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THE ENGLISH WAY TO A MODERN DREAM-VISION OF THE FUTURE

The Antiquity and the Middle Ages looked for the Golden Age in the past. The gradual shift of interest which made the future the source and the natural focus of general attention began with Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and with Sir Francis Bacon's writings. In 1961 I.F. Clarke published a book *The Tale of the Future From the Beginning to the Present Day* which he called *A Check-list of those satires, ideal states, imaginary wars and invasions, political warnings and forecasts, interplanetary voyages and scientific romances—all located in an imaginary future period—that have been published in the United Kingdom between 1644 and 1960.*

The book is one the Library Association Bibliographies and contains over 1100 titles, which shows how popular the future has become in fiction since the times of king Charles I. But before the nineteenth century the excursions into the future occurred very seldom. It was Saint Simon who explicitly declared: "L'age d'or, qu'une aveugle tradition a placé dans le passé, est devant nous". — "The golden age which a blind tradition has placed up to now in the past, is ahead of us". These words became familiar in England to every reader of T. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833) and one of the earliest expressions of Saint-Simon's attitude in England was the vision of the happy future of mankind in A. Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* (1842).

At first, the nineteenth century literary visions of the future were frequently those of organized happiness i.e. utopias. Later on, at the turn of the century, when the Liberal promises of progress were not fulfilled and all kinds of economic, social and political difficulties began to be felt, the visions became mixed or even frightening. But their number was steadily growing and at present it is a matter of course, at least in science fiction, to picture a far-off future just as it is a literary convention in this kind of literature to evoke the setting of far-off worlds.

The purpose of this paper is narrowly limited. I wish to show how

modern English futuristic fiction writers of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries in search of realistically plausible contacts with future ages revived the medieval form of the dream-vision which allowed them to present a comprehensive vision of society. I also wish to show why this form was thought to be useful and, indeed, in some ways necessary as a vehicle carrying the narrator and the reader from the here-and-now to the inaccessible future and back. The problem is so much entangled in dreams, sleep, and mechanical and psychical techniques that it needs an orderly presentation. And, as the dream-visions make only one-third of the books that built bridges leading to the future (among those which I have thought worth discussing), a lot of things will be said before we come to the representatives of the rare genre.

The following is the list of the books to be discussed in chronological order of their publication:

1) 1888—William Henry Hudson, *A Crystal Age*
2) 1888—Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000—1887*
3) 1888—[William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball*]
4) 1890—William Morris, *News from Nowhere*
5) 1895—Herbert G. Wells, *The Time Machine*
6) 1899—Herbert G. Wells, *When the Sleeper Wakes*
7) 1908—[Robert H. Benson, *Lord of the World*]
8) 1911—Robert H. Benson, *The Dawn of All*
9) 1911—Herbert G. Wells, *The Sleeper Awakes* (a revised version of Nr 6)
10) 1922—Herbert G. Wells, *Men Like Gods*
11) 1930—Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men*
12) 1932—John Buchan, *The Gap in the Curtain*
13) 1933—Herbert G. Wells, *The Shape of Things To Come.*

One fact should be stated before my analysis begins. The most important, the most influential, and the most popular genre of Victorian times was the realistic novel. Therefore, writers who wished to introduce anything exotic, far-fetchedly romantic or utterly fantastic, had to step carefully. To make their fiction convincing they had, at least, to use circumstantial realism and they had to build plausible bridges between the here-and-now and whatever other dimensions of space and time their narrators entered and from which they returned to tell their stories.

Sleep was the earliest of such devices. In its classical form it was used by the American writer Edward Bellamy in his socialist utopian novel *Looking Backward 2000—1887*. It is true that the book was preceded by a few months by *A Crystal Age,* but it seems that W. H. Hudson, the author of the novel, had had no clear idea of the logic the form of sleep implied so I shall begin with Bellamy who also goaded William Morris into writing *News from Nowhere*, a book as famous as *Looking Backward* and much more appealing.

The main character and the narrator of Bellamy's utopia tries to cure his insomnia by hypnotic sleep, and owing to a fire, is forgotten in his underground bunker bedroom under the débris of the house until the year 2000 when the place is excavated and he is raised from his sleep. He has not changed physically and eventually he will get married to the great-granddaughter of his nineteenth-century fiancée. His extraordinary experience is told in a book that pretends to be published in the year 2000.

Julian West's long sleep performs three important functions in the book: it carries him body and soul into the future over a distance of more than one hundred years; it gives the author the opportunity to present in his hero's own words (for Julian is the narrator) his first shock and gradual psychological adaptation to the new scene; and it allows the novelist to produce—"overnight"—the deep contrast between the shape and essence of the life in the nineteenth century and a new existence in utopia.

For this deep contrast does exist, even in spite of Bellamy's conviction that Capitalism might be transformed into Socialism by way of evolution and though his America of 2000 is intended not so much to thrill the dreamer as rather to captivate the bank accountant and businessman. This deep contrast is strongly manifest in the last chapter of the narrative when Julian is "looking backward" (and indeed is carried back) to the nineteenth century in his nightmare of a dream in which he is assaulted by his former prospective father-in-law who has raised the cry: "Put the fellow out!"

Fortunately for the narrator, he awakes to find himself in the new reality into which no dream, but a solid sleep of 113 years brought him for the rest of his life.

Though the book is a fantasy it is also intended as a forecast and so Bellamy tries to impress the reader with conventionally realistic characters, motivation, and atmosphere. Even the preservation of Julian's youth has been made plausible.

For just as we believe in the wonders of hibernation, Bellamy and his contemporaries were persuaded that hypnotically induced sleep stops all the funcions of the body and therefore preserves it intact from time.

This view is presented by E. A. Poe in his story *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* in which the process of dying is stopped by the hypnotist, but when he releases his patient, the man at once diassolves into a mass of corruption. The alleged powers of hypnosis were added by Bellamy to the older idea of the sleepers outsleeping their times, which had originated with the Christian legend of the *Seven Sleepers of Ephesus,* made known in the English speaking world by Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall,* chap. XXXIII. Of course, since the eighteenth century the English version of the widely known fairy tale of *The Sleeping*

Beauty made the motif of survival through sleep very familiar. In 1830 it reappeared in A. Tennyson's *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* under the title *The Day Dream*. In *L'Envoi* directed to a Lady Flora the poet expressed a very characteristic attitude impatient of his own times and eager for the future:

> Well—were it not a pleasant thing
> To fall asleep with all one's friends;
> To pass with all our social ties
> To silence from the paths of men;
> And every hundred years to rise
> And learn the world, and sleep again;
> To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
> And wake on science grown to more,
> On secrets of the brain, the stars,
> As wild as aught of fairy lore;
> And all that else the years will show,
> The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
> The vast Republics that may grow,
> The Federations and the Powers;
> Titanic forces taking birth
> In divers seasons, divers climes;
> For we are Ancients of the earth,
> And in the morning of the times.[1]

The American story of Rip Van Winkle, invented by Washington Irving, was another tale of sleep almost certainly known to the author of *Looking Backward*.

Now we can return to British soil and to *A Crystal Age* in which the device of sleep seems to have been used by William Henry Hudson (1841—1922), a distinguished student of wild-life.

When I say "seems to have been used", I am referring to Hudson's own words which open the story: "I do not quite know how it happened, my recollection of the whole matter ebbing in a somewhat clouded condition".[2] What we can gather from the story is that "whether at home or abroad I don't know", the narrator-hero of the romance fell down a ravine and lost his consciousness. When he awoke, he found himself entangled in the roots of a huge oak-tree which had grown over him for centuries. His modern dandified suit was completely spoilt.

That the picture of the utopian society which he entered belongs to the future, we know only from the author's own words in the Preface. There he speaks about the "romances of the future". But in itself his vision is that of deep timeless forests inhabited by large families living an great stone houses. The government and the religion of each family turn on the Father and the Mother who are the only people endowed

[1] *The Poems of Tennyson 1830—1865*, London 1907, p. 183.

[2] *A Crystal Age*, by E. H. Hudson, New York 1950, p. 3.

with the instinct and power of procreation while the other inmates are as free from sex as ants or bees. The narrator tries his sexy tricks on one of the girls, falls in love with her and in his frustration drinks what seems to be poison. The last words of his book seem to suggest his death.

But if his story has been told and printed, he must have returned to his century, or awaked from a dream. Moreover, he could not have registered the sensations of his last moments before "everlasting silence" descended upon him (p. 182).

It is obvious that the novel has been faultily designed and therefore its logic is hopeless. Yet it is remarkable for the crystal lucidity and esthetic beauty of its vision. With *After London, or Wild England* (1885) written by Richard Jefferies (1848—1887) that mystic of the earth, it is an expression of passion for nature intensified by the author's encounter with the evil sights and smells of the city created by the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century. William Morris's *News from Nowhere* shows the same passion which in our days has found scientific foundation in Ecology.

The device of sleep transferring the main character bodily into the future was used much better by H. G. Wells, because his story is told by an omniscient narrator. It is a novel about a nightmare of capitalist technocracy of the future, entitled *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899). It was revised in 1911 as *The Sleeper Awakes*.

The Sleeper is a certain Mr Graham suffering, like Bellamy's hero, from insomnia and sleep-inducing drugs, but he falls into "a trance" accompanied by "cataleptic rigour" without hypnosis. His living body is kept under trust until he awakes after more than two hundred years to find himself the owner of the world, but also a slave of the managerial dictatorship. He joins the suppressed workers' revolution, fighting for them in the air until he crashes to his death. Here the narrative ends, because the "fantasia of possibility", as H. G. Wells has called it in his preface,[3] was meant as an illustration of the economic and social dangers rather that as an individual adventure story.

All the novels using physical sleep as the means of transfer into the future had one disadvantage: no return to the present was possible in them. So other devices had to be invented.

It was H. G. Wells who invented a new way of travelling into the future four years before *The Sleeper*. This time he was warning about the possibility of a biological split of mankind into two degraded subspecies—the Eloi and the Morlocks. The book was *The Time Machine* (1895) and its title signalled a *mechanical device*. This novel of the future still fascinates with the unexpectedness of a brilliant invention. The

[3] Written in 1921 for the edition by British Books Ltd, Cecil Chambers, London (without any other date).

masterful plausibility of its circumstantial realism has almost completely overshadowed the crudity of its concept of time. No wonder that in the hands of Wells's imitators the mechanical travel in time has become what J. B. Priestley has called "monkeying with Time".[4]

But in 1922 H. G. Wells introduced a much more ingenious device to drive in a car into a utopia which might be our future. It was in the novel *Men Like Gods*. Perhaps vaguely influenced by the new concepts of time and space launched by A. Einstein, J. W. Dunne, and P. D. Ouspensky, he created a multiple universe which consisted of many three-dimensional worlds just like a book consists of many leaves. And each of the worlds presented a successive stage of advancement just like the pages of a book present the story at different stages of its progress. Men who were like gods and who lived in the world next to ours, shook the foundations of the two spaces by a nuclear explosion and a group of earthmen actually drove into the future utopia. It also took nuclear energy to drive them out of it for the sake of peace and happiness.

The years after the First World War were very much intellectually alive and imagination—severely and sometimes absurdly restrained by the scientific establishment of the nineteenth century—was given full play. Einstein's and Minkowski's physics and theory of relativity flourished. Wells flourished. Strange halfphilosophers, half-occultists, like G. J. Gurdjieff with his institute at Fontainebleau found followers.[5] In 1921 Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in an English translation. In 1927 J. W. Dunne published *An Experimen with Time*, also about dreams. P. D. Ouspensky, a Russian author and lecturer, settled in London, wrote *Tertium Organum* (1922) and *A New Model of the Universe* (1931) which presented his theory of three-dimensional time and of recurrences and a new concept of reincarnation. J. W. Dunne's first book was followed by *The Serial Universe* (1938). Men's minds were concerned with the structure of physical reality and its relation to human consciousness. This is the background against which we should see the futuristic fiction of that period as indiscriminately as the readers saw it then, without any attempt at evaluation of the scientific reliability of the theories. I owe a lot of information about those men and works to J. B. Priestley's book *Man and Time* and if I am trying to recreate the mental climate of the 'twenties and the' thirties it is because an appropriate introduction to two or three books on my list is necessary.

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[4] Cf. J. B. Priestley, *Man and Time*, New York 1968, p. 107.

[5] Katherine Mansfield, who died there, was one of its members. Her husband John Middleton Murry has commented on it as follows: "She entered a kind of spiritual brotherhood at Fontainebleau. The object of this brotherhood, at least as she understood it, was to help its members to achieve a spiritual regeneration." Cf. the final note to *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* ed. by I. Middleton Murry, Rome 1950.

A special place among those who inspired novelists with new ideas about the nature of dreams and the nature of time should be reserved for John William Dunne (1875—1949), a sober-minded son of General Sir John Hart Dunne.

A veteran of the Boer War, he began aeronautical experiments as early as 1900 and invented several types of aeroplanes, including the first British military plane, tested by the War Office in 1907—1908.

As early as 1899 he had begun to take an interest in dreams; he thought that he suffered from mental aberration when he discovered that some of his own dreams forecast some later events. Then he discovered that this was also happening to other quite ordinary people. In 1927 he published the results of his research in *An Experiment With Time,* his best known book, in which he tried to explain why dreams about the future are normal experience.

According to Dunne, time has spatial quality and when human consciousness in sleep is freed from the impact of sensual perception, it can not only move in time, but also rise to another, larger time it which it can perceive things about to happen. He conceived the universe as a series of times—one within the other—each corresponding to a higher or deeper state of human consciousness. This idea has been explained in *The Serial Universe* (1934), *The New Immortality* (1938) and in *Nothing Dies* (1940).

J. B. Priestley, the author of *Three Time Plays,* who knew both J. W. Dunne and H. G. Wells as he testifies in *his Man and Time* [6], says that both men had known each other "long before *An Experiment With Time* (p. 167). Their acquaintance might have begun in the period when the author of *When The Sleeper Wakes* became fascinated by flying machines as the means of attaining self-fulfilment, universal control or conducting wars. In *The Sleeper* flying is the privilege of the ruling class and the *War in the Air* (1908) explores the destructive capability of aviation. *Tono-Bungay* (1909) in which an alter-ego of the author is preoccupied with building a flying machine, an essay describing *The Coming of Blériot* (1909) and another—My *First Flight* (1912)—all register Wells's personal interest in aircraft at the time when Dunne made his aeronautical experiments.

It is unlikely that these two imaginative men exchanged ideas on aircraft only. J. B. Priestley tells us that in the period preceding the First World War Dunne was conducting his research on dreams and worked out a method of remembering and recording them, which Wells——as we shall see—adopted in *The Shape of Things To Come.*

On the other hand, a careful comparison of the succession of the dates marking the publication of Dunne's and Wells's works (like *Men Like*

[6] Cf. J. B. Priestley *Man and Time,* especially the chapter on "Dunne and Serialism."

Gods) excludes indebtedness on either side until we come to *The Shape of Things To Come*. And we have Priestley's assertion that Wells rather "pooh-poohed" Dunne's concept of time. (p. 167).

Dunne was unique in that he first linked together dreams, dream-remembering techniques, knowing the future, and a new conception of the relationship of human consciousness to time. He suggested that what we call dreams may be special (or induced) states of consciousness which conect the mind with the future. Besides, he was a well-known, technically and socially respectable British physicist who never pretended to having proved his theory in a completely satisfactory way. He inspired trust, seemed plausible and began to affect in different ways the writers of several books.[7]

The first of these books is an astounding work by Olaf Stapledon (1886—1950), a Doctor of Philosophy and a socialist who lectured in philosophy and psychology at Liverpool University and served in an ambulance unit in the First World War.[8] In 1930 he published *Last and First Men, A Story of the Near and Far Future* which ran into eight editions within eight years. It is not a novel, but belongs to the rare genre of imaginary or anticipatory history about which I have written elsewhere.[9] The book is the work of a rare mind akin rather to those Indian minds which created Indian epics and cosmic chronology.[10] Stapledon operates with five time scales while telling of the fathomless human future. The first scale begins about 2000 BC and ends about 4000 AD. The second scale is one hundred times larger, so it ends about the year 200 000. The third scale carries the reader to the year 20 million, the fourth to the year 2 milliard. The fifth extends the time range to 5 billion years. On this last time scale the first scale is reduced to a point where the words

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[7] Cf. the technique of inducing occult initiation dreams in *Winged Pharaoh* (1937) a book by Joan Grant, distinguished by its quiet charm and high moral tone and very much in vogue in its time.

[8] See Brian Ash, *Who's Who in Science Fiction*, Sphere Books, London 1976.

[9] See W. Ostrowski, *Imaginary History — Fikcyjna historia*, "Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich", 1960, vol. 3, 2/5, pp. 27—42. See also [in Polish]: *Prorocy bomby atomowej (Prophets of the Atom Bomb)*, [in:] W. Ostrowski, *O literaturze angielskiej (On English Literature)*, Warszawa 1958, pp. 218—226 and S. Skwarczyńska, *Mickiewicza „Historia przyszłości" i jej realizacje literackie (A. Mickiewicz's History of the Future and its Literary Realizations)* Łódź 1964.

The term *anticipatory history* was introduced by H. G. Wells in his *Experiment in Autobiography*. It is significant that the publishers printed Stapledon's book as a Pelican Book, not as fiction.

[10] The Indian epics, like *Mahabharata*, run into hundreds of thousands of lines and contain lesser epics in which still shorter epics are inserted. The Indian chronology of evolution consists of more than 311 billion of our years. This divides into 100 *kalpas* or Brahma's days which are made of 1000 *mahayugas*, great eras, each of them consisting of four *yugas*, cycles lasting longer than four million of our years.

"Planets formed" and "End of Man" mark "Today". This is the longest history in fiction, told at an increasing tempo and covering fifteen phases of biological and psychical trensormations of humankind in changing conditions. It contains suggestions which, if developed into novels, would form a small SF libraty.

The great tragedy of Stapledon's man is that in spite of all his powers of survival and adaptation he must die both as an individual and as a race and that means the ultimate end according to Stapledon, for he does not believe in the individual survival of the human spirit after death. "Great are the stars, and man is of no account to them! [...] Man is a fair spirit, whom a star conceived and a star kills", — he says. So he finds sense and comfort in the esthetic meaning of man's existence!

> For soon, seemingly, he comes to his end. But cohen he is done he will not be nothing, not as though he had never been: for he is eternally a beauty in the sternal from of things. (p. 287).

And again he says:

> But one thing is certain. Man himself, at the very least is music, a brave theme that makes music also of its vast accompaniment, its matrix of storms and stars. Man himself in his degree is eternally a beauty in the eternal form of things. It is very good to have been man. And so we may go forward together with laughter in our hearts, and peace, thankful for the past, and for our own courage. For we shall make after all a fair conclusion to this brief music that is a man. (p. 288).

Before man disappears from the face of the earth he can comunicate through the aeons of time with the author's mind.

"This book has two authors", say One of the Last Men in his Introduction—

> one contemporary with its readers, the other an inhabitant of an age which they would call the distant future. The brain that conceives and writes these sentences lives in the time of Einstein. Yet I, the true inspirer of this book, I who have begotten it upon that brain, I who influence that primitive being's conception, inhabit an age which, for Einstein, lies in the very remote future.
>
> The actual writer thinks he is merely contriving a work of fiction. [...] Yet the story is true. (p. 11).[11]

So it is a kind of telepathy operating across ages and informing a twentieth century mind about the future.

Stapledon was not the only writer to use *a psychical technique* to learn about the future. John Buchan (1875—1940), a distinguish barrister, statesman, governer general of Canada, literary scholar and novelist introduced another in *The Gap in the Curtain* (1932).[12]

The novel, read today, evokes the dead world of the early twentieth century country life of the upper classes. These people are still rich, still at the top, but restless and uncertain of the meaning of life. One of them

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[11] All quotations from: O. Stapledon, *Last and First Man*, Harmondsworth 1938.

[12] J. Buchan, *The Gap in the Curtain*, London 1962.

says: "Sometimes I would give a good deal for just one moment of prevision", (p. 23).

Five such men gather round Professor Moe, a mathematician and psychotechnician who organizes an experiment to make the gap in the curtain separating the present moment from the future. He prescribes a special diet, orders mental concentration on the future and abstention from reasoning to release other powers of the mind. The Professor

> thinks that Time is not a straight line, but full of coils and kinks. He says that the Future is here with us now, if we only knew how to look for it. And he believes he has found a way of enabling one to know what is going to happen a long time ahead. (p. 29).

An echo of Dunne's hypothesis may be heard in Professor Moe's teaching for, according to him,

> there seemed to be a number of worlds of presentation travelling in Time, and each was contained within a world one dimension larger. The self was composed of various observers, the normal one being confined to a small field of sensory phenomena, observed or remembered. But this field was included in a larger field and, to the observer in the latter, future events were visible as well as past and present. In sleep [...] where the attention was not absorbed, as it was in waking life, with the smaller field of phenomena, the larger field might come inside the pale of consciousness (p. 34).

But the five participants in the experiment do not see the future in their sleep. Half dazed, they read about it in the proper column of *The Times* or rather a blank sheet on which each of their "inner observers" projects a text with information which will appear in a year's time.

In this way Buchan raises the curtain. What follows is five human stories showing that knowing only something about the future does not make a man either wiser or happier.

Leaving *psychical devices*, let us come at last to the *dream-vision* proper. It flourished in the medieval literature, very often combined with allegory.

According to C. S. Lewis the medieval learned man, following Macrobius, distinguised five kinds of dream-visions—three veridical and two that were merely somatic. The first kind was *somnium* which shows "truths veiled in an allegorical form". The second was *visio* which is "a direct, literal pre-vision of the future".[13] Chalcidius, however, also mentions *revelatio* referring to *Hebraica philosophia* (p. 54). This reference should remind us of the fact that *Genesis* contains the earliest recorded accounts of prophetic dreams. In one of them God reveals to Abraham "a direct, literal prevision of the future" of the patriarch and his posterity (Gen. 15, 12—16). In another it is young Joseph who dreams allegorical

[13] C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image, An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge 1967, pp. 63—64.

dreams of the future of his family, which make even his father angry (Gen. 37, 5—11), but which are fulfilled after many years.

If we apply Macrobius' classification to mediewal and even early modern literature down to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, we can see that the prevalent *dream-vision* was the *somnium* rather than the *visio*, though in the case of religious subjects we may suspect a hint of the *revelatio*. And those early *dream-visions* rarely refer to the future. They present rather timeless problems. In the later *dream-visions* allegory is replaced by a directly seen future.

The first great book of this kind was *News from Nowhere* (1890) published soon after *Looking Backward* as a poet's protest against Bellamy's kind of socialism. Its author William Morris (1834—1896), who called himself the "dreamer of deams", steeped since his boyhood in medieval lore, naturally used the form of a dream to carry him either into the past (as happened in *A Dream of John Ball*, 1888) or into the future.

The first chapter of the novel introduce the reader to a group of members of the Socialist League who rather noisily exchange "their views on the future of the fully-developed new society" [14] on a winter night. One of them, "our friend" who becomes the narrator in chapter II of the book, goes home to Hammersmith by an old-fashioned smoky underground, thinking all the time: "If I could but see a day of it [...] If I could but see it!" (Ch. I, p. 2). He tumbles in bed and falls asleep in two minutes time, wakes up again not long after, "in that curiously wideawake condition which sometimes surprises even good sleepers [...] wits preternaturally sharpened", hears the clock strike one, two, three, falls asleep again and from that sleep he awakes once more, but this time into a dream. All these fallings asleep and awakenings serve to blur the boundary between the waking and the dreaming states so that the contents of the dreamer's dream might be accepted as reality, at least in the beginning. That is why, while older writers simply say: "I fell asleep and had a dream", Morris uses a characteristically vague statement: "Our friend says that from that sleep he awoke once more, and afterwards went through [...] a surprising adventure" (Ch. I, p. 3). That is why, also, when the narrator takes over the telling of the tale in chapter II he feels he is in a real world.

All these strategems show how strongly realistic conventions influenced writers and readers about the end of the nineteenth century. Besides, *News from Nowhere* was to be a utopia and one of the unwritten laws utopian fiction must obey is that the utopian vision should be as

[14] W. Morris, *News from Nowhere or an epoch of rest being some chapters from a utopian romance*, ed. by Redmond, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1970, p. 1.

realistic as possible in order to counterbalance the impact of the reality known to its readers, which it pretends to replace.

A. L. Morton has said that *News from Nowhere* is "the only Utopia which stirs the emotions as a whole".[15] It presents the Marxist way to "an epoch of rest" — the revolution, the formation of a classless society, and a gradual withering away of the state—as the things of the past, and concentrates on a twenty-first century England wrapped in the greenery and the sunshine of June, an England free from money, offices, law-courts and laws, but full of friendly, healthy and handsome young--looking men and women who treat work as an enjoyable art and live in the garden country and town, fresh and clean, where machines discreetly serve, but do not rule any more.

No wonder that the dreamer is enchanted. He is easily accepted by the new people, learne all about "the past" and "the present" while exploring London and going up the Thames. He experiences the passage of almost four days and three nights in the earthly paradise and it looks as if he found his love in the beautiful Ellen, but then—at dinner in an old church—he realizes that some people have stopped seeing him and that an alien vision intrudes—that of a dirty beggar. He awakes "at dingy Hammersmith" and finds that he "had been dreaming a dream". But then another thought comes: "Or indeed was it a dream? If so, why was I so conscious all along that I was really seeing all that new life from outiside?" (Ch. XXXII, p. 182). The dream has brought him hope "to build up little by little the new day of fellowship, and happiness" (p. 182). And then he concludes: "If others can see it as I have seen it then it may be called a vision rather than a dream" (Ch. XXXII, p. 182).

All the quoted sentences contain an important implication. Somehow in his dream the dreamer has been granted the real vision—the "direct, literal pre-vision of the future" as C. S. Lewis describes it. So this is the *visio* in the tradition of Macrobius, the last traditional *dream-vision* in English literature.

There is something uncanny about it. Though the "surprising adventures" of the narrator feel like "a vivid dream" (Ch. XXXI, p. 175) from time to time the people whom he meets sense his otherness. They think that he may vanish (Ch. XIX, p. 115), refer to his wearing the cap of darkness and seeing everything while remaining invisible himself (Ch. XXIII, p. 133), throwing a kind of evil charm on Ellen (Ch. XXXII, p. 179). Each time this kind of remark is made, he feels uncomfortable or touched on his weak side of not feeling sure of his position in this beautiful country, or lonely and sick at heart. Thus the vividness and delicate

[15] See his "Introduction" to *Three Works by William Morris. A Dream of John Ball, The Pilgrims of Hope, News from Nowhere*, Seven Seas Publishers, Berlin 1968.

fleshliness of the experience is combined with the sense of the uncanny appropriate to such a strange vision (this is a trick that Morris first used when writing *A Dream of John Ball*).

The second interesting, comprehensive *dream-vision* of the future was written by Robert Hugh Benson (1871—1914), an Eton and Cambridge man, a son of an Archbishop of Canterbury and a Catholic convert who, like his two brothers, was a novelist and essayist. In 1908 he published *Lord of the World* which he called "a parable" and "a terribly sensational book". The novel shows the victory of godless Humanism in the person of Antichrist over Christianity and ends with the Judgement Day. But this novel simply introduced the future without any dream-vision device, perhaps because it was meant as a parable.

Its tone must have been too apocalyptic for the English Catholics and perhaps for the author himself, so he wrote its counterpart *The Dawn of All* (1911). Its optimistic vision of the world in which the Catholic Church in her essentially nineteenth century character gains victory on all fronts and revives her medieval set up, triumphalism and all, may make irritating reading for many Catholics of the Vatican Council II era and does not matter much today. The book however, has the form of *a dream-vision.*

The use of this form was necessary for two reasons. The main character is a priest who has lost his faith and ceased to belong to the Church. In the Prologue he is mortally ill in the Westminster Hospital, refuses a confessor and falls into a coma. In this state he "awakes" sitting in state at an open-air sermon at Hyde Park, but without any knowledge of his identity, even of his being a high dignitary of the Church. Benson meant the vision to bring the man back to Catholicism and to make it realistically plausible. When Easter bells bring him back to normal consciousness, he says: "Fetch a priest", accepts sacraments and during the few hours before death he tells about his *dream-vision* to the nurse who has been attending him all the time.

There is a strange indebtedness to the medieval tradition in Morris's and Benson's books in spite of their authors' great differences in outlook, generation and age. Both Morris's secular Communism and Benson's Catholic Christian state have been modelled on selected idealized pictures of the Middle Ages. Their visions contain the didactic element of the *dream-visions* explicit in *The Dream of the Rood, The Vision of Piers the Plowman* and in Bunyan's *Progress:* the socialist narrator of *News from Nowhere* is comforted by his dream and the lapsed priest is reconverted by his. But though neither writer can shake off the influence of the English Gothic of all ages including Victorian times, of the two, Morris closes the Middle Ages as a romancier while Benson opens the Modern Age as a novelist.

The medieval-type *dream-visions* just happen to fictional dreamers.

The modern-type dreams must have their natural, realistic or at least theoretically explained plausible causes. In keeping with this rule of fictional realism Benson introduces as the somatic basis of his dreamer's vision, a coma combined with a gradually receding amnesia. This makes his *dream-vision* modern.

The third and the last *dream-vision* with which this paper is concerned was written by the great guesser of the future, H. G. Wells. It was one of his anticipatory histories, *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933).[16]

It may be useful to remember that this book came out after all the books discussed in this paper. Its author probably knew them or at least heard about them. He had also written quite a number of books after his *Men Like Gods*. And, again, the new anticipatory history was a book with a difference. I have discussed it elsewhere,[17] so here I will only say that this history of the future covers, with a few gaps, the time from 1930 to 2106.

The Introduction to the book is a masterpiece of building bridges between reality and fiction. It is signed with Wells's own initials and the writer acts as the editor of the notes in a mixture of shorthand and longhand, left to him by a friendly member of the League of Nations Secretariat before his death. Wells has deciphered and chronologically arranged the loose papers and tries to make out their true nature.

The Introduction has a subtitle *The Dream Book of Dr Philip Raven* for the author of the notes used J. W. Dunne's technique of remembering and recording dreams, described in *An Experiment with Time*. According to Dunne's experiment, about 50% of dreams thus recorded turned out to be dreams about future events.[18]

Dr Raven has used the technique for years and "made a clean breast" of the fact in the following conversation recorded by Wells:

> "This Dunne business" he began.
> "Well?" said I.

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[16] H. G. Wells, *The Shape of Things To Come. The Ultimate Revolution*, London, vols I and II, no date. This paperback edition of Hutchinson's "pocket" Library, which will be quoted bears the words *Non-fiction-Series*, which shows how unfamiliar the fictional genre of the *imaginary history* is even to editors.

[17] In *Imaginary History* mentioned in footnote 6.

[18] This is what Wells writes about the man in his Introduction: "Among other gifted and original friends who, at all too rare intervals, honour me by coming along for a gossip is Mr J. W. Dunne, who years ago invented one of the earliest and most "different" of aeroplanes and who has since done a very considerable amount of subtle thinking upon the relationship of time and space to consciousness. Dunne clings to the idea that in certain ways we may anticipate the future, and he has adduced a series of very remarkable observations indeed to support that in his well-known *Experiment with Time*. That book was published in 1927 and I found it so attractive and stimulating that I wrote about it in one or two articles that were syndicated very extensively throughout the world. It was so excitingly fresh." (p. 16).

"He has a way of snatching the fleeting dream between unconscious sleep and waking."

"Yes."

"He keeps a notebook by his nedside and writes down his dream the very instant he is awake."

"That's the procedure."

"And he finds that a certain percentage of his dream items are—sometimes quite plainly—anticipations of things that will come into his mind out of reality, days, weeks, and even years ahead."

[. . . . .]

"Well?" I said.

He turned and looked at me with a reluctant expression that broke into a smile. Then he seemed to rally his candour.

"How shall I put it? I wouldn't tell anyone but you. For some years, off and on—between sleeping and waking—I've been—in effect—reading a book. A non-existent book. A dream book if you like. It's always the same book. Always. And it's a history." (p. 19).

Analysing the text of the *Dream Book* Wells rejects the possibility of its being "a cold-blooded fabrication of Raven's". The other alternative is that the book is either "a product of his subconscious mind, a work of inspiration as our fathers would have called it, which came up precisely as he said it came up, to his consciousness between sleeping and waking" or "it is really what he believed it to be, a part of a universal history for students of the year A. D. 2106." (p. 24).

We may combine the two views and then they give us a complete description of the *dream-vision* of the future used by Wells. That this kind of dream is a *visio is* indirectly confirmed by C. S. Lewis who says: "Mr Dunne's *Experiment with Time* is mainly about *visiones.*" (p. 64).

Read in the current year *The Shape of Things To Come* does not only surprise by its author's perspicacity, but also—sometimes mercilessly——exposes his failures due to his prejudices. And if it is to be "a theory of world revolution" (p. 507), the revolution is singularly lacking in theory and makes an impression of being due merely to all kinds of chance. Indeed every kind of aggressiveness, dictatorship, terrorism and suppression goes into the process to produce what the author has called a "modernized World-State, socialistic, cosmopolitan and creative" (p. 507), which in the end is to transform humanity into a Teilhardesque global body-and-mind, the state which Wells describes in the following way:

...A phase with a common consciousness and a common will. We in our time are still rising towards the crest of that transition. Abd when that crest is attained what grandeur of life may not open out to Man! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the mind of man to conceive... (p. 507).

In these words borrowed from St Paul (I Cor. 2, 9) Wells has expressed his final vision. But it would be a mistake to link them or his ideas to Christianity or, indeed, to any religion. In *The Shape of Things To Come* Christianity in the form of the Catholic Church is practically fi-

nished by throwing bombs, with gas making people insensible for thirty--six hours, on the Pope and a large gathering of priesthood. Ten days later, Islam ends when its holy places in Mecca are forcibly closed. And Judaism follows when the same thing happens to kosher slaughter-houses. All this is neatly done in the year 1978; religion is over and the World State free to shape man as it likes.

This is only one of the examples of Wells's mind at the end of its tether...

But it would be unjust to say that there is no coherent philosophy behind this fascinating and disappointing book and its final vision. Surprisingly, it is not a political philosophy or one based on a scientific outlook, but esthetic, like the ulitimate idea of Olaf Stapledon.

I think we may discover it in *Book the Fourth § 6* where esthetic frustrations of a certain artist have been described, but also his maturity expressed in the following points:

> "The individual is for species; but equally the species is for the individual."
>
> "Man lives for the State in order to live by and through—and in spite of—the State."
>
> "Life is a pendulum that swings between service and assertion. Resist, obey, resist, obey."
>
> "Order, discipline, health, are nothing except to make the world safe for the aesthetic life."
>
> "We are Stoics that we may be Epicureans."
>
> "Exercise and discipline are the cookery but not the meal of life."
>
> "Here as ever—PROPORTION. But how can proportion be determined except aesthetically?"
>
> "The core of life is wilfulness." (p. 436).

These points are followed by words: "So they were thinking in 2046. Have we really got very much further today?" So we can accept them as the ultimate fruit of humanity's experience as seen by Wells.

Morris's, Benson's, and Wells's *dream-visions* show a significant change in this vehicle of presentation. In a sense they mark the revival of the discarded medieval form, but at the same time its modern transformation. As I said, the medieval-type dreams just happen to fictional dreamers. They come from outside. But at the beginning of the 20th century the dream became a valid human experience the contents and the importance of which could not be dismissed as something accidental and separated from the dreamer's life. Whatever may be said about Freud's interpretation of dreams, his work in this field was an early expression of the modern concept of dreams as a meaningful composition, analogous to a literary work, and this concept has been reflected in the *dream-visions of the future* presented here. On the other hand, it was not Freud, but people like Dunne who were responsible for accepting the possibility of dreams that come true, not necessarily because one may wish so, but also because there is something prophetic in some of them.

ANGIELSKA DROGA DO NOWOCZESNEJ WIZJI SENNEJ PRZYSZŁOŚCI

STRESZCZENIE

Starożytność i średniowiecze szukały złotego wieku w przeszłości. Z bibliografii opisowej I. F. Clarke'a *The Tale of the Future* (1961) zawierającej ponad 1100 tytułów utworów odnoszących się do przeszłości, które opublikowano w latach 1644—1960 widać, że zwrócenie myśli ku przyszłości stało się powszechnym zwyczajem w XIX wieku, kiedy Saint Simon stwierdził, że „złoty wiek, który ślepa tradycja mieściła dotąd w przeszłości, znajduje się przed nami". Echo tych słów w Anglii rozpowszechnił T. Carlyle a w 1842 roku A. Tennyson wydał poemat *Locksley Hall*, zawierający wizję szczęśliwej przyszłości rodzaju ludzkiego.

W takiej sytuacji i przy narastającej w powieści konwencji realistycznej powstał pod koniec XIX wieku problem, jak przenieść narratora w przyszłość a zarazem zapewnić mu możność powrotu do teraźniejszości, żeby mógł zdać relację czytelnikowi. Formą podawczą, którą posłużyli się autorzy była unowocześniona wizja senna *(dream-vision)*, dobrze znana w Anglii od wczesnego średniowiecza aż do XVII wieku.

Analiza 13 utworów, przeważnie powieściowych, które ukazały się w latach 1888—1933, ukazuje jak pisarze angielscy zdążali do nowoczesnej wizji sennej przyszłości.

Najpierw pod wpływem niepełnych informacji o hipnozie próbowano snu fizycznego, który miał zakonserwować organizm przez zatrzymanie jego funkcji i w ten sposób przenieść narratora cieleśnie w przyszłość. Ale ten sposób nie pozwalał na powrót, więc H. G. Wells wymyślił wehikuł czasu w 1895 roku a w 1922 roku w *Ludzie jak bogowie* wprowadził hipotezę wielowymiarowego wszechświata, w którym liczne trójwymiarowe światy na różnych etapach rozwoju stykały się niemal jak karty książki. Wstrząs wyładowania nuklearnego posłużył pisarzowi do przeniesienia ludzi XX wieku w utopię i z powrotem, do ziemskiej rzeczywistości.

Zarówno wspomniane tu powieści Wellsa, jak fikcyjna historia przyszłości filozofa Olafa Stapledona *(Last and First Men*, 1930) i powieść Johna Buchana *The Gap in the Curtain* (1932), które operowały nowymi koncepcjami czasu i przestrzeni, i stosunku do nich świadomości ludzkiej, wynikały z atmosfery intelektualnej po pierwszej wojnie światowej. Były echem prac Einsteina, Freuda, angielskiego lotnika i wynalazcy Johna Williama Dunne'a i pism Rosjanina P. D. Ouspenskiego. Na tym tle można szczegółowo prześledzić powstanie nowoczesnej wizji sennej przyszłości.

Nawiązując do średniowiecznej klasyfikacji wizji sennych, wywodzącej się od Makrobiusza, Chalcydiusza i snów proroczych w *Biblii*, można określić sen proroczy o przyszłości jako *visio* lub *revelatio*. Ale w literaturze średniowiecza literackie wizje przyszłości były niezwykle rzadkie.

Z pośród trzech utworów omawianego okresu wszelkie cechy średniowiecznej wizji sennej ma utopia Williama Morrisa *News from Nowhere* (1890). Natomiast znacznie mniej znana powieść Roberta H. Bensona *The Dawn of All* (1911), mimo tendencji do wskrzeszania średniowiecznych form życia, uzasadnia utopijną wizję przyszłości psychologicznie i medycznie. Śniący jest w niej człowiekiem ciężko chorym, który zapada w sen a po przebudzeniu na krótko przed śmiercią opowiada, co przeżył, pielęgniarce.

Trzecia wizja przyszłości — *The Shape of Things To Come* (1933) Wellsa wykorzystuje teorię snów o przyszłości wspomnianego już J. W. Dunne'a wyłożoną w książkach *Experiment with Time* (1927) i *The Serial Universe* (1934). Narrator

książki Wellsa dzięki specjalnemu treningowi zapamiętuje w snach i notuje na jawie to, co przeczytał w podręczniku historii powszechnej z 2046 roku.

Nowoczesna senna wizja opiera się na przekonaniu, że to, co się nam śni jest istotnym ludzkim przeżyciem, którego nie można oddzielić od całości życia ludzkiego i jego treści.