the stranger and his activities of visibility and invisibility then she emphasis him regarding his unbearable and strangeness work. Mrs. Hall roaring upon him, “I want to know what you been doing my chair upstairs, and I want to know this your room was empty and how you got in again.” (Wells, 65). The stranger for his defence says “You don’t understand,” He said, “who I am I or what I am”. “I will show you by heaven I will show you” (Wells, 65). Wells description for the protagonist is created something quite different as the hero of the story who must work for the sake of society is completely its contrary like antagonist.

The concept of fantasy and imaginative fiction depends upon the effect of strangeness setting such as other world, time and space, time travel in past or in future and the characters which are quite different from the normal beings. Such characters are, supernatural being or like alien etc. This speculative fiction and the ideas of supernatural being in great authors writing, for examples, William Shakespeare’s *A midsummer Nigh’s Dream*, Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, J.R.R Tolken’s *The Lord of Rings* and other famous science and fantasy authors including Mary Shelley to H. G. Wells and up to the present time. The common themes in these novels as an imagination and fantastical temporal concepts the utopian world and escapism from the contemporary dystopian world where is no peace, justice and the equality and the exploitation of working class and marginalized society. The crystal-clear examples of exploitation and supremacy of white dominant culture in America immensely effect on the psychological of African culture due to partiality of racism on the based of colour of skin, white and black. The protagonist of the novel, the invisible man is a black man who is unsatisfied and suppressed in the dominant of white culture so he tries to hide his identity and culture through the experiment of science and makes himself invisible among the society. There are two conflicts going on with the protagonist one is inner conflict and second is outer conflict. The inner conflict of his own identity and the outer is the dominancy of the white culture in America towards Afro-American. Wells’s concepts of racism partiality with the protagonist closely related to WEB DuBois’ “Double consciousness” where the character conflicts for the sake of own identity and culture among the oppressor. So, some concepts on the bases of imagination and fantasy of temporal theme discussed in both science fiction are closely related the contemporary England after romanticism and particularly the Victorian time period where there is class divisions, exploitation and conflicts at on the peak. H.G. Wells’s imagination in future time where the protagonist meets with two species one is on earth and second of underground and the protagonist encounters and has analysed there is even in future a dominant

species suppressing the weak species on the base of power and dominancy. In Postmodern time where is over population, lack of natural resources, conflicts, war, environmental issues unemployment and depression within the world so the dream of such utopian society, Dazzling Iland and American

Conclusion.

As the above research paper, it comes to the conclusion that *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells indicates an important message about the threats of class divisions systems and how they are dangerous that lead to the devastation of humanity and as well as for the planet. The science fiction's story concludes when the Time Traveller traveling to the distant future of (802,701 AD) and perceiving the evolution of humans into two different species: *the Eloi*, a ruling class and considered the communist class of the 'utopian society' where all the problems have been solved and such species lives on the surface and is beautiful but strange, and *the Morlocks*, a working-class exploitation by the ruling class, Elio. that lives underground and preys on the Eloi. The Time Traveller also sees that all life on Earth eventually dies out. The concepts of class divisions in England during Victorian England clearly the indications of two new species of 802.701, era where the time traveller encounters two species. The main motif this research papers to explore the notion of H.G. Wells how the fantastica and imagination of the future generation linked up with the contemporary society of Victorian England and the ideology of power of one dominant class on another. Through the adventure of Time Traveller Wells describes a crystal-clear picture of future world, for examples the time traveller goes further in future time and he observes the time period when the humanity has almost destroyed the earth has cooler the sun has expand and the winds become thinner. Wells's notion of the day is not far when the whole humanity would be perished due the environment and other anthropologist activities on the earth planets. The second science fiction, *The Invisible man* it also has the thematic concern of the use and misuses of scientific observation and somehow it leads towards the bad effects as the protagonist of the story, Griffin who becomes mad and he also creates problems for the society. The second thing it seems as in the class divisions system within a society on the base of colour and skin where the Afro-American black society feel inferiority with the white American society so the identity of Afro-American is dangerous in America on the name of partiality of racism which led the protagonist to do some illegal things like hide himself and harm the others.

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