

indicate why he transferred, perhaps in a spirit of mischief, his own guilt onto Pollack/Ford, as he put the finishing touches to *Tono-Bungay*. Whatever the reasons were, the jest appears to have failed, since Ford's editorial eye did not notice this portrait of him, if such it be; Ford told a correspondent in 1910 that the last person to "put me into a book" was Henry James, who was believed to have modelled Merton Densher in *The Wings of the Dove* on Ford.<sup>10</sup>

## Notes

1. See Bernard Bergonzi, *The Turn of a Century: Essays on Victorian and Modern English Literature* (London, 1973), p.98, and my own forthcoming article, "Conrad, Wells and *The Secret Agent*: Paying Old Debts and Settling Old Scores," to be published in *Modern Language Review*.
2. *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866)*, 2 vols (London, 1934), p.617.
3. *Tono-Bungay* (London: Macmillan, 1909), p.391.
4. *Experiment*, p.617.
5. *Tono-Bungay*, pp.283-84.
6. For discussion of Wells' relationship with Ford in the foundation of the *English Review*, see Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story: A Biography of Ford Madox Ford* (London, 1971), pp.154-55, 160-64; Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (London, 1931), pp.378-79, 384-87; Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie, *The Time Traveller: The Life of H.G. Wells* (London, 1973), pp.241-43, and *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, ed. Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton, N.J., 1965), pp.28-38, *passim*.
7. On Marwood's Actuarial Scheme, see Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p.396, and Mizener, p.156.
8. Ludwig, p.32.
9. *Ibid.*, p.31.
10. *Ibid.*, p.45.

## H.G. Wells at work (1894-1900): A Writer's Beginnings

Bernard Loing

Since 1954, most of the manuscripts, drafts and early versions of H.G. Wells's works have been kept in the University of Illinois at Urbana. The aim of this research is to initiate a thorough and detailed study of these precious documents, and examine and reassess three of the author's early works according to the procedures of "textual genetics" (as defined and applied — to French literary prose works — by the "Centre d'analyse des manuscrits modernes du C.N.R.S."). The three works are two scientific romances, *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896); and Wells's first "realistic" novel, *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900). After

reading — in many cases deciphering — and arranging the manuscripts in chronological order according to form and content, after tracing the early versions, published or unpublished, of each work, a comparative analysis has been made of the successive stages in its composition. This study has led to a double result. First, by bringing to light the underlying early texture of each work, it has revealed certain mechanisms of his literary creation and provided a relevant basis for a new interpretation. Secondly, completed by a selection of partially unpublished correspondence, a chronological table of composition and a detailed bibliography for the period concerned, the study enables us to discover the writer's growing craftsmanship, and watch, step by step, the artist's development.

### First Part: *The Time Machine*

#### Introduction

The genesis of this work, extending over a period of seven years (1888-1895), can be divided into five main stages, each centred upon one main text.

#### Stage I. *The Chronic Argonauts* (1888)

This earliest of all versions, written at the age of 21, and published in the *Science Schools Journal* — the student magazine just founded at the Normal School of Science, where Wells had just ingloriously rounded off his three years' academic studies — might stand as the "prehistory" of the book. It is a short, unfinished, clumsy narrative, in which the writer deals for the first time with the theme of time-travelling; this is done by means of the Chronic Argo — the ancestor to the Time Machine —, designed by a certain Dr. Nebogipfel. But no picture of the future world is yet shown. Even with its hypothetical developments — no longer extant and only known through the testimony of one of Wells's friends — this very early text is only loosely connected with *The Time Machine*. Two elements only will be taken from it for later use: the idea of time-travelling — already in the air at the time — and the description of the Machine; as for the Traveller's character it will be considerably altered in the following versions. It can be computed that only 2% of the text in the final edition (hereafter Ed) actually comes from *The Chronic Argonauts*.

#### Stage II. An intermediate version: "The Time Traveller's Story", The National Observer, March-June 1894.

This series of seven instalments, or articles (hereafter NO), written at W.E. Henley's request, appears as a kind of discontinuous narrative, on time-travelling and life in the future some 12000 years hence —, illustrating Wells's Huxleyan views on the destiny of mankind. Thus, didactic passages are woven into the narrative, which is nonetheless recognizable as the first basic structure of the final version. The future world is already divided between the two diverging species of Eloi and Morlocks — though the latter are not yet conceived as preying upon the former — an evolution which dramatically illustrates the central thesis of the inescapable ultimate degeneration of all highly sophisticated civilizations. Treated as a kind of pseudo-scientific popularization, NO seems at first to belong mostly to the didactic mode. With only 10 pages out of 32 in the published text, the narrative passages remains illustrative, and subservient to the running commentary. Yet

two episodes are elaborate enough to pass with little alteration from NO to Ed. One is the scene of the Time Traveller's theatrical entrance into the world of the future, which can be read as a long metaphor introducing the whole story as if it were a sort of theatre performance. Several early clues also suggest that this world where he falls can be seen as a Garden of Eden in reverse. The other passage is the underground exploration into the caves of the Morlocks. Yet a close examination of later drafts reveal that NO was to include two more narrative episodes which remained unpublished at that stage. One is the discovery of a first Morlock by the Traveller, a scene prepared and written for NO but only published later in the *New Review*; the other episode remained unpublished and has been hitherto undiscovered: it is a series of tentative drafts of the final episode, showing the problems met by Wells in concluding his story, and revealing at the same time early improvements in his narrative technique. The discovery of these episodes shows that, as early as March 1894, Wells already had a balanced and organized conception of the story as such.

Stage III. The birth of the definitive version: the main draft (manuscript MsB, July-August 1894).

This central draft of 154 sheets, the first complete version of the "Time Traveller's Story", composed in July and August 1894 — and analysed here in detail for the first time — is already very close to the final text. This time, the narrative has been conceived and written up in one single and sustained effort, the former passages of commentary being now merged into the dramatic texture, while all passages of dialogue have been cut out. Making full use of NO as a starting platform, Wells re-organizes the structure of his fiction and enriches the dramatic content of the tale. The Traveller becomes completely involved in his story, which is now told from his own exclusive point of view. The time structure of the story is established by means of several indicators; projected much further into the future (to the year 802701), the journey takes on a cosmic dimension, which coincides with Wells's giving up his former Lamarckian views in matters of Evolution; such a fabulous time span is made concrete and visualized by means of climatic and/or cosmographic terms, is underlined by pictures of general decay, and is more or less measured during the visit to the ancient museum of Green Porcelain. As for the Traveller's sojourn, it is punctuated by the recurrence of sunsets, a dramatic and symbolic device which Wells will be using again in *Moreau*.

New episodes are imagined, turning NO's mere glimpses of the future into a sustained narrative which thus becomes more elaborate and more plausible: the disappearance of the Machine, stolen by the Morlocks, leaves the Traveller "stranded in Time"; the forest fire appears in two successive versions in the manuscript, and a comparative micro-analysis of these shows how Wells moves on to a higher degree of verisimilitude, a better logic in the development of his narrative, and a greater dramatic intensity. The gradual disclosure, in a kind of counterpoint to the main events of the story, of the new cannibalistic relationship between Morlocks and Eloi, now constitutes the underlying dramatic structure of the tale.

Stage IV. The additional drafts: MsE = the beginning of the novel; MsD + MsC = the end of the novel.

Written and added on in the following weeks, from September to December 1894, these texts were to be set on each side of the central draft MsB, as an introduction and conclusion.

Composed of 36 sheets and probably written in December 1894, MsE is a new opening for the story, meant to supersede that of NO. Wells digs up his old theory of a "rigid universe", borrowed from Laplace and/or Samuel Butler; he also inserts here the brilliant demonstration of time-travelling by means of a small-scale model of the machine; he now outlines a new personality for the Time Traveller, who is conceived both as an amateur scientist and as a sort of super-tramp, and whose loneliness throughout the story, together with the cosmic and mythical dimension of his adventure, gives relevance to a reading of the story as a kind of would-be epic.

Probably composed almost at the same time as MsE, MsC (12 sheets) is the definitive version of the conclusion: after hesitating between several other solutions in the previous versions, Wells now chooses to have the Traveller disappear for ever with his Machine. This, as well as the evidence provided by the Traveller's friends and the general narrator, gives further credibility to the story.

Written before the previously mentioned drafts, in September and/or October 1894, MsD (28 sheets) also has its place just before MsC in the narrative chronology. It is composed of two highly interesting chapters. First, "The Further Vision" is the draft of the text describing the final stage in the Traveller's cosmic voyage to the end of Time, 30 million years into the future. It is directly inspired from NO (7th article), but now that the Traveller makes the journey himself, the didactic mode is abandoned and replaced by the well-known poetic and eschatological vision of the dying universe; the description is focused on the central metaphor of the seashore, where life was born aeons ago, and where it is now passing away for ever. Wells displays here a complete mastery of poetic style and inspiration, particularly obvious in the force of his images, the coherence of his metaphor, and the new-found rhythm of his prose.

Then comes an unpublished chapter, where the Traveller is seen briefly stopping twice on his way back to his own time: first in the mesozoic age, then in 1645, where he nearly gets killed by a party of Puritans. But with its regressive manner, similar in places to that of *The Chronic Argonauts*, its careless and immature style, this chapter remains purely anecdotal and would have been too much of an anticlimax after the sublime pathos of "The Further Vision".

Stage V. The publications of the final text: NR, NY and H, from January to May 1895.

Published serially first (NR), then as a book both in the USA (NY) and in England (H), *The Time Machine* in the final stage of its creation has rather a complex history, and the three "definitive" texts present an appreciable number of minor differences.

NR is the serial publication, in five monthly instalments, in the *New Review*, from January to May 1895. NY is the first American edition, by H. Holt, New York,

issued on 7 May 1895. A systematic collation of MsB, NR and NY clearly shows that the text published by Holt was sent from England by Wells as early as February 1895. H, the first English edition, by Heinemann, came out on 29 May 1895; it is the same text as NR, minus the opening section, to which Wells has substituted that of NO. Moreover, NR/H contains a 300 word epilogue for which no earlier draft is extant, and in which the general narrator draws a final lesson from this extraordinary story. In this final passage, Wells finds a neat ending for his tale, a problem which he had been unable to solve in any of the previous versions. This epilogue also reveals an evolution in his own thought: a systematic comparison with an earlier conclusion (NO/MsB) shows that he now advocates the categories of the collective and the immanent, as opposed to those of the individual and the transcendental he used to uphold before, an evolution which foreshadows his later optimistic utopianism.

### Human Rights and World Order by James Dilloway

This H.G. Wells Society pamphlet traces the connection between Wells's pioneering work and the setting up of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. It contains Wells's original and revised drafts for the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and statistical tables showing the degree of acceptance of selected human rights.

Copies are available by post from the H.G. Wells Centre, The Polytechnic of North London, for £1.00 plus 20p postage.

## Second Part: The Island of Dr. Moreau

### Chapter I. The Manuscripts and their Organization.

Among the four series of manuscript drafts available, written from January to May 1895, the most interesting by far is the earliest one (hereafter Ms1), entirely handwritten, which covers the first half of the story. The central theme of the tale is already that of a fantastic surgery to create men out of beasts, but the approach to it is original and the text differs almost entirely from the one eventually published (Ed). Made up of 112 sheets and divided into 7 chapters (instead of 14 in Ed), this first unpublished narrative is largely allegorical, in the manner of a fairy-tale, and quite remote from that blend of scientific romance and realism which Wells was to practise later. As such, it was not very credible; so that keeping only the same argument, and the same limits for the first half of his narrative (from the initial shipwreck to the Doctor's explanation), Wells rewrote it from beginning to end as early as February 1895. The three later drafts — Ms2, Ms3, Ms4 — are the result of this new effort; they also concern the first half of the book and are mostly identical with the final version. It seems that the second half of the story was written much more cursorily, and apart from three chapters, no manuscripts are available for it.

### Chapter II. Textual Genesis: the Starting Points.

The following study will be based essentially on a comparison between Ms1 and Ed. Before examining their differences, one can note their three main similarities: 1) Their identical volume of text (about 20,000 words in each) tends to show that, in spite of later developments, Wells wanted to stick to his initial conception of a fairly short and strictly limited work. 2) The introductory shipwreck has been maintained from Ms1 to Ed, but submitted to minute and elaborate adjustments to make it serve as a "credibility device"; it also provides the story with a symbolic perspective, if shipwreck and rescue are interpreted in terms of death and re-birth, of baptism, of Evolution seen as survival. 3) Wells has also kept the same text for his central revelation "Dr. Moreau Explains", which is meant to enlighten both narrator and reader, and offers in both texts the same didactic and explanatory anti-climax.

As for the rest of Ms1, it will undergo a complete metamorphosis, by means of a general re-shuffling of narrative and symbolic function among the characters.

### Chapter III. Montgomery as Mediator.

In Ms1 Prendick the narrator was directly rescued by Moreau, as the latter was sailing across the South Seas on board a fantastic boat. In Ed that task devolves on Montgomery, Moreau's attendant, a weak, rather contemptible character. But whereas Montgomery had no real function in Ms1, such a shift now confers on him the role of a general go-between in the story: he becomes a mediator between Prendick and Moreau, between the worlds of men and of Beast-men, between the worlds of reality and of fiction. By this transfer of function other aims are achieved: Wells eliminates some inconsistencies, and can stylize Moreau's character by introducing him much later; he can establish the fantastic ambiguity of his fable on more realistic foundations; he can also develop an element of suspense, particularly by staging a second rescue for Prendick on reaching the island, an episode in which Montgomery's mediation is essential.

#### Chapter IV. Prendick and his status as Narrator.

A pure observer in Ms1, Prendick the narrator becomes in Ed a protagonist fully involved in the plot, and Wells no longer yields to the temptations of aestheticism and poetic description for its own sake. By making him, from the start, side with M'ling, the Beast-man, Wells plunges his narrator into the heart of the adventure; he takes him through a series of initiation ordeals to have him gain admittance into both worlds, that of Moreau the God-man, and that of his creatures the Beast-men. He is thus submitted to a test of curiosity, in Moreau's laboratory, and to one of personal defilement, in the Beast-men's village. In the end, his ambiguous position at the frontier of both worlds will precipitate the decay of the strictly hierarchic, but highly precarious microcosm which Moreau had established on the island.

#### Chapter V. Developments in narrative structure and in fantastic ambiguity.

With this shifting of the characters' functions, Wells finds a new application for his elementary dramatic unit — previously mentioned in our analysis of *The Time Machine* under the name of "to and fro movement" —. As the book is built on a series of hunting episodes, this basic device is here even more systematically applied. The hunt, an image of the struggle for life, is the central motif of the story; it is reversible, alternately active and passive, everyone being in turn hunter and hunted.

The recasting of the characters also enables Wells to re-inforce the dimension of phantasy and strangeness, based on Prendick's ambiguous interpretation and the feelings roused in him by the "Unheimliche" of the inhabitants of the island.

#### Chapter VI. Moreau as Creator: an equivocal allegory.

While the characters of Prendick and Montgomery are thus substantially filled out and turned into active protagonists, that of Moreau is deprived of its "realism" and diversity, and becomes almost mythical. His very name, hidden at the start, has mysterious connotations, and its origin may be traced back to the works of E. A. Poe. In Ms1, the allegorical figure of the creator was combined with that of a father, a husband, a fashionable yachtsman, a refined conversationalist. In Ed, the character is highly simplified: among other elements, Wells has eliminated the Doctor's wife and son, two unlikely and almost useless characters; yet, in a hypothetical further development, their function might have been to serve as ritual victims for some terrifying monster of Moreau's. So with other clues, they testify that *Moreau* was under the influence of *Frankenstein* as early as the first draft.

In Ed, Moreau is turned exclusively into a wrathful figure of Father Almighty: a solitary and Faustian scientist, he is now twenty years older than in Ms1, a white-haired demiurge with an aura of glory and terror, ruling over a mythical territory, a kind of Paradise in reverse. In its relationship to the Beast-men the trinity of characters now stands as a syntatic paradigm: the I of Prendick the Narrator, the YOU of Montgomery the Mediator, the HE of Moreau the Creator, facing THEM, the plurality of the Beast People.

#### Chapter VII. The Comus Rout.

In Ms1, the Beast People hardly appeared until chapter IV, where Prendick visited their village. There he was arrested and tried, going through a new version of that Swiftian nightmare in which a court of animals passes sentence upon a man. The matter of this chapter was mostly discarded later, but some of it is recognizable in the village scenes of *The Wonderful Visit* (1895). On the whole in their first version, the Beast-men were more manlike but less credible than those of Ed. Through the various drafts from Ms1 to Ed, they have gradually been "animalized", and integrated dramatically and symbolically into the story, and Wells has drawn a few individual portraits of them (M'ling); to introduce their animal-like features, he cleverly mixes objective scientific information and subjective impressions. The Beast-men are also implicitly assimilated to other monstrous categories on the fringes of mankind: morons, ape-like creatures, fiend, spectres.

On the other hand, the systematic use of the neuter IT when referring to them increases their "inhumanity". As for their language, in spite of the brilliant idea — gradually developed from Ms1 to Ed — of operating it at two different levels, a very primitive kind of free speech, and a highly complex system of ritual utterances (the Law), it remains a weak point of the tale.

#### Chapter VIII. Unity preserved.

Unlike the first part of the story, the second half (from chapter XV) seems to have been written in one single effort, and without emendations: it is rather similar in manner to the allegorical style of Ms1. Yet such a relative regression in the "signifiant" only runs parallel to that in the "signifié", where the Beast People revert to their initial animal condition. The dramatic texture becomes loose, and commentaries are interpolated into the narrative. The scenery is no longer depicted, the narrator disengages himself from an action he now describes from afar. Yet the text remains powerfully constructed, as appears in particular in the successive exits of the main characters, in an inverted syntactic order, Moreau (HE) first, Montgomery (YOU) second and Prendick (I) last, while the monsters (THEM), reverting to beast-hood are being "de-monstrated".

Chance is the centralizing theme of this book, which can be read, on the whole, as a game about the order of the four items — Thing, Beast, Man, God — composing the universal paradigm of Creation, or else as a mythical narrative about man in search of his own identity.

*(To be continued in the next issue of The Wellsian.)*