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Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
M'hamed Bougara University, Boumerdés
Faculty of Science
Department of Foreign Languages (English)



Nature and Nurture in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

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Supervised by:
Prof. Si Abderrahmane ARAB

Submitted by:
Mrs. Zohra LAMECHE

Panel of Examiners

CHAIRMAN: Prof. Bouteldja RICHE , University of Tizi-ouzou
RAPORTEUR: Prof. Si Abderahmane ARAB , University of Boumerdes
EXAMINER: Dr. Amar GUENDOUZI , University of Tizi-ouzou

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Zohra Lameche.

19th April, 2012.

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Dedication

To Ali and Fatima, my beloved parents.

To my only brother and my sisters especially Akila and Amina.

To my sister-in-law Ratiba.

Abstract

This dissertation looks at how the theme of ‘nature vs. nurture’ is treated in three English novels written in three different periods: Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*. A comparison of these novels allows us to survey the move from an ardent belief in the ability of nurtured man to tame nature and thus establish a ‘utopia’; to a skeptical vision that doubts the ability of nurture (science) to improve *la condition humaine* and tame nature, the result of which being ‘anti-utopia’; finally to a pessimistic view that sees nurture as helpless in transforming man and his environment for the better, thus resulting in ‘dystopia’.

What caused writers to despair of the ability of a well-nurtured man to achieve supremacy over the natural world is the main question this dissertation addresses. This research stems from the conviction that, through the analysis of this theme, we bring out the interactions between the authors and their times, between texts and contexts. To this end, we shall rely essentially, but not exclusively, on the theory of Cultural Materialism.

This dissertation contains six chapters. The Enlightenment, as I show in the first chapter, was characterized by civilized man’s confidence in his ability to tame wild nature. The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* which reflects the spirit of progress that dominated the late-seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

The third chapter is concerned with the atmosphere of the late-nineteenth century doubts as to man’s ability to successfully tame nature. This mood of skepticism and uncertainty is enhanced by man’s fear of the misuse of science. H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau* which is the concern of the fourth chapter epitomizes this spirit of doubt.

The fifth chapter is an investigation into the twentieth century sense of hopelessness caused mainly by the disastrous results of the First and Second World Wars; the latter witnessed the dropping of the first atom bomb. In the sixth chapter, we discuss William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* which exemplifies the spirit of despair of the mid-twentieth century.

In the conclusion, we find that the answer to the question of whether nurture enables man to tame wild nature depends on the writer’s viewpoint which is, for its part, shaped by both the historical and literary ideology/ies of his/her time.

Key words: nature, nurture, utopia, dystopia, anti-utopia, optimism, scepticism, pessimism, progress, human nature, good, evil, culture, cultural materialism

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INTRODUCTION

For ages, the binary *nature vs. nurture* has stimulated divisive discussions. There has been much controversy about the question of whether human nature is good by nature or as a result of social nurturing. Recently, much research has been conducted on this issue. In his *Marxism and Human Nature* (1998), Sean Sayers, basing his analysis on the Marxist doctrine, argues that man is not a product of nature but that of the social environment: '[human] beings are not merely natural beings, they are not only biological organisms; they are also, and essentially, social and historical beings who change and transform themselves through their social activity.'¹ Sayers further argues that the hope to reach a higher – more humane – stage of civilization is not just a dream but a goal which can be attained through historical progress. In this respect, Mary Midgley, in her *Beast and Man: the Roots of Human Nature* (1998), explains that though the existence of human nature *per se* is unquestionable, the role of culture in shaping human personality is no less certain:

How, in fact, shall we understand social man? The trouble with him is, of course, that he comes half-finished. Man is innately programmed in such a way that he needs a culture to complete him. Culture is not an alternative or replacement of instinct, but its outgrowth and supplement.²

From this quotation, it may be understood that the binary opposition referred to above is rather replaced by a sense of complementarity: nature – here equated with instinct – needs to be softened, shaped, 'educated' by culture – which is equated here with nurture – in order to reach human plenitude.

These writers focus their analysis on man's behaviour within society which is not what this research work is really concerned with. It is not focussed on the discussion of man in a state of nature either. In fact, the phrase 'state of nature' refers to social contract theories which describe the supposed condition of humanity before the advent of social man. In a broader sense, the state of nature generally refers to the image of an isolated human being who is originally estranged from society. Arguing about this state has taken different

¹ Sean Sayers, *Marxism and Human Nature*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 152.

² Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: the Roots of Human Nature*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 286.

interpretations. Some thinkers, following Aristotle's postulate that man was 'a social animal', think that the isolated natural man was able, through the use of his reason, to achieve, independently as it were, the same moral and intellectual attainments as the human being raised in society. Another group suggested that though natural man was brutal and savage, he had greater freedom and fewer vices, an idea expounded by Michel de Montaigne in his essay 'Sur les cannibales' and taken up, later on, by Rousseau in his theory 'du bon sauvage'. And others, such as Thomas Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (1651), argued that the bestial life of this solitary man was insecure and that the isolated natural man lived in constant fear of death.

Actually, this dissertation is concerned neither with social man nor with natural man in a zero-point state of nature. Rather, it is interested in the test of capability of the 'civilized man', who returns to a state of nature after living in society – i.e. after being nurtured in civilization – to live to the full without relinquishing his essential humanity, i. e. that which makes him different from the animal. To investigate this hypothesis, I propose to focus on three English novels for description, analysis and interpretation: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954).

It is worth noting that these three novels have received, individually, countless interpretations. I shall mention only those which have some bearing on my theme. A lengthy study was written by Maximillian E. Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man*, who examines the ideological basis for Defoe's themes and stories. For its part, H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* has been the concern of many critical articles such as Steven McLean's 'Animals, Language and Degeneration in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*' to name but the most notorious one. Finally, Golding's *Lord of the Flies* has received the attention of many critics and from different perspectives. For instance, Harold Bloom in his *William Golding's Lord of the Flies* edited a collection of interesting articles that are written by many writers from

various perspectives; S.J. Boyd's 'The Nature of the Beast: *Lord of the Flies*', for example, analyzes the treatment of human nature in this novel.

Though these critics have clarified many aspects about the three novels, the theme of nature vs. nurture, as I shall explain further, seems to have escaped most critics as far as I can tell. Moreover, a comparative study that follows the progress of this theme in English literature is certainly overdue. In this dissertation, I shall attempt to signpost this progress by focusing on continuity and change with reference to this issue.

But before coming to the heart of the matter, it seems that a definition of the terms 'nature' and 'nurture' is of great import for the clarification of this research work's purpose. A complex and dynamic definition of nature is given by Raymond Williams. In his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), the word nature refers to three different meanings: 'first, the essential quality of something; second, the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both; third, the material world itself taken as including or not including human beings.'³ Nature therefore means the innate instincts and in-born capacities that direct man in his endeavours – here I refer to 'human nature' – on the one hand; on the other hand, nature is the material environment which surrounds man and which he has not yet altered, something akin to what is called ecosystem nowadays.

The word nature through history has witnessed many changes and alterations. First, there is the very early personification of the singular 'nature': Nature as goddess. 'The emphasis was on the power of natural forces, and on the apparently arbitrary or capricious occasional exercise of these powers, with inevitable, often destructive effects on men.'⁴ This usage has a religious connotation. In this sense, the concept of nature was used in medieval Europe to express a sense of fatalism. In the eighteenth century, the word 'nature' was

³ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 219.

⁴ Trevor H. Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Early Nineteenth Century Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 100.

identified with reason. It was compared to what man had constructed. This contrast resulted in the distinction between two states: a state of nature which was often contrasted with a state of existing society. Discussing a state of nature often anticipated discussions about an existing corrupt society that needed redemption and renewal or an artificial and mechanical society which should be cured by learning from nature. By the nineteenth century, and especially with the Romantics, nature had been used to symbolize goodness and innocence. Nature meant the countryside, the unspoilt places, plants or creatures other than man. For the Romantics, nature was good, sinless, and beneficent. Man, by introducing his artificial civilization – kings and priests, class distinctions, arbitrary division of property, and poverty – brought injustice into the world. Nature was what man had not made, i.e. everything that man had not yet altered or interfered with was wild nature; and what man had made was culture. Nature, which the human hand had not yet touched, was usually described as ‘bare and wild nature’ in which life was very difficult to sustain.

One of the important elements that helps men sustain life experience is their being nurtured in a society which provides them with the necessary solutions to the different problems that can confront them. In *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, the word nurture means on the one hand to feed or nourish; to support or bring up to maturity; ‘to rear and encourage the development of (a child)’;⁵ and on the other hand, it means the action of ‘upbringing, educat[ing], and of the environment as an influence on or determinant of personality.’⁶ Nurture in this sense is often contrasted with nature. Nurturing someone means preparing him for future duties physically and intellectually. More precisely, the word ‘nurture’ refers to all the acquired experiences, social habits, morals, and values that individuals recognize as the norms. To nurture someone is to wholly immerse him in his cultural environment so that he appropriately learns the necessary means – physical and

⁵ Judy Pearsall ed., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 978.

⁶ *Ibid.*

intellectual – by which he will succeed in life. In other words, man has to learn from his culture the standards that will guide him to self-realization.

In this sense, nurture is substituted for the word ‘culture’. This latter refers to the social values man inherits from his society. Culture, as defined by Raymond Williams in his *Key Words*, is

- (i) The independent and abstract noun which describes a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, from C18.
- (ii) The independent noun, whether used generally or specifically, which indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general, from Herder and Klemm.
- (iii) the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity.⁷

Culture is thus man’s best social achievement. It consists of the values that determine the individual’s action and behaviour. These values are indeed constraints that teach man what is good for him and what is not. These constraints are absent if man is isolated from society. Bare and wild nature provides individuals with the freedom they lack in society. In this case, is man capable of distinguishing between good and evil? This leads to a discussion of human nature itself. ‘Human nature’ denotes, in contrast to bare animal construction, the psychological traits of man. Therefore, what force dominates in man, is it that of good or that of evil?

To provide answers for these questions, a return to man’s pre-social existence is of much help; and the desert island is the best place that can be explored by writers to give their views about these issues. In fact, discussions about nature, human nature and how man interacts with the wilderness can be thoroughly analysed in that state of isolation the desert island provides. This island is an isolated and uninhabited place that can be set outside the real world and may be the representation of the unspoilt, the primitive and the wild. This type of setting is frequently used by writers in their fictions which involve a castaway who is forced to take control of the new discovered space. Moreover, the island narrative, as a fictional

⁷ Raymond Williams, op. cit., p. 90.

realm, provides writers with a unique site for a re-creation of their character's behaviour because the uninhabited island is considered as a *tabula rasa* which has no rules except the ones that its inhabitants set. For these reasons, it is necessary to select works whose setting is a desert island. Thus, and because it is an ambitious enterprise to deal with all the novels of the same theme, this work will be confined to three English novels: *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *Lord of the Flies*, which are all set on islands.

In bare islands, radical openness to wild nature means that the castaway's everyday life is determined and regulated by nature's laws: the cycle of the seasons, the passage of the day and night and the company of untamed animals. Indeed, civilization nurtures people with the necessary background – culture – that can help them overcome the difficulties that may lead to their recession into the first stage of human existence, that of the caveman. Having been nurtured in culture for a while, and finding himself in bare nature, the castaway is confronted with one of such difficult situations. He will either attempt to tame the wilderness and impose his culture on nature or he will himself submit to the wilderness and go back to the primal state of wild nature. Therefore this dissertation will attempt to find out the answer, in fiction, to the following question: will civilized man be able to impose 'the laws of culture' he was nurtured in on nature and therefore contribute to the establishment, in the long run, of a utopia? Or will he, finding himself in a state of nature, follow 'the laws of nature' i. e. regress to barbarity and therefore be instrumental in the establishment of a dystopia?

Therefore the concepts of 'utopia', 'anti-utopia' and 'dystopia' are of much significance for the analysis of the three selected novels. The word utopia in Greek means 'nowhere'; but the meaning which the analysis will be based on is given by Raymond Williams:

if we analyse the fictions that have been grouped as utopian we can distinguish four types: (a) *the paradise*, in which a happier life is described as simply existing elsewhere; (b) *the externally altered world*, in which a new kind of life has been made possible by an unlooked-for natural event; (c) *the willed transformation*, in which a new kind of life has been achieved by human effort; (d) *the technological*

transformation, in which a new kind of life has been made possible by a technical discovery.⁸

Put simply, utopias analyse current social situations, anticipate a better or perfect society and promote instruments and principles of social progress. Hence, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* will be analysed within this tradition of utopian writing.

Faith in man's good nature and his ability to progress and establish a utopia goes back to Plato. Plato thinks that man is endowed with the knowledge of good and evil. Furthermore, he argues, reason and nature are sufficient for human guidance. Goodness, therefore, is in harmony with nature whose principles are ordained by reason. This view continued during the Renaissance when Humanism was to nourish the idea of human perfectibility and dignity. For the humanists, the idea of human perfectibility suggests that man as a rational being is capable of progress and that the possibilities of human betterment, as individuals and as groups, are limitless. This optimistic view is reflected in utopian works where writers expressed their desire to better the existing world by providing models of ideal cities which would guarantee happiness; Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) falls within this line of thought. This optimism was enhanced in the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth centuries thanks to the scientific and industrial revolutions which gave ample evidence of human progress. The British advance in particular was due to the rise of an entrepreneurial class which believed in progress, technology, and hard work. Science was celebrated and the best work which exemplifies the belief in science to improve man's condition is Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1624). These views were supported by political thinkers, such as Thomas Hobbes, who believed that social contract is the main vehicle that may upgrade man from a primitive state of nature to a civilized society.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has much in common with the utopian literature of the Renaissance, and of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Moreover, parallels with

⁸ Raymond Williams, 'Utopia and Science Fiction', in *Science Fiction: A Critical Guide*, Patrick Parrinder ed., London: Longmans, 1979, in www.library.nu, accessed on 15/01/2010.

religious and allegorical works, such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), that preceded it can be drawn. What this dissertation tries to suggest is that Defoe's optimistic view, that made him believe in Crusoe's capacity for success, owes much to the general optimistic atmosphere he was nurtured in. Thus Defoe equips his hero with the necessary – material and intellectual – means to survive. Like Prospero who puts his knowledge into practice and subdues both wild nature and the savage Caliban, Crusoe's success in taming nature and designing a utopia is due to his capacity to re-invest all that he learnt from the society he was nurtured in.

The second notion that needs clarification is anti-utopia. The latter refers to a work of literature which appears to be utopian or has been intended to be so, but in which a fatal flaw or other factor has destroyed the intended utopian world or concept. Raymond Williams defines anti-utopia as '*the willed transformation, in which a new but less happy kind of life has been brought about by social degeneration, by the emergence or re-emergence of harmful kinds of social order, or by the unforeseen yet disastrous consequences of an effort at social improvement.*'⁹ In the light of this definition, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* will be analysed within the context of its production; a context which witnesses the appearance of many satirical utopias. These works proved that the optimism of previous centuries was not to last. In the late-nineteenth century, a sense of anxiety and doubt was born. Faith in human progress from bad to good was deeply shaken by the growth of skepticism arising mainly from Darwin's theory of evolution and the recognition that advances in technical knowledge were not sufficient to ensure moral and social progress. The authority of religion was also questioned; Nietzsche's declaration that God was dead shocked people and shook their belief in the existence of God. Writers, such as Samuel Butler in his *Erewhon* (1872), started doubting the possibility of realizing a utopian state; therefore, many of them expressed their

⁹ Ibid.

fears by producing anti-utopian works which conveyed a fear that the present situation was unlikely to change.

Finally a dystopia is a vision of society which is the antithesis of utopia. It is the fictional representation of a society in which evil or negative social and political developments have the upper hand. Raymond Williams defines it as ‘*the hell*, in which a more wretched kind of life is described as existing elsewhere.’¹⁰ A dystopia is a state in which the conditions of life are extremely bad, characterized by wretchedness, poverty, oppression, anarchy, violence and disease. *Lord of the Flies* will be analysed in the light of this definition. The first half of the twentieth century saw the appearance of many dystopian works such as Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949). In the twentieth century, the butcheries of the First and the Second World Wars proved to Europeans that things were not well with their civilization. By the first half of this century, the rise of totalitarian governments and the disastrous effects resulting from the atom bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima changed the optimistic vision that man was good towards a dark vision that saw man as evil.

My methodology is based on the theory of Cultural Materialism – ‘a theory of the specificities of material, cultural and literary production within historical materialism’¹¹ – as initiated by Terry Eagleton and Raymond Williams. In his *Criticism and Ideology* (1976), arguing that the task of criticism is to analyse the complex historical articulations of the structures which produce the text, Eagleton advances a materialist approach that considers art as a ‘material practice.’ He explains that the text establishes a *relationship* to ideology, without merely reproducing it. The text is a specific *production* of ideology – ‘the ideas, values and feelings by which men experience their societies at various times’¹²:

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 5.

¹² Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, London: Routledge Classics, 2002, p. xiii.

The text is a tissue of meanings, perceptions and responses which inhere in the first place in that imaginary production of the real which is ideology. The “textual real” is related to the historical real, not as an imaginary transposition of it, but as the product of certain signifying practices whose source and referent is, in the last instance, history itself.¹³

This statement highlights the ways in which the text gives a determinant shape to ideology.

The determining force of the text is not history directly, but ideology.

Moreover, I will draw on Raymond Williams’s cultural criticism to further examine the social and political processes during which the novels this dissertation is concerned with are produced. In his *Marxism and Literature* (1977), Williams introduces the concept of Hegemony, already coined by Antonio Gramsci in the thirties. Hegemony, as described by Williams, is the complex process through which a dominant group imposes its values, beliefs and interests upon the rest of society by creating, appropriating, or controlling the various cultural institutions through which the members of a society are socialized. In this way, the hegemonic order pervades society. Williams also notes that hegemony can never be complete and is thus constantly being contested and negotiated. The hegemonic process also involves what Williams describes as the selective tradition:

From a whole possible area of past and present, in a particular culture, certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are neglected or excluded. Yet within a particular hegemony, and as one of its decisive processes, this selection is presented and usually successfully passed off as “the tradition”, “the significant past”.¹⁴

Tradition is an important aspect of Williams’s concept of hegemony. He argues that tradition is a powerful part of contemporary culture, ‘a version of the past which is intended to connect with and ratify the present.’¹⁵ Tradition gives a selection of the past in order to provide continuity with the present. For Williams, this sense of tradition is important because it gives a clue to where to find counter-hegemonies, in the redundant material of the past that is separated from the tradition. This neglected material can be used to create an alternative tradition whose mode of incorporation in the dominant tradition is powerful. In view of that,

¹³ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, London: Verso, 1976, p. 75.

¹⁴ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, op. cit., p. 115-116.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

this work will highlight a utopian/anti-utopian/dystopian tradition, evincing a continuity which is ongoing within the three novels. In describing this tradition, it will appear that certain themes in it are linked to certain ideological schemes which define that tradition. On the other hand, a counter-tradition that each time springs as an opposition to the dominant one will be traced.

Particularly relevant to my discussion, hence, are Williams' notion of dominant, residual and emergent elements of culture. 'The 'dominant' and the 'effective', and in these senses the hegemonic,'¹⁶ refer to the existing and widespread cultural features and practices that are used by the majority. Residual elements are those experiences, values and practices formed in previous social and cultural institutions which continue to be lived and practised by dominated groups though they are not verified in terms of the dominant culture. As such, residual culture provides an important resource for developing either alternative or oppositional culture. Emergent elements, on the other hand, consist of new meanings, values and practices which are merely novel forms of the dominant culture. Accordingly, these concepts can give us a framework for understanding the complex ways in which the culture or ideology of a period operates as it faces ever-changing views.

To realize this research, I rely on the following outline: the dissertation is divided into six chapters; each chapter dealing with the historical background will be followed up by the analysis of the text related to it. Since the dissertation rests on the assumption that a literary text is the product of the ideology of the time it is produced in, the first, third and fourth chapters deal with the historical and ideological background prevailing in the eighteenth, the late-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries successively. In the second, fourth and sixth chapters, a detailed analysis of the novels selected will be presented. Terry Eagleton states that Marxist criticism's 'aim is to *explain* the literary work more fully; and this means a

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 121.

sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meanings. But it also means grasping those forms, styles and meanings as the products of a particular history.¹⁷ Basing my analysis on this assumption, I shall stress the inseparable relation of form and content. The study of the works will be concerned with their content as well as their form through the investigation of characters, themes, setting, language and style. The aim is also to indicate how these constituents relate to the world the authors lived in. Finally, the conclusion will summarise the results this study reached by answering the question raised in the problematic.

¹⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, op. cit., p. 03.

I

THE ENLIGHTENMENT: FROM THE PURITAN REVOLUTION TO THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

*'How glorious, then, is the prospect, the reverse of all the past,
which is now opening upon us, and upon the world.'*

(Joseph Priestley (1733-1804))

Throughout the twentieth century, approaches to literary theory, mainly New Criticism and Russian Formalism, have celebrated the autonomy of the text. They have insisted that the best method of analyzing a literary text was to study it in isolation from its contextual backgrounds. But more recent theories, such as Cultural Materialism, aware of the pitfalls of these approaches, challenge the ‘close reading’ method. They give more prominence to the political and historical conditions of the work’s production.

Accordingly, our focus in this first chapter falls on the era that witnessed the publication of *Robinson Crusoe*, namely the Augustan Age (1680-1750), known for its flavour of optimism thanks to developments and changes that touched all fields. The aim is to clarify the dominant philosophical and literary tradition that supported progress and a hope for a better future. Scientific discoveries, intellectual transformations, expansion overseas were factors that helped the English change their attitude towards society and the individual. These developments also encouraged scholars to theorize about ideal commonwealths. Second, I shall give a short survey of the utopian writings – a tradition that goes back to Plato’s *Republic* – through which writers imagined ideal cities that would avert the social problems their societies suffered from. Works, such as Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516) and Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1624), to name but a few, proposed ideal cities that would, as their authors believed, guarantee happiness for mankind. Finally, Defoe’s attitude, as a novelist, will be examined in the last section.

1. A Spirit of Progress

The present section gives a brief presentation of the dominating ideas at the time when Defoe was writing. That period was characterized by a spirit of progress; a spirit that was highly confident in man’s ability to tame wild nature mainly thanks to his scientific achievements based on reason.

The general mood of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries gave great importance to the individual as a reasoning being. The Augustans who belong to the then rising middle class valorised both the individual and the moral legitimacy of self-interest. Most thinkers celebrated ‘the self-made assertive men who achieved their place through hard work, skill, and talent,’¹⁸ – qualities that Robinson Crusoe valorised as well – and denounced at the same time the aristocrats who were simply born to privilege. Moreover, the merchant, evincing an entrepreneurial spirit, strong reason and great experience, became a figure of honour and praise. This attitude was confirmed by many economic successes. Important business organizations such as the Bank of England (1694) and insurance and trading companies were founded and prospered. Free market economy, to be theorized in Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of the Nations* (1776) in the form of the *laissez-faire* policy, was introduced.

This social tendency which privileged the rise of the individual was a landmark of the change that took place by the eighteenth century. In fact, during this century, the Europeans’ way of living knew many transformations that had been affected by the rapid growth of commerce and industrialization. The emergence of the middle class, for instance, had been thought to be the outcome of the Puritan spirit. ‘Yet this spirit was characteristic of the whole nature of the time; men of all sects and creeds were taking to business as to a philosophy of life.’¹⁹ What was specific of the middle class was that it embraced the new commercial civilization and its values, seeing it as a progressive and reforming force. Science and technology were the engine of this progress.

Science accelerated man’s endless improvement and reformation of the human condition and made him look for a future that was thought to be perfect. Moreover, science would

¹⁸ Isaac Kramnick, *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, London : Penguin, 1995, p ix.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. xiii.

ameliorate human life providing the comfort that accompanied happiness in this world. ‘Science would create a people “more easy and comfortable” who would “grow daily more happy”. Whatever the beginning of the world was, the end would be glorious and paradisaical.’²⁰ Science was thus the basis of an unbounded faith in progress and belief in perfectibility and promised the eminent elimination of pain and suffering. Enlightenment philosophy (a term used to designate the thought and aims of French philosophers of the eighteenth century)²¹ through its rationalism enthroned the individual as the centre and creator of meaning, truth and even reality; an individual who no longer believed in ready-made facts, but who used, to a higher degree, his reason.

The main reason behind this shift lay in the remarkable maritime expeditions which were launched during the last decade of the fifteenth century. The Spanish, English and Portuguese explorers brought back additional knowledge of new worlds. These discoveries and explorations changed the vision of the fragments of the Earth that men knew before. Westward, a continent larger than the whole world known up to then was brought to light by Columbus. Southward, Vasco Da Gama discovered that Africa was a gigantic continent thrice the size of Europe. At the same time, Copernicus first discovered the true dimensions of the Earth and its place in the limitless universe. These discoveries gave new realization of the narrowness of man’s formal perspective and these new horizons introduced new races and inhabitants with new customs and traditions. Therefore a reconstruction of thought and theories was necessary.

The new tendency towards learning increased thanks to the introduction of paper and printing (around 1450). The inventions of printing introduced from Asia were perfected and used with an amazing rapidity under the growing stir of intellectual achievements in the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Julian Wolfreys, Ruth Robbins and Kenneth Womack, *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006, p. 36.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John Key invented a new shuttle for the loom. It reduced the weaver's labor and doubled his output. James Hargreaves, a poor weaver, invented a new spinning wheel. This machine produced the same amount of yarn in the same time as eight machines did. Edward Cartwright, a country clergyman, invented the power loom. This invention made the weaving process faster than the spinning process. James Watt, the son of a shipwright, invented the double engine. In addition, the five decisive inventions that transformed the face of things and that contributed to the creation of modern civilization were the compass, lens, gunpowder, the printing press and the steam engine. These inventions did not come from bankers or financial departments, but were made by artisans. This indeed explains the demand of working men to use their initiative and play a part in their enterprise. Much of this progressive spirit of the Industrial Revolution is foretold in *Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe then represents the type of men that emerged in England after the Puritan Revolution and before the Industrial Revolution.

All matters, including religion, were subject to a critique of reason. Faith was no longer a matter of taking the universe on trust; rather, man's aim turned towards understanding it. The belief in an absolute God that established moral laws and required men to discover them either by revelation or by reason was shared by all. In this, the Augustans were strong believers for whom God had embodied in man spiritual capacities which made of him the supreme creature of the created world. Moreover, the natural laws provided the evidence of God's benevolence. These laws revealed the wisdom of an intelligent direction and good will. They were the means through which God directed his universe towards the best results. 'Augustan literature [drew] a deep moral assurance from its certainty as to fundamental spiritual goodness accessible to man through his conscience and intelligence as well as through revelation'.²² The traditional confidence in God's purpose was strengthened by the

²² Boris Ford ed., *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature: From Donne to Marvell*, London: Penguin, 1956. pp. 38-39.

new intellectual technique of inquiry, as experimented by the French Encyclopedists, and the cherished faith in divine goodness was confirmed by scientific evidence. The church became rational and preached a reasonable faith and social virtues instead of dogma or the conviction of sin.

Indeed, religion and politics both dominated the seventeenth century life. The puritans had a strong influence over the government and culture of England. Their growing power culminated in the Civil War and the installation of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector of Britain in 1653. During Cromwell's reign various activities were brought to an end throughout Britain, including dancing and theatre going. For many years the country was in the grip of religious fundamentalism. Religion in the seventeenth century was also highly political. It was not simply a matter of choosing one's faith to practise peacefully at home, but a sign of political alliance with or rebellion against the ruling faction. Religion affected one's career and one's family and John Bunyan demonstrated this in *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) when Christian suddenly decides to leave his family behind to seek salvation in the Celestial City.

Politically, the magical power of thrones and crowns was replaced by rational acts of consent. The government's purpose was to serve self-interest, liberty and property; and indeed, the political thought of the age was concerned with the common man. The Augustan rulers were tolerant owing to the harsh experiences of disaster England witnessed in the seventeenth century notably through the civil war and religious persecutions. The individual was no longer ruled by princes and magistrates who had received the divine right to rule from God; rather, government was established by individuals through a wilful act of contract.

These circumstances were the outcome of the intellectual activity of the thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who confidently theorized for ideal commonwealths. Indeed, many authors, writing in this tradition, were scientists who strongly believed in the

ability of science and reason to foster human progress, a leitmotiv of the Enlightenment. Many thinkers charted human progress by identifying four stages of human development: the hunting stage, the pasturage stage, the agricultural stage and the commercial stage. Thinkers, such as Hobbes and Rousseau, described how and why man was obliged, and indeed successfully managed, to progress from a primitive life to a civilized one. For them, men moved from a crude and simple way of living to a civilized and complex one. In most cases, the luxury of the civilized and mercantile society was celebrated and accepted.

Hobbes was famous for his early and elaborate development of the tradition that was to be known as ‘the social contract theory.’²³ In his *Leviathan*, Hobbes describes, in a step-by-step process of developing human rationality, his political project. First, Hobbes considers what life would be in a ‘state of nature’. He terms this situation “the condition of mere nature.” It is a state where each person decides how to act, and is judge, jury and executioner of his own deeds. Hobbes argues that such an unregenerate condition of masterless men who refuse to subject themselves to laws would make impossible the security upon which comfortable, sociable, civilized life depends. It is to such state that the children of William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* regress. The absence of a powerful authority to execute laws left the children unable to control their hatred and urge for revenge.

In this ‘harsh’ state of nature, Hobbes ascribes to each person the right to preserve themselves, which he terms ‘the right of nature’. This is the right to do whatever man judges needful for one’s preservation; yet because anything might be judged possible for one’s preservation, this theoretically limited right of nature becomes, as Hobbes puts it, a right to ‘all things’. The right of each to all things invites serious conflict especially if there is scarcity of resources. People will fear that others might invade them. Conflict will be further fuelled by disagreement in religious views, in moral judgments and over even simple matters such as

²³ David Butcher and Paul Kelly eds., *The Social Contract Theory from Hobbes to Rawls*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 37.

what goods one needs. In this situation, there is no common authority to resolve disputes; therefore, for Hobbes, the state of nature could become a state of war of all against all.

Hobbes argues that the state of nature is a miserable state of war in which none of our important human ends are realizable. Happily, human nature provides resources to escape this miserable condition. Hobbes declares that each of us, as a rational being, can see that a war of all against all is inimical, and so can agree that 'peace is good, and therefore also the way or means of peace ... are good'.²⁴ Humans will recognize as imperatives the seeking of peace and the necessity to secure it. These laws of reason forbid many familiar vices such as cruelty and ingratitude. They direct people to submit to political authority. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the dangerous behaviour of Atkins after Robinson Crusoe, the governor, left the island obliges the inhabitants to resort to a social contract that should regulate their life and ensure peace.

Hobbes views human nature as naturally wicked and believes that man in the state of nature would be naturally driven by military desire and appetite. Thanks to the use of 'right reason', man is able to make the transition from the 'state of nature' to 'the civil state'.²⁵ People arrive at this stage when they realize that it is not enough to rely on individual laws; but that there has to be a positive, collective act of creation, an act of state-building. A century later, Jean-Jacques Rousseau criticized Hobbes for asserting that since man in the state of nature has no idea of goodness he must be naturally wicked; that he is vicious because he does not know virtue. On the contrary, Rousseau holds that uncorrupted morals prevail in the state of nature.

It is important to put together the names of Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, not only as contrast, but also because the tradition of theorising for ideal commonwealths cannot be understood without recognizing that 'it is compounded of very different and at

²⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Richard Tuck ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 111.

²⁵ David Butcher and Paul Kelly, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

times even directly contradictory elements.’²⁶ For Rousseau, primitive man lives in a pre-political or pre-social state of nature. Rousseau’s savages seem more like brute animals than human beings because they are solitary and their desires are simple (food, sex and sleep). At this stage, men rely on the land in all the assistance they require and it is instinct which impels them to make use of them. But as these primitives begin to encounter difficulties, they start to solve them and therefore develop their abilities, such as how to catch up animals. They begin to understand that they are superior; which gives them a certain feeling of pride. In this vein, we can say that Daniel Defoe anticipated Rousseau. Robinson Crusoe positively investigates the island’s resources and successfully improves his abilities in all fields; consequently, his self-confidence is strengthened.

As early societies are formed, Rousseau continues, man learns how to make comparisons and to form judgments of what is better and worse. This is not good because ‘everyone beg[ins] to notice the rest, and wishe[s] to be noticed himself.’²⁷ This, Rousseau says, is the first step towards inequality and vice. Comparative judgments, a sense of superiority, the desire for the approval of others poison the simplicity of primitive life and leads to hierarchy, poverty and misery. In *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding presents a similar case when Jack, anguished by a sense of superiority and a desire of approval hates his rival Ralph and prepares to kill him.

In Rousseau’s philosophy, it is the social existence that produces these evil effects in the first place. Thus, humankind passes from an original state of contentment to one of degradation and misery. To transcend this state of wretchedness, Rousseau provides numerous and various suggestions. Among them, the hope of salvation through the personal authority of great men is one of the most important. Men need a master to guide them. This

²⁶ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, p. 38.

²⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, Susan Dunn ed., London: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 118.

master should be someone of a great intelligence and moral strength; one who will positively restructure the environment in which men live.

Unlike Hobbes, the state of nature for Rousseau is peaceful and free of vice; Friday in *Robinson Crusoe* is precursor of this hypothesis. Nevertheless, Rousseau thinks that life in society, despite its corruptive potential, brings the possibility of a higher form of human existence. Thus leaving the state of nature is not wholly to be regretted. By nature men are free, but left to their own devices, they will inevitably enslave each other, as the children of *Lord of the Flies* prove to be. If men's ills, Rousseau explains, are not caused by some external force, be it original sin, malevolent nature, or a hostile environment, then there is always hope for self-improvement.

This being said, the main ideology of the eighteenth century world view was built around the central idea that the natural universe was believed to be governed by rational scientific laws which were accessible to human reason through scientific experiments and empirical observation. Science had a seemingly unbounded power to tame nature and to ameliorate the human condition. The world, which used to be submitted to religious authority, was by the eighteenth century submitted to reason. There was a general tendency towards thinking that pleasure and happiness were worthy ends of life and quite realizable 'here and now'. The circumstances mentioned above had tremendous effects upon their age: this new atmosphere held the promise of the concretisation of utopias.

2. The Flowering of Utopias

This section analyses two exemplary utopias, which though written earlier had much influence in eighteenth century thinking: Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1624). But before dealing with these utopias, we consider it a necessity to refer to an earlier one, i. e. Plato's *The Republic* (380 BC), which sets the tradition of utopian thinking and which had a profound impact and a deep influence on Western philosophy; a

philosophy that was marked by the belief in the capacity of the human mind to reach and use truth for a rational ordering of the human life.

In his *Republic*, Plato reflects on many topics. Politically, he argues that the best political system surely leads to a harmonious unity in society and allows its various parts to flourish. Most people are irrational, corrupt and driven by appetite; nevertheless, they are not vicious by nature. They are social animals, incapable of living alone. Thus living in communities and exchanging products is natural for them because they are rational and good. Plato believes that once a political society is well ordered it can contribute to the improvement of ethical standards. A good political order, a good education and upbringing can produce good natures and these useful natures, which are in turn well educated, would grow up even better than their predecessors; thus educated, 'these people find out for themselves the apparently trivial rules which were all destroyed by their predecessors.'²⁸ This implies that Plato's philosophy contains such elements of an idealistic worldview as the belief in education and progress, and a hope for a better life. The quality of human life could be improved if people learnt to be rational and understand that their real interest lies in harmonious co-operation with one another, and not in war and strife.

The best form of government that Plato argues for in his *Republic* is a philosophers' democracy. Indeed, large parts of this work are devoted to the description of an ideal state ruled by philosophers. The 'philosopher-ruler', in addition to being chosen from amongst the brightest, most stable and most courageous, goes through a sophisticated and prolonged physical and intellectual education which begins with gymnastics, music and mathematics and ends with dialectic, military service and practical city management. They have superior theoretical knowledge, including the knowledge of the just, noble, good and advantageous, but are not inferior to others in practical matters as well. For them, goodness is not merely a

²⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, Tom Griffith trans., G. R. F. Ferrari ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 117.

theoretical idea. The aim of their rule is to spread happiness through the city by bringing the citizens into harmony with each other. Philosophers do not rule because they will be best prepared for this aim only, but also because if they do not, the city will not be well governed and may suffer from economic decline, factionalism and civil war. Thus, Plato has a strong confidence in these well nurtured philosophers to guide humanity for a better condition of life. All these points are made by Plato very early in what was to become utopian writing tradition.

During the Renaissance, Plato's works were revived and his *Republic* was considered as a model for ideal commonwealths. Thinkers turned towards practical affairs of life and dealt with discussions of the spiritual, mental and social welfare of mankind. Thomas More's *Utopia*, for instance, which '[gave] the tradition a single watchword and a name',²⁹ was a reflection on the society in which More grew up, and an aspiration after a fairer and a juster ordering of the commonwealth. In it, he analysed the illnesses that his society suffered from and hoped for a better society. He realized he was not in the best possible world and thus proposed a scheme that would cure the problems of this imperfect society.

To enhance the idea that man is able to improve himself to a better condition, More states that Utopia is a semi-circular island which had once been connected to the main land but when a man named Utopus conquered and civilized the barbarian inhabitants, he made them dig a canal to turn utopia into an island. Therefore utopia evolved from barbarism to a perfect civilization; a civilization that is advanced in all domains. The system of government in *Utopia* is a representative democracy based on the electoral system. Moreover, Utopia is a cooperative society of shared resources and its citizens work together for the betterment of the whole. Concerning religion, the utopians consider Atheism immoral but tolerate other forms of religious expression. As to their military system, the Utopians maintain a skilled army for self-defence and for humanitarian intervention.

²⁹ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, op. cit., p. 124.

More important than the above mentioned characteristics of the Utopians' achievements is their attitude towards learning and education. Utopians give great importance to education. All Utopians are educated because they think that it is through education that an individual's values and attitudes take shape. They devote much of their time to learning and indeed they are advanced in the known sciences. The Utopians are fast learners and are always ready to learn skills such as printing and paper-making to make life more enjoyable; an attitude that is embraced by Defoe in his *Robinson Crusoe*.

For nearly a century after More's *Utopia*, there was no utopian work of interest until Francis Bacon broke the silence by publishing *The New Atlantis*. This latter is a land of freedom and a world that is stable, prosperous, happy, and at peace. Its inhabitants value purity and moral rectitude: 'there is not under the heavens so chaste a nation as this of Bensalem; nor so free from all pollution or foulness. It is the virgin of the world ...'³⁰ For Bacon, this utopia is reached through the rebuilding of society in the light of knowledge with the help of discoveries. Through experimental science men gain dominion over things. Bacon was convinced that the proper application and possession of exceptional intellectual power would revolutionize man's relation with nature and reveal to him its hidden secrets.

The significance of Bacon in this tradition is that he presents us with a utopian model based on science and knowledge. For this purpose, Bacon presents in his *New Atlantis* a great college called 'Salomon's Home'. It is composed of a group of learned and capable men who work together to attain knowledge by experiment in order to discover the truths and principles that would lead to progress and happiness. The purpose of this college is to interpret nature and produce great and marvellous works for the benefit of mankind. The governor of Salomon's House describes its functions as follows: 'The end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes and secret motions — of things and the enlarging of the bounds of

³⁰ Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*, Bronwen Price ed., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002, p. 44.

human empire, to the effecting of all things possible.’³¹ The students of this college make experiments, conduct researches to promote the welfare of the state. Every twelve years some of them are sent abroad to study the sciences of other countries. When they return, they bring back books, instruments and ideas. As one of the inhabitants says:

But thus you see we maintain a trade not for gold, silver, or jewels; nor for silks; nor for spices; nor any other commodity of matter; but only for God's first creature, which was Light: to have light (I say) of the growth of all parts of the world.³²

Bacon's society is established not upon wealth but upon knowledge. The college is directed towards improving the material state of society. New flowers and fruits are brought into being in the orchards to add to the welfare of man. Vivisection, which is to be found in a degraded form in *The Island off Doctor Moreau*, is practised on beasts and birds so that the effects of poison may be tested, new operations in surgery may be performed, and also knowledge of physiology may be widened. ‘The main goal of scientific research would seem to be the restoration of a harmonious union between humanity and nature, which will only be achieved when the latter is fully known.’³³

Therefore, the mainstream thinkers of the Enlightenment – as inheritors of the Renaissance – were convinced that human understanding was capable, by its own power, of comprehending the system of the world. However, this optimistic view did not lack opponents. The dominant ideology that supported progress by the eighteenth century hides within it a residual ideology that questioned its soundness, as Raymond Williams states, ‘here is always, though in varying degrees, practical consciousness, in specific relationships, specific skills, specific perceptions, that is unquestionably social and that a specifically social order neglects, excludes, represses, or simply fails to recognize.’³⁴ During the eighteenth century, there were writers who announced the dangers of the excessive reliance on science

³¹ Ibid., p. 51.

³² Ibid., p. 35.

³³ Chris Ferns, *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, p. 61.

³⁴ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 125.

and technology. Jonathan Swift, for instance, challenged certain aspects of the inherited tradition of utopists, mainly those who believe that science will improve man's life. In his *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Swift satirized scientists and presented a gloomy image concerning man's goodness.

But, in fact, this view did not represent the majority's opinion which believed that Plato's philosophers, More's intellectuals and Bacon's scientists were the main agents of progress. Through the application of the scientific method, Bacon sought to combine the theoretical interpretation and the technical control of nature; the same method, as will be shown, that Moreau intends to apply, though disastrously, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. In the successful search for knowledge, the individual scientist attained power, a power achieved over nature and over individuals. This progressive ideology dominated all Europe. For instance, the Encyclopaedists, a group of 18th-century writers in France who collected and wrote the *Encyclopedia*, promoted the advancement of science and secular thought and supported tolerance, rationality, and the open-mindedness of the Enlightenment. They applied reason to the study of many areas of learning, including philosophy, history, science, politics, economics and social studies.

As a consequence, the eighteenth century became a century of optimism. As Oliver W. Holmes writes,

Small wonder that the thinkers of the eighteenth century were intensely hopeful of the future: All that is wrong in the world was due to a faulty education and a faulty social environment. Once these factors have been changed, there will be no limit to the possibilities of human nature.³⁵

Men thought that a new universe, which demanded new ways of life, was born. They were sure 'that such a victory over the forces of both animal and inanimate nature was possible, especially with a good plan and model at their disposal.'³⁶ Distant lands were represented as being inhabited by people living under formed systems of production, government, education

³⁵ Oliver W. Holmes, 'Theories of Nature and Education in the Development of the Human Self in the Eighteenth Century', in *Springer*, 2008, p. 227.

³⁶ Joyce Oramel Hertzler, *The History of Utopian Thought*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., p. 125.

and religion. These utopian works were written in a period of upheaval and transition, when the world reflected itself in men's minds as fantastic dreaming:

In spite of their fantastic nature, these utopias attempted to portray a land and a people released from the bonds of artificiality and scholastic formalism, from the thralldom of ignorance, superstition, degeneration and man-made tyrannies, and living their lives without extreme or noticeable restrictions of the law, and yet in reasonable harmony and order.³⁷

3. Daniel Defoe and Hope

In this atmosphere, Daniel Defoe was born in London in 1660; it was an interesting date because it situated Defoe within the tradition we are considering. Indeed, an author is a figure that exists in the midst of social relationships. Terry Eagleton writes that Authorial Ideology refers to the author's particular 'mode of insertion' into the General Ideology, that is those elements of the author's general background – for instance, his class, gender, religious doctrine or nationality – which might affect him to adopt a particular perspective or relationship to the General Ideology. Eagleton argues that 'Au[thorial] I[deology] is always G[eneral] I[deology] as lived, worked and represented from a particular overdetermined standpoint within it.'³⁸ Here authorial ideology may differ from the general ideology, yet in other respects it may conform to it. Following this definition, the biographical notes that will be given at the end of each historical survey show that the ideologies of the authors selected comply with the general ideologies of their times.

Certainly Defoe's background placed him in an ideal position to share the views of the thinkers of the seventeenth and those of the eighteenth centuries and gave him the opportunity to participate in utopian discussions of the time. In addition, Defoe was born after the Restoration of the monarchy and before the Glorious Revolution (1685); a revolution that

³⁷ Ibid., p. 06.

³⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, London: Verso, 1976, p. 59.

emerged triumphant and gave promising hope. Moreover, his religious education at Dorking from 1671 and then at Charles Morton Academy for Dissenters places Defoe in the tradition of religious thinkers who believed that spiritual education could transform the world.

As a Dissenter, Defoe was not allowed to attend the traditional schools and universities of Anglican England and instead he was educated at the 'Newington Green Academy (1674–79), where he studied the “modern” subjects of astronomy and geography in place of the usual Latin and Greek, and where free inquiry was encouraged.’³⁹ He was a Protestant Dissenter who saw life as a pilgrimage towards a better life under the guidance of God. This optimism influenced his novels which were read as fables of spiritual growth. In fact, in his earliest writings, Defoe functioned as a defender of the Dissenters, ‘who were Protestants but could not, in good conscience, swear to some of the provisions of the Thirty-Nine Articles of faith required by the Church of England.’⁴⁰ But, after the publication of *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* in December 1702, Defoe was sued by the government for writing a paper that resulted in a disturbance of the peace. Defoe, in fact, was accused by both Dissenters and Tories who took him seriously. He was captured, imprisoned and sentenced to stand in the pillory. Fortunately, Defoe’s writing ability attracted the attention of Robert Harley, a moderate Tory leader, who saved him from prison.

Coming back to his education, it equipped Defoe with skills that fitted the age – languages, mathematics and science – and also triggered in him a sense of utopian thinking. Indeed, Defoe was very optimistic about humanity’s future since many topics he wrote upon, such as the foundations of government and the principles that regulate the intercourse of society, which recalls in many ways More’s *Utopia*, are of vital importance to the interests of society. His *An Essay upon Projects* (1697) is a remarkable set of proposals or ‘projects’ for improvements in English life and society based on his own experiences in the commercial

³⁹Cynthia Wall, ‘Defoe and London’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*, John Richetti ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 163.

⁴⁰ Maximillian e. Novak, ‘Defoe’s Political and Religious Journalism’, in John Richetti ed., op. cit., p. 27.

world. Defoe's proposals are sensible, practical rather than utopian. He is, himself, very confident of the practicality of his projects. He asserts, for example, early in the book that if his outline of Friendly Societies for the poor and for seamen were to be put into operation, 'Poverty might easily be prevented, and Begging wholly suppress'd.'⁴¹

In this spirit Defoe offers many proposals such as building a new road system for England, organizing pension and insurance schemes for the poor, providing a hospital for humane treatment of the insane, instituting an efficient banking system to rationalize credit, improving the laws concerning bankruptcy, and founding a college for the education of women. Defoe proposes to rationalize and regularize what he sees as chaotic or unplanned and inefficient social arrangements. In this, in the line with the tradition, Defoe agrees with More that reason is able to solve man's social and natural evils.

Defoe stretches his imagination to writing utopian themes from non-fictional works to fiction narratives. This is stimulated mainly by his wide reading 'in related genres – travel literature and *voyages imaginaires* – to an extent that helps to explain the balance between pragmatism and fantasy, non-fiction and fiction in his work.'⁴² Defoe was, like his contemporaries, interested in travel writings. Travel books were very popular and *Robinson Crusoe* includes many exotic places that were known in this genre such as North Africa and America. Defoe drew inspiration for the story of Robinson Crusoe from the accounts that related the return of a Scottish sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who had been marooned on an island off the coast of Chile. Selkirk spent four years living in solitude on Mas à Tierra.⁴³ Like Selkirk, Defoe's hero lives (for 28 years) in isolation. Many traditional utopian topics such as survival, diet, politics, education, religion and control of the environment, occur in this novel. But it is important to note that while Defoe's utopian project is realized on an isolated island,

⁴¹ Daniel Defoe, *An Essay upon Projects*, quoted in *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography*, John Richetti, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 31.

⁴² Christine Rees, *Utopian Imagination and Eighteenth Century Fiction*, London: Longman Group Limited, 1999, p. 74.

⁴³ Recently re-named Robinson by the Chilean authorities.

it is not arguing for a situation of *tabula rasa*. On the contrary, Crusoe inherited from his society the necessary means (physical, material and intellectual) that were to enable him to realize the model of civilization he left in England. How this is realized is the concern of the next chapter.

II

ROBINSON CRUSOE: A REALIZED UTOPIA

‘[T]he country appeared so fresh, so green, so flourishing, everything being in a constant verdure, or flourish of spring, that it looked like a planted garden.’

(Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 101)

On the basis of Raymond Williams's understanding of 'hegemony', I intend to show, in this chapter, that *Robinson Crusoe* needs to be seen in the wider context of the eighteenth century dominant ideology which supported progress. *Robinson Crusoe* was written at a time characterized by a spirit that valorised human progress and, hence, the belief in man's ability to elevate himself from a state of nature to that of a socialized being. By the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, man was seen as a being who, with his capacity for progress thanks to reason, could succeed in taming nature, and more, master it. Thinkers had come to believe that man's ultimate regeneration and perfectibility depended primarily on the progress of science and technology (both instrumental in commercial development). Moreover, I will show that the novel conforms to the tradition of utopian writing – a blend of the dominant cultural ideology that advocated progress and mercantilism. To reach this aim, the analysis will focus on the study of characters, themes, setting and language.

Robinson Crusoe is the story of a seaman who is cast away on the shore of an uninhabited island. Robinson Crusoe is an Englishman, the youngest son of a merchant. He is encouraged by his father to study law, but Crusoe's inclination is to go to the sea. His first voyage is not a success: he is saved from a terrible storm that nearly causes his death. In the second, Crusoe is enslaved. After his release from slavery, he goes to Brazil where he successfully establishes a plantation. Not satisfied with his situation, he again goes to sea to trade in slavery. But he ends up shipwrecked on a desert island. Being the sole survivor, Crusoe seeks shelter and food for himself. He also salvages from the ship guns, powder, food, and other items. Crusoe attempts to restructure the chaotic nature of the island in order to make of it a microcosm of (an ideal) England.

1. Robinson Crusoe, a Utopian Designer:

In discussing the presentation of persons (characters), Raymond Williams notes that it includes two standard variables: personal appearance and social presentation. This presentation varies from a briefly typical presentation to exhaustive analysis. Furthermore:

the conventional variations in the presentation of 'personal appearance' correspond to deep variations in the effective perception and valuation of others, often in close relation to variations in the effective significance of family (lineage), social status, and social history, which are variable contexts of the essential definition of presented individuals.⁴⁴

Concerning his social history, Robinson Crusoe records that he was born in 1632 in the English city of York. His father induces him to take up the law which would place him within the middle class. But he resolves to make money in a less safer manner; nevertheless, his education proves very helpful during his forced exile.

On the island, the values of civilization that Crusoe has inherited help him keep an appearance similar to that of his English fellow-countrymen. Crusoe activates all that he has learnt earlier in English society. He rescues from the wreck of the ship many tools, such as razors, scissors and knives – artefacts of craftsmanship; in addition to pens, paper, compasses, mathematical instruments, dials, perspectives, books of navigation, three bibles and several other books – tokens of knowledge. This equipment is of great use to Crusoe:

I had a great *shapeless cap*[...] as well as to keep the sun from me as to shoot the rain off from running into my neck[...] I had a *short jacket* of goat skin[...] but of a most barbarous shape, as indeed were all the rest of my clothes[...] my beard I had once suffered to grow till it was about a quarter of a yard long; *but as I had both scissors and razors sufficient, I had cut it pretty short*, except what grew on my upper lip, which I had trimmed into a large pair of Mahometan whiskers.⁴⁵

Physically, and though his appearance may be frightening or may raise laughter because of its strangeness as the quotation clearly displays, Crusoe keeps close to civilized norms. Instead

⁴⁴ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 175.

⁴⁵ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, London: Penguin, 1994, p. 148.

of being driven to barbarity, the use of ‘scissors’ and ‘razors’ enables him to distance himself from it and remain attached to what keeps him close to civilized life.

Intellectually, he keeps some artefacts and habits that are tokens of civilization such as a calendar, in order to know the time, and the keeping of a diary. But these are not to last for ever. With time, he loses many of them such as ink, bread and clothes. However, he tries to find substitutes; he makes his clothes from the skins of the animals he kills. The true heritage is the knowledge Crusoe has on how to use his weapons and tools. Thus, Crusoe ‘climbs’ out of the Hobbesian state of nature by salvaging some material heritage of his civilization from the wreck. Like the American pilgrims, he bravely faces cold, heat, hardship, sickness, and dangers which would disturb any other man. But these disasters leave him unshaken and unafraid, always ready for the next duty. His courage leads him to see the world as it is; he does not run away from it, but he faces it. In a situation of despair, he blames no one but himself. He optimistically accepts his world because he knows that his attitude is the secret of progress as well as of personal happiness. Crusoe is aware of the benefits of making a compromise with the existing world; therefore, he persistently tries to remodel his island as best as he can.

These qualities can be found in the type of man known as the *Homo oeconomicus*. The latter is a model or theoretical representation of the human being as an economic actor, a model that is meant to represent faithfully the practical reality of human comportment. John Stuart Mill described the *Homo oeconomicus* as an ideally rational and ideally egoistic individual who ‘desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging the comparative efficacy of means for attaining this end.’⁴⁶ The *Homo oeconomicus* is sometimes referred to

⁴⁶John Stuart Mill, ‘On the Definition of Political Economy, and on the Method of Investigation Proper to It’, quoted in Samuel Bradford Tabas, ‘After Nature: Homo-economicus and the Aesopic Fable’, A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Comparative Literature, New York University, September, 2009, p. 1.

via the acronym RREEMM: “Resourceful, Restricted, Expecting, Evaluating, Maximizing Man.”⁴⁷ He is resourceful and maximizing because he believes that to exist is to exist in a condition of scarcity. Humankind, in order to live, must bring forth its livelihood through toil, and it must do this by mastering nature.

Crusoe possesses most of these traits. He is a hard worker; a fact which enables him to live comfortably during his isolation. He does not despair of anything however difficult. He improves his abilities in many things thanks to experiment; he makes mistakes and corrects them till he reaches better results. When he sows his corn for the first time, it does not show up because he chooses an inappropriate season. But on the second occasion, he becomes master of this business and, in addition to getting a good quantity of corn, he discovers when is the proper season to harvest.

Moreover, with hard work and patience, he manages to invent some useful tools. When he begins to dig behind his tent into the rock, he exceedingly needs three tools for his work: a pickaxe, a shovel and a wheelbarrow or basket. He succeeds in making these tools though they are of a strange shape and have many disadvantages. The same thing happens when he needs some tools to build a tent surrounded with a wall. Making a grindstone requires of him much thought:

At length I contrived a wheel with a string, to turn it with my foot, that I might have both my hands at liberty. NOTE. - I had never seen any such thing in England, or at least, not to take notice how it was done, though since I have observed, it is very common there; besides that, my grindstone was very large and heavy. This machine cost me a full week’s work to bring it to perfection.⁴⁸

At length he contrives one, though it is very large and heavy. Crusoe draws our attention to the fact that he has never seen such thing in England. For Crusoe, ‘necessity is the mother of invention’.

⁴⁷Ibid. p. 2.

⁴⁸ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 85.

This idea originates in the doctrine of Machiavelli who asserts that ‘men never do good unless necessity drives them to it’. Crusoe, because of his pride, falls into necessity; however, through diligence, ingenuity and invention, he reproduces the arts of agriculture and manufacturing. The aim of Crusoe, as Maximillian E. Novak claims, ‘is to recreate upon the microcosm of his island the standard of western civilization in his day – to duplicate in the existence of one man all the useful products which are required by the human race for comfort and convenience.’⁴⁹ It is this spirit that drives Rousseau to choose *Robinson Crusoe* as the only book worth reading by Emile. “I hate books,” Rousseau pronounces, “they only teach people to talk about what they don’t know.”⁵⁰ The only book that he excludes from his attack on education was *Robinson Crusoe*. Rousseau thinks that this tale promotes practical ingenuity. The vivid narrative of an individual’s survival on a desert island impresses Rousseau. He finds the greatest interest and value in Defoe’s novel, particularly as a work that exemplifies the principle that moral education derives more from action than from theoretical teaching.

The appearance of the savages has profound effects on Crusoe. He becomes more cautious and keeps his eye wide open lest he should be seen. He keeps himself to the surroundings of his cave because he lives ‘in the constant snare of the fear of man.’⁵¹ This fear, Crusoe states, deprives the mind of the use of reason; and instead of advancing, fear pushes him to regress because it stops invention. Commenting on the effects this fear has on his attempts to improve his living conditions, Crusoe says: ‘the frights I had been about these savage wretches, and the concern I had been in for my preservation, had taken off the edge of

⁴⁹ Maximillian E. Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963, p.40.

⁵⁰ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or on Education*, Allan Bloom trans., Basic Books, 1979, p.

⁵¹ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 161.

my invention for my own conveniences.⁵² It is the same opinion that Hobbes voices in his *Leviathan* when describing the state of nature:

In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force ; no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worse of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty,, brutish, and short.⁵³

For Hobbes, men are vicious by nature and, unless they resort to a social contract, their life will be intolerable. The savages Defoe describes in *Robinson Crusoe* are still living in Hobbes's state of nature while Defoe's hero is not a solitary primitive man in a state of nature. Crusoe's tools and the symbols of learning he has saved elevate him from a state of nature to that of a civilized life.

The potency of Robinson Crusoe lies in the archetype of the self-made and self-reliant man who makes his own world. He has secured his position well before others came to the island. He has proved that he could survive without other human beings. He emerges as a member of the middle class and as a representative of the mentality of an Englishman of the early eighteenth century: resourceful, self-reliant, and acquisitive. Throughout the novel, Crusoe gives himself the names of many jobs; for instance he calls himself a seafarer, a merchant, a slave, a prisoner, a commander, a master, a planter, a governor, a king, a lord, an emperor, a trapper, a herdsman, a breeder, an estate owner, a gentleman, a household manager, a carpenter, a tailor, a canoe-builder, a cook, and a pipe-maker. Crusoe labours endlessly in order to produce goods for his consumption or use, becoming 'master of all arts'.

2. Religion, Politics and Civilization as Tools of Success

⁵² Ibid., p. 165.

⁵³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Richard Tuck ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 89.

In his *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams considers hegemony as a complex process through which a dominant group imposes its values, beliefs and interests upon the rest of society by creating, appropriating, or controlling the various cultural institutions without resorting to violence. Therefore, the dominant ideology pervades society and is eventually internalised and perceived as the natural order of things. Williams also notes that hegemony can never be absolute and is constantly contested and negotiated. To maintain its power, the dominant ideology attempts to neutralise the opposition: ‘the decisive hegemonic function is to control or transform or even incorporate [alternatives and opposition]’.⁵⁴

In the following section, the study of themes will show that Crusoe’s uncontested religious, political and ethical values enable him to impose his own culture and therefore tame both (wild) nature and the ‘savages’. It has been shown in the previous section that Crusoe’s life on the island is not a perfect one, but he succeeds, at (long) last, in living comfortably. He faces severe problems and many obstacles; yet, he succeeds in surviving for more than twenty-eight years quite happily. He leads a very stable life because he is capable of finding solutions to the problems he is confronted with thanks to his cultural and technological equipment; i.e. thanks to the way he has been nurtured. What is ‘more important than the goods he salvages from the wreck is the model of civilization he carries inside his head.’⁵⁵ What helps Crusoe tame the island are his religious beliefs, his attitude towards the state and towards civilization.

i) Fulfilling God’s Message

As a Puritan, Crusoe sees himself subjected to the direct and indirect influence of Providence. His situation on the island could have been worse if God had abandoned him. For

⁵⁴ *Marxism and Literature*, op. cit., p. 113.

⁵⁵ Christine Rees, *Utopian Imagination and Eighteenth Century Fiction*, London: Longman Group Limited, 1999, p. 76.

Puritans, this strong belief in Providence's role in man's life results in the latter's reliance on the kindness and protection of God. Crusoe is convinced that he is treated with special favour:

This was to compare my present condition with what I at first expected it should be; nay, with what it certainly would have been, if the good providence of God had not wonderfully ordered the ship to be cast up nearer to the shore, where I not only could come at her but could bring what I got out of her to the shore for my relief and comfort; without which, I had wanted for tools to work, weapons for defence, or gunpowder and shot for getting my food.⁵⁶

This strong belief in Providence provides the individual with serenity and an energetic optimism. Crusoe's absolute reliance on God makes him endure the hardships he meets with remarkable courage and makes him dispense with useless lamentations.

Defoe's own religious beliefs clearly rub on Crusoe. Like all Puritans, Defoe recognized the Old and the New Testaments. The Bible provided the Puritans with a rule of life and a storehouse of knowledge. Since they took the Bible as their guide, the Puritans often read into it their own meanings. They chose from it what was of temporary significance and applied it to their situations. Crusoe is very thankful to God who directed his friend in England to pack a Bible among his travel goods. He daily reads it and applies its teachings to his circumstances:

I opened the Bible upon these words, "I will never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee"; immediately it occurred that these words were to me; why else should they be directed in such a manner, just at the moment when I was mourning over my condition, as one forsaken of God and man?⁵⁷

He opens the Bible at random and then he interprets the words he reads according to his own needs and mood.

Puritanism as a religion dictates that each individual should undergo a spiritual journey that will lead to his redemption. Many examples in Puritan writings give emphasis to this notion of the journey. Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, for instance, undertakes a geographical journey in which he progresses spiritually towards the Celestial City. *Pilgrim's*

⁵⁶ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 130.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

Progress demonstrates that knowledge is gained through travel by portraying Christian and his companions learning from their mistakes on their journey. Pilgrimage depends on travel, and so a pilgrim must be a voyager prepared to go far and wide. Yet, in Bunyan's book, voyage in itself does not make of a traveller a pilgrim. The pilgrim must advance spiritually as he or she advances geographically. The key factor is knowledge which must increase as the pilgrim proceeds forward. Christian never makes the same mistake twice because he learns from his experiences. He understands his journey more as an inward progress than a geographical one. Moreover, the journey to the Celestial City is a solitary experience. In part, his solitude is a necessary aspect of his Protestant faith, which holds that salvation comes not through church attendance and group ritual but through private prayer and introspection. Bunyan shows the reader that faith is individual, so Christian must be alone to practise it.

Robinson Crusoe embarks on a similar journey during which he too progresses spiritually as he advances geographically. Throughout the journey he learns many things that make of him a true pilgrim. After sinning against his father, Crusoe undergoes many torments before attaining deliverance. During his first voyage at sea, he encounters a harsh storm that nearly kills him; during his second voyage to Guinea, he is captured by the Moors and taken into slavery; in his last voyage, he is cast on the shore of a desert island. In his isolation, Crusoe also goes through other experiences such as the terrible earthquake that frightens him. All these experiences are tests from Providence that Crusoe fails to pass. The most serious event that leads to his conversion is the dream he has during his illness. This dream reveals to him his true wicked soul:

But now, when I began to be sick, and a leisurely view of the miseries of death came to place itself before me; when my spirits began to sink under the burden of a strong distemper, and nature was exhausted with the violence of the fever; conscience, that had slept so long began to awake, and I began to reproach myself with my past life, in which I had so evidently, by uncommon wickedness,

provoked the justice of God to lay me under uncommon strokes, to deal with me in so vindictive a manner.⁵⁸

In Bunyan's book, Christian's conversion is caused by his meditation upon the scriptures. Defoe uses another way to convert his hero. Crusoe's repentance is caused by attacks of fever resulting in a great fear of death.

The recognition of God's omniscience is the first step towards Crusoe's deliverance. After more careful thinking, he discovers that deliverance can be interpreted differently. Though God has delivered Crusoe from many disasters, Crusoe does not glorify him. Thus, he regrets what he previously failed to do and his heart is 'deeply and sincerely affected with the wickedness of his past life.'⁵⁹ This alters his vision of things: deliverance from his captivity is no longer important; rather he seeks deliverance from his sins. He looks back upon '[his] past life with such horror and [his] sins appear so dreadful that [his] soul looks for nothing but deliverance from the load of guilt that bore down [his] comfort.'⁶⁰ Like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, Crusoe is burdened with the load of sins on his back. This is above all founded on the dogma of original sin, which supposes that physical and moral evil are necessary results of guilt, and are either inflicted by God as punishment, or brought on by the devil through hatred and wickedness.

Crusoe's belief conforms to the dominant Puritan ideology of the eighteenth century. Liberating his soul from passions – from wild nature – he distinguishes between the Devil who is the source of evil and Providence which is the source of goodness. The Devil is the enemy within man's heart. He uses his malice and skill to defeat the good designs of Providence and to ruin the kingdom of Christ in the world. Crusoe is saved from falling into the Devil's trap and succeeds in purifying himself and enlightening others. After saving the

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 90-92.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 133.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 148.

life of the 'savage' Man Friday, Crusoe does not hesitate to fulfil his puritan duty. The presence of Friday is a real danger because his "unregenerate" human nature assumes in him a terrifying form. The contact between Friday and Crusoe necessitates that each of them influences the other to some extent because there would be a reciprocal exchange; therefore, Crusoe must make sure that *he* influences Friday for the good (that is convert him) instead of allowing Friday's unregenerate character to influence him and cause him to retreat from the ideal of purity he has attained. Crusoe is aware of this danger. Thus, as soon as he is able to converse with Friday, Crusoe does not hesitate to impart to him religious enlightenment. He teaches Friday about

The origin of the devil, his rebellion against God, his enmity to man, his setting himself up in the dark parts of the world to be worshipped instead of God, the many stratagems he made use of to delude mankind to their ruin, how he has a secret access to man's passions and to our affections, to adopt his snares so to our inclinations as to cause us even to be our own tempters and to run upon our own destruction by our own choice.⁶¹

Friday willingly accepts these teachings. This is in tune with Raymond William's claim that the process of hegemony does not involve the coercive imposition of a dominant order, but rather negotiates consent to this order. After discussing religious matters with Crusoe, Friday proves to be an excellent pupil. He is readily converted; and he soon excels Crusoe himself; 'the savage was now a good Christian, a much better than I.'⁶² Moreover, Friday is so happy with his new convictions that he fervently wishes his master would teach his nation (his fellow natives) the good he has learnt: 'You teach wild mans to be good, sober, tame mans; you tell them know God, pray God, and live new life.'⁶³ This willing tameness and submission to the superiority of Christianity must have been satisfying to Defoe's English readers; actually, it recurs in many literary texts of the nineteenth century as well. For instance, in *The Coral Island* (1858), Bill explains to Ralph that 'the South Sea islanders are

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 214.

⁶² Ibid., p. 217.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 222.

such incarnate fiends that they are better of being tamed, and the missionaries are the only men who can do it.’⁶⁴ This illustrates the ardent belief that Christianity can make men good.

ii) Polity in the State of Nature

In addition to being a believer, Robinson Crusoe is also the ‘prototype of [the] empire builder, leaving a crowded homeland for the wide open places where he establishes a little city in a tropical forest and converts the heathen.’⁶⁵ Crusoe has many qualities that help him be a successful leader; he has authority and he is good at what we call now decision-making. Thanks to this ability, Crusoe establishes law and order and promotes values to be implemented. Moreover, this ability for command gives him an awesome power, similar to the magic of Prospero in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, which makes the newcomers both fear and respect him.

However, Crusoe cannot legally rule a land that does not belong to him. He is the first person – or rather the first European – to set foot on it: ‘I shot at a great bird [...] I believe it was the first gun that had been fired there since the creation of the world.’⁶⁶ Crusoe then begins to discover the new territory. This exploratory journey shows to him that the island is uninhabited. He therefore declares his ownership over it:

I descended a little on the side of that delicious vale, surveying it with a secret kind of pleasure, [...] *to think that this was all my own, that I was king and lord of all this country indefeasibly and had a right of possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in inheritance, as completely as any lord of a manor in England.*⁶⁷

Crusoe is a self-proclaimed ruler of the whole island. He does not hesitate to call himself ‘king’ or ‘lord’ over the whole country which he had possession of. Moreover, there is no

⁶⁴ Ballantyne Robert Michael, *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific*, p. 164, in www.library.nu, accessed on 10/06/2010.

⁶⁵ Ian Watt, ‘Defoe as Novelist’, in *The Pelican Guide to English Literature: From Dryden to Johnson*, Boris Ford ed., London: Penguin, 1997, p. 93.

⁶⁶ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 56.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101. [emphasis added].

rival and no competitor to claim joint sovereignty or command with him. In contrast, in *Lord of the Flies*, as will be shown later, the political rivalry between Jack and Ralph leads to the destruction of the whole system of government they have tried to set up.

Crusoe succeeds in governing the island both before and after the presence of other human beings. He imposes his rule first on his little family, composed of His Majesty the Prince and some animals. He is the absolute commander and all the lives of his subjects are at his disposal. His eating ceremonies are like those of a king who is attended by his servants. This is the good treatment which faithful subjects deserve. But criminals are harshly punished. The birds which steal his corn are treated like thieves in England. This is Crusoe's strategy as a commander in peace time. That is, he rewards the good-doers and punishes the wrong-doers; but things are different in war time.

Though he is very eager to have a companion, the appearance of a single print of a human foot is perceived as a threat by Crusoe; this response gives us the opportunity to observe Crusoe, the commander, at war. The issue of war is indeed treated by all the designers of ideal commonwealths; Thomas More's Utopians, for instance, consent that war is sometimes necessary. However, Crusoe does not directly indulge in war with enemies of any sort. His first reaction, being ignorant of both the degree and source of the danger, is one of withdrawal. His life on the island follows then the pattern of natural law which Hobbes describes in his *Leviathan*. Crusoe may be regarded in a state of war with all those who threaten his kingdom. Much of his time is devoted to self-preservation. His self-defence strategy is enhanced to the highest degree; for instance, he builds another wall around his first fortification. Crusoe is aware that his condition is that which Hobbes terms 'the state of nature'. In this state, Hobbes assigns 'the right of nature' which gives each person the right to preserve itself.

In fact, Daniel Defoe wrote at a transitional time when debates about the evolution from a state of nature to a civil state through social contract were rife. Hobbes writes that in a state of nature there is no authority to impose the law on individuals; therefore, the drive for power is prominent. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Atkins and his companions claim their ownership of the island and declare that they should be obeyed as absolute monarchs. Atkins and his companions resemble the type of men that Hobbes describes in his *Leviathan* as ‘needy men and hardy, not contented with their present condition.’⁶⁸ The behaviour of Atkins can be seen within the pattern of Williams’s counter-hegemonic ideologies. The dominant ideology, as Williams states, tries to maintain and adjust itself to new circumstances without losing its grip:

A static hegemony ... can ignore or isolate such alternatives and opposition, but to the extent that they are significant the decisive hegemonic function is to control or transform or even incorporate them. In this active process the hegemonic has to be seen as more than the simple transmission of an (unchanging) dominance. On the contrary, any hegemonic process must be especially alert and responsive to the alternatives and opposition which question or threaten its dominance.⁶⁹

The Spanish captain, knowing that the island’s ownership belongs to Crusoe, rejects Atkins’s declaration of ownership obliging Atkins and his friends to surrender. Such containment of the political activity demonstrates the hegemonic success of Crusoe’s society. The behaviour of Atkins is a proof that the social disorder inherent in the state of nature cannot cope with man’s evil drives. Crusoe’s island traces the development of a society from a state of nature to a civil state. Defoe asserts that the state of nature cannot restrain human evil. Thus men are obliged to sign a social contract to live peacefully; a move to a civil state is compulsory.

Similarly, in his *Social Contract* (1762), Rousseau outlines the basis for a legitimate political order. In this book, Rousseau claims that only in civil society can man live happily by consenting to his reason:

⁶⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

⁶⁹ Raymond Williams, op. cit., p. 113.

The transition from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting in his behaviour justice for instinct, and by imbuing his actions with a moral quality they previously lacked. Only when the voice of duty prevails over physical impulse, and law prevails over appetite, does man, who until then was preoccupied only with himself, understand that he must act according to other principles, and must consult his reason before listening to his inclinations. Although, in this state, he gives up many advantages that he derives from nature, he acquires equally great ones in return; his faculties are used and developed; his ideas are expanded; his feelings are ennobled; his entire soul is raised to such a degree that, if the abuses of this new condition did not often degrade him below that from which he has emerged, he ought to bless continually the wonderful moment that released him from it forever, and transformed him from a stupid, limited animal into an intelligent being and a man.⁷⁰

To avoid the chaos of the state of nature, Crusoe never accepts newcomers without entering with them in either an oral or written contract. Every person who comes to the island is forced to swear complete obedience to him. These contracts vary from written to oral depending on persons and circumstances:

I gave him a strict charge in writing not to bring any man with him who would not first swear in the presence of himself and the old savage that he would in no way injure, fight with, or attack the person who was so kind to send for them in order to their deliverance; but that they would stand by and defend him against all such attempts, and wherever they went, would be entirely under and subjected to his commands; and that this should be put in writing and signed with their hands.⁷¹

Concerning the subjects who are indebted to him for their lives he is satisfied with an oral oath of fidelity. But those who are not indebted to him are obliged to sign a written contract. Before accepting the other Spaniards on his island, he insists on a written contract that is signed by their hands in addition to their oath. Therefore, the arrival of new men signs the development of Defoe's utopia from 'a state of nature' based on the laws of nature to a 'civil state' that is based on a social contract. Thus *Robinson Crusoe* can be considered as an account of a development from a state of lawlessness to a state where law and order, accepted by all, prevail.

⁷⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, Susan Dunn ed., London: Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 166-167.

⁷¹ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 243.

iii) Civilization vs. Barbarism

Crusoe is aware that he has to differentiate himself from the wild nature of the island and from the savages as well. When he first sees the savages, they are naked. They are preparing themselves to kill a man. Before leaving the island, they dance stark naked; a ritual which will be performed by Montgomery in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and by Jack's tribe in *Lord of the Flies*. This macabre dance leaves behind it terrible marks of horror: blood, bones, part of the flesh of human bodies, eaten and devoured by the cannibals. Crusoe is terribly shocked by the brutality and degeneracy of human nature. He is very proud to belong to a part of the world that has been civilized and enlightened. The emphasis on differences between Europeans and non-Europeans corresponds in *Robinson Crusoe* to a particular period of the colonial encounter, one when medieval ethnic prejudice was at odds with the spirit of tolerance of the Renaissance humanists.

Although Crusoe regards the cannibals with a certain degree of tolerance, he never questions his Western or European cultural supremacy. Rather, it is Friday who learns to wear clothes, to eat his food cooked and speak a new language. Crusoe re-educates Friday in fundamental habits and attitudes, beginning with the acclimatization with clothes and diet. Robinson's opinion of the savage must be understood in the context in which the novel was published, when different attitudes towards the savage man were obtained. The most progressive was that of Michel de Montaigne who wrote in his *Essays* (1580) that barbarity was simply what men did not consider as the custom of their country, since they had no other means for seeking truth but those opinions and customs of the country where they lived. Their religion was the true one, their government was the perfect one, and there the use of all things was complete and perfect. This description fits well Robinson's Eurocentrism. The possibility of the 'savages' being fellow human beings, on the same footing as him, was simply

unthinkable. And yet, for Montaigne, the cannibals, who have a very pure and innocent nature, are still governed by the laws of nature:

They are savages at the same rate that we say fruits are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her own ordinary progress; whereas, in truth, we ought rather to call those wild whose natures we have changed by our artifice and diverted from the common order. In those, the genuine, most useful, and natural virtues and properties are vigorous and sprightly, which we have helped to degenerate in these, by accommodating them to the pleasure of our own corrupted palate.⁷²

Michel de Montaigne had a remarkable influence on eighteenth century thinkers notably Rousseau who put forward the thesis of 'le bon sauvage' or 'the noble savage'.

Subverting both Montaigne's thesis that civilization corrupts the primitive natural man and Hobbes's claim that man is evil by nature, Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe* presents a different view. Crusoe thinks that ignorance is the main reason behind savagery: 'It is certain these people do not commit this as a crime; it is not against their own consciences reproving, or their light reproaching them; they do not know it to be an offence...'⁷³ For Defoe, though the savages have a good nature, it is civilization only which will lead them to happiness. Crusoe changes Friday's habit of eating human flesh by letting him taste other meat; he teaches him to drink in an earthen pot; he introduces to him bread and teaches him how to prepare it; and he gives him clothes to wear. As a result, Friday is perfectly 'rehabilitated' and 'saved'. For Williams, the hegemonic process enables the dominant ideology to suppress and silence ideas that resist it. When Friday remembers his old habits of eating man's flesh, Crusoe angrily shows his discontent:

As we went by the place where he had buried the two men, he pointed exactly to the place, and showed me the marks that he had made to find them again, making signs to me that we should dig them up again and eat them. At this I appeared very angry, expressed my abhorrence of it, made as if I would vomit at the

⁷² Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, Charles Cotton Trans., William Carew Hazlitt ed., Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 2003, p. 271.

⁷³ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 168.

thoughts of it, and beckoned with my hand to him to come away, which he did immediately, with great submission.⁷⁴

Friday thus readily abandons the state of nature for the advantages conferred by nurture. If Friday had resisted and defended his own culture, Crusoe would not have been able to civilize him. Friday not only accepts the new civilization but is very eager to enlighten his countrymen and to teach them the good he has learnt from Crusoe. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Prospero fails in his mission to civilize Caliban: the latter is so immersed in his natural world that he is unqualified for nurture:

PROSPERO:

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
And as with age his body uglier grows,
So his mind cankers.⁷⁵

Caliban's education proves not only useless but also harmful. Actually, Crusoe does not wholly resemble Prospero, nor does Friday Caliban. Prospero, through knowledge and magic, robs the island from Caliban and his mother while Crusoe receives Friday to *his* island and gains his loyalty by saving his life. Caliban surrenders to Prospero's will only through oppression and exploitation, while Friday willingly considers himself his master's servant. Friday's surrender and Crusoe's ability to spread his own European culture make of *Robinson Crusoe* a precursor of the nineteenth century myth of "the civilizing mission", even if Friday may be considered as the forerunner of Rousseau's 'bon sauvage.'

Still, *The Tempest's* racialist discourse is quite resurgent in *Robinson Crusoe*. The association of devilry with the black is relayed from Prospero to Crusoe; a stereotype which was to continue through the nineteenth century; as when Ralph in *The Coral Island* describes one of the natives as follows:

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 203.

⁷⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, 2000, Act 4, Scene 1, p.1833

His hair was frizzed out to an enormous extent, so that it resembled a large turban. It was of a light-yellow hue, which surprised me much, for the man's body was dark as coal [...] altogether with his yellow turban like hair, his Herculean black frame, his glittering eyes and white teeth, he was the most terrible monster I ever beheld.⁷⁶

Ralph's description marks the native as dark, monstrous and 'Mahomettan', as the 'turban' suggests. By locating devilry within other places and races, Crusoe enhances the superiority of his own – Western – fellow men and civilization.

Commenting on his return to England, Crusoe says: 'when I came to England, I was as perfect a stranger to all the world as if I had never been known there.'⁷⁷ But his strangeness does not isolate him from his fellow-men; rather, he easily integrates within his society and slowly rides the tide of social and economic continuity. While Gulliver upon his return from his last voyage could not cope with his fellow men because of their similarity with the Yahoos, Robinson Crusoe's return to his earlier environment is less traumatic than that of Gulliver. In contrast, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Prendick's reaction towards his society resembles that of Gulliver. Crusoe's attitude provides a support for his dominant ideology. In this way, Crusoe's hegemony pervades the island's society on many levels so that it is eventually taken for granted and therefore unquestionable.

3. From Hell to Heaven

For Raymond Williams, 'the presentation of place depends on variable conventions from a deliberate unlocation to a simple naming to a brief sketch to variably detailed description, up to the point where, as it is said, the place itself becomes a 'character' or 'the

⁷⁶ Robert Michael Ballantyne, op. cit., p. 134.

⁷⁷ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 272.

character'.⁷⁸ Radically variable assumptions of the relations between people and places, and between man and nature are conveyed in these apparently self-evident ways.

The relation of Robinson Crusoe to his place evolves from that of hatred at his arrival to that of love after his success in taming it. Crusoe's arrival at the island indicates the beginning of its history since he is, supposedly, the first man to settle on it. Just after his landing, Crusoe is aware he has been miraculously saved, and what awaits him is not paradise but indeed a harsh 'state of nature': 'I, that was reduced to a mere state of nature, found this to my daily discouragement; and was made more sensible of it every hour...'⁷⁹ This is an obvious reference to *Leviathan* where Hobbes says that in the state of nature 'the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.'⁸⁰ In fact, at first the island presents itself as a mysterious and fearful place. Crusoe has no clothes, no shelter, nothing to drink or eat; he is surrounded with danger, from hunger to wild beasts; he has no weapon to hunt or defend himself with. In this state of despair and vulnerability he describes the island as a 'horrid place,'⁸¹ – that is the antithesis of a utopia.

Shortly afterwards he discovers that this perception is the result of his false impression of his situation. He, after a time, discovers that the island is not the hostile place he fears since it contains no ravenous humans or beasts and since he does not submit to its wilderness. This motif of the wilderness has famous biblical precedents; Christ spent forty days in the wilderness, and the Israelites wandered through it for forty years. Wilderness symbolizes not only solitude but a place for spiritual test, a place of despair and hardships that strengthens faith. The difference between the biblical instance of wilderness and Bunyan's wilderness lies in their locations. In the Bible, the wilderness is an actual desert, a physical locale. In *The*

⁷⁸ Raymond Williams, op. cit., p. 177.

⁷⁹ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 118.

⁸⁰ *Leviathan*, op. cit., p. 89.

⁸¹ *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., p. 66.

Pilgrim's Progress, wilderness shines as a motif of an inward state, except perhaps at the very beginning when the narrator says he wandered in the wilderness before dreaming of Christian. The inner struggle in the wilderness tests the pilgrims and separates the spiritually strong from the weak. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe uses the two types of wilderness: wilderness is a physical locale – a desert island – and an inward state – Crusoe's solitude. Crusoe works hard to domesticate this wilderness and turns it into a paradise. Concerning his inward solitude, it has been shown that religious meditations have compensated for the absence of society. As to the place he lives in, he spends too much time on widening his cave to make it spacious enough so as to serve as a warehouse, a kitchen, a dining room, and a cellar; as for his lodging, he uses the tent. But he is not satisfied with one fortification. After discovering the fruitful valley on the other side of the island, he decides to build another bower to have a 'country house' and a 'seacoast house'; the second house being a status symbol of leisure and affluence.

Hard work 'enables Crusoe to leave his paranoid seclusion and to convert his island from Hell to Heaven.'⁸² It is no longer a place that corresponds to the wilderness described in the Bible. Its beauty rather corresponds to that of Prospero's island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In *The Tempest*, the 'uninhabited island' gives a chance to everyone who lands there to build his own commonwealth. As he attempts to comfort Alonso, Gonzalo imagines a utopian society on the island, over which he would rule:

GONZALO:

Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,--[...]
 And were I the king on't, what would I do?[...]
 I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
 Execute all things; for no kind of traffic;
 Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
 Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
 And the use of service, none; contract, succession,
 Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;

⁸² John J. Richetti, *Defoe's Narratives: Situations and Structures*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 46.

No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
 No occupation; all men idle, all;
 And women too, but innocent and pure;
 No sovereignty;--
 [...]

 All things in common nature should produce
 Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,
 Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
 Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
 Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
 To feed my innocent people. [...]

 I would with such perfection govern, sir,
 To excel the golden age.⁸³

Gonzalo's dream about his would-be-plantation suggests a utopian society, in which no one would work and all people would be equal. Gonzalo's idea of the island is a lovely fantasy in which the frustrations of society are removed and all could live in harmony. Most of the play's characters, such as Gonzalo, Prospero, Stephano and Trinculo, envision the island as a space of freedom and unrealized potential. The island is so generous that it would produce all the population's needs without much labour. This generosity resembles that of Crusoe's island. Like Eden, Crusoe is delighted while discovering the beauty of his island:

At the end of this march I came to an opening where the country seemed to descend to the west; and a little spring of fresh water, which issued out of the side of the hill by me, ran the other way, that is, due east; and the country appeared so fresh, so green, so flourishing, everything being in a constant verdure or flourish of spring that it looked like a planted garden.⁸⁴

But unlike Gonzalo's utopia, the beauty of Crusoe's island is arrived at through hard work.

Crusoe's hard work enables him to keep himself closer to his civilization rather than to the wild life of the island. He spends much of his time on the island trying to turn it into a more civilized place like the Western one he has left. As he works hard, he domesticates the island and marks his command of his environment. Crusoe alters his island through his building of enclosures, planting fields and domesticating animals. Defoe gives Crusoe the task of learning all the mechanical arts and shows how an isolated man might live in a bare nature.

⁸³ *The Tempest*, op. cit., Act 2, Scene 1, pp. 1781-83.

⁸⁴ *Robinson Crusoe*, op.cit., p. 101.

Thus with the ideal milieu reached through hard work, the man willing to labour and invent, and the tools with which he could transform his environment, Robinson's utopia is created. In this sense, Defoe's hero represents the progressive man who continues the line of civilization his society has reached rather than go back to the life of a caveman.

4. Language, a Sign of Civility

The language Crusoe uses to describe his dwelling places reinforces his desire to differentiate himself from the wild nature of the island. The names of things help him build a replicate world in his isolated island. For instance, instead of saying to himself that he climbs from a tree, he says 'When I came down from my apartment'.⁸⁵ Moreover, when he tells the reader what he is going to do next, he says 'then I called a council, that is to say, in my thoughts'.⁸⁶ These expressions are very important to Crusoe. They give him a touch of civilisation that is lacking in this wild and natural place. He often juxtaposes names to describe his environment. For instance, when he digs the rock behind his tent, he says, 'I placed it in my new cave, which in my fancy I called my kitchen'.⁸⁷ When he goes to collect food from the other side of the island, 'having spent three days in this journey, I came home (so I must now call my tent and my cave)'.⁸⁸ This careful choice of names familiarizes Crusoe's places which become less remote and less threatening.

This juxtaposition extends to Crusoe's description of his psychological condition. When he refers to the island experience, he says 'my reign, or my captivity, which you please'.⁸⁹ When he reflects on his experience on the island, he says: 'I learned to look more upon the bright side of my condition, and less upon the dark side; and to consider what I enjoyed,

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 52.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 101.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 137.

rather than what I wanted'.⁹⁰ These juxtapositions are a stylistic reinforcement of Crusoe's actions and help him form a positive image of his situation. He continues, 'In a word, as my life was a life of sorrow, one way, so it was a life of mercy, another'.⁹¹ Moreover, Crusoe includes a list of the deficits and benefits of life on the island. The list is presented as a double column under the categories 'Evil' and 'Good'. Crusoe often reads this list horizontally, adjusting from evil to good: 'there was scarce any Condition in the world so miserable, but there was something negative or something positive to be thankful for in it'.⁹² Crusoe is more confident of himself when making these adjustments.

Defoe, as a Puritan, relies in his writing on the Puritan aesthetic. The Puritans considered poetry, the theatre, music, dancing, and art in general to be traps of the devil. Such conception of life resulted in a hatred of all emotions. Thus in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* there is no poetical ornamentation or literary embellishment. It rather resorts to realism as defined by its rejection of the fantastic or romantic. Defoe's realism appears in his vivid description of Robinson Crusoe who carefully examines his situation on the island and explores the means to get out of this situation. Robinson looks back on his life and discovers the nature of his condition. He reveals how he adapts himself to the new circumstances and how he modifies the reality he encounters by constructing his own personal version of reality:

I spent whole hours, I may say whole days, in representing to myself, in the most lively colours, how I must have acted if I had got nothing out of the ship. How I could not have so much as got any food, except fish and turtles; and that, as it was long before I found any of them, I must have perished first; that I should have lived, if I had not perished, like a mere savage; that if I had killed a goat or a fowl, by any contrivance, I had no way to flay or open it, or part the flesh from the skin and the bowels, or to cut it up; but must gnaw it with my teeth, and pull it with my claws, like a beast.⁹³

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 130.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 132.

⁹² Ibid., p. 69.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 130.

Moreover, Defoe's hero is no scholar. He is a merchant and a sailor. This explains why Defoe makes him use the language of the middle-class and ordinary tradesman. The use of some commercial phraseology such as accounts, balance-sheets, a journal and catalogues confirms Crusoe's mercantile spirit. Book-keeping is one form that exemplifies this spirit. For instance, when he kills the barbarians, he gives these accounts:

... The account of the rest is as follows:
3 killed at our first shot from the tree.
2 killed at the next shot.
2 killed by Friday in the boat.
2 killed by Ditto, of those at first wounded.
1 killed by Ditto in the wood.
3 killed by the Spaniard.
4 killed being found dropped here and there of their wounds, or killed by Friday in his chase of them.
4 escaped in the boat, whereof one wounded, if not dead.
—
21 in all.⁹⁴

Finally, the diary that Crusoe names 'the Journal' is an evidence of Crusoe's commercial mindedness. He gives accounts of his everyday activities and he does not abandon it until he is short of ink. Defoe resorts to details which tell us not only what Crusoe did but how he did it. There are numerous examples in the uses of details such as Crusoe's project in raising the crops of barley and rice and the description of the shipwreck. Thus, when speaking about his goats, Robinson frequently praises their usefulness; they supply him with sufficient food and allow him to save his gunpowder:

for I had a great concern upon me for my little herd of goats: they were not only a ready supply to me on every occasion, and began to be sufficient for me, without the expense of powder and shot, but also without the fatigue of hunting after the wild ones...⁹⁵

Or again:

It was therefore a very good providence to me that I had furnished myself with a tame breed of goats, and that I had no need to hunt any more about the woods, or shoot at them; and if I did catch any of them after this, it was by traps and snares,

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 232.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 160.

as I had done before; so that for two years after this, I believe I never fired my gun once off...⁹⁶

The many repetitions reinforce the idea of Crusoe's ability to better his environment and elevate himself from the state of nature.

In the preceding chapter, I have put *Robinson Crusoe* under scrutiny, placing it within the progressive spirit of the time of its publication. The study of Robinson Crusoe shows that he epitomizes the archetype of the self-reliant and sturdy man who succeeds in living a steady life. He struggles very hard, spiritually as well as physically, to improve his condition and transcend the state of nature. The analysis of themes reveals that *Robinson Crusoe* is highly immersed in its contemporary religious, political and ethical debates. Crusoe is the first inhabitant of the island; thus, the history of the island starts with Crusoe's arrival. The wild and savage island is tamed and turned into a place fit for social man. Finally, the language used by Crusoe reinforces his desire to impose his culture on nature.

Crusoe's success in this task is mainly due to his ability to reactivate and use in his island all the knowledge and know-how he has acquired earlier in a civilized society. The eventual victory of nurture over nature in *Robinson Crusoe* is representative of the eighteenth century belief in progress, which explains Robinson's ability to realize a utopia on his desert island. However, this optimistic view did not lack opponents. There were already in the eighteenth century writers who announced the dangers of an excessive reliance on science and technology. For instance, in his *Gulliver's Travels*, Jonathan Swift presented a view which opposed the dominant (optimistic) ideology. He satirized scientists and gave a pessimistic view of human nature. Swift is a precursor of H. G. Wells and, as will be shown, many of the themes explored in *Gulliver's Travels* will recur in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 165.

III

THE LATE-NINETEENTH CENTURY: AN AGE OF DOUBT

'The changes that we receive as record were experienced, in these years, on the senses; hunger, suffering, conflict, dislocation; hope, energy, vision, dedication.'

(Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 49)

In his *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams, in his discussion of the dominant, emergent and residual elements of culture, states that ‘*no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention.*’⁹⁷ The dominant ideology cannot embrace all fields of a culture; there also exist subordinate and repressed cultures. These non-dominant elements may interact with the dominant forms: sometimes coexisting with them, but they may also be absorbed or destroyed. The subservient forms may challenge, modify or even displace the dominant ones. However, even when the emergent culture displaces the dominant, the residual aspects may be powerfully reactivated. Thus, by the late-nineteenth century, though the optimistic vision towards man’s future was still there, the skeptic vision that questioned man’s ability to ensure a better future was swiftly gaining ground.

As argued in the first chapter, much of the utopian fictional works produced before the eighteenth century were a reflection of the exhilaration that marked the period when they were written. Most of them supported the hypothesis of man’s capacity for progress. At the close of the nineteenth century, ‘which [saw] the first major flowering of utopian fiction since the Renaissance’,⁹⁸ many thinkers, who were still optimistic about humanity’s future, continued the tradition of theorizing on ideal societies which, if implemented, could guarantee happiness. Others, being affected by the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution and the new theories of evolution, wrote in the wake of Swift’s earlier emergent tradition which doubted the efficiency of science and at the same time questioned man’s innate goodness.

The main concern of the present chapter is to present the late-nineteenth century background and the general intellectual atmosphere out of which H. G. Wells developed his ideas. This atmosphere unambiguously contributed to shaping H. G. Wells’s thinking, which

⁹⁷ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 125.

⁹⁸ Chris Ferns, *Utopian Imagination and Eighteenth Century Fiction*, London: Longman Group, 1999, p. 67.

is reflected in his writings, notably *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. The first section of the present chapter deals with the continuum tradition of optimistic writers who, thanks to the belief in man's ability for progress, still produced utopias. The second part will be devoted to the second group of writers who produced anti-utopian works because their belief in man's capacity for bettering his life came to be shaken. The third part will be concerned with where H. G. Wells stands in the midst of these two warring intellectual factions.

1. Progress and Utopianism in Literature

In this section, we will see the continuity of social progress which became commonplace during the nineteenth century. Many earlier historical events, such as the English 'Bloodless Revolution', the American War of Independence and the French Revolution, had already demonstrated that changes, which were envisaged in a utopian context in the eighteenth century, were capable of being embodied in reality. Moreover, the credibility of the content of utopian fiction was further enhanced by the fact that developments in science and technology gave substance to another aspect of the utopian dream which was that of humanity gaining control over nature.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the unprecedented intellectual activity, the advance in physical science and in knowledge of human affairs and the development of mechanical inventions revolutionized man's conception of human progress. The achievements of the Industrial Revolution proved that 'the greater the productive power of society and the fuller the equipment of life on its physical side, the more time there will be to invest, and the broader will be the opportunities for perceiving and perfecting means of social advance.'⁹⁹ England witnessed the second Industrial Revolution that made the British confident in the ability of science to solve humanity's problems. The world experienced an explosion of new inventions and people were appreciating both science and scientific methods in the attainment

⁹⁹ Joyce Oramel Hertzler, *The History of Utopian Thought*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., p. 301.

of progress. In 1851, under the patronage of Prince Albert, the first world fair, called the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry, was opened by Queen Victoria. The building itself, the Crystal Palace, was revolutionary. It was the first building to use iron and glass on such a scale and such a size.

Politically, Britain dominated the world through its colonial empire. Its navy imposed a *Pax Britannica* nearly everywhere. Its explorers and settlers carried with them Christianity everywhere they landed. In fact, the years of the late-nineteenth century marked the climax of British power, prestige and prosperity. Britain carried moderate and gradual reforms, and at the same time, it underwent a prolonged Industrial Revolution. This enabled Britain to attain a double pre-eminence: first as a model for constitutional monarchy and second as producer of cheap manufactured goods. Colonies were valued both as manifestations of national greatness and as sources of raw materials and markets for manufacturers. This spirit of imperialism was reflected in fictional works such as Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858). Written in the tradition of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Coral Island* was naturally enough one of the favourite English classics of the nineteenth century.

Being highly immersed in the unprecedented prosperity of their country, the English could not pay attention to Samuel Butler's warning, in *Erewhon* (1872), that machines threatened to enslave the man who made them; on the contrary, they were confident that a better future would be attained in the course of the coming years. The achievements and realizations of the Industrial Revolution made of change no longer a dream but a real possibility. In addition, the feasibility of creating, if not an ideal, at least a better society became much more plausible. Indeed, scientific invention became the main instrument of social change. 'In portraying technology as central to the creation of their utopian societies, writers such as Bellamy and Wells [were] in essence only reflecting the realities of their own

world.’¹⁰⁰ Wells’s Moreau in his *The Island of Doctor Moreau* ironically uses science as an instrument to change animals into humans by accelerating the evolutionary process.

The utopias of the nineteenth century presented a collection of the best thought on a variety of social, economic and political subjects. They were scientific utopias, based on attained or attainable facts, and ‘they [were] worked out in accordance with the natural order or sequence from existing conditions, true also to the law of cause and effect and duly regarding the limitations of nature, both human and physical.’¹⁰¹ Furthermore, it must be noticed that the end of the age of exploration was the main reason for the disappearance of the space into which writers projected their utopias. What had been unknown by the early nineteenth century was completely known in mid-century. Therefore, utopists were obliged to look for other places that seemed more credible. They turned to write utopias situated in the future rather than in distant geographical horizons. The finite frame of time was shaken by the evolutionary theory that gave to time an unlimited dimension. Thus, the future was thought of as a suitable and possible place in which utopias could be set. Repeatedly, the narrative of the traditional spatial voyage to utopia was replaced by the process of going to sleep and awakening in a utopian future. This device was used by both Edward Bellamy in his *Looking Backward* (1888) and William Morris in his *News from Nowhere* (1891).

The locale Edward Bellamy chooses for his ideal society in *Looking Backward* is no longer an island or a walled city, but rather the more ordinary setting of Boston, Massachusetts. But this setting is displaced more than a hundred years in time, into the year 2000. Like Thomas More’s *Utopia*, Bellamy’s vision of an ordered society is contrasted with the chaos of the actual world to which it proposes an alternative. In the first part of the book, in which the continuity from the earlier tradition is quite evident, Bellamy depicts the social evils and insufficiencies of the late eighties. He criticizes the concentration of wealth in the

¹⁰⁰ Chris Ferns, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 312.

hands of the minorities. Society was divided into classes, particularly the rich and the poor. Strikes and labour unrest created constant chaos.

Being highly influenced by Marx's socialist views,¹⁰² Bellamy describes the United States under an ideal socialist system marked by cooperation and brotherhood. More importantly there is no corruption in this new ideal city. The standards of living have changed and with them human nature has changed for the better:

Nowadays . . . society is so constituted that there is absolutely no way in which an official, however ill-disposed, could possibly make any profit for himself, or any one else by a misuse of his power. Let him be as bad an official as you please, he cannot be a corrupt one. There is no motive to be. The social system no longer offers a premium on dishonesty.¹⁰³

This utopia is known for its peace because there is no desire for acquisitions. In addition, because there is no crime, no jails can be found in Bellamy's utopia. Since the State is the owner of all wealth, crime ceases to exist. As to other crimes, which have no relation with greed, they are committed by degenerate persons who are taken care of in hospitals. Similarly, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, degenerate human-like animals, such as the Ape-man, that violate the law and commit crimes are hunted out by Moreau and taken to his laboratory to be cured.

West, the protagonist of *Looking Backward*, is told that the new world has reached these results because the whole nation is aware of the necessity of cooperation. This change has occurred without any 'great bloodshed and terrible convulsions.'¹⁰⁴ Dr Leete, West's host, assures his guest that

...there was absolutely no violence. The change had been long foreseen. Public opinion had become fully ripe for it, and the whole mass of people was behind it. There is no more possibility of opposing it by force than by argument.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Michèle Riot-Sarcey, Thomas Bouchet et Antoine Picon eds., *Dictionnaire des utopies*, Paris : Larousse, 2002, p. 21.

¹⁰³ Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, London: Routledge, p 31, in www.archive.org

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 29.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

While wars are no longer waged in *Looking Backward*, the military drive is still there. At the heart of this new world, there is the Industrial Army which exists in order to satisfy the needs of people and not the personal profits of proprietors. This common purpose permits experts to elaborate criteria of production founded on the study of people's needs. Planning and national service lead to a society of abundance that eliminates the waste which Bellamy deplores in capitalist society: competition and hostility, over-production and periodical crises. As will be shown, planning in *Lord of the Flies* does not succeed in controlling competition and hostility among the castaway boys.

Bellamy's utopia is also a state where mechanical perfection is uppermost. This does not mean that the belief in man's ability to use science and technology for his welfare was the dominant impression in the late-nineteenth century. There were some who still believed in man's innate goodness and who still thought that he was corrupted by the social environment. Therefore, proposals to get rid of the industrial world and go back to the pre-industrial time were made. William Morris's *News from Nowhere* is representative of this trend. *News from Nowhere*, continuing the tradition of utopian dreaming and writing in the same line of Rousseau's thought, projects a utopian dream of what English life might be under an ideal socialism but in a pre-industrial society. It tells the story of a narrator who falls asleep in the nineteenth century, and who wakes up in the twenty-first century, in a post-revolutionary London. The new world is completely different from the one he knew. People's suits have medieval cuts, and are generally woven at home. Women are the equals of men. People are free to do what they think best and what they like best. Rivers are cleaned and the salmon returns to the Thames. Buildings are demolished to leave room for plantations. The surface areas of big cities such as London are reduced whereas small villages are developed to reach an optimal size; Britain seems to be a garden where nothing is wasted. There are no poor and the architectural norms are strict. There is no buying and selling in the traditional sense, and

markets are regulated by local exchange agreements. Most of the causes of crime disappear with the abolition of private property and criminals are treated as friends. There is tolerance concerning people's life-style. Public politics takes into consideration the voice of the minorities.

Thus, *News from Nowhere* is the fullest expression of Morris's longing for a communist utopia. It represents a return to an old, organic harmony between man and nature, rather than the imposition of a new, man-made order. One of the recurrent themes of *News from Nowhere* is the emphasis on man's living in coalescence with nature. In this new world the railways have disappeared and the only method of transportation that is kept is horse-and-carriage or boats. *News from Nowhere* is filled by a sense of nostalgia for a world – the pre-industrial era – that is forever lost. Morris's vision of this ideal society is an evocation of a vanished golden age, a dream of a regained paradise. William Morris believes in man's innate goodness and his capacity to reach perfectibility. But technology and science can corrupt this goodness. Therefore, their elimination is necessary. The same impression is felt in H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* where the human-like animals are not at ease with their new artificial life. Moreau's creatures long for their former situation when they lived in harmony with nature and without the nefarious effects of science. Indeed, by the end of the century, skepticism arose *vis-à-vis* science and its ability to help man better his life.

2. Skepticism and Anti-utopianism

Many authors, writing in the Swiftian tradition, which became accepted and recognized at the end of the nineteenth century, produced anti-utopian works and satires that doubted man's ability to realize a utopia. This skeptical feeling, emerging in the eighteenth century and taking more prominence at the end of the nineteenth century, will be dominant in the mid-twentieth century.

Actually, the last years of the nineteenth century were characterized by reaction, resignation, and disillusion. After 1870, the population growth slowed down because of the decline in the birth-rate. The British industrial and commercial strength was being challenged, and its naval supremacy began to be questioned by the United States and Germany. The imperial heyday was passing away. The economic prosperity witnessed many crises. The rigid social hierarchy disappeared and was replaced by social and political unrest. The old certainties of faith had evaporated. It appeared that the age had lost all sense of purpose. '[The] Victorian era seemed to have gained the whole world and lost its own soul.'¹⁰⁶ Thus man's dream of taming nature was being questioned.

The Industrial Revolution had considerably bad effects. The new industrial towns were small in area and densely packed. Working people lived around factories, roads, canals, and railways. The result was that nineteenth century towns were smoky and dirty. For the workers, they were expensive in terms of rent and cost of living. Consequently, slums multiplied and new types of dwellings were created such as the 'room and kitchen' or 'single-end' flats. If housing was bad, sanitation was worse. Epidemics for instance were the first enemy of the working class. Furthermore, British industry, dominated by textiles, was subject to increasing competition from America and Europe.

The nefarious effects of the Industrial Revolution were seen everywhere. Factories were unsafe and hired not only men but women and children too. By throwing their wastes in rivers and their smoke from coal-fired furnaces, they polluted both water and air. The long and strict hours and the repetitive work in the factories were seen as dehumanizing. Writers were aware of these changes which presented a contrast between the hellish life of the city labourer and the purity and peace of the countryside. The industrial changes were evidence that the natural

¹⁰⁶ Arthur Pollard, *The Penguin History of Literature: The Victorians*, London: Penguin, 1993, p. .

world was purer than the industrial world and that nature was a place of spiritual truth, release and renewal.

Economically, the harsh conditions that resulted from industrialism and individualism obliged the state to interfere in matters which were previously the concern of private enterprise. The protests of the advocates of the *laissez-faire* did not prevent this intervention. The doctrine of economic individualism, the result of the *laissez-faire* policy, which emphasized the right of each man to develop his own interest without interference, was attacked by writers such as Carlyle, Dickens, Kingsley and Morris. They insisted on the importance of moral principles in economic practices. Karl Marx went further in his opposition to the *laissez-faire* doctrine by arguing for a revolutionary change in the economic and political organization of society. Marx argued that peace between social classes was impossible and that revolution was inevitable. Thus, to achieve his communist goal, Marx summoned the workers of the world to unite and throw off their chains. Marx believed that

man is sufficiently rational, capable of understanding the forces that mould him and society, and most important, that he is good, willing to subordinate his immediate private interests to those of society. The simple belief that the source of our evil is outside ourselves, in capital, rather than in the more general desire for power, enabled Marx to view with assurance the future propertyless society as just, harmonious and classless.¹⁰⁷

Marx advanced an economically deterministic interpretation of human history, arguing that society has naturally evolved, from feudalism to capitalism, and will then move on to communism, a system under which all property would be held in common. The dignity of the poor workers, oppressed by capitalism, would be restored and all people would live as equals.

As science and technology were gaining popularity, their practitioners challenged the established way of thinking. With the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), the idea of seeing man as having a singular importance in the world was shattered. By their claim that the history of the Earth was older than the Bible claimed, the

¹⁰⁷ Moses Wolfe Steinberg, *Formative Influences on the Thought of H. G. Wells*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1951, p. 66.

geologists were a support to Darwin's theories which proposed that humans and apes have the same ancestry. Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871) gave arguments in favour of the belief that men were physically descended from more primitive animal ancestors. Darwin thus contributed to shaking people's confidence in the Biblical account of the Creation and the Bible as divine revelation.

Darwin's theory of evolution offered an argument about the competition for life between individuals and how it could lead to infinite divergences in biological structure. It explained how new creatures arose without the guiding of a divine creature. Darwin solved the problem of evolution by pointing to a mechanism that depended on variation and chance: natural selection. Some individuals could support the environment they were born in; others had to die because they were not adapted to it. Within species, there were aspects that could be passed from one generation to the next and the most useful adaptations would be preserved. If many of those adaptations were accumulated, a new species could arise. The Darwinists asserted that all living things adapted themselves to their environment. Man, for his part, had always been in a process of adaptation that has led him to better his life.

Many writers, such as T. H. Huxley, who believed in Darwin's theories, strongly defended the evolutionary theory. Huxley delivered remarkable lectures at Oxford in 1893 entitled *Evolution and Ethics*. In the latter, Huxley announced his conclusion after many years of meditation on Darwin's theory. However, the opposition to the theory of evolution was very strong. There were those who believed that all species were created at the beginning of the world in the same form as they exist now. Others saw that new species were continuously created to fill new environmental functions. Finally, there were those who thought that the variations that occurred within species were within nature's power but the creation of new species remained in God's hands.

Even if it grew more secular, religion still permeated every aspect of Victorian society:

The head of state, Queen Victoria, was also the head of the Church of England (or Anglican Church): the 'Established Church'. Under the system of inherited privilege the wealthy landed establishment also effectively controlled the Church. Clergy advanced their careers only through the patronage of the aristocracy and gentry, in the form of the endowment of 'livings' (which gave them property and income for life).¹⁰⁸

Yet this system discouraged religious zeal because it was associated with the superstitious practices of Roman Catholicism. Therefore, there was a marked decline in church attendance: '42 per cent of the population did not attend a church of any kind according to the 1851 census.'¹⁰⁹ This was so because nineteenth century England was a period of deep upheavals in religion.

The British lost much of their earnest faith of the previous centuries. In 1845, Thomas Carlyle declared that 'The Age of the Puritans is not extinct only and gone away from us, but it is as if fallen beyond the capabilities of memory herself.'¹¹⁰ Moreover, *The Life of Jesus* (1846), written by David Strauss and translated by George Eliot, shocked Victorian readers. Strauss did not deny the existence of Jesus, but he criticized the New Testament as if it were any other literary work. He concluded that the text's supernatural elements were myths created like other myths by the early disciples. Strauss's book, more than any other, threw a shadow of doubt over religious thought. Writers, such as Matthew Arnold, Samuel Butler and others, were troubled by it. 'If the Gospel was reduced to myth, the Savior to an invention of the early church, how could one believe the promise of a future life?'¹¹¹ Many writers were earnestly seeking substitutes for their lost faith. Matthew Arnold, for instance, pleaded for 'high culture' as a substitute for a fading faith.

In literature, the evils of urbanization and industrialization resulted in the rise of many literary movements, such as the Gothic and Romanticism. The Gothic as a literary movement focused on ruin, decay, death, terror, and chaos. It also privileged irrationality and passion

¹⁰⁸Tim Dolin, *Authors in Context: George Eliot*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 67.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Patrick Parrinder, *Nation and Novel: The English Novel from its Origins to the Present Day*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 258.

¹¹¹Gordon S. Haight, *The Portable Victorian Reader*, London: Penguin Group, 1976, p. xxvi.

over rationality and reason. In this, the Gothic was a reaction to the eighteenth century rationalism and neo-classicism. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many thinkers and writers began to react against the rationality of the Enlightenment. They produced works that privileged irrational and emotional responses and feelings. They argued that true knowledge could be achieved through the senses. Therefore, Gothic literature revolted against the strict rationality of the Enlightenment and looked for its models to the literature of the medieval period. The terror of the Gothic novels with its images of chase and capture and its threat of evil overcoming good reflect the deep anxiety of writers. A representative work that embodies this duality of good and evil is Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).

There was a general sense that civilization could not be wholly trusted. In addition to the suspicion concerning man's innate human goodness, civilization might corrupt man. Therefore its elimination was necessary. Writers such as Samuel Butler, continuing the tradition of dystopian writings that had been announced by Swift, expressed increasing doubts about science's ability for progress. His novel, *Erewhon* (1872), satirizes the hypocritical practices of the British society of his day.

As the title suggests, Butler wrote his novel with Thomas More's *Utopia* in mind. "Erewhon" is "nowhere" misspelled backwards.¹¹² Despite this resemblance, the reader who looks for utopian revelations from the civilization that *Erewhon's* narrator discovers will be disappointed. *Erewhon* is no paradise of humanist social planning – no wise management of resources and human desires is to be found – but instead a mess of bizarre institutions and fantastic customs. The Erewhonians, for instance, punish their sick and hospitalize embezzlers; they imprison those who have suffered grievous misfortune and sentence them to hard labour.

¹¹² Sue Zemka, 'Erewhon and the End of Utopian Humanism', in *ELH*, 69, 2 (Summer, 2002), p. 439, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30032027> accessed on 26/10/2009.

These circumstances, in addition to the emergence of new theories of history and the development of the idea of evolution, led men to cease to produce ‘real’ utopias. Men had a new conception of social growth and development; therefore, they did not contemplate picturing a perfect substitute for the present society, but making improvements on it. The Renaissance utopians assumed that man was originally perfect, born ‘angel’ and that he was corrupted by the social environment such as the lack of education or inefficient institutions. By the late-nineteenth century, it was difficult to believe that all the defects of people came from defects in society, that if society were organized on right lines, evil would vanish, and that the removal of evil institutions would leave men saints. In addition, the Renaissance utopians were dominated by the idea that a condition of social stability could be attained. But with the theory of evolution, social perfection became more and more an illusion.

3. H. G. Wells Betwixt Hope and Despair

In this atmosphere Herbert George Wells was born in London in 1866, a time known for its contrasts and contradictions. Science destabilized the established ideas on the one hand and socialism challenged the accepted views of *laissez-faire* and individualism. Wells became a teacher at a Grammar school until he won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science in South Kensington, a technical college that teaches a new kind of scientific education as initiated by T. H. Huxley, Darwin’s student. During his first year (1884) as a student in this school, Wells was greatly impressed by Huxley’s lectures on biology and zoology. He managed to get a degree and for the next few years he worked as a tutor for medical students in biology.

During this period, Wells was not interested in biology only, but he also began writing fiction for the college literary magazine. In 1895 he published his first novel, *The Time Machine* (1895). This novella was followed by many other works that established what H. G. Wells called “the scientific romance”: *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible*

Man (1896), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901).

Darwin's and Huxley's evolutionary views had remarkable effects on Wells's thoughts. For Wells, though he declares that he believes that progress is mainly a matter of chronology, the process of evolution itself offers no assurance of a better future. The problem of evolution becomes more complicated when it deals with man. Man, unlike other species, has perforated the earth, has mastered space and has constructed formidable engines. Will civilization ensure his superiority over nature or will it burry him under its rubbish? Will it reserve for him a future of happiness or a future of cruelty? These are but a few among so many questions which Wells asked at the beginning of his career, and which he tried to answer in *The Time Machine* (1895). In this novel, a very pessimistic work, Wells gives us a gloomy vision of humanity's future. He presents a society which is divided into a peaceful group named the Eloi and a fiendish underworld, that of the Morlocks. The Eloi and the Morlocks embody class conflict. The underground Morlocks raise the Eloi as cattle and feed on their meat.

However, affected by the efficiency of scientific methods, H. G. Wells wished to reform the world. For this purpose, he launched his scheme for an ideal commonwealth; *A Modern Utopia* (1905). In this work, Wells proposes an administrative and scientific paradise created by an intellectual aristocracy named the Samurai, which are explicitly compared to Plato's guardians in *The Republic*. To become a member of these elite, passing a competitive exam is required. This exam includes physical fitness and a variety of other odd practices such as bathing in cold water and sleeping alone 'at least four nights in five'. In return, they receive a number of privileges such as the right to wear a distinctive uniform, sole access to the careers of lawyers, doctors and public administrators, and the right to vote which is denied to the rest of the population. But they are forbidden to act on stage, perform menial tasks, and play or watch competitive sports. The socio-economic system of *A Modern Utopia* is based neither on

socialism nor on individualism but on somewhere between the two. The World State is the sole owner of the earth and there are local governments who manage it. These subordinates possess all sources of food and power energy and they make them available for work. They keep order, provide a low-cost and efficient administration of justice, maintain roads and rapid locomotion, ensure children's health, safeguard public health, subsidize research, and ensure education.

An important point that distinguishes Wells' utopia from other utopias is his attitude towards machinery. Wells thinks that machinery enables man to free himself from hard work. This will lift the burden from the working classes who will be freed from servitude. Mechanical perfection eases, improves and simplifies the life of man. In the chapter entitled 'Failure in a Modern Utopia' Wells also departs from other utopias. Unlike the old utopias which are peopled by mentally and physically superior individuals, the citizens of Wells' utopia resemble those of our actual life. They include idiots, drunkards, and men with a vicious mind. But they are kept under control. The utopian State demolishes uncomfortable and unhealthy housing, and for the poor citizens, the State will find work and lend money to start some business. Another important problem that Wells deals with in his *A Modern Utopia* is how to improve the quality of the people. To solve this problem he proposes to prevent the birth of deformed children. The State then should impose some conditions on marriage. The married persons must be above a certain age, have a certain minimum of physical fitness, be free from any transmissible disease and criminal drives.

In the last chapter, Wells contrasts the discontented world of his day with that which may be reached if men strove for it. Wells believes that human societies can attain a state of durable perfection, that this state is in sight, that man has to struggle for education to create

this world republic.¹¹³ At this stage, H. G. Wells - the young Wells - is neither optimistic nor pessimistic.

In fact, H. G. Wells is torn between two views. 'He combine[s] a cynicism about the world that he inhabits, a social anger that expresses itself in visions of apocalypse, a strong and unself-pitying ethic of work and its rewards, and a utopian dream of a better situation.'¹¹⁴ The general thoughts of the late-nineteenth century were divided between hope and despair. But later on, H. G. Wells - the older Wells - became more and more pessimistic. This of course is due to a change in circumstances, as will be shown in the fifth chapter, which led people to completely lose faith in progress.

The modest historical survey carried in this chapter leads to the conclusion that the late-nineteenth century, as Raymond Williams describes it, was one of 'contrasts'. The same elements that raised Britain to a unique supremacy in the world brought with it ill-fated effects. Hence, at the very period when the utopian tradition was losing much of its prominence, the anti-utopian tradition was coming to the scene, swelling the tide of doubt and confusion and questioning man's claim about the ability of nurtured man to tame nature.

¹¹³ André Maurois, *Magiciens et Logiciens*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1935, p. 97.

¹¹⁴ John Huntington ed., *The H. G. Wells Reader: A Complete Anthology from Science Fiction to Social Satire*, Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2003, p. x.

IV

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU. AN ANTI-UTOPIAN NOVEL

‘The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature.’

(H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, p. 93)

In the late-nineteenth century, Crusoe's ardent belief in man's innate goodness and his ability to tame wild nature through nurture were severely questioned. Though there was a hope in man's capability of bettering his social conditions due to the technological facilities, anti-utopian works were flowering, warning people about the exaggerated trust in science. Affected by this atmosphere, and though he thinks that the potential for progress still exists, H. G. Wells, in his *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), presents a gloomy image of man's hope for progress. He epitomizes a change from an optimistic view that believes in the realisation of a utopia to a skeptical view that sees anti-utopias more probable.

The novel is the story of Prendick, the narrator, who is travelling in the South Pacific when his ship goes down. He is saved by another ship, and is brought to life by a passenger, Montgomery, who lives on a mysterious island with a scientist, Dr. Moreau. Prendick remarks the mysteriousness of the members of the ship's crew. He does not immediately understand why their appearance and behaviour inspire him with a feeling of horror and a sense of *déjà vu*. But when he arrives on Moreau's island he finds an explanation to that mystery. Dr. Moreau, like Prospero who was expelled from his dukedom for dabbling in occult sciences, is banned from his society because of the illegal experiments of vivisection he used to conduct. He settles on an isolated island in the Pacific where he carries on his activities. Through his experiments, Moreau aims at creating a new perfect human race by transforming animals into humans. By the end of the story, the animal-people have gone back to their original animal nature and attack one another and the humans on the island.

In the present chapter, the analysis of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* will be pursued on a number of convergent lines of inquiry. I shall emphasise a tradition demonstrating a continuity that is ongoing from *Robinson Crusoe* to *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. In describing this tradition, I shall make it apparent that certain thematic elements are linked to a

certain ideological background which helped the appearance of anti-utopia; the aim of which is to pave the way for an understanding of the dystopias of the twentieth century. Moreover, in his *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Terry Eagleton writes that ‘significant developments in literary form [...] result from significant changes in ideology. They embody new ways of perceiving social reality.’¹¹⁵ Following this statement, the concern of this chapter, which comprises four sections, is to trace how changes in the ideology of the late-nineteenth century resulted in changes in the presentation of characters, themes, setting and language in H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

1. Doctor Moreau, an Anti-utopian Scientist

In the second chapter, the analysis of Robinson Crusoe has led to the conclusion that he was endowed with many qualities that enabled him to tame wild nature and therefore realize a utopia on an uninhabited island. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Prendick, the narrator, describes Moreau as follows:

He was a powerfully-built man, as I have said, with a fine forehead and rather heavy features; but his eyes had that odd drooping of the skin above the lids which often comes with advancing years, and the fall of his heavy mouth at the corners gave him an expression of pugnacious resolution.¹¹⁶

Moreau’s appearance typifies the image of the cold, calculating surgeon who performs his work with an unsympathetic indifference to the feelings of his subjects.

When analysing the residual element of a culture, Raymond Williams says that it is that element which ‘has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present.’¹¹⁷ The representation of scientists in English literature goes back to medieval literature where the image of the scientist was largely negative. During the Renaissance, the

¹¹⁵ Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, London: Routledge Classics, 2002, p. 23.

¹¹⁶ H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, p. 30, in www.planetebook.com

¹¹⁷ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 122.

scientist such as Dr. Faustus was represented as a villain. Yet, during the Enlightenment, the scientist gained popularity after the admiration for Sir Isaac Newton shown by many of his literary contemporaries. On the edge of this view, moralists who were fearful that the very successes of science might lead to an undermining of the Christian faith and the rise of atheism and amorality reacted against science. The image of the scientist was further downgraded with the Romantics. Among the Romantic works that typified, for modern readers, the fatal failings of the scientist was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). By the late-nineteenth century, this negative image was taken to its extreme. Late-Victorian writers simply presented the scientist as a villain or a madman. Attacks on scientific materialism were raised by writers such as Samuel Butler in his *Erewhon* (1872) and Robert Louis Stevenson in *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).

H. G. Wells, himself a scientist, was conscious of the late-nineteenth century fear that scientists were causing. In his *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Wells conforms to this frame of mind by creating a complex character, Dr. Moreau. On the one hand, Moreau is 'a prominent and masterful physiologist, well-known in scientific circles for his extraordinary imagination and his brutal directness in discussion.'¹¹⁸ With remarkable cleverness, Moreau succeeds in creating a rational 'superman' thanks to his accelerating of the evolutionary process. He 'is employing the latest vivisectionist techniques he has developed in order to bring forth the human form and consciousness out of more primitive biological material.'¹¹⁹ Moreau's investigations cannot wholly be considered aimless because, whatever the method he uses, his purpose is to create a rational being freed from physical limitations. Each time, he learns from his mistakes. After creating a monstrous and terrifying serpent, he '[sticks] to the ideal of

¹¹⁸ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., p. 39.

¹¹⁹ Steven Lehman, 'The Motherless Child in Science: "Frankenstein" and "Moreau"', in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Mar., 1992), p. 54.

humanity— except for little things.’¹²⁰ His aim is to suppress the bestial instinct within the animals transformed into humans and succeeds in reaching this task. But as he himself complains, the beast within rises, like the Sphinx, from its ashes. Yet the description of Moreau as a good character does not mean that Wells is praising scientists. On the contrary, endowing Moreau with some positive qualities and intentions adds to the bewilderment writers felt towards scientists.

On the other hand, Moreau is depicted as a degenerate individual. The psychopath in Moreau is evidence of his degeneracy. By scientifically creating more rational creatures, Moreau hopes to eliminate all the creatures’ animal impulses; thus, he intends to achieve an orderly, controllable progress as opposed to God’s own uncontrolled ‘disorder’. Furthermore, he compels his creatures to submit to his laws in order to restrain their natural instincts and desires; yet, ironically Moreau himself is exiled from England for not controlling his impulses by violating the laws regulating vivisection.

Moreau’s undertaking makes us realize that Frankenstein’s theme of artificial intelligence is taken up, though Moreau deals with animals this time. Moreau is reminiscent of Frankenstein because he cannot control the consequences of his experiments. But unlike Frankenstein, Dr. Moreau does not repent for his deeds. While Prendick and Montgomery are troubled by the pain the animals endure, Moreau is not disturbed in the least. His indifference to suffering is expressed in his comment to Prendick that ‘it is just this question of pain that parts us. So long as visible or audible pain turns you sick; so long as your own pains drive you, so long as pain underlies your propositions about sin – so long, I tell you, you are an animal...’¹²¹ Here the resemblance with the legendary Doctor Faustus, the soul-less scientist

¹²⁰ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., p. 96.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

who strives after forbidden knowledge, is obvious. This “residual” motif could be seen as having a continued resonance. As Raymond Williams explains:

certain experiences, meanings and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social and cultural institution or formation.¹²²

This residual trope, i.e. that of the scientist as a villain, is reconciled within the dominant ideology. Moreau’s indifference to the results of his experiments questions Bacon’s utopian view of the scientists. In this, Wells is not the first to note such naive optimism. Earlier, Jonathan Swift, in his *Gulliver’s Travels*, satirizes Francis Bacon’s scientific ambitions. Gulliver’s third voyage ends up in Laputa, a floating island inhabited by theoreticians and academics who oppress the inhabitants of the land below called Balnibarbi. The scientific research undertaken in Laputa and in Balnibarbi seems totally impractical, and the scientists are wholly out of touch with reality. The Laputans represent the folly of theoretical knowledge that has no relation with human life and no use in the actual world. Moreover, down below in Balnibarbi, though the academy is inclined to practical applications, knowledge is not made socially useful. Knowledge, there, has proven positively disastrous, resulting in the ruin of agriculture and architecture and the impoverishment of the population. For Swift, science is not the product of reason but rather the foolish pursuit of a form of superior knowledge unrelated to the welfare of humankind.

Indeed at the turn of the century, many readers became aware of the ethical and moral issues raised by the new ‘emergent’ scientific and technological practices. Vivisection, for instance, was one of the most commonly known horrors ascribed to science especially that practised by Darwin. To support his understanding of variation under artificial selection, Darwin studied pigeons. He studied not only living breeding pigeons but also dead ones. His

¹²² Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, op. cit., p. 122.

workshop became a shop of horrors because he killed varieties of pigeons of all ages, in addition to some rabbits and chicken, in order to study the differences in structure between different varieties. These surgical operations are obliquely referred to by H. G. Wells in his *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

In addition to indulging in debates about vivisection and its credibility as a science, Moreau, when he states that ‘the study of nature makes a man as remorseless as Nature’, identifies with the negative view of natural selection. In fact, Darwin’s theory influenced the thinking of the time and echoes of it are frequently found; Butler’s *Erewhon* is such an example. The Erewhonians valorise the virtues of physical excellence. They do not welcome ill or deformed people. The latter are punished as if they committed a crime. Moreover, the Erewhonians are wary of reformers who wish to ease the harshness of illnesses because the latter are laws of nature that cannot be offended. To allow the reformers to cure illnesses will promote what they call the “universal dephysicalization”¹²³ of the race. The diseased may infect others or, if permitted freedom, may pass on his defect to others and therefore ensure the survival of the unfit. According to nature’s laws, the deformed must die. Dr. Moreau is of the same frame of mind; as he explains to Prendick:

I began with a sheep, and killed it after a day and a half by a slip of the scalpel. I took another sheep, and made a thing of pain and fear and left it bound up to heal. It looked quite human to me when I had finished it; but when I went to it I was discontented with it. It remembered me, and was terrified beyond imagination; and it had no more than the wits of a sheep. The more I looked at it the clumsier it seemed, until at last I put the monster out of its misery.¹²⁴

Thus Moreau mercilessly kills the creatures that do not fit his project.

But Wells does not only criticize man’s inhuman nature; like many nineteenth century writers, he questions the claim that science ‘humanises’ man. Moreau uses science in an attempt to control and transcend the animal within and to create a new and solid border that

¹²³ Samuel Butler, *Erewhon*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970, p. 117.

¹²⁴ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., p. 93-94.

separates irrational emotion from reasonable intellect. This idea of the duality of human identity is frequent in the late-nineteenth century. For instance, Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* centres on the duality of human nature. Jekyll asserts that 'man is not truly one, but truly two,'¹²⁵ and he imagines the human soul as a battleground for an 'angel' and a 'fiend', each one struggling to gain mastery. The potion that Jekyll takes, which he hopes would separate evil from good, brings the dark side of man into being. Once liberated, Mr. Hyde slowly takes over until Dr. Jekyll ceases to exist. This implies that man is not 'truly two' as Jekyll thinks, but man is primarily the primitive creature embodied in Hyde and brought under control by civilization, law and conscience. The potion eliminates the civilized veneer and exposes man's essential primitiveness. Hyde, like M'ling in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, is described as beastly, hairy and ugly. He behaves according to instinct rather than intellect and reason.

The inefficiency of science and technology to improve humanity's condition, investigated in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in the twentieth century through the death of Piggy, is anticipated by Samuel Butler in his *Erewhon* in the late-nineteenth century. In the 'The Book of the Machines', Butler says that machines, all but the simplest, have been destroyed five hundred years earlier. Machines, originally made by man to satisfy certain desires, have been destroyed in order to prevent their certain ascendancy over humans. The Erewhonians fear machines because, as one of their philosophers argues, they show unmistakable signs of superseding man. Thus, Butler rejects the idea that technological advance may lead to progress. H. G. Wells expresses the same attitude in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. The novel presents the image of a scientist who violates the laws of his civilization in contrast to the rational scientist who is expected to use his skills to remove pain and not cause it, to ease the hardships of everyday life and not increase them, and to improve

¹²⁵ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, London: Penguin, 1994, p. 70.

humanity and not to endanger mankind. In this, H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is a precursor of Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) whose major aim is the refutation of nineteenth-century utopian thinking which assumes that scientific progress leads to an ideal world. Moreau's experiments, in addition to the horror they entail, are plainly gratuitous and useless. Through the process of humanizing animals, Moreau tortures them by changing their nature and imposing on them another one. The Beast People stand in an intermediary state; they are neither fully humans nor fully animals. Wells's morbidly satiric emphasis on man as a superficially civilized animal is analogous to that of Swift. Like Swift who uses the Yahoos to represent men's degenerated nature, the Beast People are used by Wells to trace back to the origin of species the animality of man.

The analysis of characterization leads to the conclusion that by the late-nineteenth century, specialised nurture became dominant. Unlike Robinson Crusoe who learns many skills through the course of his life, Moreau sacrifices himself to science. This specialization limits his abilities in understanding and controlling his environment. Moreover, science, if misused, proves dangerous. Moreau thinks that it is man's animal legacy that is an obstacle to the 'breeding' of better humans. Ironically, Moreau is presented as a degenerate character who, instead of using science for humanity's benefits, indulges in 'forbidden knowledge', a knowledge incompatible with the perfection of Man's estate.

2. Religion, Politics and Civilization as Sites of Conflict

In the late-nineteenth century, emergent scientific and historical theories subverted the progressive dominant ideologies of the previous centuries. Nietzsche's claiming the death of God, Darwin's scientific discoveries, the questioning of man's origins put into question the previous belief that the world is a well-knit and harmonious piece of creation which by dint of

hard work and diligence, can be tamed. In this section, I will show through the analysis of themes that *The Island of Doctor Moreau* falls within this 'revisionist' perception of science.

i. The Death of God

It has been demonstrated that Puritanism, the dominant religious doctrine of the seventeenth century, provides Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* with an optimistic and daring spirit which makes him tame wild nature of his island. In the late-nineteenth century, emerging scientific theories disturbed the stability of the Church and questioned the soundness of the Christian religion as a whole. H. G. Wells was alert to the religious skepticism of the late-nineteenth century. In this section, the focus will fall on the extent to which Wells considers religious education unimportant in improving man's condition.

Contrary to *Robinson Crusoe* where religion sustains Crusoe during his isolation, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* religion does not have the same role. Crusoe frequently relates his destiny to providence; in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, none of the scientists refers to the helpfulness of the Divine Providence in the conduct of scientific experiments. Rather, the idea of chance as a ruling element in the universe is strengthened. Moreover, though he declares he is a religious man, Moreau does not have a firm religious doctrine that would permit him to have some authority over the inhabitants of the island.

In fact, Providence seems to be less the ruling element in the universe over the human condition than 'blind' chance. Chance and uncertainty undermine order and knowledge. Chance always operates for Prendick's benefit. When Prendick and his two companions, suffering from thirst and hunger, decide to indulge in cannibalism, Prendick's life is unexpectedly saved. When Prendick thanks Montgomery for saving his life, the latter dismisses his show of gratitude because he thinks he has had no hand in the matter:

‘If I may say it,’ said I, after a time, ‘you have saved my life.’ ‘Chance,’ he answered. ‘Just chance.’ ‘I prefer to make my thanks to the accessible agent.’ ‘Thank no one. You had the need, and I had the knowledge; and I injected and fed you much as I might have collected a specimen. I was bored, and wanted something to do. If I’d been jaded that day, or hadn’t liked your face, well it’s a curious question where you would have been now!’ This damped my mood a little. ‘At any rate, I began.’ ‘It’s chance, I tell you,’ he interrupted, ‘as everything is in a man’s life.’¹²⁶

Chance then intervenes in his favour when he is picked up by the *Ipecacuanha*, among which crew there is a medical man who saves his life. Being an amateur biologist is helpful to Prendick again because Moreau allows him into his island only after he is told that Prendick has been a student of Thomas Huxley’s. However, good luck does not sustain Prendick all along his stay on the island. In opposition to Robinson Crusoe whose life on the island is considered a spiritual and geographical journey that leads to his redemption, Prendick’s chance arrival on the island excludes the possibility of any redemptive scheme.

The reliance on chance however does not mean that Wells argues for a total secular theology in this novel. Moreau for instance is not a disbeliever. He declares: ‘[t]hen I am a religious man, Prendick, as every sane man must be.’¹²⁷ Yet, Moreau displays no pondering on God and on His Divine Providence. He questions the Christian belief in original sin and the idea that pleasure and pain can be related to heaven and hell:

And I tell you, pleasure and pain have nothing to do with heaven or hell. Pleasure and pain—bah! What is your theologian’s ecstasy but Mahomet’s *hour* in the dark? This store which men and women set on pleasure and pain, Prendick, is the mark of the beast upon them,— the mark of the beast from which they came! Pain, pain and pleasure, they are for us only so long as we wriggle in the dust.¹²⁸

Moreau questions here the ardent belief in Divine Providence and its power to guide man towards good faith. This attitude is due to the theory of evolution initiated by Charles Darwin in his *The Origin of Species*. This theory contradicted previously religious theories according to which evidence of the creative hand of God was revealed in the ordered perfection of the

¹²⁶ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., pp. 21.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

universe. In addition, many critical Bible readings, as shown in the previous chapter, demonstrated the unreliability of the narratives of the Gospel and therefore destabilized the scriptural foundations of the Church. This change in religious beliefs is effected to in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

To keep order within the inhabitants of his island, Moreau, after humanizing the animals, ‘infects their dwarfed brains with a kind of deification of himself.’¹²⁹ In order to transform the Beast People into a civilized society and maintain control over them, Moreau’s supremacist design consists in assigning himself the position of God. He makes the Beast People recite a litany in praise of him: ‘His is the lightning flash,’ we sang. ‘His is the deep, salt sea’... ‘His are the stars in the sky.’¹³⁰ This incantation recalls the prayers said in a Christian church. Ironically, thus, Moreau plays the role of a ‘great’ and ‘good’ god. He ‘implants’ a series of prohibitions and punishments, recalling the ten amendments, in the brains of his creatures. Thus, Moreau is mocking seventeenth century thinkers who argued that God’s presence is ingrained within man’s heart and that the right use of reason will lead to the discovery of God’s omniscience and mercifulness. It is true the prohibitions help the Beast People abandon their instinctive and animalistic behaviour to produce a more human and controllable nature. Nevertheless, unlike Robinson Crusoe who teaches Friday the right religion, which he willingly and convincingly accepts, Moreau enforces their obedience to him not through conviction in the goodness of his teachings but through torture and pain: ‘Punishment is sharp and sure. Therefore [they should] learn the Law.’¹³¹ Yet, this law, as Montgomery asserts, is implemented only when Moreau is present. But when he is absent, the Beast People break it, especially at night.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 72.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 75.

Wells's aim in this novel is to parody God's work. His protagonist, Moreau, does not consider himself the Beast People's creator only; he also makes of himself a judge capable of tormenting and even destroying the sinners against the Law: 'His is the House of Pain. His is the Hand that makes. His is the Hand that wounds. His is the Hand that heals.'¹³² Moreau's House of Pain obviously stands for Hell. Moreau embeds this fear within the Beast People as a method of controlling them especially as they are stronger than him. This image of a divinity ensures Moreau's safety until the Puma kills him. The death of Moreau ends up a long period of religious oppression.

After the death of Moreau and the destruction of the House of Pain, the Beast People are finally freed from the restraints of the Law. They daringly announce Moreau's death and boldly question the authority of the Law:

'Is there a Law now?' asked the Monkey-man. 'Is it still to be this and that? Is he dead indeed?'
'Is there a Law?' repeated the man in white. 'Is there a Law, thou Other with the Whip?'
'He is dead,' said the hairy-grey Thing. And they all stood watching us.
'Prendick,' said Montgomery, turning his dull eyes to me. 'He's dead, evidently.'¹³³

The Beast People's declaration of Moreau's death recalls Nietzsche's doctrine. During *the fin de siècle*, the combined impact of Darwinism, biblical criticism and skepticism towards the authority and status of the Church shocked people 'and many individuals felt a profound sense of spiritual dislocation in the face of the disappearance of God from their world.'¹³⁴ Nietzsche announced in *The Gay Science* that God was dead and that belief in the Christian God had become incredible. Nietzsche declared that the Christian God with his commands and prohibitions had been until then the greatest obstacle to the full happiness of the human kind. Now that he was dead, people were free to express their will to live.

¹³² Ibid., p. 113.

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 130-131.

¹³⁴ Hilary Fraser, 'The Victorian Novel and Religion', in *A Companion to The Victorian Novel*, Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing eds., Oxford : Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002, p. 105.

In an attempt to placate the Beast People and keep them under his control, Prendick, aware of the dangers resulting from the disappearance of Moreau, denies his death. He tries to convince the Beast People that the slain Moreau is not really dead but has become invisible:

‘He is not dead,’ said I, in a loud voice. ‘Even now he watches us!’... ‘The House of Pain is gone,’ said I. ‘It will come again. The Master you cannot see; yet even now he listens among you.’ ... ‘I tell you it is so,’ I said. ‘The Master and the House of Pain will come again. Woe be to him who breaks the Law!’¹³⁵

But this lie cannot be upheld for long. After the death of Montgomery, the Beast People discover the truth and decide to keep the Law and reject the authority of Dr. Moreau: ‘We love the Law and we will keep it; but there is no pain, no Master, no Whips for ever again.’¹³⁶ Eventually, Prendick loses his last hope to control the Beast People. This is a parody of the Christian belief that Jesus will return again and bring peace to the world and punish the sinners; a theme that is further explored in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*. Wells proposes the possibility that messianism is made up by the clergy men to keep their hold over the gullible. This explains why Prendick, upon his return to London, finds religious service intolerable:

Then I would turn aside into some chapel,—and even there, such was my disturbance, it seemed that the preacher gibbered ‘Big Thinks,’ even as the Ape-man had done; or into some library, and there the intent faces over the books seemed but patient creatures waiting for prey.¹³⁷

Religion then has no positive influence on the inhabitants of the island. Unlike Crusoe’s unflagging Puritanism which enables him to keep his hegemony over the others, Moreau’s flawed religiosity adds to the bewilderment of the Beast People. Moreau’s forced humanizing of the animals is unsuccessful since the law he implements in the Beast People’s brains becomes a source of suffering and torture. Therefore, Moreau’s religious indoctrination is bound to fail. The Beast People, like many late Victorians, discover their Master’s limited powers and thus bring to an end their belief in him.

¹³⁵ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., pp. 153-154.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

ii. A Frail Tyranny

Unlike Crusoe who proclaims himself benevolent monarch over his island, Moreau's rule is a dictatorship with Moreau as dictator, Montgomery as his second-in-command and M'ling as their 'minister', while the Beast People stand for subjects. However, this system does not last because Moreau's death provokes a change. The populace, freed from the tyranny of their rulers, move to another system which is that of anarchy. This section discusses Moreau's intended political system and how change is brought about.

In fact, one of the central themes of utopian literature, as demonstrated in *Robinson Crusoe*, is the complete subjugation of individuals to a central, powerful and wise authority that intends to rule in a perfect world. Moreau uses all possible means to keep the Beast People under his control. In order to prevent their disobedience, Moreau's laws are carefully implanted in the animals' brains. Moreover, painful torture is the punishment meted out for those who forget or dare break these laws. Thus, the Beast People are in constant fear of Moreau whom they consider as both their maker and destroyer:

“Evil are the punishments of those who break the Law. None escape.”

“None escape,” said the Beast Folk, glancing furtively at one another.

“None, none,” said the Ape-man,—“none escape. See! I did a little thing, a wrong thing, once. I jabbered, jabbered, stopped talking. None could understand. I am burnt, branded in the hand. He is great. He is good!”

“None escape,” said the grey creature in the corner.

“None escape,” said the Beast People, looking askance at one another.¹³⁸

This decisive passage implies that Moreau, the legislator, alters the animals' nature and obliges them to obey laws that are fit for another, alien, nature, that of humans. However, Moreau's specialized scientific training restricts his talents and capacities. He does not succeed in holding his grip over his creatures for long because the laws he creates are intended not to better the Beast People's condition but to protect him from the threat of these primitive creatures. Moreau is not so much interested in the happiness of the Beast People as

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

much as he is worried about the preservation of his territory. Moreover his authority over the Beast People is much harsher than Robinson's. The latter gains his inhabitants' loyalty by saving their lives and convincing them that laws are a necessity. In addition, unlike Crusoe who expresses his superiority over Friday by frightening him with the magical power of his gun, Moreau and Montgomery, and later on Prendick, always carry with them a revolver and a whip as a form of dissuasion. But unfortunately, neither the whip nor the revolver proves helpful in protecting them.

Moreau keeps himself aloof from the community he creates. The Beast People form their own little society to which they do not accept a newcomer if he does not agree to abide by the Law imposed upon them by Moreau: "Here come all that be new to learn the Law. I sit in the darkness and say the Law."¹³⁹ The Beast People accept Prendick into their group only after he participates in their ceremonies and accepts their rules:

And incontinently he began again the strange litany of the Law, and again I and all these creatures began singing and swaying. My head reeled with this jabbering and the close stench of the place; but I kept on, trusting to find presently some chance of a new development.¹⁴⁰

However, these laws do not bring to an end the fear of Hobbes's state of nature. Prendick is unable to find security neither with Moreau nor with the Beast People. Wells thus ridicules the eighteenth century thinkers who thought that man could progress from a state of nature to a civilized state through contract. This does not mean that Wells wrote *The Island of Doctor Moreau* solely as a refutation of eighteenth century social theories. The fact is that Wells was more interested in contemporary debates about politics, and especially those raised by Karl Marx. Marx thinks that politics is the exercise of power and domination in a society that is divided into classes. Therefore there are dominant and dominated classes and the dominant ones exercise oppression over the dominated through law or violence. In *The Island of Doctor*

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 75.

Moreau, Wells obviously presents two different classes: one is dominating (the scientists) and the other is dominated (the Beast People). This is not the first time that Wells deals with the conflict between classes. In *The Time Machine*, the society-of-the-future is divided into two classes: the Morlocks (the dominating class) that oppresses the Eloi (the dominated one.) But contrary to *The Time Machine* where this conflict goes on indefinitely, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, it is taken to an end. The Beast People, after the revolt led by the Puma which resulted in their master's death, decide to reject the authority of the 'ancient regime': 'The Master is dead. The Other with the Whip is dead. That Other who walked in the Sea is as we are. We have no Master, no Whips, no House of Pain, any more. There is an end.'¹⁴¹ Moreau, who has lived for a long time assuming his complete tyranny, is finally killed by one of his creatures.

After the death of his fellows, Prendick regards loneliness as terrifying and seeks refuge within the community of the Beast People. But instead of influencing the Beast People for the better, Prendick's regression is the ultimate result. The murder of Montgomery and the burning of the compound oblige Prendick to live among Moreau's creatures and as they revert to beastliness, he likewise acquires a bestial aspect:

I too must have undergone strange changes. My clothes hung about me as yellow rags, through whose rents showed the tanned skin. My hair grew long, and became matted together. I am told that even now my eyes have a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement.¹⁴²

This passage shows that humans too are exposed to regressing to animality, as happens to the children of *Lord of the Flies*. Prendick, finding himself alone with the Beast People, lives his remaining days in constant fear: 'over all this island there was now no safe place where I

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 159.

could be alone and secure to rest or sleep.’¹⁴³ The death of Moreau results in the regression of the inhabitants of the island to Hobbes’s state of nature where fear is dominant:

For a moment we stood eye to eye. I dropped the whip and snatched at the pistol in my pocket; for I meant to kill this brute, the most formidable of any left now upon the island, at the first excuse. It may seem treacherous, but so I was resolved. I was far more afraid of him than of any other two of the Beast Folk. His continued life was I knew a threat against mine.¹⁴⁴

Prendick is particularly afraid of the hyena-swine which wants to kill him. His description of his confrontation with the hyena-swine reactivates Hobbes’s notion that homo in a state of nature is ‘homines lipii’. Actually, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* traces a regression of society from a civil state to a state of nature. Moreau’s despotic rule over the small community he created fails because of his exclusive reliance on science, but science de-humanised.

iii. Back to Barbarism

The boundary that separates Crusoe from the savages fades away in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Crusoe successfully imposes his own culture on the barbarians; hence, he demonstrates the superiority of Western civilization. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, this superiority is questioned and the distinction between barbarians, who are the source of evil, and the European man, who is the source of good, is difficult to ascertain. Moreover, the belief in the purity of man’s innate nature is altered. The myth of Rousseau’s ‘noble savage’ is questioned. The savage is no longer believed to be ‘outside’, i.e. in the non-European other, but within the European himself.

Indeed, Wells presents the *idée reçue* of civilizing savage peoples with a new perception. He follows the new emerging tide of late-nineteenth century thinking whereby belief in the natural superiority of Europeans was beginning to be questioned. Charles Darwin in *The Descent of Man* (1871) rejects the idea that humans are created in God’s image. He

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 146.

rather claims that humans are creatures who have evolved from simpler to more complex forms. Darwin states that our relation to animals is not seriously considered because ‘our natural prejudice, and [...] arrogance [...] made our forefathers declare that they were descended from demi-gods.’¹⁴⁵ Darwin’s theories radically alter the traditional boundaries between humans and other creatures, though humans still claim their superiority to other species. The evolutionary theory reduces the gap between humans and animals because it holds that humans have evolved from animals and have thus inherited many traits from this ancestry.

Throughout *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Prendick’s experience before and after his landing on the island leaves him with a strong awareness of the animal within. This beast is in need of control; but Prendick (as well as the Beast People) fails to control his animalistic part. When, at the beginning of the novel, the three men starve to death in the dinghy, Prendick has to defend himself with a knife. But in despair, under the effects of physical suffering and fear of being eaten, he agrees to join in cannibalism. Thus, man’s animal nature cannot be dismissed. For Prendick, killing one’s fellow men and cannibalism are wrong but circumstances oblige him to participate in both activities. His traumatic experience is upsetting because, as John Glendening writes, ‘Prendick, a civilized man cultivated with ideals of human dignity and justice from the first is consistently forced to confront a natural order whose overwhelming imperative is the Darwinian struggle to survive.’¹⁴⁶ And yet, the civilized man is no longer capable of differentiating between the ‘civilized’ and the ‘savage’. Prendick is confused and he is unable to discriminate between men and beasts, allies and enemies. At first he thinks that the natives whom he first encounters on the island are humans,

¹⁴⁵ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Vol. I, p. 32.

¹⁴⁶ John Glendening, “‘Green Confusion’: Evolution and Entanglement in H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*”, in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2002), p. 587.

but later on, Moreau assures him they are not: ‘the creatures I had seen were not men, had never been men. They were animals – humanized animals – triumphs of vivisection.’¹⁴⁷

M’ling’s appearance resembles that of Caliban. The latter is described by Stephano as ‘a monster of the isle with four legs.’¹⁴⁸ Similarly, M’ling’s appearance is very fearful: ‘[h]e was... a misshapen man, short, broad, and clumsy, with a crooked back, a hairy neck, and a head sunk between his shoulders. He was dressed in dark-blue serge, and had peculiarly thick, coarse, black hair.’¹⁴⁹ Yet, he is much more akin to Friday in his behaviour:

M’ling, the black-faced man, Montgomery's attendant, the first of the Beast Folk I had encountered, did not live with the others across the island, but in a small kennel at the back of the enclosure. The creature was scarcely so intelligent as the Ape-man, but far more docile, and the most human-looking of all the Beast Folk; and Montgomery had trained it to prepare food, and indeed to discharge all the trivial domestic offices that were required.¹⁵⁰

M’ling is easily tamed. Moreau regrets that just after he makes the creatures, ‘they seem to be indisputably human beings. It’s afterwards, as I observe them, that the persuasion fades. First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me.’¹⁵¹ M’ling embodies an acceptance of Moreau’s dominant ideology and technology whereas the emergence of animal traits within the Beast People represents a resistance to humanisation, ‘acculturation’ so to speak. The result is a further breakdown of barriers, greater disorder and ultimately the creation of ‘hybrid’ monsters.

This reversion is also felt with humans. Like Swift’s Gulliver, when Prendick returns to London, he is afraid of his fellow-men, though he is still convinced that they are real men and women:

¹⁴⁷ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁴⁸ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, op. cit., Act 2, Scene 2, p. 1796.

¹⁴⁹ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

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. I know this is an illusion; that these seeming men and women about me are indeed men and women,—men and women for ever, perfectly reasonable creatures, full of human desires and tender solicitude, emancipated from instinct and the slaves of no fantastic Law,—beings altogether different from the Beast Folk. Yet I shrink from them, from their curious glances, their inquiries and assistance, and long to be away from them and alone.¹⁵²

Here, the suggestion that humans can also revert to an animal like, or pre-human, state is quite clear. This passage evokes Gulliver who similarly expresses the difficulties he has had in readjusting to his own human culture:

My reconciliation to the Yahoo-kind in general might not be so difficult, if they would be content with those vices and follies only which nature hath entitled them to. I am not in the least provoked at the sight of a lawyer, a pick-pocket, a colonel. . . . This is all according to the due course of things: but, when I behold a lump of deformity, and diseases both in body and mind, smitten with *pride*, it immediately breaks all the measures of my patience; neither shall I ever be able to comprehend how such an animal and such a vice could tally together.¹⁵³

Gulliver associates English culture with the Yahoos, degraded humans. He expresses his conviction that humanity is, as the Houyhnhnms believe, corrupted and ungovernable. Humans are nothing more than beasts equipped with reason that make their corruption more dangerous. But even worse, he says, is the inability of man to see his own flaws, and thus recognize his depravity behind his false nobility; an attitude to be found in *Lord of the Flies* when the naval officer who comes to rescue Ralph is himself an agent in warfare. But while Prendick and Gulliver express the same response towards their men-folk, their fear stems from different experiences. Gulliver, influenced by the Houyhnhnms, disdains men because they are inferior to those perfectly rational creatures. Prendick, after his year-long stay among Dr. Moreau's engineered 'Yahoos', fears men because of their kinship to the former. The sight of men reminds him of the Beast People and he is anguished by the idea 'that presently

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁵³ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, London: Penguin, 1994, p. 328.

the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale.’¹⁵⁴ As Prendick watches the reappearance of animal-traits in man’s faces, he concludes that reversion or devolution is as possible as that of progress or evolution.

The problem that Wells poses in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is that the unrestrained individual, through claiming his right to manipulate others, will challenge the natural order. The Law that the Beast People chant expresses the principles and precepts that society imposes on individuals to restrain the ‘natural man’. The series of commandments such as: “‘Not to go on all-fours...”, “Not to suck up Drink...”, “Not to eat Fish or Flesh...”, “Not to claw the Bark of Trees...”, “Not to chase other Men...”,”¹⁵⁵ point to man’s fear of regression to his innate animal brutishness. Moreover, the fact that the Beast People are at ease with these laws points to the artificiality of man’s civilization. Aiming at bettering the human race – to suppress savage customs – Moreau paradoxically regresses to a savage state. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* also anticipates Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902) with Prendick in the role of Conrad’s narrator Marlow, the reasonable Englishman who discovers in Kurtz the cruel and corrupted genius of European art and science. These two fables of empire present an image of men who hold power over physically superior peoples whom they control with guns, whips, and laws. But Kurtz’s degeneracy is nearer that of the children of *Lord of the Flies* than Dr. Moreau’s.

By accelerating the long and slow process of evolution, Moreau intends to create a more rational human race. But this ‘utopian project’ fails and instead of elevating animals to the level of humans, the beast within them comes back to the surface with a vengeance. This is mainly due to Moreau’s misjudgements which lead to wild anarchy. He is unable to

¹⁵⁴ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit. p. 168.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

successfully establish a 'biologically ideal city' because the behaviour of humans stems also from instincts, passions and desires.

3. A Biological Station

In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the relation of the island to its inhabitants is more complicated than that of Robinson Crusoe's. Indeed, Moreau's intention from his self-exile is not to exploit the wild nature of the island but rather to fulfil his scientific project. Therefore, his hard work on his 'creatures' prevents him from exploring his island. Moreau characterizes the island as a 'biological station'¹⁵⁶ like 'a kind of Blue-beard's Chamber'¹⁵⁷ which hides a secret.

At first, the island as described by Prendick and Moreau contains no ravenous beasts or 'cannibals'. After the scenes of violence he experiences on the *Ipecacuanha*, Prendick sees the island as a refuge of peace: he sees 'this little island' 'hidden' 'in the dimness'¹⁵⁸ as a refuge, describing its beach, coral reefs, its lava and pumice. At this point, Prendick's impression of malaise is not caused by the island itself but by its inhabitants, '[those] horrible creatures of [their] maker's image.'¹⁵⁹ Yet, as the story advances, the island becomes more mysterious, concealing a sense of unrest.

When recalling his arrival on the island eleven years earlier, Moreau reflects on its isolation: 'I remember the green stillness of the island and the empty ocean about us, as though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me.'¹⁶⁰ Because the island is completely isolated from civilization, Moreau and his assistant are free to operate without the restrictions imposed in London. The island provides Moreau with a refuge from the

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

constraining laws of Britain and a site for his laboratory. At first, the island appears to be, with its “green stillness” surrounded by an “empty ocean”, a suitable place for Moreau to fulfil his project.

However, Moreau’s project appears to be open-ended, subject to chance, and associated with struggle, suffering, and death. During the vivisectioning process, the animal under operation suffers from terrible pains. Prendick describes such pains:

I found myself that the cries were singularly irritating, and they grew in depth and intensity as the afternoon wore on. They were painful at first, but their constant resurgence at last altogether upset my balance. I flung aside a crib of Horace I had been reading, and began to clench my fists, to bite my lips, and to pace the room. Presently I got to stopping my ears with my fingers.¹⁶¹

These savage scenes of continuous pain on the island and in the laboratory anticipate twentieth century history provoking in the reader a sense of fear, loathing, and nausea.

Thus, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* can be considered as an anti-utopia since neither Moreau, nor the other inhabitants, explore the island to make of it a setting similar to that of More’s *Utopia*. More’s island is an artificial setting which is inhabited by real humans who successfully domesticate it. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the island is a natural setting on which Moreau deals with artificial humans whose regression to animality prevents them from improving their environment.

4. Language, a Sign of Brutality

Believing that speech is the mark of humanity, Moreau gives emphasis to teaching the animals language. The distinction between man and animal is implied by Moreau when he tells Prendick that ‘the great difference between man and monkey is in the larynx [...] in the incapacity to frame delicately different sound-symbols by which thought could be

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

sustained.’¹⁶² To some extent Moreau is successful; Prendick even comments on the “strangely good” English accent of one creature. In contrast, Prendick notices the stream of “vile language” spoken by the captain of the *Ipecacuanha*, one of many signs of his brutishness:

But the captain meant to quarrel now. He raised his voice. ‘If he comes this end of the ship again I’ll cut his insides out, I tell you. Cut out his blasted insides! Who are you, to tell me what I’m to do? I tell you I’m captain of this ship,—captain and owner. I’m the law here, I tell you,—the law and the prophets. I bargained to take a man and his attendant to and from Arica, and bring back some animals. I never bargained to carry a mad devil and a silly Sawbones, a—’¹⁶³

Language aligns the captain of the *Ipecacuanha* both with the Beast People whose ‘speech’ becomes degraded as they regress into bestiality and with Shakespeare’s Caliban whose language is used to curse his master:

You taught me language; and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language!¹⁶⁴

Language is also an instrument of repression, as in Moreau’s commands, which are always threats, reminiscent of Prospero’s:

Hag-seed, hence!
Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou’rt best,
To answer other business. Shrug'st thou, malice?
If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.¹⁶⁵

To stress the atmosphere of scientific horror pervading the late-nineteenth century, scientific words like *vivisection*, *grafting*, *physiology*, and *chemical* are used. Wells also refers to vivisectors as ‘artistic’ torturers who practise an ‘extraordinary branch of knowledge.’¹⁶⁶

To insist upon the terror and pain of the animals, Wells repeatedly uses the word ‘blood’:

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶⁴ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, op. cit., Act 1, Scene 2, p. 1763.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., p. 89.

blood in the sink 'brown and red,' on the floor, on the hands of the operators and on the bandages that envelop the creatures.

To make his effects more forceful, Wells resorts to some aspects of the grotesque. David Mikics defines the grotesque as 'an artistic style that audaciously rouses disgust and astonishment in the viewer or reader.'¹⁶⁷ When Prendick sees the three "grotesque human figures," he realizes the source of the disturbance he felt since his first meeting with a "native" of Moreau's island:

I perceived clearly for the first time what it was that had offended me, what had given me the two inconsistent and conflicting impressions of utter strangeness and yet of the strangest familiarity. The three creatures ... were human in shape, and yet human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal. Each of these creatures, despite its human form, its rag of clothing, and the rough humanity of its bodily form, had woven into it, into its movements, into the expression of its countenance, into its whole presence, some now irresistible suggestion of a hog, a swinish taint, the unmistakable mark of the beast.¹⁶⁸

These are physically disgusting details that emphasise Moreau's indifference to the screams of his victims during their surgical transformation. These effects are features of the Gothic mode of writing which flourished by the late-nineteenth century. Gothic writers generally use horror and terror to create an atmosphere of fear and anxiety. Wells conveys these effects, as the previous quotation obviously shows, through the detailed descriptions of the scenes of pain resulting from Moreau's bloody experiment.

After this analysis of *The Island Moreau*, I can draw the following conclusion. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* fits well into the tradition this research work is considering. Like Robinson Crusoe, Moreau attempts to transform the Beast People into docile Fridays; like Gulliver, after Prendick leaves the island, he finds in London animality in human faces; like Dr. Frankenstein, Moreau is an apprentice scientist. It also announces the tradition of dystopian writing that was to gain prominence by the first half of the twentieth century. Like

¹⁶⁷ David Mikics, *A New Handbook of Literary Terms*, London: Yale University Press, 1961, p. 138.

¹⁶⁸ *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

Kurtz, Moreau experiences degeneracy; as in *Brave New World*, Moreau is doomed to violating his creatures' freedom.

Moreau's intention in creating a better human race is promising but its results are disastrous. The misuse of science results in the destruction of both man and his natural environment. Moreau's cultural heritage is not of much help in taming the wild nature of both the island and the animals. The Beast People's resistance to Moreau's illegitimate godliness and degraded science ensures the victory of nature 'red in tooth and claw' over nurture. Hence his utopian project to create a better human race fails. The Beast People represent a transgression of the previous categories of identity (human/animal, civilized/savage) that were, by the eighteenth century, unshakable.

Actually, Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is an anti-utopia stemming from the mindset as well as the history of the period when it was written. The late Victorian era was a time of unprecedented scientific advance that facilitated man's conditions of living. However, as their life became more and more 'technologized', the Victorians increasingly expressed suspicion, apprehension and fear about how modernity, and science and technology in particular, were affecting them. Thus, many anti-utopian works, representing in fact a critique of the Victorian ethos, questioned the belief in the goodness of human nature and the ability of science to solve all problems on the one hand, and doubted the capacity of nurture to tame nature on the other hand. Indeed, contrary to optimistic writers who claimed that progress ensured humanity's future, Wells proposed human degeneration as an equally possible alternative. This view was to be aggravated in the first half of the twentieth century because the First and Second World Wars were a proof to man's enmity towards his fellow human beings and induce him to lose all hope of regaining his lost paradise. Dystopia is in the offing.

V

THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY: AN AGE OF DESPAIR

“I am by nature an optimist; but a *defective logic* – or a logic which I sometimes hope desperately is defective – makes a *pessimist* of me.” [Emphases added].

(William Golding, “On the Crest of the Wave”)

As argued previously, the atmosphere of the late-nineteenth century was one of doubt and confusion. The progressive and optimistic view that marked the eighteenth century and the earlier Victorian period came to an end. In the mid-twentieth century, due to deteriorating social, economic and political circumstances, the belief in man's ability to control both nature and his social conditions declined. It was also an age of political transformation, scientific discoveries and quickening technological growth. These circumstances 'contributed to a general sense of the times as, according to inclination and mood [...], a catastrophic fall away from civilized values.'¹⁶⁹ This sense of the world falling apart made writers despair of a better future and their belief in man's ability to reach perfection seemed then a naïve dream. Thus, instead of imposing their order on society, 'they combine satire with an attack on utopia, guided by an essentially nihilistic outlook which deconstructs the utopian genre by turning it on its head.'¹⁷⁰

This chapter addresses the context of the first half of the twentieth century by offering brief comments on the intellectual and historical views that inspired and frustrated William Golding. The first section is concerned with the harsh historical events that shocked humanity and proved that evil was stronger than ever. The second one considers how these events were reflected in literary works through the dystopias that were produced to warn men about future. The last section shows that Golding, influenced by the events that took place in the first half of the twentieth century, holds a dark vision of man's innate nature.

1. Man, an Enemy of Men

¹⁶⁹ Philip Horne, 'The Novel to 1914', in *The Penguin History of Literature: the Twentieth Century*, Martin Dodsworth ed., London: Penguin, Vol. 7, 1994, p. 66.

¹⁷⁰ Nadia Khouri, 'Reaction and Nihilism: The Political Genealogy of Orwell's 1984', in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Jul., 1985), p. 138.

The harsh experiences of the first half of the twentieth century proved man's enmity to his fellow human beings. This enmity prevented man from both improving his condition of living and better exploiting nature for his benefit. Moreover, it led to the destruction of both the nature he was expected to cultivate and the civilization that he had achieved by then.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a growing sense that the natural environment was ruined by man's technology. Various writers such as T. S. Eliot in his *The Waste Land* (1922) addressed this issue. Moreover, a gap between the propaganda of imperialism and its exploitative realities was recognised, as Conrad states earlier in his *Heart of Darkness*, 'the conquest of the earth [...] mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves.'¹⁷¹ The consequences of the First World War showed how men could be diminished and destroyed by man-made technology. 'More than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilized in one of the largest wars in history. More than 9 million combatants were killed,'¹⁷² mainly due to a great technological advance in firepower such as aerial bombs. This atmosphere proved that civilization could turn into barbarity.

The First World War had a lasting impact on social memory. It signaled for the British the end of Imperial Britain. Historian Samuel Hynes explains:

A generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals. Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences, and saw that their real enemies were not the Germans, but the old men at home who had lied to them. They rejected the values of the society that had sent them to war, and in doing so separated their own generation from the past and from their cultural inheritance.¹⁷³

The experiences of the war led to a shock that was felt by many from all participating countries. Many years afterwards, people still mourned the war's victims. The optimism of *la*

¹⁷¹ Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, London: Penguin, 1994, p. 10.

¹⁷² www.bbc.co.uk

¹⁷³ www.bbc.co.uk

belle époque – late-Victorian and Edwardian era – was destroyed and those who fought in the war were referred to as the ‘Lost Generation’, mostly in America.

Writers of this generation were strongly affected by the disaster of war and ‘the feeling of historical chaos and the futility that followed it, which gave them both their mood of despair, loss and exile, and their artistic tactics of fracture and fragmentation.’¹⁷⁴ In his *The Waste Land* (1922), Eliot captures the hypocrisy, disillusionment of post-World War I life. In this work, Eliot uses the rituals of various ancient sects, both Christian and pagan. He also relies heavily on those of the Greeks (Adonis, Osiris, or Attis) to present man’s desire to reconstruct a new cultural identity. The result of this juxtaposition of ancient with modern is an exposure of a contemporary life devoid of spirituality. The melancholy poems of Eliot point to the loneliness and lack of meaning that city-dwellers often feel.

The age of the lost generation witnessed the appearance of modern totalitarianism. World War One saw the end of the Europe of Kings, and the beginning of the Europe of Dictators. The behaviour of these dictatorial and totalitarian governments – in Russia, Germany and Italy amongst others – questioned the traditional utopian hypothesis that strong and centralized authority would act in the best interests of the citizen. The totalitarian states of the twentieth century inspired their ideologies from ideal systems of government such as Plato’s. But, according to Malcolm Bradbury, ‘the intentions and deeds of totalitarian regimes proved far more terrible than the grimmest prophets had foreseen.’¹⁷⁵ At the beginning, the leaders promised to bring equality and happiness to their countrymen; unfortunately, most of them turned despotic and abandoned the values of those idealistic visions. These governments, which promised to be a means of stability, became the mechanism of Europe’s destruction.

¹⁷⁴ Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel*, London: Penguin, 1994, pp. 203-204.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 265.

In Russia, Communism arose when a union between the intellectuals resulted in a rebellion against the wealthy and powerful class of capitalists and aristocrats. The intellectuals hoped to establish a socialist utopia based on the principles of Karl Marx. In the Russia of 1917, people thought that Marx's socialist dreams were to become a reality. Vladimir Ilych Lenin, a Russian revolutionary intellectual, seized power in the name of the Communist Party. After his death in 1924, his previous allies, mainly Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky, began looking for power. In the following years, Stalin succeeded in becoming the unquestioned dictator of the Soviet Union and had Trotsky expelled from Russia in 1936. Trotsky fled to Mexico, where 'he was assassinated on Stalin's orders in 1940.'¹⁷⁶

Stalin officially denounced his opponents as "enemies of the people,"¹⁷⁷ a claim that gave him the right to execute his enemies. Stalin then began to secure his power with brutal intensity, killing or imprisoning his political enemies and assassinating approximately 'twenty million Soviet citizens.'¹⁷⁸ As the Soviet government's economic planning failed, Russia suffered from violence, fear, and starvation. Stalin used his former opponents as a tool to calm down the common people. Trotsky became a common national enemy and a source of negative unity. Many critics noted that there were direct parallels between these events and Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945): Napoleon gets rid of Snowball from the farm and, after the windmill collapses, uses Snowball in his purges just as Stalin used Trotsky. Similarly, Napoleon becomes a dictator, while Snowball is never heard of again.

In Italy, fascism was another kind of dictatorial government. Like communism, the ideological basis for fascism came from a number of sources. Mussolini used the works of Plato and Nietzsche to create fascism. He admired *The Republic* which he often read for inspiration. A number of ideas that fascism promoted originated in *The Republic*. As Prime Minister, the first years of Mussolini's rule were characterized by a coalition government. But

¹⁷⁶ www.bbc.co.uk

¹⁷⁷ www.bbc.co.uk

¹⁷⁸ www.bbc.co.uk

soon after, Mussolini restored the authority because his aim was to establish a totalitarian state in which he was to be the supreme leader. He did not hesitate to use torture and persecution to oblige his opponents to surrender.

In Germany, Hitler became minister of a coalition government in January 1933. He hated democracy and Marxism which he regarded as a Jewish poison. As in *Erewhon*, the weak and the insane were denounced. Hitler demanded a strong government, capable of leading Germany back to its place in the world. He quickly took dictatorial powers and began to pass anti-Jewish laws. He also began the process of German militarization and expansion, a process that would eventually lead to World War II. He allied with Italy and later with Japan to create the Axis. On August 22nd, 1939, on the invasion of Poland, Hitler permitted his commanders to kill “without pity or mercy, men, women, and children of Polish descent or language.”¹⁷⁹ This sentiment was anticipated in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* when Kurtz claims that one must “exterminate all the brutes.” The human failure of those governments can be considered a deception of Plato who believed that the philosopher-rulers might bring happiness to the world.

Among the common themes of the writings of this period are the miseries of civilized life. Erick Auerbach claims in his *Mimesis* (1953) that authors found in writing ‘a hatred of culture and civilization, brought about by the subtlest artistic devices culture and civilization have developed, and often a radical and fanatical urge to destroy.’¹⁸⁰ At the beginning of the century, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), Sigmund Freud announces his theory which explains the fundamental tensions between civilization and the individual. On the one hand, civilization is a tool men have created in order to protect themselves from unhappiness, and on the other hand, it is their source of unhappiness because people become obsessed by the frustrations that are imposed by society. Freud thinks that civilization creates discontent

¹⁷⁹ David Irving, *Hitler’s War and the War Path*, London: Focal Point Publications, 2002, p. vii.

¹⁸⁰ Erick Auerbach, *Mimesis*, quoted in Malcolm Bradbury, op. cit., p. 205.

within its members through the repression of instinct. For Freud, civilization represents a collective human effort to save men from their own evil impulses. Human beings are inherently aggressive, Freud states:

Their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. Homo homini lupus [man is a wolf to man.] Who, in the face of all his experience of life and of history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion?¹⁸¹

Freud's upsetting fear about humanity's future was realized in the Second World War, the deadliest war ever fought.

Eventually, though the First World War shocked the optimists, it is the Second World War that completely killed their hopes. In less than a decade, the war revealed unnumbered atrocities of man's inhumanity to his fellows. The most shameful event of this war was the extensive use of humans in medical experiments. Among these physicians was Dr. Josef Mengele who worked in Auschwitz.¹⁸² His experiments, for instance, included placing persons in pressure chambers, testing drugs on them, freezing them, attempting to change eye colour by injecting chemicals into their eyes and various other brutal surgeries. Men who survived Mengele's experiments were killed. He worked particularly with Romani children. He would bring them sweets and toys, and then take them to the gas chamber. Vera Alexander, who was a Jewish prisoner at Auschwitz who looked after 50 sets of Romani twins, asserted:

I remember one set of twins in particular: Guido and Ina, aged about four. One day, Mengele took them away. When they returned, they were in a terrible state: they had been sewn together, back to back, like Siamese twins. Their wounds were infected and oozing pus. They screamed day and night. Then their parents – I remember the mother's name was Stella – managed to get some morphine and they killed the children in order to end their suffering.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, quoted in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilization_and_Its_Discontents.

¹⁸² www.bbc.co.uk

¹⁸³ www.bbc.co.uk

These experiments are anticipated by H. G. Wells in his *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. The surgeries applied on human beings recall the medical experiments that Moreau applies on the animals he wants to change into humans.

The destructiveness of science and technology reached the zenith by the end of the war. The researches on the atom led to the invention of the atomic bomb which the Americans used in this war as a trial. Thus, the war ended ‘with another, no less terrible holocaust, the dropping of atomic weapons on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.’¹⁸⁴ With the decision to use the atom bomb against civilians in Japan, writers lost all their remaining optimism; the greatest invention of the twentieth century was used not to improve the world but ‘to kill some 200,000 people.’¹⁸⁵ The catastrophic results because of the misuse of science proved Bacon’s mistaken in regarding scientists as the savers of man’s happiness.

‘The end of the war was the beginning of the Atomic Age; human beings now had the power of universal self-annihilation.’¹⁸⁶ It was the beginning of what W. H. Auden called in 1947 “the Age of Anxiety”. The United States was the only country which possessed atomic weapons. After World War II, nuclear weapons were also developed by the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China; which contributed to the state of conflict and tension that became known as the Cold War. The United Kingdom tested its first independent atomic bomb in 1952, followed by France in 1960 and then the People’s Republic of China in 1964. As a result, political tensions continued to dominate the period and ‘the hot war turned into a cold one, the post war into the non-peace; the mood of anxiety, horror, and apocalyptic peril increased.’¹⁸⁷

Finally, the British Empire, which was a dominant force in world politics before the war, was shaken. The collapse of British imperial power was complete by the mid- 1960s:

¹⁸⁴ Malcolm Bradbury, op. cit. p. 265.

¹⁸⁵ www.bbc.co.uk

¹⁸⁶ Malcolm Bradbury, op. cit., p.265.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 266.

India became independent in 1947; Malaya won its independence in 1957 as did Ghana, while Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and most other African colonies gained independence in the 1960s. These imperial defeats in Africa and Asia destroyed Britain's financial and economic freedom.

As stated above, the harsh experiences, i.e. the misuse of technology in two destructive world wars and the modern experience of totalitarian governments, which negatively affected people's hope towards a better future, were the main reason behind the shift towards a darker view of man's future and of the ability of nurture to master nature. This feeling became so universal as to be the dominant feeling of the first half of the twentieth century; giving prominence to the tradition of dystopian writings.

2. Dystopia and the Despair of Systems

By the first half of the twentieth century, the hope of imposing order on humanity became impossible. This section, then, investigates the dystopian works written under the effects of the above mentioned circumstances. In fact, the utopian dream of order appeared in the form of nightmare visions in the work of writers such as Yevgeny Zamyatin in his *We* (1923), Aldous Huxley in his *Brave New World* (1932), and George Orwell in his *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). The work of these writers addressed an audience that was disillusioned by the disasters of the twentieth century, as Chris Ferns writes:

Where utopian fictions gave expression to humanity's growing sense of mastery over both social conditions and the natural world, the works of writers such as Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell speak to an audience increasingly disillusioned by the consequences of such controlling aspirations. Where Bellamy's belief in the virtues of an industrial army and Wells's vision of a world where nature is groomed and manipulated to suit human convenience now seem disturbingly naïve, the totalitarian nightmares of Zamyatin and Orwell, or Huxley's portrait of a society dominated by mindless consumerism, seem hardly less apposite now than when they were written.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Chris Ferns, *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, p 105-106.

The main reason behind this shift towards a darker view of man's future lies in the many harsh experiences, such as the misuse of technology in two destructive world wars and the modern experience of totalitarian governments, which negatively affected people's hope towards a better future.

Despaired of utopian projects as models to guide man for a better future, twentieth century writers wrote dystopias reflecting the mood of fear and anxiety which resulted from wars. Zamyatin's *We* is an example. The novel is set in the twenty-sixth century. It expresses Zamyatin's vision of a future city called One State. Its inhabitants are known by numbers instead of names. The inhabitants live in glass houses which enable the "Guardians", or the political police, to keep watch on them. There are many executions in Zamyatin's dystopia. They take place publicly in the presence of the Benefactor, the ruler of One State and the owner of a machine called the guillotine. The purpose of this machine is to liquidate its victim and reduce him to smoke and water; an experiment that was practised by Hitler's scientists during the Second World War. Indeed, the book's concern is the irrational side of totalitarianism. The book is in effect a study of the Machine – a tool used to extend human dominance over nature.

Another dystopian work that satirises totalitarian regimes is Huxley's *Brave New World*. Many of the novel's characters are named after influential people of the time, for example, Polly Trotsky (Leon Trotsky, the Russian revolutionary leader), Benito Hoover (Benito Mussolini, dictator of Italy and Hoover, the American President), and Bernard Marx (George Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx). Moreover, like Zamyatin's *We*, in order to preserve its own stability and power, the world that Huxley describes relies on science to control the behaviour and actions of its people. But this does not mean that the State supports science itself. Science is censored and limited because it symbolizes a threat to the State since it leads people to reach the truth. The government of *Brave New World* maintains control by making

its citizens so happy that they do not care about their personal freedom. Therefore in *Brave New World* the main consequence of state control is a loss of humanity. Huxley's novel is considered as a warning of the dangers of giving state control over new and powerful technologies.

The rise to power of dictators – Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini – was the main reason behind writing dystopias that express their writer's hatred of totalitarianism. Giving emphasis to the tradition of dystopian writing, Orwell wrote political novels, first with *Animal Farm* in 1945, then with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1949. *Animal Farm* is famous for its critique of the history of the Russian Revolution. The novel presents the development of Soviet communism in the form of an animal fable. In particular, as many critics asserted, *Animal Farm* allegorizes the dictator Joseph Stalin. The struggle between Leo Trotsky and Joseph Stalin to gain authority is reflected in the competition between the pigs: Snowball and Napoleon. In both the Soviet history and *Animal Farm*, the weak figure (Trotsky/Snowball) is excluded from the revolutionary state by the usurper of power (Stalin/Napoleon). Similarly, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *Lord of the Flies*, the malicious and powerful (Jack, the Beast People) expels the idealistic but less powerful (Ralph, Moreau) from the state. Stalin's rule and his neglect of the first principles of the Russian Revolution are represented in *Animal Farm* by the pigs that turn to violent government.

Unlike *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written after the effects of totalitarian brutality had been revealed. The world-state of Orwell's dystopia is pitiless. In this novel, Orwell portrays a state where government controls every aspect of man's life; for instance, having a treacherous thought is against the law. In order to control its citizens, the ruling Party uses a number of techniques such as the psychological stimuli which are intended to prevent the mind from independent thought. In addition, the giant telescreen in every citizen's room announces a regular stream of propaganda, the aim of which is to make

the failures and shortcomings of the Party appear successes. The telescreens also observe the behaviour of the citizens; wherever they go, they are reminded by the signs reading “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU” that the authorities are watching them.

The common theme of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the power of a totalitarian state that demands complete obedience from its subjects. They rely upon scientific and technological advances to ensure social control. Enlightenment optimism that respects the progress of reason and science was now replaced by a sense of the inability of man to restrain his new destructive powers. During the first half of the twentieth century, ideal societies have been portrayed in dystopian rather than utopian works. The rise and fall of dictatorial governments extended the darkest aspects that began earlier in the late-nineteenth century. The growth of new scientific discoveries intensified the risks of annihilation. The progressive optimism, which was based on the belief in the capacity of science and technology to solve humanity's problems, failed. The ideological utopias now appeared naive allusions, treacheries and betrayals. 'If Europe's capitals, economics and political systems lay in ruins, so did its intellectual, ideological, metaphysical and cultural values: its ideas of the self, the state, politics, history, art, good and evil.'¹⁸⁹

3. William Golding and Despair

William Golding was born before the tremors of the First World War, in 1911, in Cornwall. Golding was influenced by his father who was a teacher of science at Marlborough Grammar School. As a young boy, William Golding chose to study natural science. However, he couldn't get a degree in science and he turned to study English literature, in which he graduated in 1934.

¹⁸⁹ Malcolm, Bradbury, op. cit., p. 267.

Golding specified the sources of *Lord of the Flies* as: 'first his training in Anglo-Saxon literature; second, his five years of war service; third, his finding out what the Nazis did; and finally, his ten years teaching small boys.'¹⁹⁰ Golding was influenced by his involvement in World War II because it revealed to him what humans were capable of doing. As a naval commander, before getting himself out from the horrors of the war, he was confronted after its end by the start of the Cold War. Therefore, *Lord of the Flies* was written as a response to these events which saw a conflict between capitalism and communism.

Before the war, Golding remarked to his friend Jack Biles that he had 'believed in [...] the perfectibility of man'; afterwards, he could see little but man's 'bestly potentialities'.¹⁹¹ The Second World War broke Golding's personal ethics. In a newspaper interview he said, 'I learned during World War II just how brutal people can be to each other. Not just Germans or Japanese, but everyone. I tried to point that out [. . .] Some have said that the brutality of the novel is impossible. It's not.' The world was horrified by news of the Nazi death camps and Golding felt that all nations were capable of committing the same atrocities. On the effect of the war on his world view, Golding said:

It is bad enough to say that so many Jews were exterminated in this way and that, so many people liquidated—lovely, elegant word—but there were things done during that period from which I still have to avert my mind lest I should be physically sick. They were not done by the head-hunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skilfully, coldly, by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind. . . . When these destructive capacities emerged into action they were thought aberrant. Social systems, political systems were composed, detached from the real nature of man. They were what one might call political symphonies. They would perfect most men, and at the least, reduce aberrance. Why, then, have they never worked?¹⁹²

He admitted that it was the Second World War that changed him from an idealist who believed in human perfectibility to a more pessimistic observer of mankind. According to

¹⁹⁰ Jack I. Biles, 'Literary Sources and William Golding', in *South Atlantic Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (May, 1972), p. 30.

¹⁹¹ Jack I. Biles, *Talk: Conversations with William Golding*, New York: Harcourt, 1970, p.

¹⁹² William Golding, *Hot Gates*, quoted in L.L. Dickson, 'Lord of the Flies', in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: William Golding's Lord of the Flies*, Harold Bloom ed., New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008, p. 55.

Golding, man's tendency towards evil and violence, added to it the "psychology of fear", pushes men to act in unconscious ways. Such catastrophic violence and loss of life caused by the atomic bomb affected Golding. In *Lord of the Flies*, the evacuation of the boys is caused by a nuclear war.

After the end of the war, Golding returned to writing and teaching, with a dark view of the European civilization. He worked as a schoolmaster; therefore, he was accustomed to the behaviour of children. These experiments inspired his novel *Lord of the Flies*. Golding described the theme of *Lord of the Flies* as an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral that can be deduced from this is that society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual rather than on any political system. In a lecture to American students some years later he said that the intention of the work was as follows:

Before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganization of society. It is possible that today I believe something of the same again; but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another. I am not talking of one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up or torpedoing him. I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states. [...] I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that *man produces evil as a bee produces honey*, must have been blind or wrong in the head . . . I believed then, that man was sick-not exceptional man, but average man. I believed that the condition of man was to be a morally diseased creation and that the best job I could do at the time was to trace the connection between his diseased nature and the international mess he gets himself into.¹⁹³

When the Second World War ended, William Golding was a teacher of English and philosophy at Bishop Wordsworth's school. Before the war, he had been optimistic about mankind's future; but his experience during the Second World War, as he said, was a turning point for him. He began to see what people were capable of doing; a gloomy vision that was articulated in his bestseller novel, *Lord of the Flies*.

¹⁹³ David Spitz, 'Power and Authority: An Interpretation of Golding's *Lord of the Flies*', in *The Antioch Review*, 30, 1 (Spring, 1970), p. 23. Emphasis added.

VI

LORD OF THE FLIES: A DYSTOPIAN NOVEL

‘And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for *the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart...*’ [Emphasis added]

(William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, p. 223)

Discussing cultural changes, Raymond Williams declares that within the dominant ideology there are emergent elements which are likely to be an alternative to the dominant. More specifically,

the process of emergence [...] is then a constantly repeated, an always renewable, move beyond a phase of practical incorporation: usually made much more difficult by the fact that much incorporation looks like recognition, acknowledgment and thus a form of acceptance.¹⁹⁴

The emergent elements start at the margins of society, may become less marginal and eventually hold sway. Thus, during the first half of the twentieth century, Swift's dark vision was embraced – notably by H. G. Wells – while Defoe's optimism was superseded; and pessimism became the dominant mood. *Lord of the Flies* fell within the general atmosphere of pessimism that characterized the post-war era.

Lord of the Flies was written at a time when writers, disillusioned by the utopias that promised hope for a better future for mankind, resorted to allegory and satire in a bid to warn people about the naivety of believing in man's innate goodness and hence of his ability to build a utopian city. As a result of the disastrous effects of the two World Wars, the experiences of the Holocaust and of the atom bomb in particular, Defoe's optimism fades away while Wells's skepticism is confirmed. This is illustrated by Golding's *Lord of the Flies*; therefore, the concern of the present chapter is to investigate, through the analysis of characters, themes, setting and language, the permanence of man's disbelief in the ability of nurture to tame nature. My intention is to show that, by resorting to dystopia, Golding belies the prospect of 'rosy tomorrows' and re-activates, in the footsteps of H. G. Wells, Swift's bleak despair.

William Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies* in 1954, less than a decade after the end of the Second World War, when the world was in the midst of the Cold War. The novel tells the

¹⁹⁴ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 124-125.

story of a group of English schoolboys, aged between six and eleven, who emerged from the wreck of a plane to find themselves in an uninhabited island. Two of the boys, Ralph and Piggy, discover a conch shell on the beach. Piggy proposes to use the conch to summon the other boys. After their gathering, the boys elect a leader, Ralph, and set rules. Jack, Ralph's rival, takes charge of the boys who will hunt for food. However, the boys are interested more in playing than in keeping the rules. They at first enjoy their life without the authority of adults and spend much of their time playing while Jack and his group become increasingly preoccupied with hunting. The boys, fearing an imagined beast, slowly follow Jack's tribe leaving that of Ralph. Jack's tribe practises savage rituals such as painting their faces, walking naked, feasting for a beast and killing their friends, Simon and Piggy.

The boys are evacuees of a civilization which has culminated in an apocalyptic chaos and their plane has been shot down in an air battle. Finding themselves in a 'state of nature', the boys at first, in an attempt to recreate a microcosmic version of their previous civilization in England, try to articulate the values they are nurtured with in their society so that they may live happily. Hence their values are a reflection of the world into which they have been born and educated. The boys start with a democratic vote, and discuss social responsibility. But instead of keeping that civilization going on, they turn the island into hell, into a Hobbesian 'state of nature'. Their success is short-lived and they gradually regress into a savagery that destroys their attempt to create a successful and peaceful society; thus, resulting in a dystopia.

1. The Boys, Dystopian Initiators

The study of Doctor Moreau in the fourth chapter revealed that Wells attacked scientists and belied their claim that they were able to better understand the world. In his *Lord of the Flies*, Golding mocks not only scientists but human nature as well. The novel traces a conflict between two competing groups: the 'good' represented by Ralph, Piggy, and Simon and the

'bad' represented by Jack and his tribe. The present section is concerned with the analysis of characterization, the aim of which is to show which of these two groups succeeds in dominating the other.

Ralph is the son of a naval officer; therefore, he belongs to the middle class. He is handsome and good-natured. He attempts to establish a fair, democratic, peaceful government on the island. He also takes responsibility for the welfare of others by building huts, trying to keep the fire going, and making rules to ensure that their food and water are clean. However, Ralph is not a perfect boy. He has drawbacks that prevent his success. For example, at the beginning of the story, he tells the other boys that the fat boy is nicknamed Piggy, even though he has promised him not to tell them. Later, he is 'contaminated' by the boys' degraded mentality as he participates in Simon's murder. His joining in the violence against Simon shows how easy it is even for 'the good' to submit to evil.

Piggy stands for rationality. For him anything wrong has a solution because 'life is scientific'. He does not believe in the Beast – which is reported in the outskirts of their camp – and disagrees about the boys' fear. There is no need to fear anything 'unless we get frightened of people.'¹⁹⁵ This rationality resembles that of the pigs of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Orwell's pigs are similar to Piggy in that they attempt to control their world by rational behaviour and democratic rule. Orwell's pigs eventually regress to an irrational state. But though Piggy remains rational till his death, he does not succeed because his rationality is not welcomed by most of the boys. He is alien to them: 'there had grown tacitly among the biguns the opinion that Piggy was an outsider, not only by accent, which did not matter, but by fat, and ass-mar, and specs, and a certain inclination for manual labour.'¹⁹⁶ His spectacles make possible the lighting of the fire. But Jack, more powerful than him, steals the specs from

¹⁹⁵ William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1954, p. 92.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Piggy. Deprived of his spectacles, he loses his sight and his rationality. Piggy's inability to protect himself parodies scientists who cannot protect their knowledge from tyrant rulers. Piggy, like most scientists of the twentieth century, provides the means whereby leaders exert their powers. Jack steals Piggy's glasses to gain the power of making fire and therefore dominating all through his 'stolen' technology.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed a generalization of the reaction, in literature, against the ugly effects of science and technology, already established in the late-nineteenth century, mainly in Butler's *Erewhon*. Huxley's *Brave New World* takes it up in the twentieth century. In this dystopia Huxley is worried about the morality of science. He presents a world in which science controls human life; even reproduction is controlled through technological and medical intervention such as the removal of ovaries. Moreover, like Moreau who attempts to use science to create a better human race, the state in *Brave New World* uses science and technology as a means of building a faultless and happy world. The inhabitants of such world are brainwashed and drugged into happiness. Science dominates human nature to the extent that the individual is robbed of his true personality. Huxley attacks science which he thinks can deprive humanity of its true essence. Golding admits that he was influenced by Huxley and that he 'was fascinated by him.'¹⁹⁷ He agrees with Huxley in seeing that the most dangerous threat comes from science because for Golding scientists are unable to protect their science from dictators who may misuse it. Piggy's loss of his 'eyes' is emblematic of this situation.

In addition to his weakness, Piggy's rationality is also hopeless because it prevents him from correctly understanding human nature. He dismisses the Beast saying that there is no such thing without fully realizing that the boys are suffering from hallucinations. In an

¹⁹⁷ James R. Baker , 'Golding and Huxley: The Fables of Demonic Possession', in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: William Golding's Lord of the Flies*, , Harold Bloom ed., New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008, p. 90.

interview with Jack Biles, Golding describes Piggy as follows: ‘Piggy isn’t wise. Piggy is short-sighted. He is rationalist. My great curse, you understand—and, well he’s that. He’s naive, short-sighted and rationalist, like most scientists.’¹⁹⁸ ‘Scientific advance’, he continues, ‘is useful, yet it doesn’t touch the human problem.’¹⁹⁹ Piggy, like Swift’s scientists of Laputa, never copes with the real problems of the island. He is convinced that the only source of evil is Jack and his tribe. Moreover, since he considers himself as rational and good, Piggy refuses to accept that he, too, has evil propensities. Therefore, he cannot openly admit his participation in Simon’s murder, saying: “We never done nothing, we never seen nothing.”²⁰⁰ Piggy’s mistaken reasoning points to the inability of human reason to cope with the dark reality of human nature.

Simon, whose role in this dystopia will be further examined in the study of themes, is a religious visionary. He is the kindest of all the boys; helpful and gentle, helping in the building of huts and feeding the littluns fruit: ‘Then, amid the roar of bees in the afternoon sunlight, Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach.’²⁰¹ But he is also a strange boy who isolates himself, in fact, the other boys refer to him as ‘batty’. Moreover, Simon is unable to communicate with others because he usually lacks the words to express what he perceives.

The flaws of the good boys give the opportunity for the bad boys to control and dominate them. Jack Merridew is the most evil person on the island. Physically, he is distinguished by his ugliness and his red hair. He is a member of the upper middle-class, and the choir leader in a Cathedral school. He feels an unquestionable sense of superiority, declaring: ‘We’re English; and the English are best at everything.’²⁰² Jack becomes the leader of the hunters but longs for total power and becomes increasingly wild, barbaric, and cruel as

¹⁹⁸ Harold Bloom ed., *William Golding’s Lord of the Flies*, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010, p. 66.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 174.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 61.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 47

the novel progresses. Jack's greatest desire is to hunt and kill. When he becomes a hunter, he physically changes, turning almost bestial:

Jack was bent double. He was down like a sprinter, his nose only a few inches from the humid earth... Then dog-like, uncomfortably on all fours yet unheeding his discomfort, he stole forward five yards and stopped... His sandy hair, considerably longer than it had been when they dropped in, was lighter now; and his bare back was a mass of dark freckles and peeling sunburn. A sharpened stick about five feet long trailed from his right hand, and except for a pair of tattered shorts held up by his knife-belt he was naked. He closed his eyes, raised his head and breathed in gently with flared nostrils, assessing the current of warm air for information...At length he let out his breath in a long sigh and opened his eyes. They were bright blue, eyes that in this frustration seemed bolting and nearly mad. He passed his tongue across dry lips and scanned the uncommunicative forest...²⁰³

This passage visibly describes Jack's descent to animality. The hunt is something that the boys cannot perform by themselves. For the other boys, it would be difficult and tiresome to repeat Jack's experience. He is the only one who possesses power on the island. Therefore, he successfully imposes his rule and the boys – except Ralf, Piggy and Samneric – sheepishly follow him in order to benefit from his protection. Furthermore, Jack knows how to manipulate people because he knows how to turn situations for his benefit. For instance, during a hunt, when he is knocked down and it is Ralph who wounds the boar, Jack manages to turn events to his advantage by displaying his own wound to general admiration. Eventually, he tries to make hunting a prerequisite for leadership. He calls Ralph a coward and attacks him for his failure to hunt, using this as a basis to challenge him. To further impose his power, Jack withholds meat from those – such as Piggy – who do not support him and offers it to those who do. Hunting tends to shift Jack into a position of unchecked dominance. The presence of the good boys is a challenge to this authority. Therefore, they are killed one after another, first Simon then Piggy and finally Ralph who is, though not killed, chased by the end of the novel.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 52.

Most of the boys belong to the middle class. They have spent a few years within civilized society absorbing the particular cultural habits of their class. Yet, their behaviour on the island is closer to untamed nature than to nurture. This is ascribed to the fragility of the thin crust of civilization which the Church, the state and the school have left on their minds and bodies.

2. Religion, Politics and Civilization as Tokens of Failure

The second chapter of this dissertation has shown that the strong and assuming religious, political, and ethical beliefs enabled Robinson Crusoe to successfully dominate the polity of the island. In the fourth chapter, it has been shown that Doctor Moreau's religious, political and ethical dwindling beliefs and meddling with original nature resulted in his creating hybrid monsters instead of an Ideal Man. Presently, I will reveal through the analysis of themes in *Lord of the Flies* that the castaway boys are unable to re-activate the good habits they were nurtured with in the absence of civil institutions. Religious beliefs deteriorate to paganism, political affairs regress from a democratic state to a tribal system and the English pre-school boys to loutish barbarians.

i. Idols and Beasts

Worse than in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* where the quasi-absence of religion is instrumental in the failure of 'scientific humanizing', *Lord of the Flies* completely ignores the role of religion in the new islanders' social organization. Throughout the novel, there is no mentioning of God or of His Divine Providence as agencies in the inhabitants' polity. Moreover, though Golding makes many references to the Christian religion, most of the boys do not show any manifestation of spiritual pursuits; they become superstitious instead.

Rather than believing in the presence of an omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent God as Robinson Crusoe did, they believe in a Beast. To dominate the boys, Jack develops

paganistic rituals, thus creating his own religion. This is quite evident in the actions of the boys who form Jack's tribe:

There were sounds coming from behind the Castle Rock. Listening carefully, detaching his mind from the swing of the sea, Ralph could make a familiar rhythm.

“Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”

The tribe was dancing. Somewhere on the other side of this rocky wall there would be a dark circle, a glowing fire, and meat. They would be savouring food and the comfort of safety.²⁰⁴

For the defenceless boys, these religious rites of the 'circle', 'the glowing fire' and the eating of 'meat' bring a much needed sense of security; a false security indeed because the God they worship exists in their fancy only. As the boys grow wilder, their belief in the Beast grows stronger. The more savagely the boys act, the more real the Beast seems to become, and the more it strengthens their superstition.

To gain its sympathy, the boys offer the Beast a pig's head as a sacrifice. After killing the first sow, Jack decides that the sow's head should be put on a stick: 'Sharpen a stick at both ends.'²⁰⁵ This scene is reminiscent of Kurtz's compound where human heads are impaled on stakes. But the heads in Conrad's novel are given as a sacrifice to Kurtz by the worshipping natives. In *Lord of the Flies*, the head is given as a sacrifice to the Beast itself. Since the tribe is afraid of the beast, Jack decides to offer it the head in order to win its goodwill: 'This head is for the beast. It's a gift.'²⁰⁶ Soon the rotting head is surrounded by flies. This makes the pig's head the 'Lord of the Flies' which becomes the symbol of evil on the island:

After a while these flies found Simon. Gorged, they alighted by his runnels of sweat and drank. They tickled under his nostrils and played leapfrog on his thighs. They were black and iridescent green and without number; and in front of Simon, the Lord of the Flies hung on his stick and grinned. At last Simon gave up and

²⁰⁴ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 205.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p150.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

looked back; saw the white teeth and dim eyes, the blood—and his gaze was held by that ancient, inescapable recognition.²⁰⁷

Indeed, the Lord of the Flies is a complicated symbol. It is, as many critics assert, the most important image in the novel. It is both a physical manifestation of the Beast, a symbol of the power of evil, and a kind of Satan figure evoking the beast within each human being. Looking at the novel in the context of biblical parallels, the Lord of the Flies recalls the Devil, just as Simon recalls Jesus. In fact, the name “Lord of the Flies” is a ‘literal translation of the biblical name Beelzebub, a powerful demon in Hell sometimes thought to be the devil himself.’²⁰⁸ The boys are thus worshipping the Devil himself. Therefore, Nietzsche’s declaration of the death of God is taken further by Golding who makes it clear that man is more likely to worship the devil than God. The idea initiated by Defoe in his *Robinson Crusoe* that religious upbringing may defeat evil within the human heart is dismissed.

The pagan religion becomes so ingrained in the boys’ hearts that they do not hear any call for redemption. Among them, Simon is the only one who keeps his wits together and ‘sees the light’; the other boys sacrificially slaughter him. In fact, many critics have drawn strong parallels between Simon and Jesus. Simon’s conversation with the Lord of the Flies for instance ‘parallels the confrontation between Jesus and the Devil during Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness, as reported in the Christian Gospels.’²⁰⁹ Simon undergoes a spiritual journey similar to that of Robinson Crusoe; a voyage which is supposed to enlighten his tainted self and bring salvation to the inhabitants of the island. He, like Christian in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, embarks on a lonely quest through the forest in order to discover the reality of the Beast. He

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁰⁸ Margaret Ruth Syme, ‘William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*: A New Secular Theology’, A Thesis in Religious Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts, McGill University, December 1st, 1976, p. 24.

²⁰⁹ S. J. Boyd, ‘The Nature of the Beast: *Lord of the Flies*’, in *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: William Golding’s Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 39.

wanders in the jungle looking for a sign of truth. But the nature of this jungle is very different from that of *Crusoe*; it is rather similar to Kurtz's in terms of physicality.

The outcome of the journey into the 'heart of darkness' is different; Kurtz surrenders to the forest's evil embrace and becomes one of the 'savages'. But Simon distances himself from the forest's evil temptation and courageously explores its darkness to discover the truth. In the jungle, like Moses in the Bible, Simon 'talks' to The Lord of the Flies which 'reveals' to him that the Beast was simply fear and that evil lies within every human heart:

“Fancy thinking that the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!” said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. “You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?”²¹⁰

This parabolic language, characteristic of prophetic discourse, strengthens the allegorical dimension of the work and therefore its didactic function. This reading approaches the novel as a fable. The latter is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'an allegorical tale used to illustrate a moral precept or pragmatic truth'. The truth that *Lord of the Flies* conveys is that 'man is a fallen being... gripped by original sin.'²¹¹ It reflects the foolishness of the boys in believing that the Beast lives in the jungle. The Beast, like the Beast People in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* whose animal traits gradually emerge, has always been inside them, waiting to break free. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* presents us with a completely different view. Defoe thinks that the individual is born with innate capacities that enable him to distinguish between good and evil. By contrast, Golding considers that man is incapable of easily distinguishing between good and evil since evil is part of him. Thus the differentiation between the two is acquired rather than innate. It is something that civilization, and more

²¹⁰ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 158.

²¹¹ William Golding, 'Fable', in *The Hot Gates*, quoted in 'William Golding', Robert MacFarlane, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 441.

precisely religious teaching, imposes upon the individual rather than the natural faculty of man's essential being.

As can be expected then, Simon's spiritual voyage in the jungle ends in failure because it does not bring salvation to the community. Simon runs to bring the truth to his fellows aiming at restoring things to their normality. However, like all messengers of divine truth, Simon is misunderstood by everyone and is finally killed by those he seeks to save. He is unable to share his revelation with the other boys because they are not ready to accept or understand it. Since Simon is a Christ figure, his inability to deliver the truth to the boys parodies Christ's abortive teaching. 'The most controversial aspect of *Lord of the Flies* has always been its "Christian message".'²¹² Perhaps Christ died before delivering the truth to mankind and thus the Christian religion is but an invention of people's fancy, as the boys create the pig's head to be worshipped. Since truth cannot be wholly determined and since religion may be fancy, there is no difference between Christianity and paganism. This explains the children's implied disavowal of their Christian religious heritage.

Instead of worshipping God and asking deliverance from Him, the boys offer sacrifices to an 'imagined' Beast in order to avert his anger on the one hand and to create a sense of security on the other. Here Robinson Crusoe's ardent belief in God's role in the conduct of his life is refuted because the boys revert to Friday's pagan state. Thus Golding mocks Christianity and rejects the authority and truth of Revelation. Besides, he questions Defoe's simplistic distinction between good Christians and bad cannibals while Prendick's contempt for the religious man gibbering big thoughts is confirmed. The absence of God, added to man's innate fallen nature, means the negation of any supreme authority, any order and any

²¹² Margaret Ruth Syme, op. cit., p. 50.

accountability. Thus, in the words of W. B. Yeats ‘mere anarchy is loosed upon the world’.²¹³
The age of dystopia is at hand.

ii. From Democracy to Tribalism

The island territory is shared between two leaders, Ralph and Jack, who represent two different systems. At the beginning things function well; Ralph and Jack work together and combine their talents; thus, order and peace reign on the island. However, driven by egoism and ambition, permanent collaboration between them soon becomes impossible, and their friendship slowly deteriorates into a merciless rivalry which results in their splitting apart.

After their landing and gathering together, the boys decide to make a journey and explore the island. This journey results in the discovery that nobody has been there before them; “[this] is real exploring,” said Jack, “I bet nobody’s been here before.”²¹⁴ This exploration reveals to the boys the island’s beauty, a beauty reminiscent of Gonzalo’s description in *The Tempest*:

“But this is a good Island. We—Jack, Simon and me—we climbed the mountain. There is food and drink, and—“ “Rocks—” “Blue flowers—”... “While we’re waiting we can have a good time on this island.” He gesticulated widely. “It’s like in a book.” At once there was a clamour. “Treasure Island—” “Swallows and Amazons—” “Coral Island—” Ralph waved the conch. “This is our island. It’s a good island. Until the grown-ups come to fetch us we’ll have fun.”²¹⁵

In this quotation, there is a direct reference to Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883), and particularly Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* (1858). Golding’s novel, as many critics have asserted, rewrites R. M. Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island*, whose three characters carried the same names as some of the protagonists of *Lord of the Flies*. R. M. Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* describes how three resourceful English boys marooned on a tropical island succeed in overcoming all the hardships they face. Ballantyne’s characters are: an eighteen-

²¹³ W. B. Yeats, ‘The Second Coming’, quoted in *The Cambridge Introduction to W. B. Yeats*, David Holdeman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 77.

²¹⁴ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 29.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

year-old boy described as ‘tall, strong and manly for his age and might easily be taken for twenty’²¹⁶ who is named Jack; a fifteen-year-old boy, bookish and filled with common sense and practical knowledge who is named Ralph; a thirteen-year-old boy named Peterkin Gay who shows extraordinary skill and much relish in killing pigs. Thus, *Lord of the Flies* recalls *The Coral Island* in setting, circumstances and mainly in the names of its principal characters. But the two novels present two radically different views. To Golding who had newly returned from the Second World War, this story seemed incredible. Ballantyne’s novel is the product of early nineteenth century optimism. It is based on the concept of the perfectibility of man, which includes the idea that evil is not inherent in man’s nature but stems from the society which nurtures him. Like Robinson Crusoe, the boys use their skills and knowledge to duplicate the comforts and values of their previous society. Working very hard, they build shelters, make utensils for their daily use, and find a variety of vegetable and animal food. On the contrary, Golding’s novel is a product of twentieth century post-Hiroshima pessimism. *Lord of the Flies*, indeed, is written as a refutation, and more as a grim parody, of the idyllic world of *The Coral Island*. It subverts the myth of the civilizing mission or the illusion of natural control of wild environments through the well disciplined white man. For Golding, *The Coral Island* represents ‘an extremity of Victorian confidence and optimism in the civilized values of English schoolboy society.’²¹⁷

Golding carefully leads the reader to the conclusion that sooner or later totalitarian systems will supersede democracy. At the beginning of the novel, the political system is based on democracy; thus the boys use elections to choose Ralph as a leader:

“Shut up,” said Ralph absently. He lifted the conch, “Seems to me we ought to have a chief to decide things.” “A chief! A chief!” “I ought to be chief,” said Jack

²¹⁶ Robert Michael Ballantyne, *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific*, in www.library.nu, p. 130.

²¹⁷ James Gingin, ‘The Fictional explosion: *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*’, in *Bloom’s Critical interpretations: Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 11.

with simple arrogance, “because I’m chapter chorister and head boy. I sing C sharp.’... “Let’s have a vote”. “Yes!” “Vote for a chief!” “Let’s vote—”... Ralph! Ralph!” “Let him be chief with the trumpet thing.”²¹⁸

Such containment of political activity, such as voting, demonstrates the early hegemonic success of Ralph. Ralph, representing order and leadership on the island, has many similarities with Cyrus Harding, the protagonist of Jules Verne’s *The Mysterious Island* (1874). Harding manages to control matters on the island thanks to his intellectual prowess and physical abilities. Similarly, Ralph possesses both faculties; however, unlike Harding, his control over the boys is short-lived.

Cleverly, Ralph, realising the danger of the absence of grown-ups, urges the boys to take care of themselves by setting their own rules. Ralph creates the first golden rule: during meetings, only the one who has the conch can speak: “I’ll give the conch to the next person to speak. He can hold it when he is speaking.”²¹⁹ The conch shell serves to bring the boys together and establish a mini-democracy in the ungovernable wilderness. Ralph and Piggy discovered the conch shell earlier on the beach at the start of the novel and used it to summon the boys together after the crash separated them. The shell, thus, is a symbol of political legitimacy and democratic power. But when power shifts over to Jack, the conch slowly loses its influence, not to say symbolic power.

As the group gradually succumbs to savage leanings over the course of the novel, the hegemony Ralph earlier enjoyed now falls away while Jack’s rises. Referring to the Cold War, Golding states that Jack and Ralph are ‘two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate.’ Jack first questions the reliability of the rules that Ralph creates:

“The rules!” shouted Ralph, “you’re breaking the rules!” “Who cares?” Ralph summoned his wits. “Because the rules are the only thing we’ve got!” But Jack was shouting against him. “Bollocks to the rules! We’re strong- we hunt! If

²¹⁸ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

there's a beast, we'll hunt it down! We'll close in and beat and beat and beat—!" He gave a wild whoop and leapt down to the pale sand. At once the platform was full of noise and excitement, scramblings, screams and laughter. The assembly shredded away and became a discursive and random scatter from the palms to the water and away along the beach, beyond night-sight...²²⁰

Jack has performed a successful *coup d'etat* and usurped Ralph's authority. As he gradually establishes his dominant position, he assumes the role of a leader: 'Power lay in the brown swell of his forearms: authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape.'²²¹ The end of democracy leaves the way open for a dictatorial government led by Jack. He then rejects the usefulness of the conch: "[w]e don't need the conch anymore. Its time some people knew they've got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us.'²²² This scene proves Jack's progress towards dictatorship. By stating that only certain members of the community merit the right to contribute their opinions, Jack, like Hitler and Mussolini, stands for the total demolition of democracy. The conch is replaced by another token, the spear, which symbolizes power and authority. When the tribe raided Ralph's camp, 'Jack lifted his spear and began to shout.'²²³ Hence, his spear is his conch, his token of power. The decay in power symbols is taken to its extreme with William Golding. Prospero's magic staff is replaced by Crusoe's gun which is superseded by Moreau's whip which is finally degraded to a spear in *Lord of the Flies*, an obvious recession to the age of Neanderthal man.

The replacement of the conch by a spear announces civil war, strongly helped by the division of that society into two competing groups. The raid of Jack's tribe to steal Piggy's glasses shocks the rational clan. When the latter – Piggy, Ralph and Sam and Erik – visit Jack's group, with the intention of bringing back the glasses, Ralph gets involved in a fight with Jack who won't stand being called "thief". Piggy juxtaposes the values of the two clans which the island has known: "Which is better – to be a pack of painted niggers like you are, or

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 100.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 165.

²²² Ibid., p. 111.

²²³ Ibid., p. 160.

to be sensible like Ralph is?” ... “Which is better—to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?”...²²⁴ He is answered by the rock that kills him. Then, Jack’s group which includes all the boys except Ralph, turns to killing Ralph and offer his head as a sacrifice to the Beast.

Jack’s success in imposing his dictatorial order is helped by the mental decay of the other boys who willingly subordinate themselves to Jack’s dominance. For his part, George Orwell in his *Animal Farm* reveals how situations of oppression arise not only from the motives of the oppressors but also from the naivety of the oppressed. When presented with a dilemma, Boxer does not question the implications of Napoleon’s actions but instead repeats to himself, “Napoleon is always right.” *Animal Farm* demonstrates how the inability or unwillingness to question authority condemns the ordinary people to suffer from the ruling class’s oppression. This anticipates Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* where the young children or the ‘littluns’ unquestionably obey the oppressor Jack. *Animal Farm* conveys Orwell’s conviction that revolutions may lead to tyranny and that those who try to bring about equality eventually ensure that ‘some animals are more equal than others.’²²⁵ Man, Orwell suggests, is not capable of continuous moral improvement: at the close of the work, humans and pigs are identical. Likewise, Golding’s children revert to a very primitive state; they are undistinguishable from animals. Golding agrees with Orwell in his view that naked dictatorial power is the major agent of mankind’s loss of humanity.

At first, Ralph attempts to establish a democratic and peaceful government on the island. He cares about others through building huts, feeding the boys, trying to keep the fire going, and making rules to keep order. However, Ralph never gains real control over the boys since he has no rewards to offer for good behaviour and no punishments to sanction disobedience. Ralph appears to be the chief but has no actual power, only a slight ascendancy

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 199.

²²⁵ George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, London: Penguin, 1987, p. 90.

that ultimately disappears. The boys gradually lose respect for Ralph as he fails, repeatedly, to demonstrate his dominance over Jack. On the other hand, Jack disrupts the existing social order by removing Ralph and introducing himself. The frightened children desert one after another to Jack whose clan is committed to the pleasures and terrors of anarchy. It is a reversion from a democratic system based on the authority of the rule of law to a tribal system based on Darwin's 'survival of the fittest'.

iii. From the Age of Innocence to the Experience of Evil

After the two World Wars the simplistic binary opposition between the 'Civilized White Man' and the 'Savage Black Man' associating the former with good and the latter with evil gives way to the questioning of the innate goodness of Man himself. *Lord of the Flies* thoroughly investigates this issue. At an early point in the novel, the boys are chauvinistically proud of their Englishness and of their belonging to a great civilization: "We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right things."²²⁶ Here, Golding's sarcasm, born out of the atrocities he witnessed during the Second World War, is very evident. The novel, in fact, presents a gloomy image of Man. By its end, it demonstrates very effectively that Jack's pride of his Englishness and his civilization is tantamount to a demagogue's 'word-screen' and an illusion, at best.

While the standards of their parent's education are still fresh, the boys try their best to keep themselves close to the civilized mores they have inherited. After Ralph is voted leader, he decides to improve and organize the conditions of living for everyone on the island. For him one of the most important ways to maintain civilization on the island is the building of shelters; he repeatedly declares that they need shelters in order to be used as homes and also

²²⁶ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 47.

to help them overcome their fears. Contrary to Crusoe's dwelling that lays very secure and concealed, the shelters the boys built are very shaky, unprotected and provide no real security. In addition to building huts, the boys for instance, choose rocks to be used as lavatory and decide to bring water from the stream in the coconut shells and keep it under fresh leaves. Unfortunately, these golden rules are slowly broken, and finally forgotten. The more the boys forget the rules that keep them close together, the more they appropriate other habits that associate them with primitiveness. Ralph is aware of how the boys become dirty and unkempt; their new situation is reminiscent of the untamed, unruly and disgusting brutish 'Yahoos' of *Gulliver's Travels*. The standards of civilization the boys set at first fall apart so that the state of savagery replaces the civilized one.

Though Golding denied any influence of Freud on him, he confessed that he was 'doing the same thing as Freud did – investigating this complex phenomenon called man.'²²⁷ Freud argued that children were completely dependent on their parents for protection and nourishment. Children unhesitatingly obey their parents because of fear of punishment and fear of losing their parent's love. Consequently, by learning to obey parental authority, they acquire the ability to tell right from wrong. Hence, children, possessing no conscience, are not yet troubled by their misbehaviour apart from the fear they may have of being found out. In other words, in not yet possessing a conscience, they are not yet liable to have a sense of guilt. This is exactly what happens to the children of *Lord of the Flies*. At the beginning of the novel, and though the boys are experimenting with their baser instincts, they are greatly restrained by the behavioural guidelines that have shaped their childhoods:

Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child

²²⁷ Bernard F. Dick, 'The Novelist Is a Displaced Person: An Interview with William Golding', in *College English*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (Mar., 1965), pp. 480-482 in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/373459>, p. 481.

was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins.²²⁸

Yet, the children, aware of the absence of any adult authority, gradually revert to lawlessness and abandon all rules. The collective killing of Simon stirred by ritual dance and blood chant makes of them faceless, murderous hysterical mob:

The dark sky was shattered by a blue white scar. An instant later the noise was on them like the blow of a gigantic whip. The chant rose a tone in agony.

“Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”

Now out of terror rose another desire, thick, urgent, blind.

“Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”

Again the blue-white scar jagged above them and the sulphurous explosion beat down. The littluns screamed and blundered about, fleeing from the edge of the forest, and one of them broke the ring of biguns in his terror.

“Him! Him!”

The circle became a horseshoe. A thing was crawling out of the forest. It came darkly, uncertainly. The shrill screaming that rose before the beast was like a pain. The beast stumbled into the horseshoe.

“Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”

The blue-white scar was constant, the noise unendurable. Simon was crying out something about a dead man on a hill.

“Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”

The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the centre, its arms folded over its face. It was crying out against the abominable noise something about a body on the hill. The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water... there were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws.²²⁹

This scene recalls the horrors of the macabre feast held by the savage Caribs in *Robinson Crusoe*. Yet, in the latter, as Friday argues, the savages do not kill their clansmen; they kill their war enemies. In Golding's novel, instead of externalizing and projecting evil onto alien peoples of more primitive races, we are confronted with the decent, 'innocent Europeans', slaughtering one of their kind. 'The beast' is now undoubtedly within.

The pack of painted savages who blindly murder Simon has by now abandoned all social restraints. This recalls Conrad's Kurtz – the epitome of European civilization – whose loss of identity and moral control results in his reverting to sacrificial killing. In *Heart of*

²²⁸ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 67.

²²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 168.

Darkness, Conrad shows that the ritual murders are committed, not by the natives, but by the whites and that it is the whites who lose all moral restraint.

Marlow states that ‘all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz.’²³⁰ The latter comes to the Congo ‘equipped with moral ideas of some sort.’²³¹ He is expected to bring the light of civilization to the uncivilized Africans. But the darkness of Kurtz’s heart leads to his loss of identity and moral restraint, and ultimately to a savagery so severe that he recalls ‘a shadow darker than the shadow of the night’.²³² He is now driven by primitive instincts. In *Lord of the Flies*, most of the characters, including Ralph who struggles to keep the children decent, revert to Kurtz’s brutish state. At first, Ralph is unable to understand why the other boys would give in to animalistic bloodlust. Though Ralph remains determined not to let this savagery overwhelm him and though he ‘holds the torch of civilization’, he reverts to it as well. This reveals something of the same sense of shared inherent evil. Early in the novel, he viciously accepts the hunters’ raw pig meat and gnaws on it, “like a wolf.” His first experience of the hunt is a revelation of his darker side. When Robert pretends to be a pig and is hunted by the boys, Ralph also feels a sudden excitement to participate in the game. As Robert screams and struggles, ‘Ralph too [is] fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown, vulnerable flesh. The desire to squeeze and hurt was overmastering.’²³³ He is, in addition, part of the unthinking gang that murders Simon. In the last chapter, Ralph is like a cornered animal. Ironically he sharpens a stick in self-defence and becomes a murderous hunter himself; “whoever tried [to harm him] would be stuck, squealing like a pig.”²³⁴

While Ralph, himself drawn to savagery, urges the boys to stick to the rules, Jack stalks back to the first stages of humanity. From the beginning, he shows signs such as his love for

²³⁰ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, London: Penguin, 1994, p. 71.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²³³ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 126.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

hunting and blood letting that align him with primitive man. When Ralph tells Jack that his choir-boys are available whenever he wants them to be, the latter immediately answers that they will be hunters. The hunt is the first indication of a power shift to Jack's advantage. Moreover, when Jack sets his own camp, he uses fire only to cook meat and is indifferent to using it as a signal for their rescue. In addition, he abandons the shelters Ralph has built and urges his followers to live in a cave. Jack's degeneration is linked with his mask, which signifies separateness from his true being and a kinship with the beast: 'The mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid liberated from shame and self-consciousness.'²³⁵ Body-painting and masks are a symbol of the boys' loss of identity and fall from civilisation. In Chapter 4, 'Painted Faces and Long Hair', Jack defects to darkness: 'He made one cheek and one eye-socket white, then he rubbed red over the other half of his face and slashed a black bar of charcoal across from right ear to left jaw.'²³⁶ In *The Coral Island*, Ralph, the other Ralph, compares the war-painted natives to demons:

They wore grotesque war-caps made of various substances and decorated with feathers. Their faces and bodies were painted as to make them look as frightful as possible; and as they brandished their massive clubs, leaped, shouted, yelled, and dashed each other to the ground, I thought I had never seen men look so like demons before.²³⁷

But in *Lord of the Flies*, by associating evil with Jack, Golding negates the nineteenth century belief that evil is located in aliens only. It is interesting to note the shift from associating savage aspects such as dirtiness and ugliness with non-Europeans in the eighteenth century to that of associating them with English boys in the twentieth century. In this vein, Golding states that *Lord of the Flies* attacks English chauvinism: 'One of our faults is to believe that evil is somewhere else and inherent in another nation.'²³⁸

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Robert Michael Ballantyne, op. cit., p. 230.

²³⁸ William Golding, *Hot Gates*, quoted in 'The Nature of the Beast: *Lord of the Flies*', S. J. Boyd, in Harold Bloomed., op. cit., p. 35.

The 'savage' group isolates Ralph more and more because he keeps reminding them of their humanity and the responsibilities attached to it. In the end, Ralph 'wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart.'²³⁹ His confidence is shattered. Nevertheless, the loss of innocence that Ralph weeps for by the end of the novel reveals his growing awareness of the darkness within, of the evil in man's heart, smouldering in the children's breasts. Piggy and Ralph tried to find meaning and value in a world where suffering, death, and savagery were rife. Therefore, their rationality proved inadequate because they failed to comprehend where the beast lies in reality. The transformation from candid schoolboys to Yahoos forces the bitter truth of *Gulliver's Travels*, i.e. that man is a creature whose nature is incapable of maintaining rational societies comparable to that of the Houyhnhnms. The boys revert to Hobbes's harsh state of nature. In the novel, a reference to Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* is detected in the description of the sea that later on swallows Piggy:

There was one flat rock there, spread like a table, and the waters sucking down on the four weedy sides made them seem like cliffs. Then the sleeping leviathan breathed out, the waters rose, the weed streamed, and the water boiled over the table rock with a roar. There was no sense of the passage of waves; only this minute-long fall and rise and fall.²⁴⁰

The boys unwittingly discover that man's life in a state of nature is, in Hobbes's words, as said earlier, 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.'²⁴¹ Golding insists that this is an inescapable truth.

To convey this bleak and despairing message, Golding, like Orwell in *Animal Farm*, resorts to irony; an irony particularly evident in the endings of both novels. *Animal Farm*, a beast fable, concludes with a party held by the pigs for the neighbouring farmers who come to learn from the pigs' experience. The other animals, looking through the windows of the house, see the pigs on two legs, dressed in Mr. Jones' clothes, and looking from pig to man

²³⁹ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 223.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115. Underlining mine.

²⁴¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 89.

and man to pig, conclude that there is no difference between the two. Thus, the pigs have actually become what they had revolted against, and the final state of the farm is as bad as the former, if not worse. *Lord of the Flies* concludes with the boys being saved by a naval officer who is a representative of the civilised world. Yet, this salvation seems to be a salvation in name only since the boys are being brought back to a world of adult savages, of nuclear warfare and mass-killings, a world where all crimes are accepted as part of the structure of civilization. Golding stresses this idea: “[but] remember that the officer is in many ways no different from the boys who turned hunters. He, too, is corrupt. He, too, is hunting, but he really doesn’t know it.”²⁴² Like Gulliver, the officer finds the boys distasteful, resembling the Yahoos in many ways. But Gulliver, upon his return to England, sees the supposedly civilized humans as worse than the Yahoos because their clothing covers up their filth and vices. Similarly, the officer’s participation in a war that is taking place nearby, much worse than the boys’, makes of him another Yahoo wearing a uniform. Thus *Lord of the Flies* dramatizes the conflict between the civilizing urge and the barbarizing drive that co-exist in all human beings.

3. From Heaven to Hell

Instead of dominating the island’s wild nature and making of it a suitable place for their survival, the boys are immersed in the island’s nature so that they ended as wild as it is. At first, Golding presents us with a picture of an island which, like Prospero’s and Crusoe’s, is friendly, has possibilities, and is exciting. Ralph is energized by its beauty:

He patted the palm trunk softly; and, forced at last to believe in the reality of the island, laughed delightedly again and stood on his head. He turned neatly on to his feet, jumped down to the beach, knelt and swept a double armful of sand into a pile against his chest. Then he sat back and looked at the water with bright, excited eyes.²⁴³

²⁴² Bernard F. Dick, op. cit., p. 481.

²⁴³ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 11.

The island appears to be lush in verdure, rich in fruit, and replete with exotic but harmless animals, indeed a 'perfect Eden'. It is a tropical paradise of abundant greenery, coral reefs, fruit trees, and pools of clear water; a perfect island which the boys find delightful. In addition, the boys who inhabit the island are carefully chosen products of an already established middle-class society. They are socialized in, and are a microcosm of, twentieth century Western – more specifically English – civilization. Thus, the two necessary factors – a rich cultural heritage and a pleasant island – will leave no excuse for the boys to live comfortably during their stay. However, things start breaking up.

From the beginning, the edenic aspects of the island are juxtaposed to others of pain, terror and death: the fruit which makes the boys ill, the animals which awaken their thirst for blood and hunting, and the darkness and the unknown that cause their fears. Moreover, the high and good trees that Crusoe used to secure his fortification become in *Lord of the Flies* snake-like creepers that add fuel to the boy's fear. The description of the forest in *Lord of the Flies* resembles that given by Conrad in his *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad describes the primeval state of the river where Kurtz has known horror: 'Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest.'²⁴⁴ Similarly, the boys of *Lord of the Flies* find it difficult to work through the wilderness of the island both physically and mentally. Since they do not discipline themselves, they become infected by the island's wild nature. The island's beautiful side contains within it a wild one which spreads into the boys' lives.

The description of 'the devastated fruit trees' gives an image of how the island, once an idyllic paradise, generous in every way, has been spoiled by the boys. From the beginning of

²⁴⁴ Joseph Conrad, op. cit., p. 54.

the novel, the results of the contact between nature and humans are stressed. Without lavatory facilities or a balanced diet, the littluns become ‘filthily dirty’ and suffer from ‘a sort of chronic diarrhoea’.²⁴⁵ The boys themselves contribute to the filth on the island. As the children get dirtier, the littluns cry about their miserable circumstances while the big boys become more violent and cruel. The boys’ contact with nature, then, is not a success but a nightmare. By the close of the novel, the entire island is burned and destroyed and the boys are akin to savages than to civilized humans.

4. Language, a Sign of Regression

In *Lord of the Flies*, language usage is part of Golding’s emphasis on the boys’ regression to savagery. Throughout the novel, the distinction between civilized and savage steadily becomes hazy. Golding continually uses the word savage. Early in the novel Jack himself proclaims, “I agree with Ralph. We’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages”.²⁴⁶ Piggy asks more than once, “What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?”²⁴⁷ The members of Jack’s tribe are named savages, for instance: ‘a savage who carried a spear’, and ‘Five yards away the savage stopped’ or again ‘the savage wrinkled up his face.’²⁴⁸ The masks of painted faces provide the boys with ‘liberation into savagery’.²⁴⁹

Moreover, the transformation of the boys into savages is reinforced through the use of animal imagery. For instance, Sam and Eric ‘flung themselves down and lay grinning and panting at Ralph like dogs’²⁵⁰; Jack, during the hunt of a pig, moves ‘dog-like’ on all fours and he hisses like a snake, and is ‘less a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the tangle

²⁴⁵ *Lord of the Flies*, op. cit., p. 64.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

of trees'.²⁵¹ Ralph calls Jack a 'beast'. Piggy says that if Ralph does not blow the conch for an assembly, 'we'll soon be animals anyway'.²⁵² When he dies, his body twitches 'like a pig's after it has been killed'.²⁵³ Simon, hidden in the shadows of the forest, is transformed – in the words of the boys – into a 'beast'. The language choices Golding makes in the novel are designed to emphasize the chaotic elements of humanity's savage animal instincts, which include bloodlust, the desire for power, amorality, selfishness, and violence.

The analysis carried out in this chapter calls for the following conclusion. The mid-twentieth century was characterized by man's utter disappointment with his own nature due to the terrifying deeds experienced during the two World Wars. In that context, utopian ideals appeared impractical while dystopian warnings became predominant. *Lord of the Flies* exemplifies this pessimistic mood through the description of a microcosmic society in which evil – and negative social and political developments in particular – is dominant. Continuing Swift's tradition, the novel is about a dystopia that negates the assumption that man can reach perfection. It is not concerned with the idea that children, freed from the control of adults, will turn into savages; it rather dramatizes the real nature of man himself. The author's choice of symbols and imagery reinforces the fact that the boys, freed from any power that may exceed punishment, revert to savagery which is an evidence of man's evil nature. Moreover, the novel refutes Rousseau's conception which views man's innate nature as noble. Instead, it affirms Golding's wartime vision of man as a creature that 'produces evil as a bee produces honey'. Man is now convinced that he is potentially civilized but essentially savage. The novel, then, presents a chaotic account of human nature and registers the subversion of previously dominant cultural assumptions of humankind as essentially superior, morally progressive, beneficent, and cultured.

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 53.

²⁵²Ibid., p. 101.

²⁵³Ibid., p. 200.

CONCLUSION

The investigation carried out in this dissertation shows that the issue of nature vs. nurture in *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *Lord of the Flies* can be analysed in the light of Raymond Williams's theory. Williams argues that specific cultural forms and practices should not be analysed independently but should be studied within the context of a whole social formation: there is a continuity of experience relating a text to a particular genre and relating that genre to its period. Thus, this approach has provided a convenient theoretical framework for the examination of the evolution of the theme nature vs. nurture from the eighteenth century till the twentieth century.

This investigation has enabled me to draw the following conclusions. First, the modest historical survey this dissertation covers allows us to say that western civilization witnessed the zenith of its self-confidence during the eighteenth century, was in a state of doubt and confusion by the late-nineteenth century and fell apart by the mid-twentieth century. Authors living in a progressive age produce utopian works. Those who live in an age of doubt and confusion write anti-utopian works; while those who live in an age that despairs of man's ability to regain his lost paradise produce dystopian fables. Thus the ideologies of the writers this dissertation has treated are shaped by the general ideologies of their times.

Secondly, the meanings of the three concepts 'utopia', 'anti-utopia' and 'dystopia' epitomize a change in historical conditions. Utopia meaning 'good place' flourished in the late-seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries as a result of the pervading spirit of progress stemming from the Renaissance. Anti-utopia, meaning a place intended to be good but become evil, emerged in the wake of the late-nineteenth century as a result of the general mood of skepticism. Finally, dystopia, meaning a hellish place, came out as an alternative and dominant concept resulting from the spirit of despair prevailing in the mid-twentieth century.

Thirdly – and it is what I really consider the most interesting fact in the work – the literary study this dissertation covers shows that the island is ‘a long-established literary method of examining human nature and human polity in a microcosm, as in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* or Thomas More’s *Utopia*, in Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* or Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*.’²⁵⁴ *Robinson Crusoe* generated so many imitations that it constituted a tradition of its own named the Robins-sonade or ‘the desert island story’. Among the themes which this genre treats are isolation (e.g. desert island), a new beginning for the protagonists, and a commentary on society. In this sense, both *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *Lord of the Flies* belong to this tradition. *Robinson Crusoe* reinforces the ideals of the eighteenth century such as individualism and progress; *The Island of Doctor Moreau* questions these ideals and replaces them by those of late-nineteenth century skepticism; and finally, *Lord of the Flies* subverts them all. Thereby, the ideological circumstances each generation experiences affect man’s attitude towards the issue of nature vs. nurture. Raymond Williams writes:

[...] the new generation responds in its own ways to the unique world it is inheriting, taking up many continuities, that can be traced, and reproducing many aspects of the organization, which can be separately described, yet feeling its whole life in certain ways differently, and shaping its creative response into a new structure of feeling.²⁵⁵

According to this statement, the question of whether nurture is able to tame nature which was raised in the introduction can be answered as follows: in the eighteenth century, due to the spirit of progress that helped the flowering of utopias, man believed that nurture was able to tame nature. In the late-nineteenth century, because of the sense of doubt and confusion that nourished the rise of anti-utopian works, the ability of nurture to domesticate nature was questioned. Finally, in mid-twentieth century, the problem does not lie in nature or nurture but in man himself who proves to be essentially evil.

²⁵⁴ S. J. Boyd, *The Nature of the Beast: Lord of the Flies*, in *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: William Golding’s Lord of the Flies*, Harold Bloom ed., New York: InfoBase Publishing, 2008, p. 30.

²⁵⁵ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961, p. 65.

The first chapter of this dissertation has dealt with the general atmosphere Daniel Defoe was writing in; an atmosphere of progress and innovation in all fields. Writers, then, were helped to form a very optimistic view about the human capacity for progress. Reason, science, knowledge were fields of interests for eighteenth century thinkers. Man was thought to be able to elevate himself from the primitive state of nature to a socialized state thanks to good training and culture. Long before, Plato had viewed man's original nature as rational, ready to be properly educated. Thomas More had argued that intellectuals were the leaders of progress. Francis Bacon trusted scientists and science in the task of better improving man's estate. And finally, Hobbes and Rousseau, though on different grounds, thought that a social contract would regulate men's lives.

Interestingly enough, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* reflects its writer's optimistic view. The Enlightenment positively affected Defoe's vision. Defoe's hero, Robinson Crusoe, succeeds in building a utopia thanks to his ability to perfectly master the rules of nature and submit them to his own needs with the help of the culture he has acquired from his society. Crusoe is aware that what is awaiting him is not paradise but a state of nature, a return to the pre-social existence of his species. However, he does not behave like a savage; on the contrary, his self-confidence enables him to tame the wild nature of both the island and the natives. It has been shown that Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, unlike its predecessors, offered a practical model for an ideal city. This model is based on a strong belief in God, hard and organized work, the institutions of law and order.

In the third chapter, I have examined the historical circumstances that surround *The Island of Doctor Moreau's* publication. The last years of the nineteenth century were characterized by skepticism and disillusion. Much of the progressive spirit that dominated the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Britain was weakening. Writers started to doubt the promises of the Enlightenment. The disastrous effects of Industrialism and the growing

imperial zeal enhanced the writers' questioning of the ideals of their society. This line of thought was taken by many satirists whose work addressed the dangers behind the misuse of science. Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* is a representative one. However, though there were many skeptical writers, they did not wholly dominate the literary scene. Other writers still had hopes in science to improve man's condition if it were appropriately used. For instance, Bellamy's *Looking Backward* is a utopia that expresses strong faith in man's ability for bettering his future.

Conversely, H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* presents a bitterly skeptical view. Wells's protagonist, Doctor Moreau, experiments in biological manipulations which turn out to be un-natural: the creatures he has created escape his power. Doctor Moreau's intention is good because he wanted to create a perfect race but his misuse of science leads to a catastrophe. At this stage, faith in the goodness of the human kind is still prominent; what is doubtful is the misuse of human reason, science and knowledge in particular, as a means to progress. Human progress and man's goodness are limited since science has two possibilities: one can lead to happiness (good) and the other to unhappiness (evil). *The Island of Doctor Moreau* reflects much of the doubts the late-nineteenth century witnessed. It questions the pursuit of scientific knowledge for its own sake and without reference to any system of moral/religious standards.

In the fifth chapter it has been argued that the prevailing impression during the first half of the twentieth century was pessimistic. The First and Second World Wars darkened the image of (innocent) man. The myth of progress has failed and the rival myth of necessary evil and universal guilt gets the upper hand. The eighteenth century utopias were replaced by dystopias such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. By the second half of the twentieth century, the world was marked by mass violence and bloodshed; it was a world of terror and inhumanity. It seemed to many that Western

civilization was on the way to its decline. The values of Western civilization proved meaningless. The death of God proclaimed by Nietzsche announced the death of all the great modern icons: reason, science, progress and history. Neither Plato's philosophers, nor More's intellectuals, Bacon's scientists, Hobbes's politicians, Rousseau's Emile were able to save humanity from its evil urges and impulses. Therefore, man's ability to control nature through an adequate nurturing seems inappropriate in an age devoid of all values. On the contrary, education, reason, science and technology lead to a total destruction of both nature and man.

In this context, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* has been discussed in the sixth chapter. The children of *Lord of the Flies* turn the island into a heathenish den where barbarity and savagery are prominent. At first, the children try to make of the island an ordered place through the creation of rules and the election of a leader. Things do not last long; the children are driven back to animality. Instead of securing order and civilization, they turn barbarians. Worse, they transform the island into a hell. In fact, the boys' transgressing of their civilization's boundaries, both physical and intellectual, allow the island's savagery to affect them. Instead of civilizing the island and taming it, they immerse themselves, body and soul, in its wilderness. This is due mainly to Golding's belief in man's fallen nature and his inclination towards evil rather than good. But Golding is not only pessimistic about man's human nature; he questions the soundness of Western civilization as well. He makes it clear that the boys who come to the island have already been acculturated. However what they bring with them is a tradition of carnivorous blood lust, human violence and tribalism. Thus *Lord of the Flies* complies with the idea that it is in Western culture, values and traditions that evil lurks, and not in the heart of man at large.

Finally, it must be admitted that this dissertation could not deal with all the issues linked to the theme of 'nature vs. nurture'. Among the issues which have been shelved because of space shortage is the role played by women. For all her essential part in the process of

nurturing, the woman was neglected and marginalized from the utopian/anti-utopian/dystopian debate; therefore, approaching the theme from a feminist perspective will certainly make it more interesting. Moreover, though Daniel Defoe held his optimistic view till his death, both H. G. Wells and William Golding changed their views as they grew old. Wells, like most writers who witnessed the atrocities of the first half of the twentieth century became very pessimistic. For his part, in his later years, Golding struggled ‘toward a view in which science and the humanities might be linked in useful partnership, and he tried to believe [...] that the visible world and its laws were the facade of a spiritual realm.’²⁵⁶ Thus, Golding, like many utopists who again produced utopias such as Aldous Huxley’s *Island* (1962), recovered from the trauma of disillusionment that he suffered from during the war and came, at long last, to a happier and more balanced view about science and its ability to solve man’s problems. The causes and circumstances of this change, as well as their literary representations, need further investigation.

²⁵⁶ James R. Baker, ‘Golding and Huxley: The Fables of Demonic Possession’, in Harold Bloom, op. cit., p. 99.

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Résumé

Ce mémoire porte sur la manière dont le thème de 'l'inné vs. L'acquis' est traité dans trois romans écrits à des périodes différentes: *Robinson Crusoé* de Daniel Defoe, *L'Île du docteur Moreau* de H. G. Wells et *Le Roi des mouches* de William Golding. Une comparaison entre ces romans permet d'examiner la transition d'une vision optimiste, vers une vision sceptique et, enfin, pessimiste concernant la capacité de l'homme 'civilisé' à dompter la nature sauvage. Au début du 18^{ème} siècle, l'homme était confiant qu'il est possible de dompter la nature et donc créer une 'utopie'. Les conditions qui changent à la fin du 19^{ème} siècle met en doute la capacité de l'homme, et de la science en particulier, à améliorer la condition humaine, débouchant ainsi sur une 'anti-utopie'. En dernier lieu, les conditions néfastes du début du 20^{ème} siècle ont conduit à la désespérance de la possibilité de l'homme 'civilisé' à dominer la nature, qui a conduit à l'émergence du 'contre-utopie'.

En ce qui concerne l'approche adoptée dans cette dissertation, la nature du thème nécessite de s'appuyer principalement, mais pas exclusivement, sur la théorie du Matérialisme Culturel. Nous visons à travers l'analyse de ce thème de mettre en évidence l'interaction entre les auteurs et leurs époques, entre les textes et leurs contextes.

Ce mémoire comprend six chapitres. Le premier chapitre est consacré à l'exposition du contexte historique qui règne dans la fin du 17^{ème} siècle et au début du 18^{ème} siècle. Cette période, où l'Age des Lumières, a été caractérisé par une croyance fervente de l'homme 'civilisé' en sa capacité à contrôler la nature sauvage. Le deuxième chapitre analyse et étudie *Robinson Crusoé*. Ce Roman reflète l'esprit de progrès et de confiance qui dominait au début du 18^{ème} siècle.

Le troisième chapitre traite le contexte historique de la fin du 19^{ème} siècle. Ce dernier a été marqué par l'incertitude en la capacité de l'homme 'civilisé' à contrôler la nature sauvage, particulièrement suite à l'utilisation irrationnelle de la science. Le quatrième chapitre étudie *L'Île du docteur Moreau* qui incarne parfaitement cet esprit de doute et de scepticisme.

Le cinquième chapitre est une exploration du contexte historique du début du 20^{ème} siècle. Celle-ci a été caractérisée par un sens de désillusion, particulièrement après les résultats désastreux de la Première et Seconde Guerre mondiale. Dans le sixième chapitre, nous discutons *Le Roi des mouches* de William Golding qui illustre cet esprit de désespoir.

La conclusion finale qui peut être tirée de cette étude est que la repense à la question est ce que l'acquis permet à dompter la nature sauvage est relative. On a démontré que les auteurs, en exprimant leurs différents points de vues vis-à-vis ce thème, sont largement influencés par l'idéologie(s) historique(s) et littéraire(s) de leurs époques.

Les mots clefs : l'inné, l'acquis, utopie, contre-utopie, dystopie, optimisme, scepticisme, pessimisme, progress, nature humaine, le bien, le mal, matérialisme culturel

ملخص:

طرحنا في هذا البحث موضوع "الفطرة مقابل الاكتساب" من خلال ثلاث روايات كتبت أثناء فترات مختلفة: روبنسن كروزو لدانيال ديفو، جزيرة الدكتور مورو لويلز، وأمير الذباب لوليام غولدنغ. تسمح المقارنة بين هذه الروايات باستعراض الانتقال من الاعتقاد المتفائل إلى المشكك وأخيرا إلى المتفائل بقدرة الإنسان المتحضر على بسط سيطرته على الطبيعة البرية. في بداية القرن الثامن عشر، جزم الإنسان جزما حاسما على أنه من الممكن التوصل إلى ترويض الطبيعة مما أهله لتأسيس 'اليوطوبيا'. تغير الظروف مع أواخر القرن التاسع عشر أجبر الإنسان ذو التنشئة الجيدة إلى التشكيك في قدراته على تحقيق التفوق على الطبيعة وبالتالي احتمال نشوء 'ضد اليوطوبيا' أصبح أكثر ورودا. الأجواء القاسية التي سادت أوائل القرن العشرين أدت إلى اليأس من إمكانية الإنسان المتحضر في أن يفرض هيمنته على الطبيعة مما أدى إلى بروز 'الديسطوبيا'.

نهدف من خلال تحليل هذا الموضوع إلى إبراز التفاعل بين الكتاب و نصوصهم الأدبية من جهة وبينتهم التي نشئوا فيها من جهة أخرى. بخصوص المنهج المعتمد في هذا البحث فإن طبيعة الموضوع اقتضت الاعتماد أساسا ولكن ليس حصرا على نظرية المادية الثقافية.

يتضمن هذا البحث ستة فصول. خصص الفصل الأول لتتبع الواقع التاريخي السائد في أواخر القرن السابع عشر وأوائل القرن الثامن عشر. تميزت هذه الفترة التاريخية المعروفة بعصر التنوير بتفائل الإنسان المتحضر بقدرته على السيطرة على الطبيعة الوحشية. تم تكريس الفصل الثاني لتحليل ودراسة روبنسن كروزو لدانيال ديفو التي تعكس روح التقدم والثقة السائدة في أواخر القرن التاسع عشر و أوائل القرن الثامن عشر.

اهتم الفصل الثالث بإبراز الجو التاريخي المهيمن في أواخر القرن التاسع عشر. تميز هذا الأخير بالشك وعدم اليقين في قدرة الإنسان المتحضر على السيطرة على الطبيعة البرية، خاصة مع تزايد خوف الإنسان من الاستعمال اللاعقلاني للعلم. تطرق الفصل الرابع إلى دراسة ومناقشة رواية جزيرة الدكتور مورو التي جسدت هذا الجو المميز بالشك وعدم الثقة.

أما الفصل الخامس فيستعرض الواقع التاريخي لأوائل القرن العشرين. تميزت هذه الفترة باستفحال اليأس من قدرة الإنسان على تحسين حياته للأفضل، خاصة بعد النتائج الكارثية للحربين العالميتين الأولى والثانية حيث شهدت هذه الأخيرة إطلاق أول قنبلة ذرية. تناول الفصل السادس والأخير رواية أمير الذباب لوليام غولدنغ بالتحليل والنقاش، هذه الرواية عكست روح اليأس التي ميزت منتصف القرن العشرين.

نخلص في آخر هذا البحث إلى أن الإجابة على التساؤل هل التنشئة الجيدة للإنسان تمكنه من ترويض الطبيعة البرية ليست إجابة قطعية. الدراسة السابقة بينت أن هذه الإجابة مرتبطة بمواقف الكتاب التي تحددها الإيديولوجيات التاريخية والأدبية التي عاصروها

كلمات مفتاحية: الفطرة، الاكتساب، اليوطوبيا، ضد اليوطوبيا، الديسطوبيا، التقدم، التفاؤل، التشاؤم، الشك، الطبيعة البشرية، الخير، الشر، الثقافة، المادية الثقافية