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"Do You Read Fables? Modern Ones?" Fable and Fairy-Tale Strategies in Early Scientific Romances of H. G. Wells

The quotation placed in the title of the article comes from an early text of an English author H.G. Wells (1866-1946) who is considered as the father of *science fiction* through his invention of the genre called scientific romance. The quoted text, entitled *The Chronic Argonauts* (1888), is generally considered as the first version of *The Time Machine* (1895), the seminal text for the future development of new conventions of the emerging genre. This direct meta-fictional encouragement expressed in the authorial question points to the possibility of reading H.G. Wells's scientific romances in the light of fable and fairy-tale conventions. They are used in the function of subsidiary generic influence. Such perspective, surprisingly, has not been used in the scholarly interpretations of Wells's texts. There is a common practice of acknowledging the influence of old literary tradition, including fairy-tale generic features, on the development of *science fiction* (Głowiński, "science fiction" 500-501, Martuszewska 15, Gunn 9). However, this impact has not been analysed on the example of particular texts and techniques used by Wells, being taken rather as an *a'priori* assumption mentioned in the studies of popular literature. Tracing of the particular fable and fairy-tale strategies and devices in selected Wellsian scientific romances can thus offer a fresh perspective on the understanding of semantic and systemic aspect of the fictional world of these texts. It is, therefore, of particular interest to trace the techniques of characterisation, spatial patterns and plot motifs – such as that of a journey to another world or encounter of the human and animal world – which mark Wells's affinity with the genres of fairy tale and fable

So as to properly understand the way of implementing the conventions in the discussed texts some theoretical distinctions are necessary. Scientific romance is generally considered as a genre which constituted an early stage in the development of *science fiction*. However, such a presumption is misleading as the two generic conventions use different ontological composition of their fictional

worlds. In *sf*, the plot development is situated instantly in the fantastic world of some technological discoveries, with no connection to the world described as mimetic. Scientific romance, by contrast, entails a direct connection between the two worlds. There is the world which can be called mimetic as it is shaped as some recognisable rendering of the author's contemporary world. This world, or its inhabitant, is confronted with the fantastic world which is found somewhere in the unknown nooks of the mimetic world. In course of plot development, the character from the mimetic world can move to the fantastic world or at least view it. Alternatively, in some texts which Wells himself regarded as scientific romances, there is an unexpected correction of the laws of the fictional world initially shaped as mimetic by means of the intrusion of some supernatural element like the discovery of some fantastic species or a ghost[1]. Thus, the texts of scientific romances cannot properly be called *science fiction* as the genre did not then exist. However, they can be regarded as leading to the emergence of this *novum* in the twentieth century[2].

As a genre, recognised in the late nineteenth century as something distinct, scientific romance emerged and rose to instant popularity in the time of technological revolution when the reading public was attracted to any application of the topos of scientific invention. In France, it can be recognised in the works of Julies Verne. In England, the new trend was exploited by the scientifically trained H.G. Wells. It can be found not only in the works recognised as his literary trademark, like *The Time Machine* or *The Island of Dr Moreau*, but also in his numerous less known but equally crafted short stories. It is to these works of the English author that this chapter is devoted. These creations, which exceeded the conventions of his times, follow in the footsteps of some earlier works, like *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, but they are also markedly original. Not only do the texts of this group voice human fascination with the possibilities offered by technological progress, but they are also oriented to experimenting with generic strategies of fiction.

Admittedly, the features of fairy tale are at first sight slightly obscured in Wells's scientific romances by the element of science prominent in them. However, the underlying, core structure of frequent Wellsian models of plot development is unmistakeably taken from fairy tales. One of the typical scenarios is that the character tests an unknown device or produces a new invention which allows him to achieve his goals. This artefact works as a kind of magic object as if fairy tales. It allows him to access the fantastic world which works as the equivalent of different kingdom of fairy tales[3]. The texts which use such a story structure are:

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[1] This distinction of *science fiction* follows Zgorzelski's theory delineated in *On Differentiating Fantastic Fiction*. Wells's scientific romances can be placed within the categories of antimimetic and fantastic fiction distinguished by the scholar in the above article.

[2] Detailed analysis of the emergence of *sf* from preceding conventions is presented by Zgorzelski in *Fantastyka. Utopia. Science-Fiction*.

[3] Compare Burzyńska's discussion of Propp's functions, p. 286–287.

The Time Machine, *The Crystal Egg*, *The New Accelerator* and *In the Abyss*, to name but a few. The fantastic artefact of a machine – applied to move in space, time, or space and time – is depicted through the imagery equivalent to that of a magic fairy-tale artefact. It is a modification or a novel kind of Aladdin's magic lamp, an exquisite object depicted through the imagery of duality. It is frequently both outstanding and very common. This combination of elements is clearly taken from oriental folk tales such as the tale of Aladdin written by Antoine Galland in the early eighteenth century and incorporated in the corpus of *One Thousand and One Nights* (first English translation published in 1706). Like the magic lamp of Aladdin, or its animate version – the golden fish from the European and Asian folk tale of the fisherman and the wish-granting fish, these Wellsian artefacts also satisfy the human direct or implicit desire for moving away from the domestic space. The characters can get into some exciting new areas, the equivalent of the outer space in fairy tales, such as: the sea depths, the suspended moment of the present, the unimaginable future, cosmic or earthly space beyond time, eschatological dimension, remote mountain valley, and others. The affinity of these elements with fairy tale-motifs should not obscure the fact that Wells in fact invented the topos of the time machine even if he framed it on the foundation of earlier tradition. The generic influences in the making of his motifs are in fact multiple. The other worlds can be taken as modern variants of the chivalric-romance space of exploration which metaphorically indicates the limits of human virtue and foregrounds the philosophical view of human frailty. One can also find in Wells the influence of the tradition of medieval dream vision as well as of nineteenth-century utopia. Wells's artefacts undoubtedly reflect Victorian fascination with the machine and explore the literary potential of that motif, as confirmed by describing them in aesthetic terms of elaborate artwork.

For all the complex and interrelated nature of generic influences, we cannot overlook the fact that Wells's plot motif of spatio-temporal movement, as in fairy tales, serves to attain or highlight the element or quality which the character misses in his life. Thus the implication of time travel in *The Time Machine* is the perilous future of the very social divisions which are enjoyed by the guests and their host. They are unobtrusively served dinner and provided with comforting elements of a leisurely afternoon by unobtrusive servants. This is described in the seemingly inconspicuous narrative frame. This feature of framing focused on relations of dominance and subordination is also the re-applied compositional element taken over from *One Thousand and One Nights*.

The way of crossing space and time is as important in Wells's scientific romances as it is in fairy tales. As a kind of dual, ordinary and extraordinary, magic carpet, The Time Machine is described in combined terms: of an unknown device, and a mixture of familiar horse-riding and cycling. It has a saddle and the Time Traveller rides astride it, but it is also ambiguously shaped as a bicycle-like kind of device, and as such is rooted in the everyday experience of cycling to ex-

plore the countryside. These motifs are combined so as to reveal something about human nature as well as the future of humanity on metaphorical level.

There are more texts by Wells which follow similar pattern. The short story entitled *In the Abyss* uses the artefact of a diving globe applied for getting deep into the ocean bed so as to discover an underwater civilisation. The discovered world metaphorically represents some aspects of human concept of deity. *The Crystal Egg* is built round the story of looking into a crystal globe so as to see metaphorical representation of the character's situation of domestic oppression. This apparently unknown Martian observation tool, as well as the diving globe-like apparatus are reminiscent of the mythical ancient Greek motif of a glass ball used for prophecies or for insight into the future, a motif much used in fairy tales. Such a device, named as a crystal egg, motivates a detailed description of the technologically advanced, insect-like civilisation of Mars. The characterisation of the inhabitants of the place clearly links the text to the beast fable tradition. This is attained by means of an apparently common but at the same time strange object endowed with quasi-scientific properties. Although the crystal egg looks like an oblong piece of transparent material, it turns out to be a Martian telescope. This comes as a surprise. The crystal egg, just as Aladdin's lamp, is an apparently most common object found in the bric-a-brac collection displayed in a dusty shop window.

Wells's fantastic world, as the other kingdom of fairy tales, is far away, removed in spatial terms. It can be on the other side of the Earth as in *The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes*, it can be under a hill, as in *Mr Skelmersdale in Fairyland*, over the mountains, as in *The Country of the Blind*, or high up in the mountains in *The Apple*. An alternative location of the far-away kingdom is deep under the sea, as in *In the Abyss* and *The Sea Raiders*. The remote is also situated vertically, high up in the cosmic space as in *Under the Knife* and *The Crystal Egg*. Alternatively it is remote in temporal terms as in *The Time Machine*, while the location is said to be the same in spatial terms, constituting the future version of the Time Traveller's place of living. The idea of overlapping spaces is used in the descriptions of the eschatological dimension of the dead. The world of souls is placed as converging with the documented world in spatial terms in *The Plattner Story* and *The Stolen Body*. The latter realisations of the double-space motif are influenced by the Christian culture and by the late nineteenth century fascination with the occult. Motifs of clairvoyance are combined with scientific focus. Generally, one can trace the rooting of these spaces in spatial properties of Eurasian myths which are also formative for fairy tale transformations. Thus there are numerous traits of the biblical and Mesopotamian myth of Eden or Paradise, to be found in: *The Country of the Blind*, *The Door in the Wall*, *Aepyornis Island*. The settings of Hell and Purgatory are also influential in *The Apple*, *The Plattner Story*, *The Wild Asses of the Devil* and others. The Norse and Celtic myths of Elfenland can be directly traced in *Mr Skelmersdale in Fairyland* and *The Door in the Wall*.

Another element in Wells's stories taken over from fairy tales is the use of the motif of quasi-magical escape by means of the technological device[4]. This is the core of the Time Traveller's escape from the assaulting Morlocks and from the crustacean crab-like descendant of this predatory race in his double journey. The lieutenant in *In the Abyss* escapes in a similar fashion from the underwater race who want to keep his diving sphere and unknowingly expose him to suffocation. Mr Cave's jumping back from the sight of the dominant insect-like Martians who notice him through the crystal egg can also be viewed as a distant version of this motif.

One can, moreover, find a reminiscence of the transformed motif of a dragon or monster in Wells's stories[5]. Just as fairy-tale fantastic creatures, Wells's menacing monsters are frequently described through fragmentary, incomplete features, highly suggestive of evil. They abduct a helpless lady, like the Morlocks who assault Weena. A transformation of this motif is a case of a quasi-biological monster's attack on a helpless man. The predatory bat rounds the confused Woodhouse in *In the Avu Observatory*. Another variation of this topos is the blood-sucking orchid which attacks the stupefied amateur botanist Winter-Wedderburn in *The Flowering of the Strange Orchid* and almost succeeds in overpowering his female cousin, who yet rescues the man and herself, in what obviously constitutes a reversal of fairy-tale and chivalric-romance plot model. Much in the tradition of fairy tale, Wells uses the motif of monsters' association with inaccessible places. This principle determines the indeterminate characterisation of the deep-sea monsters in *The Sea Raiders* and *In the Abyss*. This is also the core feature of the Martian dominant race in *The Crystal Egg* and of the Morlocks hidden in their underground shafts in *The Time Machine*. In *The Door in the Wall*, the monsters are transformed into playful panthers which mark the positive aspect of Wallace's vision of the spiritual reality behind the green door.

By contrast with the more obvious influence of fairy tale and myth, at first sight there seem to be no strictly fable-like texts in Wells's literary output, understood – following the dictionary definition – as "short, fictional (nonhistorical) prose or verse tales with a specific moral [which] feature animals (personified) as their principal characters"[6]. As such it would be rather strange for an author who, like his equally popular contemporaries, experimented with systemic aspects of fiction. The ancient genre thrived in his epoch, returning in a rejuvenated form into the repertoire of English literature in the works of Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) and his short story cycles *The Jungle Book* (1894), *The Second Jungle Book* (1895) and *Just So Stories* (1902). The features of Kipling's texts, such as: the child addressee, and the morally-oriented direct presentation of anthropomor-

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[4] The motif mentioned by Propp in *Historyczne korzenie bajki magicznej*, p. 383.
[5] Compare: Propp *Historyczne Korzenie bajki magicznej*, p. 221; and Propp "Fairy Tale Transformations", p. 64.
[6] Murfin and Ray definition of fable in *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, p. 119; compare also definition "fable" in Cuddon, p. 256–257.

phic animals – engaged in social-like relations and endowed with human-like emotions – make these texts radically different from anything written by Wells. It is enough, to consider the direct, dialogue-driven way of telling the story in *How the Camel Got His Hump*, of *Just So Stories* for example. The capitalised characters like Camel, Dog, Horse and Ox represent the contrast between the laziness of the first species and diligence of the latter three that requires action in the form of magical materialisation of the Camel's care-free expression *Humph* into a physical hump. The moral lesson is thus implied about the negative consequences of being negligent (Kipling 16–19). Although Wells wrote no such texts, some of his techniques are similar and bear a clear if subtle mark of the beast fable convention[7].

In *Aepyornis Island*, the traveller's yarn serves to explain how he got his scar on the face and to imply his shortcomings as a man. It is a story of an encounter between the human being and a prehistoric animal who is fantastically hatched as a result of a Robinson kind of adventure. The giant fantastic bird is characterised by means of the the beast fable convention, as a human's companion and competitor, featured with common traits and behaviour of an oversized hen. The plot of competition between the two species is also of beast-fable origin. The physical erosion of the traveller's face turns out to be the consequence of engaging in a fight for dominance on a desert island with this personalised *Aepyornis* bird companion. The scar remains as a proof of man's ruthless behaviour towards his friend although he does not admit this directly. This works as an equivalent of a moral judgement in fable. In the manner typical of beast fable, the bird is endowed as much with human idiosyncrasies as it retains the features of a bird in external description, mockingly twisted into hen-like presentation.

The representation of the human race of the future in *The Time Machine* is done through the contrastive pair of distinct species: the Eloi and the Morlocks. The imagery used to render the pair is that of the livestock and farmers, or cattle and ant-like efficient society: "These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon, and probably saw to the breeding of". They are physically conditioned to fail or excel in some activities – thus the Eloi cannot provide for themselves, and lose in the quasi-Darwinian contest for survival. However, their providers, the Morlocks are also shown as gradually degenerating.

As in beast fables, Wells exploits the contrast between the figures of animals and man. This is so in Wells's short story *The Empire of the Ants*, where the efficiency of the invading human-like ants, their perfect military organisation,

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[7] Wells can be credited with fragmentary implementation of the convention of animal fable, he applied it only to the degree which suited his syncretic approach to genres, but such was also Kipling's approach, albeit to a lesser degree. Compare ideas on the incomplete implementation of the beast fable in Kipling's stories by Kokot, p. 137, p. 212; Zgorzelski, *Lectures*, p. 26–27 .

strategic acting and hierarchic order is contrasted with the human incompetence depicted through the chaotic actions of the military ship's crew sent to curb the dangerous expansion. As in the beast fable, the ants' behaviour imitating that of the humans is shown through dual perspective as they still retain the features proper for their species. The story of invasion is told as a warning against man's excessive confidence in his dominant position in the world.

However different they are from Kipling's choices, Wells's texts such as *Aepyornis Island*, *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Empire of the Ants*, *In the Abyss* and *The Crystal Egg* clearly use the beast fable convention of the socially-organised, animal world which engages in a mutually influential relationship with the human world. The novelty is that they were not written primarily for a child addressee, in contrast to Kipling's tales. They were rather intended for an adult reader with scientific interests. This is an expansion of the traditional folk-tale convention of telling instructive stories for the benefit of more mature addressee. It is only later that Wells's longer texts of the group started to function as adolescent readings by virtue of their implementation of the motifs of adventure and exploration. These devices were derived not only from fairy tale but also from the developing genres of popular fiction.

However, what is most significant is that the considered texts of Wells's literary output expand, for artistic ends, the basic compositional and semantic presumption of fables reflected in the structure of the fictional reality. The overwhelmed and fearful human attitude to the natural or quasi-natural world, which is foregrounded in selected scientific romances, can indeed be viewed as rooted in the cultural sources of beast fable identified in Egyptian and Indian animal worship[8]. Going in the footsteps of this tradition, Wells exploits the contrast between the human and pseudo-animal world to demonstrate the turn-of-the-century concept of precariousness of man's position in the world. This is why Wells highlights the similarities and differences between the two worlds and presents one world in terms of another, using the structure of extended metaphor[9]. The picture of the other world and its inhabitants is always a kind of commentary on the human world in its diachronic development.

To clearly understand the implications of this trait of duality it is interesting to overview the numerous variants of appropriation of animal figures in Wells's scientific romances. The range of animals which undergo humanoid transformation through forced vivisection in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is quite familiar as it includes dogs, pigs, pumas, rabbits and suchlike typical figures of most petrified beast fable variants. Wells can also fit into the frames of familiar conventions when he invents something seemingly new. Thus, there are the scientifically-identified extinct animals, named with their Latin names, like the *Aepyornis* bird.

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[8]   Compare the ideas on fable elements pointed out by Chesterton, p. 17, 19.
[9]   On further discussion of metaphoric aspect of Wells's binary world structure see Leleń *Tekst jako sieć*.

Their ancient quality is balanced by being described in the terms of quarrelsome domestic fowl, following in the footsteps of Chaucer's realisation of beast fable characterisation in T*he Nun's Priest's Tale* of *The Canterbury Tales*. There is also to be found an effort of redynamise the fable repertoire of creatures through the choice of the unknown insect or plant species. The ghostly moth haunts the career-obsessed entomologist in the short story *The Moth*, the text cross-influenced by the tradition of gothic fiction. This device of haunting is motivated as a kind of psychological consequence of the character's unresolved scientific conflict. It becomes a moral punishment for the professional feud that he engages in, which leads to the death of his fellow scientist. Another Wells's extension of beast fable tradition is using the society made of intelligent creepy-crawlies to comment on the weakening state of human society and culture, as in *The Empire of the Ants*. The same is the function of selective depiction of insect-like dominant creatures on Mars in *The Crystal Egg*. The way they are described through the gesture of binary watching suggests they have much in common with the domineering wife of the henpecked Mr Cave. The two-way structure emphasised by means of the beast-fable motifs constitutes here a way of redynamising the convention of fiction of manners used in the frame of the exploration.

Wells's insects are frequently credited with super-human military abilities. They are depicted as an efficient, dominant or even invasive element which constitutes a threat to the disorganised human society. They are also reminiscent of the motifs of colonial fiction, acting in the recognisable fashion of expanding empire. This is implicitly so with the insect-like Martians who have apparently dominated the humanoid ape-like creatures in *The Crystal Egg*. The new unstoppable ants annex new territories and destroy the existent human organisation of the world in *The Empire of the Ants*. These motifs are used to demonstrate the topos of human inefficiency and failure. They are enhanced by reworking of some myths, such as that of the Biblical tower of Babel in the latter text, in the description of a multi-lingual gunboat where nobody seems capable of successful communication. There is also the trace of the myth of Prometheus in *The Time Machine*, in the repetitive action of the Time Traveller of lighting the match so as to illuminate the darkness of the future twilight of humanity. The Time Traveller is the inefficient version of the Greek character who attempts to save the debilitated Eloi of the future with a very inadequate and unstable source of control over the Morlocks.

What Wells takes over from the ancient tradition of beast fable, as encoded in the fables of Aesop, is using the figures of animals for some abstractions of human features, with the allocation of the species to typified ways of acting. Admittedly, he gets new species into the traditional fable array of protagonists.

While the traditions of fairy-tale and fable are constantly merged in Wells's scientific romances so as to attain a completely new generic effect, they also retain the narrative features of earlier genres. Wells's short stories are told in the

convention of oral tale, with the personal character's *skaz* much foregrounded in the opening and closing frame of the texts. This is the conventionalised framing of *The Time Machine*, *In the Abyss* and others. The pretence of the told story in Wells's text is something typical of fairy tale tradition. The difference is that the frame asserts the inner story as the experience of the personal narrator. As in fairy tales, what is told depends on who it is told to. The figure of the addressee is very prominent in Wells's fiction. It determines the transformation of the systemic and inter-generic features such as the fairy-tale convention, travelogue traits, the pretence of the seaman's yarn, crossed with the English Christmas-tale convention.

An interesting example of Wells's working with the combined tradition of fairy tale and beast fable is *The Valley of Spiders*, which exceeds the generic formula of scientific romance and anticipates the genre of *fantasy* (Leleń *The Birth of a Genre?*). It gives up motivation by science, retaining it only on the metaphorical level, and it places the plot development in some minimally defined world reminiscent of the stories of South American colonisation (Malcolm, 207). The central plot-reorienting role in the story is granted to a species of militant spiders, who conduct a surprise attack on the human team in pursuit of a fugitive girl. The arachnids are depicted through the imagery of an efficient army, organised in the form of strange ship-like attacking globes, much in the above-mentioned colonial tradition. Their appearance disturbs the natural world order of the fictional reality, as acknowledged by the fearful reaction of the knights' horses as well as the behaviour of a wild dog and a hog. The motif of the spiders' fight with the human world serves to counteract the plot of the liege lord's chase of the escaping half-caste girl. The colonial feature of race impurity is here a metafictional mark of multiple indeterminate generic influence. The moral code of chivalric conduct, typical of medieval romance as well as fairy tales, is questioned through the encounter and the emerging fight with the spiders. This ends in the human demise – the death of the attendants and the loss of dominant position suffered by the master. This topic is reinforced on the level of crossing literary conventions of various origins which are momentarily evoked only to be dismissed. The motifs of the quest and reverence for the lady, of chivalric-romance origin, are alluded to but they are invalidated by introduction of the opposite motifs and by being revealed as non-functional any more. The spiders are personalised only indirectly, their advent is described through the language of ship-battle strategy, with allusions to mooring controlled by a strange army. "They came on before the wind with a sort of smooth swiftness, rising and falling noiselessly, sinking to earth, rebounding high, soaring – all with a perfect unanimity, with a still deliberate assurance" (442). This quality of purposeful strategy is developed into the description of the uneven combat of the two species. The spiders' aerial ship warfare is run against the imperfect realisation of land horseback combat.

The element of this feud, typically for Wells's incomplete implementation of

fable and fairy-tale devices, is the mutual perception of the engaged parties, with the foregrounded imperfect quality of human perception. The master observes the floating globes only to realise that he is being watched.

> He looked to discover one of those grey masses anchored as it were above him by these things and flapping out ends as a sail flaps when a boat comes about – but noiselessly. He had an impression of many eyes, of a dense crew of squat bodies, of long, many-jointed limbs hauling at their mooring ropes to bring the thing down upon him. For a space he stared up, reining in his prancing horse with the instinct born of years of horsemanship. (442)

It is only after he is attacked that his servant recognises the attacking creatures are spiders.

The central character described by extensive appellation as "the man with the silver-studded bridle" is characterised as a ruthless tyrant, apparently a fairy-tale stock character. However, unlike in the fairy tales, which are featured with clear axiological order, he is the only one of the party who survives despite, or rather because of, his ruthlessness. The convention of animal fable is also introduced only to be cut short. The interaction with animals, the spiders, only apparently leads to some change in the master. His conclusion after the encounter is ambiguous "'Spiders,' he muttered over and over again. 'Spiders! Well, well … The next time I must spin a web" (446). What this next time might be is highly ambiguous, as the story is built on the poetics of a fragment and it might also be taken as a kind of self-referential observation on the possibility of spinning a longer tale out of it.

The fable tradition in the use of the motif of spiders competing with the human world along with the fairy-tale motif of fighting with a fantastic or imaginary monster are used as elements of generic redynamisation of the short story, leading to emergence of something new. This is anticipating the genre of *fantasy* which is also heavily influenced by fairy tale and beast fable.

It needs to be asserted that in Wells's fiction no tradition is used on its own. It is the combining of generic influences which is the core of Wells's inventive experimenting with the techniques of fiction. The borrowings from the traditions of animal fable and fairy tale go along with suggestions of legendary source of the stories told, most frequently some stories within the main story. This is so in *The Country of the Blind* where both the people from the mimetic world and the blind preserve the knowledge of the other world in the form of the legend. Also the shape of the quasi-biblical Eden in *The Apple* is asserted as derived from the native legends of Armenia. The story can be viewed as a scientific romance as it is told in the spatial context of the train, derived from the Victorian fascination with the possibilities offered by the invention of the railway. The departure of Wells's Eden in *The Apple* from the biblical model is very prominent as it merges the fea-

tures of its opposite, the quasi-Biblical account of Hell. However, in *The Apple*, the native inhabitants and the inner storyteller, the diabolic stranger, do not wonder at this change but accept it as the stuff of legends.

The generic features of animal fable, fairy tale and legend are more often combined in the discussed scientific romances. In *Aepyornis Island*, the bird companion Friday, who is primarily a quasi-scientific species – a revived extinct bird, is described by Butcher by reference to an oriental fairy-tale space and legendary material: "It was a monster. Sindbad's roc was just a legend of 'em'" (54-55). In this passage, the ellipsis of the letters in the quoted pronoun "them" foregrounds the principle of oral tale and the voice of the teller.

In Wells's texts, what is clearly rooted in earlier fable tradition is the way names are used for designation of character simplified features and roles in plot development. This corresponds to the fable convention of anthroponomastic designation of the characters. The characters in *The Time Machine* are named according to their social functions e.g. the Medical Man, the Journalist, the Editor, the Psychologist, the Provincial Mayor, the Very Young Man. Some names reveal characters' functions in the story. The Time Traveller is the one who tells the tale of his experience of the time travel and the Silent Man is the individual whose stance questions the type of ideal reception. The naming of the Editor and the Journalist indicates the auto-referential orientation of the novella. It draws attention to the story's duality as an oral tale and as a text in the immediate journalistic style which needs to be edited and published. This style of naming somehow works within the fable convention of naming characters with generalised social functions which at the same time correspond to their role in the story. In *Aesop's Fables*, there are doctors and soldiers, as in *The Soldier and His Horse* (98), a rich man *The Rich Man and His Tanner*, an old woman *The Old Woman and the Wine Jar* (94). The main character in *Aepyornis Island* by Wells is called Butcher, which is a tell-tale name emphasising the ruthless method he employs for the bird slaughter. Butchers as characters appear also in one of *Aesop's Fables* entitled *The Oxen and the Butchers* (98).

In Wells's texts, naming works through typifying and as such it can also be traced back to the beast fable tradition, even if it is also developed to function in a more complex way. Friday, the name given by Butcher to the bird upon his hatching, is an instance of interfigurality employed within the text[10]. The Aepyornis bird starts to function within the way of broadened semantic scope of a character portrait which alludes to the figure of the stranded man's companion named Friday from *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe. In this way the scarred man in Wells's tale is represented as a ruthless white man while the Aepyornis bird referred to as Friday starts to function as a personification of

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[10] Müller defines interfigurality as the subtype of intertextual relations that arise between the characters of different texts suggested, among others, by means of similarities in the names, p. 101–103.

colonial indigenous man type, the dominated and exploited savage. This line of semantic designation is attained by Wells with the help of beast fable convention combined with the convention of Robinsonade. Such generic crossbreeding in this text is reinforced by the first episode in the travels of Butcher when he brutally treats a native helper for dropping an Aepyornis egg during the expedition. Evidently, the issues of man's ethical responsibility towards the colonially expanded world around him are central to the story. They are further foregrounded through the allegorical representation of the human world attained by the fable-like implementation of the bird figure.

The quasi-scientific context of paleozoology, much focused on in the closing dialogue between the explorer and the orchid collector, serves as a distancing device to the moral implied in the text. The moral is that one should not maltreat a companion. In a typically Wellsian subversive way, this companion also represents the figure of the Other, the indigenous type estranged through the device of beast fable personalisation. The presence of the implied moral is here clearly a feature derived from beast fable. However, typically for Wells's strategy in his early fiction, this moral is made very tentative, as is the principle of ambiguous characterisation of the central character. The final dubious attitude of the man who befriended the Aepyornis bird is foregrounded in the discrepancy between his directly expressed regret at becoming a murderer and the demonstrated lack of concern. On the one hand, he mourns the death of his companion and emphasises that he treated his body reverently. On the other hand, he proves incongruously detached from this situation when he mentions selling the bones at some profit as sensational fossil specimens and he talks of them in the context of other scientific findings.

The aim of Wells's stories is not to pass a direct moral commentary on humanity but rather to imply the necessity of axiological and moral reassessment of the human world, which is a change compared to the parenetic effect[11] of the fable, which typically encourages the change of behaviour through its exposure.

Such a quality of implied ethical judgement on human indifference is a frequent feature of Wells's scientific romances. The stories subtly illustrate the consequences of human moral failure in many aspects of modern world. This might be expressed through animal-as-human representation, which is used in fables and in *Aepyornis Island*. Alternatively, this is represented through a plant-as-monster motif, as in *The Flowering of the Strange Orchid*. However, Wells goes even further in inventing the transformed hybrid forms. He devises some animals-as-human creatures which are half way through the process of transformation. This is the case in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, where Prendick gradually realizes to his horror that the animals brought to the island are used by Doctor Moreau for vivisection and endowed with some human properties at the cost of their torture.

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[11] In his definition of parenetic literature, Sławiński points to its advisory and perusasive function in spreading some social role models, p. 373

The name Prendick is phonetically reminiscent of the word "apprehend" – which suggests the sense of coming to understand. Focus on cognition is even more evident if we compare this name with words from other European languages. Spanish "comprender" means to understand. The quasi-scientific process used for the transformation of animals into human-like monsters in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* functions in the way typical of scientific romances, as a modern credibility device. However, it is also used to explore the relationship between the human and animal worlds in the context of moral responsibility of man, which is the feature developed in the tradition of beast fable. Such shaping of plot development is focused on the ethical and axiological judgement of science implied by Prendick's reaction of horror and dismay.

The Island of Doctor Moreau is another variant of the Biblical myth of creation and human downfall told in *Genesis*. It is focused on exploring the aspects and consequences of man's usurpation of the God-like position of the creator realised within the combined generic precepts of utopia, beast fable and fiction of adventure. The island used for the setting, with its lush vegetation and streams, evokes the image of the primordial garden of Paradise turned into a Gothicised Hell of suffering through human appropriation of the power to create. Dr Moreau's name is reminiscent of English word "mores" – the unquestionable moral laws of people – and it points to his God-like role of the new law-giver. The text points to this topos directly when he undermines the system of traditional beliefs:

> He […] proceeded to point out that the possibility of vivisection does 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 superseding old inherent instincts by new suggestions, grafting upon or replacing the inherited fixed ideas**. Very much indeed of **what we call moral education**, he said, is such an **artificial modification and perversion of instinct; pugnacity is trained into courageous self-sacrifice, and suppressed sexuality into religious emotion**[12].

In the above passage, Moreau assumes the right of redefining morality. The scientific process of improvement of the species and human beings is judged as the most positive phenomenon by him. However, it is simultaneously presented as the most negative process through the plot development of the story. Instead of being the hallmark of progress, it turns out to be the pit of degeneration. This is amply demonstrated by the suffering, torture and exasperation of the created species. The reaction of Prendick to these revelations as well as the resolution of conflict in Moreau's death also constitute important clues pointing to the textual strategy to question, disrupt and re-establish the axiological system of the fictional world.

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[12] Emphasis added.

In most scientific romances written by Wells, the textual ambiguity of moral judgement on men's actions as well as on the modern world is foregrounded by the duality inscribed into the main characters. They are clearly far from being uniformly positive, unlike the hero figures of fairy tales. The protagonists of *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau,* who set out from the known space into the scientifically transformed world, the equivalent of the magic world in fairy tales, are defined against the traditional representation of a hero rooted both in fairy tale and chivalric romance tradition. Both Prendick and the Time Traveller are the source of moral judgements in the texts through their reactions of horror to the atrocious experiments on the hybrid animal-human race. However, both texts inscribe some of these beastly features into the characterisation of the explorers.

Before his coming to the island of Moreau, Prendick is shown as a survivor on the lifeboat of Lady Vain. The role of this episode is not only to reinforce the convention of fiction of adventure but also to introduce the implication that he might have killed his companions to survive. There is only a delicate textual suggestion that he might have done it, but it is reinforced by the seemingly insignificant fact that he is revived by Montgomery with a drink reminiscent of blood. Another textual signal is the fact that the captain refuses to have him on board, accuses him of cannibalism and compares him to the animals: "'Overboard!' said the captain. 'This ship ain't for beasts and cannibals and worse than beasts, any more. Overboard you go'". This strategy is taken over from *The Time Machine*, where the Time Traveller is equalled to both the Eloi, as the representative of a leisure-seeking middle class, and the Morlocks, as the machine-maker, leisure-provider and meat-eater (on the further discussion of the latter feature see Warner xxiv).

This ambiguity gains potency in the technique inherited from *A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms*, the fourth part of *Gulliver's Travels* (1735) by Jonathan Swift, a utopian text written in the beast-fable tradition. Upon his return to England, Wells's Prendick – just as Gulliver after his return from the country of rational horses – feels alienated from his fellow citizens because of his obsession about their beastly features. His mental instability is expressed through his direct confession:

> At most times it lies far in the back of my mind, a mere distant cloud, a memory, and a faint distrust; but there are times when the little cloud spreads until it obscures the whole sky. Then I look about me at **my fellow-men**; and I go in fear. I see **faces, keen and bright; others dull or dangerous; others, unsteady, insincere, – none that have the calm authority of a reasonable soul**. I feel **as though the animal was surging up through them; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale**[13].

To conclude the above considerations of the influence of beast fable and fairy

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[13] Emphasis added.

tale elements in Wells's scientific romance, it should be emphasised that none of these is dominant in the discussed text. They rather act as a subsidiary element of redynamising the conventions of fiction into creating a new kind of metaphoric, mythopoeic fiction adjusted to the tastes of an emerging popular market. These texts tackle the topical issues of the fascinating modernity that opened before humanity at the time of Wells's speedy launch into writing career. Thus, the typical beast-fable elements such as the way of characterisation, the didactic orientation on passing on a moral lesson, and others are not so obvious in H.G. Wells's works. They function rather through implication and as act as tentative reminders of the source convention. Likewise, the features identified in Wells's works, such as the way of building oppositions by means of fairy-tale duality of the world, the beast-fable, and fairy-tale topoi and plot structures are implemented to suggest the issues of moral and ethical judgement and to foreground the depersonalised, generalised human stance as seen against the natural world. This generically-introduced axiological sphere is not the dominant but the accompanying perspective in the descriptions of humans' precarious status in the world.

Wells develops, through strictly literary means, the post-Darwinian and Nietzschean concept of the evolution of humanity as a species. He questions the privileged status of humanity, which for him runs the risk of turning into a decline. This is reinforced by the creation of new literary myths, or what can be called Wells's mythopoeic strategy. In his scientific romances, there is a lot of focus on the beginning and ending of humans' dominant status on the Earth. To that end, the imagery of seasons and natural cycles is used, which is a crucial descriptive technique in myth evocation. The stories are often told through the perspective of human cosmic history. There are explicit or implicit commentaries on human existence on the globe. The social system is also taken as a quasi-natural organism undergoing evolution or devolution, with the preserving and the destructive forces at play to affect it. This quasi-sociological orientation is something which is very distinct from the tradition of the earlier genres. On the other hand, it is what later tempted Wells to abandon writing fiction and engage in non-fictional works on the present and future condition of mankind. Wells as a thinker ultimately dominated Wells as a literary storyteller, however, it is Wells the storyteller who still impresses the modern reader with his outstanding cross-generic jugglery.

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Summary

"Do You Read Fables? Modern Ones?" Fable and Fairy-Tale Strategies in Early…

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Fables are common across folk cultures worldwide and have been used to pass on the values of a people, especially to children, for centuries. The fables origins lie in oral storytelling. The central characters are usually animals, making them extremely engaging for children. A well-crafted fable is a driver for improving human behavior, while also serving to entertain. 2. Fables Convey Moral Messages. As with other stories, fables strive to entertain the listener or the reader. Summary and bonus fable teaching ideas. The activities above can be used as one-off lessons or as a series of lessons exploring different aspects of fables: character, moral, sequence, and story structure. There is also a lot of scope here for continuing work based on the initial fables. One characteristic of a fable is that it uses animal characters to portray human characteristics . Each particular animal will act in a human way. For example, the fox will be a crafty or sly animal. The lion will be a brave individual. Before reading any fables in your classroom, take some time as a class to brainstorm a list of animals and the characteristic for which they are best known . Encourage your students to notice if these characteristics apply across cultures or whether each culture views a particular animal in a different way. Your students can have fun learning, telling stories and acting out original tales that carry a deeper message. A bird in the hand may be worth two in the bush, but a fable in the classroom may be worth an entire volume in the library. About fables. A fable is a fictional story, that often features animals, mythical creatures or forces of nature. These creatures are given human qualities, they can talk think and act like humans. The creatures are often stereotypes of human characteristics. They are sometimes clever and brave, sometimes selfish and stubborn... What is special about fables is, that fables are one of the most enduring forms of folk literature. They spread abroad just by oral transmission and have done so in the last thousand of years. Fables can be found in the literature of almost every country of the world. While the fable has been often trivialized in many children's books, fables have also been adapted to literature. Famous fables are for example: Felix Salten's Bambi (1923) - coming-of-age story). A fable is a very short story which promises to illustrate or teach us a lesson which is also called a moral. Usually if not always, fables are stories having animal characters that talk like humans. Many common sayings come from Aesops Fables like "Honesty is the best policy," and "Look before you leap" are familiar examples of fables. Aesop is believed to have been a Greek slave who made up these stories. Nobody is really sure if Aesop made up these fables. What is certain, however, is that the Aesop's Fables are timeless. They are so wonderful that they have been told over and over again fo Fable and Fairy-Tale Strategies in Early Scientific Romances of H. G. Wells. The quotation placed in the title of the article comes from an early text of an English author H. G. Wells (1866-1946) who is considered as the father of science fiction through his invention of the genre called scientific romance. The more. Tracing of the particular fable and fairy-tale strategies and devices in selected Wellsian scientific romances can thus offer a fresh perspective on the understanding of semantic and systemic aspect of the fictional world of these texts. HG WELLS, Scientific Romance. Crises of Legitimation in Conan Doyle's Professor Challenger Scientific Romances.

Fables, fairy tales, folktales, legends, myths, and tall tales -- six literary genres that engage student interest -- can be used in the classroom to inspire creative thinking and writing. This week, Education World offers five lessons to introduce students to the literary genres -- and to their own imagination! Included: Graphic organizers, student work sheets, more! Once upon a time, in a day long ago, there lived incredibly prolific storytellers. Their stories have been passed down, retold, translated, adapted, and even "Readers Theater-ized"! In this week's Education World lessons plans, your students will have opportunities to retell, adapt, and, yes, Readers Theater-ize marvelous fairy tales, fables, folktales, legends, myths, and tall tales from origins around the world and across the centuries. "Fairy-tales" are just a particular brand of folklore, usually of Western origin and often featuring fairies and other magical fey critters. Folk tales are narratives and parables which are handed down (either orally or through writing) from generation to generation; they are a product of entire cultures, and subject to modification over the years as they're told and retold among the populace. What are you doing here?â€, Felix asked with sincere and innocent curiosity. â€œIâ€™m waiting for someone to give me a coinâ€ , answered the old woman. â€œI dont have a coinâ€, confessed Felix, â€œbut I will give you something even betterâ€. Fairy Tales and Fables Fables provided instructional reading for European children from the Middle Ages well into the nineteenth century. Fairy tales for children, on the other hand, were relative latecomers for child readers, appearing in the early eighteenth century but becoming popular only from the later eighteenth century onward. Fables provided instructional reading for European children from the Middle Ages well into the nineteenth century. If girls read chapbook romances recreationally in the same period, women's memoirs do not mention it, generally reporting only devotional reading. England's fairies and elves, which offered little in the way of narrative adventure, were chiefly anecdotal and explanatory rather than narrative figures. Both fables and fairy tales belong to the literature of folklore. Fairy tales are specially made for children and they fabricate a whole magical world for them. Well-known examples of fables are the collection of Aesopâ€™s fables, Buddhist fables like Pancha Thanthraya, etc. Some examples of fairy tales are Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Hansel and Gretel, The Frog Prince, The Rumplestiltskin, The Little Mermaid, Swan Lake, etc. Conclusion. Both fables and fairy tales belong to the literature of folklore. They provide enjoyment to everyone irrespective of their age. However, fairy tales are specially made for children and they fabricate a whole magical world for them. While fable usually has a moral lesson at the end, a fairy tale is essentially for entertainment.