



The Future of Nature Prophesied in the Select Futuristic Science-fictions of H. G. Wells

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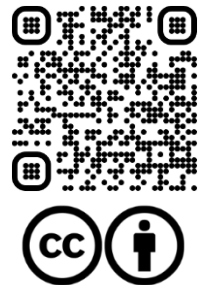
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Abstract— *Eco-criticism is one of the most recent interdisciplinary fields of study to have risen in the domain of literature which includes ecology, ecosystem and various other environmental issues relating to nature and its myriad aspects. Also, the discussions in the domain have increased significantly. For the last three decades, the environment has been facing a whole range of threats by the human-centric present day society. Also, the environmental consciousness in literature is a matter of vital concern for the scholars and the academic alike, and the subsequent emergence of the green theory, i.e. Ecocriticism is a remarkable addition. It is a field of study wherein nature and literature are mingled. As natural resources are being used injudiciously, the ecological environment is fast losing its poise and equilibrium. The cycle of seasons is fast turning irregular leaving the environment with a whole range of limitations and existential hazards for the entire human race. This crisis is not a recent phenomenon. Rather, it has been continuing since the Victorian age—the age of rapid industrialization, which consequently led to various disastrous phenomena, such as deforestation, water pollution, air pollution, soil pollution etc. Various scientific experimentations and developments have also brought harm to nature. The present paper attempts to show how H.G.Wells in his two novels, namely *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) prophesied the future of the environment in the light of the ideas laid down by the enterprise of science. The paper showcases how the characters of Wells forecast in their course of intersecting and interacting the two different natural worlds and play the role of a mediator between the two civilizations—one natural and the other reigned by science and the future. Through the literary analysis, the paper attempts to analyze not only the interrelationship shared between the human and the non-human worlds, but also, it lays bare the otherwise unwelcome outcomes of the man-nature interactions. In continuation of the analysis, the paper exhibits the demolition of the civilization as well as the environment through the film versions adapted by George Pal and David Duncan in 1960 and 2002 respectively under the same titles. In yet another novel titled *The Island of Doctor Moreau*(1896), Wells has shown how animals have been exploited for the sake of science and experimentation. The paper concludes how nature is confronting a great threat by the deliberate negligence of the human race, where there is a necessity to improve the correlation between human and nonhumans.*



Keywords— *environment, nature, literature, science, eco-criticism, exploitation of animals, industrialization, time machine, Time Traveler, back to the Future.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The term *Ecocriticism* takes us to William Rueckert's *Literature and Ecology: An investigation in Ecocriticism* (1978). At the present hour, the rise of Ecocriticism on the literary horizon is considered to be an important development worldwide. The noted professor of

literature and environment in the United States and the co-founder of ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment) Cheryl Glotfelty defines the term *Ecocriticism* in her book *The Ecocriticism Reader* as a “relationship between literature and the physical world” (qtd. in Jenkins et al. 356). In the present literary-cultural

scenario, this rather new theory appears to be not only an encouraging domain of enquiry, but also a promising research framework. The Ecocritic William Rueckert first coined the term in his *Literature and Ecology: An experiment in Ecocriticism* (1978). Etymologically, the term *eco* means 'earth', and *logy* means 'a logical discourse'. Collectively, the term Ecocriticism deals with ecology and the literature on the themes of ecology and nature. In other words, it focuses on the ecological aspects presented in literature. It offers the reader a specific perspective on literature which celebrates both aesthetic and the ethical values of the natural world. Ecocriticism does not simply mean the study of nature, rather it has distinguished itself from the conventional ways of writings on nature. At first ethical stand and commitment to the natural world and after that making the connection between the human and the non-human world. One part of the environment is Ecology. It has two shades—Deep Ecology and shallow Ecology, the first one challenges nature in its original form without any interference of man. In the present scenario, the human world seems to be the rival of nature. Human beings became the worst affecting factor for every organism in the Environment. Nature has lost its own control. Scholars are trying to raise the Point at issues of natural degradation. This paper will investigate how nature is losing its poise and what will be the precautions to prevent these issues and find the way of a green world through H.G.Wells' two novels—*"The Time Machine"* and *"The Island of Dr Moreau."*

Basically H.G. Wells is the masterpiece of Science Fiction. But here in this paper, I will discuss his novels on the light of Environmental Consciousness. If we need back to early ages, we can see that in the earlier ages of writers and Old ages there will be a Utopian nature Environment in their writings. They dealt with the beauty of nature. In the writings of Romantic age's poets, we always noticed that they find the inspiration of their writing in the lap of nature. Nature plays the vital role of the mother to them. It feeds them with wisdom and energy. They present every part and organism of the Environment in most of their writings. But after a century during the Victorian Period, the beauty of nature faded. In this period, the relation of Man and nature gets distanced. A new revolution has started in this period in the field of Industry, Economy. During the Victorian period, there was rapid industrialization in England and also in the other countries. Scientific development reaches its peak that causes harm to the normal flow of nature. River loses its freshness; air gets polluted with various gasses from industries. The theme of the writings in this period has changed. Like H.G.Wells and the other writers of this period turned their eyes from nature. They always present nature in a dystopian way. H.G.Wells is often called the father of Science Fiction (Sci-fi) because of his great novel-*The Time*

Machine. In this novel, there are two parallel ways of viewing the world. The novel is written in 1895 when the world has faced so many disastrous movements. Wells in this novel, sitting between the times, from where he shows the two different worlds. On the other hand, we show the world where nature has faced a typical Environment and on the other hand he wishes to have a world full of greenery. Further, I will discuss the natural scenario in two other adaptation films of *"The Time Machine"*. These two films are - *"The Time Machine"* (2002) by David Duncan and *"The Time Machine"* (1960) by George Pal.

The Time Machine begins narrating a scientist and inventor, the Time Traveler who meets with his friend in his Laboratory in order to show them his new invention. He starts explaining to them the number of dimensions that exist in this world. We all know that every object has three dimensions. But here, Wells invented the fourth dimension. Without this fourth dimension nothing will exist. Here he presents Time as the fourth dimension. In our life, we always move forward in accordance with time. But Wells explained this fourth dimension theory where we can move our life in both ways; in the past or in the future.

In between the story, we can see that the Time Traveler climbed to his Machine and stopped it 5 hours later. First he thought- nothing has changed but found himself in 180-701 AD. He saw that he is in a garden where the world is post-apocalyptic and in the film he lands in the middle of the jungle. He notices that the natural scenario has been changed. The Sun took on a streak of fire as it whizzed through the sky. The Environment of this era is quite good. The people of that place are happy and fragile. He has been spotted by a 4 foot tall man and by 10 others. He eats with them and tries to learn the language and tries to adopt their new environment. But after a few moments he discovered that their society has been divided into two parts- *Eloi* and *Morlocks*. This distinction has been done due to natural disasters. At the time of the formation of the world, some of the people went underground and some of the surface on the earth. The underground people are called *Morlocks*. And the people on the surface are called *Eloi*. As the *Morlocks* were underground thousands of years ago, they are not able to be convenient with the surface. They can't tolerate the light-of the sun. For this natural distinction, they become the rival to *Eloi*, as *Eloi* are much happier than them. So here nature plays the vital role of a mother to both *Eloi* and *Morlocks*. Time Traveler in the novel begins his study about the *Eloi* community and due to that study; he meets Weena. Here a Utopian hope is conveyed through the relationship between the Time Traveller and Weena. Instead of saving Weena from the hand of *Morlocks*, the Time Traveler tries to hide themselves in the lap of nature-the palace of Green Porcelain. But later this place turned into a museum. Once

a counter attack with Morlocks, he accidentally fires a giant wooden tree and on that great fire all the Morlocks have been died.

H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) imagines the environmental consequences of two important Victorian horticultural trends: artificial selection and selective breeding. Victorian horticulturalists glorified these techniques as steps toward the subjugation of the natural environment. This horticultural narrative of environmental control seemingly reaches its apex in the novel's future world of 802,701. Wells' *Time Traveler* believes he has entered an environment perfectly engineered to suit human needs. While critical attention has typically focused on the novel's humans, I use its engagement with contemporary horticulture to describe a plant-centered plotline. Building on critical work that argues for the possibility of nonhuman narrative agency, I read the novel's plants as minor characters. I argue that Wells' novel pits its plant and human characters against one another in competing plotlines, in a narrative refraction of ecological competition. Earlier Eco-critical analyses of Victorian works have pointed to the harmonious entanglement of humans with the nonhuman vegetal environment. I argue that ecological competition, as exemplified both in horticultural narratives' descriptions of environmental subjugation and in Wells' competing plant and human plots, was also a significant source of inspiration for Victorian environmental depictions.

Analyzing the *Time Machine* with its film adaptation of 2002, we may have a look that human beings have developed the way to live on the Moon in 2037. But they also destroyed the environment of the Moon. And now the Moon looks fragmented. The ashes of the Moon falling down to the earth. And on earth, there are so many natural disasters happening. The crust of earth has fragmented due to the earthquake. Then Alexander goes to 802-701 AD. During this journey he identified that there was a period where in the world, there were few people. The whole world is full of greenery. There was no element of technology and industry. Human beings live like native. The *Time Traveler* goes after 30 millions of years and discovers that there are only the last living things on a dying Earth. The world is covered in simple lecherous vegetation. The rotation of Earth gradually ceases. The Sun grows large, it comes nearer to earth that is why the earth's crust has been demolished.

The conflict between Man and Animal is another issue in Wells' novel *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896). In this novel, Wells basically shows animal exploitation. But we will discuss how animal exploitation causes the natural outbreak of the Great Chain of Being. Here man tries to change the formation of life. Dr Moreau and his assistant

Montgomery try to sustain a pseudo-colonial regime over the animals that they raise up by vivisection into Humanoids. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), H. G. Wells presents an imaginative rendering of the implications of evolutionary theory. He describes a world where the boundaries separating humans, animals, and the environment become permeable. The novel's engagement with evolutionary theory effectively deconstructs an essentialist conception of demonstrating how our biological connection to other life forms alters the way we think about ourselves and the planet. In this way, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* proves an important text for considering the profound shift in perspective that is required to think in a truly ecological manner.

The advent of evolutionary theory marked an important moment in the history of ecological thinking, as people were forced to consider their biological connection to each and every life form. Dr. Moreau, a rogue scientist who has retreated to the island with his assistant Montgomery to make humans out of animals. The novel exemplifies how evolutionary theory challenged late-Victorian notions of life on the planet. In this way, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* proves an important text for considering the profound shift in perspective that is required to think in a truly ecological manner. On the first night after landing on the Island however, the protagonist Prendick discovers the instability of the normal system. He comes across a mutilated rabbit in the jungle. The Doctor recognizes the rabbit is dead and its corpse is a threat to his regime.

During a shipwreck Edward Prendick had been saved by the mad scientist Dr Moreau and took him to his laboratory on an Island. There he discovered Moreau had prepared a Humanoid via vivisection that looks like half human. Here Wells gratefully shows the pain and cruelty of man over animal. Humans not only destroy nature, but also break the Great Chain of Being and lose their moral responsibility for the environment. Human beings have lost their real identity. So Wells says it—"an exercise in Youthful blasphemy." As a result, the text de-centers human perspective and forces Prendick into an ecologically minded way of viewing the world. I argue that *Dr. Moreau's* imaginative engagement with the theory of evolution gives rise to an ecological understanding of reality.

CONCLUSION

My paper has attempted to raise the Ecological concerns in H.G.Wells novel-*The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr Moreau*. As we know that he is the mastermind to present Science Fiction. But in a way, he always tried to show the degradation of Environment on the then time. He tried to

attempt a washing mirror of the societal and environmental changes. He always left a valuable message in his novels. It is Wells who actually shows the then society in a robust way and leaves a message. In a way, we can say that Wells masterfully tries to raise the issue of Environment among common peoples. In this present scenario, nature is facing a great threat, so by the discussion of the novel through the light of nature, we need to improve our awareness and love for nature. A conscious society is needed to create a valuable relationship between Men and nature. Only Eco-Consciousness can leave a better world for the upcoming generation.

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